

## Mk. 10:1-12 “What God Has Joined”

**For the Children:** When I was a young boy, I sometimes assembled model airplanes. You had to glue the pieces together, and make sure they were clamped tightly together until the glue was dry. You certainly didn't want anyone to interfere with it. If the glue was not dry, it might all fall apart. What God has glued together, people shouldn't interfere with. If they pull apart what He has taken trouble to join together, that is a very bad thing. God has joined husband and wife together. No one should try to break up their marriage – not even the couple themselves. To do so is to seek to destroy God's work and break His commandments. **Questions:** Why do so many marriages break down today? What are some other reasons Jesus gives for a husband and wife to stay together? How were the Pharisees trying to use this to trap Him?

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### Introduction:

#### First Point: The Trap

- The Hostile Question: The Pharisees “test” (or “tempt”) the Lord to say something that will cause Him trouble. They ask if it's lawful for a man to divorce his wife. Dt. 24:1-3 implied that it was, but the Jews argued about the grounds – was the “indecency” of Dt. 24 immorality, or simply something that displeased the husband?
- The Danger: The Pharisees were apparently trying to get Jesus to say something unpopular, or to disagree with the OT (or with John the Baptist, who taught about divorce). Or they were trying to get Him to take sides with one or other school of thought on this issue, as though He were not unique. They may also have hoped that His answer would anger Herod and Herodias, whose marriage involved an unlawful divorce, and into whose region Jesus had now come – for that is what had led to John the Baptist's death.

#### Second Point: The Answer

- Focus on Principle: The Pharisees asked about whether divorce was *permitted*. The Lord redirected the question to what Moses *commanded* – a positive “order” or principle. He made clear that Dt. 24 was a regulating of an existing evil, not a command that one ought to divorce (vss. 4-5). This regulation was necessary due to the hardness of their hearts, their sin
- Other Scripture: “What Moses commanded” brings in other passages from the Pentateuch, not just Dt. 24. The Lord specifically cites Gen. 1:27, 2:24, 5:2. These passages teach the moral, abiding principle that man and woman were created male and female for the purpose of marriage – for a man to leave his parents and be joined or united to his wife. They were made to be one flesh, not two. This is the “creation ordinance” that lies behind the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment and Dt. 24. The primary directive about marriage is that no one should try to dissolve what God has joined together. The secondary regulating of sinful behavior limits the bad consequences when the primary principle is ignored
- The Risk of Adultery: The Lord adds another argument – that (illegitimate divorce leads to adultery if either party should re-marry. Other passages qualify what is legitimate divorce – again, when man's sin gets in the way. One may divorce due to immorality (Mt. 19:9, Dt. 24:1) or when an unbeliever deserts a believer (1 Cor. 7:15)

#### Third Point: The Equalizer

- Equal Value: The Lord also shows that the husband and wife have the same value and are under the same law in marriage. Dt. 24 protected the wife from a husband who discards his wife then wants her back when it suits him. V. 11 shows that illegitimate divorce and remarriage by a man is a sin of adultery against his wife - just as she would sin against him in the reverse situation. This was new to the Jews, who saw adultery as only against the man, and divorce as being by him rather than by the woman. The Lord's teaching here implicitly condemned Herodias and Herod
- A Messianic Proclamation: In all this the Lord is showing His Messianic authority – giving authoritative teaching unlike the Pharisees, and profound new insights into the Law. He avoids immediate disaster, but provokes Herod, who will later be involved in the trial that sends Christ to the cross

### Conclusion