

# KING OF KINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Mark 10:2-16

*God Desires a Happy Home*



Last Sunday in Bible Class, we talked about how simple the words about the Lord's Supper are to understand. **"This is my body. . . . This is my blood."** That's not difficult to understand. Sadly, what is simple to understand is difficult for many to believe.

The Word of God we hear today about family relationships is not difficult to understand. **"Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy. . . . Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. . . . Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."** (Ephesians 5:22-26, 6:1,4) The concepts and message of the text are not that complicated. There isn't a lot of room for debate about what God wants.

Of course what is easily explained isn't easy to put into practice — whether we are talking about family relationships or any other aspect of God's will. Add sin into the life of each of the members of our homes and suddenly conflict arises. A little selfishness by any member of the family can be devastating. An angry moment or unkind word can bring strife. Let these and other offenses go on for a few years and the hurt builds. God's ideal plan often seems like an impossible dream.

Jesus' words in our text reminds us that although sin is real and impacts our relationships, it is not God's plan that our homes be places of strife. Divorce is not what God wants. Children should receive love and welcome from God's people.

The lesson begins with an attempt by some Pharisees to test Jesus. The trap question was about divorce. Would Jesus say that divorce was never allowed? If he did they would quote Moses to Jesus and show that Jesus didn't agree with Moses. On the other hand, if Jesus allowed for divorce they would call Jesus "soft" on divorce because in Malachi God said, **"I hate divorce."**

Jesus answered their question with a question about what Moses said. The Pharisees rightly pointed out that Moses allowed for divorce. But Jesus said that they were missing the point. God wasn't in favor of divorce, but because their hearts were hard and he knew they would do it anyway, he tried to regulate the sin. The law they quoted was if a man divorced his wife because he did not like her and then she remarried, but it happened to her again. Then the first husband should not marry her again. It was hardly an endorsement of divorce, only limits on how the sin would be carried out.

Jesus pointed out their error by going back to the source of marriage. He quoted from Genesis and the first marriage that God established. God intended for the two to become one and that they would not be separated. That was God's ideal for marriage, not the lax divorce laws of the Pharisees . . . or of our day!

Like the Pharisees, all humans want to push the limit of sinning — *"How much can I get away with?"* It actually happens in all sorts of areas of our lives; it isn't just sex and divorce where people sin. *"How much do I have to give to church?"* Or *"How often do I need to forgive my neighbor?"* Or *"How selfless do I have to be?"* Or *"At what point can I finally get a divorce?"* In each case, humans (even Christians) tend to wonder how close we can get to the line of sin.

Jesus' answer reminds us that God wants something better. In fact, when Jesus got the

disciples in a house, he told them that divorce involves adultery. It may be only one person who committed adultery, but there is no such thing as a “no-fault” divorce. God has something better in mind. He wants marriages to work and work well.

The root of the problems that arise in marriages is always sin. Whether sin leads to the “huge” sin of an affair, or the on-going sin of loveless actions and words, it is always sin that causes problems in marriages.

The answer is always the same too. Repentance. Don't bother repenting for someone else, repent for your own sins. Repentance means that we recognize the reality of our sins. Hiding from those sins only allows them to continue and to causes more hurt in your marriage. Don't make excuses for your selfishness or push the limits of what you can get away with; admit your failures to God. Repentance also means to recognize that you are forgiven for Jesus' sake. Trusting in him, your guilt is removed. God is not angry with you for your sins. Quite the opposite, Jesus' blood washes all your sins away. There's even more! Jesus gives you a new heart of love! He fills you with himself and with a desire to do good.

The fallacy of questions about what we can get away with is that as Christians our new hearts are focused on pleasing God and striving to do all according to his will. It is your sinful nature that wants to know how far it can go before it gets in trouble. But because of Jesus, you are guided by a heart that wants to do everything to God's glory. You understand that love is more than just a feeling. Love is illustrated by Jesus who died for our sins. His actions prove his love. His service and selflessness show love. That is the type of love that guides us now!

All the way back to Moses' day, marriage was difficult. What we have in our day is nothing new. What you may be experiencing is nothing new. But in Jesus Christ we find the solution. Learn of him and find forgiveness. Learn from

him to show love in a meaningful and God-pleasing way.

In the midst of this lesson, it seems that another lesson needed to be taught. People were bringing children to Jesus for a blessing, but the disciples thought it was their job to run interference and keep the kids away.

Jesus wanted the opposite. He wants children in his kingdom and in fact, used the faith of children to teach the adults a lesson. Like children trust their parents and other adults — often without hesitation or question; we are to trust our Lord Jesus to save us.

Children are important to Jesus. They should not be neglected in the name of work or selfish uses for time. In particular, the spiritual needs of our children should not be neglected. The Bible never encourages letting them make their own decision when they get older. The Bible tells us to teach our children God's Word. Anything less is neglect that could last for eternity.

God's plan for our homes isn't that sin dominate and control us. God has saved us from that type of “life” by sending Jesus Christ. Put your faith into practice at home too — particularly at home! In the situations you've faced countless times with your spouse, be guided by love and forgiveness. In the moments when you are tempted to be selfish and ignore others, practice love that imitates Jesus. It is God's will that we overcome sin's power in our homes. It is God's will that divorce lawyers be out of business and children be nurtured in body and soul. Through faith in Christ Jesus, God has provided what we need to have happy homes. Amen.

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