

You Can't Divorce Your Self

by Russell DeLong

The sermon emphasizes the impossibility of divorcing oneself and the necessity of transforming the self through God's forgiveness and grace.

Scripture: Psalm 139:14, Proverbs 28:13, Romans 8:38, Romans 12:2, Galatians 5:24, Ephesians 4:22, Philippians 4:8, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Personal Transformation", "Inner Sanctification"

Description

Russell DeLong preaches about the impossibility of divorcing oneself, emphasizing that despite the struggles and flaws within us, we are inseparable from our own selves. The sermon delves into the futility of denying one's existence or enduring a corrupt self until death, highlighting the need for personal transformation rather than seeking divorce from oneself. Various philosophical perspectives are explored, ultimately pointing to the importance of being self-respecting, conscience-free, and seeking forgiveness and cleansing from internal sin through God's provision.

Transcript

Many apparently impossible tasks have been achieved. Miracles have been wrought when

everything seemed hopeless. Feats of amazing skill have been performed. But here is something that neither God nor man can do -- separate you from your self. There is no divorce, in the courts either of God or of man, for a person from himself. I can't divorce me. My self and I remain together forever. The ego and my self are inseparable.

One may divorce a nagging, unfaithful wife. One may get rid of a philandering husband. But you cannot sue your self for a divorce. Even separation papers are impossible. In fact, there is no court either divine or human, moral or civil, that has the legal right or the metaphysical power to sever your self from you.

In view of the absolute impossibility of personal divorce what are the possible solutions people pursue?

Some deny that they exist, which is irrational. Who is doing the denying?

Some just endure themselves to the bitter end -- "till death do us part." That is ridiculous

because it means years of agonizing toleration of a corrupt and tantalizing self, and then death does nothing but divorce our bodies from our spirits. You will still live with your self after death. What a hopeless and distasteful future some people have ahead of them -- to live with themselves forever!

The only way to meet the problem is to change the self you do not like so that the impossible divorce is no longer needed or desired.

David Hume, the father of the associationistic school of psychology, said, "I cannot find myself except at the moment of a sense perception. If my senses were destroyed, I would cease to exist." Someone has pictured Mr. Hume coming out of his house and proceeding to look in the five windows of sense: sight, and then hearing, smell, touch, and taste and, finding nobody home, he reasoned, There is no self. But who was looking in the window?

Immanuel Kant called Hume's self the "empirical self" -- that which dealt with sense experience. But behind every such a self is always the "transcendental self." One may pull a part of his self out and look at it but his transcendental self is always doing the scrutinizing.

One may be dreaming or be the victim of illusions or hallucinations but there is always someone who is doing the dreaming and someone who is having the illusion or hallucination.

Descartes, the great French rationalist, made his first self-evident, certain postulate: "I think, therefore I exist." Personal existence precedes personal experience and personal knowledge. You can't get behind your self. You cannot annihilate your self. And you can't divorce your self. Therefore, it is imperative for your present and eternal happiness that your self be the kind of self that you don't want to divorce. So "be good to yourself" by making your self good.

The poet expressed the truth of this sermon pertinently when he wrote:

"I have to live with myself and so

I want to be fit for myself to know.

I want to be able as the days go by

Always to look myself in the eye.

I don't want to stand with the setting sun

And hate myself for the deeds I've done.

I want to go out with head erect;

I want to deserve all men's respect.

"But here in the struggle for fame and pelf,

I want to be able to like myself.

I don't want to look at myself and know
That I'm bluster and bluff and empty show.
I can't hide myself from me.
I can see what others may never see.
I can know what others may never know.
I can't fool myself, and so,
Whatever happens, I want to be
Self-respecting and conscience free."

James Russell Lowell underscored the same truth when he penned these sobering lines:

"To have no secret place wherein
To stoop unseen to shame or sin;
To be the same when I'm alone
As when my every act is known;
To walk undaunted, unafraid;
To right the errors I have made;
To be without pretense or sham,
Exactly what men think I am."

Your number one problem is your self. Other people may cause you trouble and "get in your hair," but you cause your self more heartaches and distress than anyone else. You know yourself -- your deceit, your duplicity, your jealousy, your pride, your hypocrisy, your agony, your condemnation -- summed up in your sin.

"If you have lied, you live with a liar.

If you have cheated, you live with a chisler.

If you have stolen, you live with a thief.

If you have killed, you live with a murderer.

And to live daily and hourly with a liar or a thief or a murderer is very undesirable company.

But you can't divorce your self. But you can divorce that part of your self that makes you a liar, a thief, or a murderer.

In brief, and in conclusion, it is sin in your self that makes your self loathsome and undesirable.

God has not made it possible for you to divorce your self but He has made provision whereby internal sin can be divorced from you.

Your past sins which have brought guilt and condemnation to your self can be forgiven.

Your inbred sin, the carnal part of your self, can be purged out of your being. Here is God's promise:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1: 9).

Does your self give you trouble?

If you could, you would divorce your self.

But you can't -- it is impossible. But the sinful part of your self can be divorced-removed, eradicated, cleansed, purged-from your self.

So, instead of starting divorce proceedings against your self, why don't you start praying for your self, that God may pardon and cleanse you?

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/russell-delong/you-cant-divorce-your-self/>

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