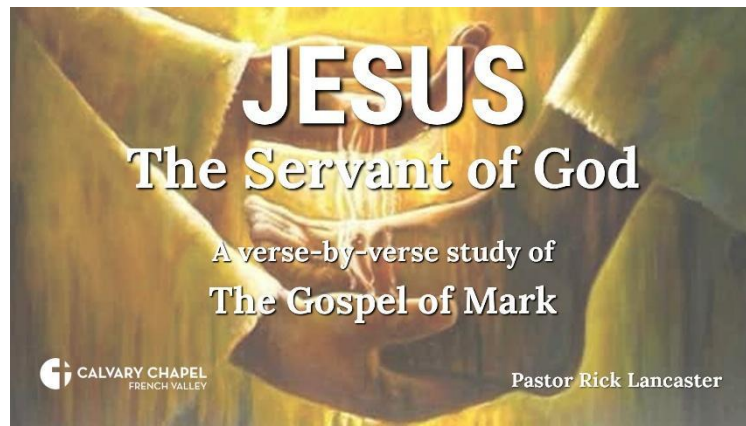




JESUS: The Servant of God

A verse-by-verse study of the Gospel of Mark

The Gospel and Marriage

Mark 10:1-12

Message #23

Sermon given on June 28, 2026



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Gospel and Marriage

Mark 10:1-12

Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Mark 10**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Mark – **JESUS: The Servant of God**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Gospel and Marriage**
 - Why do we read and study the Bible?
 - A good answer is to know God better.
 - God created us to be in a relationship with Him.
 - He created us with a need to worship Him.
 - We also were created with a need to love and be loved, first by God and then by others.
 - One of the things we seldom think about is that we might not know how to do that the right way.
 - Another thing we might not think about is the influence the culture and world has had on the way we think, what we believe, and how we live.
 - One of the reasons we read and study the Bible is to challenge the way we think, examine what we believe, and to make sure we are living in a way that pleases God. **Romans 12:2**
- ² **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**
- Our minds are renewed and transformed by regular exposure to the Word of God.
 - Today we come to a topic that many in churches all around us hold viewpoints that are closer to the culture than they are to the Bible.
 - I am praying that we all have ears to hear what God is saying to His people by His Spirit and in His Word.
 - Jesus is making His way to Jerusalem and His appointment on the cross.
 - **Mark 10:1-2**

- The Pharisees and other religious elites are threatened by Jesus' popularity with the people.
- They come testing Jesus. They are trying to lay a trap for Jesus.
- They want to catch Him saying something that will get Him in trouble with the Romans or with the Jewish religious leaders.
- Their question to Jesus is controversial, culturally and religiously.
- This is fascinating because two thousand years later people are still asking the same question.

Divorce: the legal dissolution of a valid marriage, officially terminating the marriage contract between two individuals and returning them to single status.

- That is the definition that makes the question possible.
- But what if God has a different definition of marriage?
- Jesus answers their question with a question.
- **Mark 10:3-4**
- Jesus knows they are trying to trap Him, and it never works.
- They say, according to Moses, a man can divorce his wife for any reason.
- Then, just as it is now, there is a wide range of opinions on marriage and divorce.
- And to often, those opinions are separated from the Word and principles of God.
- Jesus tells them why Moses allowed for divorce.

● **Mark 10:5**

- Hardness of heart is the Greek word *sklērokardia*.
 - This word is also translated as stubbornness, obstinacy, and obduracy.
- Obduracy is the state of being stubbornly persistent in one's opinions or actions, refusing to change despite persuasion, reason, or attempts at compromise.**
- Another word for hardheartedness is unfeelingness.
 - There are countless reasons why someone's feelings for their spouse change.
 - But if someone is a believer, God the Holy Spirit is living inside them to make them like Jesus.
 - To become hardhearted requires someone to stubbornly refuse the reconciling work of the Holy Spirit.
 - The culture says it is okay to divorce if you don't love your spouse anymore.

- And the Devil encourages those thoughts because he loves the carnage that is left behind after a couple divorces.
- Jesus doesn't refer to the culture when He continues His response to the hardhearted Pharisees.
- **Mark 10:6-8**
- Jesus goes back to the very beginning, to Genesis chapters 1 and 2.
- In the beginning of the creation God made Adam and Eve, male and female.
- God made them different from one another but complementary toward one another.
- They go together, and when combined they form a new, better whole.
- That combining of a man and a woman is the institution of the covenant of marriage.
- Most in the world and some even who call themselves Christians view marriage as something created by man.
- Marriage is a picture of the unity of God.
- Just as the Trinity of three persons in One, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, marriage is a tri-unity of three persons man, woman, and God.
- And just as the unity of God cannot be broken, the unity of marriage should not be broken.
- The unity of God cannot be broken because God is perfect.
- The unity of marriage is broken when imperfect people choose themselves over unity with God.
- Marriage is a covenant relationship between God and a man and a woman for life.
- Turn to **Genesis 15**
- Once a covenant is established by God, only God can annul it.
- God takes these covenants seriously.
- That is symbolized the description of the covenant God made with Abraham.
- **Genesis 15:7-10; 17-21**
- By passing through the sacrifices God was saying that should He violate the covenant that He should be cut in two like the sacrifices.
- God cannot break the covenant; therefore, the promises are certain.
- Turn back to **Mark 10**

- When a couple enters into the covenant of marriage, they are making a vow to God that He takes very seriously and only death should break that vow.
 - We live in a culture that doesn't believe that.
 - And just like the Jews during the time of Moses, and those at the time of Christ, God's people have been influenced by the culture.
 - Marriage was established by God and as the initiator of the covenant He sets the terms of the covenant.
 - And that includes how that covenant can be terminated.
 - **Mark 10:9**
 - Turn in your Bible to **Malachi 2**.
 - To break this covenant with God exposes people to the consequences of being out of God's will.
 - We live in a time when people live under the delusion that they are immune from the consequences of their actions.
 - That is not true anywhere in life, especially with God. **Galatians 6:7-8**
- ⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.
- The people of Malachi's time were experiencing consequences.
 - One of those areas was in relation to how they were treating their marriages.
 - **Malachi 2:13-15**
 - God has made His feelings clear on the topic of divorce.
 - **Malachi 2:16**
 - To seek a divorce, knowing how God feels about divorce is a sign of a hard heart – a heart unfeeling toward God.
 - For a Christ-follower it is rebellion and willful disobedience.
 - Turn back to **Mark 10**
 - If you take away hard-heartedness, you take away divorce.
 - God's will is not divorce – it is oneness.
 - God is seeking unity in the body of Christ, and in our marriages and family.
 - Before divorce, every effort should be made to reconcile.

- Matthew 18 teaches us the importance of forgiveness in relationships.
- Almost all divorces could be prevented if people would just repent of their sins to one another and practice forgiveness.
- Some might say there are some sins that cannot be forgiven.
- That's not what the Bible says. **Matthew 12:31**
- 31 **Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy *against* the Spirit will not be forgiven men.**
- Some sins are harder to forgive, like adultery, but hard does not mean impossible.
- It is hardheartedness that keeps someone from forgiving others.
- I have been a pastor long enough to have heard countless reasons why people should get a divorce.
- But, as a pastor, I can't go past verse 9.
- And if you are a Christ-follower, neither should you.
- That doesn't mean someone must endure abuse or violence.
- There are times when separation is the right course of action.
- But for a Christ-follower, divorce should never be a consideration.
- There are nuances far beyond what we can cover in a single message.
- Jesus is dealing with people who are treating the covenant of marriage as bait to try to trap Him.
- That plays into the question the disciples ask.
- **Mark 10:10-12**
- The disciples view of marriage and divorce in the same way as that of the Pharisees.
- That was the common view on the topic, just like it is today, even in many churches.
- The common, cultural view is seldom the right one, biblically.
- The key to understanding verses 11 and 12 are verses 6 to 9.
- If a divorce is a product of hardheartedness, remarrying is adultery.
- Unless God separated a marriage, remarrying is adultery.
- If you have questions on this topic, talk with me or Kelly or Pastor Bruce and Jayne, or Pastor David and Jamie.
- Marriage is a beautiful gift given to a man and woman and is the closest approximation in this life of the oneness of the Triune Godhead.

- Marriage is not always easy because it is two sinners living in intimate proximity to one another.
- Not everyone who listens to this message is married.
- Here are three quick things that are important for every relationship in our lives, married or not.
- They are not the only three, but they are pretty important.
- First – **Loving**
- The quality of your relationships will be determined by the amount of love you pour into it.
- And not just feeling of love, but real, sacrificial, agape love.
- What Jesus referred to as greater love. **John 15:13**
- ¹³ **Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.**
- Greater love creates greater relationships.
- Second – **Serving**
- Greater love is manifested through serving others. **Mark 10:45**
- ⁴⁵ **For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.**
- We should be striving to give more to the relationship than we are getting and being okay with doing that.
- Third – **Forgiving**
- In a perfect relationship no one sins against the other person.
- Unfortunately, we are not perfect; we will sin against one another.
- We should try not to, but we probably will.
- And hopefully the mistakes are small.
- If we want good relationships, we must be willing to forgive every sin, every time, even when they won't confess their sin.
- Give it to God and let it go.
- Otherwise, hardheartedness will start to make your heart incapable of loving that person.
- One of the things we say as Christ-followers is we love God.
- This is how we love God, by loving others, serving them, and forgiving them when they sin against us.
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us to love better and more.
- **Pray – Last Song**