

Jesus on Marriage & Divorce, pt.2, Mark 10.2-12

Introduction

1. Highlights from The Good News About Marriage message in 2014 from the book by the same title.
2. The couple married 60 years and the wife kept a lock box. On her deathbed she told her husband to get the box and it had two doilies in it and \$25000. Friend told her to make a doilie every time she was mad at her husband. The husband cried b/c there were only two. The \$25K was the money she made selling all the other ones.
3. Text

God hates divorce, because it... (Mal.2.15-16)

1. **Breaks covenant – 2.15.** The foundation of a relationship between two believers is their commitment to God and to each other. Your marriage covenant is a constant reminder that God is involved in your relationship; you have him on your side.
 - a. Most marriages can be repaired. If two people are committed to God's best and reach out to the resources He provides their marriage can be restored to a better place than ever existed. Research shows that if a couple who are in marital distress will give their marriage five more years that they will work through those issues.
 - b. The biggest regret of divorced couples is that they did not try hard enough to save their marriage. At the time of the divorce, the issues seemed insurmountable, but years after the divorce they realized they could have overcome them.
2. **Negatively impacts everyone involved – 2.16.**
 - a. The language used here is referring to men covering a woman with his garment as a sign of his protection. This is seen in the book of Ruth. She put herself under his covering. In this instance, God is saying by divorcing your wife you are covering her with violence...cruelty.
 - b. Divorces impact on the couple
 - i. Life expectancies for divorced men and women are significantly lower than for married people who have the longest life expectancies.
 - ii. Both men and women suffer a decline in mental health.
 - iii. After a diagnosis of cancer, married people are most likely to recover, while the divorced are least likely to recover, indicating the emotional trauma of divorce has a long term impact on the physical health of the body.
 - iv. Usually significant financial impact – women typically experience a 30% decline in the standard of living and men a 10% decline.
 - c. Divorces impact on the children:
 - i. Are more likely to experience higher levels of behavioral problems and thus suffer academically. They are less likely to graduate from HS.
 - ii. Are substantially more likely to be incarcerated for committing a crime as a juvenile.

- iii. They are 5x more likely to live in poverty than are children with married parents.
- iv. Teenagers from divorced homes are more likely to engage in drugs, alcohol and sexual promiscuity than those from married intact families.
- v. They experience illness more often and recover slower and they are more likely to experience abuse.
- vi. The emotional scars of divorce last into adulthood. One study which followed the children of divorce for 25 years discovered they still experienced expectations of failure, fear of loss, fear of change and fear of conflict.

The Bible allows for divorce due to...

1. Persistent, unrepentant sexual immorality – Matt.19.9

- a. The word in Greek is “Porneia” and refers to any form of sexual immorality. In participating in such activities, it breaches the marital covenant. It is joining physically and emotionally to another person, even if it is in your mind. It is bringing another person into the relationship and effectively separating what God has joined together.

2. Abandonment by an unbelieving spouse – 1 Cor.7.12-16

- a. You are to remain married to the unbelieving husband in hopes he will come to faith in Jesus. But, if he leaves “creates distance” then you are no longer under any obligation to stay.
- b. This is why it is critical to marry a believer who shares your same values. Otherwise, you are putting your marriage in jeopardy and your children on unstable ground. I realize some marry believing their spouse is a follower, but then quickly discover he/she is not. Scripturally, you are to remain in that relationship in hopes that it will bring the spouse to genuine faith.

Are addictions and abuse grounds for divorce?

- 1. If physical or sexual abuse is taking place, get yourself to a safe place. The Bible is clear on this one – Rom.13.1-2. Report the abuse to the civil authorities. These types of abuse are crimes and they must be reported. It is godly to send an abusive spouse to jail.
 - a. There are those who believe that there are Biblical grounds for divorce b/c of abuse.
 - b. Personally, I don't know where I stand, but I can say unequivocally that you should in no circumstances stay in an environment where you feel threatened and especially if children are involved.
- 2. Addictions – I believe Matt.19.9 covers sexual addictions, but what about drug, alcohol, gambling, etc?
 - a. There are some who believe this is a form of abandonment. As the person has chosen to separate himself from the spouse by pursuing these addictions. In essence, placing them before his family and not taking care of his/her needs.
 - b. Again, I am not sure where I stand. I think each situation needs to be taken case by case. Most reasons why people get a divorce – incompatibility, falling out of love, finances, communication, lack of commitment – can be resolved. These cases are delicate and require discernment.

Divorce catalyst:

1. **Marry an unbeliever – 2 Cor.6.14-16.** You should not be united to an unbeliever. You have two different values systems and sets of priorities. It is ALWAYS better to wait for God to lead you to a believer than to jump the gun and marry a person who has no genuine relationship with Jesus.
2. **Cohabiting** – the data is clear. If you cohabit, you have a greater likelihood of getting a divorce (50+%). The difference between cohabiting and marriage is the difference between a contract and a covenant. When you cohabit, you have a contract (You do this; I'll do that; if it doesn't work then we can leave). When you're married, you have a covenant (I am 100% committed to you and the Lord and I will do everything to make this marriage work). Cohabitation undercuts the marriage covenant.
3. **Pornography** – It creates dissatisfaction in the relationship; it pushes you further away from your spouse; it distorts the sexual relation; and depersonalizes the spouse as just an object to meet your physical needs; it creates extreme distrust.

Conclusion

1. For those considering divorce:
 - a. You need a godly person who is willing to walk with you during this time. A person who will hold you accountable to God's Word and His principles.
 - b. You need to remain connected to the church. Don't pull away. It is the worst thing you can do. You need a company of people.
 - c. You need to humble yourself and honestly assess how you are contributing to the problems in the marriage. Remember, we are bringing more than ourselves into our marriage. We are bringing generations of our families into the marriage.
 - d. Diligently seek out the resources that will strengthen your marriage. Counseling, mentors, books, training, etc.
2. For those who have divorced.
 - a. If you have not already, seek God's forgiveness for your part.
 - b. Receive His forgiveness and live as a dearly loved child.
 - c. Should you remarry? Seek the Lord and godly counsel.