

And do you know what else? We aren't the first ones to think that! Even as the words left Jesus' mouth, his own disciples raised an outcry: "Why, if that's the way it is, it would be better not to even marry!"

Jesus hurts for hurting people too. Don't you know He didn't want to make a single *unnecessary law*? He had the authority – if anyone did – *not to say those words*. But maybe *even He* didn't have that authority, because He backed His statement with a referral to the way marriage had been from the beginning. Maybe, inherent within the husband/wife relationship, from the very creation of Adam and Eve, has been the rightness of marriage and the wrongness of divorce; like truth is right and lie is wrong – not because of *an arbitrary law*, but a *fact of inherent rightness and wrongness*.

But why would divorce matter that much?

Why condemn good people for making a mistake in marriage? Since, historically, very very few adulterous marriages have been dissolved in order to get one's life right with God, Jesus' statement probably was not made **to correct a bad situation**, but rather, *to prevent the broken marriage, in the first place*. By making such stringent laws, Jesus was protecting the husband/wife relationship, and the home and the security of its

children, from becoming victims to thoughtless, easy, "no fault" divorces. He knew what a destructive thing a broken home can be in society, and when it is multiplied by the millions to the point that maybe half the marriages end in divorce, Jesus knew what would happen. Look around you. See why Jesus strictly forbade the destruction of marriage and the home! See the abuse, crime, emotional breakdowns, anger, hatred, and unhealed wounds in the homes across the land. See the way broken homes have spilled out into society so that the very foundations of our nation are breaking apart, with lawlessness, immorality, and godlessness the norm among us.

Yes, the home matters that much! Everything of humanity and life – even spiritual life – is built on the foundation of the home! No wonder God would protect it with such stringent law!

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**Does Divorce
Matter that Much?**
J.C. Choate

"...Whosoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9).

In this age of pervasive immorality, marriage is treated lightly. Among people in the world, it is more common to find a person living with the second or third mate than to find one

still faithful to the first marriage partner. What happens, then, when the couple learns the Truth and wants to obey the Gospel, becoming a part of the Lord's family?

The reasoning is introduced, "Matthew 19:9 applies only to Christians. When people in the world don't know anything about the Bible, God can't hold them responsible for making a mistake in marriage. But, now, they can be baptized, washing away their sins, and their marriage will be all right." *Is this true?*

What is sin? It is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4; Romans 4:15) The adulterer may not know God's law but that ignorance does no more to remove the guilt of his disobedience than does the ignorance of the infidel who denies the very existence of God. Both will be held responsible in this world and in the world to come.

"Not under bondage..."

And what about that verse in 1 Corinthians 7 that says, "...if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases..." (v.15). The subjects of the previous verses had been (1) rendering due marital affection, (2) permission for the unmarried and widows to marry if they were having problems with temptation, (3) the married person was not to leave his/her mate, but if they had done so

then they were not to remarry but to be reconciled, (4) the marriage of the believer to an unbeliever was recognized by God and sanctified, so the believer was not to leave the unbelieving mate; but if the unbeliever left, the Christian had not disobeyed God and was not to be held responsible – however, the Holy Spirit, through Paul, did not contradict Jesus' statement in Matthew 19:9; permission was not given to remarry. The word is not even mentioned.

What about, "*Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called*" (v. 20). These words are used as a canopy, spread over adulterous marriages. But does anyone say the murderer is to continue to murder? The thief, to rob? The child abuser, to beat his children? The gossip, to continue gossiping? A closer look at the verses preceding 20 will show that the situations under discussion were circumcision/uncircumcision and slavery/freedom – not some life-style of wrong-doing.

"There are no examples in the New Testament of people required to divorce..."

No, but we do have the law concerning marriage, and the command for repentance. And we have the statement in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, "*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.*

Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such WERE some of you." Somebody stopped being an adulterer!

"God wouldn't break up a happy home."

It is a strange thing that people say with great determination that they do want to go to heaven when they die. Yet, almost 0% would look for a way to separate, with the least repercussions inflicted, from an adulterous situation so that they could *live* an upright example before mates and children. Such a thing would be *beyond reason, absolutely too much for God to expect!* Yet that same couple may turn around and get a "*no fault*" divorce, destroying their "happy home" and inflicting all the repercussions on their children! Why? Not for the sake of eternal salvation, but for *no cause* at all! Aren't we strange in our thinking?

The Out-cry

Do you know what? The weaker, sympathizing part of me says, "I wish Jesus hadn't made that statement. I see hurting people, and I wish it were easy to just erase the sin with a word, and all would be gone. If Matthew 19:9 wasn't even in the Bible, it wouldn't matter about divorce."