

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

RLJ-1948

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PART 49: DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

BEYOND JORDAN

Matthew chronicles how Jesus left Galilee and traveled south into Judah. He describes the place as “beyond Jordan,” referring to the location where John the Baptist had baptized people in the Jordan River. **Matthew 19:1; John 10:40**

This was the area from which Jesus commenced His ministry when He was baptized by John. **Matthew 3:13-17**

Jesus must have thought about that some 3.5 years earlier he was now back in the spot where he had started. At that time, he had been alone, no disciples and no crowd. Now he was coming back with his 12 apostles, the 70 others and some 39 women that were part of his entourage.

Thousands came out to hear the Messiah speak and experience a healing from the God-man. **Matthew 19:2; Mark 10:1**

DIVORCE

When the Pharisees discovered that Jesus had left Galilee and come into Judah, they immediately confronted Jesus in an attempt to snare Him. This time they used the subject of divorce to see if they could trip up the Son of God. **Matthew 19:3; Mark 10:2**

Jesus responded by summarizing what Adam had said about his identity. **Matthew 19:4-5; Genesis 2:23-25**

The God-man added that man should not separate what God had joined together. **Matthew 19:6**

The Pharisees then asked why Moses had allowed divorce. **Matthew 19:7; Deuteronomy 24:1**

Jesus responded that it was due to the hardness of the hearts, but such a separation had not been intended when the Son of God created Adam and Eve. **Matthew 19:8**

The God-man reiterated infidelity (adultery) is the only thing that breaks a marriage. **Matthew 5:32; 19:9**

This last statement triggered a response from the disciples who held the belief that a man could divorce his wife if he was not happy with her. **verse 10**

The Son of God had dealt with the issue of divorce four hundred years earlier. **Malachi 2:11-17**

Jesus ended the discourse on divorce by stating that not all men are destined for marriage.



1. Some men are born impotent or perhaps recognize they are socially inept and therefore do not want to get married.
2. Some have suffered from the cruelty of man that renders them incapable of producing children.
3. Some are content to live in a single state; they embrace celibacy to fully serve the Lord. **Matthew 19:11-12**

Some are able to understand what God intended in marriage and therefore they had been made eunuchs (castrated) **Matthew 19:11-12**

MARRIAGE

Half of the marriages in America end in divorce. This statistic includes Christians as well. Can divorce be justified? Let's examine the following scenarios:

1. A man is unhappy in his marriage and has no grounds for divorce since his wife has not been unfaithful. Nevertheless, he decides to separate and seek God's forgiveness afterwards. Such a sin will not be forgiven and he will have to make payment at the Judgment Seat of Christ. **Hebrews 10:26-27; 2 Corinthians 5:10-11**

What about the wife? What should she do? The apostle Paul said to let him go; she is no longer bound to him. There is no bondage for her; she is free and can remarry if she wishes. **1 Corinthians 7:15**

2. What if a man filed for divorce and later marries someone else. Where does he stand? We have no scripture to address that situation, but my belief is that two wrongs do not make a right. God will forgive if there is true repentance and there is no place in the Bible that advocates breaking the second marriage.

There are only three sins that God will not forgive:

- a. Taking the Mark of the Beast. **Revelation 14:9-11**
- b. Removing scripture from the Bible. **Revelation 22:19**
- c. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit. **Matthew 12:31-21**
3. If a couple divorces and each spouse marries someone new, God forbids them from getting back together because of the compromising position in which it puts their current spouses. **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**
4. If a spouse commits adultery and seeks forgiveness, there is no need for a divorce since the marriage can be saved.

During nearly five decades as a pastor, I have discovered that most Christians are divorced and remarried. In a church of some 100 members, there might have been four families who were not blended.

God will forgive unless you have willfully sinned. Some of these people would go on to become strong Christians, serving in the ministry and in leadership roles.

I was criticized for this stance as the protesters were emphatic that a divorced man could never hold an office in the church. **1 Timothy 3:2**

But Paul was not addressing divorce in this portion of scripture; he was addressing bigamy, since it was common for men to have more than one wife.

If a man responds to Holy Spirit conviction and repents, is the blood of Jesus strong enough to wash away sin? If so, why should his life be rendered useless in terms of Christian ministry because of divorce?

We don't employ such a standard against new believers, so why should divorce – or any other sin for that matter – effectively taint him for the rest of his life? Don't we live in an age where there is an abundance of mercy and grace? **Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 John 1:4-10**

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?