

***The Heart of Divorce***  
*Matthew 5:31-32 - NCBC, September  
22, 2019*

<<Before the Throne of God Above>>

**Main Point: Divorce is not God's solution for your hard heart.**

- Marriage is a life-long covenant, not a contract (Mt 19:1-12; Ep 5:31-32)
  - God joined you together
  - Until death do you part
  - Picturing Christ's oneness with His church
  
- Divorce is for protection, not a license (Dt 24:1-4; 1 Co 7:10-11, 15)
  - God's law was to limit not command divorce
  - Protecting the vulnerable from ongoing unrepentant sin
  - While awaiting repentance that could make reconciliation possible
  
- Remarriage after divorce requires caution, not conceit (Lk 16:18; 1Co 7:8-16)
  - Marrying another after an illegitimate divorce is adultery
  - Marrying another after your spouse repents is adultery
  - Future reconciliation with spouse must be a biblical impossibility

**Application: Your hard heart needs covenant oneness with King Jesus.**

**Opening Announcements:**

- **Sermon Series Resources** available today in the Commons to further your growth in Christ! Please use for your growth!



Such good news this morning church. We gather together today to look away from our own failures and our own sins and gaze upon Christ! Jesus is our righteousness. Jesus is our life. Praise God that He looks on Christ and pardons me!!

This morning our Bibles are open to **Matthew chapter 5**, as we continue our study of the exceeding righteousness of Christ.



If you do not have a Bible with you, simply raise your hand to receive a Bible this morning. Today we focus on the heart of divorce from **Matthew chapter 5:31-32**.

I'm thankful we practice expository preaching. Preaching that makes the point of the passage the point of the sermon. Preaching through the Bible verse-by-verse necessarily brings me to preach passages I wouldn't otherwise preach. This is the case today. Yet, this is right and good.

We don't gather to hear another human opinion. We don't come to be entertained by a talking head waxing eloquent. We worship God together as we listen and submit to the preaching of His Holy Word!

So let's quickly review the context for today's Scripture before we read it together.

Illustrating the Heart behind God's Law 		
Verse	You have heard...	But I say...
21	You shall not murder	Anger is real problem
27	You shall not commit adultery	Desire is real problem
31	You shall divorce	A hard heart is real problem
33	You shall not swear falsely	Deceit is real problem
38	You shall retaliate eye for eye	Vengeance is real problem
43	You shall hate your enemy	Selfishness is real problem

Remember in **verses 21-48** Jesus is using 6 contrasting examples to illustrate his main point: Our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the

Pharisees in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.<sup>1</sup> Jesus contrasts what the Jews had heard, with what He Himself says as God's messianic King. He's contrasting religious traditions with the true heart of God's law.

So far, we've considered how selfish anger is a real heart problem that deserves the same judgment as murder. And sexual lust is a real heart problem that deserves the same judgment as adultery. Jesus is showing us that we are all far more sinful than we even thought, according to the true intention of God's law!

Today's lesson on divorce is going to make exactly the same point as the last two weeks – we need a new heart! We need an internal righteousness granted to us – for a hard heart that religiously justifies an unbiblical divorce does not know the righteousness of God.



So please stand in honor of the reading of God's Word as I read from **Matthew 5:31**, in the English Standard Translation:

---

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 5:20  
Page **3a** of 19

*<sup>31</sup> "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' <sup>32</sup> 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.*

This is God's Word. Please be seated.

### **Let's Pray.**

---

I must confess that I have two goals for this sermon which seem irreconcilable and incompatible with one another.<sup>2</sup>

One the one hand, Jesus' teaching emphasizes the precious enduring value of marriage. Today's Scripture calls us to press into our marriages and swim upstream our culture of no-fault divorce and lack of commitment!

But on the other hand, Jesus' teaching removes stigma and cares compassionately for the painful sufferings of the divorced. God actually offers divorce as a protection for the vulnerable, and forgives those who repent of marital unfaithfulness.

So here's my dilemma: How do I encourage and affirm those who have suffered divorce, without diminishing the importance of the marriage covenant? And how do I

---

<sup>2</sup> I'm indebted to Sam Storm's introduction of his very helpful article listed in the recommended resources at the end of this manuscript for this pastoral insight.

rightly elevate God's design for marriage without scandalizing those who have experienced divorce?

My plan is to proceed with compassion and gentle clarity. So if you have been divorced, and you're sitting here this morning, please listen carefully. God loves you. You are not condemned. You are not second-class. Divorce doesn't disqualify you from all future ministry. God will meet you right where you are to give you the freedom of His righteousness through faith in Christ!

I don't know of anything more painful or devastating than divorce. Its pain is often more bitter than a physical death. The sense of shame and betrayal and loneliness and hopelessness are overwhelming. The court proceedings, custody battles, and financial settlements all inflict inescapable injury on you and your children.

So if you've lived through the excruciating nightmare of divorce...please know that your divorce is not your identity. Our God is a God of resurrection and life.

If you sinned your way into your divorce, God comes to meet you in your repentance and supernaturally restore your joy in Him. Neither do we condemn you; go and sin no more!<sup>3</sup>

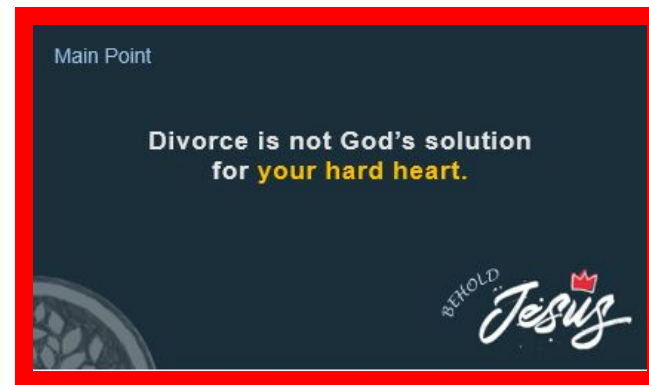
If you suffered your way into your divorce, know that God cares for you, and He has never left you alone. Not for a moment. Yes – I know it feels like He has. You may have suffered immense and unspeakable injustices. But this life is not all that your Heavenly Father has for you. He is a God of resurrection and just judgment. So pray

---

<sup>3</sup> John 8:11

with me today as I encourage our married brothers and sisters to stay faithful in their marriage.

And then, for those of who you are presently in a difficult marriage, and you're currently being tempted to bail on your spouse...please *never* hear me say that divorce is God's solution for your own selfishness. In fact the main point of Jesus' teaching today is that:



Divorce is not God's solution for your hard heart.

Let's carefully consider three reasons why divorce is not God's solution for your hard heart:



First, divorce is not God’s solution for your hard heart since **Marriage is a life-long covenant, not a contract.**

**Matthew 19** helpfully expands Jesus’ teaching on divorce, so please turn over a few chapters and let’s look carefully at **Matthew chapter 19, verses 3-10** in order to better understand how God designed marriage to be a life-long covenant instituted by God Himself, and not simply a temporary contract of convenience executed between two human beings.

Please follow along as I begin reading from **Matthew 19, verse 3:**

*And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?”*



Remember the Pharisees were the Jewish experts on God’s law. Here they ask for Jesus’ thoughts on no-fault divorce.

Because at this time there were two schools of religious thought on divorce. One taught divorce was only permissible for a serious breach of marital oneness, and the other taught that divorce was permissible anytime for any reason.<sup>4</sup> The Pharisees wanted Jesus to weigh in on their argument.

It’s also helpful to realize the cultural context into which Jesus is speaking here. Women were still viewed as property and had very few rights at this time. Remember the Samaritan woman in **John 4** had already been

<sup>4</sup> The rabbinic school of *J kngl* embraced the broad liberal view. They interpreted *kpf gegpef* ‘in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 as to mean any kind of trivial offense, like burning food, or being physically unattractive, or bringing embarrassment upon the husband. The rabbinic school of *Uj co o ck*’ embraced a narrow conservative view which interpreted *kpf gegpef* ‘in Deuteronomy 24 to mean a violation of marital oneness.

married 5 times.<sup>5</sup> Divorce was just as common then as it is in our society today.

So the Pharisees ask Jesus, what does God's law teach regarding no-fault divorce?

**Matthew 19:4**, <sup>4</sup> *He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, <sup>5</sup> and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? <sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."*

Notice Jesus quotes from **Genesis**,<sup>6</sup> and then emphasizes the God-made oneness of marriage in **verse 6** – God supernaturally unites two into one through the covenant of marriage. It's never right for man to separate what God has joined.

The Pharisees understood Jesus' condemnation of no-fault divorce, since they followed up in **verse 7**:

<sup>7</sup> *"Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"*

Jesus, we're confused. If God intended marriage to be about inseparable oneness...then why does **Deuteronomy 24** command us to divorce our wives with formal certificates?

---

<sup>5</sup> John 4:16-18

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1:27 and 2:24

<sup>8</sup> *[Jesus] said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. <sup>9</sup> And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."*

Now notice – **verse 9** parallels **Matthew 5:32** from our Scripture this morning. But here in **chapter 19** we get more insight into the stark contrast between religion and righteousness pertaining to divorce.

You see the scribes and the Pharisees were teaching that the Mosaic law *commanded* divorce... and by the time of Jesus, their religious traditions for divorce focused almost entirely on the paperwork. The certificate. This is what they were effectively teaching: God can't allow a divorce without the proper legal process...but as long as the paperwork is in place, it is a divorce that pleases God, and satisfies the righteousness requirements of His law.

But consider how Jesus blows up their false assurance of piety: God's law to Moses never commanded divorce, but regulated and put limits on this practice of your own stubborn hearts!

Your marriage vows are not just a human contract – they represent a life-long covenant of oneness that is created in heaven's court by God Himself! You think you're righteous just because you have a piece of paper that excuses your stubborn self-love, and legalizes your lust? But when you pursue divorce and remarriage contrary to God's design—you're actually guilty of adultery!

Listen church, whenever you try to twist God's law for your selfish purposes, you only multiply your sin!

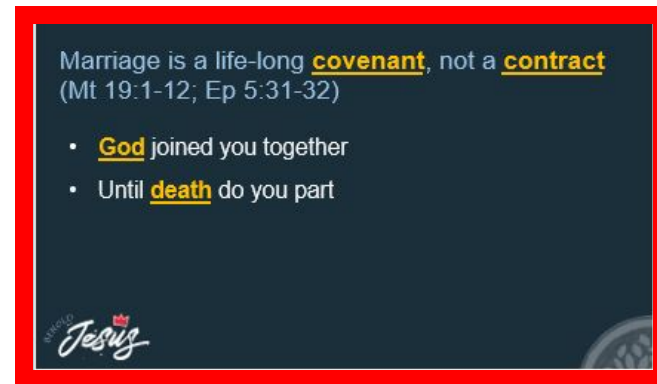
By the way, have you noticed how easy it is to rip verses like **Matthew 5:32** and **19:9** out of their context, and focus entirely on the exception clause while totally nullifying the main point Jesus was making here? Yes... there is an exception clause, and we're going to get to it in a moment...but first ground your thinking with what Jesus is truly teaching here. Marriage is a life-long covenant of oneness. It's something that God Himself does. We must take our marriage vows seriously.

After all, this is the point that the disciples took away from this discussion in **verse 10** right?

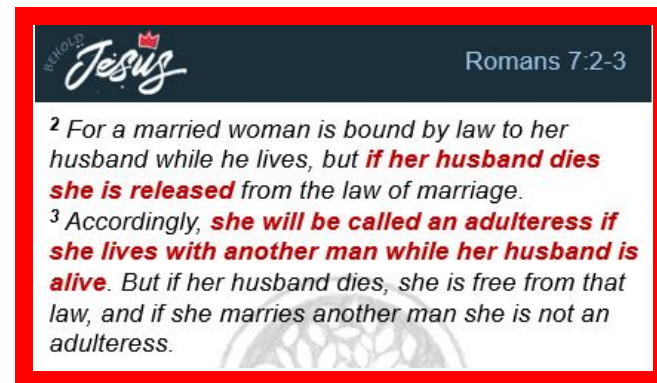
*<sup>10</sup> The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."*

Let that sink in... It would be better not to marry at all – in fact Jesus goes on in **verses 11-12** to provide several good reasons why someone shouldn't get married – rather than to break your marriage vows in divorce.

So let's spank some blanks before we move on.



Marriage is a life-long covenant of oneness, not a human contract. **God joined you together.** And this union is **until death do you part.**



**Romans 7:2** clearly states that,

*A married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage.*



So marriage is not eternal. No one is married in heaven.<sup>7</sup> Death terminates the marriage covenant, and allows for remarriage as **Romans 7:3** so clearly states.

Marriage is a life-long **covenant**, not a **contract**  
(Mt 19:1-12; Ep 5:31-32)

- **God** joined you together
- Until **death** do you part
- Picturing Christ's **oneness** with His church

So marriage is a God-made oneness that should last until death –**picturing Christ's oneness with His church.**

Remember Jesus emphasized God's design for oneness. After all, **Ephesians 5** tells us the primary reason God created marriage. The primary purpose of marriage is not procreation. The primary purpose of marriage is not companionship. The primary purpose of marriage is to picture Christ's oneness with His church.

---

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 22:30. Since God's primary purpose of marriage is to picture the eternal reality of Christ's oneness with His church (Ephesians 5:31-32), there will no longer be a need for the imperfect picture (human marriage) in the presence of the eternal reality (Christ and His Bride). Further, there will be no need for procreation in heaven, since only regeneration, not reproduction, is the means to entrance into the kingdom of Heaven (John 3:3-8).

BEHOLD Jesus Ephesians 5:31-32

*31 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become **one flesh**.*

*32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that **it refers to Christ and the church**.*

*This mystery [of two becoming one flesh] is profound, **Ephesians 5:32** says. And I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.*

Christian – God designed marriage so the watching world would see how covenant-faithful love responds to sin. How sacrificial love and forgiveness continues to love another sinner in the context of a relationship bound by promise.

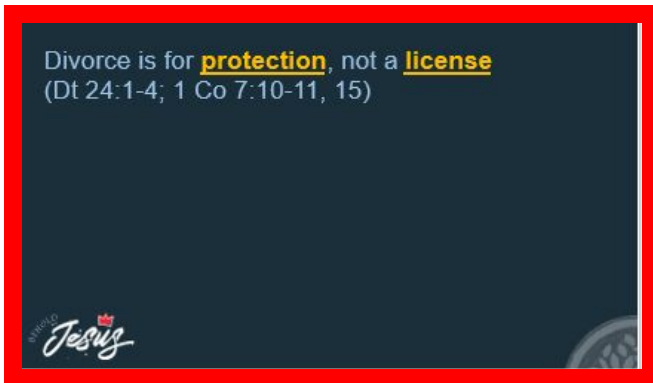
Marriage is a life-long **covenant**, not a **contract**  
(Mt 19:1-12; Ep 5:31-32)

- **God** joined you together
- Until **death** do you part
- Picturing Christ's **oneness** with His church



Therefore divorce is not God's solution for your stubborn heart of sin. Because divorce destroys the testimony of the most powerful ministry on earth – the ministry of a life-long promise of oneness powered by sacrificial love, forgiveness, and mercy.

Now, the second reason divorce papers are not God's solution for your hard heart is because,

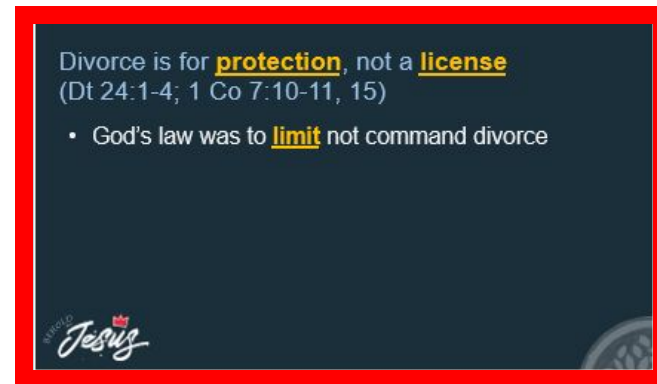


Divorce is for protection, not a license.

Write it down. God designed divorce to protect the vulnerable, and regulate the destruction caused by divorce!

Let's go back and carefully consider the Mosaic Law in **Deuteronomy 24** which the Pharisees wrongly interpreted to command divorce.

From the beginning,



God's law was to limit – not command – divorce.

God's law is an indivisible and noncontradictory whole. God's laws for marriage and divorce, when rightly understood, do not oppose themselves.

Let's start by reviewing the historical context behind **Deuteronomy 24**.

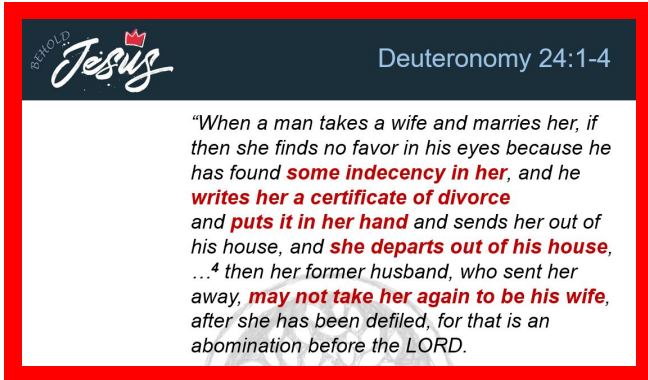
For God's people coming out of Egypt, their marriages were in shambles. Very much like the women in Jesus' day, the Hebrew women were treated like property owned by their husbands. Disrespect and injustice was rampant. Men were dismissing their wives at alarming rates. (And not for adultery by the way, since remember the penalty for adultery was death by stoning!<sup>8</sup>) Men were divorcing their wives for any reason at all – if she burnt his toast, or became no longer attractive to him – or if he just started to love another woman more – he would throw her out of his home with her children, and leave her entirely destitute to fend for herself.

---

<sup>8</sup> Leviticus 20:10

Now God hated this!<sup>9</sup> After all, an unmarried woman was absolutely destitute and dependent.<sup>10</sup> There were little ways for her to make a living for herself. Most often she would have to give herself to prostitution or get remarried as soon as possible just in order to survive in that culture.

So God in His mercy and compassion for these women who were being treated as mere throw-away objects by their husbands, revealed this law to His people in **Deuteronomy 24:**

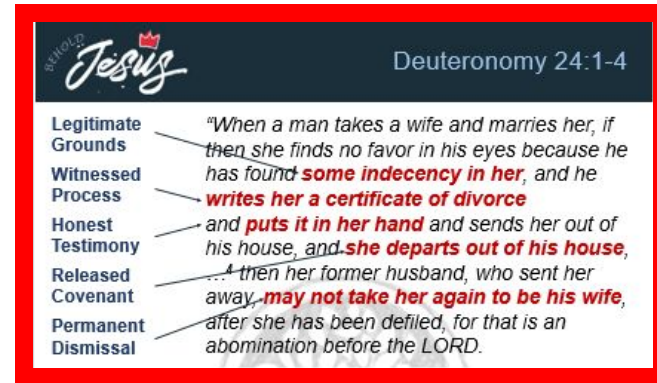


*“When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, ...<sup>4</sup> then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the LORD.*

<sup>9</sup> Malachi 2:16

<sup>10</sup> i.e. Ruth 1:8-13ff

Now I want you to see how God’s divorce law was a protection not a license.



First, a husband had to have legitimate ground for the divorce. He had to have a good reason for the divorce – more than just his own whims and fancies.

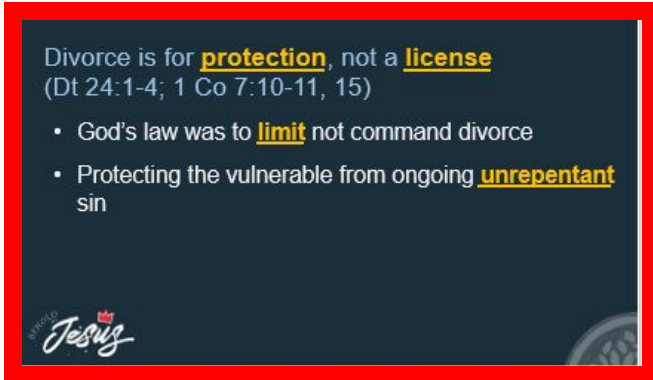
Then he had to write her a certificate of divorce. The was a formal legal process at the city gate involving two witnesses.

And then this husband had to put a copy of the divorce papers in the hand of his wife – so that she had proof of an honest testimony to protect her from future false accusations.

Further, God’s law made sure that the divorced woman was truly released from all marital expectations. Men could no longer come back and make demands on a former wife to fulfill her marriage responsibilities later. God’s law condemned all such abuses here. The divorced woman was truly released from all marital duties.

And finally, God's law made it clear that these hard-hearted men couldn't just cycle back to a former wife after they tired their new one. God's law was clear – biblical divorce separated what God had joined. Once a woman remarried – and **verses 2-3** clearly assumed that she would in that culture – her husband could not take her back.

You see, from the very beginning, God's design for divorce was,



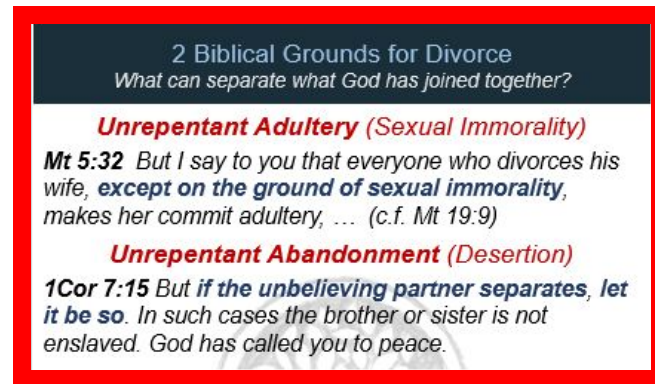
Divorce is for **protection**, not a **license**  
(Dt 24:1-4; 1 Co 7:10-11, 15)

- God's law was to **limit** not command divorce
- Protecting the vulnerable from ongoing **unrepentant** sin

*Jesus*

Protecting the vulnerable from ongoing **unrepentant** sin

And that's still the case today. The New Testament Scriptures reveal that there's two biblical grounds for divorce. Two kinds of situations where God mercifully offers the protection of divorce to those who are vulnerable to ongoing, unrepentant sins of a hard heart:



2 Biblical Grounds for Divorce  
*What can separate what God has joined together?*

**Unrepentant Adultery (Sexual Immorality)**  
**Mt 5:32** *But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, **except on the ground of sexual immorality**, makes her commit adultery, ... (c.f. Mt 19:9)*

**Unrepentant Abandonment (Desertion)**  
**1Cor 7:15** *But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace.*

Today's text from **Matthew 5:32** reveals the first biblical grounds for divorce as unrepentant adultery or sexual immorality.<sup>11</sup>

**1 Corinthians 7:15** reveals that unrepentant abandonment, or desertion, is the second biblical allowance for divorce. *In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved* – or obligated to remain married.

Now please know that I sincerely respect others who hold to different convictions about the biblical grounds for divorce. But my intention this morning is to humbly teach God's Word as our elders understand and seek to apply it out of our love for Christ.

We believe the practice of unrepentant sexual sin or unrepentant abandonment – whether that's physically moving out, financial desertion, or even the abandonment of abuse,<sup>12</sup> fundamentally destroys marital oneness, and

<sup>11</sup> The Greek word *rqtpgk* 'is broad enough to cover all kinds of sexual immorality, not just adultery specifically.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.dennyburk.com/what-about-divorce-and-abuse/>

separates what God has joined together. And at such times, God's design for divorce is to protect the vulnerable from ongoing unrepentant sin,



While awaiting repentance that could make reconciliation possible.

Thankfully in our culture, a woman doesn't require marriage in order to survive today. She doesn't have to immediately get remarried after divorce.

Remember – Jesus assumed the woman would remarry...that's why He taught that *“everyone who divorces his wife makes her commit adultery.”*<sup>13</sup>

But God designed divorce to protect us while we wait for the genuine repentance that could make reconciliation possible.

This is why Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 7:11**,



*If she does [separate from her husband], she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband.*

Notice that. Under God's protection of divorce, you have two options: Remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to your spouse after their genuine repentance would bear sufficient fruit to make reconciliation possible.

Now listen carefully loved ones. Contrary to the legalism of the Pharisees, God never commands divorce. The presence of biblical grounds *allows* but does not *require* you to divorce your spouse.

---

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 5:32, 19:9; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18



**1 Corinthians 7, verses 13-16** reveal that there may be loving evangelistic reasons a believer would choose to remain faithfully married to an unfaithful spouse.<sup>14</sup> Such painful perseverance requires much humility, meekness, and faith,<sup>15</sup> and should only be adopted after much prayer and biblical counsel since there are also times when some form of marital separation is the most loving expression to the unbelieving spouse.<sup>16</sup>

Much humility and wisdom is required with this, for sure.

So now back to the big picture:

---

<sup>14</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:13-16 use the word “holy” to refer to the “separation of spiritual influence” rather than the “separation of salvation.” In other words, the unbelieving husband and the children continues to benefit from the spiritual influence of righteousness when God enables the wife to remain in the home. At times this righteous influence can lead to the conviction which God uses to bring about salvation of the lost, as seen in verse 16.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Peter 3:1-6

<sup>16</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:15



God’s purpose for divorce from the very beginning has been to protect the vulnerable from ongoing unrepentant sin while patience awaiting the repentance that could eventually make reconciliation possible.

And this leads us to the third reason why divorce is not God’s solution for your hard heart:



**Remarriage after divorce requires caution, not conceit.**

Contrary to the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees, divorce papers do not automatically give us the right to remarriage. Jesus’ teaching about the true spirit of God’s

righteousness should quiet our clamoring for our own rights, and cause us to be very humble and cautious in remarriage.

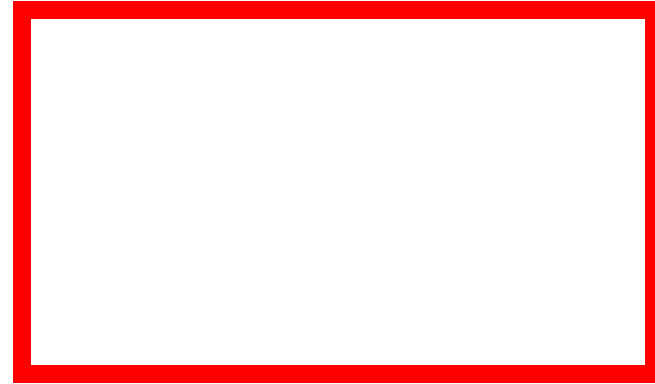
Jesus says clearly in **Matthew 5:32**,

*Whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.*



In other words, **Marrying another after an illegitimate divorce is adultery.**

If you don't have biblical grounds for your divorce, then you and your spouse are still one in God's eyes – regardless of whether you have a piece of paper that says you are divorced or not. This was Jesus' point to the crowds in the Sermon on the Mount – the religious leaders are telling you that you're righteous because your divorce has been authorized by a religious piece of paper. But marriage isn't a man-made contract! It's a life-long covenant of oneness made by God Himself! There's only two biblical grounds for divorce...all other grounds for divorce are not recognizable by God.



Second, **Marrying another after your spouse repents is adultery**

Remember God's purpose for divorce is to protect the vulnerable from the ongoing unrepentant sin of their spouse. But if your spouse genuine repents – and I mean bears the fruits of genuine repentance over time in accountable relationship that is evidenced to others as well as yourself, **1 Corinthians 7:11** would urge you to either stay single or be reconciled to your first spouse.

To go ahead and marry another is adultery.





Here's an important principle: **Genuine repentance eliminates all biblical grounds for divorce.**<sup>17</sup> Where there is God-given repentance – there is no biblical ground for divorce – no matter how grievous or long-lasting the sin!

Praise God for a Gospel that truly frees sinners like you and me from our past! Repentance is such a good and precious gift from God's Spirit!!

So now you ask,

*is there ever a time after divorce when remarriage becomes a biblical option?*

---

<sup>17</sup> C.f. 2 Corinthians 7:10-11; 2:7-8. The godly grief of genuine repentance truly changes everything. So that 2 Corinthians 2:7 urges us to reaffirm our love for the sinner, and turn to forgive him and comfort him. After all, if the primary purpose of Christian marriage is to put God's gospel on display, then why would we fail to forgive and pursue reconciliation with our spouse after the time-tested fruits of genuine repentance for their sins? (c.f. Mt 18:35)

Well again, we hold our convictions here humbly, but based on the strong warnings of Scripture we believe remarriage after divorce is only an option when,



**Future reconciliation with your sinful spouse is a biblical impossibility.**

In other words, if your divorced spouse has physically died, then your future reconciliation with him/her is a biblical impossibility. **Romans 7** clearly teaches you would be free to remarry another in such a situation.

I also believe that if your divorced spouse has remarried another person, then your future reconciliation of marriage back to him/her is a biblical impossibility. So there may be times in such circumstances where remarriage becomes a biblical option for you.

But because there are so many unique circumstances, and of course because there's never such a thing as a purely innocent spouse in any marriage conflict... much

caution and counsel is advised for anyone considering remarriage after divorce.  
So let's review:



God's Word teaches that **Divorce is not God's solution for your hard heart**, since marriage is a life-long covenant of oneness, not a temporary human contract. Second, God's purpose for divorce has always been about protection, not a license for your failure to love God or love others. And third, divorce is not God's solution since it doesn't guarantee you are able to remarry someone else.

Here's Jesus' point. Hard hearts are the only real cause for divorce. Divorce is a reality simply because stubborn hearts fail to love God enough to forgive one another. Stubborn hearts fail to love others enough to suffer and sacrifice unconditionally for them.

Righteousness can never be proven by a certificate of paper that says we did it all right. Kingdom righteousness is a matter of the heart.



And **our hard hearts need covenant oneness with King Jesus.**

There's only one righteous solution for stubborn hearts that love themselves. We need to be united with Jesus. We need to receive the righteousness that comes only by faith in the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus!<sup>18</sup>

So if you come this morning tempted to walk away from your marriage – pray right now that God's Spirit would forgive your hard heart, cleanse your heart of self-love, and soften you up by His Spirit of hope and love! Believe on Jesus Christ – so that He becomes your life and His resurrection power will fuel and empower a hopeful pursuit of your spouse to fulfill God's Gospel purposes for your ministry of marriage here on earth.

If you come this morning with divorce in your past, then take great joy that your divorce is not your identity! Christ is your identity loved one!! If you pursued divorce God's way, then humbly rest in God's merciful protection while you continue to wait for your spouse to repent. Jesus is

---

<sup>18</sup> Philippians 3:9; Romans 3:28, 4:23-25

your eternal husband!<sup>19</sup> Never forget this! Pursue joy in your covenant oneness with Him, and keep trusting God for the salvation of your unrepentant spouse.

And if you come this morning recognizing that you've sinned through an unbiblical divorce or remarriage, then please listen carefully to me:

There is great righteousness available to all who admit that they are sinful and come in repentance and faith in Christ alone! The point of the entire Sermon on the Mount is that we are all sinners! Not one of us is excluded! So neither do we condemn you. Go and sin no more!

Repent of any and all sin that you are aware of. You aren't living in perpetual adultery if you entered your present remarriage sinfully. But you do need to admit and acknowledge any sin, and turn from it. God always meets us right where we're at – just like He did with the woman at the well in **John chapter 4** – and calls us to turn from stubborn self-sufficiency and believe on Him alone for our righteousness.

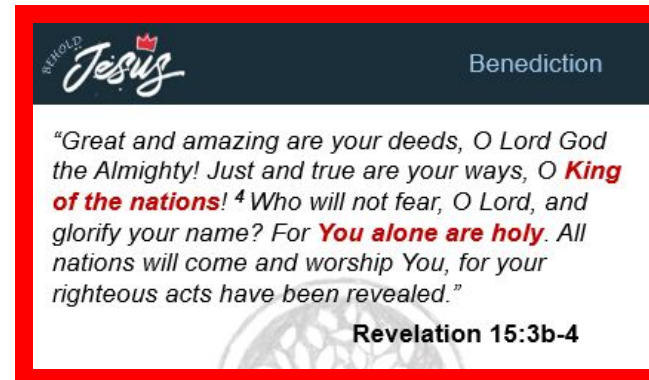


Behold our King Jesus! His righteousness far exceeds anything we could muster. And yet, in His mercy, He has come to purchase us and wed us to Himself for the eternal praise of His name.

**Let's pray.**

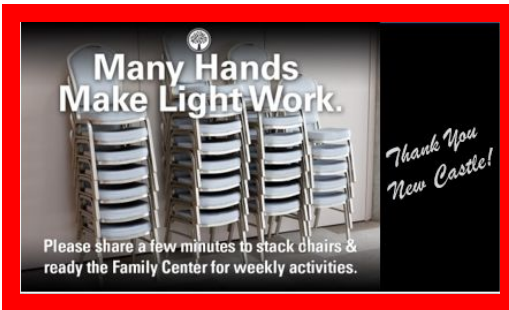
<<His Mercy is More>>

**Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.**



<sup>19</sup> Ephesians 5:25-27; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7-9; c.f. Isaiah 54:5  
Page 17a of 19

*Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! <sup>4</sup> Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”*  
**Revelation 15:3b-4**



### Recommended Resources on The Heart of Divorce:

- Leviticus 21:7, 14
- Deuteronomy 22:14, 19, 28-29; 24:1-4
- Ezra 10:2-3, 10-11, 19
- Isaiah 50:1
- Jeremiah 3:1, 8
- Malachi 2:14-16
- Matthew 1:19; 19:3-9
- Mark 10:2-12
- Luke 16:18
- Romans 7:1-3
- 1 Corinthians 7:8-16, 39-40
  
- “Whatsoever Romantic State” sermon dated 1-15-17 at NCBC
- “Christ-Centered Marriage” sermon dated 10-18-15 at NCBC
- “When can I get remarried after divorce” Q/A dated 1-18-17 at NCBC

- “What if I already remarried, instead of waiting for my first spouse to repent?” Q/A dated 1-18-17 at NCBC
  
- [http://andynaselli.com/wp-content/uploads/2019\\_Divorce\\_and\\_Remarriage.pdf](http://andynaselli.com/wp-content/uploads/2019_Divorce_and_Remarriage.pdf)
- <https://www.gracechurch.org/about/distinctives/divorce-and-remarriage>
- <https://www.samstorms.com/all-articles/post/matthew-5:31-32>
- <http://bradhambrick.com/article-is-pornography-biblical-grounds-for-divorce/>
  
- *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, Newheiser
- *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible*, Adams
- *Divorce*, Murray

## Discussion Questions:

1. Read Matthew 19:3-12. How does the disciples' response in verse 10 help us understand the emphasis of Jesus' teaching in verse 9? Is this what you emphasize here? Why or why not?
2. Read Leviticus 20:10. How do we know that the divorces spoken of in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 were not related to adultery?
3. Review Matthew 5:32 and 1 Corinthians 7:15. What are the two biblical grounds for divorce? Given the serious nature of the marriage covenant, why do you believe God legitimizes divorce on these two grounds, but not others?
4. Read Matthew 19:8. What does hardness of heart refer to? How does this relate to the main point of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount? (c.f. Deut 30:6; Jer 31:33; Ezek 11:19-20, 36:22-32)
5. Review Matthew 5:21-48. How does each illustration relate to the next? Do you believe Jesus is progressing through the 10 commandments in order throughout this section? Why or why not?
6. What specific questions does this raise for you about divorce and remarriage? Discuss together, and pray for God's grace to truly live out a greater love for God and others in our marriage relationships.