

# Not a Servant but the Bride

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of understanding Scripture correctly and the transformative relationship believers have with Christ as His bride, moving beyond a servant mentality.*

**Duration:** 42:26

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:21-24, Ezekiel 36:25-27, Matthew 5:21-22, Matthew 19:3-8, Ephesians 5:23-32

**Topics:** "Marriage And Relationships", "Intimacy With God"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the importance of understanding God's original plan for marriage and relationships, emphasizing the significance of having a soft heart towards God's commands. It contrasts the hardness of heart seen in the Old Testament with the call to a higher standard in the New Testament, where believers are called to have a bridal relationship with Christ. The message highlights the need for believers to move away from a legalistic approach to faith and embrace a deep, intimate connection with God.

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## Transcript

There was a time when the Pharisees came to Jesus in Matthew chapter 19. And this is a very important passage of Scripture. I want you to turn please to Matthew chapter 19.

And the Pharisees came to him, verse 3, and asked him, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all? And they were trying to test him. And Jesus replied saying, In the beginning, haven't you read that in the beginning the one who created them made them male and female? So I want you to see that little phrase there, in the beginning. In the beginning when God made Adam and Eve, there was no provision for divorce.

But in the law of Moses, in the book of Deuteronomy we read that God said, if you divorce your wife, then you must give her a certificate of divorce. That you can read in Deuteronomy 24. Verses 1 to 4. God was not telling them to divorce their wife.

What he said is, if you do divorce her, then make sure you give a certificate to her. But they twisted it to their own benefit, the Pharisees. Even though Moses had not commanded it, they said Moses has commanded it.

So we read in Matthew 19 in verse 7, that they say to the Lord, why then did Moses command to give a certificate and send her away? The word they used was Moses commanded it. But Jesus said no. See in verse 8, Moses permitted it, not commanded it.

There are a lot of things God permits, but he doesn't command. If we don't read the scripture carefully, we can miss these important things. See, for example, one man does not like his wife.

And he goes to Deuteronomy 24. He goes to Deuteronomy 24. And he reads there.

What does he read? In Deuteronomy 24, verses 1 to 4. That if it happens that a man does not find some indecency in his wife, and he writes a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand. So, if you read that carefully, there is no command to put away your wife. He's saying if you put her away, then you give a certificate of divorce.

When a man does not like his wife, in those days in Israel, and he wants to somehow send her away, because now he's interested in some other woman. And he comes to this verse, and he reads it carefully, and he discovers it does not permit him to divorce his wife. So, he will twist it.

He will twist the scripture to say, Moses has said I can divorce my wife. And then you keep on saying that after a thousand years, you believe that Moses actually commanded it. See, because in those days, everybody did not have a Bible at home to check up that verse.

So, today we have a Bible, we can check up the verse. Those days, the Bible was written by hand, and it was very expensive, and only one copy would be in the synagogue. So, they read it there on Saturdays, and if you don't listen carefully, you can get some wrong impression.

So, what I'm trying to say here is this, that many human beings are like this, just like those Israelites. When they want to do something, they'll find some verse in the Bible to do it. And they will make that verse twisted to suit their own convenience.

Because they already made up their mind what they want to do. And they go to the Bible to get what they want. And they say, God said this to me.

We have to be very careful that we don't use the Bible to do what we want. I've seen so many people do this. They want to do something.

And they read some verse and say, God has spoken to me. That's how these Pharisees were. They want to divorce their wife.

And there is no command in the Old Testament to divorce the wife. In fact, in Malachi chapter 2, God says, I hate divorce. But, they will not look at that verse.

They will look for some other verse that will twist. They can twist and say, yes, I can divorce my wife. Now, today, the question is not divorce, because for Christians, divorce is not permitted at all.

But, the same way you can twist Scripture to do what you want. Whereas, we must read Scripture to do what God wants, not what we want. Let me give you an example.

Here is a young man. And he is very much in love with one girl called Grace. And he is praying, Oh God, show me your will.

Then he goes to 2 Corinthians 12 verse 9. And he reads there. My grace is sufficient for you. And this girl's name is Grace.

Oh, God has shown me. I have to marry Grace. How did he get that? Because it is written here.

He wanted to do something and he was looking for that verse. Now, here is the second case. Another man.

His father suggests one girl called Grace. And he looks at her and says, I don't like her. I don't like her face.

So, he says, I will pray about it. So, he reads this verse. My grace is sufficient for you.

So, he comes to his father. God has spoken to me. His grace is sufficient for me.

I don't want this grace. See, how from the same verse, two people got two different things. That is just an example.

How you can read the Bible and get what you want from it. How you can read the Bible and get what you want from it. The Bible says, God cannot be fooled.

We should not say, The Lord has spoken to me, when the Lord has not spoken. Verse 31 I am against the prophets, says the Lord, who use their tongues and declare what the Lord declares. You read that whole chapter.

They were saying whatever comes to their mind and they were saying, the Lord said it. Whatever comes to their mind, they say. And they say, the Lord says that.

We have to be very careful about that. So, turn back to Matthew 19. Here was an example of that.

Moses had never commanded divorce. But here was somebody who wanted to divorce his wife. But here was somebody who wanted to divorce his wife.

And they came to Jesus. And Jesus said, Moses never commanded it. He permitted it.

Why did he permit it? That is very important to understand. Matthew 19 verse 8 So, who is the man who divorces his wife? A man whose heart is hard. Jesus said that.

His heart is so hard. He does not want to do what God tells him to do. He does not want to love his wife.

He does not want to bear with her weaknesses. He wants to do what he wants to do. He is interested in some other woman.

And so he is trying to get rid of his wife. Such a man has got a very hard heart. So, in the Old Testament, people had a hard heart.

That is why God permitted so many things in the Old Testament. But he does not permit it in the New Testament. For example, In the Old Testament, They were permitted to be angry, but not permitted to kill.

In the Old Testament, They were permitted to be angry, but not permitted to kill. But Jesus came, and he said, That is the Old Covenant. In the New Covenant, you must not even be angry.

See Matthew chapter 5. This is the difference between a hard heart and a soft heart. I was saying earlier that You must come away from the law and come into a bridal relationship with me. You see the verse written there.

Arise my love and come away. Come away from that hard, hard type of relationship. That was alright in the Old Testament.

When I was the master of Israel. But now, I don't want to be your master. I want to be your husband.

Isn't that better? Supposing you are working in one rich man's house. And one of your sisters is working in some rich man's house. He is not a married man, but he is a very rich man.

And you are just a very poor servant working in his house, Sweeping the floor and cooking the food. And every month you get your salary and go. And you go and live in some little hut and come next morning to work.

And supposing one day the master says, I want to marry you. Will you be happy? Oh, that's wonderful. He wants to marry me now.

Then I can live in this house. See the difference between being a servant and a wife. That is the difference between old covenant and new covenant.

That is the difference between being under the law And having this bridal relationship with the bride. That is the difference between having a hard heart and a soft heart. See that, Matthew 5, verse 21.

The old covenant, the law was, You shall not commit murder. That is written here. If you commit murder, you will be liable to the court.

Verse 21. But now in the new covenant, See that was the law of Moses, verse 21. Jesus says, Moses said, Do not commit murder, otherwise you will go to the court.

That is what Moses said. But I am saying to you, verse 22, Jesus says, I am saying, I am not saying what Moses said. I am raising the standard higher.

I am saying, if you are angry with your brother, You will go to the court. Do you see the difference? Old testament, Moses said, If you commit murder, you will go to the court. Jesus says, if you are angry with your brother, You will go to the court.

What a difference this is. What he was saying is, Anger is like murder in the heart. You do not take a knife and kill him.

That is external murder. But when you are angry with somebody, You are killing that person in your heart. That is the difference between Old testament and new testament.

Or see another example. Verse 27, The old testament law was, You shall not commit adultery. That is Moses law.

But Jesus says, I am saying to you, If you lust after a woman in your heart, And you wish you could commit adultery with her, You have already committed it. So, if you do not commit murder, You are living under the old covenant. If you want to live by the new covenant, You must overcome anger.

In the old covenant, If you do not commit adultery, You have kept the law. In the new covenant, If you do not commit adultery, In the new covenant, You should not even lust with your eyes. I will take another example.

In the old testament, the law was, You must not make a false vow. They would put their hand on some holy book And say, I am going to speak the truth now. In some court and all, Sometimes they ask you to do that.

Put your hand on the bible and say, I am speaking the truth. Jesus said no. I am saying, you should not make any oath like that.

Verse 37, When you say yes, it must be yes. When you say no, it is no. You do not have to put your hand on the bible and say, Now I am speaking the truth.

See, when you put your hand on the bible and say, Now I will speak the truth, What your meaning is, Most of the time I tell lies, But now I am going to speak the truth. Are you like that? Only when you put your hand on the bible, you will speak the truth. Rest of the time you tell lies.

Then you are in the old testament. Jesus says, Yes, yes. No, no.

You should not go back on your word. What I am trying to say is, The standard is so high in the new testament. Because, A servant can live in a low standard, But a wife cannot live in a low standard, If she is the wife of a rich person.

No. You see, You go to some very rich man's house. And all the servants will be wearing very ordinary, cheap clothes.

But the wife will be wearing a grand dress. Spiritually, what does that mean? Spiritually, it means that, If you live as a servant before God, Your spiritual standard is very low. Like that rich man's servant can have dirty clothes.

When you live under the old covenant, Your heart can be dirty. That is not serious. You are allowed to have a dirty heart under the old covenant.

You can have anger. You can have lust. You can tell lies in your heart.

It is permitted. But in the new covenant, Like that man's wife is dressed with grand clothes, Our spiritual dress in our heart must be very high standard. So what is Jesus saying when he says, My love, come away.

Come away from that low standard of life Where your heart is dirty all the time. Come to this higher level. I mean, if the rich man tells his servant, Now you don't have to wear these dirty clothes.

Come and be my wife. I will give you good clothes. She will be so happy.

And when the Lord says to me, I am going to take away your dirty heart And I am going to give you a clean heart. I should be so happy. How many of you want a beautiful dress in your heart Instead of a dirty dress in your heart? Do you really want a beautiful dress in your heart? Do you really want a heart in which there is no anger? Do you really want a heart in which there is no lust? Do you really want a heart in which there is always speaking the truth? How many of you want a heart like that? So many believers who sit in

churches And break bread every Sunday Do not want a heart like that.

They like a little dirty. We don't like to wear dirty clothes. If somebody offers you dirty clothes and clean clothes as a gift, Which one will you take? You will definitely take the clean clothes.

God says, why do you want to live in that low standard of the Old Testament then? I love, come away from there. Come to where I am. Live with me with a clean heart.

And then you say, Lord, how can I have this clean heart? I want it. See this beautiful promise in Ezekiel chapter 36. Even though this is an Old Testament book, Here is a promise Which could not be fulfilled Till the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost.

Ezekiel was prophesying About a future day When it would be fulfilled. It's a word to our hearts. We who come to the Lord With dirty hearts, full of sin See what he says.

Ezekiel 36 verse 25 He is using a figurative language When he says, I will sprinkle clean water on you And make you clean. It's a picture. He is referring to the blood of Christ That will cleanse our heart.

And I will cleanse you from All your filthiness and all your idols. And I will give you a new heart. And I will put a new spirit within you.

And now listen to this promise. I will take away that hard heart of stone And give you a soft heart of flesh. What did Jesus tell the Pharisees? Your hearts are so hard.

That is why you do all these wrong things. It is because your hearts are so hard That God gave you such a low standard In the Old Testament. Don't you think the Old Testament is standard? There are millions of people in our villages Who honor their father and mother.

And if your life is only like their life Then what is the difference between You and the unbelievers? They have got a hard heart And they keep all these commandments. And if you only keep the ten commandments Your heart is also hard. But the Lord says, I will take away that hard heart.

You don't have to give it up. If you permit me, the Lord says, I will take it away. And I will give you a soft heart.

And here is the promise that was fulfilled On the day of Pentecost, verse 27. I will put my spirit inside you. In the Old Testament, the spirit was only On top of people.

Like on Samson. The spirit came on him, he could kill lions. But it was not inside him.

So his heart was dirty. Even Samson, his heart was so dirty. Because the spirit was not inside him.

But now the Lord says, I will put my spirit inside you. And look at this wonderful promise. I will make you keep my command.

And you will automatically be careful To do all my commands. This is the result of the Holy Spirit Coming in. And making us love Jesus.

Where we come away At the invitation of the Lord From that low level of life. So, I want you to Take this invitation very seriously That the Lord is giving us. Come away from the law.

Come away from that low level of life. Come to what I originally Purposed for man. So I told you a little bit about the Hardness of heart that Jesus spoke in Matthew 19.

When your heart is hard, He allows you to live at a low level of life. But when he cleanses us in his blood, And gives us his Holy Spirit To dwell inside. Our hearts become soft.

Then we get convicted Even if we lose our temper. Or if one look of lust I get convicted because I have a soft heart. Do you get convicted Every time you get angry? If you say no, then your heart must be hard.

You know some parts of our body are hard And some parts of our body are soft. If I take a pin And I poke the sole of my foot I don't feel anything. Because it's quite hard.

But if I take that same pin And touch my cheek, immediately I feel it. How is your heart? Is your heart like the sole of your foot Or is it like the cheek? That you can do something wrong And you don't feel convicted. You can tell a lie And you don't feel convicted.

In the office, you can sign a false statement To make some money And you don't feel convicted. You can speak evil of other people Behind their back And you don't feel convicted. You can hate somebody And you don't feel convicted.

You can have a bitterness in your heart Against somebody And you don't feel convicted. You can look with lust At a woman And you don't feel convicted. Nowadays, so many young people Are sitting in the computer And looking at all types of dirty pictures.

And they don't feel convicted. They come and break bread. How is that? How is it possible? Because they've got a hard heart.

They've not allowed the Lord To give them a soft heart. You must ask the Lord to give you a soft heart. It's very sensitive to sin.

The other thing Jesus said in Matthew 19 Also what I pointed out to you in verse 4 He said, think how it was in the beginning. Don't think about after Moses came Some 2500 years After Adam. Moses was born 2500 years after Adam.

And he brought the law. And the Lord said, don't go by that standard. Go back to the beginning.

When God made Adam He made one man. Did he make two women? No. He didn't tell Adam, take one.

And when you get tired of that one You can choose this one. He made only one woman. That was God's plan in the beginning.

So if you want to understand God's plan for us You can also see that in Adam and Eve. Genesis chapter 2 Verse 22 It says in verse 21 The Lord put this man to a deep sleep And took out one of his ribs. And from that rib He made a woman.

And he brought her to the man. Genesis 2 verse 22 And the man said This is now bone of my bone And flesh of my flesh. I am one with her.

This is not my servant. This is my wife. Because she came from my side.

This is how it was in the beginning. What does this passage mean? Is it only talking about husband and wife? Let's turn to Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians 5 Verse, it says here Verse 23 The husband is the head of the wife Just like Christ is the head of the church. And then The same verse that we find in Genesis 2 Where the Lord said You must leave your father and mother And cleave to your wife.

I am going to show you that again. Genesis 2 verse 24 A man shall leave his father and mother And cleave to his wife And they shall become one flesh. That's referring to Adam and Eve Becoming one flesh.

Now that is interpreted in the New Testament In Ephesians 5. Verse 31 Same verse A man shall leave his father and mother And cleave to his wife And they shall become one flesh. But now in the New Testament Holy Spirit says I am not talking about Adam and Eve. Verse 32 I am talking about Christ and the church.

So that picture in the Old Testament That event in the Old Testament Is a picture of Christ and the church. So go back to the beginning. Did God make a servant for Adam Or did he make a wife? He could have made a servant.

He could have said Adam needs a helper I will make a servant for him. He made a wife. You young people Would you like a servant or a wife? Adam didn't want a servant He wanted a wife.

God gave him a wife. How did he give him a wife? He put Adam to sleep. Sleep is a picture of death.

Sleep is a picture of death. We can say God put Jesus to death on the cross. That is just like putting Adam to sleep.

Jesus slept the sleep of death. And like God made a hole In Adam's side And took out a bone And made a wife. When Jesus was hanging on the cross His side was also pierced.

And all the blood came out. And because of that we are cleansed And we have become his wife. That is exactly like Adam got his wife.

God cut open his side And took out a bone First putting him to sleep. Jesus also was put to sleep on the cross. Death.

And his side was pierced. This time it was not a bone but the blood. That blood Cleansed and made a wife for him.

And just like he said to Adam and Eve You must be one The father says you and Jesus must be one. That is the wonderful position Into which the Lord is calling us. So always say this to yourself.

I am not a servant, I am a wife. I am not a servant of Jesus I am the bride of Jesus. He does not love me like a servant He loves me like a bride.

A rich man may be a very kind man And he may be kind to his servants. Like that God is kind to so many people in the world. Think how that rich man will love his own wife.

That is how God loves us. So we must rejoice in that love. Let us pray.

Heavenly Father I want you to think Of dear brothers and sisters I want you to think of What you heard just now. And ask the Lord to give you a soft heart And To save you from being a servant To be the bride of Jesus Christ Heavenly Father Help us each one To live the way you want us to live We pray in the name

of the Lord Jesus Christ Amen

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