

Mark 10

V.1-2 The rhythm of ministry - teaching/testing

V.3-12 Jesus teaches on the Law, marriage, and human hearts

It's important to remember why the Pharisees asked Jesus this question. It wasn't born out of sincerity or need but to test him - to put him on the spot, to try to sow discord among those who came to hear Jesus teach.

They asked because marriage is a topic that people have strong feelings about and each person perhaps feels like they are uniquely qualified to give their opinion -- in short marriage is divisive!

But it shouldn't be.

Marriage isn't only, or even primarily about the family unit, or US. It is primarily about Christ and the church - Eph 5.

[Eph 5:25-32 NKJV] 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves

his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord [does] the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." **32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**

Christ and His relationship with the church are not primarily meant to teach us about marriage, it is the other way around. Marriage is meant to teach us, and those watching, about Jesus and His bride.

If we take just a moment to reflect on that we see that those two statements are miles apart and when we realize that our marriages are to teach us about who Jesus is and how much he loves his church then our marriages are impacted in a far more substantial way than all of us trying to fabricate perfect marriages and homes.

More than just the foundation of marriage, Christ is the center, and he is the point of marriage. This is contrary to the self centered way we normally look at things, where we believe all things are designed and devised to serve us.

V.13-16 Jesus with children (ref - Mark 9:37)

This is not the first time Jesus has instructed his disciples on caring for children.

We see here that the disciples are running interference. They are not allowing these children to come near to Jesus for one reason or another - which is unstated.

Do you believe that - disciples actually keeping people from Jesus!? It happens still today.

As a matter of fact they are even rebuking people - getting sharp with them for thinking that Jesus would be interested in their children.

This is grievous to Jesus. He has a heart for the children. His kingdom is composed of such as these: Children in innocence, belief, and openness - lacking any of the jaded roughness that we pick up from being wounded over and over again in the world.

We are bidden to become like children, "...whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."

We often accept God's kingdom on our terms and conditions when we are asked to receive the kingdom on His terms and conditions. We are happy to do so when it affirms our dignity, maturity, respect...less so when it

demands our recognition of child-like need - that we bring nothing to the bargain!

How do we identify ourselves in God's kingdom: a pastor, teacher, deacon, board member, greeter, husband, father, leader...what about a child? A son or daughter of God first and foremost?

We must also not lose sight of the practical and real sense of Jesus' teaching. We can easily over spiritualize this and lose sight that Jesus was ministering to ACTUAL children.

Some of the best proving ground of faithfulness is found in ministering to children.

V.17-27 Jesus teaches a hard truth

What did this man want? To be validated as a good person? To be affiliated with a popular movement? Eternal life? Knowledge?

He asks for eternal life but what unfolds reveals that not all is as it appears.

People's motives for coming to Jesus are quite diverse, they were in Christ's day and they are today.

BUT, Jesus cares too much about us to let us continue to hide behind false sincerity. His word challenges us and reveals our motives - which perhaps we were unsure of, or unaware of ourselves.

By his own account this man was what we would call a morally good man - he had followed the commandments.

We learn from Matthew that this man was young, and from Luke that he was a ruler, and from all of the synoptic gospels that he was rich.

By all accounts then, at least by any measurable standard, he was successful - but coming face to face with God, and hearing this hard lesson that he must divest himself of his riches he walked away.

So at the end of this what does he have? He has his morality, his religion, his riches - but lacks eternal life, at least as far as we are told.

Jesus' word made him sorrowful, if what Jesus required of him was true then he was lost! And so thought all of the disciples.

One of the many lessons here is that even the truth, spoken in love, may not be universally accepted.

Sometimes we even think that if people just had a wake up call, if they just had the hard truth spoken to them in love then they would come to Christ.

What we find is more complicated. Some people may be driven away sorrowful by that hard truth.

God doesn't promise that all of His truths are easy to swallow. This is especially true when our flesh rebels against the Spirit. But His words are always true.

Not only did this teaching challenge the rich young ruler but it challenged his own disciples - they extrapolated this teaching, and Jesus' teaching on trusting in riches, as incredibly exclusionary to salvation.

"Who then can be saved?" The implied answer in their hearts is one of doubt - only a few, or maybe nobody, could measure up to such a big ask.

BUT, take heart - we who are convicted by this teaching, "with men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."

God is able to save the most wretched of us, the most materialistic of us. His grace abounds to us when we are looking at everything else except Him - perhaps especially so since grace by nature is undeserved.

V.28-31 Jesus teaches on sacrifice and blessing

Peter's words are not timely - it seems like he is fishing for compliments, no matter how true they may be.

AND, don't they reveal something about Peter's heart too in the way of motivation - what did he want? Validation? Praise?

But Jesus takes this time to teach them about God's justice, and care towards His saints.

Sometimes, like the rich young ruler, it is difficult for people to walk away from their past self - especially when family bonds are attached - notice that Jesus includes in this list of things that people leave: houses, siblings, parents, spouses, children, property.

For some people that is the entirety of their life. Either one or all categories have become the thing that keeps us from following hard after Jesus Christ.

Just like the rich, young ruler we find ourselves unwilling to loosen our grip on the things that validate our existence.

BUT, people DO leave those things behind for the gospels sake, and Jesus' sake - many testimonies are marked by one or all of these things left behind as the reborn saint finds themselves to be a new creation.

God is not unjust to forget that.

[Heb 6:10-12 NKJV] 10 For God [is] not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, [in that] you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

What many saints find after leaving those things to follow Jesus - things that should be left - is that God has given them so much more in the kingdom.

He, by His Spirit and the very nature of His eternal kingdom, gives us new siblings, new parents, new marriages, etc. He gives us an eternal home in His kingdom.

AND let us not forget that He PROMISES persecution with that, along with eternal life.

V.32-34 Jesus continues to teach his disciples about the center of his ministry - his suffering, death and resurrection.

V.35-45 Be a servant, slave of all.

This is not the first time Jesus has taught this. Why does it take so many hearings, so many reminders? Because we are not inclined to adopt this naturally. We must be changed by the Holy Spirit to adopt the character of Christ.

Our inclination is to get what we are owed, to stand up for ourselves, be assertive, protect our “rights,” bow to no man, etc.

Jesus is exceptionally clear on this issue. His instruction for those who desire to advance in His kingdom, and advance His kingdom, is to become a slave of all - not only those who we think deserve our service.

As a matter of fact that notion is contrary to God’s Spirit. When we were enemies of God he stooped down to us and showered us with His favor and blessings.

Jesus himself came to serve, to be a slave, trading his righteousness in exchange for our wretchedness.

[Phi 2:5-8 NKJV] 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but **made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant (slave)**, [and] coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself** and **became obedient** to [the point of] death, even the death of the cross.

Do we reflect this - is it this Jesus that lives through us in our mortal bodies or some fabricated version of Christ that ignores the imperative of service to those who scarcely deserve it. Keeping in mind that our own condition as those who do not deserve God's grace is every present.

V.46-52 People continue to interfere with others coming to Christ, just as the disciples did with the children so now this blind man - desiring to be made whole is squashed for his desire.

Lord help us to facilitate rather than interfere, help us to bring people rather than restrict people.

Because the reality is that Jesus wants people to be whole, and as he tells this man, he wants them to know that their faith makes them whole.

For those who believe we are given new sight, new hope.

May the message on our lips to others resound with: "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."