

Gospel of Mark 10:1- 52 – Lesson 10

Mark chapter 10 opens with one of the most debated and emotionally charged topics in Scripture: **divorce and remarriage**. This passage reveals not only God's original intent for marriage but also Jesus' heart for forgiveness. Let's walk through these verses one by one, and draw out the theological and practical truths.

Mark 10:1:

'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.'

Jesus moves into the region of **Perea**, east of the Jordan River. Crowds gather, and as always, He teaches them. Jesus' popularity continues, but the setting shifts toward the **final journey to Jerusalem**.

Verse 2:

'The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" testing Him.'

This wasn't an honest question—it was a **trap**. The Pharisees hoped Jesus would say something to anger either side of a long-standing debate between two rabbinical schools: **Hillel**, which allowed divorce for almost any reason, and **Shammai**, which allowed it only in cases of sexual immorality. Worse still, Jesus is now in **Herod Antipas's territory**, where John the Baptist was executed for criticizing Herod's unlawful marriage. The Pharisees may have hoped to stir political trouble for Jesus too.

Verses 3–5:

"And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her." And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept."

Jesus points them to **Scripture**, not tradition. Yes, **Deuteronomy 24** allowed for divorce, but not because it was God's will—it was a concession due to human **hardness of heart**. That law was meant to **protect women**, not endorse divorce.

In the ancient world of Israel, according to the law of Moses, when a divorce occurred, it was primarily designed to **protect the woman**, since she **did not have the legal right to divorce her husband**. Only the **husband had the authority** to initiate a divorce.

When a man chose to divorce his wife, he was required to **give her a certificate of divorce**—a legal document proving that she was no longer bound to him. This certificate was critical. It allowed her to **remarry lawfully**, demonstrating to any future husband that she had been **legally released** from her previous marriage.

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Without that document, she had **no way to prove her marital status**. A man considering her for marriage wouldn't risk entering a marriage relationship with someone who might still be married for fear of being stoned to death; without this document, she would likely be **rejected**, left **vulnerable**, and at high risk of **poverty and social isolation**.

Verses 6–8:

"But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh."

Jesus goes back to **Genesis 1 and 2**, to God's original design. Marriage is **God-ordained, binary, exclusive, and permanent**. The phrase "one flesh" speaks of more than physical union—it's a spiritual and covenantal bond.

Verse 9:

"Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Here is the principle: marriage is not a human contract—it's a **divine covenant**. Human laws may allow separation, but God's intent is **permanence**. Jesus doesn't side with Hillel or Shammai—He sides with **God's original creation plan**.

To fully grasp the heart of God—especially in matters as serious as adultery and divorce—we must balance the **truth of the Law** with the **grace of Christ**. A powerful example of this is found in **John 8**, where Jesus is confronted by the religious leaders who bring before Him a woman caught in adultery.

Let's walk through this account.

John 8:3–6: *"Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?' This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear."*

Let's pause here.

The scribes and Pharisees were **not genuinely seeking justice**. Their goal was to **trap Him**. If Jesus affirmed the Law of Moses and said, "Yes, stone her," He could be accused of defying Roman law, which reserved execution for Roman courts. But if He said, "Don't stone her," He could be accused of **disregarding the Law of Moses**.

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It's worth noting: they brought **only the woman**, though the Law required **both the man and the woman** caught in adultery to be punished (see **Leviticus 20:10**). This reveals their true motives—they weren't defending righteousness; they were setting a trap.

Yet Jesus does something unexpected: **He stoops down and writes on the ground**, as though He doesn't even hear them. This silent act speaks volumes. Jesus **doesn't react to manipulation**, and He **doesn't rush to judgment**. Instead, He takes time—possibly to let conviction rise in the hearts of the accusers, or to turn their attention inward. All the accusers leave, and Jesus is still with the woman.

Jesus reveals His **heart of mercy** toward those who have fallen. He does not **excuse sin**, but neither does He condemn the sinner who comes humbly. Jesus is full of **grace and truth** (John 1:14).

Now she had to have two witnesses against her to be stoned. They're all gone, no witnesses. So, she's not going to be condemned. She's not going to be stoned. She said, no, man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more. This is a perfect example of Jesus forgiving our sins.

Another example is the Woman at the Well in John 4:1–42.

Jesus travels through **Samaria** and stops at **Jacob's well** near the town of **Sychar**. Jesus meets a **Samaritan woman** who comes alone to draw water. He asks her for a drink, beginning a conversation that breaks multiple cultural norms—Jews didn't associate with Samaritans, and men rarely spoke publicly to women, especially alone.

As they speak, Jesus reveals her deep spiritual need. He tells her about **“living water”**—the eternal life that only He can give. Then, He gently uncovers her personal history. She had been married five times and was now living with someone outside of marriage. But notice what Jesus doesn't do: He doesn't condemn her.

Amazed by His insight, she realizes He is no ordinary man. Instead of being ashamed, the woman runs back to town and **tells everyone**, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (John 4:29). Her testimony causes many in the town to come to Jesus and believe in Him.

Mark 10:10–12:

*In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter. So He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. **And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.**”*

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In private, the disciples seek clarification. Jesus reinforces the seriousness of **breaking the marriage covenant**. Notably, Jesus **elevates women** here—they usually couldn't initiate divorce but He recognizes they can.

This is not meant to be a weapon, but a **warning**. God's standard hasn't changed. However, it must be understood within the full counsel of Scripture:

- **Matthew 19:9** allows for divorce in the case of **sexual immorality**.
- **First Corinthians 7** gives allowance in cases of **abandonment by an unbelieving spouse**.

Still, even in cases where divorce is allowed, **reconciliation** and **forgiveness** are always God's preferred path (see **Hosea 3**). These verses are heavy, especially in today's world of broken relationships. But remember: **Jesus forgives**. Remarrying after divorce is not a continuing sin, it is a one-time event that Jesus forgives.

He forgave the **woman caught in adultery** and showed mercy to the **woman at the well** who had five husbands. His call is not to shame but to **redeem**. Divorce is not the **unpardonable sin**. It is a serious matter, but one that falls under the **blood of Christ**.

Mark 10:1–12 is not just about marriage and divorce—it's about the **unchanging nature of God** in a culture that constantly shifts. His standards are rooted in **creation**, not culture. Yet His heart is full of **compassion** for those who have fallen, failed, or hurt deeply.

So if you've been wounded by divorce, or if you've failed in marriage, come to the One who offers **both truth and grace**—Jesus Christ, who is the same **yesterday, today, and forever** (Hebrews 13:8).

On The Road to Glory there is a Cost of Greatness.

Verse 13:

"Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them."

The disciples, perhaps trying to protect Jesus from distraction or maintain His image as a teacher for adults, rebuke those bringing children. Yet their actions miss Jesus' heart completely.

Verses 14-15:

"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. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.'"

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Jesus is not just endorsing childlike faith; He's declaring it a requirement for entering the kingdom. Children trust easily, receive simply, and don't try to earn their way in. The kingdom belongs to those who come humbly and dependently.

Verse 16:

"And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them."

This is a beautiful moment. The Creator of the universe holds children close and blesses them. His kingdom values the vulnerable.

I'd like to walk you down a path of thought about the little children that Jesus says, "*for of such is the kingdom of God.*" I first explored this years ago. You may or may not arrive at the same conclusion as I did—but let's examine it together and see where we end up. Let's think outside the box for a moment.

Let's begin with the rapture. When the rapture takes place, how many Christians will remain on the earth?

None.

All believers will be caught up to be with the Lord, as described in **First Thessalonians 4:16–17**. At that moment, there will be **zero Christians** left on earth.

However, Scripture clearly shows that people **do come to faith in Christ after the rapture**. We read of the **two witnesses** in **Revelation 11**, and the sealing of **144,000 Jewish evangelists** in **Revelation 7**. We know that after the rapture, the Gospel continues to spread, and many become believers during the tribulation.

Now fast-forward to the **second coming of Christ**—this is not the rapture, but His return to earth in power and glory. When Jesus returns, how many Christians are with Him?

All of them.

Every believer, whether raised from the dead or raptured, will return with Him in **glorified bodies** (Revelation 19:14). No believer will remain behind in a mortal state.

One of the first events following His return is the **judgment of the nations**, often called the **Sheep and Goat Judgment** (see **Matthew 25:31–46**). Here, Jesus separates the righteous from the unrighteous. The unbelievers—the "goats"—are cast into the **lake of fire**, including the **Beast** and the **False Prophet** (Revelation 19:20).

So, let's consider: If all unbelievers are judged and removed... how many non-believers remain on earth?

Zero.

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And how many believers are still on earth in natural, physical bodies (not glorified)?

None.

All believers at this point have glorified, resurrected bodies and are with Christ.

So, here's the question: **Who is left on earth in mortal bodies at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom?**

The answer may surprise some—it can only be **those under the age of accountability**. These individuals are not held morally responsible due to their age or capacity, and therefore were not judged as unbelievers. Jesus' statement in **Mark 10:14**—*"Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God"*—may not be just metaphorical. It could be **literally descriptive** of who populates the earth at the beginning of Christ's reign.

Traditionally, many believe the age of accountability is around **12**, since that's when Jesus was found in the temple dialoguing with teachers (**Luke 2:42–49**). However, it's entirely possible that God's standard is **higher**—perhaps closer to the age of **20**, as suggested in **Numbers 14:29**, where those under 20 were not held accountable for rebellion in the wilderness.

But when Jesus says that the kingdom belongs to children, we shouldn't be too quick to dismiss it as purely symbolic. It could be a reality we have overlooked.

Verse 17:

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?"

This man is eager and respectful, but his question reveals a works-based mindset—"What shall I do?"

Verse 18:

So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God."

Jesus challenges him to think about what "good" means. If the man believes Jesus is good, is he ready to accept Him as God?

Verses 19-20:

"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.'" And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."

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The man claims outward obedience to the Law. He sees eternal life as something to earn. But something is still missing.

Verse 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."

Jesus sees into the heart. The man's wealth is his idol. Discipleship requires surrender. Jesus doesn't water down the call—He raises the standard.

Verse 22:

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

His outward obedience was real, but his heart was bound by wealth. He desired eternal life but wasn't willing to give up control.

Then Jesus beholding him, loved him. Now, this incident is only recorded in Mark. And we introduced this idea when we were getting started on the Book of Mark because this could very well have been Mark. Some commentaries suggest that it was because he's the only one that records it and it says that Jesus beholding him, loved him.

And so it's like he did go get rid of his possessions and come back possibly. But that's an assertion. And so he loved him. He said to him, one thing, thou lack us. Go that way. Sell whatsoever thou has and give it to the poor. And thou shalt have treasure in heaven and come take up the cross and follow me.

Jesus still says to us today, go and sell everything and come and follow me.

Verses 23-25:

"Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" 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! 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."

The problem is not money—it's trust in money. Wealth creates a false sense of security that can blind people to their need for God. The imagery of the camel and the needle underscores the impossibility of salvation through human effort.

Verses 26-27:

"And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?"

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

Salvation is a divine miracle. No one can be saved by their own merit—but God can do what we cannot.

Verses 28-31:

"Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You." 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, 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. But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Peter might think, "If the rich aren't going to be able to be saved, who can be saved? If the rich if it's impossible for the rich, who are, we're just fishermen."

The rich were those people that had the advantages and they would think that they would have the ability to be saved easier than the poor people.

Jesus reassures Peter that the sacrifices made for the gospel are not forgotten. Rewards come both now (spiritual family, provision, and purpose) and in eternity. But Jesus also flips worldly values upside down: greatness in the kingdom is not about status but humility.

Verses 32-34:

Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

Jesus walks ahead with purpose. He knows what lies ahead and embraces it fully. This is the **third time** in Mark He predicts His death, and this time He adds even more detail—mocking, scourging, spitting. Yet the resurrection promise remains.

Verses 35-37:

"Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory."

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The disciples still expect a **political kingdom**. James and John seek **positions of power**, not realizing that glory in God's kingdom comes through **suffering and service**.

Verses 38-40:

"But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared."

Jesus gently tells them they don't understand the **cost of glory**. The "cup" and "baptism" represent His coming suffering and death. James would be martyred; John would endure exile and persecution. The Father alone determines positions in eternity.

Verses 41-45:

"And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Jesus corrects their thinking. **True greatness** in the kingdom is measured by **service**, not power. Leadership isn't dominance—it's humility. Jesus Himself is the ultimate model: the eternal King became a suffering servant and gave His life to ransom us.

Jesus reminds us that the kingdom of God operates on completely different values than the world. Children are models of faith. Wealth can hinder salvation if it replaces dependence on God. Eternal rewards outweigh earthly sacrifice. True greatness is found in serving others.

And at the center of it all is **Jesus**, who came not to be served, but to serve—and to give His life as a ransom for many.

Are you willing to follow Him on that path?

Next, we will review the story of Jesus Healing Blind Bartimaeus.

Mark 10:46:

"Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging."

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Jesus approaches Jericho, a city rich with biblical history. As He leaves, a large crowd follows Him. Blindness was common in the ancient world, and Bartimaeus' position as a roadside beggar shows his desperate condition, both physically and socially.

Verse 47:

"And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'"

Bartimaeus recognizes Jesus' identity not just as a healer but as the **Messianic "Son of David."** His plea for mercy reveals both **faith** and **understanding** of who Jesus is. But he is a blind man. How can he know such things?

Verse 48:

"Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'"

The crowd tries to silence him, but Bartimaeus persists. True faith is often tested by opposition. His louder cry shows **bold, determined faith** that refuses to be discouraged.

Verse 49:

"So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.'"

Jesus **stops** for the cry of faith. Though many voices surround Him, He hears the one voice of faith. This shows Jesus' attentiveness to the sincere heart.

Verse 50:

"And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus."

Bartimaeus' act of **throwing aside his cloak** is significant. His cloak likely represented his only possession and protection. Casting it away symbolizes **full trust** that Jesus would change his situation permanently.

Verse 51:

"So Jesus answered and said to him, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' The blind man said to Him, 'Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.'"

Jesus asks a question designed to draw out a clear confession of faith. Bartimaeus responds by addressing Him as "Rabboni," meaning "Master" or "Teacher"—a title of deep respect. Rather than seeking wealth, fame, or power, Bartimaeus simply asks for his sight to be restored. Although Jesus already knew what Bartimaeus desired, He wanted Bartimaeus to express it personally. In the same way today, Jesus invites us to bring our needs before Him openly and trustingly, even though He already knows them.

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Verse 52:

"Then Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your faith has made you well.' And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road."

Each healing Jesus performs is deeply personal. Sometimes He instructs those He heals to stay and testify to others, encouraging them to believe in Him. In Bartimaeus' case, Jesus allows him to immediately join the journey and follow Him after receiving his sight. Jesus makes it clear that it was Bartimaeus' faith that brought about his healing.

The Greek word for "made well" also means **saved**. Bartimaeus doesn't just regain his physical sight—he gains **spiritual sight** and immediately **becomes a follower** of Christ.

The story of Bartimaeus powerfully illustrates the nature of true faith. His persistent and bold cries for mercy show a faith that refuses to be silenced by opposition. Bartimaeus recognized Jesus for who He truly is—**the promised Son of David**—and when Jesus called, he responded without hesitation.

Casting aside his cloak, he left behind the security of his old life, trusting completely in Christ. After receiving his sight, Bartimaeus immediately followed Jesus with a wholehearted devotion. His example reminds us that genuine spiritual vision comes through faith, and that Jesus always hears and answers the heartfelt cries of those who trust Him.