

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

Marriage and Divorce

Last time...lessons in prayer

- persistence
- humility

This time...an important teaching on marriage and divorce

We will be in Matt 19 and Mark 10

Matt 19:1-9

v1-2 coasts of Judea beyond Jordan:

Thus far in the ministry of Jesus, He has preached the kingdom of God and touched innumerable peoples' lives (physically and spiritually) in [Tetrarchs]

- Samaria
- Galilee
- Jerusalem
- Gentile lands
 - Tyre and Sidon
 - Decopolis
- Perea

The immediate events leading up to this point have taken place in Perea, with an interlude in Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead, as recorded in Luke 10-18 and John 11

All of which is not recorded by Matthew or Mark

Jesus and His disciples are back in Perea, on the east side of the Jordan River.
(From here, the final journey to Jerusalem)

In Perea, His ministry continues – our Healer was very busy

v3 tempting Him...lawful...every cause:

Everywhere that Jesus went the Pharisees were sure to follow...
not like little lambs but like wolves

With His raising of Lazarus from the dead, they have decided Jesus must die,
for their own good and the good of the nation
So they show up trying to trap Jesus teaching contrary to the Law

Ps 64:2b-5b the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: Who whet their tongue
like a sword, *and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter*
words: That they may shoot in secret at **the perfect**: Suddenly do
they shoot at him, and fear not. They encourage themselves *in an*
evil matter.

Their “shot” is about divorce:

Is it lawful (legal, according to the Law of Moses) for a man to divorce his
wife for every reason?

Their reference is Deut 24:1, their question is about its application/interpretation

Notes:

1. Unless they have forgotten, they already know Jesus’ answer –
Matt 5:31-32 *It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his
wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But
I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his
wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her
to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her
that is divorced committeth adultery.*
2. 2 schools of Jewish thought/interpretation
 - a. Rabbi Shammai: conservative view
 - Deut 24:1 applies only to adultery
 - not widely accepted
 - b. Rabbi Hillel: liberal view
 - Deut 24:1 applies for any cause
 - widely accepted
 - accepted by the Pharisees
3. A very intense issue...it led to the murder of John the Baptist!

v4-6 Have ye not read:

Does Jesus answer by citing the Oral Law, as the Pharisees did?

The Oral Law was a legal commentary on the Torah (Books of Moses), explaining how its commandments were to be carried out.

Jewish thinking believed that some sort of oral tradition was always needed to accompany the written Law because the Torah alone, even with its 613 commandments, was an insufficient guide to daily Jewish life. Interpretation and application (man's) of the written Law was needed.

In about 200 AD, the Oral Law was written – the Talmud.

No! Jesus went directly to the written Word of God

2 Tim 3:16-17 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Peter 1:19-21 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost

Heb 4:12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart

The Infinite Mind that authored the Word alone teaches and interprets His Word

Scripture interprets Scripture

The written Word is The Final Authority

Required: faith and obedience

Jesus' "respect" of the Law and Moses is being questioned/assaulted...

His immediate response is –

the Beginning of Creation, Genesis (1st book in the Law)

to site God's Plan

to correct how fallen man has twisted/perverted God's Plan

Marriage, as designed and established by the Creator:

- one man and one woman, two becoming one
- a oneness/unity by the work of God; a 3 person relationship
- not to be broken/divided/separated by man
- a contract with God made void only by death

Man has no right to change what the Creator God has established!

Yet, perversions by man of God's design of Marriage abound

- breaking the contract before death (divorce)
- "oneness"/union before the contract (sexual sin)
- "oneness"/union with another after the contract (sexual sin)
- one man and multiple women
- one man and one man
- one woman and one woman

By going directly back to God's Plan, Jesus

- rejects man's interpretation of God's Law
- gives a direct answer to the Pharisees' question – No!
 - God's interpretation of His Law
 - Rabbi Hillel (liberal view of divorce) is wrong
- leaves no room for theological debate

v7 Why did Moses then command:

The Pharisees then ask how Deut 24:1 is to be interpreted

Deut is the 5th Book of the Law of Moses

Does Deut contradict Genesis?

Was Moses a Law-breaker teaching others to break the Law?

How can the two be reconciled?

v8 because of the hardness of your hearts:

The beginning, God's design of Marriage, is unchanged and will never change
(even if man "legalizes" perversions of God's design)

But because of hard hearts – not a healthy or positive condition before God

- hearts contrary to God
- hearts not in one accord with God
- law-breaking hearts
- hearts opposed to God...ala Pharaoh

Moses made a ruling, not a command

ala a concession in 1 Cor 7:6...But I speak this by permission
(concession), not of commandment

A concession for stiff necks since the day the Lord brought them out of Egypt!
1 Sam 8:7-8, 2 Kings 21:13-15, Jer 7:23-28

That ruling/concession was never God's way, never a part of God's design of marriage or His Plan for man (male and female)
Mal 2:14-16

Jesus stands on the beginning, His original and perfect design, not on a "concession" for hard and rebellious hearts
Heb 13:8...that is where He stands to this very day

v9 And I say unto you:

Thus says the Lord...the Creator speaks

Col 1:16 by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him

Heb 11:1-2 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Marriage/Divorce/Re-marriage is adultery

Rom 7:1-3 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man

Marriage/Divorce/Re-marriage is adultery...

with the exception when fornication/adultery/sexual sin is involved

Just as He taught (as one having authority) in SoM (Matt 5:31-32)

Why the exception for fornication?

Hardness of heart

- a weakness (Luke 18:7)
- a rebellious heart unwilling/unable to forgive
- the absence of a soft heart, the heart of God that delights in mercy and is willing to forgive

- John 8:7, 11 He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her
Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.
- Matt 6:14-15 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
- Mark 11:25-26 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses
- Luke 6:36-38 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again
- Eph 4:31-32 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you
(put away our nature, be Christ-like)
- Jer 31:31-33 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts (2 Cor 3:3); and will be their God, and they shall be my people

The Lord Who is willing to forgive can heal any heart if that heart is willing to forgive
Or else, Heb 12:14-15 Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled

Jesus previously showed the liberal view of divorce (Hillel) to be wrong
Now He shows the conservative view of divorce (Shammai) to also be wrong since there is a New Covenant with new hearts
The malicious Pharisees are once again thwarted and shamed publically
Ps 64:7-8a God shall shoot at them *with* an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves

What happens next is in Mark 10:10-12

Mark 10:10-12

v10-12 in the house His disciples...the same matter:

The Pharisees were not the only ones rocked by Jesus' answer and teaching on marriage and divorce; so were His disciples

In a house, the disciples privately ask Jesus to "go over that again."
They knew the 2 schools of Jewish rabbinical thought (Oral Law)
They may well have believed the liberal view taught by the Pharisees

v11 Jesus repeats His teaching...a man divorcing his wife
Leaving out "except for fornication"
Truth does not change...ever
Truth is not subject to man's interpretation

v12 Now, regarding the wife divorcing her husband, the same teaching
There is no provision in the Law for the wife to divorce her husband, only for the husband to divorce his wife
This scenario was not a part of the Jewish culture, but it was in the Roman (Gentile) culture

The mystery of the kingdom of God: Jew and Gentile
So Jesus addresses the Gentile scenario also

Lest our human nature protest God's Law having a provision for
the husband to divorce his wife but not have a provision for
the wife to divorce her husband,
Lest we give liberals the opportunity to blaspheme God by calling
Him a misogynist (hater of women)
Let us consider the entire counsel of God to hear God's heart for us

The mystery of marriage: Eph 5:32
Our Husband: Heb 13:5 with Mal 2:16
The Bride: cannot divorce her Husband...eternal security
(wife's one need, Eph 5:25-27)
Therefore, PTL we cannot divorce our Husband!!!!
Every child of God should PTL that the Law is so written!

The disciples reaction is captured in Matt 19:10

Matt 19:10-12

v10 If man...wife...not good to marry:

“If what is good for the gander is also good for the goose (Mark 10:12),
it is not good to marry!”

If a wife can divorce her husband as a man can divorce his wife,
it is better to not even get married!

Marriage, like

- the Messiah
- the kingdom of God
- the Church/Bride/Body of Christ

is a mystery, an eternal truth revealed by God to man over time

We have the entire counsel of God, the disciples did not at that time

1 Cor 6:13b – 7:15

The teaching of Jesus on Marriage and Divorce does not mean a wife/husband
being abused and endangered by her/his spouse must stay and take it

His teaching is

- not against separation for a brief season (heat of battle) that leads to reconciliation (v11, Jesus' ministry, 2 Cor 5:17-21)
- against divorce for the purpose of re-marriage, breaking God's contract to “get a better deal” is sin

Societies that disregard God's design for His basic building block of society
(marriage, family) lapse into violence and confusion

Case in point: Egypt (why teach Marriage every visit)

Islam-dominated society

Islam is not family-friendly

Result: violence and confusion, widespread destruction of the family

Case in point, USA

1962 Prayer (to God of the Bible) cast out of public schools

1963 Bible cast out of public schools

1960s Sexual revolution..."free" "love" (neither term is true)

1970 No-Fault Divorce (liberal CA, Reagan "my biggest mistake")

1973 Murder of defenseless babies "legalized"

2015 Homosexual marriage "legalized"

Destruction of the Creator's design of marriage has led to a widespread destruction of the family

Commonplace now...no longer shameful:

- Fornication/sexual sin
 - purity is mocked and despised
 - shameless promiscuity reigns
- Couples living together in sexual sin before or instead of getting married ("playing at being married")
- Divorce (50%)
- Children born out of Marriage
- Baby murders (approaching 60M)
- Single-parent families (and often times, poverty)
- Homosexual marriages

Jer 8:12 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD

- Violent crime, the root cause of which is the breakdown of the family

<https://www.heritage.org/crime-and-justice/report/the-real-root-causes-violent-crime-the-breakdown-marriage-family-and>

And we wonder why our society is unraveling?!

But back to the disciples' reaction of it being good to not marry

Marriage is good, for its Designer is good!

Gen 1:31

The destroyer of men's souls targets God's design of marriage

Divorce is bad, for the destruction and pain it causes God's beloved

Fallen man is evil and corrupt and perverse

Fallen man needs a new nature, a new heart, to be made a new creature

v11-12 All men cannot receive:

Marriage is not for everybody, it is a calling of God

1 Cor 7:7-8, 26-40

Note: virgin vs unmarried who has slept around

“Homosexual Christians” twist/misinterpret v12a to say they were born that way,
therefore not in sin, despite many Scriptures that say quite the contrary

They are not rightly dividing the Word, they are perverting the Word to justify
their perversion

“eunuch” means either “castrated” or “unmarried”

v12a: a physical deformity, NOT a sexual preference!

v12b: kings would do this to men caring for his harem

v12c: a choice to serve the Lord vs a wife and the Lord, a calling of God
to be single (self-castration is a misinterpretation!)

Marriage, as God designed it and with the human nature in consideration, requires

- humility
- submission, to the Lord and to each other
- God's selfless, self-last, sacrificial love...preferring the other above yourself, denying Self
- a soft heart after God's own heart, willing and eager to forgive and be gracious, as we have been forgiven and given grace by God

Those who are called to be single should not marry!

Those who are called to be married should not be single!

Marriage God's way is a beautiful, blessed relationship that teaches us about
Jesus Christ's relationship with His Bride

Marriage man's way can be extraordinarily painful, because people are messy and
they think nothing of hurting each other

Divorce, for any reason, is not God's Plan, not God's best for man

Divorce for the purpose or re-marriage is a sin but it is not an unpardonable sin;
unbelief in Jesus Christ is unpardonable

But, do you believe Jesus' teaching about Marriage and Divorce?
Submitting to the Lordship of Jesus Christ is required

If the trends in our nation are to be reversed, if the tide of violent crime and confusion is to be stemmed, who must stand against the shameless, commonplace, destructive behaviors and bluish, teaching a Better Way?

Republicans?
Democrats
Socialists?
The Swamp creatures in Washington DC?

The Church, the Body of Christ

Problem: The Church has NOT affected society, society has affected the Church
That which is shamelessly commonplace in society is shamelessly
commonplace in the Church
The Church, by befriending society/the world, has lost her witness to society

But...the Lord always has a remnant who believe His Word and apply His teachings by
doing the things He commands

Time to examine our hearts again
Am I "in Christ" (remnant) or "in Christianity"?

Do I think like Christ or like society?
Do I need to repent of my choices/actions and/or my thinking about these things?

If you are in sexual sin, about which the Lord is VERY serious because it points
to a greater reality (idolatry, spiritual fornication against Him),
the gracious and merciful God is calling you to confess and repent

Do not hesitate!

If you are contemplating divorce, think that through VERY carefully and
prayerfully...
with the mind of Christ and the heart of God
using the Word of God as your Final Authority
let God do what only He can do – ministry of reconciliation and heal hearts