

Selfless Sacrifice vs Selfish Standards

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[0:00] What another wonderful example of a mother passing faith on. Thank you for that. Well, if you have a Bible, please turn it to Mark's Gospel, chapter 9.

! We're continuing our studies throughout Mark's Gospel. And this morning we're going to take quite a large chunk from chapter 9, verse 30, into 10, verse 12.

And part of the reason for doing that is soon we're going to be in Palm Sunday. And I wanted us to reach Palm Sunday in Mark's Gospel as we got to Palm Sunday in the calendar, rather than preach Palm Sunday a couple of weeks after Palm Sunday.

And so part of it is a practical reason. Another part is there's a lot going on in these passages. And you could easily spend a long time in little bits of it.

But you could easily get lost in the weeds of it. And so just to have that bigger picture in mind, we're taking a larger section. So Mark chapter 9, reading from verse 30.

[1:12] God, our Heavenly Father, please would you speak to us by your Spirit as we open your Word.

When you think about the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, these are true words. Your Word is a living Word. May your Word penetrate our hearts and challenge us, convict us, encourage us, build us up, lead us into the way everlasting.

Lord, may you be glorified this morning, and may you teach us by your Spirit. Amen. Mark 9 from verse 30.

They went on from there and passed through Galilee, and he did not want anyone to know, for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him.

And when he is killed, after three days he will rise. But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him. And they came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house, he asked them, What were you discussing on the way?

[2:35] But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve, and he said to them, If anyone would be first, he must be last of all, and servant of all.

And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, Whoever receives one such child in my name, receives me. And whoever receives me, receives not me, but him who sent me.

John said to him, Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us. But Jesus said, Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name, will be able to soon afterwards, speak evil of me, for the one who is not against us, is for us.

For truly I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water, to drink, because you belong to Christ, will by no means, lose his reward. Whoever causes one of these little ones, who believe in me, to sin, it would be better for him, if a great millstone, were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.

And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled, than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.

[4:05] And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better for you to enter life lame, than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out.

It's better for you to enter the kingdom of God, with one eye, than with two eyes, to be thrown into hell, where the worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. For everyone will be salted with fire.

Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.

And he left there, and went to the region of Judea, and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.

And Pharisees came up, and in order to test him, asked, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife? He answered them, what does Moses command you?

[5:03] And 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.

But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother, and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate. And in the house, the disciples asked him again about this matter.

And he said to them, whoever divorces his wife, and marries another, commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband, and marries another, she commits adultery.

This is God's word, and we pray he blesses the reading of it. Amen. When you think about the way you approach your own discipleship, as you follow Jesus, what are your standards for discipleship?

[6:14] Have a wee think about, what's your standard for how you conduct yourself as a disciple? We've read this long passage with many parts, but think about the attitude and the standards throughout this.

Think about all these parts of the passage, and all the people involved. So there's Jesus. He is the selfless king who will suffer for all people.

Then there's the disciples, arguing about who is greatest among them. Then there's a little child, who is insignificant in the eyes of most. There's a random man casting out demons in the name of Jesus.

The disciples trying to stop him. Those who do mighty works, or even just give a cup in the name of Jesus, a cup of water. There are those who cause others to sin, and there are our own standards for sin.

And then there are Pharisees trying to test and trap Jesus, and people who divorce to go after another. In all these examples, what is the motivation?

[7:17] What's the standard in all of these examples? I know there's big subjects in this passage, some of which might seem quite random and out of place in the flow of the passage, but let's not get lost in the weeds.

Consider how all these things fit together. Think about the care and the standards of the kingdom of Jesus, as opposed to the kingdom of this world.

Think about how Jesus is thinking throughout all these things, compared to how everyone else is thinking. Remember, Jesus spoke earlier in chapter 8, about setting your mind on the things of man, and not on the things of God.

And then he spoke about denying yourself, and carrying a cross, and following a suffering Messiah. Setting your mind on the things of God might mean losing your life, not trying to hold on to it.

And so this passage, again it starts with Jesus speaking about his suffering again. For the second time, Jesus speaks about his suffering.

[8:29] And then this leads into more examples of either setting your mind on things of man, or setting your mind on the things of God. The disciples, they're arguing about who is the greatest, and then they're trying to stop a man from casting demons out in Jesus' name.

Does that sound like setting your mind on the things of God? Or there's people who cause others to sin. Or there are the disciples toying about with sin.

Flirting with sin. Does that sound like setting your mind on the things of God? And likewise, there's the Pharisees trying to test and trap Jesus by trying to find a legalistic loophole in marriage to allow divorce.

Does that sound like setting your mind on the things of God? Now notice, notice how the discussion with the disciples leads to Jesus talking about the dangers of causing others to sin.

And then, the discussion with the Pharisees leads to Jesus talking about these things causing people to sin. And so, there's this section with a discussion with the disciples, and then Jesus talks about if anyone causes you to sin, or if your hand causes you to sin.

[9:49] And then afterwards, we have Jesus talking with the Pharisees, and again, Jesus ends the conversation in the house with the disciples saying, if somebody divorces and goes off with another, they're leading themselves into sin.

And that other person, they're committing adultery. And so, you have this conversation, and then it leads to a discussion about leading others into sin. Do you see how these things fit together? What are the standards? If you want to be in the kingdom of Jesus, what are the standards? Because in this passage, it seems like the disciples are not much different from the Pharisees. They have similar selfish motives and similar low standards. It seems like both are failing to see the awful dangers of sin and causing others to sin.

Now, I don't think that Mark is just in certain random, unconnected teaching blocks. I think they all relate in some way. I think they relate in some way to the care and standards of the kingdom of Jesus.

[10:58] So, think about all these, think about all these things that are in this passage. What are we missing in our lives when we forget the selfish, the selfless sacrifice of Jesus?

What are we missing when we forget the selfless sacrifice of Jesus? what are we missing when we argue about who is greatest among us? What are we missing when we try to stop others doing things in Jesus' name?

What are we missing as disciples when we overlook the little and insignificant people? What are we missing as disciples when we hold on to sin or toy around with sin?

And what are we missing when we try to find excuses and loopholes to get out of our responsibility to love and serve others?

That's all in this passage. And look at how Jesus absolutely exemplifies what it is to set your mind on the things of God.

[12:07] He absolutely exemplifies what living in the kingdom looks like and how he exemplifies what the care and standards of God look like in our daily lives in all of these situations.

And so verse 30 to 37 the disciples are arguing about who among them is the greatest. That's their conversation. Meanwhile Jesus who is the greatest is actually trying to tell them about his own betrayal and death which will be for their sake.

See the contrast there? They're arguing about who's the greatest and the greatest one is sitting right in front of them Jesus and yet he's talking about his own suffering for their sake.

And yet they don't understand this business about Jesus suffering and dying and then rising again. They don't understand and not only that they're too afraid to ask.

You can understand that. Have you ever been too afraid to ask something? Maybe you've asked something before and you got it wrong and you're worried about being made a fool of or being embarrassed getting it wrong again.

[13:19] Matthew Henry says many remain ignorant because they are ashamed to inquire. What's the worst that can happen?

You get it wrong and you become a little bit more humble. It's not a bad thing. You might just get the answer that you're looking for. So forget about fear and pride and just ask.

Just ask. While the disciples are thinking about who ranks first among them Jesus takes a child and he tells them they must become last and the servant of all.

Now you could imagine think about this right? If you're going to be in the kingdom of God I want you to imagine that you are entering into the kingdom of God.

What a great honor it would be to be a servant of the king. In the kingdom of God to be a servant of the king would be an immense honor.

[14:22] But Jesus told them to be a servant of all. In fact later on in Mark's gospel we're going to read that Jesus came not to be served but to

serve others and give his life as a ransom for many.

So it would be a great honor to be a servant of the king but Jesus tells them to be a servant of all. I don't think that it's difficult to be a servant of some.

You ever feel that? It's not difficult to be a servant of some. We're often happy to be the servant of those we deem worthy to be served. We would happily serve someone important.

What do you think has the greatest honor? What do you think has the greater honor out of these two things right? What is the most honor? Being the personal aid to the president.

What has the greatest honor? Being the personal aid to the president or being a nursery teacher or a babysitter to a toddler. What has the greatest honor? See in our world we're inclined to think the former rather than the latter.

[15:35] But Jesus challenges our standards. He picks up a toddler. Do you see how it says taking him in his arms? That's not a teenager. That's a toddler.

And Jesus basically says to his disciples I'll tell you what folks if you want to be great you must serve those who are little and those who are not all that important.

You must serve them. Who are those in our society? Who are those in our church that are often overlooked or forgotten about? Or those who can't contribute much?

In the first century children were at the lowest rung of society. They couldn't do anything. They couldn't help you with anything. It was a labor intensive society. They couldn't work. They were completely dependent.

They couldn't add much to society. And yet Jesus points to them as the ones we must serve. Who are the folks in our society? Remember this big section Jesus is teaching and challenging our value system.

[16:40] He challenges our level of care our standards our values. Who is worthy to be served? So I've got a question. Do we even need little children in our church?

I mean they just make noise and run about and don't do as they're told. Do we need little children in our church? How about this? Do we need old people in our church?

People who can't serve or do anything because their health is always poor. They have a season ticket for the hospital. Do we need these kind of people in our church?

Of course. You know it would be nice to have young families come into the church. It would. And we want to see the church grow. Of course we do. But Jesus is really challenging our standards.

We could be so tempted to think well if they can't do anything for us do we need them around? Are they a burden? How many people who are like that feel like a burden? In fact this whole business about assisted suicide force these people to feel like they are a burden to society and a burden to their families.

[17:50] And what an awful thing that is. Jesus challenges that. You know I think we are really missing something important when we overlook the value that the Lord places on those who cannot do much.

The value the Lord places on serving such people. you see we miss how having these kind of people in our midst and loving and serving one another how that shows the world something of Jesus kingdom.

See without the little children without you know the poor health of elderly people without disabled people without people who can't offer much and do much without all of that how are we going to show the world what Jesus kingdom looks like?

because he places a tremendous value on these people. We miss something vital even in our own growth as disciples that serving people like that makes us look more like Jesus.

And if we didn't do it we wouldn't look more like Jesus. So he really challenges our value system.

We might not always know how to do it at granted we don't always know how to do it but if we want to follow Jesus we should always be willing and ready to be the servant of all.

[19:14] In verse 38 to 41 Jesus goes into this but what about those who are doing ministry in Jesus name over there out there somewhere? People doing ministry in Jesus name but they're not doing it with us.

The disciples see this other man casting out demons in Jesus name and it's ironic because the previous passage they couldn't cast out a demon in Jesus name even although they'd been given

the authority to do so and they see this other man having success casting a demon out in Jesus name and they try and stop him.

They try and stop him because he's succeeding and they're failing. Some churches try to stop other churches grow while they themselves are failing and dying.

And that's not to say we should compromise on essentials in order to work with other people. We shouldn't compromise on essentials but most of the time we argue and divide over non-essentials and we quietly let the essentials slip and before we know it the church is closed.

Happens so many times. Those who are doing great works in the name of Jesus are unlikely to quickly speak against the name of Jesus. Christians at times and in different places will be under increasing pressure and persecution so much that even getting a cup of water will be difficult.

[20:40] And so Jesus uses this example in light of the disciples who want to discourage a great work in Jesus name. Jesus says well even a simple work in my name should be accepted.

Never mind this great work over here. Even someone giving a cup of water in my name. And if somebody's doing that they're on a fair way to becoming one of his followers.

And so we need to recognize who our friends are and who our foes are. At times you might just find Jesus providing people to support his mission and how foolish would it be for his disciples to try and stop them.

Now when Jesus says those who are not against him are for him I take it that he's talking about those who actually know Jesus. They know what Jesus is about.

They know that you either support him or you reject him. You cannot sit on the fence. Jesus isn't talking about Mormons or Jehovah's witnesses or any Tom, Dick, and Harry who calls on the name of Jesus.

[21:43] He's talking about people who know the cost of using Jesus' name. The cost of giving a cup of water in Jesus' name. There's countries in our world danger of great harm for simply giving a cup of water in Jesus' name.

And that's who Jesus is talking about. In fact, he says this thing in light of the fact that he said, if anyone is ashamed of the Son of Man, so too will the Son of Man be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

We need more people who are not ashamed of the name of Jesus. And so, is it out of envy or jealousy?

Or is it a concern for the truth and glory of Jesus? Or do we want our own little church here to grow? Or do we want the kingdom of Jesus to grow? Do we want to rejoice at the name of Jesus

anywhere in this world?

It's a practical point that Jesus is making, not a theological point. We should see such people as allies in a world that doesn't like the name of Jesus. Verse 42, Jesus says, whoever causes one of these little ones who believes in me to sin, it'd be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

[23:12] This is gentle Jesus saying these words. From the lips of Jesus something so stark and shocking as a warning like that.

But we need to see that it's not abstract and it's not callous. Actually, this kind of comment demonstrates how much Jesus cares for the little ones who believe in him.

How much he cares. His high standard, his counter cultural value system, his radical care for the least of people is teaching us about the kind of standards and care that belong in his kingdom.

When he shared a second time about his suffering and death, the disciples would soon learn that his suffering and death wasn't just a consequence of evil men, but it was the plan of God that the Christ should suffer to redeem not just Israel, but to redeem all people by laying down his life for them.

That's the kind of radical selfless sacrificial serving that disciples of Jesus should follow. So when we come to sections of warnings like this we need to remember that such a stark and shocking warning is actually showing us how much Jesus cares for the very folks that he laid down his life for.

[24:40] Jesus has gone to the cross for such people to enter the kingdom and so anyone who would jeopardize them entering the kingdom it's a terrible fate for them.

He cares so much about saving people out of darkness that if anyone wants to play about and mess with that it's a terrible fate for them. When he says whoever causes one of these little ones who believes in me to sin it's not necessarily talking about little children little ones who believe in Jesus they're not going to be scholars they wouldn't be able to put much a fight up if someone was trying to lead them astray or lead them into sin this warning shows how much Jesus cares for such people so precious to him are those who don't have much but a simple faith so precious to him that if anyone were to lead them astray or cause them to sin he doesn't even say what their fate would be all he says is it would be better for them if a great millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea because their fate is far worse it sounds harsh but think about another image that

Jesus uses think about John chapter 10 Jesus says I am the good shepherd he's a good shepherd and so think about the good shepherd looks after his sheep and who are the enemies of the sheep talks about wolves and who do the wolves go for they don't go for the pack they don't go for the strongest sheep in the pack they go for the little lamb that's out there on its own they go for the weak the straggler the defenseless the injured and so the good shepherd is saying that he has such harm them well they would have a worse fate than being thrown into the sea with a millstone around their neck Jesus laid down his life for his little sheep these people who have no other place in society no status for them no welcome for them no service for them nobody's caring for them nobody's giving the time of day to these people

Jesus laid down his life for them and he's given them a place in his kingdom and that's why he gives such an extreme warning against causing them to stumble or sin leading them to risk their place in the kingdom that Jesus bought for them with his own blood now a quick note I want to say when he says these little ones he's not talking about children however if that's the warning for little ones who believe in him with simple faith in the church then certainly he has if not the same if not more care for little children who truly are defenseless if Jesus cared that way for the simple and vulnerable believer how much more does he care for little child who is more vulnerable it's actually a comfort to see such a stark warning from the lips of Jesus when we consider the horrendous crimes that people have committed against children in our world you see a stark warning like this from Jesus you think about the people in our world who have committed horrendous crimes against children and Jesus is saying do you know what their fate is going to be worse than being thrown into the sea with a millstone around their neck this will not go unpunished none of these things!

[28:31] you probably heard in the news about someone who committed terrible crimes against children who was on his last legs if not dead was attacked in prison and I remember the mother of the children saying I hope the next time I see that man at the court case when he was convicted she says I hope the next time I see that man it's the same as I seen my daughter in a coffin but it's not enough it's not enough it's still not fair and we feel the injustice of these things but Jesus is saying there will be no injustice every single sin will be accounted for now just a quick side note this is something that terrifies me and has always terrified me when I was younger I was in care work with Jeanette and you probably seen this or you certainly heard about it and care work for adults with learning disabilities saw how easy it was for them to be abused so easy when you've got influence or control over someone so easy and that always terrified me being in that position always terrified me that they were so easy to abuse and then

I became a father and I thought these little children and it really terrifies me to be a father because it's so easy and then as a pastor I have to say to you it terrifies me because it is so easy to abuse power and Jesus gives a very stark warning God God to sin to sin to sin!

Let's think about the things that cause us to sin verse 43 to 48 Jesus talks about anything that causes you to sin should be cut off and here we have a section where Jesus talks about hell no small subject time will not suffice to delve into the whole doctrine of hell but I just want to say that Jesus isn't trying to say everything there could be said about hell here he's saying enough that it should sober us up and cause us to tremble hell now the term hell is the word in Greek Gehenna Gehenna comes from the name of a place just outside Jerusalem the valley of Hinnom Israel's dark history a very dark point in Israel's history with a very horrendous practice when the evil kings Ahaz

and Manasseh sacrificed their own children through fire to the false god Molech and they encouraged this kind of child sacrifice a very dark point in Israel's history where God absolutely abhor that kind of stuff thankfully when Josiah became king! he brought about reform and he stopped the practice and he desecrated Gehenna he desecrated the valley of Hinnom so that people would no longer do that practice and eventually the place of Gehenna became an idiom for the way that God would respond to evil the fire would be turned on them they would be punished in the same way and even worse than they punished others and so hell or Gehenna is ultimately pointing to God's justice no evil will go unpunished and no one will escape judgment the imagery that Jesus uses is extreme their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched I don't know if in your Bible you have verse 44 and verse 46 missing you might look down and see that it's not there at all but don't worry if it is missing it is just a repeat of verse 48 and you should have a footnote the very last words of the entire book of

[32:46] Isaiah and it talks about the final punishment of the rebellious and so that's where this came from now let me say again this passage isn't trying to tell us everything about hell but what it is doing is trying to paint a picture that's vivid enough that we should want to avoid hell at all costs and even if it were not literal with the worm in the fire these things are trying to use earthly terms to describe something that is far worse far worse but remember this is about how much Jesus cares how seriously Jesus takes sin and how seriously he takes his kingdom it's helpful to compare and contrast verse 42 with 43 to 48 verse 42 firstly comparing these they're both talking about things that are better than going to hell and they're both talking about how sin leads to hell secondly to contrast these we see that verse 42 the emphasis is on how bad it will be for those who cause someone to sin and then verse 43 to 48 the emphasis is on how good it will be to enter his kingdom even if you enter crippled so cut off the things that cause sin now we have a hard time taking hell serious but

I reckon that it's also connected to how we really don't take sin very serious just look at how serious Jesus takes sin Jesus has shown us how much he cares for the people that enter his kingdom so first we have in verse 42 he's saying see these little ones who believe in me he really really cares for them so much so that if you mess with them it's better that you would be thrown in the sea with a millstone around your neck but then verses 43 to 48 Jesus is saying you see how much I care for you I don't want you to go to hell cut off your hand cut off your foot tear out your eye I want you to enter my kingdom do whatever is necessary because he bought you a place there with his blood Jesus wants you to enter his kingdom not hell and while he tells us even to cut off anything that would cause us to sin so that we might enter he also tells us that he's going to suffer and die so that we might enter he has done more than cut off a hand

Jesus has done more than cut off a foot or tear out an eye he's descended from glory and taken on flesh so that his whole body could be broken for us to make a way for our forgiveness and redemption to ransom us and renew us so that we might enter his kingdom even although we are guilty of sin and so we need to take sin much more seriously than we do Jesus doesn't offer he doesn't suggest moderation with sin he doesn't suggest negotiation with sin he doesn't entertain toying or flirting with sin he urges us to cut it off at all costs he tells us eradication and amputation is what is needed now obviously I hope you know that this is not literal that if you cut off your hand sin will still find a way Mark's gospel often goes to the root of it which is the heart hard heartedness how many parts of your body would you have to cut off sin but it's a powerful point you should try whatever you can do to cut sin out of your life anything that causes you to sin your hand talks about what you do your feet talk about where you go your eyes talk about what you see and so what are you doing and where are you going and what are you seeing that you need to cut!

your life that's what Jesus is talking about the point is don't play with sin because sin will not play with you sin doesn't play nice Genesis chapter 4 God says to Cain he says sin is crouching at the door it's desirous for you sin and so we the way we need to think about sin is as if sin is like a lion a lion that is crouching and hiding just outside the door waiting to pounce and devour you sin will leave you looking like you've been mauled by a lion that's what sin does you can't toy about with sin sin will devour you if we don't cut it off it will look at the extent

God has gone to so that we might not end up in hell Jesus didn't just sacrifice parts of his body he took a body in order to sacrifice it all for us Hebrews 10 states that Christ through the offering of his body offered once for all time a sacrifice for sins you'll be glad to know that this is in all the commentaries a confusing thing and all the commentaries say this is one of the most difficult parts of Jesus statements to interpret oh good you know we're nearly at the end of the sermon and what have we got to say about this it's confusing they all disagree on what it means one of those passages where all the commentaries say it's one of the most difficult parts to understand one possible clue might be in the old testament salt was used when sacrifices were made when sacrifices were made on the altar salt they had to be salted leuiticus 2 says they were to be seasoned with salt never never give an offering without seasoning it with salt and so some see this as a refining and purifying like the fire is refining and purifying others see that salt preserves and keeps those who are being punished so that they continually be punished and there are many more interpretations

[39:49] I think amidst the confusion it's best perhaps to see that both salt and fire deal both with corruption and preserving and purifying salt deals with decay and salt penetrates corruption likewise fire will purify fire will burn away anything that's impure and so Jesus seems to be saying that we should take all of these things very seriously and we should not expect that any of us will get a free pass we will all be salted with fire take care how you walk now I've included chapter 10 verse 1 to 12 this business about marriage and divorce because I felt like we really needed a lot more stuff to cover I'm not going to be able to go into a full doctrine of marriage or rules about divorce but also

I don't want us to get lost in the weeds because I don't think that Mark is just flinging some random teaching about marriage in here I think these things all fit together and how these Pharisees are looking for a loophole but what they're really doing is leading other people into sin and Jesus has just been talking about this and so notice how it ends in verse 11 and 12 Jesus is again emphasizing the dangers of people and things that lead to sin and he's upholding a greater standard the standard of care and love and his kingdom God's original design the Pharisees were hard hearted like their forefathers the only reason Moses allowed a certificate of divorce was because of their hard hearts it wasn't out of love or loyalty or godliness that they wanted a divorce it was out of a selfish motive to find a legal loophole and so without trying to discuss every scenario Jesus isn't trying to go into every case study and every scenario Jesus is simply upholding God's design marriage was meant for one man and one woman who come together the two become one and it was meant for life joining together that would only be undone by death a lifelong covenant before God yet many are trying to find legal loopholes divorce not because divorce was necessary or even because of infidelity but because they were selfish and they wanted to go after another and do whatever they wanted and so we shouldn't take Jesus words here we shouldn't take them as a way to force someone to stay with an abuser that's not the scenario Jesus is talking to however at the same time we should take Jesus words serious enough that wherever possible people would fight for their marriage Jesus is upholding

God's design the trouble is many people in our society today many married people that we encounter likely haven't taken vows before God likely they've not done it as a covenant before God most of the people we encounter out there are probably not aiming for God's purpose for marriage and his design but Jesus standard is not like the world standard the world standard is self is number one Jesus says you need to be the servant of all and you need to be last and so I think this business about marriage and divorce is really about the hard-hearted Pharisees trying to find a legal loophole and cause other people to sin and Jesus doesn't let them away with it and so I know we've been going a long time it's a big passage let me just close by summarizing okay the way of the world the way of the world is to prevent

Christ from dying that's what Jesus said to Peter you're thinking of the things of man the way of the world is to prevent Christ from dying the way of the world is to want him to be great because we ourselves want to be great the way of the world we often don't have time for the likes of little children and unimportant and unimpressive people yet when we do see impressive people like the man casting out demons we're often jealous and we want to stop them from succeeding and it's all too easy in the way of the world for us to lead others into sin and it's all too easy for our flesh to

allow us to toy around with and flirt with sin ourselves we just don't want to cut it off and we don't want to cut off we don't want to cut sin off but the thing that we do want to cut off is our commitments and responsibility to love and serve other people and so the people divorce easily Jesus has a different way that's the point of this whole passage

[45:05] Jesus kingdom is different and Jesus has a different way a better way a more committed but a more caring way a way of self a way of self sacrifice and love because the way of the world the way of self serving and sin will only lead to hell but the way of Jesus will lead us to eternal life and his kingdom he laid down his life and he did everything to grant us entrance and so are we going to allow anything to prevent that let me pray Lord we thank you for your word we thank you for the truthfulness of your word we thank you that your word does not accommodate or compromise with our flesh we thank you that you spoke the word of God uncompromisingly graciously yet firmly and boldly we thank you that your words cut through our sin and selfishness we thank you that your words cut through the way of this world and we thank you that your words show us a better way a different way and a way of life a way to eternal life and you are the way and so

Lord please help us to take these things seriously please by your spirit impress these words just as your heavenly father said in the cloud during the transfiguration this is my beloved son listen to him Lord please help us to listen to these words of Jesus and take them seriously please prevent us from leading others into sin and please prevent us from leading ourselves into sin but help us to follow you so that we might have life we ask these things in Jesus name amen to Thank you.