God's View on Marriage, part 2

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. We are walking verse by verse through the Gospel of Mark and have come to the first section of chapter 10, which, as we looked at last week, is a bit of a difficult subject dealing with topics like divorce, and remarriage. I don't want to re-preach everything from last week, but knowing we were going to spend a couple of weeks in this, I do want to say a couple of things, just knowing not everybody was here last Sunday.

I do want to just say again to you that my desire every Sunday as your pastor is to do two things, and they're not disconnected. They are absolutely connected together.
One is to love you. I want you to know that, that I desire to love you and to serve you and to be faithful to you. A second thing that is not disconnected from that is I want to teach to you the full counsel of God's Word.
I want to do what the Bible says in 2 Timothy, to cut it straight. The primary way that I try to serve you faithfully each Lord's Day is by preaching the Word.
And I want you to understand that when it comes to hard passages like this in Mark 10, it's not hard for me to say what Jesus said, because my life is—I'm so convinced that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.
[1:53] I'm so convinced that His way is best. It's not difficult for me in a counseling situation or in a conversation or a sermon to just say what Jesus said.

I don't run from that. I don't hide from that. I'm not ashamed of His words. I'm not embarrassed by what Scripture says. I feel very unapologetic in just simply saying what the Bible says.
At the same time, when you're pastoring a church, you're not just preaching the Bible. You're preaching the Bible to people.
And there's a difference there. Preaching the Bible is just simply to say, I just want to get it right, and that's where everything ends. But for the pastor, you want to get it right, but you're preaching the Bible to people.
Which means it matters to me not just that we cut it straight, but that we understand it, that we live it, that we're faithful to it.
[2:54] My responsibility doesn't end when the service ends. My responsibility continues. I want to shepherd you and disciple you and teach you and lead you. And it matters to me not just what I say.

It matters to me collectively how we live and if we obey it and if we honor the Lord. So, while it's not hard for me to say what Jesus says, it's not hard for me to say what Scripture says, even if to the world it were unpopular, even if inside the church it were unpopular, really would not even be any bearing to me.
I just want to say what Jesus said, what the Bible says, and I feel no apology about that. However, I care so deeply for the people of our church, and I love you so much that it would be impossible for me to just simply say, I'll just say what the Bible says.
I don't care what you think about it. I don't care how it makes you feel. I don't care what you do with it. That's not true. I do care how you live. I do care together how we honor Christ.
I do want to preach the Bible, but I preach the Bible to people. And so, your lives matter. Your families matter. I also understand that our church is filled with sinners.
[4:10] All of us are sinners. All of us are. And I want us to make sure that we would never be puffed up with pride when we look at a certain issue just because that's not our issue.

I also want to make sure that if it is your issue that you understand God's grace is sufficient, and that's always our hope. And so, I just share that because I tried last week to really communicate my heart with you as we get to Mark 10.

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Now, I don't want to go over all those things again, but I do want you to understand that as we walk through this text and any other text that's difficult to understand or difficult to hear, to withhold it would be unloving.
To preach it and not care about you would be unloving. But I am convinced the most loving thing I could do ever is to just say what the Bible says and then to try to gently and graciously shepherd you through living and applying it as best we can.
So, if you weren't with us last week here in Mark 10, it's this issue about divorce and remarriage. And before we get to the nuances of it, we spent most of our time last week in verses 1 to verse 3 that I hope was very helpful and insightful for you.
[5:32] The issues behind the geography are very helpful. The issues behind how they're trying to test Jesus and why they're doing it that way are very important to understand in this passage.

If you weren't with us last week, it may be helpful for you to go back and watch that on our website. I think it would help you to understand the heart of this passage with much more clarity.
And we're really looking at this text dealing with divorce with a couple of headings. First, what we looked at last week, I want you to understand this, that we always start with Scripture and God's ideal.
We always start with Scripture and God's ideal. Let's go back to the text and get in front of us. Chapter 10, verse 1. He left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and the crowds gathered to Him again.
And again, as was His custom, He taught them. Remember, between chapter 9 and chapter 10 is about five months. We've gone from November before He's crucified in the spring.
[6:42] When you get to chapter 10, you're just a couple of weeks before the events of the crucifixion. He's in the area of Perea where Herod Antipas is over. The Pharisees purposefully wait until Jesus is in that area because Herod has already put John the Baptist to death because John the Baptist spoke out about Herod's sin, specifically related to marriage.

The Pharisees hope they can catch Jesus to ask Him questions about divorce and marriage and remarriage. And if He says what John the Baptist said, then maybe Herod will have Jesus put to death too, and they can get rid of Him and keep their hands clean.
So verse 2, the Pharisees came up and in order to test Him, asked, they're not looking for information, this is a test, this is a trap, this is an ambush, this is a desire to try to get Jesus in a theological corner where He has no way out.
And they asked, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife? And Jesus answered them, what did Moses command you?
That was really what I wanted you to walk away with last Sunday. When He says, what did Moses command you, He's referring to Deuteronomy 24. He's referring to the books of the law. Moses, the human author of the books of the Pentateuch, the first five books of your Old Testament.
[8:07] What Jesus is telling the Pharisees here is with any issue, with any question, here's your first response. What does God say? For your marriage, for the church, for your finances, for your parenting, for how you use your money, for how you deal with conflict, with how you deal with anything in life, our first response is, what does God say?

If we would think like that and respond like that, it doesn't mean that everything would be always simple and easy, but we would do away with much of the problems we create for ourselves.
There are some times where issues come up in the church or issues come up with families or people in the church, and as a pastoral team, we're doing our best to try to deal with our people and to deal with the Scripture and trying to make sense of how to best lead them in the things of God.
And sometimes it's really difficult because life can get very, very strange. But most of the time, even when things get difficult, it's because somebody failed to say, what does God say?
That doesn't mean it's your fault. It may be somebody that's been ungodly, that's acted in a bad way toward you, that's put you in a bad situation. But almost always, the problems that we deal with in life, whether it's because of our own doing or what someone has done that affects us, the issue is because we have not thought, what does God say?
[9:57] And if you want to keep your life simple, not always easy, but if you want to keep your life simple, just train yourself to respond to every situation you face by saying, what does God say?

not what will the consequences of this be? Not what will happen if I obey Him, you obey God, leave the consequences to Him.

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But just ask yourself, what does God say about this? Life gets very complicated when we start to think differently. But if we begin with, what does God say?
And make that our standard, make that our authority, we keep our life pretty simple. Not always easy, I know. But we keep our life pretty simple.
What does God say? So, we want to always start with Scripture and always start with God's ideal.
Now, this question about Moses comes from Deuteronomy chapter 24.
[11:09] So, they said, can a man divorce his wife? The Lord says, what did Moses command you? Verse 4, they said, Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.

And Jesus said to them, because of your hardness of heart, he wrote you this commandment. In other words, the issue is, can we divorce?
Who can get divorced? And all the issues that come with that, all the thousands of questions that come to your mind right now, same kind of questions would have come to their mind back in Jesus' day and in Moses' day for that matter.
And this comes from Deuteronomy 24. You don't have to turn there, just make a note of that so you're aware. I'm going to read to you this passage that Jesus is referring to.
It says, when a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds favor, finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce, and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies who took her to be his wife, then her former husband who sent her away may not take her again to be his wife after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the Lord.
[12:59] And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the Lord your God is giving you for inheritance. That's it. That's the totality of where this comes from.

And I mentioned to you last week that what's happened by the time you get to Jesus' day 2,000 years ago is you've got two schools of thought, a very conservative school and a liberal way of interpreting that.
And the issue is found around in Deuteronomy 24 if a husband finds some indecency in her. And one school of thought said that the only reason that you could divorce your wife was because of adultery.
Another school of thought, the liberal school, says no, you can divorce her for any indecency that you find in her. And by the time of Jesus' day, that had become to where some rabbis were saying you can divorce your wife if she burns your dinner.
You can divorce your wife if she talks to another man in public. You can divorce your wife if she speaks ill of your mother to you. So if she says something about her mother-in-law, everybody feels like, oh my goodness, I couldn't be married for five minutes, right?
[14:16] Well, that's what's happening. Same thing in our day that happened back in their day. Why is it that people get divorced? Well, the problem was in Jesus' day, you've got some people who are saying you just get rid of your wife if you want to.

In fact, by Jesus' day, there were some rabbis saying even if you found another woman you thought was more attractive than your wife, that would make her indecent.
It was all just about loopholes. It wasn't about godly living. It wasn't about honoring the Lord. It was all just about trying to find loopholes, which is why I say to you, we start with the Scripture and we start with God's ideal.
As best we can, what did God say? And they come to Jesus and say, well, didn't Moses command us to get divorced? I just read the passage to you.
Moses doesn't command anybody to get divorced. In fact, the only restriction in Deuteronomy 24 is that if a man divorces his wife, he has to give her a certificate of divorce.
[15:31] And I think there's a couple of reasons for that. One of them is, in the Old Testament, if someone committed adultery, what did the law say you did?

You killed him. It cost you your life. And if you want to know how serious God takes marriage, there it is.
And so, I don't think the issue in Deuteronomy 24 is dealing with that because I think infidelity already had its own way that you dealt with it.

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But what if you're, in this case in Deuteronomy 24, what if your wife is acting in such a sinful way or in such a way that brings so much shame upon you?
Maybe it's not, maybe it's not infidelity by the letter of the law, but in every conceivable way, she's not being faithful to you.
[16:35] Well, part of the issue was, if you were a woman in that culture, if a husband put you away, you were in real trouble because you may have a hard time making a living, you have no one to help you, you have no one to protect you.

And what if your husband gets tired of you for just some small thing, puts you away, and then changes his mind and wants to take you back? What if he just gets tired of you and writes you off and he kicks you out, divorces you, and you go marry somebody else, and then that man does the same thing, and your first husband says, you know what, I was, I don't know what I was thinking, I shouldn't have treated you that way, come back and be my wife again.
And you're on 24, he says, you can't do that. You can't treat your wife like some piece of property that you just sell it and buy it back, and sell it and buy it back, and just kind of keep her back and forth, back and forth.
Also, if you were going to divorce her, Moses says, you've got to give a certificate of divorce, because she can't just be left in limbo, you can't just kick her out, and now she doesn't know, am I married, am I not married, are you still my husband, but you've kicked me out of the home?
Or, if he divorced her, and the assumption was it was for adultery, then people would look at her and assume, well, maybe she should be put to death. And so, Moses, because of people's sinfulness, said, not that I command divorce, not that divorce is good or right, but, because of sin, there are times it happens, and if it's going to happen, you can't just put your wife away and take her back, and send her away and take her back, you can't do that.
[18:16] You can't treat her like that. And so, I take Deuteronomy 24 actually to be, yes, a concession to sin and the reality that things happen, but as much as anything else, it's about protecting, it's about shielding the lady in that situation.

And they come to Jesus and say, what did, why did Moses command this? And Jesus says, what did Scripture say?
Verse 4, Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and a sinner away, and Jesus said to them, it was because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this.
It was because of sin. This wasn't the ideal, this wasn't the design, this wasn't the objective, this was something that comes into play because of man's sinfulness.
The only command that's in Deuteronomy 24 is if you divorce your wife in the old covenant, you can't take her back. But they're not trying to learn.
[19:28] They're not trying to say, how do we honor the Lord? They're not trying to say, what's the closest we can get to the heart of God? They're just looking for loopholes. And now, they've not only been looking for loopholes for themselves, now they're trying to catch Jesus in some kind of a trap.

And so, Jesus is going to respond to this test by giving them a second thing I want you to make note of. Number one, always start with Scripture and God's ideal.
Number two, Jesus shares the biblical foundations of marriage. He shares the biblical foundations of marriage. And the first is that marriage is God's design.
This is very interesting to me. When the Pharisees come and ask Him about divorce, verse two, Jesus answers in verse six, from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.
And He's going to talk about marriage. In other words, when they want to talk about divorce, Jesus says, don't start with divorce. Let's talk about marriage.
[20:45] Before you can understand issues of divorce and remarriage, Jesus says, you've got to first have a God-centered view of marriage. It's a very important distinction Jesus makes.

And the first is that marriage is God's design. From the beginning of creation, Jesus says. This is God's design.
One of the reasons why Christians fight for our marriage to survive is because of the design of marriage. Ephesians five speaks of our marriage as a picture of Christ and the church.
It's a living picture of the gospel. And Jesus says, the first thing you've got to understand is that marriage is God's design.

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This isn't the world's invention. This isn't a worldly thing. And to understand what marriage is about, you've got to understand the heart of the one who designed it. Marriage is God's design.
[21:51] Number two, marriage is one man and one woman. Jesus says, from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.

This is God's design for marriage. One man, one woman. Not three, not four, not five, not two men, not two women.
God's design for marriage is one man, one woman. Now, if you're 30 and over, you say, yeah, I mean, we got it.
but if you're in your 20s or a teenager or a child, what I just said is controversial. What I just said sounds archaic.
What I just said makes you think, that's not what I've heard in school. That's not what I've heard on movies. That's not what I see in the TV shows.
[23:00] That's not what I see in commercials. And I want you to understand that God designed marriage and by God's design, it's one man and one woman.

It's not a group. It's two. It's not two men. It's not two women. It's one man and one woman. And this is one of the reasons why you don't skip hard passages because if there was ever a generation that needs to know what does God say about marriage, it's this generation of teenagers who have been so lied to by the world.
complete abuse from the world in trying to take young people's mind and confuse them and lie to them about what marriage is supposed to be.
And I want our teenagers and our children to understand as I mentioned last week, let's be gracious people. Let's be caring and compassionate.
Let's understand that sin is real and people's lives and families are wrecked by sin and let's not be harsh and mean-spirited. But at the exact same time, let's not let the sin of the world blind our eyes to God's ideal.
[24:36] So marriage is God's design and His design is one man and one woman until death parts you. Third, Jesus says marriage is the establishment of a new priority.

It's the establishment of a new priority. Verse 7, therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife.
So in a marriage, you leave father and mother and the other leaves father and mother and you hold fast, clinging, you're glued to your spouse.
And it's the establishment of a new priority. God is to always be first place in our hearts as believers, but underneath that, the highest place of priority if you're married is your spouse.
That's your new priority. Marcy is the only family I have that I chose. you don't choose your parents, you don't choose your siblings.
[26:05] If the Lord wills for you to have kids, you have kids, but you don't choose them, biologically speaking. If you have, in the case of adoption, I understand the nuance with that, of course, but in the sense of our biological families, you don't choose your siblings, don't choose your parents, don't choose your grandparents.

But I stood before God and witnesses and pledged to be with Marcy until death parts us.
That's the only relationship I have I made a covenant with. And when you get married, it's a new priority. You leave home and you have a new priority.
For my sons who are married, they have a new priority the day they got married. It's not me. It's not Marcy. I want my kids to feel welcome in my house.
I want my daughters-in-law to love to be with us. I want my family around. I want my children to be with you. But my son should have no trouble making a decision of what's my priority.
[27:28] It's not me. It's them and their wife. Their home, their family, that's their priority. The day my sons got married is the day they had a new priority.

They left father and mother and they were joined to their wife. And that's their priority. The day I got married, home for me became wherever me and Marcy live.
Marcy used to say we're newly married. If we're in a cardboard box, as long as we're together, that will still be home. Don't know if she would say that today. That's how she felt 27 years ago.
Wherever we are is home. That's my priority. And this is God's design.
That you see your marriage in such a way that when you say I do, it is till death parts you. That's God's ideal. And that new union is your first priority.

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[28:47] God is always first. I want to be clear on that. But humanly speaking, that marriage you have is your first priority. It's more important than your job. It's more important than your hobbies.

It's more important than anything else. That is your new priority. And that's an important word not just for those who are married.
That's an important word for those of us who have children who have become married. It's not the job of mother and father once your kids have gotten married to try to keep them tied to you, relationally love, of course.
Closeness, affection, of course. But my sons have a new priority because they're married. Their priority is their wife.
And one of the problems that we have in our culture is we've stopped saying what does God say? That's the question that matters. It's an issue of priority.
[30:02] So, what my wife needs is my new priority. And once you're married, you should still have some friends.

You still need to have some fun. Hobbies are good. But your friends are no longer your priority once you're married. your spouse is.
And going out with the fellas and going out with the girls, I'm not saying you can't do it. I'm just saying that's not your priority. You took a vow before God to have a new priority.
And that new priority is your spouse. And so, whatever your marriage needs is your priority.
And what most marriages need to be strong, I'm talking in a normative sense. I know there's issues that come up that are unique. I get it.
[31:10] But in a normative sense, what most marriages need is husband and wife to love Jesus, be in church worshiping and serving together, raise their children in a home where the things of God are taught and loved and cherished, and they continually say to each other, how do we get closer and closer and closer to the heart of God?

that's what we need. And you don't need money to do that. For so many families, for so many couples, they get married and they think what will really make them happy is the new home or a new car or an expensive vacation and now we've got all this debt and now we've got financial stress and now we're worried all the time and now we're working all the time and we can't even have a conversation because we fight over money all the time and we keep looking for things of the world to help us and we read this book and go to this conference and talk to this guy for help and some of those things can be helpful but here's the thing, there's no replacement for just simply saying what does God say?
And Jesus tells the Pharisees, here's what you need to know, marriage is God's design for one man, for one woman and that is your priority until you die.
Until you die. So, if there's ever a decision to be made in my life between taking care of my wife or anything else, it will be the easiest decision I've ever made.
Now, I'm a worker by nature. I love to work. Work for me is hobby.
[33:07] Work for me is fun. Work for me is what I'm made for. I love to work. As best, if the Lord allows life and health, I mean, I'd love to do what I'm doing for 35 more years.

I'm in no hurry to stop doing this. But my wife is my first priority under God. And if I ever come to a place in my life where I say, you know what, I've been a good pastor but a bad husband, that's a complete oxymoron.
It's impossible. impossible. If I come to the place where I say, I'm doing a good job of taking care of all these people, all these families, but I'm not taking good care of my wife, then I've failed.
If I die and people come to my funeral and a thousand people said, he was great to me and my wife says, he neglected me, that's a thousand to one and that one is the only one that matters.
Because she's my priority the day I say I do. Now, in marriage there's got to be sacrifice. We live in a real world with real issues and not a fairytale land.
[34:27] We've got to understand that. We've got to be aware of the challenges of being married and there are some nights I'm gone and there are some evenings that come up and you've got to make, that's true for all of us with all of our walks of life.

We don't live in some fairytale world. But Jesus says, you're so concerned with looking at loopholes and getting out of things and you're so concerned with trying to accommodate your own sin.
He says, let's remember how marriage started. This was God's design from the beginning for a man and a woman and it was a new priority.

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You left mother father and father to hold fast to his wife. Fourth, he says, it's an intimate union. Verse 8, and the two shall become one flesh, so they are no longer two but one flesh. Marriage is an intimate union.
[35:33] There's a physical oneness of husband and wife together. And I think this is instructive for us to understand that in the eyes of Jesus that one flesh relationship, that physical sexual union of husband and wife is to be reserved for husband and wife.

That's important to understand. that in the eyes of God, marriage is so significant that that physical oneness is to be enjoyed and experienced by husband and wife.
And while there is a physical union, there's not only a physical union because that also is a very emotional and spiritual connection.
It's a deep connection. which is why, fifthly, Jesus says this marriage is also to be lasting.
Verse 9, Jesus adds some commentary to Genesis. He's been quoting Genesis. By the way, when the Pharisees ask Jesus about marriage, Jesus goes back to the beginning.
[36:51] One man, one woman, Adam and Eve, he quotes from Genesis 2. He takes Genesis literally. And he adds this in verse 9.

What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. Marriage is to be lasting.
Now, again, are there issues in Scripture where divorce is allowed? Yes. I just don't want you to too quickly run to the exception.
I want you to first just feel the weight of the design of marriage. I understand because of sin things get broken, but I just want you to understand God's design for marriage.
And he says, what God has joined together, let not man separate. verse 9 makes this very clear, that Jesus cares deeply about your marriage.
[38:00] This was the design of God in marriage, that God has brought you together, and because He has brought you together, and because of your covenant to each other, that you don't end it.

Again, are there exceptions? Yes, and we'll get to them, but I just want you to feel the design of marriage before you run to the exception or run to the loophole.
Remember, the Pharisees here are trying to get Jesus tangled up in the nuances here. Can we divorce? Back to Norma 24. What if a man finds some indecency in her?
What does indecency mean? How do we define indecency? What's allowable under indecency?
And they're looking for all of these nuances and all these clauses and all of these ways of escape.
And Jesus says, let's just deal with purpose and design. The purpose of your marriage was to leave father and mother, cling to each other, and because God has brought you together, let's not end it.
[39:06] And the whole point here in verse 9 is that marriage is not a contract, it's a covenant. covenant. And those of you who are not married, I want you to hear me clear on this.

If you're a child, if you're a teenager, if you're a single adult, and one day you may want to get married, I want you to understand when you go into marriage that you see it as a covenant, not a contract.
Let me tell you the difference. I have a contract with a company to spray for weeds. I did it myself for years. I made the terrible decision to outsource that a couple of years ago.
Terrible just because they don't do it as well as I did, but that's a different matter. I have a contract with them. And the contract goes like this. You spray my lawn, and I give you money.
And if you don't spray my lawn, I don't give you money. And from their side, if they spray my lawn, and I don't give them money, they're not spraying my lawn anymore. And if they spray my lawn, and the weeds don't die, I'm not going back to them.
[40:25] And I'll just tell you straight up, if somebody else wants to spray my lawn for five bucks cheaper, I'm switching. I have no commitment here. None. That's a contract.

I'm obligated to keep my word. You spray my lawn, render a service. I'm going to pay you. I'm not going to cheat for you. I'm not going to steal for you. I'm not going to lie to you. I'm obligated for that. But somebody else can spray it better.
Somebody else can spray it cheaper. I'm your guy. It's just a contract. That's not at all what I did on May 18th, 1996.
On that day, I made a covenant where I stood before the Lord and before witnesses, and I pledged my life to Marcy.
No way out. Sickness or health, richer or poor, better or worse. I made a covenant. I said, this is the wife the Lord has given to me, and I pledged to be yours, and I pledged to be yours alone until

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death parts us.
[41:41] If a weed company said, Michael, for us to spray your weeds, I need to make a covenant before God that you're going to be with us until death parts us, I'd say, no.

I don't make a covenant with you. I make a contract with you, but not a covenant. That's God's design.
You enter into a covenant. Pastor Alistair Begg, somebody who know that name, tells the story of, he had a man in his office one day, and he said, Pastor, he said, I want to divorce my wife.
And Pastor Begg said, well, I'm sorry to hear that. Why? Why are you going to divorce your wife?
And he said, well, I'm just so unhappy. He said, there's not been any infidelity. There's not been any abuse.
Nothing like that. It's just not good. We're just not getting along very well. This isn't what I expected. I thought marriage was going to be better. I thought we were going to be happier. I thought we were going to have more fun together.
[42:43] And Alistair Begg interrupts. He said, wait a minute, wait a minute. Are you telling me your marriage is worse than you expected? And he said, yes, that's exactly what I'm telling you.
And Alistair Begg said, oh, well, this is good news.

Now, if you could hear it in the accent, Alistair tells it. It's a much better story. But he says, well, this is very good news. And the church member said, well, why is this good news? He said, because this one's easy. He said, this is easy.
This is exactly what you signed up for. You said, for better or for worse. You told me your marriage is worse.
That's what you signed up for. Why are you still in my office? It's exactly what you said you were going to be faithful to.
Richer or poor, sickness or health, better or worse. So, the fact that it's worse has no bearing on what you do.
[43:44] And he's right. He's right. God's design, God's ideal, one man, one woman for life in a covenant until death parts them.

Now, again, are there exceptions? Yes. Is there biblical teaching on other issues to consider? Yes. Will we get to those? Yes.
But I just want you to understand God's design for marriage. Because marriage is his design. God's design. And his design is for one man and for one woman to have a new priority and an intimate union that endures and that is lasting.
Now, as I mentioned last week, let me end where we end, where we were ending last week.
Our gospel is a gospel of grace. And all of us in this room are sinners. sinners. And our only hope is Jesus.
[45:07] And as I mentioned last week, if you're divorced, I'm glad you're here. Not just today, but in our church. We love you. We care for you.

I want you to be an active, thriving part of our church family. And if you've been married once or if you've been married 13 times, whoever you're married to today, this is it.
As I mentioned last week, until death parts you and you can't play a role in that occurrence. This is it. All right? You can't undo the past.
We can repent where repentance is necessary. We can confess where confession is necessary. But we can't undo the past. What we can do is say, what does God say?
How do I today stay faithful to my spouse? How do I today strive to do this? Now, again, are there exceptions? Are there occasions in Scripture where the Bible allows for divorce?
[46:09] Yes. We're going to get to those. Not today. We're going to get to those. And I want to give you the full counsel on that. But I just want you to understand that if God's ideal has not been realized in your life or in your marriage, I want you to understand divorce is not some unpardonable sin.

God's grace forgives. And our hope for heaven is the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, not what we've done in marriage.
Our marriages are important. I'm laboring to try to help you to understand that. But my hope of heaven is not my marriage. My hope of heaven is not how long I will one day be married.
My hope of heaven is that I am a sinner without any ability to save myself. But Jesus Christ died on the cross and because of His righteousness, I have faith in Him and what was true of Him, perfect

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righteousness, He has given to me.
And I could never earn heaven. I could never deserve heaven. If I could be married to my wife for 200 years, that wouldn't make me fit for heaven. The only thing that makes me fit for heaven is that the grace of Jesus Christ has forgiven me of my sin and washed over me.
[47:29] And that's true for all of us. So those of us who have not been divorced, let's not go around looking down at other people as if we've got all figured out in their, look, we've all got our sin, we all have our issues, and apart from grace, none of us could stand.

At the same time, let's not hold back God's ideal and God's design for this relationship so important to us that we would fail to do it God's way.
And so we've got to be people who know the truth, people who live the truth, and people who are gracious. And I also want you to hear me say one last thing.
God is so good and God is so faithful and God is so gracious, He brings good even from the worst of circumstances.
And there are dozens of you in this room right now who can testify to that. God is so good that even through sin, God brought good from it.
[48:46] Even through things people did that hurt you, God brought good from it. Even from bad decisions you made, God brought good from it. Even from terrible things you've done, God's brought good from it.

Even from terrible things that you've had to endure, God's brought good from it. That's just God's grace. He takes us as sinners, as broken people, as imperfect people, and in love, and in mercy. He can restore us by His grace, and He causes all things to work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.
Amen? So let's be gracious, let's be patient, let's be understanding, let's be truthful, let's set our eyes on God's design and God's ideal and not the world and not loopholes and say, how can we best do what God says in our marriage?
And if you need help with that, if you need help in knowing Christ, if you need help in knowing how to follow Him, if you need help with things in your family, reach out to us, not because we have all the answers, not because we know everything, but because as your pastors, we would love to walk with you and help you and shepherd you through any season of life.
[50:12] Lord, we thank you for your Word today and pray that you would use it to help us to have understanding and to live faithful lives that would honor you. We ask it in Christ's name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
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