

Bible Study

For small group discussion or personal journaling

Mark 10:2-16

*also references 10/3/21 sermon **by Rev. Sharon Snapp-Kolas**;
hear on our FB page, UMC Sierra Madre; text contact sierramadreumc@gmail.com
“Loving God, Broken World”*

Day 1. Broken relationships: Part 1. Read Mark 10:2-16.

Begin by sharing in your group or in your journal some examples of broken relationships.

- It's your choice if you want to share personal stories, anonymous stories, or stories from the news.
- You might also consider broken relationships at different levels of human relationship and in different sectors of society; for example, between nations, between corporations, between workers and management, and so forth.

Day 2. Divorce: Part 1. (verses 2-12).

Read Deuteronomy 24:1.

- According to theologian Leonard Sweet, in Jesus' time there were two schools of thought regarding the Law of Moses when it came to marriage:
 - A man could divorce his wife for adultery or “extreme failure to observe Jewish law.” – the more conservative Shammai school
 - A man could divorce his wife if she annoyed or embarrassed him – the more liberal Hillel school.
 - Once presented with a bill of divorcement, the wife was legally free to marry again.
- This is the debate the Pharisees were seeking to engage Jesus in.
- Discuss in your group or journal how the Pharisees' thinking on divorce compare with our modern approach. You may also want to take some time to share about personal experiences of divorce

Day 3. Divorce: Part 2. (verses 2-12).

“Jesus refuses to give preference to either of these two schools.” (Sweet)

Read Genesis 1:27; 2:24.

- Jesus cuts off the Pharisees’ debate entirely, returning to God’s original plan and vision at the creation in Genesis.
- Read Mark 10:8 again. What does Jesus add to the words from the creation story in Genesis? Discuss in your group or journal.
- Read again Mark 10:10-11. Jesus holds the man and the woman equally responsible in terms of adultery, if a divorce occurs. It was unheard of in his time, the possibility that a man could commit adultery against a woman.
 - A divorced woman in Jesus’ day could end up on the streets, destitute, begging for food, or prostituting herself to survive.
 - Jesus is also commenting on the marriages of the rich rulers of his time, including Herod Antipas and Herodias (Mark 6:17ff), who beheaded Jesus’ cousin, John the Baptist for his preaching against their adulterous ways.
 - There are many layers to what Jesus is doing here – reflect and discuss
- You may also want to take further time to discuss personal experiences and opinions regarding divorce, and how divorce in our time is different and similar to divorce in Jesus’ time.

Day 4. Broken relationships: Part 2.

Now that we have done a deep dive into divorce as an example of a broken relationship, let’s return to our earlier discussion of the broader topic:

- “Jesus’ point to the Pharisees is that the vision of God’s kingdom is one of peace, love and justice, in which women and men are in right relationship with God and with each other. Vows are fulfilled, covenants are upheld, promises are kept, marriage is for life.” (Sharon Snapp-Kolas, 10/3/21 sermon).

- Reflect on God’s vision, which we break again and again. What would the world look like if we lived out God’s vision?:
 - in our friendships
 - in our families
 - in our church families
 - among nations
 - in our relationship with God’s creation
 - in our relationship within ourselves – our own mind, body and spirit

Going deeper... God’s love.

Read John 3:16. Now read, again, Mark 10:13-16.

- Reflect on this idea: “Jesus wants us to trust in him and to let the child within be free. It is the only way to receive the kingdom of God... God makes us all and wants us to be genuine, authentic human beings. The end result is absolute joy and the opportunity to experience life in its fullest.” (Keith Wagner)
- “The whole story of the Bible is about our broken relationship with a loving God, and how that loving God relentlessly reaches out to us in love. God never gives up on us.” (Sharon Snapp-Kolas, 10/3/21 sermon)
- Consider the child within and God’s love for that child.
- Respond in whatever way seems right to you – pray, journal, take a walk, sit in silence, dance, color, hug each other if you’re in a group, bake cookies, make soup, sit in the grass and watch the birds and the bugs go by, make mud pies, color on the sidewalk with chalk, fingerpaint, sing a song, play a game...

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