

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### **LOOK**

What has been your experience with divorce? How does this experience affect your views of marriage?

Have you or someone you know been excluded or ostracized by the church for being divorced? How? Why?

### **BOOK**

Mark 10:2-16

2Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” 3He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” 4They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.” 5But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. 6But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ 7‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, 8and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” 10Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. 11He said

to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; 12and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

13People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. 14But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. 15Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” 16And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

- 1) The Pharisees knew that Jesus knew the Mosaic Law (Law of Moses). They were trying to trap Jesus. Did Jesus uphold the law? How?
- 2) Discuss the attempt on the part of Jesus to raise the discussion from the permissible to the possible, from the letter of the law to the heart of the matter.
- 3) Women were treated as property in the time of Jesus. Men were permitted to divorce women for almost anything. Women had no right to divorce their husbands. How is Jesus progressive in his answer? How does that response tie in with the last 4 verses about children?

## **TOOK**

How do we reconcile these words of Jesus with our current state of society? In our culture today, would Jesus say that divorce is never acceptable? Does that mean he wants us to stay in relationships that are unhealthy or chronically unhappy? How does this view compare with how Jesus treats people overall in his ministry?

How are we called to be in relationship with each other, with Jesus as our example? How do we hold in tension Jesus' command to committed relationship and having to divorce?

Is divorce always a failure?

What can we do to support those we know who are going through transition? Or at St. David's to support people who are going through changes in their relationships?