

Lent Day 29
Monday March 14, 2016
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Reading: Mark 10.1-12

Reflection

Let me start by saying that this passage makes me uncomfortable. I wish Mark didn't record Jesus as being so blunt. In fact, when we look at the matching passage in Matthew, Jesus isn't as blunt. He still insists on not divorcing, but he has an 'except' clause. When we look at Paul in 1 Corinthians he also speaks of not divorcing, but imagines situations where divorce may be possible. My discomfort isn't for myself, rather for the people who I know love God and struggle with the reality that they have divorced. I don't want them to be hurt and I want them to know God loves them — they haven't been disqualified!

With that caveat, let me say this passage isn't really about divorce. Rather, it is about how we handle God. The real issue for Jesus is the way God's people have of getting around God. Jesus is intentional when he asks them what Moses *commanded*. They answer that Moses allowed it, but what they are referring to is not a command by Moses. It was a later concession by Moses. Rather Jesus goes back to Genesis — the book traditionally understood to be written by Moses — and he highlights the command there that the two flesh become one and nobody should separate them. In fact, says Jesus, Moses' command was for people to stay married.

We do this sort of thing all the time don't we? God calls us to care for the poor but we pass the homeless by because there is so much need that we can't really help. God calls us to love our enemies but we curse them instead because God couldn't have meant that person! God calls us to give generously but we can't because we need at least \$2,000,000 to retire properly. We all have the habit of setting aside the things of God for the things of our own comfort and that is what Jesus is pointing out.

He points it out because he wants you and I to take God more seriously. When God says care for the poor, love your enemy, bless those who curse you, give generously and everything else God says he means it. We need to grow in this area and intentionally look to be obedient to God in these ways.

Prayer

God, who gives good gifts like marriage, help us to hear you and take you seriously. Forgive us for failing to live as you have called us to live. Help us to take on the radical discipleship you have called us to and use it to be a light to the world. Amen.