REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
CHARLOTTE

RTS Women's Study: The Gospel of Mark

#20: Mark 10:1-12: The Loving Way to Handle the Law

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Intro: Pedestrian Crossing Laws

I. How do you understand God's Law? (v.1-2)

A. Background: the role of the Law in Ancient Israel

B. Jesus: Teacher of the Law (v.1)

- Jesus's central ministry was teaching and preaching the Word
  - Mark 1:21 says that "teaching" is the first thing Jesus did publicly
  - Mark 1:38, Jesus preached from town to town, for "that is why I came"
- The teaching of Jesus was marked by clarity, awe, and authority
  - Clarity and correction: "you have heard that it was said… but I say to you…" (The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7)
  - Awe:
    - "And they were astonished at his teaching…" (Mark 1:22a).
    - "…and crowds gathered to him again…" (v.1)
  - Authority: "…for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes." (Mark 1:22b)

C. The Pharisees: Seeking life in the Law (v.2)

- Jesus's assessment thus far: traditions over God's commands (Mark 7:9-12) and a warning (Mark 8:15)
- A repeated refrain: Pharisees came to test him (with the Law)
  - The word "test" is telling: it occurs four times in Mark
    - Three times it refers to the Pharisees
    - The first time it refers to Satan tempting/ testing Jesus
- Observe: the Pharisees operate with a posture of suspicion and seek to use the law to justify themselves and condemn others.

Questions to consider: How do you use God's Law? How do you view God's Law?

II. Legal Case Study: Divorce

A. Background: the divorce debates

B. The Pharisees: misusing the Law, twisting the Scriptures

- Their statement: Moses allowed it (v.4)
- Their reference: Deuteronomy 24:1-4
- Their endpoint: misusing the Scripture

Question: why do legalism and twisting the Scriptures often go hand in hand?

C. Jesus: getting to the heart of the Law

- Clarity: divorce is permitted in certain situations in a broken world. Jesus does not overturn that reality; you need the wider NT to explain when/why.
    - Yet, the force of his teaching is to demonstrate that divorce is a breach of God's design. Ex/ amputation
- Re-centering the debate: Jesus begins with God then moves to man.
    - God's design: complimentary genders
    - God's aim: oneness
    - Man's response: 1) Leaving and holding fast. 2) Promoting marital unity, not creating division.
- **Key point**: Jesus reestablishes and upholds the Law. He clarifies the connection between the heart and the Law.

Question to consider: what does Jesus's teaching on divorce expose in your heart?

III. The Big Picture: How Jesus's Handling of the Law is Loving (v.10-12)

A. A common reaction to Jesus's teaching: the disciples' question (v.10)

- This seems unreasonable and heavy-handed! (Then and now)

B. How Jesus uses the Law: he upholds its integrity (vv.11-12)

- For the common good of humanity
- To expose our sin and drive us to the Gospel
- To teach us the way to follow Him in response to the Good News

C. The Reality: Jesus is a loving Teacher

- **<u>Knowing this should lead us to esteem God's Word by:</u>**
    - 1) **Marveling** at God's good design and character
    - 2) **Confessing our sin** and **turning in faith to Christ**
    - 3) **Pleading** with the Spirit to help us live in obedience

<u>Discussion Groups</u>

1. Why does the law matter for getting the Gospel right? How should we view God's Law?
2. How does Jesus's teaching on marriage challenge you? What does it expose in your heart?
3. Practically, what should this teaching create in a community? In other words, what would a church look like if it lived out the last point? How can you contribute to that kind of community?