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Sermon Notes

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## **Oneness in Marriage**

### **Mark 10:1-12**

On December 21, 1988, a timer-activated bomb exploded on Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 259 individuals on board and 11 individuals on the ground. Since the massive Boeing 747 airplane had reached an altitude of 31,000 feet, the explosion created what some have called the largest crime scene in world history. The wreckage spread over more than 1200 square miles. Investigators painstakingly collected the fragments in order determine the cause of the explosion. Eventually, these amazingly skilled people identified trace amounts of explosives to help confirm that this incident was indeed caused by an act of terrorism... deliberately planned and executed with murderous intent.

This stunning level of meticulous and far-reaching collection of fragments from an explosion and analysis of these fragments to deduce the cause and then bring to justice the criminals was unprecedented at the time and has never been matched since.

As I was reading about this effort, my mind went to the phrase “the largest crime scene in world history.” Some time ago, I began to meditate on the effects of the sin of Adam on the world and on every generation that has followed. A particular verse, Ephesians 1:10, was instructive for my understanding of what that original sin has done, and what all sin has done since that time... the effect like a fragmentation grenade:

***Ephesians 1:9-10 And [God] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, <sup>10</sup> to***

*be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment - to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.*

God's ultimate purpose in Christ was to GATHER ALL THINGS IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH TOGETHER and MAKE THEM PERFECTLY ONE IN CHRIST...

This was a powerful insight in helping me understand how sin has blasted things apart that were meant to be together.

When God is done with his work of redemption through the cross of Christ, he will bring all things in the universe together into perfect oneness. He will reverse the explosive effects of sin, which ripped things apart that were meant to be together.

It is in light of that concept of sin as the ultimate fragmentation grenade that I realized that this suffering planet Earth and all of HUMAN HISTORY ITSELF is indeed "the largest crime scene in the history of the world." We see the effects of the explosion of sin in the disunity in all human relationships... but especially this morning in the topic of MARRIAGE and DIVORCE.

My purpose this morning is to point with great hope to the power of Christ in marriage... to reject divorce categorically, and to defeat it with God's vision of ONENESS in marriage.

## I. Review: Jesus on Marriage and Divorce

### A. The Pharisees' Vicious Trap

*Mark 10:2 Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"*

Or more particularly:

*Matthew 19:3 They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"*

## B. Walking Through Jesus' Answer (from Matthew)

1. **“Haven't you read”**: The answers for marital problems is in the Bible; the Bible is completely sufficient to define, heal, and empower marriage
2. **“that at the beginning, the Creator...”**: Jesus cited God's original intention in marriage, asserting that the paradigm God set up at the beginning of human history is permanent for all of human history

“God made marriage originally; and God makes marriages specifically.”

3. **“Made them male and female”**: God spoke through biology, as God also spoke through Scripture; the nature of things shows God's intention... one man, one woman
4. **“And said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh.’”**
  - a. Genesis 2:24... a timeless pattern
  - b. “united to his wife” = cleave (KJV) like they are glued together
  - c. “one flesh”: clearly referring to the sexual union which makes marriage unique and is the basis also for procreation
5. **“So they are no longer two but one”**: Jesus doubled-down on the two become one imagery as the foundational truth
6. **“Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate”**: this is the final ruling by the judge of all the earth; NO, it is not lawful for a man to divorce his wife FOR ANY AND EVERY REASON; couples don't have the RIGHT
7. The question about Moses

*Matthew 19:7-8 "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"<sup>8</sup> Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.*

## 8. The clear prohibition

***Matthew 19:9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.***

***Mark 10:11-12 "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. <sup>12</sup> And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."***

### C. Okay... so for the most part divorce is FORBIDDEN

1. The illustration from Reb Bradley: "You can't. So.. work it out!"
2. Ok... Pastor... help us "Work it out!"
3. That's what this sermon is about; to try to help the marriages of FBC succeed and be fruitful for the glory of God

### D. My Approach

1. There are dozens of passages I could use to help marriages
2. I want to stay focused on the words and themes directly raised and used by Jesus in this one exchange in Matthew 19/Mark 10
3. Two parts: The Problem (Hardness of Heart); and The Solution (Oneness)

## II. The Problem: Hardness of Heart

### A. Jesus Said the Cause of Divorce was "Hardness of Heart"

***Matthew 19:8 "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard."***

### B. What Does That Mean?

1. Biblically, the phrase refers to resistance, rebellion against the Word of God

The first time we see it is famously in Pharaoh:

***Exodus 5:1-2 God commanded Pharaoh: 'Let my people go...<sup>2</sup> Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go."***

***Exodus 7:13-14 Pharaoh's heart became hard and he would not listen to them, just as the LORD had said. <sup>14</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is unyielding; he refuses to let the people go.***

Sadly later it was put on display with the Jewish nation themselves:

***Psalm 95:7-10 Today, if you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert, <sup>9</sup> where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did. <sup>10</sup> For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways."***

A hard heart is one that is stubborn toward God, not soft and yielded and obedient; a synonym for the hardened hearts of the Jewish people was their "stiff necks":

***Exodus 32:9 "I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people.***

That means to be rebellious, not soft and yielded:

***Hebrews 3:15 "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."***

***Romans 8:7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.***

2. The hardness aspect implies that God wants softness when it comes to his word, meaning YIELDEDNESS or compliance; divorce comes about when people harden their hearts toward God above all and will not obey his rules within the marriage or about the marriage; that's why divorce happens
3. Beyond the VERTICAL nature of a hardened heart is the horizontal nature of hardness toward one another in their circumstances

- a. A hard heart is one that is not MOVED with compassion toward the conditions or sufferings of others

***Zechariah 7:9-12 "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. <sup>10</sup> Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other.' <sup>11</sup> "But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and stopped up their ears. <sup>12</sup> They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit***

- b. Like the priest and the Levite in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, they see the man bleeding by the side of the road and have no feelings of pity or compassion
  - c. Christian marriage is based on love... heart attraction, affection, tenderness, being drawn toward the other person
  - d. That means compassion... rejoicing when your spouse rejoices, mourning when your spouse mourns
  - e. You share everything ... hearts bound together
  - f. But when HARDNESS OF HEART comes it, the couple no longer is sensitive toward the feelings of the other
- 4. Divorces can often display a terrifying viciousness between two people that used to love each other
  - 5. God likens divorce to a form of violence

***Malachi 2:16 "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.***

- C. To Combat Divorce, We Start by Combatting this Hardness of Heart
  - 1. Everything starts with salvation through faith in Christ
  - 2. Let your heart be convicted of sin... broken and weeping over it

***Luke 18:13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'***

***Matthew 5:3-7 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. <sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. <sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. <sup>7</sup> Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.***

3. Then let your heart be soft toward what Christ did on the cross

***Zechariah 12:10 "They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for me as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for me as one grieves for a firstborn son.***

4. Understand what conversion does to a sinner's heart

***Ezekiel 36:26-27 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.***

5. Then repent of your sins that are damaging your marriage

PRIDE... sinful anger... lust... selfishness... coldness...  
worldliness... arguments... complaining... thanklessness

6. Let God do a deep work in you to soften your own heart first, then save your marriage next

### III. The Solution: Oneness

A. The Foundation to Jesus' Conception of Marriage and His Prohibition Against Divorce: Oneness

***Mark 10:8-9 the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one. <sup>9</sup> Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."***

How can we understand the mystery of oneness? It is a much deeper and more significant topic than we ever imagined

The whole goal of God's work of redemption in Christ is oneness:

***Ephesians 1:9-10*** *And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, <sup>10</sup> to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment- - to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.*

## B. The Trinity: The Pattern of True Oneness

### 1. Definition of the Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity means that there is one God who eternally exists as three distinct Persons – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Stated differently, God is one in essence and three in person. These definitions express three crucial truths: (1) the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons, (2) each Person is fully God, (3) there is only one God.

### 2. The Mystery is the Oneness, not the Threeness

- a. Pagan nations from the beginning of recorded history have been polytheistic
- b. That there would be three gods is no mystery to the natural mind
- c. But here is the mystery

***Deuteronomy 6:4*** *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.*

### 3. Jesus' Statements

***John 10:30*** *I and the Father are one.*

***John 17:11*** *Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name-- the name you gave me-- so that they may be one as we are one.*

***John 17:20-21*** *My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.*

4. All unity in marriage is based on the unity of the Trinity: separate persons, but one as the Father and the Son are one



### C. What Does That MEAN?

1. Different centers of personality, of being
2. BUT a shared essence
3. A possible understanding of Trinitarian oneness

***Philippians 2:2*** *having the same mind, having the same love, being one in spirit and one in mind.*

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit have the SAME MIND... they agree about everything, down to the tiniest detail

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit have the same LOVE... they love each other the exact same way, and they love all the same things

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit have the SAME SPIRIT... meaning intention, purpose, direction

There is not the tiniest shadow or shade of disagreement ever!

That is UNITY

That is what Christian couples should strive for

### D. Is That Possible Here on Earth?

1. Paul wants the Philippians to pursue it
2. The way they do that is to address their own selfishness

***Philippians 2:3-4*** *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

3. He points to the humble “mind of Christ” as essential to oneness

***Philippians 2:5-8*** *Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but made himself nothing, taking the*

*very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!*

4. He commonly urged this of all Christians

*Philippians 4:2 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.*

This is amazing! Agree with each other!! Think alike!!

*1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.*

*2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you*

5. A beautiful example in the early church

*Acts 4:32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.*

*Romans 15:5-6 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

That is a picture of what oneness can look like in marriage!

Two separate individuals, agreeing with each other, loving each other in the Lord, patterning their oneness after the Trinity

That is what I think the Lord meant by, "So they are no longer two but one."

#### IV. Moving Toward Oneness (in Marriage)

A. Sounds Good... Why Is It So Hard??

Well... as I said, it is because our hearts are hard

Paul deeply defined the problem:

***Romans 7:15-17 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. <sup>16</sup> And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup> As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.***

***Romans 7:21-23 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. <sup>22</sup> For in my inner being I delight in God's law; <sup>23</sup> but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.***

B. HOPE!!!

***Romans 7:24-25 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God-- through Jesus Christ our Lord!***

C. Jesus' Prayer Means Perfect Unity Is Coming

***John 17:22-23 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.***

1. In heaven, all Christians will be as one as the Father and the Son are one
2. So, all you Christian couples, your most perfect relationship is yet to come... even though you won't be married (as in "one flesh") in heaven, yet you will be perfectly one in heaven
3. Why? Because everything Jesus prays for, he gets!!

***1 John 5:14-15 if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that he hears us-- whatever we ask-- we know that we have what we asked of him.***

Jesus always prays according to the will of his Father

***James 5:16 The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.***

Jesus is the only perfectly righteous man in history

So... Jesus is not just hoping that his people will be as one as the Father and the Son are one... we WILL BE

But the prayer is for HERE ON EARTH... being "brought toward" a perfect unity

HOW??

D. One in Christ

1. All Christian marriage is founded on our like faith in Christ
2. Christ is the vine, we are both the branches in it; for a healthy marriage, we must dwell in Christ continually and have his life-giving sap flowing through us continually

***John 15:4-5 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. <sup>5</sup> "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.***

***John 15:7-8 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. <sup>8</sup> This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.***

3. So in Christian marriage, we must be one in Christ at all times
4. If our spouse is not abiding in Christ, the marriage will suffer
5. To grow in unity in marriage, each of you needs to be having daily times in the word and prayer... his words need to dwell in each other, and each of you needs to be healthy in prayer
6. If one spouse is weak spiritually, the marriage will be damaged; it should matter huge whether your spouse is strong in Christ and in his word and in prayer

7. So also the family needs to be founded and centered on Christ every day

#### E. Unity in Mind

1. The biggest problem is DISAGREEMENT... we just think differently... maybe about finances, or parenting, or in-laws, or marital relations (i.e. sex), or about employment, or what car to buy
2. How then can we AGREE?
3. Understand that all truth about every issue comes from God
  - a. God the Father already knows what is true in the specific matter the couple is disputing
  - b. If there is disagreement, it's because one or both of you is out of step with God mentally on the issue... you think differently from God, so you think differently from each other
  - c. Seek the Lord's wisdom in Scripture, prayer, and the Holy Spirit
  - d. Oneness comes from TRUTH, and truth comes from Scripture

***Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.***

***James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.***

4. See if there is any sin hindering your relationship

***James 4:8-10 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.***

Confess your sins humbly to each other... pray humbly with each other

Listen carefully to each other; communicate openly with each other

Assume that each of you has something worthwhile to say about the issue at hand

5. One love

a. So often the issue is that the love has gone out of the marriage

b. That can even happen in our love for Christ

As God said to Israel:

***Jeremiah 2:2 "I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown.***

As Christ said to the church at Ephesus:

***Revelation 2:4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love.***

c. Look at the remedy he gave to the church

***Revelation 2:5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.***

So it is with a married couple:

Remember... repent... renew!

Remember how things were earlier in your marriage; the things that first attracted you to each other; no, you are not going to look as handsome or beautiful as the day you were married, but there were other qualities that first attracted you to each other; REMEMBER how it used to be! Look at photos of those early times

Repent... as married couples go on in years of marriage, there is an accumulation of sins, of offenses you may have against each other; there is a tendency toward bitterness, long-term

unforgiveness for incidents in the past, or habits in the present;  
each of the couples needs to repent of all sin

Renew... do the things you used to do toward each other

F. Habits of Oneness: Gary Chapman, the Five Love Languages

1. Words of affirmation (encouragement, compliments... )

Seek to use words to build up your spouse... to see ways they are  
doing well and speaking words to encourage them in who they  
are and what they have done

2. Quality time

Dates... coffee together... conversation at the end of a long day...  
walks on the beach focused just on each other; put the  
smartphone away, make eye contact

3. Gifts

Little gifts, flowers, a card, a book, a small box of chocolates, a tool  
for the workshop

4. Acts of service

Finding ways to serve your spouse, running errands, calling when  
you're driving by the supermarket to offer to pick a few things  
up for them; making the bed; doing laundry; taking out the  
garbage; yardwork; putting gas in the car; bathing the kids;  
paying the bills; calling the plumber; preventative maintenance  
on the car

5. Physical touch

Not just sex, but hugs, handholding, cuddling in bed, a pat on the  
arm, a nice thorough back rub