

Mark 10:2-16

October 3, 2021

“What God has joined together, let not man separate.” God joins together. It’s what He does. Satan divides and separates. It’s what he does. It’s why he tempted Adam and Eve to sin against God. God joined Adam and Eve to each other. He joined Himself to them giving them life. But Satan separated what God had joined together. He ripped apart the union between God and man, and life was replaced with death.

Satan still delights in ripping apart what God has joined together. And man is much too helpful in this. We see two examples in our text. When man separates husband and wife from each other, and when man separates children from Jesus.

The union of husband and wife is sacred. It is of God. He ordained and authorized this union. And He promises to bless husbands and wives as they live within this sacred union. The marriage union should remain intact, just as every union that is of God should remain intact. He united the various parts of your body, joining fingers to hands, hands to arms, limbs to torso, head to neck. This, too, is a sacred union. And God protects this union with the Fifth Commandment. We should not hurt nor harm the body that God has created. God protects the marriage union with the Sixth Commandment. Let husband and wife love and honor each other.

Satan despises what God commands. He seeks night and day to disrupt and tear apart every union that God desires to protect. When that which God has joined together is ripped apart, pain and misery results. Which is why we are not in the habit of separating our fingers, toes, or limbs from our body. We want all these to remain intact.

But if someone, either by accident or by a sudden impulse, were to cut off a part of their body, the rest of us would come to that person’s aid, would we not? Rather than despise and shun the individual and call what they did unforgivable, we would do what we could to help the person.

The same should be true when there is a separation between a husband and a wife. Rather than despising and shunning them and calling what they did unforgivable, should we not help them in a God-pleasing way?

Divorce is not pleasing to God. But even more displeasing to Him than the separation of the husband and wife from each other, is to separate these two people from Himself.

This is, in fact, why God protects the marriage union and has promised to bless it. Because it reflects the union between Jesus and His bride. In your baptism Jesus joined Himself to you. And His promise stands forever that He will never divorce you. He will never cut you off from Him.

But with divorce so rampant in the world around us, it would be easy for us to think that Jesus, too, could say to us, “Enough is enough. I’m done with you!” After all, you and I have failed Him. We have committed spiritual adultery against Him. We have not loved Him and honored Him as we should. He has every right to separate Himself from us.

But He will not. Whether you are single, married, divorced, remarried, or widowed, you have Jesus’ promise, sealed with your baptism into His death and resurrection, that He will never stop loving you, never shun you nor despise you, never push you away. Instead, His arms, filled with

grace and blessing, are always open to you because these are the very arms that were extended upon the cross for you.

Even though Jesus does not push us away, man is in the habit of doing that very thing. Parents were bringing their children to Jesus in our text. But the disciples rebuked them. This was tantamount to saying, “Jesus does not want you. You are nothing to Him, you children. Leave Him alone, for He wants nothing to do with you.”

Do you see why Jesus was so furious with His disciples? These little children were as much His very own beloved bride as were His disciples. Being His bride, Jesus loved these little ones, would die for them, and give Himself fully to them.

No greater harm can be done to a child than to separate that child from Jesus. Don't you think Satan knows this? And so how active he is in doing today what the disciples were doing – preventing little ones from coming to Jesus. Yet if they are not brought to Jesus when they are little, why and how would they come to Jesus when they are old?

Satan separates, but Jesus joins together. And He is greater than Satan. Jesus works to join sinners, whether they are babies, toddlers, or adults, to Himself. Where Satan separates to bring death, Jesus gives life by binding sinners to Himself.

And so hear this truth clearly. You are one flesh with Jesus. He has united Himself to you in your baptism. And nothing that you have done in your life can break this bond. Whatever sin in your past causes you great guilt, be one hundred percent assured that sin can never separate you from Jesus. That sin is forgiven. All your sins are forgiven.

“For I am convinced,” says the apostle, *“that (nothing) will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.”* Because all is forgiven.

“What God has joined together, let not man separate.” God has joined you together with Jesus. And not man, nor devil, nor sin, nor guilt, nor anything in heaven above or in hell below, can ever separate Him from you. Amen.