

# Another Trap Question

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Preacher: Lee Roberts

[ 0 : 00 ] Jesus. Tonight's lesson starts Mark chapter 10 by looking at Mark chapter 10 verses 1 through! The Pharisees ask Jesus about his view on divorce.

! As we dig into the passage, we'll see that the Pharisees have no interest in how Jesus answers the question. The hypocritical Pharisees want to use Jesus' answer to turn people against him and possibly to turn the government against him. Jesus refocuses the Pharisees, the crowd, and his disciples on what really matters. Let's go ahead and read tonight's passage.

Again, it's Mark chapter 10 verses 1 through 12. And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them. And Pharisees came up, and in order to test him, asked, Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife? He answered them, What did Moses command you? They said, Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away. And Jesus said to them, Because of your hardness of heart, he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother, and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. And he said to them, Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.

Here's the main idea for tonight's passage. Jesus avoids a trap by the religious leaders and teaches that marriage is a sacred covenant instituted by God. So once again, Jesus avoids a trap by the religious leaders and teaches that marriage is a sacred covenant instituted by God. Because marriage is sacred, the broader church around the world, and this local church specifically, have a responsibility to support solid marriages. For people who intend to cause division and to stir up controversy, an easy way to do it is to raise a controversial topic, a topic about which people have deep-seated opinions and differing opinions. Although the Pharisees had no real interest in Jesus' thoughts about divorce other than to use those thoughts against him, we will get into Jesus' thoughts tonight. We'll also look briefly at the exception clauses where the Bible specifically allows divorce. If we were to take a poll, we would find that many of us have differing opinions about how and when those allowable exception clauses should be applied. But we need to keep something in mind. Even if a couple sinned by getting a divorce, God offers forgiveness for that sin just as he offers forgiveness for any other sin. God in his mercy often blesses subsequent marriages of people who have been divorced. Regardless of whether married couples in our church have been previously married to others, we as a church need to encourage their current marriage to follow the biblical standard for that marriage. Daniel Aiken cited another pastor when he wrote,

[ 3 : 39 ] In the church we should emphasize the value and dignity of marriage while eliminating the shame and stigma of the divorce. We mingle the call to obedience with the tears of compassion.

Aiken also noted that even if a person gets divorced and then marries someone else for reasons that we might believe were unbiblical, we should encourage that person to work hard to glorify God and be a blessing to the mate with whom the person currently is married. Divorce typically is far more painful than almost anything else a person can endure. We need to avoid piling more guilt onto that person because that person, especially if the person is a believer, already is dealing with considerable regret.

We'll split tonight's passage into three sections. In Mark chapter 10 verse 1, we see the conditions. So the conditions are the first thing that we'll look at. Those conditions provide some important background information for the remainder of the passage. So here is Mark chapter 10 verse 1 again.

And he, of course, that's Jesus, left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again, and again, as was his custom, he taught them. The first condition that we see that's significant is the location. The region of Judea that he's in now was ruled at the time by Herod Antipas, who liked to be called King Herod, even though he wasn't a real king.

Herod was prominently featured in Mark chapter 6 when Herod thought that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead. For review, listen to Mark chapter 6 verses 17 through 28.

[ 5 : 28 ] Mark 6, 17 through 28 say, For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. For John had been saying to Herod, It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife. And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. For when Herodias' daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guest. And the king said to the girl, Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you. And he vowed to her, Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom. And she went out and said to her mother, For what should I ask?

And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in immediately with haste to the king and asked, saying, I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter. And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guest, he did not want to break his word to her.

And immediately the king set an executioner with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. When we covered Mark chapter 6, we talked about how messed up Herod's family was.

Here's a summary of that family. Herodias, which was Herod's current wife, also was his niece. Herodias was already married to another of Herod's half-brothers when Herod first met her. And when Herod first met her, Herod himself was already married to the daughter of King Herodias, who ruled Nabataean Arabia to the southeast of the Dead Sea. Compounding his unlawful divorce with adultery and incest, Herod Antipas enticed his niece Herodias to divorce his half-brother so that Antipas could marry Herodias. So did you follow all of that there? It was quite a messed up family.

[ 7 : 56 ] So that's one of the conditions that we're dealing with here in Mark chapter 10, verse 1. And another condition that Mark reports is the crowd. Although Jesus had been absent from Judea for some time, his fame preceded him. Multitudes of the people came to him. They were ready to hear what he had to say. According to his custom, Jesus took the opportunity to teach them. So these conditions provided the hypocritical Pharisees with an opportunity that was too good to pass up. And we'll see that in the next section of the passage. In the second section of this passage, the Pharisees resume their attempts to trap Jesus. And in Mark 10, verses 2 through 9, we see the confrontation. So the confrontation is what we'll look at next. Going even further back into our earlier Mark studies, you may remember that chapter 2 and the first six verses of chapter 3 highlighted five consecutive confrontations between

Jesus and the religious elite. Jesus opposed the religious leaders' hypocrisy every time, but that only made the religious elite hate Jesus even more. After the fifth time that the religious leaders failed to trap Jesus, Mark 3, 6 told us what the Pharisees did next. Here is Mark chapter 3, verse 6. It says, The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him how to destroy him. The Herodians were an irreligious and worldly political group that supported the dynasty of Herod the Great and, by extension, Rome. Those secular Jews were viewed by their fellow countrymen as loyal to the Roman culture and traitors to their own religious heritage. The Herodians could not have been more different than the Pharisees whom they normally regarded as arch enemies. Those two groups found the common enemy in Jesus, though. The Pharisees hated Jesus because he openly opposed their hypocritical system of works-based righteousness. The Herodians hated Jesus because his popularity with the people made him a potential threat to the power of Herod and of Rome. Consequently, both rejected God's Son, and those two enemies came together trying to find a way to kill Jesus. In our Mark 10 passage for tonight, the conditions

probably seem to the Pharisees to be almost too good to be true. The Pharisees have been biding their time for a while, but now they must think they have the perfect question to trap Jesus, and that question comes in Mark 10, verse 2. That is where it says,

And Pharisees came up, and in order to test him, asked, Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife? We know that the Pharisees had ulterior motives for asking Jesus this question because Jesus already had stated his position on divorce. The events in our passage tonight happened months after Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount. Listen to what Jesus said about divorce in the Sermon on the Mount.

These verses are Matthew chapter 5, verses 31 and 32. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5, verses 31 and 32, It was also said, Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.

[11:36] But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the grounds of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

The Pharisees already knew what Jesus taught about divorce, but they wanted to trap him by making him say it one more time. The hostile question in Mark chapter 10, verse 2, seems like the perfect trap question because of the conditions that we discussed in the first section.

If Jesus takes the same hardline approach that John the Baptist did, perhaps Herod will arrest and possibly kill Jesus too. But even if Herod stays out of this situation, Jesus' answer will alienate a large portion of the crowd that is gathered to hear him teach.

To quote our own James Holt, Divorce is a lightning rod topic. James is correct that divorce is a lightning rod topic today.

Little has changed since Jesus' time on earth. Divorce also was a lightning rod topic thousands of years ago when the Pharisees asked Jesus about it.

[12:47] The Jews largely were divided among two different schools of thought about divorce. One was based on the teaching of a rabbi named Shammai. The other was based on the teaching of a rabbi named Hillel.

An interesting thing about both schools of thought is that both base their views on the same passage in Deuteronomy. That passage is Deuteronomy chapter 24, verses 1 through 4.

So here are Deuteronomy chapter 24, verses 1 through 4. Moses wrote, When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies who took her to be his wife, then her former husband who sent her away may not take her again to be his wife after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the Lord, and you shall not bring sin upon the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance.

There's no command or explicit permission given to divorce anywhere in this Deuteronomy passage. It merely describes a situation where a man gets married, decides to divorce his wife, she marries someone else.

But the passage recognizes and regulates the reality of divorce without condoning or condemning it. The disagreement between the conservatives and the liberals about this passage centered around their interpretations of what Moses meant when he said in Deuteronomy 24.1 that a man could obtain a certificate of divorce from his wife because he has found some indecency in her.

[14:50] So here's a summary of how those two rabbinical schools interpreted Deuteronomy 24.1. The Shammai school was the school of the conservatives, and they argued that the only thing that would justify divorce was a shameful act of sexual infidelity.

Anything less than that was not grounds for divorce. In their minds, the couple, even though they might be bitter and unhappy, had to stay together. The Halal school, the liberals, took a much broader view of the indecency mentioned in Deuteronomy 24.1.

They said it referred to anything a woman did that embarrassed, disgraced, or even merely displeased her husband. Thus, the Halal school permitted divorce on virtually any ground.

By Jesus' time, the prevailing view was that of the Halal school, which was why Herod Antipas was able to get away with his illegitimate divorce. According to Halal, a man was permitted to divorce his wife for anything that she did that displeased him, even such trivial matters as burning his dinner, allowing someone to see her ankles, letting her hair down, or making a negative comment about her mother-in-law.

If all else fails, he could divorce her just because he found somebody else that he preferred to her. So the Pharisees appear to have Jesus backed into a corner, no matter what answer Jesus gave, so they thought he would be sure to displease somebody, and that might give opportunity to arrest him.

[16:29] The verbs in Mark 10, verse 2, indicate that the Pharisees kept asking him. This wasn't just a one-time question. They kept asking him, and they thought that they might provoke him into saying something incriminating.

Before we move on, we should consider what the term translated as indecency in Deuteronomy 24, verse 1, really means, and here's how John MacArthur summarized the meaning.

He said, the Hebrew word translated indecency literally means nakedness, not in a physical sense, but in the sense of something shameful. The same word is used in Deuteronomy 23, 14 to describe things in the camp of Israel that the holy God must not see.

The term does not refer to adultery, but to sinful behavior short of adultery. It describes things that violate normal social responsibility and behavior in a civilized culture and are disrespectful of others.

The word certainly cannot be extrapolated to mean anything that a man disliked about his wife as the Pharisees were doing. Let's go back to Mark and keep working our way through this section of Scripture.

[17:43] Look at what Jesus said in Mark chapter 10, verse 3. He answered them, What did Moses command you? The Pharisees had to be pleased with this question from Jesus.

It's a reference to the Deuteronomy passage that we just covered. The Pharisees must have been thinking that Jesus was about to side with either the conservatives or the liberals, and if he did that, they would have him backed into a corner.

The Pharisees quickly answered Jesus in verse 4. Verse 4 says, They said, Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.

But then, as Jesus did every time that the religious leaders tried to trap him, Jesus gave an unexpected answer. Jesus avoids taking sides about what Moses wrote in Deuteronomy.

Instead, Jesus goes back to the beginning of creation. Look at Mark chapter 10, verses 5 through 9 again. And Jesus said to them, Because of your hardness of heart, he wrote you this commandment.

[18:53] But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. Matthew's account fills in some details that Mark omits.

Listen to Matthew's account of this same episode. These verses are of Matthew chapter 19, verses 3 through 9. And Matthew chapter 19, verses 3 through 9 say, And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?

He answered, Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?

So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. They said to him, Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?

[20:10] He said to them, Because of your hardness of heart, Moses allowed you to divorce your wives. But from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality and marries another, commits adultery.

Matthew's account shows us that Jesus intentionally poked the religious leaders again, similar to what we saw Jesus do in the earlier conflicts.

Matthew notes that Jesus included the phrase, Have you not read? It's as if Jesus is saying that you, the religious leaders, are supposed to be the experts in the law, but you don't even know what Moses wrote in the law.

Of course, he knew they knew what Moses wrote in the law. His point was that they have failed to understand what Moses wrote in that law.

The problem with the Pharisees, as usual, is that they are staring at the law and seeing the external issue without stopping to consider the underlying heart issues. Jesus turns the tables on them.

[ 21 : 18 ] He says, Because of your hardness of heart, he wrote you this commandment. So Jesus is saying to the Pharisees, The problem here is you. You are trying to test me, but you fail to see that the law judges your hearts.

The law had to make legal allowance for the people's sinful heart issues. In a perfect world, divorce would not happen, but God gave this commandment because he knew that it would.

Though the Bible never condones divorce, it does recognize the reality of divorce. The allowance of a divorce certificate provides regulations and is a concession for the protection and welfare of an innocent victim.

The law protected the wife by restraining the husband from impulsively divorcing her and abusing her like an unwanted piece of furniture instead of treating her like a human being.

Without a bill of divorcement, a woman could easily become a social outcast and be treated like a harlot. No man would want to marry her and she would be left defenseless and destitute.

[ 22 : 27 ] After commenting on the hardness of their hearts, Jesus then turns the argument to God's original intentions for marriage as seen in Genesis chapter 2 verses 21 through 25.

God's design of male and female shows that he held each to be in equal value even though the Jews only permitted the husband to initiate a divorce. Here are Genesis chapter 2 verses 21 through 24.

Genesis 2 verses 21 through 24 say, So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, that's Adam, and while he slept he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, This is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.

She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh.

[ 23 : 37 ] Adam and Eve formed the pattern for marriage. At the beginning of creation God made one male and one female. Divorce was impossible for them because there were no other people to remarry.

The Hebrew word translated hold fast in Genesis 2 verse 24 denotes the strongest possible bond. The word can be translated as cling, fasten its grip, follow closely, be joined, stay close, stick together, or just plain stuck.

marriage involves two people unbreakably connected together glued and pursuing hard after each other to be united in mind, body, spirit, and emotion.

Divine revelation on marriage and divorce was clear and unambiguous. It offered no support for the contemporary Jewish view that divorce was permissible for any reason.

Several related principles can be seen from the cross references and other places in scripture.

First, adultery was forbidden and adultery was punishable by death back then.

[ 24 : 49 ] Second, premarital sex was also punished. Third, coveting another person's spouse was forbidden as well. Listen again to Mark chapter 10 verses 6 through 9 and hear how Jesus echoes the words of Genesis.

Mark chapter 10 verses 6 through 9 say, But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. Warren Wiersbe said, it was God who established marriage, and he has the right to make the rules.

According to scripture, marriage is between a man and a woman, not two men or two women, and the relationship is sacred and permanent. It's the most intimate union in the human race because the two become one flesh.

This is not true of a father and son or a mother and daughter, but it is true of a man and wife. While the spiritual element is vitally important in marriage, the emphasis here is that marriage is a physical union.

[ 26 : 10 ] It says the two become one flesh, and in that sense, they are one flesh, not one spirit. Because marriage is a physical union, only a physical cause can break it, either death or fornication.

And Mark 10, verse 9, warns us that man cannot separate those who have been united in marriage, but God can, because he established marriage, God has the right to lay down the rules.

In Matthew's version about this episode and in the Sermon on the Mount, we see the exception clause that Wearsby referenced. Here is Matthew 19, verse 9 again.

Jesus said in Matthew 19, verse 9, Under the Old Testament law, adultery would dissolve a marriage because the guilty party was put to death.

Sometime during Israel's history, divorce was allowed to take the place of execution as legitimate punishment for adultery. God in his mercy chose not to enforce the death penalty.

[ 27 : 25 ] Apart from that death penalty, divorce became the divine alternative, tolerated only because of the hardness of the human heart. Jesus himself modeled mercy toward the adulterer.

For an example of how Jesus modeled mercy toward an adulterer, flip over to John, chapter 8, verses 3 through 11. You'll see a familiar story in John, chapter 8, verses 3 through 11.

Those verses say, The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst, they said to him, Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery.

Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say? This they said to him to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him.

Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground, and as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.

[ 28 : 33 ] And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.

Jesus stood up and said to her, Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? She said, No one, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn you.

Go, and from now on, sin no more. Through his teaching, Jesus upheld God's higher standard for conduct. At the same time, Jesus also showed mercy to someone who failed to live up to that standard.

Jesus sets the record straight that God still hates divorce and that his ideal is still monogamous, lifelong marriage, but as a concession to sin and as a gracious provision for those who are innocent of defiling the marriage, he allowed divorce on the ground of adultery.

John MacArthur said, Adultery does not have to end a marriage, but God's sparing the life of an unrepentant adulterer is not meant to penalize that person's innocent spouse.

[ 29 : 45 ] The New Testament also reveals that if an unbeliever divorces a believer, the latter is free to remarry. That last sentence of MacArthur's quote is a reference to 1 Corinthians chapter 7, verse 15.

Listen to what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians chapter 7, verse 15. We mentioned something in the introduction that we need to reemphasize again.

What if someone divorced a spouse and later remarried someone else under circumstances different than what the Bible specifically permits? The answer from nearly all commentators we trust, and I believe it's supported by Scripture, regardless on their viewpoint on divorce and remarriage,!

is that the couple should honor their current marriage and go forward. So far, we have seen the conditions and the confrontation. In the last section of the passage, we see the clarification.

The clarification is the last thing we'll look at, and that comes in Mark chapter 10, verses 10 through 12. Here again are Mark chapter 10, verses 10 through 12.

[ 31 : 15 ] And in the house, the disciples ask him again about this matter, and he said to them, whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.

By this time, the Pharisees had disappeared. They certainly were thoroughly enraged, both because they had failed to make Jesus contradict Moses, and because Jesus had succeeded in showing their hypocrisy again.

Privately, the Lord explained the matter to his questioning disciples, who by now were convinced that it was a dangerous thing to get married. To marry after divorce, other than one granted on the grounds of fornication would make the person guilty of committing adultery, and they knew that was a serious thing.

Note that Jesus included the women in his warning, which certainly elevated the women's status in society and gave them equal responsibility with men. The rabbis would never have gone this far.

Matthew's account of the conversation at the house shows that the disciples were starting to understand how seriously God views marriage. Listen to Matthew chapter 19, verse 10.

[ 32 : 34 ] Matthew chapter 19, verse 10 says, The disciples said to him, If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.

The disciples had difficulty accepting the idea of a lifelong marital commitment because of the existing shallow and unbiblical view of marriage in the society that they had grown up in.

Had they paid more attention to God's word than the traditions of the rabbinical elders, they would have realized that God instituted marriage as the epitome of pleasant, joyful, and fulfilling human relationships.

Only those who truly honor Jesus as Lord and Savior can truly accept his teachings. Even then, his teachings become fully acceptable only in the life walked in the Spirit, who alone can keep believers from carrying out the natural desire of the flesh, which is committed to self rather than committed to God or one's life partner or others.

Remember the main idea. Jesus avoids a trap by the religious leaders and teaches that marriage is a sacred covenant instituted by God.

[ 33 : 47 ] James Montgomery Boyce said, God is able to always start with his children precisely where they are and bring blessing. The churches should never be closed to divorced and remarried people.

Christians, above all, should show mercy. Perhaps even if such persons marry in rebellion against God's will, he may bring repentance, and he may yet greatly bless the new home.

Some people have sinned through their divorce and remarriage. However, we know that all of us have sinned in various ways. All of us need God's forgiveness. Otherwise, we would be subject to an eternity in the horrors of hell that we talked about last week.

Martin Lloyd Jones said, the only way to understand the New Testament doctrine of salvation is to start with the doctrine of sin. Whatever else sin may be, it is at least something that could be dealt with only by the coming of the eternal Son of God from heaven into this world and by his going to the death of the cross.

That had to happen. There was no other way. God would never have allowed his only begotten beloved Son to suffer in the way he did unless it was absolutely essential, and it was essential because of sin.

[ 35 : 09 ] This doctrine of sin must always start by preaching the law. This means that we must explain that mankind is confronted by the holiness of God, by his demands and also by the consequences of sin.

The Son of God himself speaks about being cast into hell, and Jones ended his quote by saying, if you do not like the doctrine of hell, you are disagreeing with Jesus Christ.

Here's another quote from Lloyd Jones. He said, evangelism must start with the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the demands of the law, the punishment handed out by the law, and the eternal consequences of evil and wrong doing.

Only the man who is brought to see his guilt in this way flies to Christ for deliverance and redemption. You can have a psychological belief even in the Lord Jesus Christ, but a true belief sees in him one who delivers us from the curse of the law.

True evangelism starts like that, and obviously is primarily a call to repentance. Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. All who are trusting in their own efforts are denying the gospel.

[ 36 : 28 ] The reason for that is always that they have never seen themselves as sinners or understood the New Testament doctrine of sin. This is a controversial matter.

remember what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verses 9 through 11. 1 Corinthians 6, 9 through 11 say, Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived, neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God?

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

We can substitute ourselves in that last verse. After that long list of sins in verses 9 through 10 we can say, and such were some of us.

[ 37 : 42 ] But we were washed, we were sanctified, and we were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. When we see how much God hates sin, we can begin to appreciate what God and His only begotten Son did to rescue believers from their sins.

Here's one more Lloyd-Jones quote. He said, Only as we see what sin really is in the sight of God do we realize that nevertheless God sacrificed His only Son who willingly took our place.

That helps us begin to understand and to measure His love. If you want to love God more, grasp this doctrine of sin. As you realize what it meant to God and what He has done about it, you will see that His love is indeed so amazing, so divine.

John 3.16 is so well loved because it's true. Jesus said in John 3.16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You for this reminder that from the beginning of creation, You have set out Your standards for right and wrong.

[ 39 : 08 ] Also, thank You for this reminder that You have been merciful to all of us who have broken those standards, and all of us who have ever lived and ever will live have broken those standards and will continue to break those standards.

We thank You that You have provided a way to be reconciled to You by sending Jesus to take the place for all believers on the cross. Help us share this truth with others and help us be merciful to others who are dealing with sin in their lives and truly come to repentance.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.