

## **Mark 10:1-31**

Well we are at a scene change here in the life of Jesus...And we have a lot to cover tonight so I want to keep the introduction very brief. If you remember last week in our study, Jesus had been teaching the disciples multiple lessons on what it meant to be great in the kingdom of God.

Among those lessons was the need to have a servants heart, the need to have a willingness to minister to the children, a need to be open to the ministry of others who serve the Lord Jesus and a need to both be very careful we do not lead others astray especially children and to make sure that any sin in our lives is cut off.

These lessons were not only beneficial to the disciples as they walked with Jesus but you and I need to look to apply these very same lessons to our lives.

Now today we are going to be looking at three different lessons as we are going to be looking at what Jesus had to say about marriage and then we'll see another lesson on children followed by a rich young ruler that came to Jesus seeking to know what it would take for him to have eternal life.

So let's begin here with what Jesus said about marriage if you will look with me at verses 1-2 of chapter 10 which say this **Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again.**

**<sup>2</sup>The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?" testing Him.**

If you remember last week I mentioned that what we have before us is considered the last weeks or months of the life of Jesus and now we see Him leaving the area of the Sea of Galilee and making His last trek to Jerusalem...and so these are some of the last lessons that Jesus taught to those who followed Him.

We see once again this time that there was a multitude that gathered to Jesus and as was His custom He looked to teach them. Jesus not only showed people the kingdom by performing miracles amongst the people but also setting the standard for what was right and wrong.

Once again as this unfolds we see the Pharisees coming to Jesus and the text makes it clear when it says that they were testing Jesus that their hearts as usual were not in the right position.

It is sad to me to see that the Pharisees and the religious leaders had access to so much of who Jesus was and yet they consistently rejected who Jesus was for their hardness of heart.

So they tested Jesus this time by asking Him “Is it lawful for a man to divorce His wife?” and we might look at this and say well how was this a test? OR what was the point in them asking Jesus this question. I might add that in a parallel passage from Matthew 19 we see in verse 3 of that chapter that there were a few more words to the question as it says <sup>3</sup>**The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any reason?”**

One of the things the religious rulers attempted to do on numerous occasions was to cause the people to disperse from following Jesus. They did this earlier by accusing Jesus of doing the things that He did

by the power of Satan rather than the power of God, they also accused Him of being a Sabbath rule breaker.

We should understand that the way Jesus answered this question would in the minds of the religious people bring about a division amongst the people...and the way Jesus answered this would most probably bring some to Him while causing others to walk away.

Let me explain why this was...marriage was a hot button topic of the day in the culture of the Jewish people...and maybe not so much marriage was the hot topic but instead divorce was and when a person could and could not make that choice was really the debate people had.

The debate actually centered around what is found over in the law of Moses in Deuteronomy 24:1 which says this **“When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house,** so the debate people had was around what the word uncleanness meant and when it was a man could divorces his wife.

And there were two schools of thought about what this uncleanness might be...One rabbi named Hallel was a much more liberal teacher of the people and he said that if your wife displeased you in any way you could divorce her...this meant if she was a bad cook, if she disobeyed something or even if she could not have kids for some reason.

On the other hand there was a rabbi named Shimei and he was much more conservative and simply taught that the only reason a man would see his wife as unclean was if she had an affair.

I want to add right here that there are really only two reasons given in the Bible for a couple to divorce...First would be for the reason of unfaithfulness...this sin brings about such great damage to the commitments that were made that there is permission for the one wronged to divorce...And second over in 1 Corinthians 7 the Word speaks of how an unbeliever may abandon a believer and if they do so the believer is not under any obligation to stay single.

I want to add that while there is permission for divorce during a time of unfaithfulness that it is not a requirement and there have been many marriages that have been restored even after such a thing takes place. God is faithful and can miraculously heal marriages that are totally broken from the sin of adultery.

Today in our society we have made far too many concessions when it comes to divorce...It used to be that you had to wait for a length of time to get divorced where now we permit divorce for any and every reason. Sadly divorce is quite high in the Christian community as well...and we'll talk about this but the heart of God in marriage is that the two become one for a lifetime.

Over in Malachi 2:16 the Word confirms God heart about divorce when it says **“For the Lord God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one’s garment with violence,”**  
**Says the Lord of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously.”**

I would also add here that if you are in an abusive relationship you should not stay in that position but leave with your kids if you have them...I don't think divorce is permitted in this as the Word doesn't address it but you can pray for that person and if the offender were to divorce the one being abused they would be free to remarry as the Lord sees fit.

OK so they ask Jesus what the deal is with divorce and let's see how He responds if you look at verses 3-5 which say <sup>3</sup>And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?"

<sup>4</sup>They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her."

<sup>5</sup>And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept."

Jesus rather than quoting what the rabbis and teachers of the day have to say instead challenges them by asking what the Word of God says about it...and Jesus knew that the source of the debate of the people was from Deuteronomy 24 which we discussed before...and so He asks them what it was that Moses said about it.

They respond that Moses permitted someone to divorce a spouse by giving them a certificate of divorce...Now just so we understand the certificate of divorce given to a woman was actually a protection for the woman and it brought about a finality to the marriage...the woman would have this in her possession and it meant the previous marriage was indeed done and over with and in Deuteronomy 24 we see that the divorce was final and the two were not come back together in marriage again.

Jesus then responded by simply saying that Moses permitted this because the hearts of people were hard...Moses wasn't given this to write because it was the heart of God but instead because God knew the hearts of the people were hard and their needed to be a finality to the sinful decisions of the people to divorce and separate.

So Jesus knew what the debate was about and he knew why they were asking Him about these things but look at what Jesus says in response as He goes back even further than Moses all the way back to Adam and Eve and the first marriage to teach them about God's intention for marriage.

Look at verses 6-9 which say this <sup>6</sup>But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' <sup>7</sup>'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, <sup>8</sup>and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. <sup>9</sup>Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.'

I want you to take note here that Jesus is speaking about marriage and He is establishing the way that God intended marriage to be...How many of you have heard the argument that Jesus never addresses gay marriage or alternative relationships? I believe that Jesus here in this passage let's us know about the kind of marriage that God approves of and because of that everything outside of this would be considered sinful.

Here Jesus makes it clear that in the beginning God made them what? MALE AND FEMALE...This is how Adam and Eve were designed and anyone that wants to argue otherwise does not have a problem with me or you but with what God's Word teaches...The reality is there

are two genders and the gender of each person is assigned by God in the womb. You are either a genetic female or a genetic male and a marriage for that matter is only sanctioned by God as a genetic male and a genetic female are brought together.

Anything outside of that is against the clear boundaries that God set all the way back in Genesis when He brought together the first marriage.

Verse 7 states that when two people get married that a man is to leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. This means that the intention of God is that a married couple leave and cleave as the saying goes... Mommy and daddy are a part of their kids lives for sure but when it comes to marriage a couple has to figure it out, pay their own bills and work through their own issues... Yes, parents can help and do so in many ways but a marriage is meant to be separate from the parents of the two entering into it.

That word joined in the text before us means to be glued together... and verse 8 says that the two become one flesh... this means that everything the man has becomes the woman's and all the woman has becomes the man's... The two should be one in every way from finances to decisions about retirement to bank accounts to decisions when it comes to raising children or even what church is attended. God has intended that marriages would do things together not separately.

I want you to think for just a minute about two items being glued together... Let's take two pieces of wood for example and you glue them together and you let them sit for a few days but then you realize you glued it in the wrong place and you proceed to work to take apart



the two boards that are glued together...Doing so is going to cause all kinds of damage to the two pieces of wood and I have to say that when two people become one in marriage and they are glued together but then they are torn apart what is going to happen? There is going to be a lot of tearing and scarring.

**What God has intended in verse 9 is that when a marriage** comes together in the eyes of God it would never be torn apart.

And I want to say before we move on here that if you are in a broken marriage it doesn't mean its over. God is for your marriage and I as your pastor am going to be for your marriage...Perhaps your marriage is a wreck right now and you know it...God can do a work as you humble yourself to His ways and you pray for that spouse and you work through those issues that you are facing...The real key to a successful restoration of a marriage is both individuals being accountable to each other, to the people that are ministering to them and they are being open to the work of the Holy Spirit.

If you have a hard heart in your marriage I pray the Lord will convict you of it and soften your heart by His great power. If you need help in your marriage please reach out as I would love to be available.

So Jesus lays out the standard and then we come to verses 10-12 which say <sup>10</sup>In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter. <sup>11</sup>So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her." <sup>12</sup>And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."



Once again the disciples had questions and the Lord as they asked about it simply said that anyone that divorces his wife to marry another commits adultery and vice versa... Now I want to say to you that this is specifically speaking of those who are entering into a relationship with someone else and then justifying themselves in getting a divorce from the first person they were married to in order to marry another... That simply said is adultery, wrong and sinful.

I do want to say that if you have happened to do this in your life that this is not the unforgivable sin... Jesus can and does forgive us even when we make great mistakes in our marriages.

The standard of marriage is that God intends it would last... anything outside of that except for the reason of adultery or abandonment is sinful in nature.

I suppose I would add that of all the people in the world that believers in Jesus should be seen as getting a divorce the least... Sadly statistics say that even in the church the divorce rate is right there with those in the world. Simply said that should not be so.

Ok let's move on here as Jesus again ministers to the little children if you look at verses 13-16 which say <sup>13</sup> Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. <sup>14</sup> But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. <sup>15</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." <sup>16</sup> And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.

So the little children were brought to Jesus by the parents and the idea was that He might touch them and bless them which was something common for rabbis to do in the times of Jesus.

And of course, the disciples again have it all wrong in that they were upset and even rebuked the parents for doing this...we might think of them as saying “Don’t you see the Master is too busy for the children?”

I love it though that Jesus stands up for the kids and it says He was greatly displeased that the disciples did this and He said that the little children were to be allowed to come to Him and this should tell us even today that the Lord is for the children coming to know Him and serve Him...Don’t fall for the mistake of thinking kids can’t understand...Many times they understand the grace and forgiveness of Jesus more than we do as adults.

And then the Lord said to the disciples that they needed to receive the kingdom of God like a child...and we might ask what does that mean? Well think about how kids behave as they go through life with their parents. Kids have a full trust that their parents are going to provide for them, they aren’t really all that worried about where the next meal is going to come from. Kids are dependent, trusting, they receive what is offered to them openly and they don’t have the constant sense of needing to deserve something before they are given it...Instead they simply trust their parents to help them...and so should we be when it comes to receiving God’s kingdom...we should have a childlike faith and trust that God is good and He wants to help us.

Now perhaps you are here and you had a horrible earthly father...This can make it more difficult but we must learn to look beyond the

physical fathers who failed so greatly and stand on the Word and what it says about our heavenly Father...That He loves us, that He wants us, That He desires we would follow Him and He desires what is best for us.

And then notice the Lord blessed the little children that were brought to Him...again probably a humiliating situation for the disciples as the Lord blessed the very kids they were trying to keep away from Jesus...May we make it our ambition to work towards bringing any and all to our great Master knowing He always has time for them and wants to minister to them and bless them. Not one person on the planet is disregarded or pushed away by Jesus.

Now we come to the rich young ruler a narrative I think many of us are familiar with but let's look at verse 17 as we are introduced to this individual it says <sup>17</sup> **Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"**

You can imagine the word has traveled through the land of Israel and everyone has heard of the teacher whose name is Jesus and I can just imagine this young man as he was going through life...He really had it all when it came to the possessions and the goods of this world. He could have anything he wanted and he wasn't just rich but the other gospels make it clear that he was young and he was a ruler meaning he had power at his fingertips.

This young man reminds me of those in this world who have it all...I think of the young actors of this world who have fortune and they have popularity and they can really do anything they want as they go through life.

When it came to this young rich man even though he had it all he knew something was wrong in his heart, that he was missing something as he went through life, that though he had it all he didn't have the one thing that would last forever and that was eternal life...I get the idea that this young man had a dread in his heart when he thought about the afterlife.

And so naturally knowing something was missing from his life he came to the conclusion that perhaps Jesus the man he had heard so much about might have the answers to his quest for eternal life and coming to him we are told he knelt before him...a great act of humility for a ruler and he simply asked him what was it that he must do to have eternal life.

I believe this young man is like so many of those who are in this world in that he felt the need in his life TO DO SOMETHING to earn eternal life...By and large the biggest reason people give for being worthy of having eternal life is that they have been good people, that they aren't like the sinful people down the road who do so much evil...Many believe it is because of their good deeds that they will enter into heaven for eternity.

Instead the Bible teaches that none of us are righteous, that we all fall short, that we all need a Savior and that Savior is Jesus Christ as He came and gave His life on the cross for the sins of the world and this salvation that is found in Jesus is received as a GIFT not as something that is EARNED...The Bible openly declares the failure of man and the grace of God that is found in Jesus...Those who receive Him in their heart are given the promise of eternity and we are given a deposit of that guarantee in that the Holy Spirit comes and lives inside of us.

For the rich man he wanted to know what he had to do to inherit eternal life and the Lord responded to him in verses 18-20 which say **<sup>18</sup> So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, *that is*, God. <sup>19</sup> You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’ ”** **<sup>20</sup> And he answered and said to Him, “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.”**

Jesus challenges this man to think about who He really is when He asked him why he called Him good and that only God is good...this would have caused the young man to consider who Jesus really was much like when Jesus asked the disciples “Who do you say that I am”

And then the Lord laid out the commands and requirements for someone to enter eternity based on their works...The Lord said you must know and keep the commandments and he brings up adultery and murder and stealing and bearing false witness which means to lie about others and He says don't defraud or take advantage of others...and then the Lord tosses in that he was also to honor His father and mother.

We might keep in mind that Jesus had already taught that it was not just the outward actions of adultery and murder but that the inward heart of a person also made someone guilty of these sins...If we remember adultery includes the lust of the heart and murder includes the hatred of another...Simply said you and I should look at this list and simply say that we have failed in this in one way or another.

But not this young man...He felt that he was quite moral in his life and that he had no real sin within his heart...isn't it interesting that even though he was considered to be so moral that he still knew that he was missing something when it came to eternal life?

I believe that all of humanity if they simply examine their lives falls short of the glory of God and they know that they are sinners...The Word even teaches that one of the jobs of the Holy Spirit is to convict the world of sin.

It's amazing how self-deceived the world can be when it comes to being good...Even Paul thought He was a good person when it came to his religion and he said this in Philippians 3:4-6 which says **4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.** Be very careful that you don't think highly of yourself when it comes to morality...you are in need of a Savior just as much as everyone else in the world.

Let's see how Jesus responded if you look at verses 21-22 which says **21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."**

**22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.**



Now I just love it that we are told here that Jesus looked at the man after this response, **and it says that He loved him...can you imagine the look in the eyes of Jesus?** Can you imagine his emotion towards this young man...**It would seem that the rich young man was so close to the kingdom of God and yet here in the response of Jesus we learn that** this young man had a large idol in his life.

**The Lord says if you want eternity then you must personally** go and sell all you have and come and follow me...**In other words you must set your money** to the side and minister to others.

**And we are told this young man went away sorrowful for he** had great possessions. **I think there are a great many people in this world that Jesus calls to leave things behind** that they might follow Him and know Him **and they simply refuse to do so because they love their sin or their idol more** than the truth that is found in Jesus.

**How many people refuse to leave behind the sin of alcohol** or drugs or the great sin of money? **How many refuse to lay down their lives for the sake of receiving His kingdom?** **How many people just plain old love the darkness of this world and refuse to leave it behind?**

**Maybe you are here today and you know the Lord is saying to you that you need to leave something behind...I can tell you that holding on to that thing is holding you up in life,** that it is causing the Lord to be grieved in His heart **and I can tell you that if you will let go of that sin or that idol that** the Lord will do a great work in your heart.

**The reality is that earning heaven on our own merits and** abilities can never be done...**and this young man just like all of us couldn't let go of what was so** valuable to Him in this world.



I do think that riches can be a great hinderance for many when it comes to entering the kingdom of God...1 Timothy 6:9-10 says <sup>9</sup>**But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.** <sup>10</sup>**For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.**

And over in Luke 12:15 the Word says <sup>15</sup>**And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”**

At the end of the day you are going to find in your life that without Jesus there is an emptiness and a sense of not knowing what will happen to you when you die...but when you choose to follow Him you’ll find a peace in your heart and a satisfaction that no amount of money can ever fill.

So the young man leaves sorrowful and then Jesus turns to the disciples if you look at verses 23-25 which say <sup>23</sup>**Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!”** <sup>24</sup>**And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!** <sup>25</sup>**It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”**

Notice that as Jesus told the disciples that it was hard for the rich to enter God’s kingdom that the disciples we are told were astonished...why would they respond that way? It was widely held

amongst the people of the days of Jesus that if you were blessed financially it meant you were blessed spiritually or that God was pleased with your life...so for the disciples to hear Jesus say it's hard for the wealthy to enter the kingdom was hard for them to comprehend...it challenged them in the depths of their hearts.

We also have here the famous saying that says it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter God's kingdom...I'll let you research that on your own and come to your own conclusions but I think personally Jesus was talking about a large item going through a very tiny opening...it just simply could not be done.

Trusting in riches will never lead to an eternity with God...Only trusting Jesus produces that in our lives.

Verses 26-27 say <sup>26</sup> **And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?"**

<sup>27</sup> **But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men *it is* impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."**

The disciples said who can be saved if the rich aren't saved? And Jesus simply says that with men its impossible but with God all things are possible.

You know often times we might look at someone we know or that we have interacted with on numerous occasions and we might say to ourselves that person will never come to know Jesus...and yet the Lord just has a way of getting people's attention, convicting them of sin, and bringing them to Himself. Jesus can save the rich as well as the poor and any time an individual gives their heart to Christ we should take note that a miracle has occurred.

So Jesus has told the rich young ruler to leave everything to follow Him and then he would have treasure in heaven and then enters Peter and you can just imagine the wheels were turning in his head as we look at verses 28-31 which say

**28 Then Peter began to say to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You.”**

**29 So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, 30 who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. 31 But many *who are first* will be last, and the last first.”**

Peter was always the opportunist wasn’t he? He simply says “OH LORD, we have left everything to follow you...what can we expect because of our great deeds?”

And I do appreciate that the Lord didn’t outright rebuke Peter but instead He simply let them all know that choosing to leave all behind to serve Him would produce benefits both in this world and in the world to come.

I think we’ll leave it at that for tonight and I’ll simply say do you realize that serving Jesus produces a multitude of benefits in your life? Both in the here and now and on into eternity.

I can honestly say that I am so thankful the Lord gave me the opportunity to leave my old life behind and embrace the life and plans

that He had for me...and I would never trade that even for the whole world.

Do you know Jesus tonight? Have you met the Savior? If not I can't encourage you enough to lay down your sins and your idols and to choose to embrace the life that Jesus has for you.

Let's pray

## **Mark 10:1-31 “Marriage, Kids and a Rich Young Ruler”**

Cross References

### **Verses 1-2**

Matthew 19:3

Deuteronomy 24:1

Malachi 2:16

### **Verses 18-20**

Philippians 3:4-6

### **Verses 21-22**

1 Timothy 6:9-10

Luke 12:15