

Divorce

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What do you think would be the biggest or one of the biggest controversies in America or on planet earth today; have to do with families? One of the biggest discussions and one of the things you can ask people about, even in the religious realm, and there are all kinds of different thoughts and ideas about divorce and remarrying. There are all kinds of them.

As I studied this, it was enlightening. It is amazing what you can learn just by studying. It is amazing what you can find out why Jesus responded in a way that He did because of some of the events that were taking place and already had taken place in the area where He was at. It is amazing.

Mark 10:1-12

- 1 And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.*
- 2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.*
- 3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?*
- 4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.*
- 5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.*
- 6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.*
- 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;*
- 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.*
- 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*
- 10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.*

11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Jesus, in His teaching used different methods. We know that He used spoken Proverbs, parables, and different ways, but as you look at some things here, this is a different type of teaching. We could use the word “paradox.” A “paradox” is something teaching in itself sounds like it contradicts itself. Paul made the statement one time, “...when I am weak, then I am strong...” That is a “paradox.” That sounds like it contradicts itself. Doesn’t it? “...when I am weak, then I am strong...” We know what that means. Jesus is saying here that “...they twain shall be one flesh...” That sounds like it contradicts itself, doesn’t it? However, there is tremendous teaching in this and we will look at it tonight with the Lord being our helper.

Jesus is leaving Galilee and the area of Capernaum. In these first nine chapters, we have talked about many things that Jesus did in Galilee and His Galilean ministry. The time He spent around Nazareth, the time He spent around the city of Galilee, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and all those areas. We talked about that. Now He is leaving that area and He is going towards the south. He is going into Judea. He is going towards Jerusalem. We know that Mark excludes a lot of that teaching that has to do with what some of the theologians call the “traveling ministry.” From the time that Jesus leaves Galilee until He gets to where He is going. You can read that in Matthew and different places.

This is what is happening. He is leaving the area here of Galilee. He is going to the south. He is coming down into the area of Judea.

1 And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

As He is traveling, when you read this in the original manuscripts, it will tell you that, and not only that, but if you just read history; when people traveled, they did not have cars, boats and things like we have today. Therefore, they walked everywhere they went. Many times when people were traveling from city to city, as they would travel, they would encounter other people who were traveling the same way. In other words, if you get down here on the highway and you turned towards Portsmouth to get down that direction, then you are going to encounter other people who are going the same direction as you are. You are all going the same direction. Some of them may jump off along the way in different places and some of them may go on past there, but you are all going to travel the same way and if you behave yourself and if they behave themselves then you all traveling in the same direction and behaving yourself. There was a lesson in that, but I forgot what it was.

As people would travel here during this time they would do that. they would be traveling, there was a main road that they took, and as they would travel if people were going the same direction you are they would just come in and be part of the group and you would all travel in the same direction going the same way. Jesus had done this on many different occasions when He was in Galilee as He was traveling. We know that people would come and join in the caravans because He was a very popular fellow. We are two and half or so years into His ministry, or something like that, but He has been around for some time now. Maybe a little bit farther than that. However, He's been around for some time and people knew who He was. They were acquainted with this guy called "Jesus of Nazareth." The One that raised the dead and walked on the water and done all these things. They were acquainted with Him. Not only were the common people acquainted with Him, but also the Pharisees, Sadducees, and religious leaders were also. Jesus is traveling and as He is traveling, people would just sort of come into the group.

If you remember, the day Jesus arose from the dead, He was going to Amaeus. Do you remember the story about the guys walking to Amaeus? Jesus just sort of come into the crowd and started walking with them? That is what happens here. As they are traveling, He begins to teach them. He was teaching them, as He went and things begin to happen here.

2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.

When you read this same account in the book of Matthew, you will find out that Matthew's account made the statement that they asked, "Can we put our wives away for every cause?" That was what they were asking here. "Can we put our wives away for any reason whatsoever?"

You might say, "Why would they ask a question like that?" Here is what they were trying to do. I never thought about this until studied it this week. The reason they were doing that—do you remember what happened to John the Baptist? John the Baptist told Herod the tetrarch, that it was not lawful for him to have Phillip's wife. Do you remember? We know that what happened is that John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod. Truth?

Jesus was going into the area here where Herod was in control. The Pharisees knew that. They weren't crazy. They had been looking for some way to try to get rid of Jesus Christ. They understood and knew that John had preached that Herod was not allowed to have Phillip's wife, his brother's wife, and they knew that got John killed. Therefore, the Pharisees were thinking, "If we can get Jesus to preach that it is wrong to divorce your wife and marry somebody else, then we can get Him killed; we can get Him condemned." This is what they are doing here. This was their question. They were not interested in learning anything from Jesus. They already had their minds made up anyway.

One thing I want us to think about here as we move into this is that our divorce rate today in America is something around 51% or 52% or somewhere in that range. During the time that Jesus walked upon planet earth, it was a whole lot greater than that. Even before that, three or four hundred years before Jesus was here, it was a whole lot worse than it was even when Jesus walked here.

When you look at history, several hundred years, a thousand years ago, two thousand years ago; women were treated just like an animal would be treated. A woman was no different than an animal; a mule, a cow, a sheep, or whatever. In a lot of cultures, in a lot of places, women were abused, misused, traded, sold, given away. Many times in our past, women were very much mistreated. Even here during the time that Jesus lived, people put their wives away, they divorced for no reason. In other words, if you come home and your wife had burnt the bread, then that was cause for a divorce. If she didn't get the stains out of your socks, then that was cause for a divorce. You might say that those things are trivial, but during our past history of this world, there were many times where that is exactly what went on.

The Pharisees knew that. The Pharisees, no doubt, knew what Jesus was going to say. However, they were trying to get Him on the record exactly what He said so that they could go "Hey, this is what He taught. You killed John the Baptist for this. What about this guy?" That is what they are doing. They are trying to trap Him.

2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.

They were putting Him to the test. They were not concerned about learning some truth. They were not concerned about having a deeper understanding about things, but they were asking these questions, tempting Him, putting Him to the test; so that they could get Him on record exactly what He understood, or what He taught, or what He believed about marriage and divorce so that they could use that against Him.

Here some time ago, there was a fellow who called me and asked me a question about a certain thing. He made a bee line to some people that he was having an argument with and said, "Hey, Bob Bradley said this." That is fine as long as people repeat what I say. However, what happens many times is that there is an "is," an "at," "are," and "was" added to what you say to make it sound like something you did not even say. That is what they were trying to do here with Jesus. They did not want to learn anything, but they wanted to get Him on record for what He believed and what He understood, and what He taught here about marriage and divorce so that they could tempt Him.

Now, look what Jesus does.

3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

That is a smart answer, isn't it? It really is. You know, the Pharisees were scholars as far as the Old Testament Law went. They even knew that the scribes had taken it and wrote

it, and re-wrote it, and copied it and re-copied it to suit them. Not only that, but also all the other things that they had added to it. They knew what the first five books of the Bible said. Probably, a lot of these folks that were in this crowd could quote a lot of it. I'd say there were some very intelligent people in this crowd on this day, who was talking to Jesus.

Another thing is that there were two views from two different rabbis. One of the well-known rabbis during this time was a very conservative rabbi. His teaching and his followers believed that there was no reason that you could put your wife away. Then the other rabbi was a well-known rabbi and many people followed him. He was on the liberal side that said if you didn't like the way she fixed her hair, you could put her away. There were two different views here and what they were trying to do is see which one He was going to side with and what He was going to do. They knew whatever He said; He was going to offend somebody; one side or the other. Whatever position He took; He was going to offend some people and not only that but they were going to get Him.

What did Moses command you?

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

1 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 in her hand, and send her out of his house.

2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife .

3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;

4 Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

Moses said there was one reason for divorce. Didn't he? What the discussion was even among rabbis and even among people today when you read; the discussion is what did Moses really mean here when he makes the statement: "...he hath found some uncleanness in her..." That was the reason that Moses gave here that someone could put away his wife. Not because they burnt the bread. Not because they didn't like how she fixed her hair, she didn't wash the clothes, she did not get out of bed soon enough, or she did not get back from Wal-Mart soon enough. That was not a reason for a divorcement. The reason for divorcement is some uncleanness that she had done.

Matthew 19:9

9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Moses made this statement that the only reason that you could put away your wife was because of some of uncleanness. Jesus gives the reason for divorce as fornication. That was the reason for a divorcement. That is there. That is plain. I did not write that. The Free Will Baptists did not make that up. Some church did not sit down and write it. Jesus Christ said those words. Didn't He? Whether, I understand it, or whether I have my arm wrapped around it; I really don't know. It does not really matter because that is what Jesus said.

The thing that I want us to remember is this. When Jesus asked the question and He was not giving us the full umbrella here about marriage and divorcement because there are many other things in scripture about that. He is answering their question in a way to get them to understand how sinful that they really are.

Look what Jesus does.

3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

What they said was true. That is exactly what Moses said. Moses gave them the right to put away their wives but there was a reason here. Moses said if some uncleanness...if something is unclean; and when you uncleanness it had something to do with fornication, or adultery. It was some kind of sexual sins. That is what Moses was talking about. He was not talking about little trivial things like I talked about.

During Moses' time, and even the time that Jesus Christ lived, polygamy was a big thing. A man may have a whole bunch of wives and he may get tired of one and say, "I don't want her anymore so I'll just put her away. I'll just get rid of her and I'll go get me another." That sounds a whole lot like today. It is sad but it is true.

He is going to answer the question. However, He is going to answer their question in a way to get them to look at how sinful they really are. That is what they did. When you read this bill of divorcement in the original manuscripts it says "a little book." The reason that God allowed Moses to do that was because before this time, people were putting away their wives for no cause. What it did to women was that when a woman was put away—as I said they were neglected, they were abused, they were cast out into society, they were an outcast and for the most part, woman had no hope of having a life of satisfaction, or a life that they could enjoy living. They basically became street people.

The reason that Moses gave the law was that a woman could have a writing of divorcement and that gave her the liberty, when she was put away, she could go out here

and remarry. That's what that says here, isn't it? It gave her the opportunity to be able to have some kind of a life. This is what Moses said.

5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

Jesus looked at these guys and said, "Moses did give you a writing of divorcement, but it was because of the hardness of the people's hearts." That is the reason that He is saying here that Moses gave you this law. He is not saying that God commended it. Did He? He said, "God gave you that law because of the hardness of your heart." Truth? He is doing that because He wants to show these guys something; that they have not changed not one bit since their forefathers. In other words, since the time that Moses walked upon planet earth, the prejudice and hatred that is towards women has not changed any in all these years. You guys' heart is just as hard as your forefathers were.

The hard heart means this: to be insensitive to the truth of God; to have no feeling, to have no compassion, to have no concern about what God has said.

Wouldn't that be a bad place to be? Wouldn't it be a bad horrible place to be to know the truth, to be able to hear the truth preached and taught, to know what God's Word says and you have no feeling toward it whatsoever. That's a hard heart. People sit in churches all over this world today and their hearts are hardened towards the Word of God. They are insensitive to the truth that God has spoken and what God has taught. That is what He is saying here. Moses gave you that law because you were insensitive; you had no feeling. What God had already instituted, it didn't bother you whatsoever.

We are seeing that on a scale like we have never seen in all of our time. The Word of God doesn't touch them, it does not bother them. It does not affect them. It does not govern their lives. They will not let that govern their lives. They are just completely, totally insensitive to it.

The word "insensitive" means this: if I take a needle in my hand and I feel it, that means that I am sensitive to that, but if I take a needle and stick it in my hand and I don't feel it, then that means that I am insensitive to it. That is what I am saying here. The Word of God had no effect on these people. What God had said had no effect on them. They were completely and totally hardened against the Word of God.

6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.

Didn't He? How many people were here when God created Adam and Eve? How many people were here? That was all that was here wasn't it? There were two people. Adam was here and Eve was here. We know there were some people born here after that, but when God created man and woman, there was one man and one woman. God made one man for one woman. Truth? That is the way that it was. God made us different from the animals. Didn't He? He made man different from the animals. When He created man, He made us a whole lot higher than what the animals are. In the animal kingdom, were

adults here; you may have a dominate male that may have a whole bunch of girlfriends. In a group of lions—I don't care what kind of animals they are—there could be a dominate male in here that father's all the offspring of the whole clan, or tribe. However, God did not make man and woman that way. God made one man for one woman, for eternity. That is what God did.

We know that doesn't always work out that way, but that is the plan that God instituted. What He is trying to get these guys to understand is that some of these guys that He was talking to may have had ten wives. Some of them may have had twenty wives. I don't know that, but I'd say that what Jesus is teaching here; that some of them in the crowd who were asking the questions had put away wives, or had many wives and they had put them away for no reason at all.

He said, "In the beginning God made them male..." Not males [plural], and not females [plural], but He "...made them male and female." Everybody believe that? That is what He says. That is very plain.

Just because society says that it is okay for a man to be married to this woman and have affairs with this other woman; or for this woman to be married to this man and have affairs with this other man does not mean that it is okay. Just because society says that is fine... You'd be surprised when you read statistics about extramarital affairs of men and women both, you'd be surprised of the shocking number of men and women that sometime in their life has had a relationship with another man or another woman that was not their husband or wife. You might say, "Well, what is significant about that?" Here is what's significant about that. God never intended for that to be that way. God never intended for you to be married to one mate and to be messing around with another one. That is not in God's plan. You can whitewash what you believe, or justify what you are doing, but you will never convince God of that. You will never convince God that what you are doing and have done is okay because it is not right.

This is what He is trying to teach; the importance of marriage and what marriage was all about.

In talking to young people today, before I marry anybody; I do my best to sit down and talk to them and explain to them that marriage is more than sex. Marriage is more than lust. A marriage is more than a honeymoon. The honeymoon is going to be over and you are going to still have her, or you are going to still have him. I encourage young people, or anyone who is getting married, to make sure what you are doing because marriage is a lifetime commitment. Now, we understand that there are things that happen in life where things don't always work out that way. We understand that and God understands that. We know that. However, when we make a commitment it goes farther than just saying words. What I said a minute ago; especially with our young people today, is to try to instill in them, instill in your children and your grandchildren, the values of marriage. This world today, our news media, many of our churches today; satan today is working overtime trying to destroy the sanctity of marriage. There is not a day that goes by, if you watch any news at all that you don't hear somebody talking about some attack on what

we call heterosexual marriages; a man and a woman being married. There is an attack on that world wide today. They want to teach or try to teach that it is okay for Judy and Carla to be married, or for Paul and Bobby to be married. In your eyes it may be, in your state that you live in it may be okay and your pastor may say it is okay. However, you will never get God to approve that.

The reason that there is such a great attack on marriage today is that if we throw away marriage then we have thrown it all away. If we say that those kinds of marriages are fine then we have thrown it all away.

7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;

We quote that all the time. I'm sure that everybody in here has heard that hundreds and hundreds of times. Do you know what it is talking about? We know that it is talking about when a man and a woman gets married that a man is to leave his father and mother and the woman is going to leave her father and mother and they are going to come together.

The Bible uses the word "leave." That's a good word when you look at it. It's a strong word, actually. It means to break some ties.

When I went into the Army years ago they told me, one of the things that the drill sergeants hammered on was "Boy, we are going to cut the apron strings. Let loose of your mommy's apron strings." That is what they were telling people. They used those terms a lot.

However, the word "leave" means that. It means to leave that life behind. Not necessarily to forsake it, or do away with it; but it says here, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife."

Do you know what the word "cleave" means? Does anybody know? It means to be "glued together." Not only does it mean to be glued together for the first six months of the marriage, but you are stuck together. It is something that you continually, year after year and year after year you are together.

The reason in America today that we have so much divorce is because people are not "stuck together" anymore. We pull apart. One goes this way, and the other goes that way and one does this and the other does that. I can say a lot of different things on that, but I'm not going to do that. What I am saying is that husbands and wives ought to be close together. We ought to be stuck together. Your husband and your wife, he's yours and she's yours; you are stuck. You should be stuck together. Truth? That is what God is saying here.

Some time ago, someone called me on the phone and they were all upset and all tore up about their relationship that they were in. They had been married for a while and their wife had a child or two. When they got married she was about this big around, about the

size of a broom stick and after two babies and ten years, she put on a few pounds. He made the statement “She did not look like that when we got married.” I knew this fellow and I knew him for many years. When he got married, he did not look like he looked then either. He also got that big around and he would not fit in a barrel. There was a double standard there. He thought his wife could raise kids and do all that she did and have kids and she was supposed to stay the size of a broom stick. All the while, it was okay for him to go out and do what he done and get as big as a barrel.

We change. If you love your wife, you will love her if she weighs one hundred pounds or nine hundred pounds. Not too many Amen’s on that boys! I’m glad this is about over. Women should be the same way. If he does not have a tooth in his head, if he doesn’t have a hair on his head, she should love him anyway. That is what He is talking about here in this lesson is that husband’s and wives ought to be stuck together.

I mean this sincerely. We get married when we are eighteen or twenty-five years and we have been married twenty, thirty, or forty years or whatever it has been; our love for our husbands and wives should be a lot greater twenty, thirty, or forty years down the road than it was the day that we got married. If we are stuck together, if we are living in the will of God as we should be living, we will.

He uses the word “leave.” He uses the word “cleave.” He says here:

8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

Two of them shall become one is a paradox. The two shall become one. When a husband and wife are married, a husband should love his wife just like he loves himself and his wife should love her husband just like she loves herself. If we would do that when we get upset with one another, then we would not say things to one another that were going to hurt one another. If we knew that it was going to hurt ourselves then we would not say it. We say a lot of childish things and we call ourselves adults. We say a lot of childish things to one another sometimes. We can say “Praise God. I’m living right at the foot of the cross.” Then you treat your husband or your wife like a broom stick then I wonder about that. That concerns me. If you don’t think any more about your husband or your wife than you do your dog there is something wrong there somewhere. Somewhere down the road you have pulled apart.

9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

He uses “...what God has put together...” God put man and woman together. God did that. God gave the marriage relationship to mankind. There is no other union; there is no other relationship that a man and woman can have on planet earth that can be compared to a relationship of a husband and a wife who loves one another. I love my dad and mom and we had a relationship at home, but it was nothing like having a relationship with your wife or your husband. You women loved your dad and mom but the relationship that you have with a husband that loves you and you love is nothing like having that relationship.

He uses the word “joined.” Do you know what the word “joined” means? It does mean to be together. It means something more than that. It actually means, when you look at it in the original manuscripts; it uses the word “yoke.” Do you know what a yoke is? I never did plow with two animals at one time. However, I’ve seen dad and different ones of them who would hook two mules or two horses side by side and they had a “yoke” that would go across their neck and come down to their breast and come over and it would fit on the other one over here. They would be fastened together and they would take the chains off of the harness and they would hook them to their plow or whatever they were using. The reason they did that was that each one of them could pull. In other words, two of them pulling the plow, or the load of hay or whatever; they were to pull it together.

In a marriage, you husbands have got a responsibility. As husbands we have a responsibility. Do you know what that responsibility is? Get this. Our responsibility towards our wives is that whatever need she has, it is our responsibility to do our very best to take care of that need. Whether it is physical, emotional, financial, and sexual or whatever it is; it is our responsibility to take care of wife and supply her needs. Also, women are the same way. We could talk a lot about the man’s responsibilities and the weight or load that the man is supposed to pull. However, what Jesus is trying to teach us here is that man and woman are joined together. The man has his responsibilities and the woman has her responsibilities. Just as it is the man’s responsibility to do everything that he can to support his wife, and take care of all the needs that she has, it is the woman’s responsibility to do the same thing towards her husband. Truth?

By joining together that way, then as we work and as we walk and labor through life; we are together. We are side by side. We are shoulder to shoulder. We are pulling and working together. There are many things that are being accomplished by husbands and wives that love one another, and fulfilling their responsibilities towards one another. Satan hates that. If I fulfill my responsibilities, and we fulfill our responsibilities to our mates then we are getting on good ground where we can do some great things for God. If husbands and wives, all they do is fight and argue and carry on, can’t get along, and won’t ride in the same car together; we pull apart. Satan loves that. If we can’t get along at home with our husbands and wives then we will never do anything for God.

I understand that there are problems that come in life and there is divorce. When you look around at society that we live in today... I was talking about extended family today, and said she must be a great woman to put up with what she has put up with for twenty-five years. Her husband being unfaithful, on drugs, and doing all the horrible things that he did; she had every right many years ago to have forgot about him and put him away because of what he has done.

Marriage is something that we should cherish. You should love your wife. That is a must. You wives need to love your husbands. If you love them as yourself, if you love your husbands and wives like Christ loved the church then you will be able to get down on your face together, side by side and arm in arm. You can pray together. You can seek the face of God together. There are going to be bad times in your life but two of you

pulling together can go through these times better than one of you can. The load is going to get heavy.

There have been times in my life, that if it had not been for Deb urging me on and carrying a large part of the load, I don't where I would be tonight. In my ministry, I guess I have quit preaching a thousand times, I guess. You might say that's stupid but if you have never walked in these shoes then you really don't that. Everybody thinks that you just get up and speak; and that it all will come flying out. It does that sometimes.

It is great to have a wife who loves you and it is great to have a husband that loves you. Cherish them. In the day that we live in, cherish them. Take care of them, support them, and hug on them. Tell them that you love them. Pat on them. Appreciate them.

Jesus loves you. Do you know how much Jesus loves you? He died for you. That is how much He loves you.

Do you know how much He loved the church? He loved the church enough that He died for it.

Jesus is speaking.

Come—