

Mark 10:2-16

Now most of our failure with religion or with God really is just a failure of our imaginations! Who are you Lord that we should be mindful of you?

How can the created (us) imagine the creator? It's like being inside a painting trying to imagine the painter.

Today some Pharisees come to test Jesus and they ask, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" Well "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her." But Jesus said, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. But Jesus now zooms out and harkens all the way back to creation where two become one!

In Jesus' time a Women and children were both seen as property... and Jesus throughout the gospels doesn't devalue anyone does he...in fact he says it is to people that have been devalued, that the kingdom of God belongs... there is another way...there's hope for something bigger and better for all of us together.

This passage is all about the posture of Love from the viewpoint of the creator! And Love wins every time!

If I were to give you 24,500 dollars would that be a lot? Now how about if I gave you 24,500 dollars and that's all the money you would have for the rest of your life? Now that same amount might not seem like much anymore.

But in reality that is in fact the currency of our lives. The average Human being will live here on this planet for 24,500 days...that all we got!

Remember we said that we are not human beings having a spiritual experience, but rather we are spiritual beings having a human experience. So enjoy what you choose to do with your brief and precious physical human experience.

Today's reading is commonly chosen by wedding couples with the divorce part left out of course (that comes later lol). When I do premarital counseling, I point out that the couple is now choosing to spend the rest of their days together in a different way. They are now choosing to join in Love together as ONE in living out the rest of those 24,500 days together.

Have you ever heard the expression, "A marriage made in heaven"? If that's true then, why are so many marriages failing?"

Fifty Percent of all marriages end in divorce in the US. A coin flip!

Then add to that the number of couples staying married in name only for their children or health benefits or society's approval. And that statistic does not even include those folks who are not even bothering to get married in the first place and just choose to live together for now.

That's why I think it's important for us to find out what Jesus has to say about marriage. Even though the Law Keepers wanted Jesus to talk about divorce. So what does marriage look like in the kingdom of God? What does it mean to love one another and commit to one another - God's way? And this isn't just about joining two partners... it's so much more!

Love bows not to the ways of man but to the ways of heaven and God.

See Love is the transforming power that hums just below the surface, the base note of everything and it knows not circumstances nor situations. It is the glue that holds everything together for all of us as Children of God.

When your own children were born you gave them unconditional love. They were already worthy and loved without them having to do anything at all.

That is God's love for us all! And if love is grounded in the divine engine of the universe... expressed for us in the life and ultimate sacrifice of Jesus... then that love will withstand any hardships or circumstances that life will no doubt throw at us.

See you cannot out love God! Many of us, however, have very small view of God...it is really "conditional love" based upon transactions or worse based upon fear... not grounded in Love.

Any parents here? Do you love your children? What would you NOT do for them? If they did something wrong, do you keep a tally of their failures? Is there anything they could do that would make you choose to send your children to eternal torment?

So if we broken and flawed people could love our own children this way... why then would we think that God loves us in a smaller way than we can imagine loving our own children.

You see how shortsighted this view of God is and how it can get us into all kinds of trouble! By definition God is Love... so it follows that you shouldn't be able to out love God!

What we have here is a failure of imagination when it comes to our concepts God...and Jesus is continually pointing us to our Father's love from God's point of view.

The only thing that transforms our human existence is love! It is the thing most lacking in our world today, and also the thing that every human being craves whether they know it or not.

We are all born from love and we are made ...to love... and to be loved...it's as simple and as complicated as that!

Unfortunately, we are not God... and our love can often be petty, conditional and selfish. That is not love of God and other...but love of me...self only.

Here in America, we have more words than any language on the planet... yet only one word for love. I love my wife, I love my job... and I love cheeseburgers and I love my dog and I love shopping.

Love, narrowly then, becomes expressed only as a lens for our own desires for ourselves... and we use others then, as just a way of fulfilling our own wants and desires...as if the other person will somehow make us whole or happy.

Conversely, in the ancient world there were many words to express love...

In Greek the language of the New Testament there's Philos the friendship aspect of love. Like Philadelphia brotherly Love.

Then there's the physical and chemical aspect of love. The sexual element and passion. In the Greek the word is Eros, where we get our English word erotic from.

Then there's the self-sacrificing aspect of love when the mind and heart is focused on the other. It's the love of will. It's what makes love last. Jesus uses this word many times...The word is Agape. To love the other before the self.

And when Jesus eludes to two people joining and becoming one He is eluding to the fact that we are wired for all three of these loves to intertwine and dance together.

Love involves All of You! Your body, your mind, and your spirit. Marriage then can become an intermingling of souls! Two people giving all of themselves to each other unconditionally! That's what Jesus is referring to in the Gospel today. The Pharisee's are trying to trap Jesus by asking him a question about Divorce.

And in Jesus' day a man could divorce his wife literally for any reason...burnt toast...newer model...it was his prerogative. What's even worse... was that if a women was divorced then she would then have nothing and no standing at all in the community. She became an outcast and had to resort to prostitution or begging to survive from day to day!

So instead of addressing manmade rules about marriage Jesus focuses back to the Beginning of time when we were created. If two things become one then how do you separate them. If we take two glasses of water and combine them together then how do you now separate them back out into their original glasses of water once the two become one. For Jesus, knowing the way we are created, the man-made concept of divorce made no sense.

So two become one - a new creation. It's how we're wired, how we are made...According to psychologists, human beings need to receive and to express love. We humans suffer severe setbacks if those needs are not met. And where do we ALL first learn to love, and be loved?

Well...in our families. And if we do not have a solid family situation, there is a high probability that we will be deficient in our own experience of love and our ability to express it. So a strong marriage builds the foundation for strong families.

God ordained marriage for community as well. No one is an island. Whatever we do affects something or someone else. We are all connected! And where do we learn to make these connections, and how do we learn to function together in community? Again, the family.

The family provides opportunities for us to learn how to relate to one another. If parents are functioning properly, children very quickly learn the meaning of respect and authority, responsibility and accountability! And they soon learn from brothers and sisters that they are not the center of the universe. They learn to give, to take, to adjust. They learn that the same people who dirty dishes are also capable of washing them.

God also created Marriage to express the foundations of healthy sexuality! Bet you didn't know that sex has been part of humanity from the very beginning. If it weren't for sex you know I wouldn't be here. Safe to say if it were not for sex, NOBODY would be here!

And in all of this there is a choice. Choosing marriage is also choosing to leave our old lives behind...in order to create something new (death and transformation). One of the reasons marriages can run into difficulty is that people don't really leave their old lives behind.

They play it safe and are not fully committed to this new way of being in the world...many look back...or never really leave home. They have one foot in and one foot out without fully diving in. And marriages fall into all kinds of problems in this area.

If you're going to enter into a lifelong new relationship one must do so fully! So taking it all together... Marriage as God intended it, means connection and commitment and the very real practice of love. As the apostle Paul tells us Love is more of a practice...not so much a feeling. See feelings come and go but by practicing kindness, patience, and respect for one another...that's what builds healthy and lasting relationships that ultimately translates into healthy and people, and families and communities.

One of the reasons marriages can run into difficulties is that people choose marriage without knowing how marriage works God's Way. Our society doesn't recognize marriage as divine. Marriage is not a human Institution - something dreamed up by us. Marriage is ordained by God for our physical, emotional, psychological and communal well-being.

And once you commit to the divinity of joining...well then...you are in for a miracle. The miracle of self-sacrifice where two people actually become as one.

Two people enter a Church as individuals, each with their friends and family. The groom takes their place...the bride hers. He's one and she's one - separate.

They stand before the world - one and one. But once God enters into the hearts of two people... and joins them together. God will make one plus one equal one!

...God takes their best and their worst, their strengths and weaknesses and joins them together to compliment and enrich one another. A coming together of every aspect of their lives. And as two people in love surrender themselves, they become a new creation!

You see from God's perspective... Love Always Wins... Each and Every time! The game's rigged my friends! That's why Jesus repeatedly tells us not to worry or to be afraid.

So may you all come to see through the eyes of love... a reality where labels and distinctions often fail and where there is a joining together...this then is the kingdom of God! God's One Holy Family...joined together in love.

So honor the way you were created...for we are all wired for Love.

...and love isn't truly love is it...until it is freely given away! That's how love grows.

God is Love... and only when you and I reflect and radiate that love outwardly...to our spouses, our families, our communities, and the world... then and only then, will we all come to experience the very real peace and joy that comes from abiding in that Love...for God IS Love! And Love is God! So go now and live and love God's way!

your faithful servant,

carmen