

Divorce & Remarriage--the Words of Jesus

by Dean Taylor

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the Kingdom of God and Jesus' teachings on marriage and divorce, and how these teachings are connected to the church's witness and evangelism.

Duration: 1:04:28

Scripture: Genesis 2:18, Matthew 19:3

Topics: "Divorce And Remarriage"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of marriage in society and emphasizes the importance of understanding what the Bible says about it. The speaker encourages the audience to seek the kingdom of God and follow Jesus' teachings on marriage. They highlight that a marriage requires one man and one woman, as stated by Jesus. The speaker emphasizes the need to trust in God's grace to navigate the challenges and weight that may come with upholding biblical principles in a society that may oppose them.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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Let's just start with prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, that is our heart today, Lord. We want to hold it up to you.

Here's my heart. Take and seal it. Tune my heart, O God.

O Father, we are tuned in different ways and sometimes we can make a lot of noise in one way or another, O God. And I do pray that you would tune us to the hearing of your Word, to the seeing of your ways, that we can understand you, O God. Father, help us as we look to this very painful subject now, Lord.

Help us to know that it's not a theology that we're talking about, but that we're talking about people. We're talking about pains. We're talking about people that are hurting and have made big mistakes in their life and are making them right this very moment.

Dear God, I pray, Father. In this issue, Lord, we do know that the enemy has indeed come in like a flood. So, God, please raise up a standard against it, O Lord, according to your promise.

Thank you, Father. Thank you, Father. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Amen. It's a blessing to see you all.

If anybody has a chance, if you don't mind getting another water, please. That'd be nice. Well, it was a blessing last night to hear you all worshipping the Lord.

It's a real treat for me. I love men's courses, and especially advanced Bible school men's courses. It was very much a treat.

So, God bless you all. I have considered it a great honor and absolutely enjoyed being here teaching these different things through the week and hearing the different teachings. I've grown myself through many of these teachings that I've heard, just had the chance to hear.

Today we're going to look at, I think, one of the hardest issues that faced the church today in the 20th century, 21st century rather. As I wrote there in those different pamphlets, as I saw, through the different... Oh, you hear the grapevine here and there, and you hear doctrines going around and circulating around. What gave me a burden to even start writing about the divorce and remarriage a year or so ago, two years ago, was I just felt that this thing was chipping away more and more and more.

I heard about congregations that were... They would say, brother, you don't know how many times we would sit around at a brother's meeting when you'd have this great family showing up or something like this, you know. And one more time we'd bring up the divorce and remarriage issue just to see if it happened to change since the last time we looked at it. And over and over, these things are looked at in this way.

And I do believe that divorce and remarriage in our country, particularly in our country, in the Christian church, but particularly in our country, has given a strong foothold to Satan to be able to take a stand on a place and then be able to maneuver from that place. In other words, there was a time not long ago, people tell me 50 years ago, that yes, you had divorce and remarriage in the church every now and then, but it was something in general that you could just kind of wink at. You know, let's not talk about it, and in general it's not going to affect the whole church.

You know, we'll just kind of get through and not deal with it, you know. And some of the earlier writings of different centuries, certainly as past the Reformation, that was the way they could maybe just get away with it, you know. Whether they got away with it with God, we're not the judge of that.

But nevertheless, you could just kind of wink at it. Well, today it is not that way. It is very common.

And it has given way to a foothold to Satan, and I believe that. And without spending too much time on that point, I think it's an important point to understand. You see, what I've been talking about, and what all of us have been talking about, is a whole life of faith.

And if your faith has now just turned into, and I know it's not for you now after all these meetings you've heard about everything, but if your faith is just making someone agree to a certain teaching or a certain creed, and then you have salvation, you can understand why topics like this that obviously offend so many people, why would you go through all that trouble? You're just offending people. Just do the Gospel, and let's stop arguing and debating about all those little things. But what we've been trying to present, and what we've been studying and looking into, is the Kingdom of God.

Again, we are the Kingdom of God, that someday, however eschatology works, and I'm not big on eschatology, sorry, but however it all works out, whether a millennial or not a millennial, or whatever, how that works out, that one day we know that Jesus shall reign, and every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess. But we are the Kingdom in advance. And when Jesus came and gave us the Sermon on the Mount, and He gave us many of these teachings, He did not give one in isolation of the other.

Here it is. This is the Kingdom of God. And this issue is one of those issues that Jesus felt very much a need to establish in the New Kingdom, which we are part of.

But listen, if you could, thank you very much. Bless you, David. Listen, I was reading this book the other day, and I just was shocked by it.

Again, I don't want to spend too much time on this, but I want you to focus on thinking of this idea of what a foothold we have given them. This is a liberal evangelical so-called, and listen to the way he's defending homosexuality in the church by the foothold that Satan has obtained by divorce and remarriage. He's trying to encourage evangelicals to accept homosexuality.

That's his point in this book. To illustrate, more than a few have noticed the comic irony in the fact that the group most vocal about the sanctity of marriage, namely the evangelical Christians, happen to be the group with the highest number of divorces in the United States, which itself has the highest divorce rate in the world. Numerous explanations have been offered by Christians to minimize this embarrassment, but none of them are convincing or even relevant.

Whatever our excuses, outsiders legitimately wonder, quote, if evangelicals want to enforce by law the sanctity of marriage, why don't they try to outlaw divorce and remarriage? Better yet, why don't they stop worrying about laws to regulate others' behavior and spend their time and their energy sanctifying their own marriages? He goes on, and again, this is him trying to defend homosexuality. But what is his reasoning? Listen, do evangelicals fear gay marriage in particular because the Bible is much more clear about the wrongfulness of gay marriages than it is about the wrongfulness of divorce and remarriage? No. For the Bible actually says a good deal more against divorce and remarriage than it does against monogamous gay relationships.

Do they go after this particular sin because the research shows that gay marriage is more damaging to society than divorce and remarriage? It seems not. For while one might grant that neither is ideal, there's no clear evidence that the former is socially more harmful than the latter. This is him speaking, especially given the fact that divorce and remarriage is far more widespread than gay marriage.

But in any case, the point is completely irrelevant. Since the present issue isn't over gay unions, the issue is over whether the unions should be called marriages. To the best of our knowledge, no one has shown the social welfare of our nation is significantly harmed by what monogamous gay unions are called.

Do you see what's happening? We're now ready for the next step. We've won, Satan thinks. We've won divorce and remarriage.

It's in the church now. It's just an accepted. You can't talk against it.

And now the next step is to bring the homosexuality. And they stand on the platform of divorce and remarriage. Well, the Scripture plainly teaches against divorce and remarriage, and yet everybody is divorced and remarried in the evangelical church.

So why are you coming against homosexuality? The next step, Satan takes. It's a foothold in the church. And it's something, as we looked at these issues, it's the last thing, you know, I never want to be the divorce preacher, you know, the guy who goes around giving seminars on divorce.

I hate divorce. I despise it. But I realize, as well you need to realize, and I'm sure many of you do, particularly who come from the West, that it's an issue that we must face.

It is an issue. And particularly it's an issue because we can face this in two different ways. We can, one thing, just go with the flow and accept it all.

Another way we can do it is just kind of wish they would go somewhere else. And that's wrong. These are not theology.

Again, as I prayed, these are people. These are sins and these are souls. And the kingdom of God today, the kingdom of God today needs to know where they stand on how to evangelize and how to witness.

And you need to understand that. When you go out to your little churches and planting new little remnant churches, whether that's in Africa or whether that's in Detroit, when you go there and you're planting a kingdom of God, a little city in the kingdom, and you're there, I can almost guarantee you you're going to deal with this issue. And you need to be very clear because if you wait until you get there to deal with the issue, you're going to get buried.

And you're going to offend somebody even more. You know, when I was coming along and making many changes in my life, what made me a lot more at ease is when some brother just knew exactly where things were and said, well, here's what the scripture says and didn't try to apologize for it, didn't try to him haul around it. Just tell me what I need to know.

And if we can know clearly what the Bible says on this issue that is killing our so-called Christian society, then I think it will do us a big service for the kingdom of God. So let's look at it. Let's get to it.

I'm hoping you've read through the little packets. If you haven't, then please do that afterwards. If you have some questions, we'll see how things go and see how far we get and see what we can do about different questions coming up maybe the last day or something like that.

Or afterwards, that's fine too, if you have time. Okay, let's look at it. As we look at divorce and remarriage, one of the things that is impressive is that when Jesus was talking about divorce and remarriage, one of the places where He was challenged in the Pharisees in Matthew 19, if you want to turn to there, in Matthew 19, is that He was challenged about when can you get a divorce? Okay, Jesus, when is it right to split these two people up? Okay.

And what Jesus answered there in Matthew 19, that He saw that these Pharisees were coming about the questions in entirely the wrong way. They were questioning, when can you break someone up? They were coming to the question about divorce and He felt, obviously, from the context, that what they needed to know was they needed a clearer definition of what is marriage. Not so much what is divorce, but He wanted to make very clear to them in the kingdom of God, what is marriage.

And in this type of idea, I brought up there, and it's nothing that needs to be just overlooked, and it's something that I will admit, after a man who's been married over 21 years, it's easy for me to say, but it's hard to understand the mindset of these totally sold out, new kingdom of God people. That Jesus, even though in His society, marriage was very much important, as it is in our society. You kind of hardly saw yourself as a person without being married.

But He wanted to make sure that our loyalties were so much to Him, so much sold out for the kingdom of God, that this marriage thing was looked on as a secondary issue. And I know that's difficult, speaking to a bunch of young men. It's difficult.

But He said to them, there in Luke 14, and you can hold your thumb in Matthew 19, we'll come back to that. And there was a great multitude with Him, and He turned. This is Luke 14.25. This is all in your notebooks there.

And there was a great multitude with Him, and He turned and said to them, if any man come to Me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sister yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. He challenged how we didn't even see. You know, these things that we ask some people to do sometimes, when the end results of this whole divorce and marriage mess we get to.

It's like, how can you... the whole essence of who we are as a person is wrapped up in this concept. And Jesus sees a problem with that. As a matter of fact, even the daily things of marrying, giving in marriage, He condemns as best as it was in the days of the flood.

Everyone's just going around, I've got to eat and I drink, I'll marry and get into marriage. There's nothing wrong with any of those things, but over and over, that's all our life is about, is marrying and getting into marriage, and eating and drinking, and buying and selling. Jesus wanted us to go beyond that in the Kingdom of God.

He wanted us to go beyond that. And then He even lets them know in Mark 12, 25, For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels, which are in heaven. These are radical thoughts.

Radical thoughts. So let's look at what Jesus said when He came there. I have there, beginning on my little pamphlet there, it says in the beginning.

As Jesus was traveling to the coast of Judea, He met a group of Pharisees who wanted to tempt Him, as it says, by asking His position on divorce. However, before Jesus would enter into the discussion about divorce, He apparently felt it necessary to correct their view of marriage. Okay.

So let's jump down there. Let's open up our Bibles and look at here. And in Matthew 19, 3, I believe it is.

The Pharisees also came unto Him, tempting Him, and saying to Him, okay, here it is, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? The passage of Scripture that Jesus took the Pharisees to was back

to the very first marriage between Adam and Eve, found in Genesis 2, 18-25. Jesus answered the Pharisees saying this, Have you not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female? And said, for this cause shall the man leave his father and mother, shall cleave to his wife, and the twain shall be one flesh. So, in looking at this whole thing about marriage, we're going to see here in just a minute about how He brings it up in Matthew 5, before this, in His whole Sermon on the Mount, His whole Manifesto of the New Kingdom.

But in this idea about marriage, He wants to bring us back to a creation principle. And He gives us some principles there that I'd like to quickly go over with some analogies. Because if you get this, if you get it and really get it, what Jesus is saying to these Pharisees, everything else just starts to fall in line.

But if you don't get this, everything else gets very cloudy. Okay, Jesus said that there's four things that are necessary for there to be a marriage. Okay, the first thing seems obvious, but obviously not from the quote that I just read, is the first thing is, you need one man and one woman.

He's made that very clear. You need one man and one woman. Okay, the second thing that He mentions in here is that the man must leave his father and mother.

Now, this is an interesting phrase here. And it's interesting particularly because in their culture, you didn't necessarily leave the actual residence of your parents, so to speak. You might have had a certain little area or something like that.

But the thing that became very clear, though, is that you were leaving the identity. That you were leaving their idea of where they are, of who they are as a people. It's our family.

It's the Dean Taylor family. You're leaving that family and becoming your own family. And there's a sense of that in every culture from what I've read.

In many cultures at least. This idea of leaving the father and mother. The whole sense of who you are as an identity.

I'm no longer like my son, let's say my son Stephen, my oldest son. He's no longer Dean's son, he's Stephen. And the identity of who he is and his new wife, it becomes the new unit, the new family unit.

And that sense of identity, that sense of authority, that sense of who they are, they leave the father and mother. And many times you do leave physically, but not always. But there is in any, the least of it, there is a leaving from authority, there is a leaving from who that person is as far as their identity as a couple.

The next thing that Jesus gives us is a cleaving together. For this cause, a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and the twain shall be one flesh. That Hebrew word for cleave is the passage that suggests the idea of being glued together.

Okay, now here's the first idea here. Where is it brother Ryan? Okay. I had Ryan and Nathan and my sons put this together.

The idea in Hebrew, from what I've read, is the idea of a word picture of being permanently glued together. That there's a sense of becoming a unit with that person. You are cleaved together.

And here's the word analogy. All right, Ryan, I'm going to have you chip this. Let's use this so we don't hurt their carpet and get in trouble.

All right. Okay. Put it on there.

And there we go. And just kind of split that apart there. All right.

These two boards were glued together yesterday. So now we're splitting them apart. And our focus is on what that word says about what a cleave.

Again, the Hebrew word is the idea of this. The idea. Very nice.

Very nicely done. Stephen put a lot of glue on it. Ryan told me.

Okay. Now, even though we've ripped this board apart here, the bond is still intact. That bond has become part of what makes these two boards.

And now, even though this board is walking around without this, a ripped part of that board is still connected into that bond. And that's a beautiful word picture of this word cleave. That there is a gluing together of these two together.

The man shall leave his father and mother and they become this one unit together with the wife. And that's the cleaving there and the glue there, you could hardly even separate. That came off nicely.

Alright. And then the last thing that Jesus gave is the idea, and they shall become one flesh. Now, this is somewhat of a controversial passage.

I go into some of it there in the little booklet that I handed out. The one flesh idea does give the idea in Corinthians 6, we see Paul gives us the analogy of becoming one flesh with the harlots. And so some people make the argument, well, is marriage simply this relationship that we have? And is that the marriage? I argue that it's not.

He gives it that, yes, it's true that this is something that should be only shared in marriage. And Paul makes that very clear in his message in Corinthians 6. But nevertheless, if that act is the marriage, and I argue, then what's the difference between Solomon's wives and Solomon's concubines? There's something that's set apart and different with this idea of becoming one flesh. But there's an interesting point that's even more than this that this man here, Andrew Kornis that I found, brings out of this concept in the Hebrew.

He says this about this and become one flesh. He says the Hebrew phrase does not describe the process. The Hebrew phrase does not describe the process and they shall go become one flesh.

But the accomplished fact, depicts the changed situation. In other words, the reality of becoming one flesh is not just an idea for the married couple. It is something spiritually and supernatural that God accomplishes at marriage.

This is something that goes beyond basic human comprehension. And this is the key. And they shall become one.

Here, let me show you this. Alright, here we got some blue Play-Doh. Alright.

Now, if you get this point, if you get this word picture that I'm about to show here, everything else is going to come together. Everything else is going to come together. If you truly get this.

This is yellow clay. Right? Play-Doh. This is blue Play-Doh.

Remember, the Pharisees came up and said, when can you legally separate these two? When is it legal to separate these two? Jesus says, look, you don't understand something here. You don't understand what's going on. Let me explain to you what's going on.

And He talks about these two. And He says about them leaving their father and their mother. And He talks about them cleaving to one another.

And then He brings up this mystery. In Ephesians chapter 5, Paul talks about this whole process and he uses the word in Greek. The word in Greek is the word *mysterium*.

It's actually where the Latins got their word *sacrament* from. It's something that you can't completely understand. It's something that happens beyond just human reasoning.

In Ephesians chapter 5, it puts it this way. Paul, you know, talking about the marriage in there, and he says, So ought man to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

For no man ever yet hateth his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church. For we are members of His body, for we are the body of His flesh and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife and the two shall be one flesh.

And he goes on. He says, This is a great mystery. He gives this analogy of the Christ and the church.

Now, here's what Jesus is saying. It's one green piece of playdough. Do you get it? So, the Pharisees are saying, when can those two be broken up? He says, you don't get it.

There's no longer a blue clay. There's no longer a yellow clay. There's one green clay.

Now, you, David, could you come out here and pull the blue back out? Caleb, could you come out and pull the yellow back out? You can't. They have become fused and they are one yellow clay. I mean, excuse me, one green clay.

And so notice what he goes on to say then. Get this now because this concept is essential. To the basics of this marriage, then Jesus adds, as I wrote here, his profound dominical explanation point.

Wherefore, they are no more two but one. So, what do the Pharisees ask them? When can you split these two up? Now, let me explain to you. That's not the way it was in marriage.

It goes way back to the very beginning. And he says to them, there are no more two but one. And then he adds his final answer to their question, when can you split these two up? And what does he say? What therefore God hath joined together.

Let not man put asunder. And there we have the essence of new kingdom, the kingdom of God, relationship with marriage. That is the essence.

Everything else, when you start to talk about how does this relate to this and how does this relate to that, when is this person part of that person, how do you split these things up? If you get the idea in your mind right off from the very beginning that there's no more of the green clay, that there's no more of blue clay, and there's no more yellow clay. Because see now here, you get a little piece of green, comes off, and

they have a fight there, so now they come over here and meets Mr. Red. And Mr. Red, but you can always have, you're always having a mixture of what God has joined together because they are still one.

It's like this. You can have them walking away, but there's still a part of you that's still there. There's a portion of you that's still joined together.

And that's what Paul says, now this is a great mystery. Two people, totally different. We've seen them right here in this place, right here.

How many brothers? How many have come here? Walk down here and say a few words, make this commitment that Jesus said before, and then they walk out one flesh for the rest of their life. It's a great mystery of what's going on in the spiritual world there. It's a great mystery.

A great mystery. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder. Jesus makes it very clear.

It is God who is present at these times. It is God. You remember in Malachi, in Malachi 2, verse 14, people are crying out, you know, why are we not having the blessings of the Lord? Why are we having revival? Why are we having the fire of God? Malachi 2.14 says it this way, yet you say, wherefore? Why? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously.

Yet is she thy companion and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit, and why one? Wherefore one, that he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hates putting away. He hates divorce. God hates divorce.

As we look at this now, we're going to look at some of these actual passages of... I thought it would be interesting to get this testimony. It's an interesting testimony because it's from a relatively mainstream evangelical. I have it in your booklet.

It's by John Piper. John Piper, who does have a very successful ministry. And he started dealing with these Scriptures and he started looking at them and suddenly all the normal answers that he was getting from people just started to not settle in on very good on him.

And listen to his little testimony there. He says, All of my adult life, until I was faced with the necessity of dealing with divorce and remarriage in the pastoral context, I had the prevailing Protestant view that remarriage after divorce was biblically sanctioned in cases of divorce, had resulted from desertion, or persistent adultery. Only when I was compelled some years ago in teaching through the Gospels of Luke to deal with Jesus' absolute statement in Luke 16-18, did I begin to question this inherited position.

I felt an immense burden to have to teach our congregation what the revealed will of God is in this matter of divorce and remarriage. I was not unaware that among my people there were those who had been divorced and remarried and those who had been divorced and remained unmarried and those who were in the process of divorce or contemplating it as a possibility. I knew that this was not an academic exercise but would immediately affect many people very deeply.

I was also aware of the horrendous statistics in our own country as well as other western countries concerning the number of marriages that were ending in divorce and the number of the peoples who were forming second marriages and third marriages. In my study of Ephesians 5, I became increasingly persuaded that there is a deep and profound significance to the union of husband and wife in one flesh as a parable of the relationship between Christ and His church. All of these things conspired to create a sense of solemnity and seriousness as I weighed the meaning and the implications of the biblical text on divorce and remarriage.

The upshot of that crucial experience was the discovery of what I believe is a New Testament prohibition of all remarriage except in the case where a spouse has died. Many people, being honest with these passages, you come to that point and you realize, wait a minute, if I allow my mind to accept this interpretation, well, what does that mean? And you start playing. You start thinking of people you know.

You start thinking of family members. You start thinking of ministries. And your mind goes down the line and you just sort of back away from it.

And you say, I can't even think that because the weight of that seems too much to handle. But Jesus will handle those things. He told us to seek first the Kingdom of God and He gave us His manifesto of that Kingdom.

And He gave it to us in simple words. And those simple words, if we are again, just like all those people through those different ages, are just crazy enough to take the words of Jesus and say, here it is. Let's do it.

And God will give us the grace to be able to walk in those ways. He's promised it. He's promised it.

As I have a section there on the Old Testament, you know that the Pharisees quickly answered, well, they knew. They got it. They understood what Jesus was saying.

And they said, well, what about Moses? I mean, Moses clearly gave a permission for divorce. And Jesus corrected them on their interpretation of the Old Testament. And for time, I'm going to just skip over that.

You have that there in your little handout. But do note this thing in Matthew 19, 7 and 8, that He said, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered, or rather allows you to put away your wives. But from the beginning, it wasn't so.

So what He's saying is that divorce and remarriage was already going on already. And before we got to Deuteronomy 24. And there, because of the hardness of the hearts, Moses allowed them, and their covenant there of their people, he allowed them to make an exception and say, okay, we're going to allow divorce.

He says, but from the beginning, my heart, in other words, the heart of God, from the beginning, it wasn't so. And he takes them back to the Garden of Eden there. I brought up an interesting point there about the interpretation of Deuteronomy 24.

You can look at there in your studies drawing attention that there in Deuteronomy chapter 24, Korins brings out this interesting point that as it says there, when a man, oh, 24, when a man hath taken a wife and married her and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorcement and give it to her and send her out of the

house. That word then, in other words, you had the situation, then you did that. Then you would do this.

That word then is not in the original and it was added. It does help to make the phrase smoother, but Korins brings out that that's the four things that goes on there in the interpretation of that passage. And I have that in your little study notes there if you look at that.

But let's go right into the words of Jesus. The point that Jesus made about the Old Testament law is that divorce and remarriage was already going on. Moses did not make a law of divorce.

He did not make a law of divorce. Moses passed a law prohibiting a kind of remarriage. That's what he did.

Divorce was already happening. He prevented a certain kind of remarriage that was to occur there under those four situations or those lines of four different things that would happen. So let's look at the words of Jesus.

Turn back now to the Kingdom Manifesto in Matthew chapter 5. Jesus spoke on the subject of divorce and remarriage in several places. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus began by defining the sin of adultery. And many of these things in the Sermon on the Mount, you know, what he's taking is, he's taking a piece of the law and then he's adding, he's expanding it.

He's getting to your heart. He doesn't want you just to not kill someone, but if you have all this anger and you're wanting to kill someone inside of you, he's saying you're guilty of murder already. And as he goes through several of these things, he says even calling someone, you know, raka or stupid or something like that would be guilty of that kind of bitterness that you have in your heart, that you're going to be guilty of the law.

So he goes through each of those points or many of those points of the law and what he calls, blossoms them into his teachings there in the Sermon on the Mount. And here when he comes to the thou shalt not commit adultery of the law, he puts it this way. You have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery.

But I say unto you, this is verse 28 there, but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. The Jewish men of that day would have thought that that word, that was absolutely absurd. Somebody here give me a quick, real simple definition of the difference between adultery and fornication.

It matters. What's the difference there? Right. This adultery had the weight of the fact that you had a marriage bond involved.

And in their time, with the Jewish people, remember the men were going off and having polygamy and different things, and so this idea that a man could be guilty of adultery for being with an unmarried woman would have been, wait a minute, he's stretching it here. We never had that in the Old Testament. Yes, we have fornication, but not adultery.

Now Jesus is pushing this to the point of not only the adultery, of what he's calling adultery. In other words, who is guilty of the law of adultery there from the Ten Commandments? And he's saying, if you look at a woman in your heart, if in your heart that you are having this sort of lust in your heart, you are guilty of the sin of adultery. Again, not just an outward show, but inside how you're feeling, you're guilty of the sin.

Now, understand that. Back it up. Repeat it so you'll get it.

Jesus is going through the law, and right before this, he was talking about murder. He took it and he said, if you're angry with your brother, you're guilty of murder. Now he's talking about the sin of adultery, and he says, not just going off and marrying someone else, somebody else's wife, are you going to be now guilty of adultery that we used to stone you for? But, looking at a woman to lust in your heart, you're going to be guilty of adultery.

And he's expanding this. He goes on. To make matters worse, instead of softening those very hard statements, Jesus went on to say that if the offending eye was causing the problem of this lust, it seems to imply, it would be better, and I wrote, still not best, that we pluck them out or cast them off.

So, he's giving this teaching, and instead of trying to soften that up, he's in the middle of talking about what counts as being adultery, right in the middle of a section there in Matthew 5 of his discussion about adultery. He initiates the idea that if you look at a woman lustfully in your heart, you're guilty of adultery. He goes on then to make that point really clear.

If your eyes offend you, pluck it out. If your hands offend thee, cut it off. And he goes to that type of thing.

And let me just say right here, he doesn't say this is the best way. And I say that because I saw a young man here in Lancaster, the hospital there, who castrated himself, obviously not understanding the teaching of Christ. I say that.

So, I want to tell you, this is not Jesus' way of solution of this sort of mutilation. But he's giving you this nevertheless as something very drastic to bring home his concept of how serious the sin of adultery is. It's very serious.

He says, and then adding to his teaching, mind you, right in that context, we're getting to verse 31 now, adding it to his context of what is considered adultery in the eyes of God, he brings up divorce. And he brings up remarriage. And he brings up what do you do when you marry a divorced person.

And remember, what's the context? We're learning from Jesus what is adultery. He just explained to us that looking at another woman lustfully is adultery. He showed us how drastic of an example that is.

And now, he's following that through and saying, I'm going to talk about this even more, about this concept of what is considered adultery. He goes on. He says, it has been said, in verse 31, whosoever shall put away his wife, that's divorce, it has been said, whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce.

This is the way it used to be. He says many things in this new manifesto. This is the way it was in the Old Testament.

This is the way it is in the New Covenant and the New Kingdom of God. You have heard it been said, whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce. In those days, they had found actually some of these Bill of Divorcements and right on it, it would say, you are free to remarry.

When you had divorced your wife, you would give her this note and she would take this note and it would say, I am free to remarry. And this would go on and at least it kept things, I mean, it did. It kept things from just being, you know, just everybody just living in just licentiousness or whatever.

Nevertheless, he wants to take this farther, much further, for those citizens in the Kingdom of God. He's taking it further. Now, watch how far he takes it.

Okay, watch now. It has been said that 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, watch now, saving for the cause of fornication causes her to commit adultery.

And whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery. Now, most of the time you've read that, you've looked over what he just said because it's very weighty if you catch it. He says, okay, if you look at a woman with lust in your heart, you're committing adultery.

He now just said, people have been divorcing that, but now watch. He says now that if you divorce your wife, not even remarriage, he says, if you divorce your wife, you're going to put her into such a sinful situation. You're going to give such a possibility for her to sin that just the act of divorce alone you're going to be counted for adultery.

With one exception. Well, she's an adulterer already. If she's an adulterer already, well, then you're not going to be considered guilty for her adultery.

But if you divorce your wife for adultery, I mean, for any other reason except she's already an adulterer, then you're going to be guilty. Let's look at the Scripture again. Look at it again.

You've read it wrong. Look at it very clearly what he says. It has been said, whoever shall put away his wife, let her give her a writing of divorcement.

But I say unto you, that whosoever shall divorce his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery. In other words, you're going to be held guilty for her adultery. And whosoever marries her that is divorced commits adultery.

If you marry a divorced woman, adultery. So, let's look at it. He's going through the law and he's talking about the Ten Commandments.

He's talking about what is guilty of adultery. He just got through telling us that looking at a woman with lust in your heart, you are guilty for adultery. He's now saying, he made it very clear, cutting off your hands, plucking out your eyes.

Then he wants to talk about divorce. And he's trying to get a point across here that divorce is no place in my new kingdom. None.

Zero. And he's saying, I'm going to give you one time to become one flesh. And this is a great mystery.

Paul talks about this great mystery. But in any other way, that if you take... Now, at the end of this, he says, and if you marry her that is put away. If you marry a divorced woman, you're that red guy now coming with this green girl, you commit adultery.

You see, the way we have read that, we've read that as an exception clause that has said that you can, if you divorce her for the reason of adultery, then you can free to get married again. That's exactly what he's not saying. Listen to what this one commentator said here.

Oh, I'll get to it. It's in your little packet there. He says, let me see, see, see.

I'm getting ahead of myself with the exception clause. Okay. In the Bible, commentator Dale Allison and W.D. Davis states this, the question of freedom after lawful divorce is just not addressed and we cannot ring from the text what it will not give.

Oh, that was the International Critical Commentary from Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark. And so this idea there, that we're looking through and we're finding out what God is considering adultery. Now, let's look at his other passages about that.

Turn to Mark chapter 10, verse 11. So, you're going to be held guilty for adultery. He's checking your heart.

God does not want you just to be an outward Pharisee. He wants you to be pure inside. So, you're lusting after women.

You're guilty of adultery. You're divorcing your wife. You're sending her out.

You know, I don't like the way you whatever, cook or whatever. Then you're going to send her out. You're going to be guilty because you're going to now lead her, cause her to commit adultery.

And he goes on. Now, I'm in Mark chapter 10, verse 11. Mark chapter 10, verse 11.

Let's pick it up at 10. And in the house, his disciples asked him again of the same matter. Now, this is interesting.

This is the passage. We get a glimpse here. This is the following.

You can check it and prove that I'm right or wrong, but I think you'll find that I'm right. This is the exact context of the Matthew 19 passage. Everything that happened there in Matthew 19, now you get to follow the apostles home and they're still scratching their head.

What are you saying? So now it says here in Mark 10, and in the house, his disciples asked him again, notice Mark tells us, again of the same matter. And he said unto them, let me just make it really, really clear. Okay.

Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another commits adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband and be married to another, she commits adultery. Is that clear enough? Do you get it, apostles? Anybody.

Okay, now let me ask you this. If the woman who had a legal divorce by the world standard, by Jewish standards, if she is separated from her husband, and now you marry her, what's the only reason why it would be called adultery and not fornication? You're still married. Because it's still there.

But she got a divorce. By legal standards. But he says if anyone marries the divorced woman, the woman in the Old Testament standards would have had a paper that said you're free to remarry.

Now, I'm taking that and he says if anyone marries that divorced woman, he's guilty of adultery. Because she's still married. Because she's still married.

That's the whole point. Let's look at Luke. This is the one that stumped... that woke up, I should rather say, John Piper there.

Luke 16. Luke 16.18. Well, it's easier. Let's go to 16.16.16. The law and the prophets were unto John and unto Abraham.

Since that time, the kingdom of God is preached and every man presses into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than one tittle of the law to fail. Now listen.

He set this one up for us. Whosoever putteth away his wife and marries another commits adultery. And whosoever marries her and marries another that is put away from her husband commits adultery.

Commits adultery. These are strong words for our society. Very strong words.

These are strong words because what are we to do with that then? What are we to do with those little green people, so to speak? I don't mean that derogatory, but just for our example here. What do we do with those people that are still bound to someone and they're coming and you come with this confusion and you come with these things and there's all these things to deal with. There's so much in our heart that we just want to say, okay, let's just forget about this whole thing.

Let's just start over. Let's just start new. Let's go with this thing.

And today I'm just going to finish with the words of Jesus. I'll go to Paul in the early church tomorrow. So we come here now and one of the passages that have got the most attention is found in the Matthew 19 passage.

And let's go to that. And then I'll probably not get much further than this today and I'll have to finish the Apostle Paul with this divorce teaching tomorrow. The Matthew 19 passage is much more ambiguous than it is with the rest of these different passages.

And the exception clause or what's called the exception clause in both the Matthew 5 and the Matthew 19 is what caused both the reformers to talk about different solutions and have had people fighting about different solutions ever since. Now, does everybody here know what I mean by the exception clause? We've talked about it here just a minute ago. Does everybody know what I mean? Okay.

Accept it be for adultery. Now, people have come up with different reasons of trying to explain that away and I write a whole section there in your little booklets that I gave you about that. One of the things that have particularly has been, I'd say, very common amongst our circles is to look at this idea of the accept it be for adultery as look at that word and find in that word something that could somewhat soften it.

We get the idea of the Jewish betrothal. Who here have heard about the Jewish betrothal idea of the exception clause? Yeah. It's a decent... It fits all the... It answers a lot of questions.

It goes through the different... It certainly harmonizes Paul's strong words against divorce, remarriage with the gospel. But I think it leads to some problems and I mentioned that in your little booklet. The problems that I think that it mentioned... I don't like that the Scriptures... If I have to have someone... That I have to bring up some Jewish history to try to defend my position.

I'm uncomfortable with that. And I'll tell you what, when you're a pastor or when you're a missionary somewhere and I'll tell you what, when you take a young couple in front of you and you're having to explain to them these hard words of Jesus and you're explaining to them how the kingdom of God and what God requires of marriage and that type of thing, you like to be standing on Scripture and Scripture

alone. I find it that way.

To set that and to base it on the Jewish idea... Again, I'm not throwing the whole exception clause with the betrothal period away, but nevertheless, it's something that I think weakens the whole argument. But when we look at Matthew 19, I believe... This is me, and if you disagree with me, that's fine. I believe... I agree with these guys, Andrew Korins and this person who wrote Jesus and Divorce, have here and everything.

I believe that Matthew 19 can be translated in two different ways. That the exception clause could be read to mean that you're divorcing someone... If you're divorcing someone for the sake of fornication, then you can get remarried. then you can get remarried.

I think that the Greek could be interpreted that way. I don't believe it's in any way possible when you look at the context. I don't believe it's in any way possible when you look at the writers of the early church and their understanding of the Greek.

I think it's absolutely an absurd interpretation. But looking at it in isolation by itself, I think it could be read that way. The way I understand it, the way the early church would have understood this whole exception, again, is just like what I said.

Who is guilty of adultery? And that's the question that needs to run through your mind when you look at Jesus' teaching there in Matthew chapter 5. Who is guilty of adultery? And if you divorce your wife for any other reason except for adultery, you're going to be considered adultery even if you don't remarry. Even if you don't remarry. Let me repeat that.

Because this is a hard point. In the early church, you would have had a separation of these two topics. In your minds, in many of your minds, you're thinking if you divorce, well, then you can remarry.

Okay? If you separate from your wife, then you can remarry. Okay, the early church, and I think what Paul is making it very clear, and we'll see this tomorrow, as well as the early church, that he's looking at these things as two totally different subjects. There is the divorce.

There is the separation from your wife. And then there is also the remarriage. You get that? So in other words, don't think just because he says it's okay to separate from your wife because of some bad thing, that it's okay then for you to go and get remarried.

As we see, we're going to see Paul recommends that you spend the rest of your life single or to be reconciled with your wife. Okay? So I know it's getting there to the detail of the thing, but it's important to look at the difference there. So let's dig into Matthew 19 there.

He said to them, Moses, because of the hardness of your heart, suffered you to be put away from your wives. But from the beginning, it was not so. And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committed adultery, and whosoever marries her, which is put away, doth commit adultery.

So, and I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committed adultery, and whosoever marries her, which is put away, doth commit adultery. And I guess the way I would look at this is that this thing could be looked at in two different ways. And notice what I wrote here in examining the Greek.

When we look at these two different ways of interpreting them, the Greek, I think, is very interesting to look at. Let's examine the Greek here in Matthew 19. You see my little handout here? I have a quote here.

There's only one way of understanding the syntax of 19.9. It is a double conditional clause in which the elliptical phrase, in other words, what's in parentheses, is placed immediately after the first condition, to put away. The parentheses, or the elliptical phrase, except for immorality, does not contain a verb, and one must be supplied from the context. The only verb that has been stated for the reader to understand is the one immediately preceding the exception clause, put away.

The verb Matthew's readers just passed over. Skipping down there. The writer here brings up this point.

DuPont says that the exception clause is grammatically connected to the phrase before it and simply acts as a parenthetical clarification to the original question asked by the Pharisees. Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all? Therefore, just like in Matthew 5.32, the exception is for the guilt of divorcing a woman who is already an adulterer. And here's what Heth and Wynnum say in their book.

When Matthew 19.9 is analyzed into the constituent parts, the ambiguity disappears and it makes a fitting punchline to the dispute with the Pharisees. They ask, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all? Jesus replies, it's always wrong to divorce what God has joined together. What is more, a divorce except for unchastity is adulterous and remarriage after divorce is always so.

Naturally, the disciples object. If this relationship of a man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry. Unabashed, Jesus replies in a vain, reminiscent of the remarks of cutting off his hand to avoid committing adultery.

You are able to live up to this teaching, for there are some who are even able to become eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. So, looking at this whole, if we were to look at this Matthew 5 and Matthew 19, and this is where the exception clause come out of. If you take the Mark passage and you take the Luke passage, it's very clear.

It makes it very clear. The people that make the debate is about the exception clause as we read in Mark and in Matthew, excuse me, in Matthew 5 and in Matthew 19. If we look at the Matthew 5 passage, it became very clear that it has nothing to do with remarriage.

And then I would agree with this man that the Matthew 19 passage could be interpreted in different ways, the way I would look at it. If you think I'm wrong, that's fine. Tell me I'm wrong, and okay.

But what makes me think that it has to be interpreted the way that I think it's interpreted in Matthew 5 is the context. Look at how he goes on. His disciples say unto him, if this is the case that the man be with his wife, it is not good to marry.

But he says unto them, all men cannot receive this saying, save to whom it is given. And then let's look what he says. For there are some eunuchs which were born from their mother's womb, and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men.

And there be eunuchs which have been made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to receive it, let him receive it. All right.

So let's review this. I believe that the burden of proof of looking at this divorce and remarriage passage and who's allowed to remarry is upon those who try to take this thing and dig out what has become an exception to anything. At the very beginning, the Reformers took this to be just adultery and made that, you know, okay, if you had adultery, they had all these reasons if you were adultery or not adultery.

And then what it has become today that people have used this exception clause to mean just about anything. But let's review those very basic passages there. In closing, for this first part, and then we're going to finish up here.

Mark 10, 11. Now, they got back from that Matthew 19 scene. He told them about the eunuch and he said to them, and in the house, the disciples asked him again of the same matter and he said unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery against her.

And if a woman shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery. He makes it very clear. And then in Luke 16, 18.

Again, in summary. Whosoever putteth away his wife and marries another commits adultery. And whosoever marries her that is put away from her husband commits adultery.

So, why did I belabor, and I'm sorry if I belabored this exception clause to the point of a bit of ridiculous today. Because I think that it's important to look at the context and we're going to come back tomorrow and we're going to look at the way Paul interpreted Jesus. How did Paul interpret that statement? How did the early church interpret that statement? And so, if you don't mind, if you haven't finished reading the pamphlet, please read through the pamphlet and we'll come back here tomorrow and look at the way Paul read it and the way the early church read it and talk about this.

And also, maybe we'll open up for some questions and answers on the whole thing. I think it would be real healthy. So, I feel like I'm incomplete talking about the whole thing here because I'm leaving it for Paul tomorrow.

But, may I, just for the sake of redundancy and bringing it through one more time, belabor my points one more time. Sorry, I have to confess, I feel like I got a little too deep into the whole exception clause with you all. I feel some glossy looks from you all.

So, I hope to clarify some of that tomorrow. So, here's the point. Jesus came and he gave us the Sermon on the Mount.

In that Sermon on the Mount, he offered us the idea of what would he consider to be adultery. He told us what he considered to be adultery was that we're looking at a woman and that would be considered adultery. He then went on and talked about the divorcing your wife and marrying anyone who was divorced would be in that level of what he would be considered adultery.

In Matthew 19, they challenged him, well, when can somebody ever divorce? When can these two people get divorced? And bringing up this analogy here, he brings the idea that you don't understand, they're not two people anymore. They're one person. And so, understanding the idea that a person is now one and not two, it erases the idea that it's not a matter that even can be separated.

They are one. Paul answers this with the concept that this is a mystery, that this union is a mystery, that they are now one flesh. People argue that the exception clause means that the idea that you can

remarriage and I would say that Matthew 5 has absolutely nothing to do with the concept of remarriage and that as we're going to see with Paul and the early church, that Matthew 19, I believe, can only be explained as also a complete prohibition against any kind of remarriage, the same way that John Piper ended up with the same conclusion.

It's a serious topic and I know it's a deep topic. I would never bring this up to beginning Bible school students, but it's something that you need to start to be able to discuss amongst yourselves and talk about it because you're going to see it. And as you go about to your churches and you see all these different situations and the different people that come to you, you need to be able to have talked through every bit of this.

It's difficult to bring up a topic like this today, but if you don't mind us doing it, we're going to do it today and we'll also come back tomorrow. So, if you haven't read the booklet, please read the booklet so we can have some platform to talk about tomorrow as we look at the Apostle Paul and the early church. Alright, I give it to you, brother.

Thank you, Brother Dean. Just a couple of closing comments that I have here on this subject. I just would like to reason with you a little bit.

If it is adultery, and it is, the more that it is allowed, the more you have adultery in the church. And if you have adultery in the church, you have one mixed up defiled church. Now you have adultery and purity communing together in the same church.

What will that leaven do in a church in process of time? It will leaven the whole thing. And now, we have 50% in the evangelical church. 50%.

They didn't all decide one day to change their mind on this subject. They took one, they took one more exception, they took one, and now it's 50%. This is not a little one.

May God give us the wisdom to keep a pure church. That's my encouragement. Thank you, Brother Dean.

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