

## Commentary on Mark Chapter 10 verses 1-25, by Chuck Smith 2.20.22

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### February memory verse, Deuteronomy 6:5 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

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And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he wont [was accustomed], he taught them again ([Mar 10:1](#)).

Now, Jesus is leaving the area of the Galilee for the last time. He is on His way to Jerusalem to be crucified. He knows this. He presently will be telling the disciples this. They still do not understand; it's still, to them, a mystery. But yet, it's very clear in the mind of Christ, and so you have to realize that He is now knowingly on His way to Jerusalem to be crucified and, of course, to rise again. So, He leaves the area of the Galilee. He arose from there, the area of Galilee, and He came to the area of Judea. So, He's moving south towards Jerusalem. He's on the far side of the Jordan River, so He's coming down in the area of the Ammonites and the Moabites. And the people were still gathering to Him and as was His custom, He was just teaching them.

And the Pharisees came to him, and [they] asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? [And notice, they were] tempting him ([Mar 10:2](#)).

This was a lead kind of a question. Obviously they were seeking to trap Him in the answer that He gave. They felt that His answers were contrary to the law given through Moses. And they were hoping to trap Him, to show to the people that were gathered there that He was a heretic, that He was teaching something other than the law of Moses. And so, they asked Him the question, "Is it right for a man to divorce his wife?" Now, in the law, in the book of Deuteronomy, God did say through Moses that if a man married a woman and found some uncleanness in her, he should give her a writing of a bill of divorcement. Now, that is a little vague, not much, but a little. But there are always people who are trying to jump into any little area of controversy, or any area where there might be an excuse for what they want to do.

There were two basic schools of thought taught by the Jews that were headed under famous rabbis. There was a rabbi by the name of Shami. Shami taught that uncleanness meant only that when he married her, he discovered on the marriage night that she was not a virgin, she was not clean; she was not a virgin. And thus, if he discovered that, he had the right to divorce her. And Shami took that very narrow,

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limited viewpoint that the uncleanness would be adultery on the part of the wife either before or after marriage and that constituted the only grounds for divorce. Now, there was another school headed by the Rabbi Hallel, which took a very liberal interpretation of finding an uncleanness in her. If she didn't dress the way he liked her to, if she was a brawling woman... and they interpreted that if you could hear her voice next door, she was counted a brawling woman. Or if she didn't fix the meals to please him, that this constituted an uncleanness in her, and thus he had the right to divorce her for these grounds.

Now, the Jews were quite divided, but naturally, the Hallel side was of greater popularity among the men. And there was one rabbi by the name of Ocabe, and he said that if he found another woman that pleased him more, that constituted an uncleanness in his wife, and so he could divorce her just because he found another woman that pleased him more. Now, naturally, by these liberal interpretations, they made the law totally meaningless. But still, they were divided quite sharply on this particular issue. And so, they brought the issue to Jesus. "Can a man divorce his wife for any cause?"

And he [Jesus] answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered [allowed] to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain [two] shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain [two], but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder ([Mar 10:3-9](#)).

So, Jesus, in answering their question, asked them the question, "What did Moses command?" They said, "Moses said we could give her a writing of divorcement and put her away." And they had two different bills of divorcement. The second one became quite technical and had to be written up by a rabbi and then approved by three rabbis, and you could give it to your wife and she officially was put away. But because of the liberal views that they had taken, there was social chaos: children who really were almost orphaned in the sense that they did not have a solid type of a home environment to grow up in. And so Jesus, in talking about marriage and divorce, rather than going to the precept of Moses, He said, "Moses gave you that because of the hardness of your hearts. But in the beginning and from the beginning it was not so." Now we are dealing with God's divine ideal. "From the beginning..." What was God's ideal? What was God's intention?

First of all, there is the recognition that man by himself is not complete. Woman by herself is not complete. God made them male and female, and the two become one. And there's only a wholeness as the two become one. The wife is to compliment the husband and make a completeness, as the husband is to compliment the wife and make a completeness. But neither are complete in themselves. "And in the beginning, God made them male and female. And for this cause a man leaves his mother and father, cleaves to his wife and the two of them become one, one whole, one total.

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Therefore, those whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." And He is dealing now with the basic divine ideal established by God for marriage. And so we must note that Jesus is going back and dealing with the basic ideal and intention of God in the beginning. But man did not live up to God's divine ideal because of the hardness of man's heart, so many times the unwillingness to bend, the unwillingness to forgive, or the unwillingness just to give. For marriage is surely a giving proposition. And the hardness of a man's heart in his unwillingness to bend or to give created intolerable situations. And so, because of the hardness of their hearts towards God's divine ideal, Moses in the law declared, "Let him give her a writing of a bill of divorcement." So Jesus declares the divine ideal of God, recognizing man did not come to it; and thus, God's accommodation through the law to make that separation binding and legal, to go through the writing of divorcement. Today we are faced still with the hardness of heart.

Now, God's divine ideal still stands. It is still the divine ideal that there be one marriage for life. That's God's divine ideal. That's what God would have. But today, there are still those who have hard hearts to God's divine ideal. They will not bend, they will not yield, they will not give, they will not forgive. And when that condition does exist, marriage can be a hell. And it is extremely unfortunate when two persons set about, consciously or unconsciously, to destroy each other. That surely is not God's divine ideal either. "And I'm going to hang on until I kill her." God's divine ideal is that the two be one, that they be brought together in a harmony through love and a true oneness in love.

It's difficult to deal with this subject inasmuch as, number one, we do not want to broaden the issue to make divorce and remarriage a very simple go-for-it kind of a thing. "If she doesn't please you, if you've found someone else, divorce her." Surely, God does not intend that. In fact, God declared in Malachi He hated divorces. Yet, He also hates those intolerable conditions that sometimes exist when you get a hard-hearted person in a marriage relationship.

So, we just can't say, "Oh, well, it doesn't matter. Do what you want. Whatever pleases you." Our desire should be to please God. If we are in a bad marriage, we should seek to make it a good marriage. We should do our best to make a go of the marriage, to forgive, to give, to love, to have understanding and to come to an agreement, to come to a oneness.

On the other hand, in dealing with the subject, we do not want to create condemnation for those who have had that bitter experience of being married to someone by paper, but not by reality, where there never was a true oneness brought together by God's Spirit. And because of intolerable situations, to save themselves, found it necessary to get a divorce, less the marriage totally destroy them.

It is unfortunate, that many times in the folly of youth, young couples believed themselves to be madly in love and insist on getting married because they can't wait. And soon after the infatuation has worn off, they realized the total incompatibility. Someone has said that a decision as important as marriage should never be left up to

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the judgment of a child. And that's why they had marriage by arrangement. But that had its flaws too.

Now, if a person, while a teenager, gets married and it is soon obvious that it was a tragic mistake, and it's impossible to live with that person and they then get a divorce. I speak now for myself, as Paul the apostle said. Paul is speaking now, I don't have any commandment of the Lord of this, but this is Paul speaking. And so, this is Chuck speaking now. I do not believe that God says to that person, "Alright, you made your bed, lie in it." Or, "You made a mistake, now you can just suffer the rest of your life for the mistake that you made as a silly child. And you can never marry again." I really do not believe that God says that. But that's me; that is my conviction.

So, Jesus sought to bring back the realization of the sacredness of marriage. The Catholic Church says it is a sacrament, and I think that they are probably correct. It is an outward sign of a spiritual work, and there is that spiritual union that is created by God as the two become one. Marriage to the right person can be heaven on earth. Marriage to the wrong person can be hell on earth, and I speak especially now to young people who are not yet married, who are perhaps contemplating it. Spend much time in prayer over your decision. Before I married my wife, I went off and spent time fasting and praying. I'm glad. I'm glad I made the right decision. I'm glad the Lord led me to that decision through prayer and through fasting. And I mean, that is a matter that you should not leave to your heart or to your emotions. It is something that you need to prayerfully consider. Much better that you not make a mistake than you try to later on correct the mistake.

I do not believe that God condemns that person to hell who has divorced and remarried. I believe that if you find yourself in a remarriage, that you need to make the best of it. Just let your marriage become all that God wants it to be. I don't think that you should go out and say, "Well, I was married before, now I better divorce you too." I believe that you should stay in the condition where you are. The Bible tells us that a man should abide in the calling wherewith he was called; when you were called by Christ and you accepted the Lord, what your condition was there. Maybe you've been married, divorced, remarried. Work it out now in this relationship that you have. Let it bring honor and glory to God.

But we remember David who became involved with Bathsheba and later married her. And God was merciful, and God was gracious, and God was forgiving to David. The prophet said unto him, "Thy sin is forgiven." He did pay a price; they lost their first child. And yet, God granted to David that forgiveness of sin. And you may have sort of a sordid past as far as marriage is concerned. I don't know if some people are just really hard to get along with, or just don't have good judgment in picking out a partner. But you may be a loser in marriage, but yet God is able, I know, to help you. And God is glorified and honored when couples are able to resolve their differences in Christ and come to a loving relationship through Him.

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And [when they came] in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter ([Mar 10:10](#)).

They did not fully understand what He was declaring in His answer to the Pharisees. And so,

And he [Jesus] saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband ([Mar 10:11-12](#)),

Now, there were only a few grounds upon which a woman could put away a husband. If he falsely accused her of not being a virgin when they got married, that gave her the right to divorce him. Or if he committed adultery, she had the right to divorce him.

And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery ([Mar 10:12](#)).

It doesn't say anything about the innocent party here. But as I say, people are always looking for loopholes.

Now, as they are continuing on the way towards the cross,

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them ([Mar 10:13](#)).

Now, this was what was taking place, the children were being brought to Jesus. And it was a custom in those days to usually bring the child when they were about one year old to the rabbi to be blessed. And so the parents were bringing their little children to Jesus that He might touch them. And the disciples began to rebuke the parents saying, "Oh, don't bother the Lord. He's too busy." And they started hindering those parents who desired to bring their children to Jesus.

But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased ([Mar 10:14](#)),

He was angry, angry at His own disciples acting on their own part and not for His part.

And [he] said unto them, Suffer [allow] the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God [heaven] ([Mar 10:14](#)).

Now remember, Jesus is on His way to the cross. This is weighing heavy on Him, and yet, the disciples felt that He didn't have time for children. He shouldn't be bothered with children. But Jesus said, "No, you're wrong. Let the little children come to Me. Don't forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God."

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Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein ([Mar 10:15](#)).

Don't stop the children from coming. You know, there is something beautiful in a child. I believe that it is natural for a child to believe in God. I think that they have to learn atheism. I think that instinctively, naturally, a child believes in God. There is that simplicity of faith there within the child, a beautiful faith in the child, a natural faith in the child. Whenever I'm not feeling good, I like my grandkids to pray for me. Such faith, it's beautiful. And Jesus said, "Unless you become as a little child, you won't enter in." That's the way to enter in, to become as a little child.

"Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will not make it."

[And he] put his hands upon them, and blessed them ([Mar 10:16](#)).

I love this picture of Jesus holding the children. And I'm certain that they were just naturally drawn to Him.

When he was gone forth into the way, [from the area of Jordan, on His way towards Jerusalem in the area of Judea, when He was gone from there, and He was back on the path again,] there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God ([Mar 10:17-18](#)).

Now, so many commentators say that Jesus was rebuking him for calling Him good. I do not believe that. I believe that Jesus was trying to awaken his consciousness. Jesus is either saying to this young man, "I am no good," or He is saying to him, "I am God." And I believe He is saying the latter. And He's trying to awaken his consciousness, "Why did you call Me good? Think about that a minute. There's only one good and that is God. Why did you call Me good? Because I am God." And that is in harmony with what the rest of what Jesus said to him. In fact, the rest of what Jesus said would be blasphemy if Jesus was not declaring to him, "I am God." Because Jesus is saying to him in the remainder of the story, "You have a need to have God at the center of your life; follow Me. You've got the wrong center to your life; you've got money as the center of your life. You need to have a new center to your life if you're going to come into the kingdom of God; you follow Me. You need God at the center of your life; follow Me." And so, Jesus awakening his consciousness, said, "Why did you call Me good? There's only one good and that is God.

Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him ([Mar 10:19-21](#)),

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He looked at this young fellow He had just flashed before him the second table of the law. He said, "I kept them all from my youth." And Jesus looked at him and He loved him, and said, "Alright!"

And [he] said unto him, One thing thou lackest ([Mar 10:21](#)):

Now, Matthew tells us that he had said to Jesus, "What lack I yet?" So Jesus is answering and He said, "There's one thing you lack:"

go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and [he] went away grieved: for he had great possessions ([Mar 10:21-22](#)).

Now, as I pointed out, Jesus' central word to this young man wasn't, "Go and sell everything and give to the poor." That was incidental. The central thing that Jesus said was, "Take up your cross, follow Me." Now with him, his great riches were keeping him from coming and taking up his cross and following Jesus. I don't know what it is in your life that is keeping you from coming, taking up your cross and following Jesus. Maybe it's a relationship that you have. Maybe it's a job. Maybe it's an ambition, a goal. Whatever it is that is keeping you from coming, taking up your cross and following Jesus, get rid of it. That's what Jesus is saying. With this young man, He just named what it was. This young man had as his god, money. Jesus said, "You can't serve God and mammon. So get rid of your false god, and come, follow Me. Know the true God. Let God be the center of your life; follow Me."

Now, the word of Christ is the same to us today as far as letting God become the center of your life; follow Jesus Christ. That's the way to enter the kingdom of God; that's the way to eternal life. That's the only way to eternal life, is that the center of your life is in God. So whatever it is that is keeping that from becoming the central aspect of your life, get rid of it. "Now, this young man went away sad. He was grieved, for he had great possessions." Isn't that a paradox? Because so many of you think, "That's all I need to be happy, is great possessions." Here's a man the Bible tells us was sad, because he had great possessions. Now, do not assume that this young man was lost. We don't know. He may have thought over what Jesus said and called in his servant and said, "Sell everything and give it away. I'll see ya later. I'm going to follow Jesus." Or, he could have just gone back to his misery and lived out his life with money as his god.

And Jesus looked round about, and [he] saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they [it is for those] that have riches [to] enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words ([Mar 10:23-24](#)).

Because in the Hebrew mind, they thought that riches were a sign of God's blessing upon a person. That if a person was prosperous, it was because God favored him and he was blessed with prosperity, that it was a sign of a man's faith and closeness to God. And they were astonished when Jesus said, "How hard it is for a rich man to enter into

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the kingdom of heaven!" "What do you mean, Lord? I thought that was a sign that he was holy and righteous. You were able to trust him with those riches." Jesus is blowing that philosophy right out of the water. There are those today who had that same feeling, that riches, prosperity, is a sign of spirituality. And they even preach that godliness is a way to prosper. Paul tells Timothy, "From such turn away."

And so the disciples were astonished. So Jesus qualified a little bit what He said.

[He] saith unto them, Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God ([Mar 10:24-25](#)).

Now, as I pointed out, there are those who say the eye of the needle was a subgate in the main gate of the city, when after the gates were closed at night and a person would arrive at the city, they would not open the main gate, lest there be enemy troops that would come pouring in. So, there was this subgate that a person could dismount and come crawling through the subgate into the city. And at the subgate they say was called "the eye of the needle." So when Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to get through an eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven," Jesus was referring to this little subgate; how that they'd have to unload the camel and then guys would be pulling and guys would be pushing and squeezing and shoving and get that ornery beast through this little opening in the gate. But with a lot of sweat and effort, you could make it. No, that's not what Jesus is talking about. Whatever Jesus is talking about, it's an impossibility. There are always those men who would try to make salvation within the reach and grasp of struggling man; work hard enough, try hard enough, be sincere enough. Surely you can save yourself. No. Jesus is talking about an impossibility. For the disciples were astounded above measure. They were totally blown out at this point,