

Strange Marriages - No-fault – ‘Living together’ – Same Sex – Serial Polygamy

We do not base our views about marriage on the shifting sand of societal norms...but on biblical truth

Big Idea - Marriage is a Spiritual Covenant (not a Governmental Contract)

Marriage is a sacred covenant that ideally is dissolved only by death

Question: In marriage, how do we interact biblically with the culture, commitment, church? | READ

1. Culture: Beware Hostile Arguments (Mark 10:1-5)

And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.² And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” “To test” = Seeking to discredit...not truth | **RABBI’S**

- **Shammai** – Only grounds adultery | **Hillel** – Any indecency: Ruined food – Exposed ankles – Hair Manipulation – Support a lower moral standard | Strict interpretation making Him unpopular

Baiting Jesus into a hostile argument...and he doesn’t bite

³ He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” ⁴ They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.” | **Pharisees Quote - Deuteronomy 24:1-4**

“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,² and if she goes and becomes another man’s wife,³ and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife,⁴ 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.

Pharisees = What can I get away with...what does this allow me to do? | **Doing it wrong!**

When religious people want to justify behaviors, they manipulate Scripture

Protect marriage & women...not give men permission to leave

- Masculine culture – Women were dependent on men for protection and provision
- Dowry – Cast her out and keep her property - Legal issue not a spiritual (Permitting Divorce)

Jesus was being baited into a hostile argument about marriage...he didn’t bite and neither should we

Marriage is an issue debated with great hostility...was then...is today | **Figure that out...**

For years, American, definition of marriage given by both the State and Church were externally similar

- Internally...different (By Religion)...but they all had some things in common = **Age and Gender**
- Churches = Marry you in the eyes of our belief system | State = Benefits as a legally recognized union
- 2015 – Nation Changed definition...added who received benefits legal union | **FOOTBALL**
- Nowhere...Bible granted tax breaks or insurance incentives for marriage...government | **Officiant**
- **Do we need to enter into hostile conflicts on how Politicians define marriage? No**
- **De we need to defend our right to define marriage the way God Word prescribes? Yes**

The Spiritual Covenant of Marriage is a Hill to Die on

The Governmental Contract of marriage is a tension to Live in

God’s original plan for marriage is still His plan for marriage

Is it dangerous to start redefining divine constructs such as marriage and gender? Yes

- Humans start redefining things in the Divine Creation Order...dangerous...consequences
- ⁵ And Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.

Marriage, gender, sexuality is never the issue...the gospel is the issue – Consequence fixer

What is our job in the marriage debate?

- **Present God Glorifying Marriages** – Represent God’s original plan and illustrating the church
- **Promote biblically informed legislation** – Electing officials who protect societal health
- **Proclamation of the Gospel** - Calling the world to repentance for sin...Truth and Love

Jesus doesn’t debate the Rabbi’s view...He gives the Lord’s | Marriage is a Spiritual Covenant...

2. Commitment: Take it seriously (6-9)

⁶ But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ⁷ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife,⁸ and the two shall become one flesh.’ So, they are no longer two but one flesh. ⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” – **Last week (Quick)**

Jesus doesn’t argue misinterpretation of Deuteronomy 24...shows how seriously God takes marriage

- **6 & 9 – ‘God made them male and female...what God has joined together, let no man separate.’**

Most biblical part of a marriage? **Jokes for days** – Giving away of the bride to the groom

• How close should a parental relationship be?

- HOLD FAST – **Two boards (Glue/Clamp) Tightest possible bond = The two shall become one**
- (God’s the Bonding) – **‘What God has joined together let no man separate’**

We need to take our marriages as seriously as God takes our marriages

We need to take divorce as seriously as God takes divorce

God never commands divorce He tolerates...degree...regulates it - Divorce is never God’s perfect will

- **Divorce itself if not always sin | Divorce is always the result of sin | All divorce grieves the Lord**

Marriage is a Spiritual Covenant not at Governmental Contract...

3. Church: Seek and Give Support (10-12)

¹⁰ And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. ¹¹ And he said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, ¹² and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.

Matthew 19:9 - ⁹ And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, *except for sexual immorality,*

1 Corinthians 7:10-16 - ¹⁰To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband ¹¹ (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife. ¹²To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. ¹³If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. ¹⁴For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. ¹⁵But 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.* – **Tricky & Stick...I as Unbeliever...uncomfortable**

Marriage is a Spiritual Covenant not at Governmental Contract...

For believers...divorce is not decided on by the courts but by the church

Church – Allowing divorce for either NO reason or for ANY reason (Neither is right)

Combine the teaching of Jesus & Paul, there are at least two legitimate grounds for divorce

- Adultery – The act of physically stepping out on the marriage sexually
- Desertion by an unbeliever
 - When all attempts at reconciliation have failed
 - Professing believer refuses steps church discipline come to be treated as unbeliever (**Matt. 18**)

Three little words that give us the ability to discern what ‘separates’ means – **‘In such cases...’ (Only)**

- Where a spouse separates the bond of biblical marriage...**‘In such cases...’** (Not given specifics)
 - No such thing as a black and white marriage. Therefore, no such thing black and white divorce

Righteousness: Before divorce, your marriage must be examined by the church (Elders) | **Messed Up**

Crime...investigate | Come across a body...arrest the closes person standing to it...might have...could?

- **‘In such cases’ Yes, Might/Could be...**
 - **Spouse or Child Abuse** – Physical, sexual, or emotionally...all the above
 - Church should quickly protect the abused – Separation should be sought immediately
 - **Extreme, Prolonged Relational Cruelty**
 - **Credible Threats of Serious Physical Harm or Murder**
 - **Incorrigible Addiction: Alcohol – Drugs – Gambling – Pornography**

GRACE FOR FAILURE

No sermon can possibly specify all the complex details that will be part of every real-life situation

- **Need for Support** – Class this summer for marriages, taught by people with training in the field
- **Need for Wisdom** – Elders seek wisdom in order to rightly evaluate the actual degree of harm in individual cases and whether there is reasonable basis for hope that the destructive behavior has ended and the marriage can be saved (**15**) **God has called you to peace.**

Restoration of the marriage, if possible, must remain the first goal

Both divorce and remarriage are allowed when a person’s spouse has committed adultery or has irreparably deserted the marriage

Is it possible this marriage can be restored – Everything should be done to prevent dissolution of a marriage

Marriage is a spiritual covenant (Train – Twilight Stars...Haitian Pirates...Not the State)

Marriage is a spiritual covenant ...matters to God...it should matter to us...pray