



6/26/26

Normally, I would be telling you the topic of the Chosen and Cherished podcast today, but Tim already talked about it on Sunday. So now I'm at a loss. 😊 It was really fun to talk with him about marriage. I hope to have opportunities to do that again... maybe on another topic. 🌈 Until then, I'll be back to my normal 5:00 am recordings of the podcast next week.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Matthew 19:1-9, 1 Corinthians 7:12-13, 15

This is the final passage for our series, Building a Godly Home. It's a subject I wish we wouldn't have to consider, but because we live in a broken world it's a very real issue. The divorce rate among Christians is about the same as the divorce rate among nonbelievers. I hear people say, "We just drifted apart." "We got married too young." "We weren't happy... God would want us to be happy," as if God was not alive and it was His final thought before He died. But we have His word that makes His desire for marriage very clear. He gives only 2 biblical reasons for divorce. Since I have never been divorced, though I am child of multiple divorces, I pray, Lord, that You'll give me a perspective that helps me learn and draw closer to You.

Matthew 19:1-9 ~ Reason #1

This starts out, "Now when Jesus had finished saying these things..." I don't think it's a coincidence that Matthew wrote about the massive importance of forgiveness right before he told the story that came next. Forgiveness is a huge need in order for marriages to thrive. After speaking of the need to forgive, Jesus traveled to Judea where He spent time with the people and was healing them.

The Pharisees didn't care about the miracles that Jesus performed over and over again. Their only goal was to catch Him in saying something wrong so they could "cancel" Him. Their arrogance blinded them to who He was and is and is to come.

They asked Him a question that He had already answered in His Sermon on the Mount. In

Matthew 5:31-32, Jesus said, "It was said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery." To be fair, when I don't like what Jesus says, I try to ignore it, too... until I can't. O Lord, please help me not to ignore Your word... ever!

The Pharisees asked, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for ANY cause?" Jesus answered with scripture. What a great example for me. My words and opinions mean nothing. The word of God has all authority. Speak the word. Jesus said, "Have you not read..." (Of course, they had read!!! They were Pharisees! They knew the word like the back of their hands!) "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."

There it is... First, God has the right to command the standards for marriage because He is our Creator! He's in charge. Second, He made them male and female. He designed us to be husband and wife... male and female. Third, marriage is to be such a huge bond that not even the people who gave us life and raised us can come between us. I also know from Ephesians 5 that marriage is a model of Christ and the church.

The Pharisees were not surprised by Jesus' answer. They knew what He would say. So sad that multiple times, they accused Him of being a demon... though He spoke the word with absolute truth and never twisted or deceived. They were the ones who were trying to twist and deceive.

Here's where they thought they had Him. "They said to Him, 'Why then did Moses COMMAND one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?'" THEY twisted words!!! Jesus answered... 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." Moses did not COMMAND divorce. He ALLOWED it. BUT it was only because their hearts were hard! Divorce was never God's intention for marriage.

The heart of God is that my heart would be like His. His heart is not hard. Divorce was never His plan. He said, "And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." Yikes! That is a big calling. Marriage is HARD! But I need to have the mindset that God brings us together in marriage first, as a model of His relationship with His bride... and second, I need to take this to heart and be INTENTIONAL about pursuing oneness in my marriage.

I also don't want to miss this incredibly important truth in regard to my relationship with the Lord Jesus as His bride. I need to be intentional about my relationship with HIM first!!! He is the one who keeps my heart from becoming hard. When I sin against Him, I am committing spiritual adultery. Let me never minimize my sin. Let me never forget how incredibly forgiving He is toward me. Let me always know that Jesus will never commit adultery against me. Let me

never trample on His grace and mercy.

I just have to laugh a little at the disciples' response. It wasn't even the Pharisees who said this. They basically said, "Yikes! If that's the only biblical ground for us to divorce, it's better to stay single!!!" Hahaha. How bad do you think marriage is, disciples? They knew what is so easily ignored... Jesus speaks with the highest authority. If He says it, I need to obey it. Marriage is a covenant. That's much more binding than a contract. Take it seriously. My betrothal to Christ is unbreakable. Take it seriously. O Lord, please help me to be continuously intentional to pursue oneness with You first, and then oneness with my husband.

1 Corinthians 7:12-13, 15 ~ Reason #2

I'm kinda starting in the middle of a conversation. Paul says, "To the rest..." Who was he talking about? In vs. 10-11, he was speaking to those who want to separate from their spouses for reasons other than adultery. He told them, "Even if you separate, you can't remarry. Just don't do it." I've been told by many women who wanted to separate from their husbands, "Oh. Don't worry. I don't ever want to marry again." I'm sure they feel that way in the moment, but the feeling won't last for most people. We're designed to be in relationship. They'll want to share their lives with someone. This is why it's so important that Jesus is first. Isaiah 54:5 says, "For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is His name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth He is called." Jesus is my first husband, my first love. Let my loyalty be to Him first and foremost. Let obedience to Him and pleasing Him be more important to me than my feelings.

Anyway... Paul said, "To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him."

Why does Paul say, "I, not the Lord"? He was still inspired by the Holy Spirit, but he was not repeating words Jesus had spoken. When Jesus taught, there were no unbelievers or believers yet. Jesus hadn't gone to the cross yet. He hadn't risen from the dead yet.

I knew a woman years ago who told me that God had brought her husband to her even though he wasn't a believer. She said the Lord told her to marry him. I didn't say anything, but I thought, "That can't be right. 2 Corinthians 6:14 says not to be unequally yoked." A few years later, she left her husband and said that God told her to leave him because they were unequally yoked. Hmmm... Sounds to me like she was listening to her own desires and then attributing them to God. But God will never speak something that doesn't align with His word.

Why is the believing spouse not to leave the unbelieving spouse? I think it's because the believer represents Jesus... and Jesus will never leave or forsake us. The believer is now a missionary in her own home. Maybe the Lord will use her to draw him to salvation.

However, "if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or

sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace." If the unbeliever leaves, let him go. (Don't try to be so difficult that he finally can't take it and leaves, but if the unbeliever can't handle the believer's love for Jesus, he can choose to leave.)

Well, I am not married to an unbeliever. What can I apply to my life here? I am the bride of Christ. My groom, Jesus, will never leave me! He will never cheat on me and He will never leave me. The question is, am I willing to submit to Him no matter what? Is His design more important to me than my feelings? O Lord, please make it so!!!

I praise You that Your grace is greater than all our sin. I praise You that no sin is too great that the cross cannot cover it. I know the divorce rate among believers, and I seriously doubt that the only reason they divorce is for these two reasons. I also know that there are a lot of suffering marriages among believers. Father, I know that as much You don't want us to have unbiblical divorces, You also don't want us to have unbiblical marriages. Help us to pursue You as our eternal Husband, and to be intentional with our rehearsal husbands and wives. Help our hearts not to be hard, but to bend to whatever You will. I pray that, for all of us, no matter where we are or what choices we've made, our next choice and the ones after that will be to "deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow You", and help us to bow to Your authority and to celebrate Your mercy and grace... but never use them as an excuse to grieve Your heart. You are our perfect Husband who will never cheat on us and never leave us. O Lord, I praise You! I celebrate You. May Your will be done!