

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Drama of Marriage — Divorce & Remarriage, Pt 3

Selected Passages

PowerPoint Presentation: None

Keywords: Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Matthew 19:3-12; 1 Corinthians 7

SermonAudio blurb:

I. Introduction.

A. Deuteronomy 24:1-4.

1. Case law that is dealing with when/if a situation arises.
2. It is not in any way whatsoever commanding divorce or even allowing divorce. Rather it is legislating what happens if a divorce occurs in certain circumstances.
3. However it is a passage that over the centuries was used to create opportunities for divorce to occur. And that is why it is used by Jesus and even His enemies. Jesus mentioned it so as to correct the wrong use of it. The enemies used it to try to trip up Jesus though He refused to play their games.
4. Finally, we talked about how the term “indecency” was a broad term and could not refer at all to adultery in this passage. The reason was simple, adultery was a capital offense.

B. Matthew 5:31-32.

1. We saw that this passage was part of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus is teaching and contrasting truth with the false and twisted teachings that came from the religious leaders of the time.
2. It is here that we receive the “exception clause” that is used by so many to teach that divorce is permissible if adultery occurs.
3. Again we learned that the term itself doesn’t refer to adultery and if it was Jesus’ intention then He would have just used the actual word for adultery.
4. Again, adultery, even at this point in Israel’s history, was a capital offense.

C. Today we will now look at the passages that are used to allow for both divorce and remarriage.

II. Key texts:

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- A. Before we even look at them understand that they do give an allowance for divorce but in a very restricted manner. However, what is more important is how they may or may not allow for remarriage.
- B. Matthew 5:31-23;19:3-12 (primary passage).
 - 1. Textual challenges.
 - a. There are a few very technical points to this passage that I do not want to get into because of the complexity of them. I want, however, to at least let you know that they exist and that I am aware of them.
 - b. One must be noted, however, because if you are using the KJV or NKJV you noticed that it was not the same as what I just read.
 - (1) There are some manuscripts that added “and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”
 - (2) When the KJV was being made there were a lot less manuscripts to compare and therefore it was added. However, there is extremely strong evidence that those words were added much later by a scribe and should not be there.
 - 2. Let’s examine the text itself now:
 - a. First, this questioning is polemic.
 - (1) Meaning the Pharisees are not seeking knowledge and wisdom, they are trying to create a fight.
 - (2) And therefore Jesus’ words are designed to challenge their intent.
 - (3) We see this in verse three very clearly, notice the words at the end of that verse.
 - b. Second, notice how the Pharisee’s try to refocus the argument from the Deuteronomy 24 passage. (Vs 7)
 - (1) Notice again how they phrase that passage. “Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?”
 - (2) Jesus points out three things in response to their question:

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- (a) First, it was because of the hard hearts of the Israelites.
 - i) Not because it was righteous or good, but because they were already divorcing their wives and then remarrying them later.
 - ii) There was a huge problem within the spiritual life of the people of Israel at that time.
 - (b) Second, that it was a permission not a command by Moses.
 - i) He was dealing with a problem.
 - ii) He was not giving a positive command to go out and start divorcing one another!
 - (c) Third, Jesus then forces the conversation back to God's standard for marriage "in the beginning."
 - i) This takes us back again to Creation.
 - ii) And it simply puts us back to what Jesus just said in vss 4-6.
 - iii) Please do not let this point pass by you too quickly. The Pharisees wanted to use Deut. 24 to define divorce but Jesus says that the primary and deciding passages come from Genesis 1 and 2.
- c. Third, Jesus now adds to what He has already taught and gives a very clear statement of divorce and remarriage.
- (1) "And I say. . ." is very reminiscent to the way Jesus talked in the Sermon on the Mount.
 - (a) One of authority.
 - (b) One where His words and teaching are on par with the Old Testament Scripture.
 - (2) In Matthew 5:32 Jesus was focusing on the adultery of the *divorcee* while here He focuses upon the adultery of the *divorcer*.

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- d. Fourth, Jesus allows for a divorce in an extremely specific event—immorality.
 - (1) This is seen to refer to adultery. We dealt with that last week when looking at Matthew 5.
 - (2) There is a second view that I think is better and explains the passage well. It is what is called the betrothal view.
 - (a) This actually takes the word *porneia* at its simplest meaning.
 - (b) Notice that never, when Jesus uses this term, do the people listening to Him ask what that means. They all know it because it is part of their culture.
 - (c) This view says that the right of divorce and remarriage is only in the case where there is discovered in the partner some form of sexual sin during the betrothal stage of marriage.
 - (d) The Gentile/Jewish Connection:
 - i) You will remember that Mark and Luke make no comment on this exception clause. Why?
 - ii) Because their audiences were primarily Gentile, and in the Græco-Roman world there was no betrothal.
 - (e) The Jewish world:
 - i) Jewish custom had marriage occur in two stages: the betrothal and the actual ceremony where it was fully celebrated and consummated.
 - ii) During that time they were considered husband and wife and it was a time to test their faithfulness and purity. During this time little contact was involved between the couple and if there came a reason that the man no longer desired to marry, he had to actually go through a divorce proceeding.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- (f) John 8:41 They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God."
 - i) Note the word "fornication." It is our word, *porneia*.
 - ii) The idea was very clear. Jesus was not of a proper marriage, but out of sexual sin.
- (g) Now go to **Matthew 1:18-19**.
 - i) Notice that this is the betrothal time.
 - ii) They are husband and wife however.
 - iii) But that marriage had not been consummated, therefore he was free to "put her away." That term is actually "divorce" and is the same term we have been seeing over and over.
- (3) This view seems to fit best the meaning of the text and does not end up contradicting the many other passages that simply make divorce and remarriage a sin.
- (4) By making this exception statement, Jesus is showing them that marriage is holy before the Lord and is to be treated as such.
- e. Fourth, the response of the disciples and Jesus' reply (10).
 - (1) The disciples reaction was nothing less that a stunned shock!
 - (a) They know what the practice has been in their nation for years. They know many who have divorced for various reasons
 - (b) And they surely knew of many who had remarried.
 - (c) There were huge issues that were immediately raised in their minds if what Jesus was saying was accepted and acted upon.
 - (d) Therefore, to them, it was better never to even marry!

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- (e) This reaction shows that Matthew 19 is clearly not encouraging divorce and remarriage, or their response would not make sense at all.

C. 1 Corinthians 7.

1. Let me give you a summary of this chapter.

Vss. 1-7	To the married—remain married, with full sexual rights.
Vss. 8-9	To the unmarried/widows—stay unmarried, unless you lack the self-control to do so. Then marry.
Vss. 10-11	To the married (both believers)—stay married, but if there is a divorce, then stay single or be reconciled.
Vss. 12-16	To the married (one is an unbeliever)—stay married, if the unbelieving spouse leaves, allow it, but don't do it yourself.
Vs. 17	Summary statement: remain in whatever situation you find yourself.
Vss. 18-19	To those circumcised and uncircumcised—remain that way.
Vs. 20	Summary statement: remain in the condition you are currently in.
Vss. 21-23	To slaves—remain as slaves, unless given the legal opportunity to be freed.
Vs. 24	Summary statement: remain in the condition you are currently in.
Vss. 25-38	to “virgins” (never been married)—best to remain as you are unless you desire marriage.
Vss. 39-40	To married—only after death of spouse can you remarry, but best to stay single.

- 2. This whole chapter is about us remaining in whatever condition we find ourselves. Other than the section on circumcision, in each of the sections there is an exception given.

His broad point is simple “. . . whatever circumstance one was in at the point of your conversion—single or married, free or slave, circumcised or uncircumcised, engaged or not—does not infringe upon one’s ability to minister as a Christian or find contentment supplied by the sufficiency of the Christian life.” (D’Amour, 189-90).

D. Paul gives Christ’s teaching in verse 10.

- 1. Don’t divorce (10).

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. If there **is** a divorce, then **don't** remarry (11).
3. Seek reconciliation (11).
4. The assumption in this section is that both spouses are believers due to "But to the rest" in verse 12.

Very strong and clear that there was no exception at all, yet it was the teaching of the Lord. If, that exception for adultery existed then it makes sense to speak of it.

- E. Paul gives his own inspired and authoritative teaching in verse 12.
1. "But to the rest. . ." speaks of marriage to one who is not a follower of Jesus Christ.
 2. His teaching is simple—"stay married" (12-13).
 - a. Reason:
 - b. Spouse and children are sanctified.
 - c. Not saved, but divinely protected and blessed by the presence of a believer in the house.
 3. **If** they decide to leave, then let them (15).
 - a. Make no encumbrance. Don't fight it.
 - b. We are called to be at peace.

Key assumption by Paul: The believing spouse is fighting to **keep** the spouse because they want them to be saved (16). So different from what we see too often in marriages of this type.

- c. Result: "not under bondage."
 - (1) View 1 says that you are free to remarry. You are freed from the bondage that comes with that marriage covenant.
 - (a) Often refer to vs 39 for this.
 - (b) But they are two very different words. The one in 39 is much stronger and with a different emphasis of being lawfully bound.
 - (c) Vs 15 speaks of being under obligations.
 - (2) View 2 is what I believe is the right view, that you are freed from the marital obligations that come when you are married.

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- (a) This fits the meaning of the word.
- (b) It fits the context. The idea is that when you are married there are obligations that come with it.
 - i) Emotionally.
 - ii) Sexually.
 - iii) Physically.
 - iv) Financially.
- (c) Paul is saying, those obligations are broken if the unbelieving spouse desires to leave.

III. Conclusion.

- A. So, what have we learned?
 - 1. On this very emotional subject we have seen that marriage is a holy institution that is to be kept holy.
 - 2. To divorce and remarry causes all parties to fall into adultery.
 - 3. If you are divorced, the mandate is simple and clear: Stay single, or reconcile.
- B. How then do we handle this at Missio Dei Fellowship?
 - 1. Remember that grace is to drive all that we do.
 - 2. Recognize that not everyone will agree with this position, give them time to think and wrestle with it.
 - 3. Remain in whatever condition you find yourself. If this is your second or third marriage, then stay in it and seek to glorify the Lord in it.
 - 4. As you come to see that this is the biblical teaching on this subject, confess it as sin (usually out of ignorance). Repent (meaning, make no excuses or blame-shifting). And press on in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Community Group Questions

- **No groups meeting this Sunday.**