

Joshua 24: 1-13

Matthew 19: 3-12

The Gospel acclamation reads, “Your precepts, O Lord, are all of them sure; they stand firm for ever and ever.” I think that these words sum up the message of today’s Reading and Gospel...

God’s ways and his rules for life are never changing. They are born out of his great love for us, and they always bring a positive outcome.

In the Reading, God tells Joshua to remind the people of all he has done for his people from Abraham to that present day. He has led them through many difficulties to a position where he now says, “ I have given you a land where you never toiled. You live in towns you never built; you eat now from vineyards and olive groves you never planted.”

In the Gospel, some Pharisees are trying to test Jesus. In a sense they are trying to provoke him around God’s precepts for marriage. His answer? “Have you never read that the creator made them male and female and that he said.....A man must cling to his wife, and the two become one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide.” The pharisees countered, “Why did Moses command that a writ of dismissal should be given in cases of divorce?” Jesus answered, “It was because you were so unteachable....but it was not like this from the beginning.” He then startled his listeners, as he may us today, by saying, “The man who divorces his wife – I am not speaking of fornication – and marries another, is guilty of adultery. These were difficult words to hear then and can be today. So, Jesus reminds them that, “It is not everyone who can accept what I have said, but only those to whom it is granted.” In essence, he then explains that we are formed in different ways by birth, and then either coerced into or free to make personal choices.”

We are all confronted with difficulties and subsequent choices on our journey through life. Jesus is our guide and judge whose 'precepts remain sure and last forever.' "Let anyone accept them who can.."