

## Living in Grace

### Mark 10:1-16

“Let us break bread together on our knees.”

That’s a great way to start this sermon on one of the most problematic passages in the entire New Testament today. “Let us break bread together.” Let us remember Jesus Christ’s message of Grace. Let us take this bread which Jesus took on the night of his what? His betrayal. Let us break the bread, the symbol of Jesus Christ’s body crucified, suffering pain and anguish that we might learn what it means to follow Christ.

Let’s start on our knees in humble gratitude. Let’s start there and then let’s take a deep look at Mark 10:1-16 where Jesus is firm, very firm, some would say harsh to those who divorce. But before we go there, remember, we are on our knees. So, listen to the Word of God.

### Mark 10:1-16

**10** Jesus left that place and went beyond the Jordan and into the region of Judea. Crowds gathered around him again and, as usual, he taught them. <sup>2</sup> Some Pharisees came and, trying to test him, they asked, “Does the Law allow a man to divorce his wife?”

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, “What did Moses command you?”

<sup>4</sup> They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a divorce certificate and to divorce his wife.”

<sup>5</sup> Jesus said to them, “He wrote this commandment for you because of your unyielding hearts. <sup>6</sup> At the beginning of creation, *God made them male and female.*<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>7</sup> *Because of this, a man should leave his father and mother and be joined together with his wife,* <sup>8</sup> *and the two will be one flesh.*<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>9</sup> Therefore, humans must not pull apart what God has put together.”

<sup>10</sup> Inside the house, the disciples asked him again about this. <sup>11</sup> He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; <sup>12</sup> and if a wife divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

<sup>13</sup> People were bringing children to Jesus so that he would bless them. But the disciples scolded them. <sup>14</sup> When Jesus saw this, he grew angry and said to them, “Allow the children to come to me. Don’t forbid them, because God’s kingdom belongs to people like these children. <sup>15</sup> I assure you that whoever doesn’t welcome God’s kingdom like a child will never enter it.” <sup>16</sup> Then he hugged the children and blessed them. (Then he hugged the children and blessed them).

## Living in Grace Mark 10:1-16

Pharisees came up “trying to test Jesus.” In fact, they were trying to get him in trouble with the powers that be. We’ve seen this before where the Pharisees were up to no good. They ask, “Does the Law allow a man to divorce his wife?” Jesus doesn’t bite. He doesn’t fall for their legal trap. Jesus stands above the fray. He clarifies, “What Law? Jewish law, Greco-Roman law, or God’s law?” He asks, “What does Moses command?”

They all know the Torah and they answer. “A man can write a certificate of divorce.” Jesus redirects the question not to the legalities of divorce, but looks at the legalities of acknowledging a broken relationship.

I don’t know about you, but I’ve seen broken people going through divorce. Our youngest son, Stephen, lived in a demeaning relationship for three years as his “wife” broke his trust and humiliated him over and over and over and over again. Until he finally said, “Enough!” and filed for divorce which he paid for.

Even when the judge was seen and the papers were signed, the divorce was final, Stephen was still broken. Not sleeping. Not eating. Just worn down.

Luckily he had his music. He wrote painful lyrics of “How can I ever trust again?” and “How could I have been so ‘blinking’ stupid?”

I have not shared those lyrics with anyone for they are so dark and filled with such pain, grief, resentment, hopelessness. It was to this condition that Jesus said, “Moses wrote this commandment for you because of your unyielding hearts.”

Moses said divorce is legal because of our unyielding hearts, “stone-filled hearts”, our hardened hearts, our crowded-out hearts, our broken hearts. Divorce was not in God’s plan, not in God’s intention. Unity, oneness, wholeness is what God intends.

“If you divorce and remarry, you are committing adultery.” Luke has the same conversation in chapter 16.

And in Matthew, Jesus says “If you even look at someone lustfully, you are committing adultery.” Is there any way around committing adultery? Are we all NOT fallen? Broken? Sinful in need of forgiveness?

Remember too, that Jesus says in John 8 when the crowd found an adulterous woman (where was the man?) and they were ready to stone her? Jesus said, “Whoever is without sin may...cast the first stone.” Now who of us could throw that first stone? No one. None of us. We are all broken in some way or another.

Today we receive into membership the Covid Confirmation Class. Jackson, Daniel, Calla, Daisy all come with celebration and excitement but they also come with their own brokennesses (if that is even a word).

We know that Jackson nearly died one year ago from an aneurism. You’d never know that by looking at him today. Daisy has often shared her times of hurt and pain. But you’d never know that by looking at her today.

Calla has been on our prayer list more than once due to her medical conditions, but you'd never know that by looking at him today and Daniel admits it himself that he was a difficult kid, but you'd never know that by looking at him today. Brie's mother died when Brie was 12 years old, but you'd never know that by looking at her today.

This is where Jesus is heading in his conversation we read this morning. In our broken and fearful world, where covenants and promises are broken and hurt runs deep, Jesus puts a vulnerable, timid child in their midst and he hugs the children. He picks them up in his ever-loving arms and envelopes them with great care. That is so culturally unacceptable. It's a scandal really. An adult, Jewish, male would never, never hug someone else's children. But Jesus does. Jesus reaches out beyond any barrier we put up and takes us in.

Christ welcomes you and me. Christ welcomes all

We started this sermon on our knees acknowledging what Jesus has done for us. Now we have waded in the murky waters of divorce and brokenness- but Jesus rises above the judgement that is attached to our brokenness. In fact, He offers Himself to be broken, to reach out and grab us, to hold us, to embrace us, to hug us, to welcome us and invites us to live in grace, in His grace.

Amen.

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