

DCPC This Sunday

October 7, 2018

“A Table Large Enough For All”

Mark 10:2-16

Context! Context! Context!

This week’s Gospel reading on its face seems to contain one of the most disturbing—and out of character—teachings of Jesus: *“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”*

Historically, this passage has been used to condemn those who are divorced, but that is *not* what Jesus means.

In Jesus’ day, women and children had limited rights. If a man grew tired of his wife, he could divorce her in favor of another, and she had little or no recourse. When Jesus suggests (as he does here) that the woman is an equal partner in marriage, there are theological implications. “She becomes *more than* an object in a transaction between men,” writes Joyce Ann Mercer. “She becomes subject and agent.” Jesus challenges the idea that a man can simply set aside his wife. By bringing this element of the sacred into his understanding of marriage and divorce, Jesus offers the woman some protection. She can’t be easily discarded by one who claims to be living by the religious laws, (at least) not as Jesus interprets those laws. Like the man, the woman has value in God’s eyes—so she should be treated accordingly.

Jesus then goes on to include children in this way of thinking, too.

So, this passage isn't really about divorce as much as it is about recognizing the *imago Dei* (*image of God*) in everyone, particularly the people society tends to disempower. These are the issues we will reflect on together this week.