

Until Death Do Us Part

(Matthew 5:31-32; 19:1-9)

Intro:

1. Matthew's record of Jesus' teaching gives two of the three occasions that He taught on divorce and remarriage.
 - a. The first is from the mountain sermon in Galilee recorded in Matthew 5-7 (5:31-32).
 - b. The second, not mentioned in Matthew, follows the parable of the unjust steward (Lk. 16:1-13). When the Pharisees "derided him" (vs. 14), He spoke of their disrespect for God and His law (vs. 15). Then, He contrasted the duration of the law and prophets to the gospel of the kingdom (vs. 16) stating His law on divorce and remarriage (vs. 18). Only Luke gives this record.
 - c. The third is from his Perea ministry when He was questioned by the Pharisees as recorded in Matthew 19:1-12 and Mark 10:1-12.
2. The two references in Matthew bear the burden of the study of divorce and remarriage.
 - a. Not only do both texts (Mt. 5; 19) include the exception phrase, these are the only texts that do.
 - b. John Murray said that Matthew 19:9 is "the most pivotal passage in the New Testament on divorce" (*Divorce*, 33).
3. Our problems on this subject are not because these and other verses are difficult to grasp.
 - a. Neither passage is difficult to understand.
 - b. Martin Luther reportedly said, "Matthew 19:9 is a blunt, clear, plain text."

I. To Whom Does It Apply?

(There are at least two contentions that seek to remove the force of Jesus' teaching from people today. One says that Jesus is explaining Old Testament law. Thus, it doesn't apply today. The other says that it is New Testament law, but only applies to Christians. Therefore, aliens are not amenable to Christ's teaching on marriage and divorce.)

- A. *Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce is New Testament law.*
 1. Both passages (Matt. 5 & 19) contrast what Jesus says to the law given through Moses.
 - a. Matthew 5
 - (1) Six times in Matthew 5 Jesus presents what the law given through Moses said and then says, "But I say unto you" (vv. 21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39 and 43-44).
 - (2) In verses 31-32, Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 24 and then

teaches what “I say unto you.” What Jesus said could not be an explanation of the Old Testament reference for under the law the fornicator was to be stoned to death (Deut 22:22; Lev. 20:10).

(3) Those who heard the sermon understood that Jesus was teaching *His* law for they “were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Mt. 7:28-29).

b. Matthew 19

(1) Jesus points back to the beginning (vv. 4-6).

(2) The Pharisees raised a question about why Moses wrote what he did in Deuteronomy (v. 7). They saw a contrast in what Jesus said and what Moses wrote (v. 8).

(3) In verse 9 Jesus said, “But (a contrast - DVR) I say (His teaching - DVR) unto you”

2. Jesus law applies now (Luke 16:16-18).

B. *Jesus’ teaching applies to all men.*

1. All men are under the law of Christ.

a. Jesus has all authority (Matt. 28:18).

b. The New Testament is addressed to all men (Matt. 29:18-20).

c. The alien is required to obey the law of Christ to become a Christian (Rom. 8:2).

2. Jesus applied his law to “Whosoever” (Matt. 5:32; 19:9).

II. Can We Understand It?

A. *Some of our own brethren think not.*

1. In the current controversy over fellowship and divorce and remarriage we are hearing about the ambiguity of Matthew 19:9. We are told that the Biblical teaching on this subject lacks clarity. Thus, we can’t be sure.

2. This is said to tell us that we ought not to draw lines of fellowship over what someone teaches on divorce and remarriage. If we can’t understand what Jesus taught or, to say the least, we can’t be sure, then we certainly couldn’t bind what we may conclude on others.

B. *The word of God can be understood* (Eph. 3:3-5; 5:17).

C. *Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 are simple and clear.*

1. What part of these texts is hard?
2. What part of these verses cannot be understood?

III. What Does It Teach?

A. *On divorce*

1. Not for just any cause. The Pharisees asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?”(vs. 3). By pointing to the beginning, Jesus gives four reasons one can’t put away his mate for every cause (vss. 4-6).
 - a. God created one man for one woman (Gen. 1:27).
 - b. Mates must cleave to each other (Gen. 2:24).
 - c. A man and his wife are one flesh (Gen. 2:24).
 - d. God has joined man and woman together in marriage.
2. One exception: Jesus gave one (and only one) exception to the rule he just stated: fornication (Matt. 5:32; 19:9).

B. *On remarriage*

1. Jesus makes a distinction in one who **puts away** his mate and one who **is put away**.
 - a. The text: “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” (Mt. 19:9, emphasis mine - DVR).
 - b. The first clause deals with the one who puts away his mate. The second clause deals with the one who is put away.
2. The one who puts away his mate:
 - a. Jesus said that a man who puts away his wife (for a cause other than fornication) and remarries commits adultery. Where do we learn that? From the first clause of Matthew 19:9.
 - b. Jesus also said that a man who puts away his wife (for the cause of fornication) does not commit adultery when he remarries. Where do we learn that? From the first clause of Matthew 19:9.
3. The one who is put away:
 - a. Matthew 19:9 contains two complete clauses joined by and. The second of those clauses addresses the one who is put away.
 - b. Jesus said that the one who is put away commits adultery when he remarries. Where do we learn that? From the second clause of Matthew 19:9.

- c. In this clause there is no exception phrase. The exception phrase (of the first clause) will not fit into the second clause in any way: textually, grammatically or logically. The one who is put away (whether for fornication or some other cause) does not have a right to remarry.
- C. *Not difficult to figure out:* Determining who has a right to remarry is not as difficult as some may think.
- 1. A couple of simple questions give us the needed information. “Who put who away?” And, “What was the cause of the divorce?”
 - 2. If the person in question is the one who put away his mate, he fits into the first clause of Matthew 19:9. If it was for fornication, he can remarry. If it was not for fornication, he cannot remarry.
 - 3. If the person in question is the one who was put away, he fits into the second clause of Matthew 19:9. He cannot remarry. Now, that’s simple!
 - 4. The only one that is given the right to remarry (in the case of a divorce) is the one who puts his mate away for the cause of fornication. All others commit adultery when they remarry.

IV. What Do We Do With It?

- A. *Live it.* (Jas. 1:22-25; Matt. 7:21-27).
- B. *Preach it.*
 - 1. We must preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2).
 - 2. The teaching of Jesus on divorce and remarriage is found within that word that must be preached.
 - 3. We cannot shun to declare the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).
 - 4. Preachers that agree not to preach their position (and churches that allow it) on divorce and remarriage do not respect the truth.
- C. *Apply it.*
 - 1. No part of God’s word is helpful unless it is applied.
 - 2. We must apply it as John did to Herod and Herodias (Mark 6:18).
- D. *Respect and uphold it.*
 - 1. To be tolerant toward those whose teaching doesn’t fit Matthew 5 or 19 is to disregard these texts themselves. Thus, if we respect and uphold the teaching of Jesus on divorce and remarriage, we must oppose those who teach otherwise. Let us understand that when there are opposing views on divorce and remarriage, someone is wrong!
 - 2. 2 John 9-11 - we cannot fellowship:

- a. The one who practices sin or error (v. 9).
- b. The one who teaches error (v. 10).
- c. The one who receives a false teacher (v. 11).

Conclusion:

1. What Jesus taught in Matthew 5 and 19 about marriage, divorce and remarriage is New Testament teaching that applies to all men.
2. It is simple and easily understood.
3. It says that marriage is permanent.
4. The only scriptural cause for divorce is when one's mate is guilty of fornication.
5. The only one who has the right to remarry is one who puts his mate away for the cause of fornication.
6. We must mold our lives to fit that teaching. We must preach it, apply it and uphold it in our dealings with others.

- Outline by: *Donnie V. Rader*