

Sunday Sermon 072317

Jesus on Marriage

Matthew 19:1-9

One way or another, the topic of marriage finds its way into the news on a regular basis. Unfortunately, in our day there seems to be considerable confusion concerning the meaning of marriage. Furthermore, the increase in ungodliness across our society is not lending itself to stable marriages able to stand the test of time.

I must warn you today that it is not pleasing to the Lord for his people to conform to the world. Those of you who confess the Lord Jesus as Savior need to accept what God says about marriage in his written word.

Instead of conforming to the world believers must learn to come out of the world and be separate unto the Lord. Having the promise of fellowship with the Lord as his redeemed sons and daughters we are to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit as we move on to a mature walk with the Lord.

We are to “perfect holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1). This means we no longer walk according to the course of this world. In other words we do not allow the world to teach us how to behave. Consequently, if the world chooses to abandon the Biblical definition of marriage we refuse to follow their example.

Why—because we are set apart to the Lord. We are to be holy in all manner of behavior. We are to model our life after the will of God expressed in his written

word. However, unless you renew your mind to Scripture it will be quite natural to conform to the world.

Remember, we are not to conform to the world rather we are to be transformed from the ungodly culture around us by the renewing of our mind to Scripture (Romans 12:2).

Like the Apostle Paul in Colossians chapter one, it is certainly my prayer and desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.

With that in mind as we examine what Jesus says about marriage let's establish God's will in this matter; as well, let's touch briefly upon the meaning of the marriage covenant; and finally let's take heed to the warning of Jesus concerning the hardness of heart that may ruin good marriages.

In Matthew 19:1-9 . . .

1 And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan;

2 and great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

5 and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

7 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.

9 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.

We should note here the origin of marriage. The concept of marriage is not the product of man's thinking. As Jesus teaches here marriage is the result of God's design in the creation. God made us male and female at the beginning and by his own design established marriage between a man and a woman.

It follows that our attitude toward marriage reveals a lot about our heart attitude toward God. The godlier a society the more marriage will be held in proper esteem; the more ungodly a society the less marriage will be respected.

You will notice again God's will in marriage is for a man and woman to cleave to one another in a bond of holy matrimony. It is God who joins a man and woman together in marriage and thus what God has joined together let not man put asunder.

A couple of things need to be said at this point. First, it is not God's will that men and women engage in immorality outside the bond of marriage. God's will is that a man and a woman kept themselves unto one another until death parts them.

This is why the Bible condemns immoral behavior. Fornication is not the will of God. The Bible says in 1 Cor. 7:2, “to avoid fornication let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”

New Testament passages in Acts 15:29, Romans 13:11-14, 1 Cor. 6:18-20, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8, 1 Peter 4:1-4, and Revelation 21:8 make it clear that fornication is a sin. God’s will is purity before marriage and then purity within the covenant of marriage.

Let me pause here to point out something that everyone should recognize. Marriage is more than just a piece of paper. Many who practice cohabitation (especially the men involved) complain that the marriage license is just a piece of paper and they don’t need it.

This kind of thinking is ungodly. If marriage is not established by God, then I would agree that the license is just a piece of paper. However if marriage is God’s will, then the marriage license speaks of one’s willingness to acknowledge God’s will in marriage.

The little piece of paper that so many think is trivial takes on great meaning when God is in the equation. Anyone who fears God and enters into a marriage covenant will not mind if that marriage is recognized by the State and recognized by witnesses who confirm the couples’ commitment one to the other.

Now I have really done it! I have introduced the word “commitment.” The marriage covenant consists of the commitment of a man and a woman who give their word one to another to be faithful to each other.

This is exactly why traditional marriage vows speak of keeping oneself “only unto you so long as you both shall live.” You should take careful note that the entire concept of marriage is built upon the integrity of the couples’ word. When we give our word we enter into a covenant relationship. A covenant is a promise between partners to love and to cherish one another until death parts them.

The teaching I just gave you is where ever Christian needs to start in their thinking on this matter. Building a marriage is like building a house. A good foundation is necessary if the building is going to stand. The foundation of a marriage that can endure is to build upon the words of Christ. Those who do so are like the wise man who built his house upon the rock. That house was still standing after the storms beat upon it.

Now let’s return to our text. Jesus has hit the reset button for us to get everyone back to the basics, but look again at verse seven . . .

This verse brings us face to face with the fact that this is not an ideal world where every marriage goes unscathed. Under the law stipulation was made for divorce.

I want you to take careful note of our Lord’s response to the question set forth in verse seven. Beyond the problem of unfaithfulness there is a danger lurking that can ruin any marriage.

Jesus said that Moses allowed for divorce because of the hardness of heart that can develop in a marriage relationship. Hardness of heart speaks of a condition that can develop toward your marriage partner if wrongs are not made right.

No marriage can long endure the callousness caused by unkindness, unforgiveness, outright neglect, or worse—rejection. The only way to prevent hardness of heart is to baptize your relationship with genuine love expressed one to the other.

What does genuine love look like? Part of the answer is found in 1 Corinthians 13. Take that chapter and apply it to your marriage relationship and your heart will stay tender toward your marriage partner.

What does genuine love look like? The balance of our answer is found in the Spirit of Christ. If a husband or a wife walks in the Spirit of Christ their hearts will stay tender toward one another. As the Scripture says, “By love serve one another.”

May I say this kindly to every married couple under the sound of my voice: *your marriage will vastly improve when you (not your husband or your wife), but when you become a better servant to your partner.*

I am warning you today: selfishness on your part will cause hardness of heart in your partner. Both husband and wife need to walk in the Spirit of Christ and become excellent foot washers! Serve one another by love and the heart will stay tender toward each other.

Conclusion

Now look again at verse nine . . . In these words Jesus did away with no fault divorce. The idea that one can simply divorce for any reason is corrected. The grounds for divorce that Jesus sets forth here is fornication. Unfaithfulness will

destroy a marriage, but burning the biscuits or watching too many sports on TV is not grounds for divorce!

If you love the Lord Jesus I believe you want to please him. Let him teach you and guide you. Do not conform to this world and by all means avoid adultery and guard against hardness of heart.

And remember this: *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from ALL sin. Our failures must be put under the blood of Jesus. There is forgiveness for all who humble the heart and call upon the Lord.*