

The Gospel of Mark

(Mid-Week Bible Study)

Week 14: Surrendering Everything to Jesus -- Mark 10:1–31

Picture Jesus crossing the Jordan into the region beyond, where the crowds gather around Him again and He, as His custom was, teaches them. Right into that ordinary teaching moment the Pharisees walk with a question that has not really been a question. “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” (10:2). Mark notes that they ask “to test him.” They are not looking for wisdom. They are looking for a way to trip Him up.

Jesus answers as He so often does, by going underneath their question to the heart of God in Scripture. He takes them back behind Moses to Genesis. “From the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female’... ‘they shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (10:6–9). The Pharisees had been bending the law to make divorce easy. Christ pulls the conversation back to the design of God for marriage as it was meant to be.

Then come three more pictures of total surrender. Parents are bringing little children to Jesus, and the disciples scold them as if His time is too important. Jesus, indignant, calls the children to Him, takes them in His arms, and says, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it” (10:14–15). A rich young man kneels in the road and asks what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus, looking at him, loves him, and tells him to sell everything, give to the poor, come and follow. The young man walks away sorrowful. Jesus turns to the disciples and tells them how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.

Mark 10:1–31 is a chapter about what it actually means to surrender everything to Jesus. The covenant of marriage in its God-designed shape. The childlike posture in which the kingdom is received. The willingness to let go of the possessions and securities we have been quietly leaning on. The promise that whatever we leave for Christ will be more than restored by the One who has called us. This week we sit at Christ’s feet and let Him press on the places we have not yet fully surrendered.

Group Discussion: Mark 10:1–31 places four sharp scenes side by side: marriage, children, the rich young man, and the question of what it costs to follow Jesus. Each scene presses on a different place where surrender is required. What do these four scenes together teach us about the kind of disciple Christ is forming, and where do you see Christians today (including in our own families and congregations) most likely to stop short of the full surrender Jesus calls for?

Personal Reflection: Jesus told the rich young man, “You lack one thing” (10:21). It was a kind, exact word, spoken in love, to a man whose life looked successful and devout but whose heart

was held by something. Where in your own life is there “one thing” Christ has been quietly putting His finger on, and what would it take to actually let it go this week?

Read Mark 10:1–31

Study Questions

1. When the Pharisees test Jesus with a question about divorce, He goes back behind Moses to Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 and concludes, “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (10:6–9). What is Jesus teaching about the nature and permanence of marriage as God designed it, and how does Genesis 1–2 ground the New Testament’s vision of marriage as a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman?
2. Privately the disciples ask Jesus about His teaching on divorce. He says, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery” (10:11–12). Connecting this with Matthew 19:3–9, Malachi 2:13–16, and 1 Corinthians 7:10–16, what is Christ teaching about why God permitted divorce in the Old Testament, the one exception named in Matthew 19:9, the seriousness of the marriage covenant before God, and the call of Christians to pursue marriage on Christ’s terms?
3. Whether you are married or single, divorced or contemplating marriage, the marriage covenant in its God-designed shape calls for a particular kind of surrender. Where in your own attitudes toward marriage (yours, your children’s, your friends’, our culture’s) does Christ’s teaching require honest examination, and how can our church family help one another walk faithfully in this area?
4. When the disciples try to keep little children away from Jesus, He is indignant and says, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it” (10:14–15). What is Jesus teaching about the heart posture in which the kingdom must be received, why a “childlike” reception is different from a childish one, and how this teaching shapes the way the church values and welcomes children today?
5. Where in your own walk has adulthood, expertise, or long church experience produced the kind of self-sufficient posture that finds it hard to receive the kingdom of God like a child, and what would becoming “like a child” mean for you in the specific area where Christ has been pressing on your heart?
6. A man runs up, kneels before Jesus, and asks, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (10:17). Jesus answers him by pointing to the commandments, then by looking at him in love and telling him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” (10:21). What is Christ teaching about saving faith, the place of obedience in the gospel response, the danger of treating discipleship as a list of moral achievements, and the cost of following Him as Lord?
7. Jesus looked at the young man and loved him, and yet did not soften the demand on his life. He named the “one thing” that was holding the young man’s heart. Where in your own life

is there a “one thing” Jesus has been naming with the same kind of loving but uncompromising clarity, and what is making it hard to surrender it?

8. After the young man leaves, Jesus tells the disciples, “How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” (10:23–24), and adds the famous picture of a camel and the eye of a needle (10:25). The disciples are amazed and ask, “Then who can be saved?” What is Christ teaching about the particular dangers of riches for the soul, the impossibility of self-saving religion, and the necessity of the saving work of God in the heart of every disciple (compare 1 Timothy 6:9–10, 17–19)?
9. By global and historical standards, most American Christians are rich. Where do you sense that wealth (your income, your accumulated savings, your home, your possessions, your sense of financial security) is influencing your discipleship in ways you have not fully examined, and what is one specific act of generosity or release Christ may be calling you to this season?
10. Peter says, “See, we have left everything and followed you,” and Jesus responds with one of the most striking promises in the Gospels: “There is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will 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” (10:28–31). What is Christ promising to those who surrender everything to Him in this life, in the age to come, and how does this promise both encourage and reorder the disciple’s expectations about cost and reward?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Genesis 2:18–25, the original design of marriage; Malachi 2:13–16, the LORD’s hatred of treacherous divorce; Matthew 19:3–12, Matthew’s fuller account, including the exception clause; 1 Timothy 6:6–19, godliness with contentment and the right use of wealth; Hebrews 13:4–5, the honor of marriage and freedom from love of money.