



SUNDAY CLASS

7/12/09

Matthew 19:1-12 (New International Version)

“In this chapter, we have,

I. Christ changing his quarters, leaving Galilee, and coming into the coasts of Judea (v. 1, 2).

II. His dispute with the Pharisees about divorce, and his discourse with his disciples upon occasion of it (v. 3–12).

III. The kind entertainment he gave to some little children which were brought to him (v. 13–15).

IV. An account of what passed between Christ and a hopeful young gentleman that applied himself to him (v. 16–22).

V. His discourse with his disciples upon that occasion, concerning the difficulty of the salvation of those that have much in the world, and the certain recompense of those that leave all for Christ (v. 23–30).’

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE



Matthew 19:1-2 (New International Version)

Divorce

¹When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan.²Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

REFER TO: MARK 10:1-12

Mark 10:1-12 (New International Version)

Divorce

¹Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

²Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

³"What did Moses command you?" he replied.

⁴They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away."

⁵"It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied. ⁶"But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'⁷'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,⁸and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one.⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

¹⁰When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this.¹¹He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her.¹²And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

Matthew 7:28 (New International Version)

²⁸When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching,

Luke 9:51 (New International Version)

Samaritan Opposition

⁵¹As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

John 10:40 (New International Version)

⁴⁰Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days. Here he stayed

Matthew 4:23 (New International Version)

Jesus Heals the Sick

²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Matthew 12:15 (New International Version)

God's Chosen Servant

¹⁵Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick,

Luke 17:11 (New International Version)

Ten Healed of Leprosy

¹¹Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee.

*****Note, As Christ's faithful ministers are not taken out of the world, so they are not removed from any place, till they have finished their testimony in that place, Revelation 11:7.*****

Revelation 11:7 (New International Version)

⁷Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them.

*****Note, Great multitudes followed him. Where Shiloh is, there will the gathering of the people be. The redeemed of the Lord are such as follow the Lamb where ever he goes, Revelation 14:4.**

Revelation 14:4 (New International Version)

⁴These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb.

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

"When Christ departs, it is best for us to follow him. It was a piece of respect to Christ, and yet it was a continual trouble, to be thus crowded after, wherever he went; **but he sought not his own ease**, nor, considering how mean and contemptible this mob was (as some would call them), his own honor much, in the eye of the world; he went about doing good; for so it follows, he healed them there. This shows what they followed him for, to have their sick healed; and **they found him as able and ready to help here**, as he had been in Galilee; for, wherever this Sun of righteousness arose, it was with healing under his wings. "

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Matthew 19:3-6 (New International Version)

³Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"⁴"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'⁵and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?⁶So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

"We have here the law of Christ in the case of divorce, occasioned, as some other declarations of his will, by a dispute with the Pharisees. So patiently did he endure the contradiction of sinners, that he turned it into instructions to his own disciples!

The case proposed by the Pharisees (v. 3); Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? This they asked, tempting him, not desiring to be taught by him. Some time ago, he had, in Galilee, declared his mind in this matter, against that which was the common practice Matthew 5:31-32; and if he would, in like manner, declare himself now against divorce, they would make use of it for the prejudicing and incensing of the people of this country

against him, who would look with a jealous eye upon one that attempted to cut them short in a liberty they were fond of."

Matthew 5:31-32 (New International Version)

Divorce

³¹"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'³²But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

"They hoped he would lose himself in the affections of the people as much by this as by any of his precepts. Or, the temptation might be designed this: If he should say that divorces were not lawful, **they would reflect upon him as an enemy to the law of Moses**, which allowed them; if he should say that they were, **they would represent his doctrine as not having that perfection in it which was expected in the doctrine of the Messiah**; since, though divorces were tolerated, they were looked upon by the stricter sort of people as not of good report. The toleration, in this case, permitted it, in case she found no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, Deuteronomy 24:1."

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Deuteronomy 24:1 (New International Version)

¹ If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house

"This they interpreted so largely as to make any disgust, though causeless, the ground of a divorce. **Christ's answer to this question**; though it was proposed to tempt him, yet, **being a case of conscience, and a weighty one, he gave a full answer to it**, not a direct one, but an effectual one; laying down such principles as undeniable proof that such arbitrary divorces as were then in use, **which made the matrimonial bond so very precarious**, were by no means lawful.

precarious: having insufficient, little, or no foundation: a precarious assumption

*****Note, Christ himself would not give the rule without a reason, nor lay down his judgment without scripture proof to support it.**

Now his argument is this; "If husband and wife are by the will and appointment of God joined together in the strictest and closest union, **then they are not to be lightly, and upon every occasion, separated; if the know be sacred, it cannot be easily untied.**"

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John 8:6 (New International Version)

⁶They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

Genesis 1:27 (New International Version)

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 2:18 (New International Version)

¹⁸ The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Genesis 2:24 (New International Version)

²⁴ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Genesis 5:2 (New International Version)

² He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them "man."



“Now, to prove that there is such a union between man and wife, he urges three things:

1. **The creation of Adam and Eve**, concerning which he appeals to their own knowledge of the scriptures; Have ye not read? It is some advantage in arguing, to deal with those that own, and have read, the scriptures; Ye have read (but have not considered) that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female, Genesis 1:27; Genesis 5:2.

He made them male and female, one female for one male; so that Adam could not divorce his wife, and take another, for there was no other to take. It likewise intimated an inseparable union between them; **Eve was a rib out of Adam’s side, so that he could not put her away, but he must put away a piece of himself, and contradict the manifest indications of her creation.**

Christ hints briefly at this, but, in appealing to what they had read, he refers them to the original record, where it is observable, that, though the rest of the living creatures were made male and female, yet it is not said so concerning any of them, but only concerning mankind; **because between man and woman the conjunction is rational, and intended for nobler purposes than merely the pleasing of sense and the preserving of a seed**; and it is therefore more close and firm than that between male and female among the brutes, who were not capable of being such help—meets for one another as Adam and Ever were. Hence the manner of expression is somewhat singular Genesis 1:27,

2. **The fundamental law of marriage**, which is, that a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, v. 5. The relation between husband and wife is nearer than that between parents and children; now, if the filial relation may not easily be violated, much less may the marriage union be broken. May a child desert his parents, or may a parent abandon his children, for any cause, for every cause? No, by no means. Much less may a husband put away his wife, though not by nature, yet by divine appointment, the relation is nearer, and the bond of union stronger, than between parents and children; for that is in a great measure superseded by marriage, when a man must leave his parents, to cleave to his wife. See here the power of a divine institution, that the result of it is a union stronger than that which results from the highest obligations of nature.

3. **The nature of the marriage contract**; it is a union of persons; They twain shall be one flesh, so that (v. 6) they are no more twain, but one flesh. A man’s children are pieces of himself, but his wife is himself. As the conjugal union is closer than that between parents and children, so it is in a

manner equivalent to that between one member and another in the natural body. As this is a reason why husbands should love their wives, so it is a reason why they should not put away their wives, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, or cut it off, but nourishes and cherishes it, and does all he can to preserve it. They two shall be one, therefore there must be but one wife, for God made but one Eve for one Adam, Malachi 2:15. From hence he infers, What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Malachi 2:15 (New International Version)

¹⁵ Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.

Matthew 21:16 (New International Version)

¹⁶"Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, " 'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?"

1 Corinthians 6:16 (New International Version)

¹⁶Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."

Ephesians 5:31 (New International Version)

³¹"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."

Matthew 19:7-9 (New International Version)

⁷"Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"⁸Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. ⁹I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

"An objection started by the Pharisees against this; an objection not destitute of color and plausibility (v. 7); "Why did Moses command to

give a writing of divorcement, in case a man did put away his wife?" He urged scripture reason against divorce; they allege scripture authority for it.

*****Note, The seeming contradictions that are in the word of God are great stumbling-blocks to men of corrupt minds.**

It is true, Moses was faithful to him that appointed him, and commanded nothing but what he received from the Lord; but as to the thing itself, what they call a command was only as allowance Deuteronomy 24:1, and designed rather to restrain the exorbitances of it than to give countenance to the thing itself. A particular reason must be assigned, the bill of divorce must be written, and, as a judicial act, must have all the solemnities of a deed, executed and enrolled. It must be given into the hands of the wife herself, and (which would oblige men, if they had any consideration in them, to consider) they were expressly forbidden ever to come together again."

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"Christ's answer to this objection, in which, He rectifies their mistake concerning the law of Moses; they called it a command, Christ calls it but a permission, a toleration. Carnal hearts will take a mile, if but an inch be given them.

The law of Moses, in this case, was a political law, which God gave, as the Governor of that people; and it was for reasons of state, that divorces were tolerated. The strictness of the marriage union being the result, not of a natural, but of a positive law, the wisdom of God dispensed with divorces in some cases, without any impeachment of his holiness.

But Christ tells them there was a reason for this toleration, not at all for their credit; It was because of the hardness of your hearts, that you were permitted to put away your wives. Moses complained of the people of Israel in his time, that *their hearts were hardened* Deuteronomy 9:6; Deuteronomy 31:27, hardened against God; this is here meant of their being hardened against their relations; they were generally violent and outrageous, which way so ever they took, both in their appetites and in their passions; and therefore if they had not been allowed to put away their wives, when they had conceived a dislike of them, they would have used them cruelly, would have beaten and abused them, and perhaps have murdered them.

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Deuteronomy 9:6 (New International Version)

⁶ Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people.

Deuteronomy 31:27 (New International Version)

²⁷ For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you have been rebellious against the LORD while I am still alive and with you, how much more will you rebel after I die!

The Jews, it seems, were infamous for this, and therefore were allowed to put them away; better divorce them than do worse, than that the altar of the Lord should be covered with tears, Malachi 2:13.

Malachi 2:13 (New International Version)

¹³ Another thing you do: You flood the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 (New International Version)

¹ If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, ² and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, ³ and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, ⁴ then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

Luke 16:18 (New International Version)

¹⁸"Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

*****Note, God not only sees, but foresees, the hardness of men's hearts; he suited both the ordinances and providences of the Old Testament to the temper of that people, both in terror.**

*****Note, Corruptions that are crept into any ordinance of God must be purged out by having recourse to the primitive institution. If the copy be vicious, it must be examined and corrected by the original.**

Thus, when St. Paul would redress the grievances in the church of Corinth about the Lord's supper, he appealed to the appointment 1 Corinthians 11:23, So and so I received from the Lord.

1 Corinthians 11:23 (New International Version)

²³For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,

Truth was from the beginning; we must therefore enquire for the good old way Jeremiah 6:16, and must reform, not by later patterns, but by ancient rules."

Jeremiah 6:16 (New International Version)

¹⁶ This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'

"He settles the point by an express law; I say unto you (v. 9); and it agrees with what he said before Matthew 5:32; there it was said in preaching, here in dispute, but it is the same, for Christ is constant to himself.

*****Note, Dr. Whitby understands this, not of adultery, but (because our Savior uses the word porneia – fornication) of uncleanness committed before marriage, but discovered afterward; because, if it were committed after, it was a capital crime, and there needed no divorce.**

He disallows it in all other cases: Whosoever puts away his wife, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. This is a direct answer to their query, that it is not lawful. In this, as in other things, gospel times are times of reformation, Hebrews 9:10. "

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Hebrews 9:10 (New International Version)

¹⁰They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

"The law of Christ tends to reinstate man in his primitive integrity; the law of love, conjugal love, is no new commandment, but was from the beginning.

If we consider what mischiefs to families and states, what confusions and disorders, would follow upon arbitrary divorces, we shall see how much this law of Christ is for our own benefit, and what a friend Christianity is to our secular interests.

The law of Moses allowing divorce for the hardness of men's hearts, and the law of Christ forbidding it, intimate, **that Christians being under a dispensation of love and liberty, tenderness of heart may justly be expected among them, that they will not be hard-hearted,** for God has called us to peace. There will be no occasion for divorces, **if we forbear one another, and forgive one another, in love, as those that are, and hope to be, forgiven, and have found God not forward to put us away,** Isaiah 50:1.

Isaiah 50:1 (New International Version)

Israel's Sin and the Servant's Obedience

¹ This is what the LORD says: "Where is your mother's certificate of divorce with which I sent her away? Or to which of my creditors did I sell you? Because of your sins you were sold; because of your transgressions your mother was sent away.

No need of divorces, if husbands love their wives, and wives be obedient to their husbands, and they live together as heirs of the grace of life: and these are the laws of Christ, such as we find not in all the law of Moses. "

Now, in both these places, He allows divorce, in case of adultery; the reason of the law against divorce being this, They two shall be one flesh. If the wife play the harlot, and make herself one flesh with an adulterer, the reason of the law ceases, and so does the law. By the law of Moses adultery was punished with death, Deuteronomy 22:22. Now our Savior mitigates the rigor of that, and appoints divorce to be the penalty. "

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Deuteronomy 22:22 (New International Version)

²² If a man is found sleeping with another man's wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel.

Matthew 19:10-12 (New International Version)

¹⁰The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."¹¹Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given.¹²For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it."

Matthew 10:1 (New International Version)

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

¹He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil^[a] spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

Matthew 26:56 (New International Version)

⁵⁶But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Mark 3:7 (New International Version)

Crowds Follow Jesus

⁷Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed.

Mark 16:20 (New International Version)

²⁰Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

Luke 6:13 (New International Version)

¹³When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles:

John 12:16 (New International Version)

¹⁶At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.

Matthew 13:11 (New International Version)

¹¹He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.

1 Corinthians 7:7 (New International Version)

"Here is a suggestion of the disciples against this law of Christ (v. 10); If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is better not to marry. It seems, the disciples themselves were loth to give up the liberty of divorce, thinking it a good expedient for preserving comfort in the married state; and therefore, like sullen children, if they have not what they would have, they will throw away what they have.

*****Note, 1. Corrupt nature is impatient of restraint, and would fain break Christ's bonds in sunder, and have a liberty for its own lusts.**

2. It is a foolish thing for men to abandon the comforts of this life, because of the crosses that are commonly woven in with them, as if we must needs go out of the world, because we have not everything to our mind in the world; or must enter into no useful calling or condition, because it is made our duty to abide in it.

No, whatever our condition is, we must bring our minds to it, be thankful for its comforts, submissive to its crosses, and, as God has done, *set the one over against the other*, and make the best of that which is, Ecclesiastes. 7:14.

Ecclesiastes 7:14 (New International Version)

¹⁴ When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, a man cannot discover anything about his future.



Christ's answer to this suggestion

(v. 11, 12), in which,

1. He allows it good for some not to marry; He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. Christ allowed what the disciples said, It is good not to marry; not as an objection against the prohibition of divorce, as they intended it, but as giving them a rule (perhaps no less unpleasing to them), that they who have the gift of continence, and are not under any necessity of marrying, do best if they continue single 1 Corinthians 7:1; for they that are unmarried have opportunity, if they have but a heart, to care more for the things of the Lord, how they may please the Lord 1 Corinthians 7:32-34. being less encumbered with the cares of this life, and having a greater vacancy of thought and time to mind better things. "

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1 Corinthians 7:1 (New International Version)

Marriage

¹Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry

1 Corinthians 7:32-34 (New International Version)

³²I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord.³³But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—³⁴and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband.

The Fruit of God's Spirit



"The increase of grace is better than the increase of the family, and fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ is to be preferred before any other fellowship.

*****Note, Continnence is a special gift of God to some, and not to others; and when a man, in the single state, finds by experience that he has this gift, he may determine with himself, and (as the apostle speaks, 1 Corinthians 7:37), stand steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but having power over his own will, that he will keep himself so.**

1 Corinthians 7:37 (New International Version)

³⁷But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing.

But men, in this case, must take heed lest they boast of a false gift, Proverbs 25:14.

Proverbs 25:14 (New International Version)

¹⁴ Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of gifts he does not give.

The single state must be chosen for the kingdom of heaven's sake; in those who resolve never to marry, only that they may save charges, or may gratify a morose selfish humor, or have a greater liberty to serve other lusts and pleasures, it is so far from being a virtue, that it is an ill-natured vice; but when it is for religion's sake, not as in itself a meritorious act (which papists make it), but only as a means to keep our minds more entire for, and more intent upon, the services of religion, and that, having no families to provide for, we may do the more works of charity, then it is approved and accepted of God.



Matthew 16:26 (New International Version)

²⁶What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?