

06 - Divorce Part 2 - Matthew 19:7-8 - 2017-12-10

Call to Worship: Ephesians 1:3-6

Scripture Reading: Malachi 2:13-16

Sermon: "Marriage, Divorce and Singleness Part 6" Matthew 19:7-8

Benediction: Ephesians 1:7

## INTRODUCTION

In the beginning . . .

Adam and Eve sinned . . .

Always men are tempted to . . .

Women also are tempted, but often have lacked the social power to act on it.

Think of how Abraham and Sarah dealt with Hagar

God made Abraham promises, and God believed.

Since Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all those promises . . .

Abraham's sin, and Sarah's, had to be dealt with

The men of Israel in the time Moses gave Deuteronomy (not the first generation)

The men of Israel in the time of Malachi

The men of Israel in the time the Lord Jesus Came

He came to deal with sin, with the guilt of it

He who would never just do what He pleased with a woman and then send her away,  
took the guilt of those who would, and who have, upon Himself and died for it on the  
cross

But there is also the matter of setting the record straight as to what is right and wrong in God's  
sight regarding a man putting away his wife, a woman sending away her husband.

## TEXT

Matthew 19:7-8 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of  
divorcement, and to put her away? (8) He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of  
your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

## BODY

- I. The Two Words To Be Understood (which I previously have misunderstood, and you  
previously may have misunderstood)
  - A. Note the two expressions

1. give a certificate of divorce; bill of divorcement; writing of divorcement
  2. send her away; put her away
- B. Note that the NT speakers are citing the OT - "Why did Moses then command"
1. the NT is in Greek; the OT is in Hebrew
  2. so it is one of those times we are greatly helped in understanding by being able to compare OT with NT
- C. "Divorce"
1. Greek: G647 *apostasion*
    - a) the Greek word for divorce
    - b) yes, similar to *apostasia*, apostacy
  2. Hebrew: H3748 *kerythuth*
    - a) Hebrew word for divorce
    - b) literally "a cutting"
  3. note that the word is a noun, not a verb; it is not something you do, it is a kind of paper that you give
    - a) in our usual way of thinking and speaking, we say that a man is going to "divorce" his wife; or a wife "divorced" her husband
    - b) in the bible, a man does not "divorce" his wife
    - c) instead, he gives her a
      - (1) certificate of divorce
      - (2) bill or writing of divorcement
    - d) I'll show you this in the scriptures in a minute
    - e) the old translations say, "divorcement," conveys very clearly this is a noun, not a verb
- D. "Put away" or "send away" - two word phrase for us; one word in original
1. G630 *apoluo*
    - a) to free fully, that is, relieve, release, dismiss
    - b) common word used many times in the NT
  2. H7971 *shalach*
    - a) to send away
    - b) common word used many times in the OT

## II. The Use of the Two Words Together in the Bible

- A. In the bible, the word "divorce" always and only occurs in company with the word for "send away" or "put away."
1. the word for "send away" or "put away" is used many times in the NT and many times in the OT for all kinds of sending;
  2. but the word for "divorce" is used only three times in the NT and four times in the OT, and always with the word for "send away" or "put away"
- B. In NT, three places only **IMPORTANT**: In each of these three places, no matter how the English translations read, the Greek New Testament uses the same two words we have just studied, the noun for "divorce" and the verb for "send away" or "put away"

1. Matthew 19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of **divorcement**, and to **put her away**?
    - a) NKJV a certificate of divorce, and to put her away
    - b) ESV a certificate of divorce and to send her away
  2. Mark 10:2-4 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**.
    - a) NKJV a certificate of divorce and to dismiss her
      - (1) note that the word “dismiss” is used in NKJV, for no apparent reason
    - b) ESV a certificate of divorce and to send her away
  3. Matthew 5:31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall **put away** his wife, let him give her a *writing of divorcement*
    - a) NKJV Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce
    - b) ESV Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce
    - c) note that the NKJV and ESV read exactly the same, using “divorces” instead of “sends away” or “put away”
- C. In OT, used only four places: Deu 24:1, Deu 24:3, Is 50:1, Jer 3:8
1. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour 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.
    - a) verses 1, 3 NKJV, ESV certificate of divorce
    - b) verse NKJV verse 4 “her former husband who divorced her”
      - (1) why? not RSV or NASB but NIV “who divorced her”
  2. Isaiah 50:1 Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's **divorcement**, whom I **have put away**? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.
    - a) NKJV put away
    - b) ESV sent her away

3. Jeremiah 3:8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I **had put her away**, and given her a bill of **divorce**; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.
  - a) NKJV put her away
  - b) ESV sent her away

### III. Implications

- A. When we use the term “divorce” as we normally do, to refer to both of the operations as if they were one, we confuse ourselves in moral decision making
  1. “is it wrong to get a divorce” might be answered one way if you mean “get the legal paperwork to show your marriage is ended” but be answered another way if you mean, “kick your husband or wife out because you can’t get along, then get legal paperwork that says your marriage is ended”
  2. we need to keep the two things distinct in order to make right moral judgments
    - a) “is it right for me to kick my husband out for just any reason?”
    - b) “is it right for me to leave my wife for just any reason?”
- B. We use the term “divorce,” maybe unintentionally, as a euphemism, a way to refer to one very unpleasant thing by a somewhat more acceptable term
  1. what a man really wants is to get rid of his wife; what the woman really wants is to send her husband away
  2. it sounds better to say “get a divorce” than to say “get rid of”
- C. Two opposite things are presented the Word of God in this doctrine
  1. a man cleaves to his wife
  2. a man sends his wife away
  3. but “to divorce” and “to cleave” are not opposites; just how wrong it is gets lost
  4. so consider that if you put away your wife, you are doing exactly the opposite of what God has ordained for you to do, which is to cleave to her

## CONCLUSION

The marriage relationship between two sinful people is at the same time the most wonderful and the most miserable thing in the world. The sweetness of it excels every other pleasant thing in this life. But the bitterness of it hurts worse than any other pain. When the man’s own sinfulness combines with the sinfulness of his wife, the hurt can be both chronic and severe.

When the wife's own sinfulness crashes into the sinfulness of her husband, the result can make a mess worse than a pileup on the freeway.

When marriage becomes a painful mess, of course we are tempted to just get rid of each other. "I just want him out of here." "I just want her gone."

But beloved men and women, made in the image of God, made male and female, God hates putting away. And our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ came both to save sinners from the guilt of doing that, and to remind us all that it was not that way from the beginning. In the beginning God created them male and female, and told them, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife. And the two shall be one flesh." Our Lord has told us, what God has joined together, let man not separate.

JRY:

What the man is proposing to do is to "put away" his wife.

They are not asking if it is lawful to divorce the wife; they are asking if it is lawful to send her away.

**Matthew 19:7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"**

G647 *apostasion* properly something separative, that is, specifically, divorce

In NT, used only in this sense, and only in the gospels

In LXX, used only Deu 24:1, Deu 24:3, Is 50:1, Jer 3:8

H3748 *kerythuth* a cutting; used in OT only four times, always to mean divorce; from primitive root H3772 *karath* to cut off

G630 *apoluo* to free fully, that is, relieve, release, dismiss

Used many times in NT

Used in LXX only Gen 15:2, Ex 33:11, Num 20:29, Ps 34:1

H7971 *shalach* primitive root to send away; used many times in OT for various kinds of sending

That is how a man treats a woman whom his family has thoroughly mistreated.

Genesis 21:14 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.

That is how a man treats a woman who was part of the spoils of war.

Deuteronomy 21:10-14 When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, (11) And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife; (12) Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; (13) And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. (14) And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.

Henry:

For the hardness of their hearts Moses gave them this permission

Poole:

Or this was a permission and indulgence given to them for the hardness of their hearts, as in the case of divorce

Gill:

though after all, this was only a permission, because of the hardness of their hearts, as is said of divorce

That is how men treat a woman they have abused.

Judges 19:25 But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go.

That is how a man treats a woman he said he loved; but once he has had her, he hates her.

2 Samuel 13:14-17 Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her. (15) Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone. (16) And she said unto him, There is no cause: this evil in sending me away is greater than the other that thou didst unto me. But he would not hearken unto her. (17) Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this woman out from me, and bolt the door after her.

JRY (learned from Broadus):

The *permission* was to divorce; the *command* was to give a certificate of divorce and send her away. The Pharisees were confusing the two.

JRY:

If a man has been unfaithful to his wife by joining himself to another woman, he has separated the two who had become one flesh. If she then seeks divorce, she and the judge who grants the divorce are not violating our Lord's command not to separate two who had become one flesh, since the separation has already been done by the unfaithful man.

**Matthew 19:8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.**

Geneva:

By a political law, not by the moral law: for the moral law is a perpetual law of God's justice; the other bows and bends as the carpenter's bevel.

Trapp:

For the relief of the wife, questionless, was this permitted by Moses, not as a prophet, but as a lawgiver;

Moses noteth the hatred of a man's wife to be the cause of much mischief, Deu\_22:13-14. Hence a divorce was allowed in that case, Deu\_24:3, lest the husband's hatred should work the wife's ruth or ruin, in case he should be compelled to keep her.

He might put her away, therefore, but not without a double blur to himself.

1. By his writing of divorce, he should give testimony to her honesty, and that she was put away merely for his hard-heartedness toward her.
2. If she were again put away by a second husband, the first might not take her to wife again, as having once for ever judged himself unworthy of her further fellowship.

Husbands should be gentle to their wives, because of their weakness: glasses are not hardly handled; a small knock soon breaks them. But there are a number of Nabals, a brood of Chaldeans, a bitter and furious nation, that have little growing in their furrows but wormwood; they have a true gall of bitterness in them, Col\_3:20

And God Almighty professeth that he hates putting away; threatening also to cut off such unkind husbands as by their harshness caused their wives, when they should have been cheerful in God's services, to cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and with crying out, so that he regarded not the offering any more, Mal\_2:13.

Carroll:

[on Deuteronomy 21] The social laws concerning marriage, slavery, parental power over children, while far from the highest expression of God's will, do yet in every particular prohibit many current evils freely practiced in other nations. Our Lord himself explains that on account of their hardness of heart and low order of development imperfect laws were suffered. "The people but recently were a nation of slaves, with much more of the slave spirit remaining. It cannot be denied that even the civil and criminal codes on these points were far superior to the codes of other nations. The sanctity of human life, the sanctity of the home, and the sanctity of the family are marvelously safeguarded in these laws. And wherever this code touched an evil custom, it never approved the evil but limited the power and scope of the evil, as far as the unprepared people were able to bear it.

**Matthew 19:9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."**

Calvin:

The substance of it is: though the Law does not punish divorces, which are at variance with God's first institution, yet he is an adulterer who rejects his wife and takes another. For it is not in the power of a man to dissolve the engagement of marriage, which the Lord wishes to remain inviolate; and so the woman who occupies the bed of a lawful wife is a concubine.

Poole:

The reason is this: Because nothing but adultery dissolves the knot and band of marriage, though they be thus illegally separated, yet according to the law of God, they are still man and wife.

. . . the adultery of the person offending hath dissolved the knot of marriage by the Divine law.

But for the innocent person, it is as unreasonable that he or she should be punished for the sin of another. But what our Saviour saith here, and in the other parallel texts, is

undoubtedly to be understood of husbands and wives put away not for adultery, but for other light and trivial causes, for which by the law of God no divorce is allowed.

Henry:

He disallows it [divorce] in all other cases

Gill:

Marks adds, "against her"; which may be understood either of the woman he marries, which not being lawfully done, she lives in adultery with the husband of another woman; or of his former wife, and who is still his wife, and to whose injury he has married another; and he not only commits adultery himself, but, as in Mat\_5:32 "causeth her to commit adultery also", by being the occasion of marrying another man, when she is still his lawful wife:

and whoso marrieth her which is put away, for any other cause than adultery,

doth commit adultery also; since he cohabits with the wife of another man; see Gill on Mat\_5:32

Barnes:

Only one offence was to make divorce lawful. This is the law of God; and by the same law, all marriages which take place after divorce, where adultery is not the cause of divorce, are adulterous. Legislatures have no right to say that people may put away their wives for any other cause; and where they do, and where there is marriage afterward, by the law of God such marriages are adulterous!

Broadus:

declares that divorce is not only not allowable 'for every cause' (Mat\_19:3), but not allowable at all—except of course for unchastity

Spurgeon:

Any other sort of divorce is by the law of God null and void, and it involves the persons who act upon it in the crime of adultery. Whoso marrieth her who is put away doth commit adultery; since she is not really divorced, but remains the wife of her former husband. Our King tolerates none of those enactments which, in certain countries, trifle with the bonds of matrimony. Nations may make what laws they dare, but they cannot alter facts: persons once married are, in the sight of God, married for life, with the one exception of proven fornication.

RWP:

Jesus by implication, as in Mat\_5:31, does allow remarriage of the innocent party, but not of the guilty one

## **except for sexual immorality**

Calvin:

But an exception is added; for the woman, by fornication, cuts herself off, as a rotten member, from her husband, and sets him at liberty. Those who search for other reasons ought justly to be set at nought, because they choose to be wise above the heavenly teacher.

Trapp:

This sin dissolves the marriage knot, and directly fights against human society. The apostle adds the case of wilful desertion, 1Co\_7:15

Henry:

He allows divorce, in case of adultery; the reason of the law against divorce being this, They two shall be one flesh. If the wife play the harlot, and make herself one flesh with an adulterer, the reason of the law ceases, and so does the law.

Gill:

this is not to be understood of fornication committed before, but of uncleanness after marriage, which destroys their being one flesh

Ellicott:

The legislation which permits the complete divorce on other grounds, such as cruelty or desertion on either side, is justified, so far as it is justifiable at all, on the ground of the "hardness of heart" which makes such a concession necessary. It is interesting to compare St. Paul's treatment of cases which the letter of this command did not cover, in 1Co\_7:10-15.

Spurgeon:

Fornication makes the guilty person a fit subject for just and lawful divorce; for it is a virtual disannulling of the marriage bond. In a case of fornication, upon clear proof, the tie can be loosed; but in no other case.

RWP:

it is plain that Matthew represents Jesus in both places as allowing divorce for fornication as a general term (porneia) which is technically adultery

Carroll:

Because of the importance of the subject, we must take time to expound one other word, "fornication." Some expositors contend that this term can refer only to unchastity before marriage, therefore no offense after marriage justifies divorce. The position is wholly untenable on three grounds:

1. The Greek word *porneia* is a general term, not limited to unchastity before marriage. This is the verdict of most scholars. This abundantly appears from classical, biblical, and later usage by great scholars. The term is applied to married people in the noted case in-1Co\_5:1 ff. The corresponding Hebrew word is always employed figuratively to denote Israel's unfaithfulness to Jehovah, her husband. Dr. John A. Broadus, one of the greatest Greek scholars in American history, cites Amo\_7:17; Eze\_23:5; Num\_5:19 f; Hos\_3:3, and many passages from great Greek scholars and theologians, including Dion, Cassius, Chrysostom, Origen, and notes that the Peshito Syriac translates this very passage by "adultery." The reason for the general term is to include unchastity during betrothal, as well as adultery after marriage is consummated. (See supposed case in Mat\_1:18-19.)
2. The limitation of the meaning to unchastity before marriage would give most married women and multitudes of married men a scriptural ground for divorce. Divorces would be disastrously multiplied.
3. The limitation is absurd, opposed to sound principles of common sense and law. Nations hold each other responsible for violations of treaties after they are made, not before. Married people cannot reasonably dissolve the bonds of marriage for offenses before the marriage or the engagement to marry. Contracts do not bind before made or the pledge to make.

JRY:

Here is a significant point: to divorce and to put away are two different words in the Hebrew, and can be shown to be two distinct things

H7971 *shalach* primitive root to send away; used many times in OT for various kinds of sending

H3748 *kerythuth* a cutting; used in OT only four times, always to mean divorce; from primitive root H3772 *karath* to cut off

Deuteronomy 24:1 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of **divorce** [H3748 *kerythuth*], puts it in her hand, and **sends** [H7971 *shalach*] her out of his house,

Deuteronomy 24:3 if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of **divorce** [H3748 *kerythuth*], puts it in her hand, and **sends** [H7971 *shalach*] her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife,

Isaiah 50:1 Thus says the LORD: "Where is the certificate of your mother's **divorce** [H3748 *kerythuth*], Whom I have **put away** [H7971 *shalach*]? Or which of My

creditors is it to whom I have sold you? For your iniquities you have sold yourselves, And for your transgressions your mother has been put away.

Jeremiah 3:8 Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I **had put her away** [H7971 *shalach*] and given her a certificate of **divorce** [H3748 *kerythuth*]; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.

So, those being the only four times the word is used in the OT, the KJV uses “divorce” or “divorcement” only those four times.

NKJV, however, uses “divorce” to translate H7971

Deu 22:19 he cannot divorce her all his days

Vulgate: dimittere

Wycliffe: forsake

Gen: put her away

KJV: put her away

RSV: put her away

NIV: divorce

ESV: divorce

NASB: divorce (footnote: Lit *send her away*)

Deu 22:29 he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days

ASV: put her away

RSV: put her away

NIV: divorce

ESV: divorce

NASB: divorce

KJV: put her away

Vulgate: dimittere

Deu 24:4 her former husband who divorced her

RSV: sent her away

NIV: who divorced her

ESV: who sent her away

NASB: who sent her away

KJV: sent her away

Jer 3:1 They say, “If a man divorces his wife”

RSV: divorces

NIV: divorces

ESV: divorces

NASB: divorces

KJV: put away

Vulgate: dimiserit

Malachi 2:16 "For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence," Says the LORD of hosts. Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously."

Vulgate: dimitte

Gen: put away

KJV: putting away

ASV: putting away

RSV: divorce

NIV: divorce

ESV: divorce

NASB: divorce (footnote: Lit *sending away*)

I want to take these translators and give them a spanking!

Q: Is it true that the OT talks about putting a wife or other woman away without divorce? H7971 *shalach*

Genesis 21:14 So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba.

Genesis 24:59 So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men.

Exodus 2:5 Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it.

Deuteronomy 21:10-14 "When you go out to war against your enemies, and the LORD your God delivers them into your hand, and you take them captive, (11) and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her and would take her for your wife, (12) then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails. (13) She shall put off the clothes of her captivity, remain in your house, and mourn her father and her mother a full month; after that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. (14) And it shall be, if you have no delight in her, then you shall set her free, but you certainly shall not sell her for money; you shall not treat her brutally, because you have humbled her.

Judges 11:37-38 Then she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me: let me alone for two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains and bewail my virginity, my friends and I." (38) So he said, "Go." And he sent her away for two months; and she went with her friends, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains.

Judges 19:25 But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought her out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go.

2 Samuel 13:14-17 However, he would not heed her voice; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her. (15) Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Arise, be gone!" (16) So she said to him, "No, indeed! This evil of sending me away is worse than the other that you did to me." But he would not listen to her. (17) Then he called his servant who attended him, and said, "Here! Put this woman out, away from me, and bolt the door behind her."

Our unwitting indoctrination by the world, helped along by some misguided bible translation, has instilled in us the idea that the question is whether or not it is lawful in God's eyes for a man to get the necessary legal papers, signed by the judge, indicating his marriage to his wife is legally ended, or whether or not it is lawful in God's eyes for a woman to do the same, indicating her marriage to her husband is legally ended; that is, whether it is okay to "get a divorce."

But setting aside the misinformation provided by the world, we find in the Word of God that the question put to our Lord Jesus is not whether or not legal divorce for just any reason is approved of by God, but whether or not it is approved of by God for a man to send his wife away, to put her away, for just any reason; or for a woman to send her husband away, to put him away, for just any reason.

So let's look together and see what is truly at issue here, as our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us the will of God regarding divorce.

Prelude: Trinity 179 "Ah, Holy Jesus" (First Tune)

Camille: piano

Noah: trumpet - see attached

Anna: clarinet - see attached

Trinity 199 "Welcome Happy Morning"

Camille: piano - transpose

Noah: trumpet

Anna: clarinet

Grace 179 "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus"

Camille: flute

Noah: sing

Anna: piano

Hymn 184 "There Is a Green Hill Far Away"

Camille: Piano - transpose

Noah: Trumpet

Anna: sing

Grace 35 "Count Your Blessings"

Camille: sing

Noah: trumpet

Anna: piano

