

**Destructive Divorce**  
**Mark 10:1-12**

All based off the title and the passage in Mark 10, we come to the dicey topic of divorce. And not a fun topic, not a topic that people are just loving to talk about and to reminisce about. It is nonetheless a topic that is in the Word of God, that we get to study and get His thoughts on it. Divorce, the topic that we're all probably aware of and very familiar with. And really, in America alone, there's one divorce approximately every thirty-six seconds. That's nearly two thousand four hundred divorces per day, sixteen thousand eight hundred divorces per week, and eight hundred and seventy-six thousand divorces a year. The average length of a marriage that ends in divorce is eight years. And the Barna research group measured divorce statistics by religion even, and they found that twenty-nine percent of Baptists are divorced. That's the highest for a U.S. religious group, while only twenty-one percent of atheists and agnostics were divorced, the lowest in that category. No doubt, the statistics are clear, and we're well aware that divorce is so prominent. It's all around us. In fact, experience would even tell us of how prominent it is. I bet you every person in this room has somehow been impacted one way or another, in their family or extended family, by divorce and seen the negative impacts it has. We're recognizing, just by living life, the reality of divorce and what it causes, what it does, the negative impact for families, for children, for spouses, and for people in general. We could all testify to this in probably one way or another, but the reality is it doesn't matter what we've experienced. It doesn't matter what the statistics even show. What really matters is what God says, and we need to get to the bottom of what truth there is regarding divorce.

And that is what we find from Jesus our Savior, and that's what we get to see in Mark 10 this morning. What is the truth about this topic of divorce? We'll find He is not in favor of it or shooting for your own personal happiness. In fact, He reveals the destructive nature of divorce. Let's look at our text for this morning, Mark 10:1- 12 "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?' He answered them, 'What did Moses command you?' They said, 'Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.' And

Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.’ 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.’ ” ...our verses for this morning, our text on the topic of destructive divorce as we see.

It all begins not because Jesus just feels like bringing this up and talking about it, but because He’s tested. As we have seen over and over in the gospels, we see it again this morning that He is tested, and that is how we get to this topic. In verses 1-2, we see the test concerning divorce. The test, not a test to show off how smart He is, but a test to try and get Him to fail as the Pharisees are so used to doing.

But before we get into the test and the content of divorce, we see a transition that takes place in Jesus’ ministry in verse 1 here, the transition in verse 1. It’s a big transition, if you’d looked at it; “And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan...” This is a big moment actually in Mark’s gospel because much of what we’ve been covering and looking at in terms of the life and ministry of Jesus has been in Galilee. It’s been His Galilean ministry that’s much of what He does during His three prominent years at the end of His life when He’s ministering in Israel. But we come to a close of the Galilean ministry, and we now move towards the end. We move towards the goal for which Christ came and that is not to stay in Galilee. Do not stay there with His family, to stay there with His disciples, but to move towards Judea. Why Judea? Because in Judea, you have Jerusalem and the temple. He would move towards there for this big feast, this big Passover festival that everyone would kind of journey and sojourn towards, towards Jerusalem for the Passover, and He Himself would offer up His own body as the sacrificial lamb in connection with this holiday, but even greater to inaugurate the new covenant of forgiveness of sins. This is where we’re at.

So, Mark 10:1 marks a big change in the gospel, a movement. Christ is now going to be journeying and moving away from Galilee and on His path to

Jerusalem where it would be His final time in the city in His earthly ministry. This is the transition. So, we see Him going to Judea, and it also says, "...beyond the Jordon..." in our text, and we think, "...beyond the Jordon...", the Jordon River. Well, why? Why go east of the Jordon? What's the need for that? If you're in Galilee in the north and you want to come straight down to Jerusalem in Judea in the south, why not just go straight down and travel that way. Well, we're aware that in between Galilee and Judea, in the middle was Samaria, and the Samaritans did not have a great relationship with the Jews. So, for that very nature, often times in Galilee as you traveled down, you would make your way east and cross over the Jordon River up north in Galilee, and then make your way down, traveling through a region called Perea, and then, when you got down to the bottom of Perea, down by the Dead Sea, you would cross back over the Jordon River and ascend up in the mountains to Jerusalem, thereby avoiding Samaria at all costs. That is the reason why we have Him in the region of Perea beyond the Jordon as they're journeying towards Jerusalem.

And as customary, "...crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them." So, Jesus has been spending a considerable amount of time, if you think about it, trying to withdraw and get away with His disciples. After He did a lot of ministering in Galilee in public, He then kind of shuts that down, and He tried to retreat, tried to get away, tried to spend time with just His disciples that He could instruct them and really mentor them in private instruction and showing them who He was. Well, that time has come to an end, and He has now stepped back into the public square so to speak as they traveled down to Jerusalem, and as He steps right back out into public, what happens? People flock to Him again as expected. The crowds assemble and come around Jesus, and what does He do? Ignore them? Try to retreat again? No. He embraces it and teaches. He sees this as an opportunity to continue to teach; "And again, as was his custom, he taught them." This is what Jesus has done over and over again.

Well, it's not just that when He steps in public people come to Him, and it's not just that He begins to teach, it's also that when this happens, when Jesus comes up in public, then He gets challenged as often as we've seen, and that's what we find in verse 2; the topic of divorce comes up now. The test happens here in verse 2 as they bring up the topic for the test which is divorce. In verse 2, we read, "And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?'" This is the question,

the topic for testing. Think about it, their idea of testing Jesus, trying to challenge Him as we've seen, it's not just to give Him a hard time in general, it's because of how He was still in the spotlight, how He was taking away from them as they tried to lead the Jewish people. And we saw this even all the way back in Mark 3, back when Jesus had to correct them regarding the Sabbath and regarding what the Scriptures actually teach about the Sabbath. After that, they were plotting; these Pharisees, these religious leaders were plotting and thinking and really scheming how they might take His life, how they might kill Jesus. They even started to work with the Herodians, this political group, and try to get together how they might take Him down. And so, this is their latest attempt to try and foil Jesus in His ministry and what He's doing. They approach Him with this question about divorce. So, why divorce? Why take that topic? Is it just because it's just kind of a random topic floating out there, and they just think if they get Him to talk enough, He'll stumble over His words or something like that? We know probably two good reasons why they picked this topic. First, divorce was just widely accepted in practice during this time. Pretty much everyone was admitting that divorce was common. It was all around them, and they themselves were practicing it. It was an accepted practice at the time in Israel even though you still had two schools of thought.

Even though you had different people thinking different ways about this, you had the one school of thought - this was the less popular and the less common school of thought - but led by Rabbi Shammai. He said that he's more strict in his way of thinking about this. He said that divorce is unacceptable unless there is unchastity or marital unfaithfulness. Other than that, you cannot divorce for any other reason. That was his view, and that was not the common, popular view at all. Instead, the more popular view was the view of Rabbi Hillel. He was the more liberal and kind of loose in his view, and he was the one that was pretty much saying you can divorce for any reason. You come up with a reason, and it's good enough. It works. Anything that might make you have some disfavor towards your spouse, and then you can divorce them. So, specifically for them in this time, it was the men. Right? The husbands who really had this authority and would divorce and send their wife away, and there'd be a litany of reasons for this. Some of them just because they're tired of their wife, and they're done with this. It's too much for them. Or, maybe because they found someone else. As Josephus the Jewish historian at this time, he admits he had a divorce for this reason. He found someone better, so he divorced his wife. Or, even for the

most petty of things which we actually have recorded; people divorcing their wives because they burnt dinner, (right?) because of food prep. And you think, wow, the pressure's on. Okay? Don't mess this up. You could lose it all. So, this was the view. This was the view that really won the day, the view that most people held, that it's okay to divorce. You just find any reason and as long as you do the paperwork, as long as you write out the certificate saying that your wife is now free to marry someone else because you're sending her away, then you were a noble man, and you did the upstanding thing. This was the common view.

So, many people held this view, and they thought this will be a good chance to get Jesus to speak on this because there's a majority opinion on this. On top of that, you stack this other thought that John the Baptist, who we saw earlier, he actually was arrested for preaching about this very topic. If you remember why he was thrown in jail and then what happened to him; he got his head chopped off because of preaching against Herod Antipas. Herod Antipas was the ruler up in Galilee and even in Perea east of the Jordan. So, since they're in this region right now, the Pharisees think this is a good time to bring it up because this news could get back to Herod who's the ruler of this area so to speak. Well, if you remember back to Mark 6 with John the Baptist, he preached against Herod Antipas and told him you did a terrible thing. What you did, you took your sister-in-law Herodias, Herodias who was married to your brother Herod Philip, and she divorced and then you took her for yourself, for your own wife - a terrible thing, a wrong thing, a messed-up family at that, but a terrible thing. So, John the Baptist had this more strict view, saying that that divorce was not okay. There was not good grounds for that divorce and for this new marriage that had formed between Herod Antipas and Herodias. That landed him in jail but also got him to the point where he was martyred.

So, as the Pharisees come with this to Jesus, this test, they realize the common view is that divorce is okay, and if Jesus answers opposed to the common view, He aligns Himself with John the Baptist, which He has done on a lot of things, and once He's done that, there's a good chance He could get thrown in jail for this. He'd get in trouble for this. So, this was their kind of conniving. This was their scheming of trying to get Jesus in trouble here. So, Jesus's response on such a topic would be telling, and also potentially life-threatening for Him. So, what does He do? We get to the teaching aspect that comes up in verses 3-9, and that's what we find verses 3-9, the teaching

about divorce - the teaching about divorce in verses 3-9. Reading our verses again; “He answered them, ‘What did Moses command you?’ They said, ‘Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.’ ”

The first thing we need to address here is the incomplete view of divorce. This is the view of the Pharisees. This is the view of the people even, this view of divorce that they have. First of all, Jesus gets to speak to this as they’ve put forth the test topic of divorce. He answers, and we love Jesus’ answer and how He handles every situation He’s in; “What did Moses command you?” That’s great. Jesus goes back to the Word of God. He doesn’t want to spend time talking about Rabbi Shammai and Hillel. He doesn’t want to talk about them. He doesn’t want to talk about what these experts in the law think and what different schools of thought are out there and what the opinions of men are. He says how about the Word of God? How about Moses who is God’s inspired instrument to write what we have in Genesis through Deuteronomy, what did he say? What did he “...command you?” This must be the immediate response for all of us no matter what issue, no matter what topic at hand. Let’s get back to the Word. A lot of people talk - a lot of people say things - a lot of opinions that circulate out there. Let’s get back to the basics. What does the Bible teach? What does God say? And they go, oh, come on Jesus, clearly, we’ve thought of this. I didn’t become a Pharisee just by thinking about what other rabbis say. I obviously know the Scriptures too. So, they have a response; “They said, ‘Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.’ ”

Notice how they fail to even answer, right away, the wording that Jesus gave, “What did Moses command you?” And what do they say? Well, “Moses allowed...” They sound like a typical lawyer. Right? They’ve found the loophole. They’ve found some way. They’ve found, as an expert in the Law, they’ve found something, some way to twist it a little bit of how they’ve now justified the practice; “...Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.” What they’re referencing here

is... you think, well, where did Moses say that? They're referencing a passage in Deuteronomy 24:1-4, and we don't have time to jump back there and dig into this specific law that you find, but if you were to go back there, it's in the midst of a context of a lot of different laws and kind of precepts that governed the people of Israel, that were handed down at Sinai when Moses got the Ten Commandments amongst other laws. But upon examining these verses clear back in Deuteronomy, one finds that this isn't quite an explicit permission or allowance of divorce by Moses. That's not really what's happening in those verses. It's not this very obvious thing where Moses is saying you are allowed to divorce if blah, blah, blah, blah. He doesn't do that. That's not what those verses even teach.

Instead, those verses give a very specific law intended to protect women from being passed around from husband to husband. It's almost like this legalized form of prostitution that was taking place or that could take place even. The reality is when the Israelites received the Old Testament, when they actually received the Law from Moses in Sinai, you have to realize where they were coming from. They had just spent four hundred years in Egypt, alright, not a most holy place, not a most righteous place probably. So, a lot of practices had developed, and one of these being the very common practice of divorce. This is what they were already doing when they received the Law in the beginning. They were already about this, and so, this law forms because men were so terrible and sick in their depravity and sinfulness that they would be married to a woman and have her for a time, and then write a certificate of divorce and send her away as a noble thing. Then another man would marry her and have her for a time and then write a certificate of divorce and send her away. And the first man would come back and have her again and then write a certificate of divorce and send her away. And so the woman would get passed around and you just see God's heart for everyone in society, not just men, but women that they don't be treated this way. And so, this law comes in effect to protect women from this bouncing around that's taking place and to limit divorce which is running rampant.

Really, the Pharisees are referring to an Old Testament Law is that merely gave regulations for the practice of divorce which was already in existence among the Israelites. Moses was not giving God's hearty approval to the practice of divorce, far from it if you were to read it. So, why? Why does Moses actually give such a law? Why is there such a law in there besides

what we've mentioned? Look what Jesus says; "And Jesus said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.'" Why is this in there? Because of your sinful practices - because of your already hardened hearts - because of your already sinful practices when you received the Law to begin with. Basically, the Pandora's Box had been opened, and this was the attempt through the Law to put the lid back on it ,to give a ceiling to this practice that was already taking place. It didn't command or even allow divorce. It wasn't saying that divorce was okay. It wasn't commanding to divorce anywhere. It commanded the limitation of divorce in Israel. It provided guidelines for keeping the practice of divorce in check and reining it in and bringing it back. It's far from allowing what they think it is doing. So, the reality is how the Pharisees were using it and how they were wanting to use it was a little loophole for them to do whatever they want, when Jesus is saying you missed the point. That command was given because you guys were sinful people, and it was trying to prevent and rein it in and limit your sinful practices.

Instead, Jesus has to take them to school as He often does, and that's what we find in verses 6-9 in the instructions for marriage - the instructions for marriage. Jesus gives the proper instructions here for marriage. Again, looking at our verses; "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' " The Pharisees refer to what they thought was the loophole that allowed divorce in their thinking. Jesus on the other hand, He goes back to the very beginning of creation to give what Moses really commanded, not what he might have permitted or allowed, but what Moses actually said when he wrote Genesis, what he really commanded under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; that's what we want. We want to be on solid ground, a foundation there of what God has in fact said, and that's what Jesus does. He takes them back to Genesis 1:27. He talks about that creation week, that beautiful week that culminates with God creating man and from man, woman, "...male and female he created them" very clearly. God gave mankind his and her distinct features and anatomy, such that, that's what you have in God's creation of the human species; you have male and female.

In verse 7, Jesus goes on; " 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh." Jesus explains now. Because of how God designed and created man and woman, it is God's intention that they join together in a unifying act of marriage, that a new family unit is formed,

that as men and women are raised up, they leave from their current family units, and they join with a man or a woman to form the new family unit. That's Jesus now quoting from Genesis 2:24 as He continues to take them back to what God has actually said. The union of man and women involves both a leaving of father and mother and a holding fast to one another, a cleaving to one another, becoming glued to one another even. It's more. It's much more than a sexual union and intimacy, but a co-mingling of man and woman. Such as Jesus says and as Scripture says, they are no longer two but one flesh. They share everything together. They share all of life together. They are completely united and whole.

If this is how God designed it, if this is how God created marriage, if this is truly the foundation for marriage, then that has implications. If this is what God designed, and that's it, there's nothing else in Genesis about Adam got sick of Eve, and so, he left. If there's nothing else in there about Eve burning dinner, if there's nothing in there, in Genesis, about this, then the implication comes by what Jesus says in verse 9; "What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." This is a beautiful union, a union clearly intended to be a complete and holistic, unifying act in marriage that is never intended to separate, never purposed to be separated at all. Jesus has taken His audience there, the Pharisees, the disciples, the crowds of people, and transported them back to this first marriage between Adam and Eve in the Garden. He's brought them back. He's reminded them of what Scripture has clearly stated regarding marriage, in marriage to become one. In light of these truths, He gives the initial answer.

The question that they have, what about divorce? Is it lawful? He says I think it's pretty simple. When you go back and see the whole design and purpose in marriage, you think it's lawful for divorce? Sounds a lot like man trying to separate what God has brought together. So, no, of course not. It's not lawful; "What therefore God has joined together...", in the common grace of marriage, must not be separated by mankind. You might be thinking, well, I'm aware of Scripture and other places in the Bible that talk about this topic of marriage and divorce and other places. Is there never a time when divorce is okay? And there are actually two instances, two instances where divorce is permissible in God's eyes, not commanded. Remember that. It's not commanded by God that you have to divorce at certain junctures, but it's allowed. Two times where divorce is allowed in God's eyes according to the Word of God. First, if sexual immorality or

marital unfaithfulness has occurred, then divorce is permissible according to Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9. Jesus states it in both of those passages. Secondly, divorce is permissible when an unbelieving spouse desires to abandon the marriage. If there is a believer married to an unbeliever, and the unbeliever desires to leave and deserts the marriage, then Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:15 says, “Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave...” You are allowed. You are permitted to divorce in that situation. These are the only two exceptions that we find in Scripture. It’s limiting, very limiting. It still maintains and upholds God’s intention and purpose and goal in marriage from the beginning, that it would be unified together for all time.

How do you think the disciples felt about this teaching? They’re there. They’re listening to this. They’re aware of the conduct. They’re aware of the practice of the time, and now Jesus reveals this, and He teaches from Genesis. Well, in our passage, we don’t get as much of a clue, but from Matthew 19:10, listen to their response; “The disciples said to him, ‘If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.’ ” Yikes! Commitment. Real commitment. You got to man up. One woman for your whole life that’s it. Jesus just leaves it; “What did Moses command you?” I’ll tell you what he said, “...the two shall become one flesh.” And the disciples go there’s no more? That’s it? Oh, man, that is a hard saying. You’re right, because they got so used to the practice of the times, so used to what everyone else is doing, so used to the teaching of men and what has been said making it okay, Jesus pretty much shatters their world of thinking on this topic. Just like in the Sermon on the Mount, “You have heard that it was said...” ... “...but I say to you...” He opens their eyes to the sinfulness of mankind; this is a terrible practice. He did this simply by revealing the holy and righteous standard of God from the Bible. He just went to the Bible. He just went to what Moses had written in Genesis. He just went to the beginning. They had failed, the disciples, the people of the time, the Pharisees, they had failed to examine Scripture as the means for informing their living, and that’s a massive failure.

How easy it is for us to do the same thing. We take a look around. We look at what other Christians say and what they do and how they spend their time, and we let that start to govern what we say and do and how we spend our time. We let other people create the standard of righteousness in our head rather than letting the Word of God create the standard of righteousness. Let’s stop thinking we’re a good Christian because we look like other

people. That's not how it works. Our work efforts aren't good because they look like the efforts of our co-workers. Our diligence is not good because it looks like the diligence of our classmates. Our marriage isn't good because it looks like other marriages. Our parenting isn't good because it looks like other parenting styles. That's not how we measure. That's not the standard. Let's stop thinking we're a good Christian because we look like other Christians. Let's start looking at the standard of God's Word. Let's return to examine His holy, righteous standard as defined in Scripture. This is the public discussion here that is taking place as Jesus has taken them to school on divorce and marriage.

But after this public discussion, our text moves to a private one - a private discussion in verses 10-12. We come to the end and the truth about divorce - the truth about divorce in verses 10-12. Again, we read, "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.' " We see the setting here is "...in the house..." We don't know who's house or where they're at in this setting, but this has happened often where Jesus has some public engagement, or the disciples together are in public unable to cast out a demon, and "Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not drive it [the demon] out?" Or, perhaps they're out just doing ministry, and as they do ministry, they have their failings. They have their observations. What happened there? What'd you mean in this parable? What were You teaching? Tell us more. And so, in the same way, after Jesus has unloaded and given this teaching on divorce and marriage, the disciples bring this up. They want more. It has already stunned them as we saw from Matthew's gospel. It has already taken them back as they've heard Him teach on this, so they ask more about this privately, and this continues, this private instruction that Jesus gives to His disciples, up until the moment when His earthly ministry would slow to an end when they got to Jerusalem. Perhaps the disciples still didn't understand the gravity of how destructive divorce is because Jesus continues to push even further in His.

Notice, He says 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." Jesus has already shown that divorce undermines and attacks the plan of God for marriage as laid out in Genesis

1-2. Now, He reveals the devastating effects and the impact of divorce moving forward. Divorce in and of itself is sin and terrible in the eyes of God. It's so destructive that it actually creates more sin into the future. Jesus gives the scenario of the husband divorcing his wife and then marrying another woman in the future, this hypothetical scenario, and Jesus calls this man's relationship with the second wife an act of adultery against his first wife. And you think, how can this be? He divorced her. He wrote a certificate. The government recognized it. The people recognized it. Everyone understood. The community knew he divorced this woman and then moved on to another woman. How can he still be committing adultery against his first wife in a remarriage to someone else?

We need to understand the background of divorce. As we've talked about briefly, earlier, when divorce occurred in their time, there was this certificate, and they thought it was noble. They thought it was right. They really thought it was a holy thing to do. The man thought he was being a good husband when he actually would write the certificate out and say you are free to remarry; so now, you can actually be cared for in binding yourself to a new husband. They thought it was a good thing. They thought they were being right in God's eyes. And while the husband might feel justified that he has legally and properly dealt with his ex-wife by giving her a certificate that legally allows her to remarry, he's actually done a horrible thing as Jesus continues to highlight for us. Because of this divorce, the husband will now remarry, thinking all is well, when the reality is that God still sees him as married to his first wife. If he had no grounds for divorce, in God's eyes if there was no marital unfaithfulness, if this was not an unbeliever leaving the marriage, if this was just simply being done with his wife, if this was simply him wanting to marry someone else, in God's eyes that's man trying to separate what's one, that's man trying to make into two what's already been one. He's doing a terrible thing. It's because God still sees him as married to his first wife that his attempts to divorce and marry someone else is adultery. Since his divorce was not done for Biblical reasons, God does not see the first union as separated. Even if man still sees it as separated, or even if the government might see it as separated, it's not what Jesus is saying. It's not what God thinks.

Thus, what is Jesus saying about divorce here with His disciples in private? He's saying that divorce for any reason other than that which is laid out in Scripture is a gateway to more adultery and sin in the remarriages that occur,

for both the husband and the wife. I'm going to say that again. It's a little loaded. Jesus is saying that divorce for any reason other than that which is laid out in Scripture is a gateway to more adultery and sin in the remarriages that occur, for both the husband and the wife. It's a tragedy, and this is the point. Jesus is showing to a culture that is so okay with divorce, who says let happiness be your end goal, and if you're not happy, get out of it. Go somewhere else. Do what you need to do. Jesus has to confront that. And it's still being confronted today as we look at this and recognize that divorce is not a means to my happiness. Divorce is trying to assault and attack the plan of God and marriage. Jesus has to reveal this. He has to show this; how destructive divorce really is. No doubt, we have seen the impacts of divorce and how negative they are, and we're aware of statistics of how common it is, and that is a tragedy; but even more so, we look at the assault that it is on the Word of God and the truth of what God has done as Creator, and that is a tragedy. Jesus is shocking the people, and He's shocking His disciples to wake up and see how far off-track man has gone. They have abandoned the design of God and really upheld their own pursuit of their own desires and feelings and happiness.

Where does that leave us? Recognizing how terrible this is, we now can move forward in marriage, to move forward in our own thinking of marriage, in the way God would have us to in recognizing what its significance really is. Paul laid it out for us really in Ephesians 5, and you see it at other places in the letters of the New Testament. We now recognize the significance of marriage not just from Genesis, not just from what Jesus has taught, but even now, being on this side of the cross, to what Paul says. Listen to Ephesians 5:22-32; "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one

flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.”

When you understand the profound mystery of marriage, you then further understand the destruction of divorce. It’s not just an attack on God as Creator and what He’s designed and what He has done, it’s an attack on the gospel, the very gospel message of Christ the groom laying down His life for His wife, the bride, the church, you and me. The very heart of the good news that we proclaim to the lost is pictured in marriage. It’s a beautiful illustration that God has put in real time, an object lesson for all to see; and yet it is treated as if man can manipulate it and do whatever they want with it, and divorce continues to be rampant, and it’s a tragedy. It’s destructive. It mars the gospel message. May we get back to the very teachings of Scripture, what God has said, recognizing not just the commands set forward for our own good, but the implication of those very commands; how our obedience upholds the gospel, the truth of Christ and His love for the church.