

TILL DEATH DO US PART

Marriage today is entered into lightly, with no forethought, no preparation, and no awareness of the great responsibility involved.

I would like to share some things that God has shared with me on a rather difficult subject, a subject which, for the most part, is overlooked and ignored by most of Christianity. Sermons are seldom preached on it any more.

It is a rather painful, heart-breaking subject, when we think of innumerable friends and relatives, brothers and sisters, who are drastically affected by this particular subject. It is the subject of divorce and remarriage, and we want to examine the Word of God closely and find out just what God does feel about divorce and remarriage.

Over 11 million Americans are now divorced and live alone. Thirty to forty million Americans have passed through divorce and are now remarried. The divorce rate in America has more than doubled since 1962, and now one out of every two marriages end in divorce. In California it is two out of three. Even countries that have prohibited divorce for centuries, like Italy, are now passing legislation in favor of divorce, resulting in a total breakdown of morals. Here in America the relationship between a man and his dog lasts longer than a relationship between a man and his wife, on the average. You've seen the bumper stickers!

I would like to read an excerpt from a news story. Sorry, I do not remember the original source...
'Traditional minded Americans view the divorce phenomena as bleakly as they do, the tendency of many people is to live together without marriage vows. To traditionalists, including many younger Americans, marriage is still a binding together of husband and wife "till death do us part". But the majority take a more tolerant view of divorce as an inevitable by-product of many external factors, including the woman's rights drive, the so-called sexual revolution, the strains of urban living, and the decline of religion as an Inhibiting force.'

Further more, It is pointed out, is the high rate of remarriage after divorce...
' 60% of the women interviewed said they regarded divorce as an acceptable solution for marriage failure. Already 23 states have adopted some form of no-fault divorce, where all you have to do is simply go to the judge and get a divorce.'

Marriage is a very deep, sacred subject, and we need to go back to the very beginning to see what holy principles God laid down from the beginning concerning marriage. Marriage was the first institution God ever established. Marriage was before sin. God ordained it, and held the home sacred and sanctified.

It has always been my stand to encourage those who are unmarried to remain so as long as possible. I believe it will benefit them, and the Kingdom of God, to give their youth to the building up of the Kingdom of God. When we are young, we are ambitious, vigorous, and in a sense, idealistic. It is a tremendous time to serve the Lord.

Marriage is a legal provision God has made for the flesh, but I will continue to encourage people to put it off as long as possible, so that they can give themselves more freely to the Lord. I have yet to meet a married person who would disagree with the fact that the marriage relationship is something that has to be worked at, and because it has to be worked at, it takes a lot of time.

I am not sure what a perfect marriage is, but I know there are times when the husband and wife must take time to sit and talk, and take care of certain problems and things that will come up in a marriage. Things like how to discipline the children, how much time to spend with one another, how finances should be distributed, or what our attitude should be in a particular matter and if they are not worked out, there will be inner conflict and turmoil.

Marriages are always going through changes, because people always go through changes. On the other hand, there may be a period of time when the husband and wife are one in the Spirit, and both are working together for their Lord, and that is a great time of blessing. But time has to be devoted to the marriage relationship if it is going to work, and it will work if there is time devoted to it, and there is a mutual understanding between the man and his wife.

"And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. 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; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 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. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Genesis 2:20)

Through the union of male and female, God has unleashed and entrusted creative forces to man, made in His image and His likeness. Anyone who has married, and who has had the privilege of bringing a child into the world, knows what a great honor and blessing it is. But with this privilege also comes great responsibility.

Looking into the New Testament, the mystery of the relationship between Christ and the Church is likened to the relationship between a man and his wife. As the church is subject to Christ, so let the wife be subject unto her husband.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church—for we are members of his body of his flesh, and of his bones. 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. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:25-32)

This is God's principle from Genesis to Revelation: the principle of oneness. A man and his wife are to be one, they are no more twain, but one flesh. This is a holy principle and is not to be trifled with or esteemed lightly. It is much more serious than many of us realize.

Our twentieth century thinking says, "sure, go ahead and marry, but you'll always have divorce as an option if it doesn't work out, and you can just go marry somebody else."

We may not think we actually believe this way, but it has been programmed to us in such away that in our hearts we hold to this false escape.

Jesus and His church are one, and He established the husband-wife relationship to be the closest expression on the earth of that oneness that he has with His church. Just as He and His church shall never be put asunder, so can a man and his wife never be put asunder. God never made provision for divorce. He never set forth divorce as an option for sinful, lustful, self-willed man. Marriage was instituted before sin for sinless people.

MARRIAGE IS SACRED

"And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Mark 10:8-9)

God instituted marriage for life!

That means that as long as both persons are living they are to remain married. They should never seek to terminate this sacred, holy, God-ordained relationship. It is wrong and sinful to seek a divorce.

Now we can understand when sinful men, who care nothing about the things of God, will reject and throw aside the plain teachings of the holy scriptures. But what is incomprehensible is how some who name the Name of Christ, and call themselves God-fearing people, can set aside so lightly what God has clearly revealed to be something very dear and precious and sacred and holy in His estimation.

They want to sin, and then justify themselves by hedging around the plain teachings of the Word of God. If we had any concept of what God thought of men and women, created in His glory and likeness, living like a bunch of pigs in a barnyard we would never be the same. Marriage is lightly entered into, with no forethought, no preparation and no awareness of the great responsibility.

"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." (Hebrews 13:4)

" 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 she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 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." (Malachi 2:14-15)

God was speaking to the Israelites, who at this time had so degenerated that they didn't hold the marriage relationship sacred or holy or something to be preserved, but they took it very lightly.

"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. 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, and let none deal treacherously." (Nalachi 2:15,16)

What kind of seed shall we produce if we jump around from wife to wife, from husband to husband? What other kind of seed shall we produce, but an unholy seed? Not only speaking of our children, but also an ungodly, unholy attitude and spirit will we produce.

WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

Sin is the cause of separation between any two people. Love does not cause separation. Sin is the cause of separation: lust, greed, selfishness, and hatred. God instituted marriage in the Garden of Eden among sinless men, and 2500 years later Moses gave a bill of divorcement to a backslidden rebellious, disobedient, stiff-necked people. Moses gave it, but God never gave it. It was only during a period of 1500 years when the hearts of the people of Israel were hardened, and the people were being tested, that God suffered such outrage against His holy principles of marriage. God could not recognize it, because He is God, and He changes not. How could God change His principles without becoming totally inconsistent with what He is and who He is?

Man, in his weakness, his shortsightedness and rebellion grasps at what seems to be one loophole in this inseparable marriage relationship, so that he can have his lustful way and yet quiet his conscience, by turning to Moses' law and thereby committing a great sin against God. God did not institute divorce along with marriage.

The Pharisees understood what Jesus was saying, but still tried to tempt Him. They knew what the law said: their conscience told them what the attitude and principles of God were concerning marriage. They were living in a permissive society where for any cause a man could divorce his wife, and marry another person. But He referred them right back to the beginning. ***"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."*** (Mark 10:9) They understood plainly that Jesus was saying there is no such thing as divorce. God has never recognized divorce, and never will recognize divorce.

"Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 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." (Matthew 19:8-9)

JESUS - A MORAL REVOLUTION!

Jesus came to the world to cause social change, a moral revolution. ***"It has been said that whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement; but I say unto you that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery. And whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."*** (Matthew 5:29)

Jesus never lowered the standards of the principles of marriage, or He would not have been God in the flesh. It's amazing how everyone jumps on this one little clause, "except it be for fornication" and immediately assumes they can get back underneath the law of Moses. Let's take a look at what Moses said exactly:

"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it comes to pass that she find no favor 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. And when she is departed out of this house, she may go and be another man's wife... If any man take a wife, and go in unto her and hate her, and give occasion of speech against her, and bring an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman and when I came to her, I found her not a maid, then shall the father of the damsel and her mother take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate." (Deuteronomy 24:1-2; 22:13)

GROUNDS FOR ANNULMENT

A Jewish man did not have to live with a woman that had committed premarital sex, who was a fornicator. It was grounds for what we could call an annulment. There used to be laws in America that stipulated that if a man took a woman, and found she was not a virgin, he had every right in the world to immediately have that marriage annulled. Young people today don't even know what the word virgin means.

Jesus didn't say, "except it be for adultery", He said, "except it be for fornication."

Jesus recognized that even the New Testament days a man did not have to take a wife and live with her if she wasn't a virgin. God intends for us to be holy. He does not intend for us to live like a bunch of animals. It wasn't too long ago that any man who claimed to know God would be sure that the woman he was thinking of marrying was a virgin. That was one of his requirements for a wife! And so were they the requirements of a woman for a husband!

***"If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, [both] the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel."* (Deuteronomy 22:22)**

Jesus made it perfectly clear that He was talking about sexual sin before marriage. How God abhors, hates, and despises sex sin! What an abomination they are in His sight!

YOU ARE ONE FLESH

***"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to [her] husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of [her] husband. So then if, while [her] husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."* (Romans 7:2-3)**

Jesus is not talking about the law of the ten commandments, because they didn't say anything about divorce.

Jesus is talking about the moral law of marriage. He is plainly saying that once you and a woman are joined together, you are one flesh, and to live with somebody else makes you an adulterer.

To take that one little clause, "except it be for fornication", which has to do with premarital sex, not adultery during a marital relationship, and use it as grounds to get divorced and remarried is not scriptural and is not at all in accordance with the rest of the Word of God.

***"But if he will not hear, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."* (Matthew 18:16)** You can't just take one scripture and build a whole doctrine on it, especially when it is a matter of life and death.

Apostle Paul boldly speaks out regarding this subject as he admonished the churches throughout Asia.

***"The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth, but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord."* (1 Corinthians 7:39)**

Paul didn't say "she is bound to her husband as long as he liveth, but if the husband be dead or commits adultery, she shall be loosed from the law of her husband". If adultery was grounds for divorce and remarriage, then he would have to have said that. Simply because your spouse commits adultery does not give you the right to start looking for a new husband or wife.

Jesus exalted the marriage institution to an even higher level than it was in the Old Testament under the law of Moses. He safeguarded the institution of marriage from selfish motives by forbidding the innocent party from remarrying. As long as her husband is living, a woman is bound to him. If he is a devil, if he has five heads, if he has laid with fifty women a week, if he is alive, she is bound to him, and if she marries somebody else, she is an adulteress.

Jesus never gave his consent to divorce. There is no allowance whatsoever for divorce or remarriage in God's planning of His arrangements for Christians. Because your husband is an adulterer does not give you the right to divorce him and marry somebody else. As a Christian, we don't have any rights. We're not under the law. We are under grace. Grace means we died to ourselves, and the life we now live, we live by the faith of the Son of God. Jesus said to forgive your brother seventy times seven, in one day. That should certainly solve the divorce problem! Yes, you must even forgive him of adultery and sexual sins! You are bound to him for life, and that is why the scriptures are so emphatic about believers not being unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

GOD IS MARRIED TO THE BACKSLIDER

Coming to Jesus is like a marriage in a way. We become the Bride of Christ. It is possible for us to backslide, and God will put us away for His presence, but He doesn't write us off and looks for someone else.

God is married to the backslider, and everyday He will keep coming back, knocking on your door, pulling at the strings of your heart, saying "Let's get back together, and have fellowship again, let's not stay separated." And God will continue to do that until we walk through the gates of Hell. Once we have known Him, He will never leave us nor forsake us. We can leave Him, but He will never leave us.

How can we claim to be a Christian if we can put away our husband or wife and look for some other person to live with? Can the law of love be functioning in our hearts? Why would we want another person anyway, except for our own fleshly, sensual desires? Of course, if you are just living to fulfill your own lusts, then you wouldn't want to serve the Lord anyway, but if Jesus is your Lord, and you love Him more than you love the things of this world, then you will make no provision for the flesh, nor the lusts thereof.

RECONCILIATION

"And unto the married I command, [yet] not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from [her] husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to [her] husband: and let not the husband put away [his] wife. 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. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 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. 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. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save [thy] husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save [thy] wife?" (1 Corinthians 7:10-16)

YES! You can be separated. God forbid that one would leave his or her spouse. They would have no right to leave except in the case of some immorality, although God would give the grace to dwell with such a mate, and possibly their salvation hinges on our exhibiting the grace of God in us that would allow us to live with them. However, you are not under bondage to an unbelieving husband that insists you deny your faith and be a party to his or her sin. You do not have to live with them if it is a question of sin and immorality.

The scriptures says you are not under bondage to live with them, but it does not set you free to marry again. You must remain unmarried. You must pray for their poor lost soul and keep the door open for reconciliation. After all, that is what the Bible is all about... RECONCILIATION! You can plead his case before the church, and together lift them up to the Lord in prayer.

IS REMARRIAGE LOVE?

The law of love forbids remarriage. Who is to say your husband is a lost case, even though he may be out living a backslidden life, and has married five other women? He is still married to you in the eyes of God, and if you will remain faithful to him and love him and seek the Lord in earnest, God will bring him back to you. We can believe and trust the Lord for that.

Certainly, God will deal with him severely. As long as you remain unmarried and chaste, and continue to pray for him, write, call, see him whenever possible, and as long as you remain faithful to your marriage vows, that man can have no peace. He will be under the gun of the Holy Spirit.

"Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that [it is] an evil [thing] and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear [is] not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts." (Jeremiah 2:19)

Our Jesus is a miracle worker, and He is certainly able to get a hold on him and turn him around. I know this is a hard thing to hear, and even harder to receive, but this is simply what the Word of God says.

If you have divorced and remarried, you are living in adultery, according to the Word of God, and you need to repent of it and make restitution. You have taken someone else's wife or husband, and you need to return them.

Some of us have gone so far in sin and have become so entangled in the world that it will be very difficult to go back and make restitution, but if we plan on ever entering into the Kingdom of God, we must do it. The Word of God is uncompromising. Certainly, it will cause a lot of heartache and sorrow, but let's not forget all the heartache and sorrow that was caused when you broke up the original marriage.

If you could stand by and watch one little boy deprived of a father's love and guidance in his tender years, struggling to set his little world at rights, if you could see the heartbreak in his eyes and listen to the sobs smothered in his pillow at night, if you could see him turn away wide-eyed and silent, as a happy little boy passes in the street, hand-in-hand with a loving and attentive daddy, and still turn from such a scene to make jokes of this horror, surely your heart must be as cold as ice and hard as stone.

There are now 10 million children in the United States who have only one parent, as a result of divorce. Is it any wonder then, looking at this situation now almost out of control, that 57% of all crime activity in America today is committed by young people between the ages of 10 and 17, and most of them are from broken homes.

We are only beginning to reap the harvest from an unholy seed planted. The fruit of strong, self-willed, hard-hearted parents who would rather choose an instant easy answer to loneliness, than bumble themselves and allow God to do a work in their own heart, and trust Jesus for their every need.

In the end, each divorced person must decide whether he will obey the Word of God, and become a living testimony to God's faithfulness, or whether he will reject God's dealings, and become another statistic, one more contributor to this present day madness.