

THE SURPRISING JESUS

Studies in the Book of Mark

~Week Twelve~

“Til Death Do Us Part”

Mark 10:1-12



Life Groups

A reminder... This weekly Bible study is connected to the Sunday sermons at UPC. It includes a “Look Back” section to help you reflect on last Sunday’s sermon, and a “Look Up” section to take you through the NEXT passage in the book of Mark. If you miss a sermon, you can always listen to it online at www.upc-orlando.com.

LOOK BACK – Mark 9:33-41

In Sunday’s sermon, we saw that disciples of Jesus often struggle with pride. The cross, however, smashes our self-centeredness and turns worldly categories of significance upside down.

a) What two forms of pride did you learn about in the sermon? How do they show up in this passage of Scripture (Mark 9:33-41)?

b) How do you feel verses 38-41 relate to the church today?

c) In what ways can you identify with the disciples in this passage of Scripture?

d) What aspect(s) of the gospel do you need to believe in order for God to root out the sin of pride in your life?

LOOK UP – Mark 10:1-12

This passage of Mark’s gospel contains one of Jesus’ most provocative teachings on the sanctity of marriage. The world around us considers divorce a convenient way to resolve marital difficulties, but Jesus tells His followers that marriage is for a lifetime.

This section of Mark may raise questions about what the Bible says (and what UPC believes) about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. In light of the importance of this topic, and the differences of opinion among Christians today about divorce, consider the following words from Scripture and church history on marriage, divorce, and remarriage:

Malachi 2:16

“I hate divorce,” says the Lord God of Israel. . . . “So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.” (NIV)

Matthew 5:31-32

“It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.” (NIV)

Matthew 19:9

“I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.” (NIV)

Mark 10:7-9

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” (NIV)

Romans 7:2-3

. . . by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. (NIV)

1 Corinthians 7:10-11, 15

A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife . . . But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances. . . . (NIV)

Ephesians 5:31-32

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church. (NIV)

The Westminster Confession of Faith

Adultery or fornication, committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, gives just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and after the divorce to marry another, as if the offending party were dead. Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God has joined together in marriage; yet nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage.

Use the above to answer the following questions:

a) Why does God have such a high view of marriage that He would say, “I hate divorce” (Malachi 2:16)?

b) What two conditions does the Bible say make divorce permissible? (Hint: see Matthew 19:9, 1 Corinthians 7:12-15)

c) Is divorce the *only* option when adultery or desertion has taken place? What else is possible by the grace of God? (Hint: see 1 Corinthians 7:10-11)

d) Under what circumstances can someone be remarried who has been married before?

LOOK IN – Reflect

With so much pain in the world caused by distortions and abuses of God’s gift of marriage, how can the church become more effective at (1) preparing young people for marriage, (2) helping to divorce-proof existing marriages, and (3) restoring people wounded by divorce?

LOOK OUT – Apply

The message of the gospel is that *anyone* – regardless of his or her past mistakes – can be restored to a right relationship with God and other human beings through repentance and trust in Jesus. While divorce is a sin with often enormous consequences in this life, it is not an unpardonable sin. If it has affected you, believe the Good News: “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor. 5:17)