

09 - Divorce Part 5 - Matthew 19:9 - 2017-12-31

Call to Worship: Colossians 1:15-18

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 6:20-35

Sermon: "Divorce Part 5" Matthew 19:9

Benediction: Colossians 1:13-14

## INTRODUCTION

When our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was here walking the earth with us, some very religious people came to test him with questions. Those men, the Pharisees, made a great show of keeping God's law. But they kept it only outwardly. What they really wanted was to do whatever their flesh desired, but do it behind a facade of law keeping, so they could appear righteous to other people.

So those men asked our Lord Jesus whether, since Moses had given a law regarding divorce, it was lawful in God's sight for a man to put away his wife for just any reason, by giving her a certificate of divorce and sending her away.

The Savior taught the people how rightly to interpret what the Word of God says on the first two pages of the bible regarding marriage, how God created us for marriage, and what He said in establishing the institution of marriage. His beautiful, perfect answer to the question of whether it is lawful to put away your wife or husband for just any reason is this:

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

But those Pharisees of that time, and many people in every time, refuse to be satisfied with what God made to be very good in the beginning, and what our Lord Jesus taught us about it. They still desire, by some reference to the law given in the Old Testament, to find it lawful to get rid of their wife or their husband if they want to.

So, if a person will not hear the Word of God as He spoke in the beginning to the first man and woman; and if he will not hear the Word of God as spoken so simply and beautifully by the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ when He came; if he is so hard-hearted toward his wife, that he just wants to hear the Old Testament law, then the Lord Jesus Christ knows how rightly to use the Old Testament law in such a case.

Today we see the Savior's final word on the subject of divorce:

**For a man to put away his wife for just any reason, and marry another woman, is so far from being lawful in God's sight that it is, in fact, a breaking of one of the Ten Commandments: Thou shalt not commit adultery.**

## TEXT

Matthew 19:9 And I say to you, whoever ~~divores~~ [shall put away] his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is ~~divorced~~ [put away] commits adultery."

## BODY

**For a man to put away his wife for just any reason, and marry another woman, is so far from being lawful in God's sight that it is, in fact, a breaking of one of the Ten Commandments: Thou shalt not commit adultery.**

- I. The Lord Jesus Who Speaks Is the One Sent Not to Condemn, but to Save
  - A. John 3:13-21 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. (14) And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, (15) that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. (16) For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (17) For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (18) "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (19) And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (20) For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. (21) But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."
  - B. APPLICATION: As you listen today, do not listen as if the one speaking came her to condemn. He came here to save.

The Lord Jesus Who Speaks Is the One Sent Not to Condemn, but to Save

- II. But Anyone Who Will Not Hear the Words of Jesus the Savior Must Hear the Law of God, Which Says, “Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery”
  - A. This is one of the Ten Commandments
    - 1. like “Thou shalt not kill” and “Thou shalt not steal” see Mt 19:18
  - B. The Pharisees who were questioning Jesus acknowledged this commandment
    - 1. they were trying to justify doing what they pleased with women, without being seen as disobeying this commandment
  - C. In Jesus’ doctrine, it is assumed that His hearers would not dare do something known to be adultery
  - D. If you
    - 1. refuse to hear the creation ordinance
    - 2. refuse to hear the Lord Jesus
    - 3. hear God’s Ten Commandments

The Lord Jesus who speaks is the One sent not to condemn, but to save.  
 But anyone who will not hear the words of Jesus the Savior must hear the Law of God, which says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”

- III. For a Man to Put Away His Wife and Marry Another Woman Is Adultery
  - A. For all parties
    - 1. for himself - Mt 19:9
    - 2. for the woman he marries - Mt 19:9 (implied)
    - 3. for the wife he put away - Mt 5:32
    - 4. for the man who marries her - Mt 5:32
  - B. Even with divorce papers
  - C. Also if it is the wife who puts away her husband - Mark 10:11-12
  - D. How so?

The Lord Jesus who speaks is the One sent not to condemn, but to save.  
 But anyone who will not hear the words of Jesus the Savior must hear the Law of God, which says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”  
 For a man to put away his wife and marry another woman is adultery

- IV. This Is Not So If the Wife Is Put Away for the Cause of Fornication
  - A. See the exception stated - Mt 19:9
  - B. See an example in Joseph
    - 1. Matthew 1:18-21 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. (19) Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. (20) But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph,

son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. (21) And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

- C. How so?
  - 1. a wife can engage in a wide range of bad behavior, none of which can sever the marriage bond
  - 2. but lying with another man does sever it
- D. Other records of Jesus' words, not containing this exception clause, do not contradict this truth

## CONCLUSION

The Lord Jesus who speaks is the One sent not to condemn, but to save. But anyone who will not hear the words of Jesus the Savior must hear the Law of God, which says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

For a man to put away his wife and marry another woman is adultery Although that is not so if the wife is put away for the cause of fornication

**For a man to put away his wife for just any reason, and marry another woman, is so far from being lawful in God's sight that it is, in fact, a breaking of one of the Ten Commandments: Thou shalt not commit adultery.**

Repent, then, of your thoughts of adultery. Repent of putting away your wife or your husband, whether in the actual deed, or in words, or even if only in your thoughts.

Seek forgiveness of your sins in Jesus Christ.

Forgive, then, whatever your sinful husband or wife has done against you.

Love your husband. Love your wife.

In love cleave to her.

In love submit to him.

What God has so beautifully joined together, let man not separate.

Matthew 5:31-32

NKJV "Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever ~~divorees~~ [shall put away] his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' (32) But I say to you that whoever ~~divorees~~ [shall put away] his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is ~~divoreed~~ [put away] commits adultery.

KJV It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: (32) But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is ~~divoreed~~ [put away] committeth adultery.

Mark 10:11-12

NKJV So He said to them, "Whoever ~~divorees~~ [shall put away] his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. (12) And if a woman ~~divorees~~ [shall put away] her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

KJV 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.

Luke 16:18

NKJV "Whoever ~~divorces~~ [puts away] his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is ~~divorced~~ [put away] from her husband commits adultery.

KJV Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

### **except it be for fornication**

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 un chastity 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.

**committeth 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

**textual variant: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery**

Some of the manuscripts do not include this phrase here. Whether they do or not, the saying is acknowledged by all to be authentic, for it appears in all manuscripts Matthew 5:32

Matthew 5:31-32

ESV "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' (32) But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

KJV It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: (32) But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced [put away] committeth adultery.

**What about the case of desertion?**

**1 Corinthians 7:15-16 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. (16) For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?**

Calvin:

This is the second department of his statement, in which he sets at liberty a believing husband, who is prepared to dwell with an unbelieving wife, but is rejected by her, and in like manner a woman who is, without any fault on her part, repudiated by her husband; for in that case the unbelieving party makes a divorce with God rather than with his or

her partner. There is, therefore, in this case a special reason, inasmuch as the first and chief bond is not merely loosed, but even utterly broken through.

“Let us, so far as we can, cultivate peace with all, to which we have been called. We must not, therefore, rashly separate from unbelievers, unless they first make a divorce...”

Poole:

Such a person hath broken the bond of marriage, and in such cases Christians are not under bondage, they are not tied by law to fetch them again, nor by the laws of God to keep themselves unmarried for their perverseness.

But it may be objected, that nothing but adultery, by the Divine law, breaketh that bond. Answer. That is denied. Nothing but adultery is a justifiable cause of divorce: no man may put away his wife, nor any wife put away her husband, but for adultery. But the husband's voluntary leaving his wife, or the wife's voluntary leaving her husband, with a resolution to return no more to them, breaks also the bond of marriage, frustrating it as to the ends for which God hath appointed it; and, after all due means used to bring again the party departing to their duty, doth certainly free the correlate. So that although nothing can justify repudiation, or putting away a wife or a husband, and marrying another, but the adultery of the person so divorced and repudiated; yet the departure either of husband or wife without the other's consent for a long time, and refusal to return after all due means used, especially if the party so going away doth it out of a hatred and abomination of the other's religion, will justify the persons so deserted, after due waiting and use of means to reduce him or her to their duty, wholly to cast off the person deserting; for no Christian in such a case, by God's law, is under bondage.

for God hath called Christians unto peace, and in his ordinance of marriage aimed at the quiet and peace of his people in their service of him in their families and relations; and therefore as Christians ought not to disturb the peace of their own consciences, turning away their relations, though they be unbelievers; yet neither are they bound, if such will leave them, to court their own continual trouble and disturbance.

Henry:

if the unbelieving relative desert the believer, and no means can reconcile to a cohabitation, in such a case a brother or sister is not in bondage (1Co\_7:15), not tied up to the unreasonable humour, and bound servilely to follow or cleave to the malicious deserter, or not bound to live unmarried after all proper means for reconciliation have been tried, at least of the deserter contract another marriage or be guilty of adultery, which was a very easy supposition, because a very common instance among the heathen inhabitants of Corinth. In such a case the deserted person must be free to marry again, and it is granted on all hands. And some think that such a malicious desertion is as much a dissolution of the marriage-covenant as death itself. For how is it possible that the two shall be one flesh when the one is maliciously bent to part from or put away the other? Indeed, the deserter seems still bound by the matrimonial contract; and therefore the

apostle says (1Co\_7:11), If the woman depart from her husband upon the account of his infidelity, let her remain unmarried. But the deserted party seems to be left more at liberty (I mean supposing all the proper means have been used to reclaim the deserter, and other circumstances make it necessary) to marry another person. It does not seem reasonable that they should be still bound, when it is rendered impossible to perform conjugal duties or enjoy conjugal comforts, through the mere fault of their mate: in such a case marriage would be a state of servitude indeed. But, whatever liberty be indulged Christians in such a case as this, they are not allowed, for the mere infidelity of a husband or wife, to separate; but, if the unbeliever be willing, they should continue in the relation, and cohabit as those who are thus related.

Gill:

the deserted person may sit down contented, being not to be blamed, the fault entirely lying upon the deserter:

one that is called by grace a church member, and so a brother or sister in Christ, is not to be subject to an unbeliever in matters of conscience, in things appertaining to the worship of God, and the service and glory of Christ; nor, being in such circumstances, that either Christ must be forsaken, or the unbeliever will depart, are they obliged to yield to such an one, but rather suffer a departure; nor are they bound to remain unmarried, but are free to marry another person, after all proper methods have been tried for a reconciliation, and that appears to be impracticable; desertion in such a case, and attended with such circumstances, is a breach of the marriage contract, and a dissolution of the bond, and the deserted person may lawfully marry again; otherwise a brother, or a sister in such a case, would be in subjection and bondage to such a person

The believing party being threatened with a desertion, ought as much as possible to seek for peace and reconciliation, and do all that can be to prevent a departure; for saints are called by the grace of God, to follow after and cultivate peace, not only with one another in their Christian communion as saints, but with all men, even their enemies, and especially with such as are so nearly allied; wherefore the departure should not be easily admitted, or a new marriage be suddenly entered into, reconciliation, if it can be obtained, being most eligible and becoming a Christian.

Barnes:

If they choose to leave you, you cannot prevent it, and you are to submit to it patiently, and bear it as a Christian

Many have supposed that this means that they would be at liberty to marry again when the unbelieving wife or husband had gone away; as Calvin, Grotius, Rosenmuller, etc. But this is contrary to the strain of the argument of the apostle. The sense of the expression "is not bound," etc. is, that if they forcibly depart, the one that is left is not bound by the marriage tie to make provision for the one that departed; to do acts that

might be prejudicial to religion by a violent effort to compel the departing husband or wife to live with the one that is forsaken; but is at liberty to live separate, and should regard it as proper so to do.

Hodge:

If the unbeliever refused thus to remain, the believer was then free. The believer was not to repudiate the unbelieving husband or wife; but if the unbeliever broke up the marriage, the Christian partner was thereby liberated from the contract. This is the interpretation which Protestants have almost universally given to this verse. It is a passage of great importance, because it is the foundation of the Protestant doctrine that willful desertion is a legitimate ground of divorce. And such is certainly the natural sense of the passage.

The question before the apostle was, 'What is to be done in the case of these mixed marriages?' His answer is, 'Let not the believer put away the unbeliever, for Christ has forbidden a man to put away his wife for any cause except that of adultery, Mat\_5:32. But if the unbeliever breaks up the marriage, the believer is no longer bound.' There is no conflict here between Christ's command and Paul's instructions. Both say, a man cannot put away his wife (nor of course a wife her husband) on account of difference of religion, or for any other reason but the one above specified. The apostle only adds that if the believing party be, without just cause, put away, he or she is free.

if the unbeliever consent to remain, the believer is bound; if the unbeliever will not consent, the believer is not bound. In the one case the marriage contract binds him; in the other case it does not bind him. This seems to be the simple meaning of the passage. Others understand the apostle as saying that the believer is not bound to continue the marriage — that is, is under no obligation to live with a partner who is unwilling to live with him. But the one part of the verse should be allowed to explain the other. An obligation which is said to exist in one case, Paul denies exists in another. If the unbeliever is willing to remain, the believer is bound by the marriage contract; but if she be unwilling, he is not bound.

Ellicott:

Supposing, however, the desire for separation arises from the unbelieving partner, how is the Christian partner to act? If the married life, for example, be made intolerable by the unbeliever urging the believer to join in such religious acts as conscience cannot approve, the Apostle's previous commands for continued union do not hold good: a brother or a sister, in such cases, is not bound to insist upon the continuation of the union. "Let the unbeliever, if he so desire, depart."

This permission is in no way contrary to our Lord's permission of divorce on only one ground, for the Apostle has carefully reminded his readers that our Lord's command does not apply to the case of a marriage between a believer and a heathen. In such cases we have no command from Him.

A brother or a sister.—That is, a Christian. In such cases, when the unbelieving partner wishes to depart, let him or her do so. The Christian partner is not, under such circumstances, bound by the marriage to continue together.

VWS:

A strong word, indicating that Christianity has not made marriage a state of slavery to believers. Compare δέδεται is bound, 1Co\_7:39, a milder word. The meaning clearly is that willful desertion on the part of the unbelieving husband or wife sets the other party free. Such cases are not comprehended in Christ's words.

RWP:

The believing husband or wife is not at liberty to separate, unless the disbeliever or pagan insists on it. Wilful desertion of the unbeliever sets the other free, a case not contemplated in Christ's words in Mat\_5:32; Mat\_19:9. Luther argued that the Christian partner, thus released, may marry again. But that is by no means clear, unless the unbeliever marries first.

Carroll:

When I was a young preacher I was called into a council. A preacher's wife had left him. She refused to live with him, left him, and went back to her father, and he afterwards married again, and his plea was that abandonment justified remarriage. He quoted that passage, "A husband and wife are not in bondage in such cases." The question for that council to decide was, "Would it be a wise thing to put a man into the ministry who lived under a cloud of that kind?" One of the oldest and most distinguished Baptists that ever lived took the position that such a one was free to marry again, but I, a young preacher, dissented from him, and do still. It does not break the marriage tie so as to permit one to marry again. I quoted the declaration of Paul where he says, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband lives," and he certainly couldn't contradict himself in the same chapter. Then he says, "If her husband be dead, she shall be permitted to marry again." That settles that question.

Paul does not discuss the only cause that does thoroughly break the marriage bond, if one is disposed to plead it, which is the case of infidelity to the marriage vow discussed by our Lord. Hence my contention is that what is here said does not discuss all of the law on the subject of marriage and divorce.

Matthew 19:9

KJV 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.

NKJV And I say to you, whoever ~~divorces~~ [shall put away] his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is ~~divorced~~ [put away] commits adultery."

ESV And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

Call to Worship: Trinity 435 “Jesus Christ the Crucified”

Camille: Piano - transpose down two half steps

Noah: Trumpet - play from hymnal

Anna: Clarinet - play from hymnal

Trinity 13 “O Worship the King”

Camille: Piano - see attached in G

Noah: Trumpet - play from hymnal in A

Anna: Clarinet - play from hymnal in A

Grace 42 “Eternal God Exalted”

Camille: piano

Noah: trumpet - see attached in G

Anna: sing

Trinity 423 “Approach, My Soul, the Mercy Seat”

Camille: flute

Noah: sing

Anna: piano

Trinity 501 “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

Camille: sing

Noah: trumpet

Anna: piano