

Call to Worship: Isaiah 49:13

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 4:1-27

Sermon: "Divorce Part 1: Let Man Not Separate" Matthew 19:6

Benediction: Isaiah 61:10

## INTRODUCTION

### I. There Is a Question Being Answered

Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?

A. "Is it lawful?" meaning by God's law; in God's eyes

B. Not

1. . . . if is an adulteress, lying with other men
2. . . . if he beats her up all the time, bruising her and breaking her bones
3. . . . if he has abandoned her, left her, and is just gone; if she just leaves, and doesn't come back

C. But instead

1. translations

- a) for just any reason
- b) for any and every reason
- c) for every cause
- d) any cause

2. paraphrase/application

- a) because she does not make me happy
- b) because I don't love him anymore
- c) because he is always yelling at me
- d) because she doesn't submit to me
- e) because she spends the money on herself
- f) because he spends the money on himself
- g) because he's a jerk
- h) because she's a shrew

- i) because she is not the woman I thought I was marrying
- j) because he is not the same man I married
- k) because there is no way we can get along
- l) because of incompatible differences

II. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Word of God, Is Giving the Answer

A. He speaks from the bible, the Word of God, being the Word of God Himself

- 1. not what man thinks, says, or does; certainly not what you think, say, or do
- 2. but what God has done and what God has said
  - a) He made them one male and one female
  - b) He said
    - (1) that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife
    - (2) that the two shall be one flesh

B. He speaks of God creating them male and female, when He is the very Word of God by whom they were created

C. He speaks of the first man, Adam, when He Himself is the second, the greater Adam

- 1. not the Adam by whose sin we have death; but the Adam by whose righteousness we have eternal life
- 2. not the Adam who died for his own sins; but the Adam who, on the cross, died for our sins, that we might be saved!

D. He gives the authoritative interpretation and application of what the bible already said: God said the two shall be one flesh; wherefore they are indeed one flesh!

E. The answer He is about to give will be the perfect answer; THE answer!

## TEXT

Matthew 19:3-6

## BODY

### III. The Answer Itself

#### A. Not simply “no”

1. yes, the answer amounts to that
2. but that will not do

#### B. Therefore

1. based on the bible
2. by what Jesus shows us is right reasoning from the bible

#### C. Translations

1. Wycliffe: Therfor a man departe not that thing that God hath ioyned.
2. Geneva: Let not man therefore put asunder that, which God hath coupled together
3. KJV: What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
4. NKJV: Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate

#### D. Paraphrases

1. What the Divine Being has done, let not the human being undo
2. What the Creator has joined together, let not the creature separate

#### IV. Application of the Answer in Metaphor

Let this answer, this truth, be considered as if it were a material out of which things can be made; like wool or wood or flour or cotton

##### A. Apply this to your home as if in your kitchen

1. you have been doing well feeding your family when
  - a) fresh food
  - b) spices
2. when you can't get fresh or spicy ingredients, your family has been going hungry

##### B. Apply this to your home as if regarding the structure itself

1. there are cracks; leaks; squeaks
2. these need to be repaired
3. those who are not yet married, what will you make your house out of?

##### C. Apply this to your home as if to the wardrobe or closet

1. your family has been doing out in very poor clothing
  - a) cold
  - b) embarrassed
2. buy them or make them some new clothes

##### D. Apply this to your home regarding smoke alarms and fire extinguishers

1. if there is smoke, you won't know it; if there is fire, it will get out of control
  - a) the wedding album and family pictures will be burned to ashes
  - b) the children will die of smoke inhalation
2. put new batteries in the smoke alarms, charged with this
3. put up fire extinguishers, filled with this
4. fires may start, but will not get out of control to burn down the house

##### E. Apply this to your home as if to the beds in the bedrooms

1. pillow
2. blanket

## CONCLUSION

Matthew 19:3b-6 "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" (4) And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,' (5) and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH' ? (6) So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Prelude: Trinity 199 "Welcome, Happy Morning"

Camille: piano - transpose

Noah: trumpet

Anna: clarinet

Trinity 205 "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"

Camille: piano - transpose

Noah: trumpet

Anna: clarinet

Trinity 710 "I Need Thee Every Hour"

Camille: piano

Anna: sing

Noah: sing

Trinity 362 "Let Thy Blood in Mercy Poured"

Camille: flute

Noah: trumpet - see attached in D

Anna: piano

Grace 52 "Glorious Is Thy Name"

Camille: sing

Noah: trumpet

Anna: piano - transpose

Calvin:

By this sentence Christ restrains the caprice of husbands, that they may not, by divorcing their wives, burst asunder the sacred knot. And as he declares that it is not in the power of the husband to dissolve the marriage, so likewise he forbids all others to confirm by their authority unlawful divorces; for the magistrate abuses his power when he grants permission to the husband to divorce his wife. But the object which Christ had directly in view was, that every man should sacredly observe the promise which he has given, and that those who are tempted, by wantonness or wicked dispositions, to divorce, may reflect thus with themselves: "Who, art thou that allowest thyself to burst asunder what God hath joined?"

Trapp:

Did ever any man "hate his own flesh," Eph\_5:29, or but hide his eyes from it? Isa\_58:7, how much less tear it with his teeth, and pull it away piecemeal, unless it were mad demoniacs and rash divorcers? Christ, the best husband, hates putting away, Mal\_2:16; yea, though never so much provoked to it, Jer\_3:1; Job\_13:1, he will not do it.

Henry:

Marriage and the sabbath are the most ancient of divine ordinances. Though marriage be not peculiar to the church, but common to the world, yet, being stamped with a divine institution, and here ratified by our Lord Jesus, it ought to be managed after a godly sort, and sanctified by the word of God, and prayer. A conscientious regard to God in this ordinance would have a good influence upon the duty, and consequently upon the comfort, of the relation.

Husband and wife, being joined together by the ordinance of God, are not to be put asunder by any ordinance of man. Let not man put them asunder; not the husband himself, nor any one for him; not the magistrate, God never gave him authority to do it. The God of Israel hath said, that he hateth putting away, Mal\_2:16. It is a general rule that man must not go about to put asunder what God hath joined together.

Gill:

break the bond of union, dissolve the relation, and separate them from each other, for every trivial thing, upon any slight occasion, or for anything; but what is hereafter mentioned. The sense is, that the bond of marriage being made by God himself, is so sacred and inviolable, as that it ought not to be dissolved by any man; not by the husband himself, or any other for him; nor by any state or government, by any prince or potentate, by any legislator whatever; no, not by Moses himself, who is, at least, included, if not chiefly designed here, though not named, to avoid offence: and God and man being opposed in this passage, shows, that marriage is an institution and appointment of God, and therefore not to be changed and altered by man at his pleasure; this not merely a civil, but a sacred affair, in which God is concerned.

Barnes:

Man may not put away his wife for every cause. What God has joined together man may not put asunder.

Bengel:

In every case of sexual connection, either God hath joined the two, or He hath not joined them: if He hath not joined them, their connection is unlawful; if He hath joined them, why are they separated?

EB:

How inspiring it is to think that then and there should have been erected that grand bulwark of a virtuous home: "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

JRY:

Since this is the conclusion of His statement, He must be answering the original question, and so by "man put asunder" He must mean "divorce his wife for just any reason."

Is it lawful (in God's eyes) for a man or woman to seek a divorce because

- the feelings aren't there
- he yells at me
- she gripes at me
- things haven't worked out
- we just fight all the time
- I am not happy
- I don't love him anymore; I don't love her anymore

- He spends all the money on himself; she spends all the money on herself
- she lies to me
- he's not responsible

#### The oxen

- find that much of the journey is up steep hills
- find that one pulls harder than the other
- find that the yoke chafes
- find that the load is so heavy, it takes all their strength to keep it going
- Is it then okay for them to unhook?

#### Have a store of this in your pantry

- normally your marriage is nourished by fresh food
- sometimes when there is no fresh food, your husband or wife, or your child, goes hungry; sometimes goes hungry for a long while
- during every period when there is a famine of feeling, a dearth of desire; when there is nothing fresh and nothing spicy, you have something that is non-perishing, that is shelf-stable
- it is not the spiciest food, but it is nourishing; it will keep you alive until a store of fresh food can be acquired again

#### Decorate your home with this; put it on display prominently in every room

- Why is your home so beautiful? Because this is displayed everywhere.
- If previously you had decorated your home with this, but now all displays of it are obscured by dust and cobwebs, dust them off so they can be seen prominently again
- You might need to repaint
- What color paint do you use?

#### Make repairs to the house with this

- There are numerous flaws in your house
  - cracks in the drywall
  - paint peeling
  - subfloor rotting

If your house is not yet built, build it with this!

#### Have fire extinguishers filled with this

- fires may start, but will not get out of control to burn down the house
- the wedding photos and the family pictures do not burn to ashes
- the children do not die of smoke inhalation

#### Clothe yourselves and your family with this

- they will not become cold
- they will not be embarrassed

#### Train yourselves with this

#### Fence your yard or property with this

- the children will not go out into the street and be run over
- the children will be kept away from strangers who would do them harm
- the livestock will not get away, and go be hit by a truck on the highway

Lock your doors with this

latch

deadbolt

Maybe you haven't been keeping the door locked. Lock it again now.

Fill your bookshelves with this

Spread your beds with this

-fluffy pillows

-possibly the pillow you have given her used to be fluffy, but now is very thin, lumpy, and hard

-stuff that pillow with this

-warm blankets, comforters, or quilts

-what fabric?

-in some cases your children have been shivering in the night, not sure whether or not mommy and daddy might get a divorce; you get a blanket and go cover them up

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

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.**

**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.

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