

## Day 28

***And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.'"10.1-12***

The last time the Pharisees challenged Jesus it was to produce a sign (8.11). This time it is to test him. A serious test it is, for John the Baptist had recently lost his head for condemning Herod's marriage to a divorced woman as unlawful. Would Jesus side with John against Herod and Herodias?

It is the Pharisees, however, who come under the blowtorch. Moses had *allowed* a man to divorce his wife, but he had never sanctioned divorce. For those couples who truly seek to keep God's law, divorce should not be necessary. The Pharisees, however, interpreted the law in such a way as to make divorce an easy out. As he always does when moral laws are concerned, Jesus asks what is going on in the heart. Is the heart pure and holy, or hardened?



Jesus then goes further, introducing a new teaching: any divorcee who remarries, or anyone who marries a divorcee, commits adultery. In doing so he reasserts the seriousness with which God views the marital union of a man and a woman, and rejects any human authority which would claim to dissolve, deny, reinterpret or alter what he has done.

Many struggle with such an uncompromising approach, though they find some relief in Matthew's version (which allows divorce where there has been infidelity, Matt 19.8-9), and in Paul's teaching (the one divorced is freed from the marriage, though not to remarry, 1 Cor 7.10-15).

Jesus does not give anyone a licence to condemn those who divorce, remembering that we are all sinners and all sins will be forgiven (3.28). But neither does he allow us to play fast and loose with the moral order which he ordained from the beginning.

? Is there any person against whom your heart is hardened? Do you need to address this?



Heavenly Father, your ways are perfect, but we are weak. Soften my heart, I pray, toward those I find it hard to get along with, and help me submit to the yoke of your moral law. These things I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.