

## PENTECOST 20 (2018)

### Mark 10 Jesus Christ: Little Children's Kingdom of God

**Mark 10:2–162** Pharisees came up and in order to test [Jesus] 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 they 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.”

And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. **But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.**

In the Name of Jesus.

Dear children of the Kingdom of God, you reign with your King! So I make myself bold to beg this favor: switch to the lowest, slowest gear, your mind and your religion: slow down to the speed of your poor pastor.

*<sup>14</sup> Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, <sup>15</sup> and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” <sup>1</sup>*

‘After John—the herald of This Kingdom!—after John was arrested, Jesus came and preached and announced the coming of the Kingdom where the Living God is King!’

So, from Its beginning, this Kingdom—  
WHERE...GOD...RULES!...—This is a Kingdom that WILL  
NOT even put up a good fight against a puppet-king loser—  
Herod—put in power by the big powers back in Rome!

AND...--And, dear children of God, the King Who must now  
be HIS OWN HERALD still sticks His Head into the lion’s  
mouth—Galilee, where ruled the one who PUT John in prison!—  
and Jesus Christ proclaimed ANOTHER Kingdom—not really  
RIVAL Kingdom, if it WILL NOT DO what any kingdom HERE  
and NOW can do!—

He proclaimed it where John’s warden was most sure to hear:  
Galilee. Mark, chapter one, He is already fitting His Head for a  
crown of mockery, a crown of thorns, and beatings and spitting and  
slapping.

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<sup>1</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Mk 1:14–15). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

What was the catchy bumper-sticker of years past? ‘You can’t hug your children with nuclear arms!’ Clever and effective, whether or not you agree with the agenda behind it! But TRY to compare the power of we puny ones, who can cobble together God’s creation, only to blow it up with spectacular and lasting damage—compare our puny efforts to the One Who makes and holds together—WITHOUT...EFFORT!—all the things we cobble together and blow up. Somewhere in that comparison men put what they make-up as being ‘Gawwwddd!’ Power times power geometrically, exponentially, power to the nth power!

And yet—SOMEHOW!—the SPIRIT Who has made His Immeasurable HOME in Jesus Christ, has found a way to DISTRACT YOU...AND...ME from what we’re REALLY interested in, to THIS:

***And he took them in HIS arms and blessed them, laying HIS hands on them.***

If this is God and His Kingdom, where’s the POWER? In fact, Jesus’ star-students, the holy apostles, were REBUKING the parents of those great ones, who would dare approach such POWER with such little DISTRACTIONS! So...say...WE?!

There’s His power; and there’s His Kingdom! Where HIS arms are wrapping up those who are still so powerless in THIS HERE AND NOW, that they live their lives as if the only reason their parents were invented was to BE their personal power—and God too! So THEY ENTER the Kingdom of God, when the

Kingdom of God embraces THEM!

If we have ears to hear, the Spirit says this to each of us on account of our Baptism at His Authority, at His Name! ANY so-called more ‘POWERFUL’ claim on God and His Kingdom LOSES the attention and interest of the Living God; God the King.

So, ‘WHAT A KING!’ What King? This King:

*<sup>42</sup> And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, <sup>43</sup> Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.<sup>2</sup>*

Joseph of Arimathea ‘was, HIMSELF!, LOOKING for the Kingdom of God!.....’ And WHAT does Joseph end up with?! ‘He took courage, and went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.’

Forgive me for being so slow! Pray for me and bear with me! Slow down with me!

‘He was—HIMSELF!—looking for the kingdom of God. He asked FOR...THE...BODY...OF...JESUS!’

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<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mk 15:42–43). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

So, based on our lessons today, what have we learned about Joseph of Arimathea—wherever THAT WAS?! Just keep READING!

*<sup>44</sup> Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. <sup>45</sup> And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph.<sup>3</sup>*

To Jesus' killer, Pilate, not only was Jesus no KING with which to match swords; Jesus WASN'T...EVEN game enough to last long on the cross! 'You want THAT?! It's all YOURS!'

Yes; it was; HE was; who says so?

*<sup>46</sup> And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.<sup>4</sup>*

I've seen this played out—how many hundreds of times?!  
My children may even save ME!

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<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mk 15:44–45). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

<sup>4</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mk 15:46). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

No matter how battered, bruised and broken their toy kings and queens, fierce animals, or even dear ‘Puppys’, children will keep and secure and tuck away what’s most precious; precious to them.

Joseph was a little child, to whom belonged the Kingdom of God. And what did Joseph’s King have for Joseph? Nothing but a corpse; AND...the Word He had taught most fully—listed even THREE WHOLE TIMES in this short Gospel: ‘on the third day, He will rise!’

So the tomb was a bed and the stone was a door and the linen was jammies. (Children GET this!)

Children of God: your poor pastor, his doctors say, has problems with obsessions and compulsions. They say it’s not a disorder, where I need to be housed somewhere; not yet! But it cramps my personality. (Quelle surprise!)

So it’s feast or famine for your poor preacher. All IN; or all OUT! Now, I tell you this for a good reason.

About three-four months ago, I decided to go on a diet: a NEWS diet! I found myself not only taking in the news of the day, but also becoming very angry and upset at accounts of God’s Law being despised, and basic human decency being extinguished.

And my feelings-doctor, last Monday, brought up in our little

meeting the recent unpleasantness about the Supreme Court nominee and that whole circus. And he pressed me on it, to share my opinions and feelings with him. He really made me angry by doing that! He is very good at his God-given calling.

They tried to trick Jesus; He did not hide and ignore; He answered a question about how we live **HERE AND NOW** with the only sure guide we have: the Law of Moses. **AND**—to make clear **WHY...HE...CAME!**—He set off the nuclear explosion that is the condemnation **OF THE LAW!** ‘Adultery! God makes marriage! Men: hands off! **I WAS THERE, at the Beginning!**’

And instead of casting the holy apostles into the Pit, as they deserved, for turning away the **ONLY...PEOPLE...FIT...FOR...HIS...RULE!**—He did one even better, this King: He taught them, with a patience and long-suffering that only Heaven can inspire; and treated those who despised children, as children themselves.

We are on our way up and out, dear children of God, kings and queens all! From **HERE AND NOW** to a Kingdom Whose power is such that **IT** despises even the **THOUGHT** of matching power with creatures of a day who claim power **HERE AND NOW!**

And so the worst our society can produce: racing to put their faces on our TVs; or showing their faces, with all the ugliness they can muster, in our daily paths:

It makes sense to cringe and want to look away. One day,

this whole kingdom, here and now, will go its own way and be free of US at last! ‘You want THAT? IT’S YOURS!’

The Kingdom ours remaineth!

So, on the authority of our Baptism, at our King’s call, “Follow ME!,” we are given one great wonder to perform in the kingdom HERE AND NOW, that the kingdom here and now will never grasp:

Treat as children those trying to be so growed-up, that all they can do is rage and push and shove and make ugly faces. Who knows what the Spirit can do? Number one on your list of those not worth your bother: Why did Jesus bother to die for that one?

Thank God for the Kingdom, for His Body and His Blood, for US today! He’s still bearing with us, and treating you and me—who should KNOW BETTER!—the King is STILL treating us as little children; His Body, His Word, His children, His Kingdom!

Your blessing for this day, from the Kingdom where God rules, to raise you, me too!, from the kingdom HERE AND NOW in the Name of Jesus! Amen!