

07 - Divorce Part 3 - Matthew 19:8 - 2017-12-17

Call to Worship: Psalm 95:1-2

Scripture Reading: Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95:3-11

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

Benediction: Psalm 95:7

INTRODUCTION

In order to test Jesus, certain Pharisees brought a question to Him: Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for just any reason?

The Lord Jesus answered by pointing us to the first two pages of the bible, where the answer can be found in what God did and said in the beginning, in the original institution of marriage.

In the beginning God made them one male and one female.

And God said to them, "A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh."

The Lord Jesus then affirmed what should go without saying: Since God said that the two shall be one flesh, indeed they are one flesh!

Based on that information from the first two pages of the bible, and the conviction that if God has said something, it is true, the Lord Jesus gave this answer to the question:

Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate.

The Pharisees were not satisfied, with this beautiful answer, however. They challenged the answer by citing the place in the law of Moses where divorce is described.

Last week we worked on understanding the terminology, the way the Word of God describes divorce, both in the law of Moses, and here in the Gospels.

One thing is divorce, which, in the bible always and only describes the legal paperwork prepared and given to the wife before she is sent away.

The second thing is "putting away" or "sending away." The question being asked by the Pharisees and answered by our Lord Jesus is not primarily about the first part, the divorce paperwork, but primarily about this second thing, the putting away.

We need to think and speak about the issue in these terms, in order best to grasp the truth of what the Lord Jesus has taught us.

Today we begin to consider what our Lord Jesus said to the Pharisees when they objected to His doctrine of marriage and divorce by citing the law of Moses. We see today that

Wanting to put away your husband or your wife is a symptom of hard-heartedness, against which the Word of God strongly warns us.

TEXT

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

BODY

Wanting to put away your husband or your wife is a symptom of hard-heartedness, against which the Word of God strongly warns us.

- I. The Man Who Wants to Put Away His Wife Shows Hardness of Heart
 - A. Matthew 19:8 Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to ~~divoree~~ put away your wives
 1. G4641 *sklerokardia*
 - a) medical: sclerosis arteriosclerosis, multiple sclerosis
 - b) medical: cardio
 - c) literally: hardnes of the heart
 2. hardness is not bad, of course, in things meant to be hard
 3. but the arteries are supposed to be soft, so arteriosclerosis is a dangerous condition
 4. the muscles are supposed to be soft, so multiple sclerosis is a debilitating disease
 5. and the heart is supposed to be soft, so hard-heartedness is a serious condition
 - B. Why did the Israelites in the time of Moses want to put away their wives, and so needed a law to regulate the practice? It was because of hardness of heart.
 - C. In talking about the Israelites in the time of Moses displaying hardness of heart, the Lord Jesus alludes to a well-known, important episode, which the Word of God makes much of
 1. this doctrine of men displaying hardness of heart is a very serious, a very grave matter
 2. let us give this some serious attention here today

The man who wants to put away his wife shows hardness of heart

II. The Man Who Hardens His Heart Departs from God in Unbelief (Hebrews 3)

- A. We already read about the incident of the Israelites quarrelling with Moses and with God, provoking or testing God in the wilderness, Exodus 17
 1. God had spared their lives by the Passover
 2. God had delivered them out of slavery, out of bondage
 3. God had drowned their enemies in the Red Sea
 4. God had given them manna to eat
- B. We already read what God said about that, Psalm 95: do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, at Meribah
- C. Now we turn to where Christ's apostle puts this to the church, Hebrews chapter 3
 1. God has spared our lives by Christ, the Passover
 2. By Christ God has delivered us from the dominion of darkness
 3. Christ has gained the victory over death and Satan
 4. God has given us Christ, the true bread from heaven
- D. Hebrews 3:7-11 quotes the passage from Psalm 95
- E. Hebrews 3:12 and following interprets and applies that to us
 1. verse 12 hardening your heart is a figure of speech; when stated literally it means
 - a) having in you an evil heart of unbelief; ESV an evil, unbelieving heart
 - b) departing from the living God; ESV leading you to fall away from the living God
 - c) APPLICATION: Hopefully about now you are grasping the gravity of this doctrine. Understand that when the Lord Jesus brings up the subject of the Israelites' hearts being hard in the time of Moses, He is talking about men having an evil, unbelieving heart, departing from the living God
 2. verse 12 you must beware lest there be in any of you such an evil heart of unbelief
 - a) were there, in the congregation of Israel in the wilderness, men who had in them an evil heart of unbelief? Yes!
 - b) can there be, in a congregation such as this, men who have in them an evil heart of unbelief? Yes!
 - c) Luke 8:5-6 "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. (6) Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture.
 - d) What does that mean? Luke 8:13 But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

3. how can a man who hears the gospel, the word of God, and initially receives it with joy, can believe for a while, but then fall away? verse 13 because there is danger that you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin
 - a) of course when succumbing to temptation to sin, you don't think to yourself, "I am hardening my heart against God"
 - b) but sin is deceitful; by it you work in yourself what you did not intend
- F. In saying this, neither I nor the author of Hebrews overturns the true doctrine of The Perseverance of the Saints, chapter 17 in our confession
1. Other Names
 - a) Eternal Security of the Believer
 - b) Preservation of the Saints
 - c) Once Saved Always Saved
 2. Popular misconception
 - a) if you ask Jesus to come into your heart, you surely are saved and should never doubt it
 - b) a person professes faith in Christ, then denies the faith, and stays that way, but he and we can be sure he is saved
 3. true biblical doctrine
 - a) Those whom God hath accepted in the beloved, and given faith unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved
 - b) though they may fall into grievous sin, have their hearts hardened, and hurt and scandalize others, yet shall they renew repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ to the end
 4. hear there in our confession the acknowledgement that a true believer may, by sin, have his heart hardened
 - a) but this is only to a degree, and he is sure to repent of it
 - b) and that is true of the one who truly has saving faith in Christ
 5. yet when a man is hardening his heart, he does not communicate to himself or to the church that he is persevering in faith, but that he is departing from God in unbelief

The man who wants to put away his wife shows hardness of heart

The man who hardens his heart departs from God in unbelief

III. The Man Who Departs from God in Unbelief Is Not in Christ

A. We are in Christ only if we hold fast to the end

1. Hebrews 3:6 whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and hope
2. Hebrews 3:14 partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end
- 3.

- B. Those who do not obey do not enter His rest because of unbelief
 - 1. in the case of the generation that came up out of Egypt, they did not enter the promised land of Canaan
 - 2. in the case of the people who go to church and say they are Christians, they shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven
 - 3. remember what they will say: Lord, Lord, did we not do many good things in Your name?
 - 4. remember what He will say: Away from me, you workers of lawlessness, I never knew you

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The man who departs from God in unbelief is not in Christ

IV. So Today We Exhort One Another Not to Be Hard-Hearted

- A. Brothers, sisters, the sin you are committing is deceiving you, telling you that you should and may put away your wife or put away your husband
- B. The resultant hardness of heart will have you wanting to put away your wife or your husband, looking for a way to do it that will be right in God's eyes
- C. Were you to continue in that way, you would be showing yourself and others that you are not in Christ; so, if you *are* in Christ, obey His word and so show yourself to be in Him
- D. Repent! Renew repentance!
 - 1. What sin is it that is deceiving you?
 - a) some variety of perversion?
 - b) lack of Christ-like love
 - c) resistance to submission?
 - d) failure to reverence your husband?
 - e) failure to treasure your wife?
 - f) keeping a record of wrongs? unforgiveness?
 - 2. Repent of sin!
- E. Trust in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in faith obey what He has said regarding your marriage.
- F. If you indeed are *not* in Christ, but have only put forward that impression
 - 1. perhaps your hard-heartedness toward your wife or husband is making that plain to you
 - 2. see yourself a desperate sinner, unworthy to enter His rest
 - 3. repent, and be forgiven all your sins
 - 4. trust in Jesus Christ for everlasting life
- G. Consider our Lord Jesus: Is His heart hard toward God and toward His church?

CONCLUSION

Wanting to put away your husband or your wife is a symptom of hard-heartedness, against which the Word of God strongly warns us.

The man who wants to put away his wife shows hardness of heart
The man who hardens his heart departs from God in unbelief
The man who departs from God in unbelief is not in Christ
So Today We Exhort One Another Not to Be Hard-Hearted

Jeremiah 31:31-34 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- (32) not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. (33) But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (34) No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

3:8 if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end

ESV: if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope

3:14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end

ESV: For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

do not harden your hearts

they always go astray in their heart

Poole:

they follow deceit and lying in their doctrine and worship with all their heart, so that it is diffused through their persons, and that seat of truth is made a depth of error, to the stupifying of their hearts even to very madness; and this was their state all their time

Gill:

all sins are errors, or aberrations from the law of God; all men err in this sense: these people erred in their hearts, for there is error in the understanding, and will, and affections, as well as in life and actions; and they may be said to err in their hearts, because their sins not only sprung from the heart, but they were done heartily, or with their hearts, and that continually; which shows the sottishness of this people: their stubbornness and rebellion; their want of integrity, and their constancy in sinning: heart sins, as well as others, are taken notice of by God

they have not known My ways

Poole:

notwithstanding God's works were among them, and his word, yet they would not know his mind, so as to approve, love, and walk in God's ways; his law, doctrine, revealed truth, and commands were all cast behind their back

Gill:

they did not take notice of God's ways of providence towards them; nor did they approve of, and delight in his ways of worship and duty, or in his commands

Deuteronomy 15:7 "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother,

Proverbs 28:14 Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

Ezekiel 3:7 But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.

Mark 6:52 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

Mark 8:17-21 And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? (18) Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? (19) When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. (20) And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. (21) And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

John 12:37-40 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: (38) That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? (39) Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, (40) He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

Romans 2:4-6 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? (5) But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; (6) Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

Hebrews 3:15-19 while it is said: "TODAY, IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS IN THE REBELLION." (16) For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? (17) Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? (18) And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? (19) So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Hebrews 4:6-7 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, (7) again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "TODAY," after such a long time, as it has been said: "TODAY, IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS."

Ezekiel 18:27-32 Again, when a wicked man turns away from the wickedness which he committed, and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive. (28) Because he considers and turns away from all the transgressions which he committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. (29) Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' O house of Israel, is it not My ways which are fair, and your ways which are not fair? (30) "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord GOD. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. (31) Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? (32) For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and live!"

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.

hardness of your hearts G4641 *sklerokardia*

-RWP: *pros ten skerokardian humon*

-lit. because of your hard-heartedness

JRY:

In the beginning your hearts were not hard!

The Lord Jesus' heart is not hard toward His bride!

Psalm 95:8-11 "Do not harden your hearts, as in the **rebellion [H4808 meriybah]**, As in the day of **trial [H4531 massah]** in the wilderness, (9) When your fathers tested Me; They tried Me, though they saw My work. (10) For forty years I was grieved with that generation, And said, 'It is a people who go astray in their hearts, And they do not know My ways.' (11) So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' "

"harden" = G4645 *skleruno*

Henry:

Hardness of heart is at the bottom of all our distrusts of God and quarrels with him. That is a hard heart which receives not the impressions of divine discoveries and conforms not to the intentions of the divine will, which will not melt, which will not bend.

they did not know his ways, the ways of his providence, in which he walked towards them, or the ways of his commandments, in which he would have them to walk towards him: they did not know, they did not rightly understand and therefore did not approve of these

When the corrupt affections pervert the judgment, and so lead the soul out of the ways of duty and obedience, there is an error of the heart.

Calvin:

By hardness of heart, he no doubt means, any kind of contempt shown to the word of God, though there are many different kinds of it.

Poole:

by wilful disobedience and obstinate unbelief, rebelling against the light, and resisting the Holy Ghost, and his clear discoveries of the truth of the gospel.

Hebrews 3:5-19 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, (6) but **Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.** (7) Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "TODAY, IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, (8) DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS IN THE REBELLION, IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS, (9) WHERE YOUR FATHERS TESTED ME, TRIED ME, AND SAW MY WORKS FORTY YEARS. (10) THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THAT GENERATION, AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN MY WAYS.' (11) SO I SWORE IN MY WRATH, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.' " (12) Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; (13) but exhort one another daily, while it is called "TODAY," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. (14) **For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,** (15) while it is said: "TODAY, IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR

HEARTS AS IN THE REBELLION." (16) For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? (17) Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? (18) And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? (19) So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

- H. The Lord Jesus is not talking about the sad case of a man who has found his wife to be an adulteress
 - 1. as Joseph with Mary
 - 2. as He mentions in verse 9

Prelude: Grace 18 "Before the Throne of God Above"

Camille: flute - see attached in C

Noah: trumpet - see attached in D

Anna: piano - see attached in C

Trinity 70 "Praise My Soul the King of Heaven"

Camille: sing

Noah: trumpet - play from hymnal in D

Anna: piano - see attached in C

Grace 77 "Whiter Than Snow"

Camille: piano - see attached in G

Noah: sing

Anna: clarinet - play from Hymns of Grace in A

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

Camille: piano

Noah: trumpet - see attached in e

Anna: clarinet - see attached in e

Grace 165 "There Is a Name I Love to Hear"

Camille: piano - see attached in F

Noah: trumpet - see attached in G

Anna: sing