

Jesus Teaches His Disciples

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] If you could turn back with me please to Mark chapter 10. Praise we go there.

Our Heavenly Father we thank you for your word and we thank you that you are the God who calls us to walk close with you. We know that we are people who are prone to wander and we ask Lord that you would search us and you would know us and you would show us ourselves in a measure that we are able to bear.

Even as we think about the verses before us in order Lord that we will not despair but in order that we will come to you and walk close with you.

So minister to us we pray in the power of the Holy Spirit we pray that he would be at work amongst us and in each one of our hearts. Awakening and reviving, teaching and correcting and directing us in our thoughts.

And we ask that all that is done here and all that is done in Sunday school, all that's done in the churches that we're connected with. And the churches that surround us we pray that it would be to your glory and that we would know your blessing.

[1 : 25] And we ask this in Jesus name. Amen. Just across the road there on my right, further down the road you'll see a school, Sir E. Scott School for those who are visiting.

And part of the school is a gym and a swimming pool and you can go in through the main entrance and you can head off to the left to the swimming pool and to the gym.

You can sort of meander around the front entrance for a wee while but that's as far as you can go. There are certain areas in the school that are permitted for the public to go in and to use the facilities.

But there are much more areas in the school that are restricted. Somebody who's not teaching, someone who's not authorized can't go wandering down the corridors and into the classrooms.

Only the teachers can go there. Now in Mark 10, the passage that we've come to this morning, Jesus is still teaching his disciples. This is an intensive period of teaching as Jesus is heading towards the cross.

[2 : 34] And one of the things that we learn from this section that we're studying this morning is that Jesus expects, in fact he demands, that he be given access to every area of our lives if we are Christians.

I do a fair bit visiting around the area here. And I know that in each one of our homes we have the presentable areas, the public areas.

The areas that we don't mind people going into and visiting us and spending time with us in. And then we have the spare rooms where the junk is dumped.

And we have these dark cupboards with all kinds of mess, all kinds of things are lurking. And although we're happy for people to come in and be in the areas that are presentable, we are not happy for a visitor to come in and say, Any chance I can just have a rifle around your drawers and your cupboards just to see how you're living generally?

Now we don't want anyone to get into these areas. Now in this passage, Jesus, he takes his light and he shines it into every area of our lives.

- [4 : 00] He's interested in everything. Not just what we want to present. But his searchlight goes into the dark cupboards.
- It goes into the hidden rooms. For the Christian, Christ has an access all areas pass. Three things this morning in the time that we have.
- The first thing is, Jesus is interested in our marriages. If we are married. The second thing is, Jesus is interested in our children.
- And the third thing is, Jesus is interested in our idols. So that gives us the structure. And the first thing we come to in the passage is marriage and divorce.
- Jesus is interested in our marriages. As we track through chapter 10, that's where the narrative, that's where the conversation begins. The Pharisees here are now stalking Jesus.
- [5 : 09] They're tracking his every move. They're recording his every word. Not because they love him. Not because they trust him. Not because they're interested in following him.
- They're trying to trap him. And so they strike up a conversation about marriage and divorce. And that's the first thing we see in this section here. It's a trap.
- It's a trap that they lay. And they hope Jesus will walk into it. Verse 1. Jesus left that place. And went into the region of Judea. And across the Jordan.
- Again, crowds of people came to him. And as was his custom, he taught them. Some Pharisees came and tested him.
- By asking, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife? That's the question. They asked it not because they're looking for some direction and some education in the answer.
- [6 : 10] They're not looking for guidance. They're not interested in what Jesus may have to teach them. Their hearts are hard as rock. They're determined now to pursue Jesus to his death.
- And so they're trying to build up a portfolio of evidence that they can use against him. They're looking for any angle to try and catch Jesus out. And Jesus knew that.
- And he still has things to teach his disciples. The time is not quite right. And so Jesus treads carefully here. He knows the trap.
- So how does he avoid telling them? How does he avoid falling into their trap? Well, what he does here is he takes them to the teachings of Moses. He takes them to the teachings of Moses in the Old Testament.
- This is Moses that the Pharisees looked up to with such awe and honor. He takes them to the Bible. He opens the Old Testament scriptures.
- [7 : 17] He says, you want an answer to your question? Well, let's open the Bible. Let's listen to what God is saying about this issue.
- I remember sitting in church presbytery meetings in general assemblies in the past where marriage and sexuality was being debated. And people kept asking the same question.
- What would Jesus say? If Jesus was in the room and Jesus was being asked to give a view on these things, what would Jesus say? Well, I'll tell you what Jesus would say about marriage and sexuality and all these things.
- He would say what the Bible says. He wouldn't write a new script. He wouldn't go against the Holy Spirit. And he shows that here.
- As he opens up the scriptures to them. But it seems they didn't much like that. They, verse 4, said, Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.
- [8 : 28] And they're thinking back to Deuteronomy 24. And Jesus replies, It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law, Jesus replied.

And what they were saying here was actually, it was true. And if you went to Matthew's parallel account of this scene, it's brought out clearly that where there is marital unfaithfulness, divorce was permitted.

But what was actually happening in this day that was causing this to be such a focal issue at this point was that the Pharisees had, or some of the Pharisees, had made up their own rules for divorce.

One rabbi, who was leading a school of rabbis, Rabbi Hillel, taught that a man could divorce his wife if she had, quote, become unpleasing to him.

So that was grounds for divorce. You wake up one morning, honeymoon has passed, novelty is gone, and you determine that your wife is now unpleasing to you.

[9 : 44] That was grounds for legal divorce. So, and I'm not, this is not me being facetious or anything, this is actually what was happening. If a woman put too much salt in a dish, legal divorce.

If a woman burnt a dinner, it's grounds for divorce. If a woman spoke too loud, so much so that the neighbours heard her, grounds for divorce.

And so, many women were being divorced for these kinds of trivial things. And Jesus is facing that head on.

And he's challenging that with his teaching. So they set a trap. But Jesus, in response now, he gives them biblical teaching. Verse 6, he goes from the negative to the positive.

He says, but at the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife. And the two will become one flesh.

[10 : 51] So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate. When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this.

He answered, anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.

Now what's Jesus doing here? Both in public discussion and in private tutorial with his disciples.

But what he's doing is he is underlining the importance of marriage. It was God's design from the beginning.

back to the Garden of Eden. It's God's definition. Male and female. And we don't get to change that.

[11 : 56] No matter how many laws are pushed through Parliament in this country, no matter how many BBC documentaries would try and persuade us otherwise, marriage is God's design.

and he defines it. Jesus is interested in your marriage and he's interested in my marriage.

We don't tend to ask each other over a cup of tea after the service. How's your marriage going? But Jesus asks us through his word as the Holy Spirit applies this to our lives, Jesus asks us, how is your marriage?

So in an age where marriage is very much under attack, we are called to work hard at our marriages.

Which is exactly what men in the day that Jesus was living in were not doing. They were not working hard at their marriages.

[13 : 09] They were not taking seriously their marriages. And that was causing hurt in the hearts of women who were being cast aside. It was causing hurt and damage within families.

It was destabilizing homes. And all this continues today. to bring hurt into families.

It continues to grieve Jesus when we as a culture often have such a low view of marriage and marriage becomes such a disposable thing.

Jesus is interested in our marriages. marriages. What about those who are here this morning and you're not married? Well maybe one day you will be.

You can bank this. Or maybe you won't be. But even if you don't ever marry you can pray for those who are.

[14 : 19] because we need it. Jesus is interested in our marriages. That's the first point.

He shines his light in. Second point here is Jesus is interested in our children. Verse 13. People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them but the disciples rebuked him.

Disciples it seems were not very interested in the children. The children as far as the disciples were concerned were a bit of an inconvenience. They were a bit of a distraction, a bit of a disruption.

Disciples would really rather not have the children in the company because of the nuisance that they seemed to be. And so they did all that they could to actually shoo the children away.

and stop the children from coming to Jesus. Now how did Jesus feel about that? Well it says in verse 14, when Jesus saw this he was indignant.

[15 : 31] And that's a strong word in the Greek. That's a word that speaks about an anger when in the heart of Christ. It's one of the few times that we read in the Gospels that Jesus was angry.

Why was he angry? It's because he loved the children. Jesus was interested in the children who were drawn to him back there and then.

And Jesus is still interested in the children. Jesus is interested in our children here and now. Jesus is interested in the children of the people who are living in North Harris.

We're given the promise that where two or three of us gather in the name of Christ he is here. Don't you think Jesus loves to hear the chattering of the children when they come in and take over the front right hand side of the church?

You hear the chattering and the giggling? Don't you think that's something that Jesus loves to hear? Don't you think Jesus loves to see the children as they march down to the front here?

[16 : 53] As they give me all kinds of weird and wonderful answers that I'm trying to process and use within the children's talk? Don't you think Jesus loves to see the children as they march to the church and they head into Sunday school?

He loves the children. And don't you think it grieves Jesus to see a creche jam-packed full of toys and space and not one baby in a place that is absolutely teeming with babies?

Jesus said to the disciples, let the little children come to me. Do not hinder them for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

Jesus is interested in our children. Today, it seems to me that we have a government that is more interested in our children than ever before.

[18 : 29] we're living in a country where our government is interested in teaching our children about sexuality long before they have any interest whatsoever or any need to know.

We have a government at present who are interested in teaching our children about how they can change their gender from when they're that size. because it seems that God didn't always get that right in their opinion.

We're living in a country that's interested in teaching our children about how marriage does not need to be between a man and a woman. And the primary ones are coming home from school and telling us that stuff.

Heard it with my own ears. Interested in telling our children that Jesus is not the only way to get to heaven. All these things are required by the government to be taught to our children.

And all these strategies seem to me to be designed to undermine the authority of scripture and to direct people away from Jesus.

[19 : 51] Now who is behind these strategies? I don't think it takes much to figure it out. It's the enemy. And when Jesus sees all this, is he not indignant with the culture and the setup that we have in our land today?

his desire is to bless our children. His desire is to save our children.

His desire is to nourish our children. That's why he's interested in them. So let's be sure that we are bringing our children to Jesus and not him with them.

Bringing them with our prayers. You know, bringing them physically into the house of God, into the Sunday school, into the YF.

life. Jesus is interested in our children. Jesus is interested in our marriages and finally Jesus is interested in our idols.

[21 : 11] And here Jesus introduces us to this man that we know as the rich young ruler. And I want to look at him just really briefly just now. And then I want to look at him more closely this evening because I think this is a helpful passage and this is a helpful character for us to focus on as we think through the question, should I or should I not be at the Lord's table next Sunday?

If we have questions in our minds and our hearts about what it actually is to be a Christian, what it means to be a Christian, then this is a man and this is an encounter that gives great teaching on what a Christian is and who should be at the Lord's table.

And we'll think more generally about that tonight as we look at this man. But for this morning, for the time that we have, the few minutes that we have just to finish, I want us to see that Jesus is interested in our idols.

He's interested in the tearing down of our idols. Because here's a man, and he approaches Jesus with respect, he seems to be thinking through the issues of eternity, verse 17.

Jesus started on his way. A man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. Good teacher, he asked, what must I do to inherit eternal life? I've never had anybody come up to me with a question like that.

[22 : 39] It's a brilliant question. What must I do to have eternal life? How do I get to heaven?

Heaven? He seems to want to be saved, this man. But all actually wasn't quite as it seemed as people looked from the outside in.

This man was hanging on to an idol. And for him it was the love of money. And if he was to be saved, if he was to inherit eternal life, if he was to take hold of Jesus, he was going to have to let go of this idol, of this riches that he grasped with all his strength.

And so Jesus, because he loves him, he teaches him that. Jesus, verse 21, looked at him and loved him. One thing you lack, he said, go, sell everything you have, give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.

Then come, follow me. At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

[24 : 10] When you go through security at the airport, if you're catching a flight from here to wherever. The staff there, you can remember your hand luggage, the staff there, they say, well, empty your pockets, take off your belt, take off your watch, and take that bag, that hand luggage, and put it through the scanner.

They want to make sure that you're not carrying anything on your person or in your bag that's unauthorized, something that cannot be on board. And if they find something when they scan you that's unauthorized, that you can't fly with, you either give it up, or you don't fly.

And here Jesus scans this man's heart, and he saw that the heart was full of the love of money. that was his idol.

And Jesus says, get rid of it. Smash it. All of it. And then follow me.

And until you do, you can't follow me. is Jesus saying that to anyone here?

[25 : 39] Is he putting his finger on an idol in our lives? Jesus is interested in our idols.

And he won't negotiate some compromise deal whereby he has part ownership of our hearts. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and all our soul, and all our mind, and all our strength.

And until we agree to do that, we cannot begin to follow Christ, and we cannot have eternal life. He won't strike up some cheap deal, or we can do a horse trade with him.

hang on to some of our idols, but get the assurance of eternal life. No, he says, get rid of it. And then those who are here this morning who are Christians, those of us who are here this morning who are believers, who are following Christ, you and I both know we still struggle with idols.

John Calvin says the human heart is a factory of idols. And if we know our hearts, we'll know that's true. So in order for us to keep on following Jesus this closely, we need to keep on repenting.

[27 : 23] Day by day, hour by hour, we need to keep on repenting of the idols that we are tempted to pick back up. And I could spend five minutes speculating over what our idols might be, whether it's the love of money or the love of being popular or the love of somebody else, the love of a relationship, the love of a pursuit, the love of whatever.

But if Jesus is working in your heart as he's working in mine, then you already know what idols it is that you struggle with. And Jesus says to us, take them off my throne and follow me.

seek first, not last, not second, not third, seek first my kingdom.

This man, sadly, for all the promise of his approach, he was not willing. His wealth meant too much.

It was the idol that he wasn't willing to let Jesus smash. And the irony is that by verse 22 of this passage, this man, he goes away with all his stuff still in his hands.

[29 : 04] He still has his property portfolio. he still has this chain of restaurants. He still has mega millions in the bank. He still has all the status of whatever it is he was doing, whatever ruling forum he was in.

He has all that stuff. But he went away sad. Not contented, not thankful, but sad.

Rich but sad. And that's a story that could be told a million times over. And I hope it's not the story that will be told of any life that's here this morning.

Rather, I hope we'll actually be able to sing from our hearts what we'll come to in a moment. I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold.

I'd rather be his than have riches untold. I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands.

[30 : 22] I'd rather be led by his nail pierced hand. I want to finish one minute simply with the question why.

Why is Jesus interested in your marriage? And why is Jesus interested in your children? And why is Jesus interested in exposing and smashing the idols of our hearts?

Is this intrusion? is this some kind of overbearing nosiness? Now this is loving care.

Some are probably sitting here this morning thinking what right does Jesus have to shine his light into my life?

Some of us may be sitting here this morning slightly resentful that the word of God is speaking into these private areas of our lives.

[31 : 39] Why should Jesus ask this of me? What's his intent? He asks it because he loves you.

Jesus' interest in our lives, in our children, in our marriages, in our hearts, is because he loves us.

And he wants the best for us. How can you be sure of that? How can you know his love is real, not just words?

because of the blood that was broken, because of the blood that was broken, because of the blood that was shed.

That's what speaks into the fullness of his love for you. That's what stirs his interest in our lives.

[32 : 46] And that's the reason that you and I should trust him. Let's pray. Our heavenly father, we thank you for your word and uncomfortable sometimes as some of these passages are.

We thank you that your love is sufficient to you, are willing to make us uncomfortable in order that we will submit our lives to you. We know that we are those who are not able, we are not qualified, we are not wise enough to guide and direct our own lives.

But we thank you that you are the God who made us and who loves us and you are the God who calls us to trust you. So help us, we pray.

in our marriages, in our homes, in our family lives, in the secrecy of our own hearts. Lord, enable us, we pray, not to resist you, not to try and mask the reality of who we are, but enable us, we pray, to submit to the working of your spirit in order that we will be saved and made more like Jesus.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.