

- (e). What does v.40 tell us about Jesus and the kingdom?
- (f). What is the reaction of the ten to the request of the brothers?  
Why are they specifically so numbered?
- (d). What principle does Jesus bring out again (cf 9:35 & 10:31)?
- (e). Verse 45 has been seen to be the "heart" of this gospel.  
What does it mean?

**Read Mark 10: 46 - 52.**

**NB** The blind sometimes have uncanny "sight", and the deaf sometimes "hear" what others miss. Spiritual insight and alertness arise from the heart rather than from status or position. In this passage Mark seems to delight in the irony of a blind man who perceives what the sighted cannot see.

- 4.(a). What picture do you get of the sort of man that Bartimaeus was?
- (b). Why do you suppose Jesus asked Bartimaeus what he wanted him to do for him ?
- (c). Once Jesus heals him, Bartimaeus sets out to follow Jesus along the road.  
What road is Jesus on?
- (d). What has Bartimaeus seen that the disciples have not?  
How do Bartimaeus' actions stand in contrast to the disciples' in the last couple of chapters?



# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

## SESSION 12: CHAPTER 10: 1-31 "FAMILY MATTERS"



### Read Mark 10: 1 - 12.

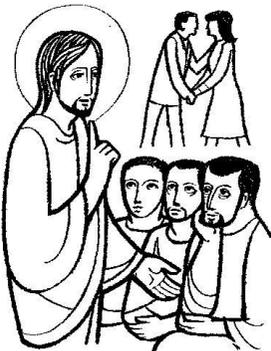
*Jesus is now heading South on the final stage of his earthly ministry as Jerusalem and his destiny await him. In ancient Judaism, divorce was a right only for husbands, women were legally the property of their husbands and had no power to end their marriage. Further, there was never any question about whether a man might be free to end his marriage by divorce, the only concern reflected in the ancient rabbinic tradition being that a man give proper official certification of the divorce to his wife. There was a difference of opinion between two major schools of ancient rabbinic thought about what were the legitimate causes for divorcing a woman, one school insisting that the only valid reason was sexual impurity in the wife, and the other arguing that the wife could be sent away simply if the husband grew tired of her. The latter view was dominant, no doubt because it was more convenient for a husband.*

1.(a). The Pharisees came to "test" him(v.2).

Why are they trying to trap him? (cf NB at end of this section)

Might the incidents in 6:14-29 be relevant?

(b). What does the reference to Moses imply?



**NB** We appear to be dealing with Deuteronomy 24:1-4, a passage that actually presupposes the fact of divorce and is mainly concerned with prohibiting a divorced and remarried woman from remarrying her first husband. The passage, however, was taken by the ancient Rabbis as giving sanction for divorce and this text is at the centre of a great body of ancient Jewish discussion on the matter.

How does Jesus deal with this traditional approach?

(c). On the basis of vv. 6-9, some Christian churches have refused to recognise divorce even when a couple have obtained a civil dissolution of their marriage.

Do you think this is the intent of Jesus' statement?

Why or why not?

- (d). Why do the disciples return to the subject "in the house"?
- (e). In a culture which granted far more freedom to men than women, what significant further statements on divorce does Jesus make in vv.11-12?

**NB** Only Mark's account of Jesus' teaching on divorce reckons with the possibility of a woman initiating divorce. In the Greco-Roman world, wives were allowed to divorce their husbands, but this action was disallowed in Judaism. A wife could only take steps that would induce her husband to divorce her. We find accounts, however, of women from the Jewish upperclass divorcing their husbands. Josephus reports that Salome, the sister of Herod the Great, sent her husband a bill of divorce and self-righteously declares that it "was not in accordance with Jewish law." He goes on to comment, "For it is (only) the man who is permitted by us to do this, and not even a divorced woman may marry again on her own initiative unless her former husband consents." Josephus also reports that Drusilla, the sister of Herod Agrippa (Acts 25:13), "was persuaded to transgress the ancestral laws" by leaving her husband to marry the Roman governor, Felix. Josephus describes Herodias, who left her husband to marry Herod Antipas, as "taking into her head to flout the ways of our fathers." Jesus may be alluding to this case here. ARNOLD

**Read Mark 10: 13 - 16.**



- 2.(a). What do you think motivated the "parents", the disciples and Jesus in this incident?
- (b). *We find Jesus again using a little child or children to illustrate a spiritual principle.*  
What does it mean to receive the kingdom of God like a child?
- (c). How are these discussions about divorce and children connected?

**Read Mark 10: 17-22.**

- 3.(a). What is the rich man looking for(v.17)?
- (b). What kind of answer does Jesus actually give him?  
How does he use the 'Ten Commandments'?  
Which ones does he focus upon and amend?
- (c). What do you think it means when it says that Jesus "loved him"?
- (d). What do you think that man did after leaving Jesus?

**Read Mark 10: 23 - 31.**

4.(a). Why is it so hard for the rich to enter the kingdom?  
What do you make of the camel?

(b). Why were the disciples so astonished?  
What does Jesus' answer mean (v.27)?

(c). What does Peter seem to be getting at in v.28?

(d). How does Jesus reassure Peter?  
What sombre note does Jesus strike in the midst of his reassurance?

(e). How have the Pharisees (vv. 2-9) and the rich man (vv.17-25) failed to receive the kingdom like a child (v.15)?



**Read Mark 10: 32 - 34.** *This is the third time that Jesus predicts his death*

5.(a). Why do you think the disciples were "uneasy" about heading towards Jerusalem?

(b). Once more Jesus predicts what is to become of him.  
What differences and distinctions do you notice between these verses and the earlier ones (8:31; 9:31)?

**Read Mark 10: 35 - 45.**

6.(a). Given what Jesus has just said, what is ironic about James and John's request (v. 35-37)?

(b). What do you think motivated the request?  
Why do you think they go about asking the way they do?

(c). What sort of picture of the Kingdom did they have in mind?

(d). What do you think Jesus means by the cup he is to drink and the baptism with which he is to be baptized?

Why these particular images?

