

Post-Exile Prophets
UNFAITHFUL MARRIAGES

Monday, October 6
Reading: Malachi 2:10-16

Malachi 2:15 *Has not the one God made you? You belong to Him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.*

Malachi continued his warnings to the people by addressing their unfaithfulness to God displayed in their unfaithful marriages. The marriage relationship was to be a picture of the people's relationship to God. So when they married foreign women who worshiped other gods, the people were rejecting their covenant relationship with the true God.

Besides this, these men were divorcing their older Jewish wives in favor of younger pagan wives! And then they wondered why God would not bless them. Their faith had been so "watered down" they did not see why their actions should affect their spiritual relationship with the Lord.

The Bible is clear that believers should only marry other believers.

2 Corinthians 6:4 "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?"

While this principle applies to more than just marriage, a union between a believer and an unbeliever is not God's plan. The potential for the believer to be drawn away from God in this situation is greater than that of the unbeliever getting saved (though this can sometimes happen). If you are in a "mixed" marriage, pray for your unbelieving spouse and be a gentle witness by the way you live (see 1 Peter 3:1-4). If you are considering marriage, be sure your potential mate shares your love for the Lord.

Too often today marriage is thought of as a "try it and see" arrangement. If it doesn't work, get a divorce and try again. But marriage is not a contract, it is a covenant! The NIV misses the translation of verse 15 where the Hebrew reads, "Has not God made you one?" This refers to God's words in Genesis 2:24 that "the two become one flesh." After quoting this verse, Jesus said, "What God has joined together, let no one separate" (Matthew 19:6).

Divorce is not a part of God's plan for His people. It tears families apart and destroys the image of Jesus' relationship with His bride, the Church (see Ephesians 5:21-27). The Bible does give a few exceptions for divorce: (1) in the case of sexual immorality (Matthew 5:31) and (2) in the case of an unbelieving spouse leaving the marriage (1 Corinthians 7:12-16). I believe a case can be made for physical/emotional abuse as well. But as 1 Corinthians 7 stresses, a divorce is not commanded in these cases; it is merely permissible. If you can live in peace with your spouse, it is better not to divorce. Malachi says to, "be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful" (2:16). We need to pray for the attitude of our nation who views marriage so flippantly. We also need to pray for those who are struggling in their marriages that they will seek God's power and guidance. And for those who have already experienced a divorce, God forgives and you can move forward to live a full and godly life.