

“Marriage and Divorce – Part 4”  
Mark 10:1-12  
(Preached at Trinity, January 16, 2013)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. We’ve been looking at the important subject of marriage and divorce.  
We’ve looked at God’s purpose for marriage which mirrors His purpose for creating the two distinct sexes, male and female.
  - a. For the purpose of providing a companion for the man
  - b. For the purpose of establishing a union between the male & female that would form a bond stronger than they were as individuals
  - c. For the purpose of providing the means through which the human race would multiply
2. Marriage is a wonderful gift from God and by God’s design it must never be terminated as long as the two are alive.  
No matter what the civil authorities allow, God forbids divorce and declares His hatred of it.  
**Malachi 2:15-16 NAU** - "let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. <sup>16</sup> "For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel"
3. If they separate they are not permitted to marry another because they are still married in the eyes of God.  
**1 Corinthians 7:10-11 NAU** - "But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband <sup>11</sup> (but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife."
4. When we talk about a Biblical divorce we are speaking of a marriage coming to an end in God’s eyes. Only then is an individual free to enter into marriage with another person.  
The reasons for a marriage to end are very few and very clear. If a person leaves a marriage and remarries for any other reason they are guilty of adultery—perpetual adultery.
5. Last time we began to examine the Biblical reasons a person is free to marry another person.
  - A. The first reason, of course, is death  
Marriage is a temporal institution  
We are blessed with our mates until death separates us. After death the surviving mate is then free to marry another.
  - B. The second reason is adultery. In this passage Jesus gives no exceptions – **Verses 10-12**  
In Matthew’s Gospel Jesus adds a single exception  
**Matthew 19:9 NAS** - "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."
    1. God permits divorce in the case of adultery - and then it is only allowed and not commanded

2. When a person commits this terrible breach of their marital vows the innocent party is allowed to terminate the marriage and marry another.
6. Are there no other exceptions? Are there not other acceptable reasons for divorce?
- A. God's standard for marriage is purposely strict. It is purposely tight because of the sanctity of marriage.
  - B. God's standard is infinitely greater than this world's standard
    1. The world, and our justice system allow many reasons for divorce. Mental anguish, Incompatibility, Physical abuse, Irreconcilable differences
    2. Our passage here in **Mark** gives no reason for divorce.  
**Matt. 19:9** - Jesus gives only one exception
- I. The Apostle Paul offers one additional reason why divorce might be permitted  
**See 1 Cor. 7:1-15**
- A. **Verses 10-11** - Remember, the Corinthians had written Paul with some questions – **Verse 1**  
"Now concerning the things about which you wrote"
    1. One important question dealt with the whole problem of continuing marriage with a pagan.  
**2 Corinthians 6:14 NAS** - "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?"  
**KJV** - "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers"
    2. First Paul says, (Verses 10-11 paraphrased) - "The Lord has already answered this, you must remain married, if you separate you must remain unmarried or be reconciled with your spouse"
    3. In **Verse 12** Paul is saying there is one more exception which Christ did not deal with - **1 Corinthians 7:12 NAU** - "But to the rest I say, not the Lord"
    4. The believer is not permitted to divorce his or her mate but we are freed if our unbelieving mate chooses to leave
  - B. This speaks of the radical nature of Christianity.
    1. Our salvation changes everything. It brings about a radical transformation.
    2. Relationships are altered
      - a. On one hand the believer becomes a much better wife or husband. They are willing to demonstrate service and love like never before. Husbands give themselves sacrificially for their wives  
Wives become submissive to the leadership of their husbands
      - b. But their commitment to Christ and His Church is absolute. They have a new Master and they have an intense desire to follow Him.  
**Luke 9:23 NAU** - "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."  
        - (1) Following Christ means submission to Him as Lord; a willingness to forsake everything else.
        - (2) The Christian wants to worship, tithe his income—he wants to serve the church and spend time with God's people.

- c. This change can cause conflict among families  
**Matthew 10:34-37 NAS** - "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> "For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; <sup>36</sup> and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. <sup>37</sup> "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."
- d. For some unbelieving mates this situation is intolerable.
- 4. If at all possible they should remain together. Under no circumstance short of adultery is a believer allowed to leave the unbeliever.
  - a. God may choose to save the unbelieving mate through the godly life of the believer  
**1 Peter 3:1-2 NAS** - "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of *them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, <sup>2</sup> as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior."
  - b. But if in spite of the best efforts of the believing spouse to live at peace the unbeliever chooses to leave the believer is then free to remarry
- C. Why does God allow desertion by an unbeliever to end the marriage?
  - 1. It is an act of mercy upon the believer as God desires us all to live in peace  
**1 Corinthians 7:15 NAS** - "Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace."
  - 2. It is an act of God's judicial judgment upon the unbeliever. Their marriage to a believer is a rich blessing of God's grace. Hardening their hearts against it is a terrible act of wickedness. Allowing them to leave the marriage is an act of God's judgment.  
**1 Corinthians 7:14** – "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."
- D. Are there not other reasons for divorce?
  - 1. What about abuse? The victim may leave to protect themselves and possibly the children. But this does not end the marriage. They must work toward repentance and reconciliation. Until such time they may live separate but they may not divorce.
  - 2. There are no other reasons for marrying another but these three: Death, Adultery, Desertion by the unbelieving mate due to the believing mate's relationship with Christ.

- II. What about unbiblical divorces – that is, divorces that do not involve adultery or desertion?
- A. They are not actually divorced in God’s eyes.
1. Both parties must remain single or be reconciled with one another.
  2. Pastors must not be a guilty party in remarriage which will join a couple into an adulterous relationship  
Pastors must also not be guilty of unequally yoking believers and unbelievers
- B. What about those who divorced in violation to the Word of God and are now remarried?
1. There are many different kinds of sin from which God has delivered us through salvation. Divorce should never occur for Christians, but sometimes we carry the baggage of a divorce into salvation.
  2. Often remarriage has occurred making reconciliation impossible
  3. Since reconciliation to the first spouse is impossible and since another divorce would worsen the situation the demand upon them is to repent of past sin and strive to honor God with this marriage
  4. I’m not giving license, but adultery is not the unforgivable sin – those in this situation must cast themselves upon the love and mercy of Christ
  5. They must repent of their sin and strive from here on out to conform their marriage according to God’s design.

**Conclusion:**

1. All of this tells us that we should take marriage very seriously. In normal circumstances marriage is for life. Divorce should be an extreme rarity for a Christian home. That’s because adultery is unthinkable and desertion because of Christ is impossible.
2. All other marital difficulties must be dealt with as with all other issues of sin—through prayer, confession and repentance. We must live together with love, patience, mercy, and grace.