



A Theology of

Divorce & Remarriage

Why This Sermon?

- ❖ To clarify God's mind and heart about marriage & divorce
- ❖ To protect marriages from frivolous, ungodly divorces
- ❖ To protect the reputation of those divorced for godly reasons.
- ❖ To protect people from the deep wounds divorce brings
- ❖ To protect the reputation of Christian community
- ❖ To help our church bring the proper balance of love and guidance to those being divorced or to those already divorced.

Marriage Overview

- ❖ God created marriage between one man and one woman (Genesis 1-2) as a life-long commitment and as a covenant (Mal. 2:14). God hates divorce (Mal.2:16)
- ❖ No unanimous agreement among Christian leaders on divorce and remarriage
- ❖ Every church needs to take divorce and remarriage seriously.

Three main Views on Divorce

- ❖ Divorce is never permitted under any circumstances
- ❖ Divorce is permitted under certain specified circumstances
- ❖ Divorce is permitted under many circumstances.

❖ Deut. 24:1-4: Divorce Allowed for any Reason

- ❖ “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that 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 from his house, and she leaves his house and goes and **becomes another man’s wife**,
- ❖ and if the latter husband turns against 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 husband dies who took her to be his wife, then her former husband who sent her away **is not allowed to take her again** to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the Lord, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance.”

❖ **Matt: 19: 3-9: Jesus Restricts Divorce Conditions**

- ❖ Some Pharisees came to Jesus, **testing Him** and asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?”
- ❖ And He answered and said, “Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. **What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.**”
- ❖ They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?” He said to them, “Because of your **hardness of heart** Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. **And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality (porneia), and marries another woman commits adultery.**”

Jesus' Teaching on Divorce

- ❖ **The couple is joined together by God.** God is always opposed to divorce. It is a sacred **covenant** (Mal. 2:14) made to God between a man and woman for life.
- ❖ In the OT, **Jesus allowed divorce for any reason** (Deut. 24:1-3) due to the hardness of their hearts but this was not God's plan "A".
- ❖ In the NT, Jesus allows divorce only for **sexual sin (porneia)** by a spouse.

NT Teaching on Divorce

- ❖ Jesus disallows all frivolous reasons for divorce and allows divorce only for serious sexual offenses (Matt.19)
- ❖ Desertion by a spouse also breaks the marriage covenant (1 Cor. 7: 12-15).

Biblical Principles

- ❖ God allows divorce for the hardness of our hearts on the OT & NT.
- ❖ Sexual immorality and desertion are illustrative not exhaustive reasons for allowable divorces.
- ❖ God would recognize that there are other sins by a spouse that can be just as damaging as sexual immorality and desertion, thereby breaking the marriage covenant:
 - ❖ Sexual abuse, physical abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, persistent & severe verbal abuse

Jesus is the Same

- ❖ These principles affirm that God's character does not change. Jesus is the same today as always (Heb. 13)
 - ❖ **Jesus hates divorce** but still makes allowances for human frailty: sexual sins and desertion.
 - ❖ Jesus' principle of making allowance for serious sins in a marriage would seem to permit divorce for other things done in homes that are **just as severely damaging** to marriage as the two stated exceptions.
 - ❖ **Jesus always offers mercy** to those wounded by the egregious sins of others.

Biblical Principles

- ❖ Each sin by a spouse can and must be forgiven
- ❖ Reconciliation should be sought if possible (Hosea)
- ❖ If **repeated attempts** to reconcile the marriage fail due to such serious sins, God would allow divorce, but with great sadness.
- ❖ God always prefers mercy over judgement when dealing with people trying to do the right thing.
- ❖ But, God's mercy has limits when people chose to resist Him

God Divorced Israel

- ❖ For hundreds of years, God sent prophets to call the 10 tribes of Israel back to Him from worshipping other gods.
- ❖ God had to divorce the 10 tribes of Israel for persistent idolatry (spiritual adultery) (Jer. 3:8).
- ❖ *He never brought them back to Him.*

Remarriage

- ❖ Permissible for those divorced for reasons God allows
- ❖ Done only with great caution, great care, much counsel
- ❖ After much emotional healing and thorough forgiveness
- ❖ Explanation for such second marriages should be made to the church whenever possible.
 - ❖ To protect the couple from false accusations
 - ❖ To protect others from seeing remarriage as the best way out of an unhappy marriage.

Separation is Allowable

- ❖ But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband (but if she does leave, **she must remain unmarried**, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife. (I Cor 7:10)



We Promise

- ❖ To fulfill our marriage vows to God
- ❖ To seek help quickly when our marriage needs help
- ❖ To pray with and for one another daily
- ❖ To forgive each other daily from the heart
- ❖ To help other couples when we can
- ❖ To honor God by loving our spouses
- ❖ To love people affected by divorce