

Divorce and Remarriage Matthew 19:1-10

In sharp contrast with our culture, the Bible teaches that the essence of marriage is a sacrificial commitment to the good of the other. That means that love is more fundamentally action than emotion. *Tim Keller*

1. Is it Lawful to Divorce?

1.1. The _____ Law of Marriage

_____ is the essence of marriage. Prov. 2:17, Mal. 2:14

Sex is not just biological. No. It is spiritual. It is two becoming one. That's the way God designed it

In our contemporary climate of sexual freedom and societal tolerance for moral deviance, we would do well to reconsider the biblical viewpoint toward marriage and sexual behavior.

Monogamous heterosexual marriage was viewed as the divine standard from the beginning of creation.

1.2. The _____ of the 10 Commandments

The Pharisees made the laws of God manageable for themselves to achieve and therefore declare themselves righteous by works.

Jesus instead corrected their thinking and placed each issue to the true meaning of God. Bringing the disciples to the point of saying in chapter 19 – we can't do this!

Remember, salvation is only by faith and so is sanctification. You cannot earn a righteous lifestyle by good works.

The 7th Commandment teaches us that the sin of adultery is a heart issue. He was not trying to teach the consequence of the sin is all the same but that all are sinners and no man can fix the problem by himself. We also learn from this commandment that adultery breaks the marriage bond.

1.3. The _____ Law – 7,8

The Pharisees said that Moses “_____” divorce.
Jesus clarified – Moses “_____” divorce.

Divorce as a cure is far worse than the disease.

1.4. God’s designed release from marriage is death.

1.5. The penalty for “porneia” in the OT is death!

Thoughts on Deut. 24

1. The divorce in this passage actually severed the original marriage relationship. Note the second man was called her husband.
2. A Biblical divorce does sever the marriage relationship. Man cannot do this by his schemes but God can.
3. Jesus made it clear that the law of divorce from Moses was a concession on God’s part and was never part of the original design. The law included the right to remarry.

1.6. God _____ divorce. Mal. 2:16

- 4th greatest fear among youth is the fear that their parents will divorce.
- That’s one every 36 seconds, nearly 2,400 per day, and 16,800 per week. It’s hardly surprising, then, that the divorce industry is worth a whopping \$50 billion annually.
- 80% of divorced couples in their 20s and 30s blame financial problems as primary reason for divorce.
- Children of divorce are at a greater risk to experience injury, asthma, headaches, and speech defects than children whose parents have remained married.
- To adjust to their new situation takes them 2 years or more.

2. _____ Law of Marriage – 9,10

2.1. The “_____ clause”

Some try to explain it in other ways.

1. The discussion was not marriage but engagement.
2. Porneia is sexual immorality, that includes the capital sexual offenses of the OT.
3. God Himself divorced Israel because of adultery.

2.2. Thoughts on “porneia”

1. There is no record in the OT of someone being put to death for ‘porneia.’
2. David committed a double capital offense – adultery and murder. God even allowed him to marry Bathsheba and the line of Christ came from her! God accepted his repentance and there was a heavy consequence meted out to him.
3. Joseph sought to divorce Mary instead of the death penalty and was said to be righteous.
4. God divorced Israel for adultery. Jer. 3:8, Is. 50:1

2.3. What was the _____ of heart?

1. It could speak of the fact that even though God created marriage to last one lifetime, and that the Jewish people ignored that command and were dissolving marriages. So, Moses permitted divorce so that marriage would be preserved.
2. It could also speak of the fact that the Jewish people could not bring themselves to bring someone caught in sexual sin to capital punishment, even though death was the only way out of the marriage, that Moses also allowed divorce to be an alternative to death.

Was “porneia” more serious under the Law in the OT than it is today? Absolutely not! If it is anything, it is even worse today in light the full Gospel of God and with the Holy Spirit dwelling within.

The conclusion seems to be that divorce in the New Testament is the equivalent of death in the Old Testament.

3. What is the abandonment of the _____ spouse exception of 1 Cor. 7?

In verse 15, the word for *leave* is the same Greek word for *divorce* in verses 10 and 11.

Therefore, the verse is allowing for the saved spouse to be free from the marriage bond if the unbelieving spouse chooses to leave.

Summary

1. God hates divorce, and sin is always part of every divorce. However, not every divorce is sinful.
2. God allows for divorce but has never required it of Christians.
3. God's plan has always been one man for one woman for one lifetime.
4. Divorce is allowed for sexual sin and for abandonment by an unbelieving spouse.
5. Remarriage is allowed for the victim of the sexual sin or of the unbelieving spouse.
6. If you are part of an unbiblical divorce, the goal is confession, repentance, and reconciliation. You are to remain unmarried until reconciled to your spouse, or until your spouse remarries someone else, or until your spouse dies.
7. Unbiblical divorce causes adultery when either spouse is the first to remarry, and when someone marries one from an unbiblical divorce before the other spouse remarries. That adultery is not continuous, but is the act that severs the biblical marriage covenant.

Conclusion

1. We will encourage those who are struggling in their marriage to seek reconciliation and not divorce.
2. When there is a threat to life, and all other resources are exhausted, we will encourage separation for the purpose of protection but also continue to work toward reconciliation.

3. We recognize that there are two causes for a “biblical” divorce.
 - a. Sexual infidelity
 - b. Abandonment by the unsaved spouseIn these cases, the one not responsible is free to remarry.
4. We recognize there are unbiblical divorces. They are many divorces that do not fit the criteria above.
 - a. If it happens, both spouses are to remain unmarried and pray for reconciliation.
 - b. If one of them remarries, it is the sin of adultery. The sin is not continuous, but it breaks the marital bond.
 - c. At that time, the other spouse is free to remarry.
 - d. If neither remarry, they are to remain single until reconciliation, death, or the marriage of the other spouse.
5. As a church family, we will seek to guide one another to live by these principles. If a brother or sister chooses not to and violates these principles:
 - a. The elders will confront those involved and clearly present the Biblical position.
 - b. We will clearly encourage obedience to God’s Word and express that to disobey God’s principles is sin.
 - c. Those choosing to proceed with an unbiblical remarriage will be removed from and not allowed to hold any leadership position within the church until the sin is confessed and repented.
 - d. There could be a situation where church discipline must also be implemented.

What if you took part in an unbiblical marriage?

1. Confess your sin before God and to others.
2. Should you now get out of your present marriage? No.
1 Cor. 7:17,20,24 says to stay in your present situation and make it work.
3. What should you do if you are single? Pray for reconciliation.

Where there is repentance, there can be restoration.

Jesus never taught you had to get a divorce. Forgiveness, patient healing, getting help and you can restore a broken relationship. But sometimes, divorce is chosen.

We will fight for the marriages in our church.