

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 22ND-23RD, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

ONE FLESH (MATTHEW 19:1-6)

BACK INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

Jesus had been spending time in more rural areas with His disciples, and now He travels back to more populated areas as He continues to train His 12.

- Judea was the province that held the capital, Jerusalem. The Pharisees from that area went on the attack again. This time, the topic was divorce.

DIVORCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A DIFFICULT TOPIC

The subject of divorce was what cost John the Baptist his head, so the Pharisees saw an opportunity.

Jesus avoided their trap and instead **took the conversation deeper** into what marriage should be.

- Jesus states that **marriage is an institution created by God, and no person has the authority to tear that apart.**

MARRIAGE IS A DIFFERENT SEASON IN LIFE

Jesus is quoting Gen. 2:24 when He says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined with his wife..." This means marriage is a separation from your parents and a unification with your spouse.

- This means married people are to mature and grow in their independence from their families (umbrellas).

BECOMING "ONE FLESH"

Marriage is a deeply spiritual thing, and it should be a constant reminder of our eternal marriage to our "Husband," God.

- **Understanding that marriage is deeply spiritual and taken very seriously by Him, we are to love and treat our spouse like they are a part of us.** We are also called to not give up unless forced to.

JESUS DOES SPEAK OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Many people make the claim that Jesus never directly speaks of sexuality and gender, but here we clearly see that He does. **If one defines what something is, they don't have to define everything it is not.** Sexuality and the parameters of love and marriage are not ambiguous in the Bible.

WALKING AWAY (MATTHEW 19:7-12)

WHY DID MOSES ALLOW DIVORCE?

The Pharisees misquoted Deut. 22 when asking Jesus about Moses "commanding" divorce. Moses never commanded divorce, but he did permit it in order to protect women being left by their husbands for unsubstantial reasons. God's intention is that people never divorce ("not like that from the beginning"), but He isn't surprised by it.

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

Though the divorce rate has gone down to about 40% in the U.S., the marriage rate has also gone down significantly. This means that the majority of couples either divorce or never get married at all.

- So, more than half of us have been divorced, are living in a sinful relationship, or have been affected by either in some way.

God hates divorce because divorce hurts people. God doesn't hate people who get divorced (Mal. 2:16), but He does want to call into account why the divorce took place.

- Divorce is always a result of someone's selfishness. When it comes to considering divorce, we must ask if we have biblical ground to do so.

WHAT ARE GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE?

Jesus clearly mentions **infidelity** in Matt. 5 and 19, but Paul also alludes to **abandonment** and **abuse** in 1 Cor. 7:10-16. Tough times and disagreements are not grounds for breaking marriage covenants.

Before making a decision to divorce, we must pray and seek God's will.

HAVE WE DONE EVERYTHING TO SAVE IT?

Even if there has been grounds to leave, Christians should still pray about restoration of the marriage if safe and possible. **We have seen many couples that had grounds to divorce be reconciled through faith, hard work, accountability, and good counsel.**

HAVE WE REPENTED IF WE WERE WRONG?

If we have divorced someone for selfish reasons that are not biblical, we must repent.

- This doesn't mean you divorce again if remarried, or that you can never have another spouse. It means that actions contrary to the Word must be accounted for. **The good news is that God is gracious and quick to forgive!**

DO I EVEN GET MARRIED?

The disciples basically respond, "If it is this much work and so serious if we mess up, maybe we shouldn't get married." Jesus' response about eunuchs (men castrated to avoid sexual desire) implies that if God calls you to not get married, that's fine, but make sure it's God's will.

CONTRAST (MATTHEW 19:13-22)

"LEAVE THE CHILDREN ALONE..."

Some people from Judea brought their children to be prayed for by Jesus, and the disciples "rebuked" them because the culture saw children as inferior.

- Jesus told them to not "keep them from coming to Me." This showed that **Jesus is equally accessible to everyone.**

REMEMBER THE EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY

Earlier Jesus called a child up in front of the disciples to teach them that salvation only comes through humility and innocence. **No matter what our age, we must learn to be dependent on Christ, lay down our pride, and sacrifice for the sake of others and the kingdom. It is a denial of self and a reliance on something better.**

"JUST THEN SOMEONE CAME UP..."

In the middle of Jesus demonstrating humility and sacrifice by laying hands on the children and praying, an infamous character from the Bible approaches to ask a question.

- Apparently the rich young ruler was sincere when he asked Jesus, "Teacher, what good must I do to have eternal life?" because he addressed Him as teacher.

THE QUESTION WAS FUNDAMENTALLY FLAWED

Though he was seeking truth, the question was flawed. The rich young man thought his actions could earn salvation, but he soon finds out that human goodness falls short.

- **Humanity will always struggle with self-righteousness, but the only "good" we can do is to rely on His goodness and obey His commands.**

"THERE IS ONLY ONE WHO IS GOOD."

Jesus clearly says that only God is good, so **do what God commands instead of trying to gain salvation from what we think is good to do.** After asking, "what commands?" Jesus tells him all of them. The young man responds, "I have kept all these."

- This man had followed the rules, but his heart was still not in line with God.

THE HEART BEFORE THE LAW

The young man thought that simply following laws and rules saved his soul, but Jesus asks us to go deeper into **why** we follow the commands of God. **The Law points to evil, but the heart must be changed and we must know that even at our best, we need the grace of God to be saved.**

IT TAKES COMPLETE SURRENDER

Jesus knew what the man valued most. The command to sell everything isn't universal, but **a calling for true disciples to place whatever is most valuable to us in God's hands.**

- **Jesus wants us to trust Him with everything. It is by trusting Him that we find true fulfillment and joy. It is by losing it all that we gain everything!**

THE POINT ISN'T MONEY, IT'S DEDICATION

When the rubber met the road and Jesus challenged the man to follow Him, after looking at the cost, "the young man...went away grieving, because he had many possessions."

- **It may not be money to us. We may value comfort, notoriety, control, race, politics, leisure, pleasure, or success more than truly following Jesus.**

99% ISN'T ENOUGH / FIRST THINGS FIRST

- **Our goodness is never enough**, this is why we must depend upon the goodness and grace of Jesus and the Cross. Do we think simply following the rules will save us? **What about our hearts?** We need Jesus to shine light on the dark corners of our minds and hearts.
- It isn't that God wants us to "do without," but that **He wants us to trust Him with the most important things.** It is only in complete **submission** and **surrender** to Him that the important things in life (marriage for example) flourish and salvation that leads to a perfect afterlife is available.

LOSING IS WINNING

- We often forget, or possibly have never heard, that **it's in losing our lives for Jesus' sake that we truly find what it means to live.**
- How will we respond when Christ asks us to give over our identities and desires? **Will we be saddened by the sacrifice, or rejoice in the opportunity to lay it down for something greater?**