MARK 10

Mar 10:1  And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.

Mar 10:2  And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

* Chapter 10 opens up with a challenge from the Pharisees.
* They came to Jesus asking about God’s teaching on divorce.
* Once again, Mark informs us about the disposition of their hearts, they came to test Jesus, not to seek His council to know the will of God.
* Some think they asked Jesus this particular question because it was a hot debate among two schools of Jewish thought at the time.
  + The school of Hillel – Taught a man could divorce for any reason.
  + The school of Shammai – Taught a man could only divorce for adultery.
* “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?
  + Was God ok with people getting divorced?
  + Matthew makes it clear they wanted to know if it was ok to divorce for “any cause.”
  + That is a good question, right?

Mar 10:3  He answered them, “What did Moses command you?”

Mar 10:4  They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.”

* Being Pharisees, they were students of the Old Testament Law, so Jesus asked them, “What did Moses command you?”
  + Moses in Deuteronomy had instructed the people on divorce.
  + They responded with a reference to Deuteronomy 24:1.
  + Deu 24:1  “When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house,
* The Old Testament law allowed a man to divorce his wife so long as he gave her a “certificate of divorce.”

Mar 10:5  And Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.

Mar 10:6  But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’

Mar 10:7  ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife,

Mar 10:8  and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh.

Mar 10:9  What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

* This is an interesting text.
* It appears, God *tolerated* the Children of Israel in the Old Testament to divorce their wives.
* The reason given for this toleration was the hard hearts of the Jews.
  + Many examples of this hard heart appear in the Old Testament writings.
  + Deu 9:6 - “Know, therefore, that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stubborn people.
* At first, it struck me as very strange that God would permit something to continue which wasn’t in line with His ultimate desire.
  + Then I realized, “Wait a second, couldn’t that be said for the whole Old Testament?"
  + The Old Testament and the laws it consisted of weren’t the ultimate and final desire of God but they were permitted to exist for a time.
  + Why? Because they were designed to teach humanity an important lesson and they acted as a teacher to lead people to Christ.
  + The Old Testament was part of the ultimate plan of God and was permitted for a period of time to accomplish His purpose.
  + I think we should understand God’s allowance of divorce in the same way.
* God allowed divorce for a purpose, the details of that purpose are not all revealed to us, but we can be confident that, like the Old Testament, it was leading His people to His final plan.
* God’s ultimate intention for marriage was communicated before the law was given.
  + Jesus pulls His listeners minds back, not to the giving of the Law, but to the creation of the world.
  + The passage referenced by Jesus predated Moses.
    - Genesis 1:27 - So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
    - Genesis 2:24 - Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
  + God did not want the marriage relationship divided.
  + Married couples are brought together by God and the union was not designed to be dissolved.

Mar 10:10  And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter.

Mar 10:11  And he said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her,

Mar 10:12  and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

* The shift from a law that allowed divorce to a law forbidding divorce would have been a big shift for the Jews.
* Other gospel accounts tell us the teaching shocked the Apostles.
* In private, they asked Jesus about the law again.
* He told them:
  + A man who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery.
  + A woman who divorces her husband and marries another man commits adultery.
* Why?
  + Why are they guilty of adultery if they divorced the old spouse?
  + Because the text implies the original husband and wife are still bound to one another.
  + They may have been legally divorced by a human court but they are still bound before God.
  + They are not free to exit that relationship.
  + God brought them together and did not give them permission to separate.
  + So when a man divorces his wife for a reason other than adultery and marries somebody else, he is violating his unbroken bond with his first wife.
* When you start discussing all the potential hypothetical situations surrounding this teaching things can get a bit tricky, but the main point of Jesus’ teaching is very clear..
  + DON’T GET DIVORCED!
  + Men are not to divide what God has brought together.
  + I think this needs to be our primary take-away from this text.
  + Too often we approach the Bible’s “divorce passages” with only the intent of finding out the rules of divorce, when I can/cannot break off my marriage.
  + When does God allow me to leave my wife and which one of us is allowed to get remarried?
  + If we instilled the main point of Jesus’ teaching we would have less need to discuss divorce and remarriage legality.
  + God does not want marriages dissolved!
  + This has been His intention from the beginning.
* If you were with us for the Matthew study or you are familiar with other Bible passages, you’ll notice Mark excludes the “exception clause.”
  + In Matthew, Jesus gives one exception to His teaching on divorce.
  + A man or woman can divorce their spouse if (and only if) their spouse is unfaithful to them (commits adultery).
* Why does Mark exclude this exception?
  + We don’t know for sure, but it may have been because he wanted to put the emphasis on the main point.
  + DON’T GET DIVORCED!
  + And don’t enter a marriage lightly with the attitude
* Jesus’ teaching is not hard to understand.
  + But the application can be very difficult.
  + Which is why it is not a popular teaching.
* *\* I know there are additional verses in the New Testament that we need to account for in this discussion, particularly in 1 Corinthians, and we will address those verses as we approach them in their context. (I just want you to know I am aware of them and they are being taken into account).*

Mar 10:13  And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them.

Mar 10:14  But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

Mar 10:15  Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

Mar 10:16  And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

* The people were bringing, not only sick people, but children to be blessed by Jesus.
* The Apostles didn’t think Jesus had time to spend with children.
* But Jesus insisted He had time.
* He then insisted the Apostles also had time to spend with the children because the Kingdom of Heaven belonged to those who were like children.
* In what ways should we be like children?
  + Teachable
  + Without prejudice
  + Without pride
  + Humble enough to receive
    - Children don’t have jobs.
    - They don’t provide for themselves
    - They are dependent on someone to keep them alive.
    - They don’t turn down gifts because of self-sufficient pride.
    - They receive.
    - Likewise, we must receive our place in the Kingdom of Heaven because we certainly will not earn it.
* What better time to bring someone to Jesus than when they are children.
  + God can certainly save those who are more advanced in years, but they don’t have the time and energy of youth.
  + But those who learn to love Christ young, have a lifetime to spend in His service.

Mar 10:17  And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Mar 10:18  And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

* A young man approaches Jesus with a question, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”
  + We might say, “What do I need to do to go to heaven?”
* Jesus doesn’t immediately respond to the man’s questions but points out the wording He used in his approach.
  + “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.”
  + Matthew’s gospel records, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good.”
  + There is only one being who has the authority to speak on what is good and what is evil, God.
    - Jesus doesn’t tell the man he is wrong for coming to Him for information on what is good.
    - In fact, He goes on to answer the man’s question!
    - What is Jesus teaching the man and those in the audience by starting the conversation this way?
    - He is making it clear that only God has the authority to speak on these things, He will now speak authoritatively on these things, therefore what is the conclusion He’s leading them towards?
    - Answer: He is God and speaks with God’s authority!
    - Example:
      * Let me try to illustrated (hopefully this is helpful lol)
      * Let’s say you approach me a question…
        + You: “How do you send a rocket to the moon?”
        + Me: “It would take an expert physicist to answer that question!”
        + Me: *Proceeds to explain how a rocket is sent to the moon.*
      * I would be implying I am an expert physicist.
  + Jesus is making a claim of deity.

Mar 10:19  You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’”

Mar 10:20  And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.”

Mar 10:21  And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

Mar 10:22  Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

* Jesus provides the man with a list of commands from the Old Testament.
* The man tells Jesus he has been obedient to all of them since his youth.
* Jesus tells him there is one more thing he must do in order to have eternal life. He must sell all of his possessions, give them to the poor, and follow Christ.
* Sadly, the young man was not willing to do this and he went away sorrowfully.
* We learn in verse 22 the man was very rich.
* Why does Jesus require this of the rich young man?
  + It isn’t a blanket rule that all Christians have to sell all their stuff and give it to the poor.
  + So why does Jesus ask him to do it?
  + Because Jesus knew to what his heart belonged and Jesus wanted that heart in His possession.
    - Yes, this man kept the commandments…
    - Yes, he had given himself to God in many ways…
    - But Jesus, with pinpoint accuracy identified the condition of his heart.
    - As we’ve mentioned in other texts, Jesus wasn’t only concerned with external compliance, He wanted the heart of His listeners.
    - The man’s treasure was laid up on earth (Matt 6:19-21).
    - Christ told him if he would have treasure in heaven he must purge his life of the object of his greatest affection (riches) and make God his heart’s desire.
    - For this man, this may have been the equivalent of plucking out the eye that causes you to stumble or cutting off the hand that leads you into sin.
    - He was not willing to make the sacrifice.
  + APPLICATION:
    - Take a good look at verse 21. It contains an important lesson.
      * Mark 10:21 “And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing”
    - Helping someone better themselves by pointing out one of their weaknesses, if done correctly, can be an act of love.
    - It isn’t popular today to tell someone there is something wrong with the way they are living. In fact, it may be the greatest (and only) cultural “sin!”
      * But scripture tells us the most unloving thing you can do is withhold truth that might save someone’s soul.
      * If Jesus had been a modern day liberal, He would have patted the man on the back and told Him He approved of His lifestyle and watched the man go to hell!
    - Don’t be unloving, be like Jesus!
    - Be brave enough and kind enough to show someone where they are coming up short AND be thankful and humble enough to examine your own life when a loving friend comes to you about a shortcoming in your life.
  + APPLICATION:
    - It is likely every one around this man thought he was a godly man.
    - He may have also believed he was a godly man (he seemed honest).
    - But even though he and others thought he was on the right track, he still came to Jesus and asked what else he needed to do.
    - When he did, Christ revealed an area of improvement he had never recognized before.
    - We need to ask God the same question.
      * We may appear to others to be on the right track.
      * We may believe we are on the right track.
      * But we need to go to God and ask Him to reveal to us what we aren’t seeing.
      * I suspect we all have blind spots.
      * Things that because of our upbringing or because of the way we’ve been taught to study the Bible or because of the examples in our lives, we miss.
      * We need to go to God in full submission and ask for them to be revealed.
      * And, unlike this man, have a heart willing to be shaped in any direction to be what God desires.
  + APPLICATION:
    - Conviction isn’t all that is required!
    - This man seemed convicted by Jesus’ words (hence his sorrow).
    - I think there are many people who attend worship or study their Bible and they walk away convicted.
    - But often that conviction wears off after a while without us making the actually changes in our lives.
    - Its easy to feel “spiritual” when we’ve been convicted but we are not practicing godliness unless there is transformation following the conviction.

Mar 10:23  And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”

Mar 10:24  And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God!

Mar 10:25  It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

* This statement is very important to spend some time thinking about.
* Jesus doesn’t try to sugar coat the fact that riches and the pursuit of riches are a powerful lure that lead many people away from the Kingdom of Heaven.
* Billions of people throughout time have devoted themselves to accumulating stuff.
  + Physical possessions promise satisfaction and joy but the promise is always empty.
  + Yet, how many people have failed to learn the lesson the rich of previous generations tried to teach them, that chasing money will not make you happy?
  + Not only will it not make you happy, it has no ability to save your soul.
  + Mar 8:36  For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?
* Jesus says it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter God’s Kingdom.
* APPLICATION:
  + It isn’t uncommon to hear people in America say, “We are so blessed to live in a prosperous nation.”
  + Certainly, that is true!
    - We have an opportunity to use our prosperity in the Kingdom.
    - To fund works around the world for the glory of God.
  + But, for some in wealthy nations, their riches are a curse.
    - Their riches give them a false sense of self-sufficiency.
    - They fall in love with the fun their riches afford them and forget their real purpose on the earth.
  + Jesus’ words make us rethink the term “blessing.”
    - With eternity in mind, is it better to be born in a rich nation or in a poor nation?
    - Those entrusted with riches by the providence of God have been given a dangerous responsibility.
      * They have the opportunity and financial ability to do great work for the Lord.
      * But they must navigate through the eye of the needle while surrounded by enticements to misuse what has been trusted to them.

Mar 10:26  And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?”

Mar 10:27  Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”

Mar 10:28  Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.”

Mar 10:29  Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel,

Mar 10:30  who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.

* The Apostles were shocked at Christ’s strict teaching on marriage and now they are shocked at the difficulty of entering the Kingdom of Heaven.
* Jesus ensures them, while it may seem impossible to them, God can turn a man’s affections.
  + In order to escape the empty promises of the world, a man must be presented with something greater on which to fix his eyes and heart.
  + God is the only one capable of presenting greater promises.
  + Only He can work in our hearts to free us from a suicidal obsession with wealth.
* Peter asks Jesus, “Since we’ve left everything to follow you, what reward are we going to receive?”
* Rather than rebuking Peter for patting himself on the back and asking for a reward, Jesus confirms that, in eternity (new world), people like Peter and the rest of the Apostles will be rewarded for their devotion.
* The Apostles didn’t always get everything right (especially Peter lol) but they had given their hearts over to God and Jesus commends them here.
* Everyone who sacrifices worldly affections to follow Christ will receive a “hundredfold” reward.
  + An exponentially greater reward than the price paid.
  + 2Cor 4:17 – For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.
* Take note, in verse 30, while a great reward is promised to those who commit themselves the Lord, persecutions are also promised.

Mar 10:31  But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

* On earth, it is the rich who are “first.”
  + They are highly respected by the world.
  + They have privileges not given to others.
* On earth, those whose lives are not devoted to material gain are often considered “last” or of low social status.
* In heaven, this standard will be reversed.
  + Those who devoted their lives to material riches and men’s praise will be separated from the glory of God.
  + Those who sacrificed for the Kingdom of Heaven and abandoned material pursuits for spiritual pursuits will be “first” and honored with the glory of Christ.

Mar 10:32  And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him,

Mar 10:33  saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles.

Mar 10:34  And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.”

* Verse 32, tells us Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem.
* This was His final trip before the crucifixion.
* The disciples with Him are described as being amazed and afraid.
  + Why?
  + It may have been because of Jesus’ teaching about the rich man and the camel going through the eye of the needle.
  + Matthew 19:25 says they were “greatly astounded” by the teaching.
  + Or it may have been a response to the words Mark records in verses 33-34.
* As they are walking, Jesus takes the 12 Apostles aside privately and tells them what they will witness when they arrive in Jerusalem.
  + Jesus will be taken by the chief priests and scribes.
  + Condemned by gentiles.
  + Mocked
  + Spit on
  + Flogged
  + Killed
  + And will resurrect after 3 days.
* If I knew that fate awaited me upon my entrance into a city, I would be running in the opposite direction.
* But we see Jesus in verse 32 leading His followers into the situation.
  + Jesus predicted His own death.
  + Knew where and when it was going to happen.
  + And willingly permitted Himself to be killed to accomplish His role as the world’s sacrifice for sin.
* In the Old Testament, people dragged unwilling sheep to the altar as a sacrifice for their sins.
* But no one could have dragged Jesus to the cross, thank God the Lamb of God walked to the altar willingly.

Mar 10:35  And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.”

* James and John, two of Jesus’ closest disciples come up to Him with a request.
* Matthew’s gospel reveals their mother was there with them (Matthew 20:20).

Mar 10:36  And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?”

Mar 10:37  And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”

Mar 10:38  Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”

Mar 10:39  And they said to him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized,

Mar 10:40  but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

* In the last few chapters we’ve started to see the Apostles jockeying for positions of prestige in the Kingdom (Mark 9:33-34)
* Here James and John ask Jesus for positions of high honor in the coming Kingdom (“to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”).
* Jesus tells them they don’t know what they are asking.
  + They have an idea what the Kingdom is going to be like but their perception and the true nature of the Kingdom are very different.
  + To be great in the Kingdom is to be the servant of all (Mark 9:35)
* Jesus asks them, “Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”
  + What is the “cup?”
    - This appears to be a reference to the suffering Christ would endure to accomplish His mission
    - Joh 18:11 - Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: **the cup** which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?
    - Mat 26:39 - And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, **let this cup** pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.
    - Were they able to participate (“drink”) with Christ in His sufferings to be glorified like Him?
  + What is the “baptism?”
    - When we think about baptism, we generally think about people being dunked in water in a church building.
    - But, strictly speaking, the term baptism means “immersion.”
    - As I understand it, this is essentially a rephrasing of the first question.
    - Can they be immersed in the sufferings of Christ?
* They responded, “We are able.”
* Jesus doesn’t tell them they are wrong, in fact, He confirms the truth of their response.
  + They would suffer with Christ.
  + James would serve the cause of the Kingdom until being killed by Herod in the book of Acts.
  + John, who probably lived longer than any other Apostle, would spend decades in the Lord’s service and encounter no shortage of suffering.
  + They affirmed Jesus’ question, but it is almost certain they had no idea what the cup of Christ contained and what it meant for their futures.
* They would suffer for the cause of the Kingdom but the positions they requested were not Christ’s to give away.
  + It wasn’t that Christ lacked the authority.
  + They were essentially asking for a political appointment.
  + They knew Christ was going to establish a kingdom and because they were His friends, they asked Him for a high post in His government.
  + But glory in the Kingdom of God doesn’t work like politics.
  + God would give positions of high honor to those who, in His grace, He counted fit for the honor.

Mar 10:41  And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.

* We know from verses like Luke 22:24 there was some strain in the Apostles relationship over the question of who was to be the greatest.
* The other 10 Apostles probably thought it was a pretty scummy thing for John and James to bring their mom along to try to gain some favor from Jesus.
* APPLICATION:
  + Even in Kingdom work, there is a temptation to jockey for position.
  + People inside the Kingdom can struggle just as much as those outside with temptations to pride and desires for personal prestige.

Mar 10:42  And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

Mar 10:43  But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,

Mar 10:44  and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

Mar 10:45  For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

* Jesus teaches His Apostles a new definition of greatness in these 4 verses.
* Greatness in God’s eyes looks a whole lot different than greatness in men’s eyes.
* We think great men ought to be served by others.
* Those are considered great in the eyes of the world often have dozens of servants at their beckon call.
* But the one God considers greatest is the servant of others.
* Jesus is the best example of a life of service.
  + Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem to give His own blood as the ransom price for the freedom of sinners.
  + It is hard to get a more clear picture of “practice what you preach.”

Mar 10:46  And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.

Mar 10:47  And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Mar 10:48  And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Mar 10:49  And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.”

Mar 10:50  And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.

Mar 10:51  And Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And the blind man said to him, “Rabbi, let me recover my sight.”

Mar 10:52  And Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

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* When Jesus was departing Jericho and turning wets to Jerusalem, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar heard He was walking by.
* Not being able locate Jesus with his eyes, he started yelling for Him, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”
  + Many standing around Bartimaeus rebuked him and told him to be quiet.
  + But Bartimaeus kept yelling until he got Jesus’ attention.
* Jesus asked him what He wanted Him to do for him and Bartimaeus responded, “Rabbi, let me recover my sight.”
* Jesus commended his faith and healed him.
* APPLICATION:
  + Take a second to observe the parallels between this man and ourselves.
    - This man was trapped in darkness.
      * We are trapped in the darkness of sin.
    - This man was willing to do anything to get to Jesus (even when others disapproved).
      * We should be willing to do anything to get to Jesus (even when others disapprove).
    - Jesus was this man’s only hope to see.
      * Jesus is our only hope to escape eternal darkness.
* APPLICATION:
  + We should be careful not to suppress the zeal of those excited about Christ.