

- ***Read Matthew 19:1-12*** God has blessed us abundantly in so many different ways as His creation. He was given us so many things to enjoy in this life, but with those things we enjoy often comes responsibilities that He expects of us. One of the greatest blessing is that of marriage. In the text we just read, Jesus is questioned concerning His teachings on the subjects of marriage and also divorce. As with any subject, Jesus was willing to get straight to the point and teach God's will.
- As we continue then this series of lessons on the difficult sayings of Jesus, we will take our time this evening considering some truths that Jesus teaches here in this task. Certainly, the text is often hotly debated because Jesus simply doesn't beat around the bush in regards to this subject. There are some plain truths that He lays out, and as confessed disciples of Him and His teachings we would do well to heed His teaching and accept and proclaim them as being true. Let's consider Jesus's difficult sayings on Marriage and divorce.

I. DIFFICULT OF SAYING: Marriage & divorce has been misused and abused in our society.

- A. We live in a society where the of seriousness marriage and divorce seem to be taken very lightly based upon the frequency of individuals being married and then divorced some time later.
- B. We have heard the disappointing statistics of a near 50% divorce rate among married couples. Now, some would argue that those numbers aren't accurate, and even if this is the case...even if it was only half of that at 25%...the rate is still entirely too high. People don't value the marriage relationship.
- C. We can also look to the efforts by some to change the design of marriage. Homosexual marriage, polygamy, and other false depictions of marriage are being paraded as being valid and acceptable.
- D. Even beyond all of this there is the sex crazed society that we live in. The devaluing of the marital relationship is seen in the fact that one night stands and multiple sexual partners are glorified in mainstream society. All of these issues show just how badly marriage has been misused and abused in our society.

II. The design of marriage is from the beginning.

- A. As Jesus begins His answer concerning marriage, He begins with addressing when it was that marriage was first instituted. He says that He who made them for marriage did so at the very beginning. **(19:4)**
- B. One of the greatest realizations and lessons that we need to learn about marriage from this text is that marriage is something that is instituted and managed by God. He alone gives the authority for man to marry, and He alone has the authority to dictate what marriage is supposed to look like. **(19:6)**
- C. Many would like to give every effort to change the equation for marriage, but the truth is that they do not have the authority to change what marriage is.
- D. On the same note, the government does not dictate the legitimacy of marriage. If the government decided that marriage could "legally" be between men or women or more than two individuals it would not matter at all in the eyes of God because government has no such authority.
- E. Furthermore, the government has no right to take away the ability for men and women to marry. If marriage is given by God then God will continue to recognize the legitimate institution of marriage regardless of what man's government might decide to do. Bottom line: Marriage is what it is because God designed it to be so in the very beginning. Man has no right to change it in any way.

III. Marriage is between one man and one woman for life.

- A. So, what does God's design for marriage look like? Jesus, again, goes back to the very beginning to teach what lawful looks like. He references **Genesis 2:24** where God establishes that marriage is between a man and a woman who have left their parents and dedicated themselves to one another.
- B. In the beginning, God created a man and a woman. These were the two that were joined together in marriage. Jesus's appeal to this design for marriage must tell us that this is the single acceptable equation for the marriage relationship. The law of silence tells us that any changes to this equation would not be accepted by God.
- C. Jesus stating that marriage is between a man and a woman means that it is not between a man and man, a woman and woman, a man and women, men and a woman, or any other combination that someone might be able to come up with. God's design was established at the beginning, and nowhere has he stated that it has changed.
- D. The second half of this point considers the duration of marriage. Jesus addresses this aspect in **19:6** when He says that those that God has joined together ought not be separated. Marriage is designed by God to be a relationship that last until the death of one partner. **(I Cor. 7:39)**

IV. Marriage is the most intimate relationship in this world.

- A. The length of marriage alone adds to the intimate nature of marriage, but Jesus also hints at the intimacy of marriage by saying that the two who are married become one flesh. **(19:6)**
- B. How is it that husband and wife become one flesh? The fact that they have left from under the roof of their parents and joined their lives together is one way in which they become one flesh.
- C. The sexual relationship also adds to the marital relationship being the most intimate one earth. It is the marriage bed alone in which the sexual relationship is approved of by God. **(Heb. 13:4)** Those who engage in such acts outside of marriage will be judge by the wrath of God for taking that which is not theirs by right to have.
- D. Then finally, there is a closeness within the marriage relationship that is not present in any other relationship. The longevity of it, sexual relationship, and joining of two lives into one contribute to the relationship being unlike any other in this world.

V. Divorce always involves sin.

- A. The negative portion of this text is certainly the portion of which much debate is had, yet I believe that Jesus spoke clearly and without much confusion. The confusion that exist is a result of man's thinking and not God's
- B. Jesus does not leave any room for there being a deserving of a marriage that does not involve sin on the part of one or both spouses in the marriage.
- C. If one spouse divorces his/her mate with the cause being adultery on the part of the one being put away then there is still the sin of adultery that has been committed. **(19:9)**
- D. Then if there is divorce that has no adultery as its cause then sin is still present because those dissolving their marriage are unlawfully separating that which God has joined together. **(19:9)**
- E. The one asking Jesus the question concerning marriage and divorce asked about the certificate of divorce that Moses permitting among those in Israel. Jesus does not deny that Moses did such a thing, but He does deny that it was pleasing in the sight of God. He emphasizes this by stating that it was because of the people's hardness of heart that Moses did such, and then He makes mention of the fact that God had not desired for this to be such from the beginning. Bottom line is that God hates divorce, **(Mal. 2:16)** and all instances of divorce, even lawful putting away of a spouse for adultery, involves sin.

VI. Marriage is difficult but rewarding.

- A. Some of Jesus's disciples are taken aback by some of the things that Jesus has said and make the observation that this marriage things seems kinda difficult. They're thinking that if this thing is so difficult then it might be better for men and women to just not get married. **(19:10)**
- B. Jesus makes note that the natural inclination of man is to be married and joined to a wife, but that there are some who are able to live this life with being a part of the marriage relationship. **(19:11,12)** Those who are able and willing to go without marriage are more than welcome to do so. However, even though marriage does come with difficulties, there are many rewards within it.
- C. We would be naive to say that marriage is easy. In fact, anyone who has barely walked down the aisle after saying "I do" can tell yo there are difficulties. Joining lives together as one can be quire an adjustment for some people. Some are able to make that adjustment better than others. Some have difficulty adjusting to the roles of marriage that God has designated as being so. **(Eph. 5:23ff)** Within marriage there will be ups and downs. Sickness, trials, money problems, family problems, and any other number of issues can makes marriage difficult, but the rewards of it far outweigh the difficulties and God designed this relationship to be this way.
- D. God knew what He was doing when He instituted marriage. He knew about the close relationship that spouses would enjoy. He knew that children would be a tremendous blessing in marriage and that seem being born into a unified family would be best for their upbringing. He knew that we would come understand His Son's relationship with the church better through the marital relationship. He knew that joy beyond many things in this life would be realized through the marital relationship. Thought there can be real issues in our marriages, those who are married recognize that the benefits far outweigh the difficulties.

Certainly we recognize the wisdom of God when he designed marriage those many many years ago in the garden. He knew what would benefit man, and bring about the desired results of joy and man's progress. Sadly, many have misused and abused this divinely created relationship. Many have tried to reshape it into something that God never intended. It is our job to always hold to God's design for marriage and to teach those who might ask us concerning it. Almost more importantly, it is our job to be a part of marriages that glorify God in the way that we fulfill our roles and shine our lights. May God bless our marriages, and may we be the husbands and wives that God desired for us to be from the very beginning.