



‘Now!’ Sermon Series

Sermon #37

‘A Discussion on Marriage & Divorce!’

Mark 10:1-12

Sunday, February 2nd, 2025

This Past Wednesday in NOW Sermon Series:

- This past Wednesday we looked at Mark 9:42-50.
 - I preached a sermon on Wednesday evening entitled **‘Sin, Salt, and Stumbling!’**
 - I asked the question: *How does the mention of sin, salt, and suffering in this text by Jesus show us how we should be growing in our personal journey of discipleship?*
 - We looked carefully at how Jesus warned His disciples that they must be careful not to cause others to stumble, to cut sin out of their own lives, and live a clean life, full of saltiness.

- We looked at the text through three specific truths:
 - **Truth #1: *Causing Others to Sin.* (v. 42)**
 - **Truth #2: *Cutting Sin Out.* (v. 43-48)**
 - **Truth #3: *Cleanliness of Your Life.* (v. 49-50)**
- Based on Wednesday’s message, are you actively cutting out the things in your life that are causing others to stumble? Is your life full of salt that is glorying to God?

‘A Discussion on Marriage & Divorce!’

Mark 10:1-12

Sermon in a Sentence:

In this text we see that Jesus deals with the Discussion on Divorce when asked about it by the Pharisees. Here we find the sinister approach, the scriptural analysis, and the sin of adultery.

Intro:

- I find it no coincidence that the first time satan appears in the scripture, it is with the first marriage in the history of the world.
 - *I also find it no coincidence that the first time that God said something was not good, it had to do with man being alone...*
 - ‘Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will

make him a helper fit for him.” Genesis 2:18

- ***In Genesis, we find the first marriage that God put together, between Adam and Eve.***
- Shortly after this satan appears for the first time in the scriptures in Genesis 3:1.
 - ***A strong warning for all Christian marriages, satan will appear early and often in your marriage to try to split you apart.***
- It comes at no surprise that our society has normalized divorce to the point that it is now the norm.
 - ***We live in a society that practices and preaches, ‘if you aren’t happy with your spouse, go get another!’***
 - As we are going to find out this morning this is quite contrary to the teachings found in God’s Word.
- ***Why is this? We touched on it last Sunday, but the disease of me is quite the epidemic.***
 - In an age of the mission and quest for self fulfillment, everyone is looking for their own happiness, and will do whatever it takes to get it.
- According to a recent study:
 - ***43% of first time marriages end.***
 - ***60% of second time marriages end.***
 - ***73% of third time marriages end.***

- Divorce was never meant to be an ‘escape route’ in God’s plan when He placed man and woman together.
 - A young little girl once wrote the words to this poem that she called ‘The Monster’.

○ ***The Monster’s here.***

The Monster’s there.

The Monster is just everywhere,

In my milk,

In my tea,

Doesn’t it ever think of me?

Mon’s here,

Dad’s there,

And I’m just not anywhere!

How can I say this,

Without any force;

The Monster is called Divorce.

- Before we jump into this text, I do want to thank you for coming to Church today. I know some purposely skipped because of the sermon topic, but when you practice book-by-book preaching, we get the entire counsel of God’s Word and not just the parts we ‘like’.
- ***Before we jump into the text, let me lay out some disclaimers:***
 - If you are here today and you divorced for an unbiblical reason, I want you to know that you are not an outcast. ***You don’t have a black dot on you as a Church member.*** While divorce is a sin that has big consequences, we must not forget 1st John 1:9.

- ‘If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ 1st John 1:9
 - ***You can ask the Lord to forgive you!***
- If you are married to an unbeliever (an unbiblical marriage), do not try to get out of it. ***Two wrongs do not make a right.*** Repent of your sin of marrying an unbeliever, and work hard at glorifying God and being a blessing with the person you are with.
- ***Our Churches would be a much better place today if we emphasized and elevated the value and dignity of marriage, while simultaneously eliminating the shame and stigma of those who are divorced.***
 - If you’re divorced, God is able to forgive you.
- ***While divorce is a sin that is equal to all other sins, we must not forget that it is a very hurtful and destructive sin.***
- If you are single today, no matter your age, I encourage you to listen hard about what the Lord thinks of marriage. As you pray for your future spouse, make sure you take all these things that Jesus says here into account.
- If you’re like me today, and your the child of divorced parents, I want to tell you something

important: ***It’s not your fault, and you are not defined by your parents divorce.***

- Your marriage does not have to follow the trends of the culture or that of your family.
- Now that we’ve forgotten those disclaimers out in the open, let’s jump into the text...

****Read Mark 10:1-12****

Question to Ask:

What does Jesus Himself say about marriage and divorce in this text?

Truth #1: *The Sinister Approach.* (vv. 1-2)

- ‘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. And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”
 - All throughout Mark’s Gospel we have seen the Pharisees constantly try to trip up Jesus with different questions that they come to Him with.
- ***And here in Mark 10:1-2, it’s no different...***
 - The Jewish leaders and Pharisees are going to try and trap Jesus with the burning question of divorce, that they had...
 - I believe there are ***two*** important things to look at considering the sinister approach that the Pharisees take here to try and ‘trap’ Jesus.

- ***A New Journey. (v. 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.’
- The phrase ‘left there’ is a reference to Jesus and the disciples leaving Galilee, which would have probably been Capernaum (Mark 9:33).
- In Matthew’s parallel account, he makes the new journey distinctive:
 - ‘Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.’ Matthew 19:1

- ***Jesus ministry in Galilee is now complete, and He is heading to the city of Jerusalem (as Mark 10:32 indicates), in the area of Trans-Jordan.***

- ***For contextual purposes it is important to point out that this area was ruled by Herod Antipas.***

- Remember, Herod Antipas is the ruler that had an adulterous marriage and put John the Baptist’s head on a platter because he spoke out against it (Mark 6:14-29).

- ***When you speak the truth from God’s Word on any particular***

subject (but especially divorce), you are going to ruffle feathers.

- As Jesus did everywhere that He went, He sought to teach, and that’s what He is doing here in the Trans-Jordan area.

- ***A Niche in Judaism. (v. 2)***

- ‘And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”’
- Of course the Pharisees come up to question Jesus for the obvious political purposes.

- ***But in this case, it’s so much more than that. Divorce was a deeply controversial topic in the Jewish society.***

- What the Jewish Pharisees were seeking to do here was to trap Jesus, because no matter how He responded, He was going to displease people with His response.

- ***There were two main Jewish Rabbi Schools of thought when it came to the area of divorce:***

- The Jewish School of thought called ‘Shammai’, believed that a Jew could only divorce due to adultery.

- The other Jewish School of thought called ‘Hillel’ claimed that a man could divorce his wife ‘Biblically’ for any little thing that displeased him, this could even include a burning meal.

- As you can imagine, there were many issues in the Jewish culture that stemmed from the ‘Hillel’ school of thought when it came to divorce.

- ***The Pharisees were setting up Jesus for this trap with the hopes that Jesus would offend Herod, just as John had done, and potentially meet the same fate that His cousin did.***

- If they weren’t able to trap Jesus into a death date with Herod, they knew he would most likely alienate one or both of the rabbinical schools of thought. The two camps if you will.

- ***The pharisees take a sinister approach and use the question of divorce to try and seal their intended outcome for what is going to happen to Jesus.***

- Jesus is going to take them back to a place that we (and the pharisees) often forget, the scriptures!

Truth #2: The Scriptural Analysis. (vv. 3-9)

- Jesus is not going to get caught up in the ‘debate’ of the day between the different Rabbi’s.
 - Instead, He is going to go straight to the scriptures, specifically Dueteronomy 24:1-4.

- ***Here, Jesus shows us the important principle of letting scripture interpret scripture.***

- In verse 3, Jesus opens with a counter question:
 - ‘He answered them, “What did Moses command you?”’

- ***When Jesus comes at them with a counter question instead of a direct answer, He is putting the ball in their court, instead of the hypothetical situation they asked Him about in verse 2.***

- When Jesus is saying ‘what did Moses command you to do’ He is alluding to Deuteronomy 24:1-4.

- ****You May want to read Deuteronomy 24:1-4 out of your Bible for context, bookmark it****

- The Pharisees then respond with this in verse 4.

- ‘They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.”’

- Here’s an important thing we need to see about verse 4...

- ***The Old Testament way of Divorce. (v. 4)***

- Prior to Moses time and the law of Deuteronomy 24:1, a man could divorce his wife with just one word.

- ***We must understand that Deuteronomy 24:1, was not the way that God intend marriage to be, but it did offer some protection for the wife.***
 - ***In Judaism and in the Law of Moses in Deuteronomy 24:1-4, notice that the man was the one who divorced the wife, and not the other way around.***
 - At this time a woman in Israel did not have the right to divorce.
- In Deuteronomy 24:1-4, you see that a certificate of divorce was given to the wife.
 - This was done to show that she could remarry and to prevent her from being cast into the streets, and eventually dying out of starvation.
- ***In verse 5, Jesus is going to come back at them and show them that due to the effect of sin, the hardness of the hearts of men, that this law of Moses needed to be put in place...***
- ***The Hardness of mankind's heart. (v. 5)***
 - 'And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.'
 - Jesus is saying to these Pharisees that what Moses commanded was a provision for divorce because the human rebellion was against God's ideal circumstances for marriage.
- Scholar James Brooks said '***The provision was an attempt to limit the effects of human sinfulness.***'
- ***Moses did not command or even encourage divorce, he permitted it to try and reduce the rampant sin that affecting much of Israel.***
 - David Garland said '***The legislation on divorce certificates protected wives from burtal abandonment. It freed a wife from the accusation of adultery when she, out of necessity, remarried; and it prevented the first husband from destroying her new marriage by trying to reclaim her. It deterred anything that might look like wife-swapping. The law was therefore intended to keep the social upheaval associated with divorce to a minimum.***'
- ***So, Jesus is very clear. If the Mosaic legislation on this issue had it's root in man's sin and hardness of heart, then it cannot reflect God's will.***
 - Moses gave laws to regulate divorce, but that doesn't mean divorce is God's will for marriage.
- So, Jesus is essentially arguing here that someone shouldn't take the stipulations and structure of Deuteronomy 24:1-4, to mean that God is fine with divorce.

- Here's a key thing we must understand: ***an unbiblical divorce is sin because it originates in the hardness of man's heart.***
 - ***Jesus wants to change the Pharisees mindset from what Moses permitted, to what God has commanded.***
 - And Jesus does exactly that in verses 6-9.
- ***God's Design for Marriage. (vv. 6-9)***
 - 'But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 7 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife,[a] 8 and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. 9 What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
 - Jesus takes this a step further and goes past interpreting Moses legislation, and then goes straight God's original intention for marriage.
 - ***Jesus is quoting 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.'
 - ***Jesus is clear that God is the one who joins man and woman together, God is the one who established marriage and God made the rules.***
 - David Garland wrote ***'Who are males to make themselves the lords of the***

marriage by ousting an unwanted wife as they might discard a pierced of used goods.'

- What Jesus says here exposes God's design for marriage, and in these, we find the rules that God placed for marriage, but what are they?
- ***#1: Marriage is between a male and a female. (v. 6)***
 - 'But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.'
 - Right here Jesus is clear that a homosexual relationship of any kind, is not ok. It's just not. Not then, not now, and not ever.
 - ***Now, we must remind ourselves that homosexuality is a sin like any other. We shouldn't look down on others because of it.***
 - God made male, and God made female and He intended that they be together and He literally made them for each other.
 - ***Also notice that Jesus placed male and female together.***
 - One scholar said ***'As a sovereign creation, woman is not man's subject but his equal.'***
 - His wives are to submit to husbands, but we were equally

created by God, and given different roles.

○ #2: *Spouses leave their Families and create their own Family. (v. 7)*

- ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife,’
- **Here, Jesus quotes from 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’s design for marriage is that a man and woman leave their families, and cling to one another.**

- God’s design for marriage is that when you create your own family. You don’t live by your own parents rules or your in laws expectations, you are your own family.
- **It doesn’t mean you can’t have a relationship with the family you came from, but your priority is now to your spouse.**

■ **It does mean that the obligation you have to your spouse is greater than the obligation you have to your parents.**

○ #3: *Sex is only to be in a marriage relationship. (v. 8)*

- ‘and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh.’
- The spiritual aspect of marriage is important (God established it), but the physical is also important to the union.

- **The two become one flesh. Not two spirits, but one flesh.**

■ **When God put this together way back in Genesis, He made it clear that sex was only permissible inside a marriage covenant.**

■ **Two things we must remember that man and woman are to be one flesh:**

- Premarital sex (sex before marriage) is not ok in God’s eyes.
- Sex inside of marriage is a gift from God to man and woman that actually gives God glory.
- **It is not a gift that should be ignored or neglected inside a marriage relationship.**

○ #4: *God and your spouse are the only ones who are to be in your marriage. (v. 9)*

- ‘What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.’
- Satan is always going to be on the prowl of a good and God honoring marriage.
- Be careful, be on guard.

- *Don't let a friend or co-worker split up the marriage, don't let your inlaws split up the marriage, or your siblings.*
- *When you made your marriage covenant, you do so between your spouse, and God Himself.*
 - 'And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.'
Ecclesiastes 4:12

○ *The scriptures clarify and give us our guidelines for marriage as a Christian. Not the world, not any TV Show, not any book but the Bible.*

Truth #3: *The Sin of Adultery. (vv. 10-12)*

- As has been usual for Jesus and His custom, Jesus gives His disciples additional instructions on this when they ask for an explanation. Here's what Jesus said to His disciples:
 - 'And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."
- *Notice that what Jesus says here in verses 11-12, is the very first mention of remarriage in this narrative.*

- Which is why I haven't dealt with it yet.
 - *You'll notice that the 'exception clause' of Matthew 19:9 is not in Luke or Mark's account of this same narrative.*
 - *I find this as an example of scripture complementing scripture and not contradicting each other.*
 - With Mark's readers, he records the blanket statement Jesus gave, while Matthew adds an extra detail. Mark chose not to include it.
- So, the Elephant questions in the room, can be answered by this scripture text and others.
- ***What are the Biblical grounds for divorce?***
 - ***Adultery from a sexually unfaithful spouse (Matthew 19:9).***
 - 'And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.'
 - *Please note that just because your spouse does commit sexual sin, does not mean you have to get divorced. God can still reconcile this with a repentant heart.*
 - ***Desertion or abandonment from an unbelieving spouse. (1st Corinthians 7:15)***
 - 'But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or

sister is not enslaved. God has called you[a] to peace.’

- These are the Biblical grounds for divorce, now, in my opinion (it is not in scripture), if it’s a life threatening or abusive relationship/environment you will need to get out. But it is a sin that will need to be repented of.
- **According to the Bible, if I’m divorced, can I get remarried?**
 - Remarriage is only acceptable after a Biblical divorce (Adultery or abandonment), or the death of a spouse. (1st Corinthians 7:39).
 - ‘A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.’ 1st Corinthians 7:39
 - **If your spouse dies, according to the Bible, it’s totally okay to get remarried.**
 - **It’s also totally okay to get remarried after having a Biblical divorce.**
- **What happens if I get remarried after an unbiblical divorce?**
 - You have sinned, yes. **But don’t commit more sin, for previous sin. In other words, don’t divorce again! You entered this covenant!**
 - **I believe that you can ask the Lord to forgive you for your sin of an unbiblical divorce, and for remarriage if you do so after an unbiblical**

divorce, I believe God’s grace is sufficient enough to forgive you.

- **Illegitimate divorce is not the ‘unforgivable sin’ (denying Christ as your Lord and Savior is), but illegitimate divorce can have a lot of consequences.**
- **Don’t forget this morning, that no matter the reason for divorce, God hates it. It goes against His original plan because sin entered the world.**
 - “For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her,[a] says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers[b] his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.” Malachi 2:16
- If you’ve repented and asked God to forgive you of your unbiblical divorce and or remarriage, then you are forgiven (1st John 1:9). Continue to serve your spouse and seek to give God Glory.
 - **Remember, the only people who live in a constant state of sin are those who are wrongfully spurned against God, continually disobedient and defiant.**
 - **When God forgives you, you’re forgiven!**

- You may be here today and you feel that in your current situation that divorce is unavoidable, never underestimate the power of God and His Grace in any situation.

Conclusion:

- ***I certainly understand that this morning's message is quite the heavy one.***
 - *Trust me, dealing and wrestling with this all week long was quite the challenge.*
- But when it comes to marriage and divorce, it's imperative that we follow the guidelines that God set forth in His Word, and not what the world deems appropriate.
 - ***Yes, there are cases in the Bible (that we've discussed) where God does permit divorce in the Bible. But, it is never promoted in the Bible.***
- I don't want anyone to leave here today feeling down, less than, or shameful.
 - If you've messed up in the past and you were divorced for an unbiblical reason, maybe even got remarried, guess what?! God's grace is totally sufficient for you. He can cleanse you today.
- ***Truth #1: The Sinister Approach. (vv. 1-2)***
- ***Truth #2: The Scriptural Analysis. (vv. 3-9)***
- ***Truth #3: The Sin of Adultery. (vv. 10-12)***