**Calvary Fellowship 11.6.2022 Matthew 19:1-12 “Building a Marriage that Lasts”**

* **Have U ever been to Disney Word on a weekend where they are doing the marathon races? That’s real treat**
* It was easy to identify everyone who runs in them b/c they were all wearing their medals b/c there’s no point in running a race if U can’t brag about it
* I know that b/c the last time I went I spoke to every person who I saw w/ a medal & I felt the need to tell them that I ran the Star Wars 10k 2 years ago
* They were like, “Uh, ok. That’s nice.”
* Then when they asked me how fast I ran the race, I was like, “Whoa. We just met. Don’t ask me all of these personal questions, freak.”
* **But I ran the Star Wars 5k & 10K a few years ago - I ran the Star Wars 5k w/ my niece Sarah & my daughter Mia & son Xander**
* The 5k was tons of fun b/c I was running w/ my kids
* The 10k was different b/c a few people from the Calvary staff ran it, but they were put closer to the front & somehow, I got stuck in the back of the pack
* That would have been ok, except I got put in to the corral w/ all of these mutants that I was pretty sure that I was a faster runner than them
* I'm not a fast, but when I'm around the elderly or infirmed I look like Usain Bolt
* Turns out I shouldn’t have judged them b/c some of them blew me away
* **There was the 90 year old man** who I judged internally & left me in the dust when the race finally started - that guy was like Speedy Gonzalez’s grandfather
* **Then there was the guy w/ a literal broken leg** who was in front of me for part of the race - it was close, but I beat him at the end by a good 90 seconds
* **There was the lady wearing what I thought was a weird backpack**
* It turned out to be an oxygen tank - she finished 10 minutes before I did
* **There was the girl who was dressed like a Tie Fighter** - I was keeping pace w/ her for a while & right at the 6 mile mark, she exploded w/ speed
* But she dropped her phone - so I picked it up & I started running as fast as I could to catch her before she got to the finish line & I lost her
* So she stops right before the finish line to take a picture & realizes she doesn’t have her phone - She starts looking around & I finally show up
* I say huffing & puffing, “U… dropped… your …phone… .2 miles ago…I … ran… to catch… U.” - She says w/ no heavy breathing, “Thanks so much!” (Pic)
* But all the while, I was running for 6 miles complaining to myself that my clothes was the reason I didn’t finish faster - my shorts were loose & my shirt was tight
* Here’s the real reason - I’m a terrible runner, that’s why I’m committed to driving everywhere from now on
* But it’s amazing to me that there’s a golf cart that drives around these races w/ 1 goal - picking up the people who don’t want to run anymore
* It’s 1 thing if U get hurt, but some people start & think it’s not worth finishing
* I see a lot of golf carts picking people up who given up on their marriages
* Some of the reason for that is we put a lot more effort in the start of our marriages, but not a lot of effort into making sure we finish well
* **I’ve done a lot of premarital in my life & no couple has ever said they’re winging it when it comes to their ceremony**
* Instead, what I hear is the most detailed event in the history of mankind
* **Think about all the stuff U pick out – the venue, the food, U tasted 15 types of cake until U found the 1 that tastes like your celebration**
* U didn’t just pick out your own clothes, U picked out the clothes for all of your friends too - and what is up w/ these bridesmaid dresses?
* Can anyone tell me why these dresses are the ugliest garments ever seen?
* Most people wouldn’t make their pets dress like that, but on their wedding day they force their closest friends into these outfits
* I think this is a test – “Wear this sea foam dress & I’ll know U love me!”
* **I’m amazed at how much is spent on weddings – Avg. in US $28K**
* They spend all this $ for the wedding, but they aren’t sure if their 1991 Honda Civic will get them home w/ the extra load of cans tied to the bumper
* Do U know how much my wedding cost? $1,500 including the reception & I’m still just as married as everyone else in this room
* US = $92 billion on weddings a yr./ US = $8 billion on honeymoons a yr
* **B/c what we tend to do is focus on the start, but not on the finish**
* I truly believe - If we focused on the finish as much as we focused on the start, we’d see a lot less couples dropping off in the middle
* Now before some of U say, “Well, I’m not married, so this message isn’t for me?
* 94% of people get married - it’s going to apply to U soon enough, so listen up
* If U are married & things are tough, this message is for U
* B/c listen, if everything in your life is horrible & U have a great marriage, U still feel like things are looking up b/c your marriage is your relational foundation
* But if U have all the success in the world & your marriage is in shambles, then everything feels like it turns to ashes in your hands
* Jesus is going to give U practical help that will help your marriage today…

**———(v. 1-3)———**

**#1 - Marriage is Meant for Life**

* But the 1st thing we have to do is understand their question - they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?”
* The reason they were asking is b/c of a command in the OT
* “Suppose a man marries a woman but she does not please him. Having discovered something wrong with her, he writes a document of divorce, hands it to her, and sends her away from his house.” (Deuteronomy 24:1 NLT)
* So here’s the question: what is meant by “discovers something wrong”?
* The problem is, that’s not defined - so the rabbi’s took it upon themselves to define what that meant - it basically landed into 2 schools of thought
* **In Jesus’ day, there was 2 rabbis who were revered**
* The 1st rabbi’s name was Hillel – he died in about 10 AD - so prior to Jesus starting his ministry & was very influential in his interpretations on Torah
* He believed that divorce was for any reason
* If he didn’t like her anymore/ If she cooked his eggs wrong/ even if he found someone more attractive – he would say, “I divorce you” 3X & it was done
* **Then he would write a certificate of divorce to keep it legal & it was done**
* This was important to the Pharisees b/c it’s what they believed - that’s why they asked - Jesus’ interpretation of Torah usually landed w/ Hillel, just not this time
* **The 2nd rabbi’s name was Shammai – This guy was a real character**
* He believed that U should never even hint at lying - here’s what I mean:
* Have U ever gone to someone’s house for dinner & they serve up something awful? But when they ask how it is, U say, “Wonderful! May I have the recipe?”
* According to Rabbi Shimai, you couldn’t do that – you told the truth at all times
* **1 example of Shimmai’s antics had to do w/ what U did at a wedding**
* If U went to a wedding & U thought the bride didn’t look good, U couldn’t say, “U look beautiful,” just to be polite – No, U had to tell her she looked ugly
* The Talmud, which is an ancient Jewish text records over 300 differences between Hillil & Shammai, ranging from who should be allowed to study Torah
* To on what nights the lights the Hannukah candles should be lit
* But in the midst of stuff like that, Shammai was a revered Rabbi & he said that divorce was only permissible b/c of adultery, which is what Jesus will say later
* **Here’s the problem, today our culture lands w/ Hillel - we will divorce for just about any reason & we give it a fancy name**
* We say, “we have irreconcilable differences.” – Listen: I don’t know 1 couple who doesn’t have irreconcilable difference
* My wife & I have been married for 25 years & we’ve had irreconcilable differences since the day we got married
* There’s stuff we’re never going to agree on - my wife has an unnatural love of Mexican food that I will never understand
* This might sound like heresy to U, but I don’t really like Mexican food
* I believe, she secretly regrets that she didn’t marry a Mexican man who had a Mexican Abuela who would bring over homemade chimichangas
* U know what she said when I told her that? She said, “I do love chimichangas”
* Listen, I know some differences are deep & they are a challenge to navigate
* But here’s what U have to realize, jumping ship on your marriage doesn’t mean it’s going to be easier - In fact, the data says otherwise
* I now the famous stat is that 50$ of all marriage fail - that’s a little misleading b/c it factors in all marriages, including 2nd, 3rd, 4th or 10th marriages
* The real stat is that 42% of 1st marriages don’t make it - that’s high
* The real shock is that 60% of 2nd marriages fail & 75% of 3rd marriages fail
* **Do U see a pattern? The issue isn’t just the other person – it’s the heart**
* Let me give U another stat: If a couple has a deep faith in God, read the Bible & pray daily, attends church weekly, & serve at church – the odds are 1 in 1,015
* This is why U have to choose well - we tend to downplay the differences that matter most on the front end b/c he’s cute & we get along
* But those end up being the issues that cripple a marriage later on & part of it is b/c we don’t realize the commitment we’re making…

**———(v. 4-6)———**

**#2 - Marriage is Designed by God**

* **Notice that the Pharisees want to know Jesus’ view on divorce, but He goes back & explains His view on marriage**
* His view on marriage is Genesis 2 - that 2 people become 1 flesh
* And to understand Jesus’ view on divorce, we need to understand His view on marriage & what it means to become 1 flesh
* 1 flesh means a lot of things - it’s physical union, it’s emotional union
* It’s spiritual union - it’s the view that 2 people are now 1 couple
* Just like your body consists of many parts, but they are 1 flesh - your body
* **When my daughter Mia was around 4 years old, she had all of the Disney princesses in action figure size**
* It’s part of a playset she got where they have different dresses they can wear
* Well, Mia came running b/c she needed help - Somehow Ariel’s head came off
* I told her not to worry b/c I am a doctor & I specialize in decapitations
* So I went into the kitchen & made this operating table & I made Mia my nurse
* Then I took a pair of needle nose pliers & some crazy glue & I reattached Ariel’s skull to the rest of her body
* Then I told Mia that Ariel needed some time to recover from her surgery
* Mia was so happy, so I asked her to give me a high 5 - that’s when I realized that I had glued my hands together
* Carey had to come out & put something on my hands to break them free b/c I’ve learned that once superglue puts 2 things together, they tend to stay
* **1 flesh is the same - when U superglue 2 pieces of paper, for all intents & purposes, they’re 1 sheet of paper b/c it’s impossible to disentangle them**
* This is why when someone goes through a divorce, it is so painful, b/c there’s pieces of U that get ripped out & pieces of them that stay around
* Jesus answers the question by saying, “Divorce was never God’s design”
* 2 people loving each other for their entire lives was & continues to be God’s design for marriage
* That’s why Jesus says, “What God has joined together, let not man separate”
* If 2 believers get married, God is joining them & don’t look for reasons to separate them - this goes against God’s design & Jesus is calling them out for having the attitude that any reason is good enough for divorce
* Well, that rubs them the wrong way & they press the issue…

**———(v. 7-9)———**

* There’s a bit of wordplay that’s important to note - they say ‘Moses commanded us to get divorced” - Jesus says, “Moses permitted it b/c of your hard hearts”
* **There’s a couple of Greek words that are used for divorce - 1 of them is “Chorizo”, which is also Spanish for Sausage**
* So if U were to go to a deli in Israel & ask for Chorizo, the girl behind the counter will say, “Chorizo? We’re not even married.”
* **But either way, chorizo isn’t a Kosher word - why? B/c when 2 people get married God is working to make them one flesh**
* “Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.” (Genesis 5:2 KJV)
* Please notice this - that as God creates this couple & blesses this couple, He calls them Adam - why? B/c they are now 1 flesh
* Jesus tells the Pharisees that He agrees w/ Shammai, that the only legitimate reason for divorce is sexually immorality
* And if U divorce your wife for any reason & marry someone else, you’re committing adultery & we’re confused about what that command means
* This is why he brings up the underlying reason for people seeking divorce.- the hardness of their hearts
* **Listen - marriage is hard - even w/ godliest people there’s still challenges**
* Why? B/c people aren’t perfect - but when U learn to celebrate your differences & trust God through the tough times, there’s so much joy
* **So my wife & I have been married for 25 years & generally speaking, we tend to agree on things most of the time**
* But 1 night we got home out of town, unloaded the suitcases & got the kids to bed & by that time, we were wiped out
* But we decided to watch a show & in the middle of the show Carey fell asleep
* Carey woke up when the show ended & I said, “Listen, I’ll save the show & we can watch it again tomorrow.” - She said, “It’s ok, just delete it.” So I deleted it
* The next morning I mentioned the show & how she fell asleep & she says, “Oh great. I’m looking forward to watching it tonight.”
* I said, “Hold on. U told me to delete the show last night.” - She said, “Yeah, but I was 1/2 asleep & I know U wouldn’t listen to what I was saying 1/2 asleep.”
* I said, “Well, interesting thing. I thought U were serious, so I deleted it.”
* “Why would U delete it? I was not in the mental state to make a decision.”
* I said, “This is very hard for me. Sometimes when U ask me to do things U want me to do them. Other times U ask me to do things & U don’t want your wishes carried out. How am I supposed to know which is which?”
* She said, “How about not asking what my wishes are when I’m 1/2 asleep.”
* But do U want to know what the best of this whole thing was? I turned on the TV that night & the show was still there - I forgot to delete it
* **Heres my point - people disagree - even people that love each other**
* Some of us are looking at our spouses from a perspective that says, “We’re too different. There’s no way it could work.” - no, it can work - but it takes work
* The point that Jesus is getting at is - they ask Jesus about divorce & He starts talking about one flesh - b/c that’s the goal is every marriage
* But 1 flesh will never happen if U have 1 eye on the door when things get tough
* This is why, couples need to make a commitment together that you’re going to finish well - most couples know how to start well - the big wedding & party
* That part is easy, w/ enough money U can start big & bold
* But we need commitment to finish well - b/c U can’t become 1 flesh is you’re thinking about how to pull this thing apart when it gets difficult
* It takes 2 people who are willing to do whatever it takes to make it work
* And when U do, you’ll find more joy than U believed was possible

**———(v. 10-12)———**

**#3 - Marriage is Bound by Commitment**

* **It seems like the only people who really got it was the disciples b/c their comment to Jesus shows they knew how serious this was**
* They say, “Wow! With such high standards, it might be better not to marry”
* Jesus says, “Not everyone can accept this saying” - meaning, not everyone has that gift of celibacy - most don’t have it
* If U were w/ us in our series in 1 Cor., we talked about this gift & how some don’t feel the need to get married & they want to devote themselves to service
* The point Jesus is making is, He’s affirming those who have this gift & agreeing w/ the disciples that marriage isn’t something to go into lightly
* Listen, outside of deciding to follow Jesus, deciding who U marry is the most important decision U will make in your life
* **So find someone who sees marriage as an opportunity to serve & when U see it as an opportunity to serve, U will find an unspeakable joy**
* So when Carey & I go out, I’ve started recommending Mexican food
* I know it’s the silliest thing in the world, but what if me eating Mexican food w/ a good attitude is simply my opportunity to serve her & show my love for her by doing something I don’t like?
* **When we were in Naples last year we walked from the hotel to the beach & walked on the beach for a while - now that sounds nice for some people**
* I happen to hate the beach - I think I would like it if they paved it right up to the water b/c I hate the sand - I’m a lot like Anakin Skywalker in that way
* “I don't like sand. It's coarse and rough and irritating and it gets everywhere.”
* But I walked along the beach w/ my pants rolled up looking like a complete idiot as Carey was gave me a science lesson about creatures who live on the beach
* Then I started thinking about how I really should have paid attention in H.S.
* But I just want to be w/ her & I didn’t care where we were & maybe having a good attitude about where we walk expresses love in a different way
* **Some of U might know C.S. Lewis b/c of the Chronicles of Narnia movies**
* But most of Lewis’ books are on different aspects of the Christian life
* His book “Mere Christianity” was required reading when I was in college
* But he wrote a book called, “The 4 Loves” where he describes the 4 types of human love - affection, friendship, erotic love & the love of God
* In 1 part of the book he says, “If we were to paint a picture to explain erotic love, it would be of 2 people looking at each other.”
* “But if we drew a picture of friendship, it would be 2 people standing next to each other, looking at something else."
* To become one flesh, U can’t be looking to your spouse to meet all your needs
* Why? B/c they can’t - I can’t meet all of my wife’s needs & she can’t meet all of mine - but that’s not what marriage was designed to do
* God is the only 1 who can meet all of my needs & when I take all of the expectations off of my spouse to be everything, something wonderful happens
* Instead of looking to each other for everything, we stand side by side as best friends & we look at God who’s the 1 who can meet all of our needs
* That’s when I realize what’s God’s purpose for bringing this person into my life to begin w/ - it’s not to meet all of my needs
* It’s to be my closest friend, my covenant partner - And we lead each other to God - And as we take steps together towards God, we become one flesh...