

Mark

Chapter Ten

Introduction

Jesus looked ahead to His *resurrection* and farther ahead to His *return*:

He looked ahead to His resurrection in verse thirty-four, saying, "And the third day [the Son of Man] will rise again."

He looked farther ahead to His return in verse forty when He spoke of the positions of honor and authority at His right and left hands - positions that will be granted when He returns to establish His kingdom on earth.

Jesus made it clear that a period of time would separate His resurrection and His return when He said to James and John,

Mark 10:39 "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized..."

His "cup" and His "baptism" were the sufferings He would shortly undergo. He was promising the disciples that they could and should expect to drink cups of suffering and to be baptized in waters of suffering. A period of time would separate His resurrection and His return to establish His kingdom on earth during which Jesus would be absent and the disciples would be despised and rejected and persecuted.

As Jesus approached Jerusalem to drink from His cup and to be baptized with His baptism, His absence from His disciples was weighing on His heart. They knew that He was their King; they expected Him to establish His kingdom on earth. How should they live on earth while their King was absent and the kingdom was postponed?

They should live according to kingdom principles, and according to kingdom priorities! Jesus uses the episodes prior to His

entrance into Jerusalem to illustrate and to communicate certain kingdom principles and priorities they should follow during His absence.

You live during the King's absence - between Jesus' resurrection and His return. You, too, are called upon to live according to the kingdom principals and kingdom priorities Jesus illustrates and communicates in chapter ten:

#1 During His Absence Jesus Calls You
To Kingdom Living In Your House

#2 During His Absence Jesus Calls You
To Kingdom Living In God's House

#3 During His Absence Jesus Calls You
To Kingdom Living Outside Of God's House

#1 During His Absence Jesus Calls You
To Kingdom Living In Your House
(10:1-31)

Marriage. Children. Young adulthood. Leaving home and following Jesus as a disciple.

Those are the themes in these first thirty-one verses. Whether Mark intended for us to see a supernatural progression or not, I can't be certain; but there is a natural progression. A man and woman are married in the Lord. They produce children whom they should desire to lead to the Lord. The children mature into young adults who, in turn, should leave home as disciples.

These verses are about kingdom principles and kingdom priorities in your house during Jesus' absence. You are to be *kingdom partners* and *kingdom parents* who produce *kingdom progeny*.

Kingdom partners are given principles and priorities in verses one through twelve, as Jesus is questioned about divorce.

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.

Mark 10:2 The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" testing Him.

Mark 10:3 And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?"

Mark 10:4 They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her."

Moses, in Deuteronomy 24:1-4, regulated the practice of divorce. In those verses he spoke of the man finding "some uncleanness" in his wife, then giving her a certificate of divorce. The Jews were split over exactly what the phrase "some uncleanness" meant. One group felt that "some uncleanness" referred to some kind of sexual sin. The other group interpreted "some uncleanness" to include anything that a husband found displeasing.

This was an attempt to trap Jesus. The people held strong views on either side. If Jesus agreed with one view over the other, many of His followers would be alienated from Him. Far more sinister was the fact that Jesus was now in the territory governed by Herod Antipas. Herod, you will remember, had imprisoned John the Baptist for condemning him for his own divorce and remarriage!

Jesus took them back beyond the issues to Moses' original intent:

Mark 10:5 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

Moses wasn't giving them the *right* to divorce; he was *regulating* their already widespread practice of divorce. Women had no right to divorce, but the Jewish men, because their hearts were hardened against their spouses, were impulsively divorcing their wives. Moses required a "certificate of divorce" be given to the wife which made it more difficult for men to divorce their wives. Moses wrote what he wrote to *restrain* their divorce rate, not to *raise* it!

Jesus then took them back to God's original intent for marriage:

Mark 10:6 "But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.'

Mark 10:7 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,

Mark 10:8 'and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.

Mark 10:9 "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

God's original intent was and remains heterosexual, monogamous, lifelong marriages.

Mark 10:10 In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter.

Mark 10:11 So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her.

Mark 10:12 "And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Man cannot separate those who have been united in marriage. When husbands and wives, with no grounds other than the hardness of their hearts, divorce one another, they sin and commit adultery in remarriage to another partner.

But hear me out: Man cannot separate those who have been united in marriage, *but God can!* Since God established marriage, He established the rules regarding marriage. Divorce and remarriage to another is permitted by God in certain circumstances. There are certain *scriptural* grounds for divorce in some cases, and in those cases remarriage to another is permissible. Jesus Christ said in Matthew 19 that sexual sin - especially ongoing, habitual, unrepented of sexual sin - was grounds for divorce. The Apostle Paul, in First Corinthians 7, said that desertion by an unbelieving spouse was grounds for divorce and he permitted remarriage. In addition, if your divorced spouse remarries someone else, you are permitted to remarry in the Lord.

I can't cover every possible case and circumstance that you may have personally encountered, or that you may be personally experiencing. These are the general principles that God's Word has given you to guide you in your decisions. My desire, personally and pastorally, is to strike a mature position on divorce and remarriage. I want to stop the flood of divorce among believers and convince more Christians to follow God's plan of remaining married, or of reconciling their marriage, until death parts the couple. I also want to minister God's grace to the many hurting, formerly married believers in our fellowship who may be free to remarry.

You are to be a kingdom partner to your spouse or to your future spouse...

Kingdom parents are given principles and priorities in verses thirteen through sixteen, as Jesus blesses the little children who were coming to Him.

Mark 10:13 Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them.

Mark 10:14 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.

Mark 10:15 "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."

Mark 10:16 And He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them.

We tell kids to "grow up"; Jesus told grown-ups to be like kids! Of course, Jesus was talking about unspoiled children. Jesus wants us to be *childlike*, not *childish*. Children are dependent on others for their needs; they take their problems to mom or dad; they generally live by faith, trusting their parents to care for them. All of these are good examples for us in our relationship with our heavenly Father.

We should bring children to Jesus, not block them from Him. Most people who come to know Jesus Christ as Savior do so at an early age.

Your house is the primary influence in bringing your children to Jesus. You are a kingdom parent...

Kingdom progeny are given principles and priorities in verses seventeen through thirty, as Jesus encounters the rich young ruler.

Mark 10:17 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?"

Mark 10:18 So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

This young man came to Jesus desiring a deeper spiritual walk. He called Jesus "good." Jesus' answer has caused some controversy. Some say that Jesus was denying He is God by what He said. He's not; He simply stated that only God is good, and to address Him in this way was to identify Him with God.

Mark 10:19 "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.'"

Mark 10:20 And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."

Anyone would want a son like this! He had been raised in a godly Jewish home, was familiar with and was following God's Law.

Mark 10:21 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."

Mark 10:22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

His wealth made him poor! He had "great possessions"; but Jesus said, "One thing you lack..." Money is a marvelous servant, but a terrible master.

Mark 10:23 Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!"

Mark 10:24 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!

Mark 10:25 "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."

Jews generally believed that wealth was a sign of God's blessing. Jesus clarified what He meant by saying "how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of heaven." Wealth and prosperity are not bad, but trusting in them is. Jesus gives an illustration: A camel trying to pass through the eye of a sewing or knitting needle. That's how hard it is for those whose trust is in the wealth of this world to trust instead in Jesus and be saved.

Mark 10:26 And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?"

Mark 10:27 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 saw wealth as a sign of God's blessing someone's efforts to be saved. That's why they were greatly astonished; they understood that, if someone like the rich young ruler wasn't doing enough, your efforts can't get you into heaven. Jesus' answer is a commentary on the Bible way of salvation. It *is*

impossible for men to be saved by their efforts; so God makes it possible for them to be saved another way - by grace through faith!

Mark 10:28 Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You."

Mark 10:29 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,

Mark 10:30 "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.

Mark 10:31 "But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Peter is thinking. He contrasts himself and the other disciples with the rich young ruler. If gain can hinder you from reaching heaven, perhaps giving can help you towards reaching heaven?

Jesus lets Peter and the others know that giving *is* gain, but only in the sense of reward, not anything you earn towards salvation. You are rewarded for following Jesus both in this life and in eternity. You notice that one of your rewards is "persecutions."

The rich young ruler looked "first" from their perspective; but he was "last" from God's point of view. The disciples looked "last," but were "first."

There is a powerful lesson here for parents. Most parents would be content with raising a rich young ruler...

You are raising kingdom progeny, kingdom kids...

#2 During His Absence Jesus Calls You To Kingdom Living In God's House (10:32-45)

On the road to Jerusalem, the disciples disputed over who among them would have the greatest positions of authority - who would be greatest in God's house on earth. Jesus gives them a kingdom principle and a kingdom priority: The greatest is the least and proves it by serving others in God's house.

Mark 10:32 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:

Mark 10:33 "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;

Mark 10:34 "and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

I remind you that these Jews had no understanding that their Messiah would first have to suffer and die. They fully expected Jesus to immediately establish the kingdom on earth. That's why even His plain language was misunderstood. Biases greatly affect your understanding of Scripture...

Thinking of the kingdom, James and John try to promote themselves ahead of the others to positions of honor.

Mark 10:35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask."

Mark 10:36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

Mark 10:37 They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory."

Mark 10:38 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?"

Mark 10:39 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;

Mark 10:40 "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."

We said earlier that the "cup" and the "baptism" indicated suffering. James would be the first of the disciples to be martyred; John would live longer, but endure great suffering and exile. They didn't know what they were talking about when they volunteered to drink from the cup and be baptized - but Jesus did. He saw the time between His resurrection and return, He saw the Church Age, He saw Himself sustaining these men and millions more like them during their times of tribulation.

Mark 10:41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John.

Mark 10:42 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.

Mark 10:43 "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.

Mark 10:44 "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.

Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

That the other ten were "greatly displeased" shows they had designs on important positions, too. Jesus took advantage of their dispute to teach them some basic things about kingdom living. Serving and sacrificing are the marks of a kingdom citizen.

Kingdom living is expressed as you serve others in God's house...

#3 During His Absence Jesus Calls You To Kingdom Living Outside Of God's House (10:46-52)

The disciples enjoyed a brief time alone with the Lord. Now they were back out among the crowds of people headed for Jerusalem. Jesus gave them a final lesson on how to conduct themselves during His absence - how to conduct themselves outside, when they were among the lost multitudes.

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.

Mark 10:47 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!"

Mark 10:48 Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Mark 10:49 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."

Mark 10:50 And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

Mark 10:51 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."

Mark 10:52 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.

The healing of blind Bartimaeus provided Jesus with a good object lesson for the disciples. Outside of God's house people are spiritually blind. Hearing the Word about Jesus being near, desire is kindled to come to the Lord. They must come by faith - shown by Bartimaeus throwing aside his garment. Garments speak of our righteousness before God. Our own righteousness is as filthy garments. We must be clothed with the righteousness of Jesus. Those who come by faith receive their spiritual sight and are set free to follow the Lord.

Spiritually blind beggars line the roads you travel everyday on your way to heaven. Many factors hinder them from seeking Jesus,

but you can help by remembering that Jesus is always calling out to them. Kingdom living outside of God's house brings Jesus within reach of those who are lost...

Conclusion

This week in Washington another historic move was made toward peace in the Middle East. In 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 you read,

1 Thessalonians 5:1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

1 Thessalonians 5:3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

The stage is being set in the Middle East for the return of Jesus Christ! His absence from the earth is nearing its end.

Practice kingdom living; conduct yourselves according to kingdom principles and priorities. Your King is returning.