



## Jesus on Family, Relationships, and Possessions Pt 6: Divorce and Remarriage Revisited

February 6, 2022

### **Text: Matthew 19:5-12**

The last time we were in Matthew (Jan 6th and 16th), we learned/relearned some needful things:

#### *Have Ye not read? (Matt 19:4a)*

By pointing back to Genesis to correct the flawed doctrine of the Pharisees:

1. Jesus affirms the Creation account. (Gen 1:1, 31). All paradigms, worldviews, and streams of thought based on evolution are false.
2. Jesus affirms Man's creation in God's image. (Gen 1:26-28) Only man was created with the capacity to be personal with God!
3. Jesus affirms a literal Adam and Eve and the Marriage Covenant. (Gen 2:7, 18, 21-25)
4. Jesus affirms Man's fall into sin. (Gen 3:6-7).
5. Jesus affirms God's Redemptive Plan! (Gen 3:15). Although the Seed of the Woman's (Christ) heel was bruised, the serpent's head was too! In Jesus, Paradise lost is Paradise restored!
6. Jesus affirms the basic Roles of Marriage! (Gen 3:16-19). The woman would have great difficulty bearing children and would desire to lead, but would be ruled over by her husband. The man would be forced to work hard to lead and provide, but meet with great frustration in the doing.
7. Jesus affirms the reality of the Spiritual World and War. (Gen 3). Satan (the serpent) is real. So are angels. Mankind would be a part of this conflict until the Consummation of all things.

Jesus also intimates a critical point: **God's Word, rightly divided, always has the answer!** Whether it be a direct precept, a principle that requires godly wisdom, or a pattern to follow, Scripture is Sufficient! Therefore we should read our Bibles 1) Daily, 2) Humbly 3) Wholeheartedly, 4) Hopefully 5) Contextually, 6) Obediently, and 7) Prayerfully.

#### *Male and Female! (Matt 19:4b)*

1. In the Gospels, Jesus taught (as He does throughout the entire Scripture) one male and one female. This is a simple but important point: in Scripture, all we ever see as it relates to humans, are males and females, men and women, sons and daughters!
2. Men and women are both made in God's image, but are different creationally, emotionally, physically, and biologically. They have different but equally wonderful commands and callings as it relates to home and church and together they take dominion unto the glory of God.
3. Spiritual warfare and cultural confusion surround this topic. Be strong CRC. Trust God and His Word as you disciple your children, preach the Gospel, and interact with others. Use God's very Words.

#### **Walking though today's Text:**

**Matthew 19:5 (KJV) 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?**

1. "For this cause." A man shall leave his father and mother...meaning he establishes his own household and comes from under the direct and daily supervision of his parents...**because** God, in the beginning, made them male and female.
2. In other words, a man and woman marry because of the design of God. Marriage was created by God.
3. Man doesn't just "leave" his parents; he must "cleave" unto his wife! Cleave is *proskollaō* in Greek. It means to adhere or glue oneself to. The marital bond is not a contract to be broken when there are difficulties. It is a cleaving...and a covenant (a spiritual, conditional agreement between the LORD and His children)!

**Malachi 2:14 (KJV)** *Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.*

4. This leaving and cleaving (marriage) creates the blessings of "one flesh." One flesh means that married couples are one in body (their physical union) and one in purpose and unity. This is pointedly illustrated by their biological children, who are literally a mixture of them both.
  - **Genesis 2:21-25 (KJV)** *And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; **22** And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. **23** And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. **24** Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. **25** And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*
  - **Malachi 2:15 (KJV)** *And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.*
  - **1 Corinthians 6:15-17 (KJV)** *Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid. **16** What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. **17** But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*
  - **Ephesians 5:28-31 (KJV)** *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. **29** For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: **30** For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. **31** For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*

**Matthew 19:6 (KJV)** **Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.**

1. One of the sad "sin realities" many married's deal with is remaining two instead of becoming one. Many marriages do not function in oneness. Pride, hurt, selfishness, etc. keep too many husbands and wives living like "partners" with an "arrangement" instead of one flesh. There is a big difference there!
2. When there is "one flesh," there is unity of purpose. There is an order according to God's Word. There is no "me" and "mine;" there is "ours" and "together." A married couple is no longer two. They are one.
3. There is nothing trivial about divorce. God is the author of marriage and puts male and female together. Man is commanded not to put marriage asunder. God hates divorce:

**Malachi 2:16 (KJV)** *For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.*

**Matthew 19:7 (KJV)** **They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?**

1. The Pharisees are likely referencing Deut 24 here:

**Deuteronomy 24:1-2 (KJV)** *When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.*

2. Remember, there were two schools of thought among the Jewish leaders, one more liberal concerning divorce, and one more conservative.
3. The “tempting” or trap they were attempting to lay was to cause Jesus to anger one of the groups.

**Matthew 19:8 (KJV)** **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.**

1. This is an important Text as it relates to marriage.
2. Jesus is teaching that Mosaic law here was an allowance based on man’s sin. Moses did not “command” divorce as the Pharisees said; he “suffered” or permitted it because men’s hearts were hard.
3. The passage in Deut is vague as well. What does “no favor” mean? What kind of uncleanness? Divorce had become too casual:
  - The ESV says of Deut 24:1, “*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...*”
  - The NLT says of Deut 24:1, “*Suppose a man marries a woman but she does not please him. Having discovered something wrong with her, he writes a document of divorce, hands it to her, and sends her away from his house.*”
4. Presumably there were divorces in Israel for reasons that did not comport with the greatness of the Covenant of Marriage! Too many “no-fault” dissolutions; too much casual *violence*!
5. Apparently, this allowance due to the hard-heartedness of man was to protect the women. Matthew Henry wrote:

*Moses complained of the people of Israel in his time, that their hearts were hardened (Deu 9:6; Deu 31:27), hardened against God; this is here meant of their being hardened against their relations; they were generally violent and outrageous, which way soever they took, both in their appetites and in their passions; and therefore if they had not been allowed to put away their wives, when they had conceived a dislike of them, they would have used them cruelly, would have beaten and abused them, and perhaps have murdered them.*

6. This phrase is critical: “But from the beginning it was not so.” In the Gospels and the rest of the NT, we see a return to “the beginning” when it comes to marriage. Allowances like easy

divorce and polygamy were rescinded by our LORD and this rescinding confirmed by His apostles.

**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.**

- In 2012, we worked through our views on divorce and remarriage while preaching through the parallel passage in Mark 10. Here are three orthodox positions and where we stand as a church:

Position 1: There is no biblically justifiable reason to ever divorce once married.

Position 2: Divorce is biblically permitted only if an unbelieving spouse leaves.

Position 3: Divorce is biblically permissible in the case of sexual immorality and if an unbelieving spouse leaves.

- **CRC's position is #3. Divorce is permissible in the case of sexual immorality (physical, conjugal adultery) and if an unbelieving spouse leaves.**

#### **Justification:**

1. Jesus gives “fornication” or sexual immorality (sex outside of marriage) as a reason for divorce. (Matt 19:9)
2. Paul, via the Holy Spirit, gives the churches these holy Words:

**1 Corinthians 7:10-16 (KJV)** *And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: **11** But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. **12** But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. **13** And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. **14** For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. **15** But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. **16** For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?*

3. Verses 10-11 and 15 use “depart” synonymously with separation leading to divorce.
  4. We also believe that even in such cases, every effort to forgive and reconcile should be made. Such is the importance is the martial bond/covenant in the sight of God.
  5. The only other biblical breaking of the marriage covenant is by the death of a spouse. (1 Cor 7:39)
- Also notable is our LORD strong elevation of the Kingdom standard. Some divorces are unlawful. No longer can divorce (putting away) happen for just any or every reason. In the Kingdom something VERY serious has to take place in order for a divorce to be sanctioned by heaven: someone within the marriage must commit fornication; they must engage in physical, sexual relationship outside the marriage.

**Matthew 19:10 (KJV)** His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his wife, it is not good to marry.*

1. This verse is kind of funny, and kind of sad. Basically, it seems like the disciples, after hearing our LORD teach the very high standards of marriage and the life-long nature of the covenant, were incredulous! They seem to be saying, “Wow, all that huh? And I could not get rid of her easily? Better to stay single!”
2. John Gill summed it up well:

*It would be more expedient and advisable for a man to live always a single life, than to run the risk of marrying a woman, that may prove very disagreeable and uncomfortable; to whom he must be bound all the days of his or her life, and, in such a case, not to be able to relieve and extricate himself. This they said under the prejudice of a national law and custom, which greatly prevailed, and under the influence of a carnal heart.*

**Matthew 19:11 (KJV)** But he said unto them, **All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.**

1. William MacDonald says here, “So the Savior reminded them that the ability to remain celibate was not the general rule; only those to whom special grace was given could forego marriage. The dictum, “All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given,” does not mean that all cannot understand what follows, but that they cannot live a continent life unless they are called to it.”
2. It remains true that for most, marriage is the best road. Our pushing off of marriage combined with our cultural litmus test for readiness has hurt much more than it has helped.

**1 Corinthians 7:1-5 (KJV)** Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: *It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*

**1 Corinthians 7:8-9 (KJV)** I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, *It is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.*

**Matthew 19:12 (KJV)** **For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.**

1. Some men are born without physical capability, some are made that way by men. (Historically, the attendants of a King's harem would be made that way for example.)
2. Others would voluntarily forgo marriage in order to serve the Kingdom. Paul was this type of person.
3. There is a debate about “the gift of singleness.” I believe there is such a thing because of this Text, but I do not believe it is normative for most.
4. Desiring marriage is ok. Wanting to remain single (with the lessened desires to match) is also ok. Trust God in whatever state you find yourself!

**Philippians 4:11 (KJV)** *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

**1 Corinthians 7:17 (KJV)** *But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.*

Amen.