

Chapter Nineteen

Sticky Issues

I. Introduction

- A. Now Jesus is Tested on Divorce, and Good Works.
- B. He deals with both subjects very strongly
- C. This chapter is worth a month's study because of the issues and doctrine presented
- D. Our modern world is the exact opposite of what Jesus teaches in this chapter!

II. Lesson

A. Still Healing (19:1,2)

- 1. Jesus is now headed for Jerusalem, for the last time
- 2. Great Multitudes
- 3. Jesus healed them all, and healed them _____ – not in some special location – no mysticism. Only Jesus!

B. Jesus Teaches Again on Divorce and Marriage (19:3-12)

- 1. In the midst of all the healing, as Jesus is approached by the _____
- 2. He has already taught on divorce back in Matthew 5:31,32
- 3. The Pharisees Present a powerful test
 - a. Is it lawful to divorce? – to put away
 - b. “ _____ ”
 - 1) Among heathen nations a man could divorce his spouse for any reason simply by telling her before witnesses, "You are no longer my wife." The divorced wife would have no recourse but to leave her home with only the few belongings she could carry on her back. This explains why women wore all their rings, jewelry, and coins on their bodies, since these provided a financial resource in the case of divorce.
 - 2) A married Muslim man can dissolve his marriage at any time by saying to his wife: "Talaq, talaq, talaq" at one occasion of his own free will and desire. ("Talaq" means "I divorce you.")
 - 3) Today, in much of the Western world, there is basically, a policy of _____ (no cause) divorce, so people can get a divorce for any reason
 - c. People will always debate this issue because it is SO touchy a subject, and very few people even WANT to do right – only want to hurt the other person
 - d. One note: Jesus taught on Forgiveness in Matthew 18 in relation to the believer and other people's hurt, and now will teach on making sure we forgive in our homes, and especially between marriage partners!
- 4. The Bible's Position (Dt 24:1-4) – this is the definitive portion in the Old Testament on Divorce
 - a. Divorce was not instituted by God, but is allowed and regulated
 - 1) Just as slavery was, and even multiple wives
 - 2) God created life, but sin brought forth death
 - 3) So also, God created marriage, but sin brought divorce
 - b. Divorce means “ _____ ” – not putting to death the partner!
 - c. It is the Putting Away of the covenant agreement (Cf Eph 4:25,31)
 - d. The Grounds for Divorce. Deuteronomy is _____ very clear – seemingly on purpose
 - 1) The wife was unclean towards her husband – mistreating him
 - 2) She no longer had favour in the man's eyes due to an uncleanness in her heart towards him.
 - 3) Having a displeasure due to something shameful about the wife.
 - 4) Not adultery

- a) Adultery was punishable by stoning – the death penalty - and not divorce (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22, 23-27).
 - b) Mercifully, stoning was rarely ever used
- 5) Notice that Moses did not _____ the husband to divorce his wife, but allowed for it
 - 6) Divorce was not supposed to be a punishment
 - a) It easily becomes a punishment weapon against an offender, and for obvious reasons!
 - b) It is a dissolving of an unsustainable union – a means of protecting the people in the marriage
- e. The Process of Divorce.
- 1) The procedure required of a man intending to divorce his wife was for him to write out a _____ and give it to her (Deut 24:16).
 - 2) The wording of the bill of divorce was probably similar to the one generally used by the Jews of the Diaspora which reads:
 - a) *“On the _____ day of the week, the _____ day of the month _____, in the year _____ from the creation of the world, in the city of _____, I, _____, the son of _____, do willingly consent, being under no restraint, to release, to set free, and to put aside thee, my wife, _____, daughter of _____, who has been my wife from before. Thus I do set free, release thee, and put thee aside, in order that thou may have permission and the authority over thyself and to go and marry any man that thou may desire. No person may hinder thee from this day onward, and thou art permitted to every man. This shall be for thee from me a bill of dismissal, a letter of release, and a document of freedom, in accordance with the laws of Moses and Israel.”*
 - b) Followed by two witness signatures
 - 3) The bill of divorce served several purposes.
 - a) It deterred a hasty action on the part of the husband by restraining frivolous and rash dismissal. You had to get two witnesses who agreed that your wife was “_____” – sinful against you
 - b) It testified to the woman’s freedom from marital obligations from the husband who sent her away. Otherwise she kept in bondage to her former husband even though he would now move on and marry another woman.
 - c) It protected the woman’s reputation, particularly if she married another man. If she was an adulteress, she should have been stoned, so the bill of divorcement allowed the woman to go free without the stigma of some sin.
 - d) It’s terrible how people want divorce without the stigma attached to it!
- f. The Purposes of Divorce.
- 1) The primary purpose of the divorce procedure was to _____ the way forever for the man to remarry his former wife once she had remarried (Deut 24:2-4).
 - 2) The main point of this legislation is to prohibit a man from remarrying his former wife if she had married another man. Even if her second husband divorced her or even died, she could not return to her first husband. To do so would be an "abomination before the Lord" (Deut 24:4) on the same level as fornication. The reason is that if a husband could easily remarry the same woman, divorce would become a "legal" form of committing adultery. Later prophetic writings confirm this truth set forth by Moses. For example, the prophet Jeremiah says: *“They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted?”* (Jer 3:1).
 - 3) The Mosaic legislation strongly condemns is not the remarriage of a divorced woman, but her remarriage to her first husband after the termination of her second marriage.
 - 4) The Pentateuch did not require that a divorced woman and her second husband be put to death, as if it was adultery. This means we should exercise caution before stigmatizing remarriage as always adulterous.

5. The Messiah's Answer

- a. Re-read from the beginning – Jesus did not refer to obscure passages like Deut 24, but to:
 - 1) Genesis 1:27
 - 2) Genesis 2:24
- b. Jesus' Principles on Marriage and Divorce:
 - 1) _____ designed us as male and female – evolution didn't!
 - 2) God designed us _____ marriage
 - 3) God made marriage a _____, a clinging – not a _____
 - 4) Marriage is initiated by the _____
 - 5) Marriage means _____ family, and especially your parents for each other
 - 6) Marriage is a husband and wife. So, Family is just about the two of you
 - 7) God commands the man to CLEAVE to his wife, not _____ her (as implied by the Pharisee's question). To cleave means to hold on to, not let her go, or drive her out!
 - 8) A husband and wife are ordained to be _____, not always _____, or one "heart" or one spirit – even though those are the goal, but at first, it is only one flesh, one body that God sees
 - 9) It is GOD who _____ the two people – not animal desires
 - 10) God _____ the adulterer
 - 11) Men and _____ (Mk 10:12) could divorce each other – it is not just a male power play
 - 12) God _____ divorce – but He does not forbid it ever happening (Mal 2:16). Never does He prohibit it!!!!!!!
 - 13) God sees marriage as a sacred _____ binding two persons in a permanent relationship before God, until death (Gen 31:50; Prov 2:17), not until death or divorce!

6. Examples of Divorce AND Separation

- a. Joseph almost divorces his bride to be, _____ (Mt 1:19) – it was better than stoning!
- b. _____ divorced Israel (Jer 3:8; Hos 2:2)
- c. David separated himself from Michal (2Sam 6:20-23) – did not divorce her, just punished her! Not a good thing he did!

7. The Disciples (Mk 10:10) Question Further (Mt 19:7)

- a. Why did MOSES "command" to put her away then?
- b. Why do we even have divorce then if it is so wrong?
- c. Good question!
- d. Evidently Jesus' teaching is in conflict with Moses

8. Jesus Responds (Mt 19:8,9)

- a. Divorce was and is only permitted because of _____, stubbornness, and danger to the woman especially, but to the person being dumped!
- b. Moses only _____, or allowed divorce
- c. It was never in God's design for the family, any more than _____ was
- d. Compare with Mt 5:31,32 and Mk 10:2-12
- e. Fornication (1Cor 7:1,2; Acts 15:20) means any sexual sin where you take what belongs to your mate, and you give it to someone else
- f. That includes:
 - 1) Pornography – porneia in the Greek – emotional adultery
 - 2) Sex before marriage - _____
 - 3) Sex outside of your marriage – like Adultery (mental AND blatant physical adultery)
 - 4) Homosexuality (Rom 1:29)
 - 5) Incest (1Cor 5:1)
 - 6) Fornication is a serious sin because it deprives the other person of what you promised to make available by covenant till death (1Cor 7:1-4)

g. Absolute principles about Divorce:

- 1) Only Two Reasons are allowed for in the word “fornication”:
 - a) Unfaithfulness during the _____ period – that was considered fornication (Deut 20:7; 22:24)
 - b) _____. Desertion – no longer being one flesh
- 2) This means, Jesus does allow for the divorce and remarriage of the innocent party (if such a state is possible), but not for the offender.
- 3) Any other reason for leaving your wife or husband is considered _____ itself
- 4) Marrying a woman than had been abandoned is actually causing _____ to commit adultery

9. One more Question by the Disciples (19:10-12)

- a. If divorce is so restrictive, then NO ONE should get married! It’s better to just stay single
- b. Jesus allows room for God’s enablement
 - 1) You can be FORCED to be single – eunuch by birth, or by castration
 - 2) And you can decide to stay single for the kingdom’s sake
- c. But only as you are able

10. How the Command is therefore understood:

- a. No one (man or woman) shall put away his spouse, except for sexual unfaithfulness.
- b. If you do divorce your spouse for any other reason...
 - 1) Then you are an adulterer!
 - 2) You are causing your spouse to commit emotional adultery (because they still love the original spouse), but now must try and love another, and you are therefore an adulterer
 - 3) You are not allowed to remarry, because you are an adulterer!
- c. Whoever marries your innocent spouse that you have put away, is committing adultery because she belongs to you still
- d. If you do go ahead and remarry, then your spouse is now free, and you are living in sin as an adulterer (Rom 7:3)
- e. If neither of you have remarried, then you need to reconcile and remarry!
- f. The Apostle Paul (in 1Cor 7) will help clear up the issue that if your spouse abandons you, you should try and stay unmarried, but you can remarry if you can’t “contain”

11. Paul’s Teaching on Divorce (1Cor 7:1-15,27,28; see also Romans 7:1-4)

- a. To avoid fornication, get a _____ (7:1,2)!
- b. To avoid Satanic ruin, render due benevolence (7:3-5)! That means...
 - 1) Often sex
 - 2) Lots of forgiveness
 - 3) Meeting each others needs, companionship
 - 4) Honour and respect each other (1Peter 3:1-7)
 - 5) Only be separate with consent, and only for short periods when you are praying and fasting
- c. It is _____ to remain single (7:6-8). Even if your marriage partner has died
- d. But Marriage is better than _____ (7:9)
- e. _____ Initiate Divorce (7:10-13)
 - 1) Don’t leave your spouse
 - 2) If you do ever have to leave your spouse, don’t remarry (7:10)
 - 3) If you and an unbelieving spouse CAN live together, then stay together
- f. It only takes ONE person to make a marriage holy (7:14)
- g. If the other person (who must evidently be an unbeliever) leaves you, let them go (7:15) – you are not bound to them if they have abandoned you!
- h. Don’t seek another wife or husband if divorced (7:27)

- i. But if you been abandoned, and do remarry, you have NOT sinned, but you will have trouble (7:28)

12. Final Principles

- a. One someone does remarry, you can never go back!
- b. Adultery and fornication is not a new marriage – it is an attempt at murdering the original marriage relationship
- c. Marriage requires the following components:
 - 1) _____.
 - 2) _____ – not to be done in secret, or else it is only fornication
 - 3) Honour by the prevailing culture
 - 4) Physical, sexual union – without it, it is not marriage, it is only a fraud (1Cor 7)
 - 5) A _____, and vow
 - 6) A _____ if that pledge is broken
- d. A Christian marriage adds the following components:
 - 1) The vow is before Almighty God (Mal 2:14; Pr 2:17) – a _____
 - 2) The witnesses are a church body
 - 3) There is to be Biblical discipleship (counselling) before the marriage

C. Jesus Invites Children to Trust in Him (19:13-15)

1. Little children were brought to Jesus so that He would lay hands on them and pray for them
 - a. Touch is a powerful force
 - b. It can be abused, but should be often in families
2. The disciples rebuke the parents – “*such a waste of time*” in their minds. Children don’t need Jesus
3. Jesus honours children, and commands that the disciples should go out of their way (_____)
4. to get them to Jesus, and to a relationship with Him!
5. Because they are what the kingdom of heaven is like!
6. Jesus goes ahead and lays His hands on them

D. A Rich Man Seeks Eternal Life (19:16-22)

1. The Rich Man’s Quest
 - a. Good Master!
 - b. What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?
 - c. Inherit (Mk 10:17) – not just receive, but by nobility, be given it
2. Jesus teaches about HIS deity again!
 - a. Who is good but God?
 - b. All men are sinners, and come short of goodness
 - c. There are “good” men in the Bible, but Jesus presses the meaning to “perfectly good”!
3. Jesus then teaches how short we come to the glory of God (19:17-21)
 - a. Keep the commandments – what a requirement!
4. The Rich Man quicklyl tries to find some loophole - “Which ones?”
5. Jesus only lists some particular ones:
 - a. **6- Thou shalt do no murder** – Old Testament said “thou shalt not kill”
 - b. **7- Thou shalt not commit adultery**
 - c. **8- Thou shalt not steal**
 - d. **9- Thou shalt not bear false witness,**
 - e. **5- Honour thy father and thy mother**
 - f. **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself** – interesting that THIS is thrown in

g. Which ones are missing?

1) All the ones about our relationship with GOD!!!

- a) **1- No other gods before God.**
- b) **2- Do not make for yourself a carved image—to bow down to.**
- c) **3- Do not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.**
- d) **4- Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.**

2) And especially the one about COVETOUSNESS. **10- Do not covet**

6. The rich man feels very confident

- a. He knows he has kept all those, at least superficially, since his YOUTH
- b. Sin is only accountable for, from your YOUTH, not from birth
- c. What lack I yet?

7. Jesus reveals the rich man's sinful heart

- a. If thou wilt be perfect – which is what he was seeking
- b. Go and sell that thou hast – _____ of it!
- c. _____ to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven
- d. And come and follow me!

8. The rich man could NOT do that, because his possessions were his God, and his LIFE, and nothing could take their place – not even Jesus!

E. **Jesus Warns of the Attraction of Riches (19:23-30)**

1. The disciples confusion

- a. Jesus reveals that rich people almost NEVER get saved!
- b. Camels fit through the eye of a literal needle easier than a rich man can squeeze into heaven
- c. Rich people were thought to be rich only because they must be good
- d. So the disciples ask, "Who then can be saved?"
- e. Not by our money, or our birth, or our goodness, by by God – since he makes it possible!

2. Peter's Poverty

- a. We have forsaken all, just like you asked us to
 - 1) They had forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands
 - 2) They had done it for Jesus' name's sake
- b. We are following you
- c. What do we get for it?

3. In the "regeneration" of the earth – the _____ – the time when the earth is restored

- a. The Son of man shall literally sit in the throne of his glory
- b. The Apostles also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel
- c. All those who have lost things by following Jesus shall receive an hundredfold then
- d. And shall inherit everlasting physical life
- e. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first
 - 1) Those that seem so "spiritual" and first now shall be at the bottom, and unhonoured then
 - 2) And those that seem so useless now, shall be at the first of the line!