

May 12th, 2019
True Discipleship
Mark 10:1-16

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

May 5 1 Chron. 12-14	May 9 1 Chron. 25-27
May 6 1 Chron. 15-17	May 10 1 Chron. 28-2C 1
May 7 1 Chron. 18-21	May 11 2 Chron. 2-5
May 8 1 Chron. 22-24	May 12 2 Chron. 6-8

Lesson Introduction: *Our lesson this week looks at two topics that are massive in the scope of all human life; marriage and children. We will begin by looking at Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce, and will see how persevering in marriage is part of Christian discipleship. From there, we will look closely at Jesus receiving the little children unto Himself, and what that tells us first, about how we are to come to Him, and second, how we are to receive the lowly of society.*

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF THE PASSAGE:

- **Marriage is instituted and upheld by God (V. 6-9)**
- **Christ has great love and compassion for the lowly and insignificant (V. 13-16)**
- **Those who recognize their helplessness are inherit the kingdom of God (V. 14-16)**

Mark 10:1-16 English Standard Version

10 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.

2 And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" 3 He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" 4 They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away." 5 And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. 6 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, 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."

10 And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. 11 And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, 12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

13 And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. 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. 15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." 16 And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

Discussion Section 1: Marriage and Divorce (V. 1-12)

-What does **verse 1** tell us about Jesus' ministry model?

-What was the motivation behind the Pharisees' question about divorce? Why?

-What do **verses 2-5** tell us about the way we approach God's commandments in the flesh?

-What is God's view of marriage, according to **verses 6-9**?

-What did Jesus mean when He stated, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her"?

-How does Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce shape how we think about Christian discipleship?

Note: *We see in this passage that the Pharisees are attempting to "test" Jesus. Essentially, they were trying to trap Him, hoping that He might answer their question with error. But of course, they were once again outmatched, for they were going up against the one that does "all things well" (Mark 7:37). Jesus begins by asking them about the what the Old Testament law allowed concerning divorce. The Pharisees appeal to **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**. Jesus uses that as a launching point to show the true spirit of the law concerning marriage, and to confront the Pharisees' hard-heartedness. Jesus makes it plain to the Pharisees that divorce is not God's plan for marriage, and that the allowance of a certificate of divorce was not because God was pleased with it, but because of the hard-*

heartedness of mankind. James Edwards states then, that **Deuteronomy 24:1-4** is, “**a text of concession, not text of intention.**”

Often, when faced with a moral dilemma, we naturally seek to justify ourselves, trying to figure out how far we can take something (or how little we have to do) before it actually becomes sin (or to keep it from becoming sin) (Luke 10:29). When we think this way, the intention of our hearts is not holiness, but sinfulness. Jesus makes it clear that God’s intention from the beginning was for marriage to be a joining together of male and female in a union that is so inseparable that they “**become one flesh.**” Jesus then tells His disciples that this “one flesh union” held in such high regard by God, that “**Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery**” (Matthew 5:32 includes the clause “**except on the ground of sexual immorality**”). What this teaches us as disciples of Christ, whether married or not, is that we are called to live lives set on God’s standard, not our own. Rather than asking, “how can I get out of this marriage?” the Christian should be asking, “what can I do to fight to stay in this marriage, for Jesus’ sake?” This principle applies across the board. Rather than asking “is this permissible” we should be asking “is it shaping more into the image of Christ?” for this why we have been saved (**Romans 8:29**)!

Discussion Section 2: Let the Children Come to Me (V. 13-16)

-Why were the disciples rebuking the children that were being brought to Jesus?

-Why was Jesus “**indignant**”?

-What do we learn about the character of Jesus in these verses?

-What does it mean to “**receive the kingdom of God like a child**”?

Note: In order to fully understand this section, it is important to understand the way children were viewed in Hebrew society in Jesus’ time. Today, children are the center of attention, the top priority within the family unit, and it would be unthinkable to consider them as being of less value than adults by most of us. However, in the Jewish culture at that time, children were not so

highly favored. They would have been viewed as the lowly in society. This explains why the disciples were rebuking these children as they were being brought to Jesus. Jesus becomes “**indignant**” with His disciples, for they still lacked understanding that “the last shall be first and the first shall be last” (**Matthew 20:16**). We see in these verses Jesus’ great love and compassion for the lowly in society. In fact, He begins then to teach them that it is those who come to Him with this childlike demeanor who will truly inherit the kingdom of heaven. But this may not mean exactly what we think it means (**Matthew 5:3**). Below is a note from James R. Edwards to help us see what Jesus really meant.

Note from James R. Edwards’ *The Gospel According to Mark (The Pillar New Testament Commentary)*:

“Children—particularly little children—are often praised for their innocence, spontaneity, and humility. It is often assumed that it is because of these qualities that Jesus commends them. It does not appear, however, that this is the reason—or at least the primary reason—why Jesus blesses the children. The emphasis in this brief story falls on the children themselves rather than on their virtues, real or imagined. The latter remain unidentified. The Greek word for “little children” is a diminutive (**paidia**), meaning “very young,” or “infants,” or as Luke 18:15 says, “babies”...hence it is not their virtue but their helplessness that is stressed. If we assume that Jesus commends children because of their innocence, purity, or even spontaneity, then we must conclude that the disciples’ acceptability in God’s kingdom depends on similar virtues. But, as Mark’s depiction of the disciples makes repeatedly clear, that is exactly what they are not, nor are we. We are not innocent and eager, but slow, disbelieving, and cowardly. In this story children are not blessed for their virtues but for what they lack: they come only as they are—small, powerless, without sophistication, as the overlooked and dispossessed of society. To receive the kingdom of God as a child is to receive it as one who has no credits, no clout, no claims. A little child has absolutely nothing to bring, and whatever a child receives, he or she receives by grace on the basis of sheer neediness rather than by any merit inherent in him-or herself. Little children are paradigmatic disciples, for only empty hands can be filled.”