

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Mark: Jesus The Perfect Servant Of God

Part II: The Perfect Service Of Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God, Mark 1:1-10:52

LL. Christ's Call For The Unconditional Permanency Of Marriage

(Mark 10:1-12)

I. Introduction

- A. We learned in the first lesson in this series that Mark's Gospel presents the perfect service of God's Perfect Servant, Jesus, with Mark's focus of having rebounded unto upright Christian service from personal failure.
- B. Mark's defection from missionary service in Acts 13:13 involved a lapse in faithfulness of some sort: either he was outside God's will in going on the missions trip in the first place, or he should have stayed on the trip.
- C. Such unfaithfulness surfaces especially in the realm of marriage among many professing Christians today who get married, then divorce and remarry, and Jesus completely countered such unfaithfulness in Mark 10:1-12:

II. Christ's Call For The Unconditional Permanency Of Marriage, Mark 10:1-12.

- A. When Jesus returned to the region of Judaea and the eastern side of the Jordan River, great crowds of people followed Him, so He began to teach them as was His custom in encountering such throngs, Mark 10:1.
- B. In such a setting, with Jesus heavily surrounded by crowds, the Pharisees came to Him to put Him to the test, asking Jesus, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" (Mark 10:2 NIV) Their intent was obvious: the Jews were very divided over the grounds of divorce, with the followers of Rabbi Shammai holding "a man could not divorce his wife unless he found her guilty of sexual immorality" while the followers of Rabbi Hillel "were more lax, allowing divorce for many, including trivial, reasons," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Matt. 19:3. The Pharisees here thus tried to get Jesus to commit Himself to one view or the other, thus causing a division in His followers, with a large segment of them ceasing to follow Him due to the stand He had taken!
- C. Though the Matthew 19:3-12 account of this event shows Jesus prohibiting divorce with the famous "except it be for fornication" clause of Matthew 19:9, Mark's account here totally omits that clause, revealing that since Mark's Gospel was for Gentile readers (Ibid., p. 1397), the "exception clause" applied only to Jews of that day who were under the Law (as we before noted in our study of Matthew). So, for believers in the Church, Mark 10:1-12 appropriately shows Christ calling for the **unconditional** permanency of marriage (as follows):
 1. Jesus asked the questioning Pharisees what Moses had commanded them, and they replied that Moses had "permitted" them to divorce their wives, Ibid., fn. to Mark 10:4.
 2. Jesus answered that Moses had permitted Israel to divorce only because of the hardness of the hearts of the people (Mark 10:5), but that divorce had never been the intent of God, Mark 10:6-9:
 - a. Alluding to Genesis 1:27 and then to Genesis 2:24, Jesus reminded the Pharisees that God at creation had made human beings as male and female, so that a man would leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife, and they two would become one flesh, Mark 10:6-8.
 - b. Since the two thus become one flesh in God's eyes when they marry and come together, having been made one flesh by God's joining them together, no man is to put them asunder in divorce, Mark 10:9.
 3. When the disciples and Jesus were later in a private setting in a house, they asked Him for clarification of the this matter, for Jesus had taken a stand that was stricter not only than the liberal view of divorce taught by Rabbi Hillel, but it was stricter than even the more conservative view of Rabbi Shammai, Mark 10:10.
 4. Accordingly, Jesus told them that marriage, being an unconditionally permanent institution in God's eyes, was not to be followed by divorce and remarriage, for these acts were adulterous to God, Mark 10:11-12:
 - a. Jesus said that whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, meaning he abuses the right of his wife to have him as her husband with whom she was made one flesh, Mark 10:11.
 - b. In addition, if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she also commits adultery, for she abuses the right of her initial husband to have her with whom he was made one flesh, Mark 10:12!

Lesson: Christ called for the unconditional permanency of marriage, outlawing divorce and remarriage under all circumstances, for marriage is the forming of one flesh in God's eyes, a bond to be honored for life, Romans 7:1-3.

Application: (1) May we unconditionally stay faithful to our spouse until death parts us. (2) If we are virgins, may we carefully consider God's will in selecting our life's our partner since God will require that we stay wed to that person for life. (3) If we have been divorced or divorced and remarried, may we stay in our latest state or be reconciled to our first spouse if that is Biblically permissible, 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 with Deuteronomy 24:1-4 NIV.