Graphical user interface, text

Description automatically generated

Supernatural Power

Stories from Mark’s Gospel

Lisa Scheffler, author

# Week 10 | Mark 10

### Chapter 10 Summary:

In Mark 8 Jesus made clear his expectations for his disciples, they must “deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (8:34). In chapter 9 he expanded this idea by telling the twelve that “anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.” Here in chapter 10, Jesus continues to reveal the values of his kingdom — faithfulness, loyalty, sacrifice, and service.

# Day 1

## Read

### Mark 10:1–16 (NIV)

**10** Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

2Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

3“What did Moses command you?” he replied.

4They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”

5“It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied. 6“But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’  7‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, 8and the two will become one flesh.’  So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

10When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. 11He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. 12And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.”

13People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” 16And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

## Study

* As they’ve done over and over, the Pharisees are testing Jesus and trying to trap him with his answer. Why do they raise the issue of divorce? One possibility is that they were hoping he’d provoke the Herodian family with his answer, and they would react to Jesus as they had to John the Baptist. Recall what we learned about Herod in Mark 6. Herod had John beheaded for speaking against his divorce and remarriage to his brother’s wife ([Mark 6:17–25](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Mk6.17)).
* To grasp this passage, we also need to understand the view of divorce during Jesus’ day. As Garland points out, “Most Jews took for granted that a man had an inalienable right to divorce his wife.” A popular Aramaic version of the Hebrew Scriptures even translated Malachi 2:16 as “If you hate her, divorce her.” [[1]](#footnote-2) (The Hebrew in this verse is challenging to translate. English translations tend to read either “‘I hate divorce,’ says the Lord God of Israel’ and ‘the one who is guilty of violence’” (NET) or “’The man who hates and divorces his wife,’ says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘does violence to the one he should protect.’ (NIV))
* The Faithlife Bible Study [notes on Matthew 19:9](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Mt19.9) help us understand Jesus’ statements on remarriage in Mark 10:11–12.
* Consider how Jesus’ remarks not only corrected their teaching, but offered protection to women and children who had few social or economic resources and suffered the most from divorce.

## Think about

When it came to divorce, the Pharisees approached the law with a question that too many of us ask when we go to the Bible, “what can I get away with?” Jesus reveals that it’s hard hearts and an unwillingness to love, serve, and protect that prompted God’s commands about divorce in the first place. God’s intent for marriage was a loving, lifelong, one-flesh union. Jesus pointed the Pharisees to Genesis to point out the people’s failure to treat the marriage covenant seriously.

According to Garland, the Mosaic law “protected wives from brutal abandonment. It freed a wife from the accusation of adultery when she, out of necessity, remarried; and it prevented the first husband from destroying her new marriage by trying to reclaim her. It deterred anything that might look like wife-swapping. The law was therefore intended to keep the social upheaval associated with divorce to a minimum.[[2]](#footnote-3)”

Garland goes on, “Jesus’ concern for children follows immediately after his statements about divorce. Both women and children could be mistreated and abused because of their lack of power. Jesus’ next words and actions give value to children as he returns to the issue of the little ones (9:42). Both wives and children are to be respected and cherished.”

So many people in our churches and communities have experienced the pain of divorce firsthand. You may be one of them. We must remember that Jesus was engaged in a confrontation with hypocritical Pharisees who were misusing God’s law and his words weren’t meant to injure those already hurting. We know from other places in Scripture that God is close to the broken hearted (Psalm 34:18) and a “bruised reed he will not break” (Isaiah 42:3). His grace, love, mercy, forgiveness, and healing are available to all who turn to him.

Yet, as we’ve seen in Mark, Jesus has consistently called his disciples to a higher standard — to love sacrificially and serve selflessly. We should certainly apply that call to our own spouses and children. There are times when divorce is permissible, or in cases of abuse, even necessary, but God always wants better for his children.

## Pray

Take some time today to pray for the marriages of people in your life. If you’re married, start with your own. Pray that husbands and wives would love one another unconditionally and grow in devotion and faithfulness. Pray that they would be quick to make amends and quick to forgive. Pray that God would strengthen their bond.

Pray for those who have gone through divorce. Pray that they would know the love, gentleness, and kindness of Jesus and find support and care within their church family. Pray for opportunities to love and care for someone recovering from divorce.

If you have gone through a divorce and need support, Christ Fellowship has a care team and offers Divorce Care. Visit cfhome.org/care to find out more.

# Day 2

## Read

### Mark 10:17–31 (NIV)

17As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

18“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. 19You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”

20“Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

21Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

22At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

23Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

24The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

26The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?”

27Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”

28Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!”

29“Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

## Study

* Why did Jesus ask the man, “Why do you call me good?” when clearly Jesus IS good? Gombis offers this explanation: “Jesus’s response makes more sense in terms of his prophetic character throughout Mark, especially his refusal to be impressed by large crowds. Here, Jesus gently waves aside the man’s flattery. Jesus is available to speak the truth to anyone who will listen. He does not need to be flattered, and he cannot be manipulated by someone seeking to gain an advantage.” [[3]](#footnote-4)
* The disciples are shocked that great wealth may not be a sign of God’s approval and blessing. According to Gombis, “Wealth is a complex reality throughout Scripture. It can be a sign of God’s blessing...Proverbs 10:22 seems to endorse this perspective: ‘The blessing of the Lord brings wealth, without painful toil for it.’” And yet, “Proverbs has much to say about the meaninglessness of wealth and how it can vanish in an instant (e.g., Prov 23:5).”
* Ultimately, “Scripture warns against the temptation to trust in riches to secure good outcomes rather than depending on God and looking to him for security.”[[4]](#footnote-5) How might this last warning illuminate Jesus’ demand for the man to give away his wealth before following him?

Think about

Garland gives us two cautions as we think about how to apply this passage:

“We must guard against two pitfalls in applying this passage: the desire to whittle away the radical demand to make it more reasonable, and the inclination to make it apply to someone other than us.”

He goes on, “Jesus’ confrontation of the rich man expresses true love. Many need to hear his disturbing demand because he casts a spotlight on our everyday values from eternity’s angle of vision. From that perspective, our covetousness looks rather silly. Those who invest only in themselves, in their security, and in their own comfort and pleasure need to know that they are making a bad investment. No amount of law observance will turn hearts set on the desire for material things to God. If Jesus advised radical surgery on hands, feet, and eyes so that one can enter life, even if maimed (9:43–48), how much more should we get rid of possessions that anchor the soul to this world and will only fuel the flames of judgment?”[[5]](#footnote-6)

These are challenging words for us who live comfortably in suburban America! How might we be investing our money, time, talents, and resources in that which is temporary and ignoring what is eternal? Are we servants to our material possessions or are we using our material possessions to serve God and his kingdom purposes?

## Pray

Jesus doesn’t need our money or resources. But because he knows the corrosive effect the love of wealth can have on our souls, he wants to free us from our dependence on it. Pray over your attitude toward wealth and material prosperity. Is it line with God’s will for you as a follower of Christ? Pray for opportunities to increase in generosity and service to help loosen materialism’s grip on you.

# Day 3

## Read

### Mark 10:32–34 (NIV)

32They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. 33“We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, 34who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

## Study

* As we read this short passage, looking at some of the original Greek helps us understand the disciple’s state of mind. “Mark notes that they were ‘astonished,’ which is the same Greek verb (*thambeō*) for their amazement at Jesus’s words just previously about the difficulty of the rich to enter the kingdom (10:24), and a synonym of the verb used (*ekplēssō*) for their intensified reaction at Jesus’s restatement (v. 26). *Amazement in Mark is not always a positive reaction.* The crowds can be amazed without any report of the result (1:27), and the disciples were previously overwhelmed with amazement (*existēmi*), which is an expression of their lack of faith and hardened hearts (6:51). In addition to amazement, the disciples were afraid, a reaction that is the opposite of faith in Mark’s Gospel and is often the condition that characterizes the disciples’ failure.”[[6]](#footnote-7)

## Think about

* N.T. Wright helps us reflect on this scene:

This is the third time Jesus has solemnly warned the disciples about what’s going to happen to him. It isn’t taking him by surprise. It’s part of the vocation which has gripped him since, at least, the voice at his baptism, which echoed Isaiah’s prophecy about the servant, to which in this passage he returns explicitly. The great central section of Isaiah (chapters 40–55) has as its main character, after Israel’s God himself, an anointed, messianic figure who suffers and dies for the sins of Israel and the world. This is ‘YHWH’s servant’, and at the end of the passage Jesus refers back to Isaiah 53, the fourth ‘servant song’, which speaks in awe and gratitude of the servant’s redeeming death.

Many thinkers in our own day have found it incredible that Jesus would have thought about his own death in this deliberate, focused way. Well, his followers at the time found it incredible too…Jesus’ disciples couldn’t believe the way he was leading them to Jerusalem with such determination.”[[7]](#footnote-8)

Jesus knew what awaited him in Jerusalem — betrayal, humiliation, pain, and death. He continued the journey anyway. He set his course for Jerusalem to sacrifice himself for sinners like you and me. Reflect on your Savior’s great love for you today.

## Pray

Spend some time thanking Jesus for all he has done for you. You may want to put on some praise music and sing to the Lord. Express your gratitude to God. He is worthy of all our praise.

# Day 4

There is so much more to Mark 10 than our pastors can cover in their Sunday sermons. Hear more of their insights during the Pastors Pregame Podcast. New episodes every Thursday at [*CFhome.org/pregame*](https://subsplash.com/christfellowship-tx/lb/ms/+hg732gk) or through [*Apple Podcasts*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/pastors-pregame/id1582563644).

## Read

### Mark 10:35–45 (NIV)

35Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”

36“What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

37They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”

38“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”

39“We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, 40but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

41When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. 42Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 45For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

## Study

* James and John ask that they be given seats on either side of Jesus when he comes into his glorious kingdom in the future (v. 37). “They perceive rightly that there will be a glorious kingdom to come, but they still do not recognize that they only arrive at this through suffering in the present. Jesus understands this, of course, so he asks if they are prepared to participate in the suffering that comes on the way to future glory (v. 38).”
* By answering “we can,” the disciples reveal their misunderstanding tinged with arrogance. “They are confident in themselves, even though they have little basis for such self-regard…They, along with others, will make boasts of loyalty that will ultimately prove baseless (14:27–31). They will flee, along with all the others, yet they are confident in themselves that they have what it takes to play these prominent roles. Jesus has in mind his suffering and their participation in it, which is the only way to exaltation. There is no crown without a cross.”[[8]](#footnote-9)
* Many commentators see Mark 10:45 as the theme verse for the entire Gospel. What do you think? How does this one verse sum up what we’ve seen of Jesus so far? What about his suffering to come?

## Think about

Gombis shares an observation that’s worth thinking about:

“It is interesting to consider the effect of this episode on Mark’s audiences, many of whom already know how the story ends. Audiences will be aware that James and John do not know what they are talking about or what they are so confidently asserting. They do not know what it takes to go the way of the cross. They do not know that they will be overcome with fear and will flee in the face of Jesus’s arrest, trial, suffering, and death. They do not know, as Jesus indicates, that they, too, will be swallowed up in violence and death because of their loyalty to Jesus.

Audiences are in on this irony, but Mark intends for them to be self-reflective enough that they will see themselves in these disciples. We, too, want prominence and glory. We, too, did not know when we were baptized to identify with Jesus and the way of the cross that it would cost us. We, too, have not taken full account of the perils that attend “the way.” And perhaps this is all by grace.”[[9]](#footnote-10)

## Pray

Pray for humility, grace, endurance, strength, and courage to be a believer who counts the cost of following Jesus and decides sacrifice and obedience is always worth it! Holy Spirit, please make it so in each of our lives.

# Day 5

## Read

### Mark 10:46–52 (NIV)

46Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. 47When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

48Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

49Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”

So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” 50Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

51“What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

52“Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

## Study

* Notice that the question Jesus asks of Bartimaeus in 10:51 is the same one he asked of the disciples in 10:36, “What do you want me to do for you?” The disciples requested glory, Bartimaeus wants to see. Turns out that sight is also the desperate need of the disciples. They’ve demonstrated their blindness by completely ignoring what Jesus said about what awaits him in Jerusalem.[[10]](#footnote-11)
* The Faithlife Study Bible notes help us see the importance of Bartimaeus’ [exclamation in 10:47.](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Mk10.47)

## Think about

Garland helps us find additional significance in this story of healing:

“This miracle takes on symbolic significance as it caps the discipleship theme in this section. Jesus has told others he has healed to go (1:44; 2:11; 5:19, 34; 7:29) and that their faith has saved them (see 5:34). Bartimaeus, however, does not choose to go off his own way. With his eyes now open, he decides to follow Jesus as every disciple is called to do (8:34)…Jesus can heal physical blindness, but more than that, he wants to heal spiritual blindness.”[[11]](#footnote-12)

## Pray

Pray for sight! Pray that the Spirit will enable you to see Jesus clearly and that his purpose for you and your life will come into sharp focus!

Go back and reflect on all of [Mark 10](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Mk10). What is the Spirit saying to you through Mark’s Gospel? What are you learning about Jesus and what it means to follow him? How will you put what you’re learning into practice. Take some time now to pray over these questions.

1. David E. Garland, [*Mark*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nivac62mk?ref=Bible.Mk10.1-12&off=194&ctx=nion+on+this+issue.+~Most+Jews+took+for+g), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 378. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Garland, 380. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Timothy G. Gombis, [*Mark*](https://ref.ly/logosres/strygdcm62mk?ref=Bible.Mk10.17-22&off=1966&ctx=+through+the+world.%0a~Jesus%E2%80%99s+response%E2%80%94%E2%80%9CWh), ed. Scot McKnight and Tremper Longman III, The Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2021), 357. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Gombis, 356. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Garland, 402. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Gombis, 368. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Tom Wright, [*Mark for Everyone*](https://ref.ly/logosres/evry62mk?ref=Bible.Mk10.32-45&off=3171&ctx=e+seeds+one+by+one.%0a~This+is+the+third+ti) (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 139–140. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Gombis, 369. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Gombis, 369–370. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Gombis, 369. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Garland, 422. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)