



The Reverend Dr. David V. Silvernail, Jr.
Mark 10:1-12

May 3, 2020
English Standard Version

“Jesus and Divorce”

**The 29th Sermon in a series on The Gospel of Mark entitled
*“The King and His Cross”***

Good morning, welcome to Potomac Hills. I’m glad you’ve tuned in this morning. This is our 8th week meeting all over Northern Virginia as a church distributed. When this pandemic first started, how many of us thought we’d still be here after 8 weeks? I’m guessing not many. However, here we are and, to be honest, we’re blessed to live in a time when we have the technology that enables us to meet this way. We’ve tried our best to make this worship service helpful and hopeful ... and we pray that God will use it in your life to build you up in the faith and draw you closer to Him. So, before I start, please turn in your Bibles to **The Gospel of Mark, chapter 10**, and listen carefully as I read our Scripture passage for today.

Mark 10:1-12

“And He left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to Him again. And again, as was His custom, He taught them. ² And Pharisees came up and in order to test Him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” ³ He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” ⁴ They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.” ⁵ And Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. ⁶ But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ⁷ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, ⁸ and the

two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. ⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

¹⁰ And in the house the disciples asked Him again about this matter. ¹¹ And He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, ¹² and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

The Word of the Lord ***Thanks be to God***

A week or so ago, we had a fun contest on our Facebook group trying to guess what the Pastor says every Sunday. Most of you guessed **the opening line** of this prayer. What I thought you would guess is **the closing line** of the prayer ... so I guess you’ll just have to listen to the whole thing. Please join me.

Let’s pray ...

*Heavenly Father, this is Your Word and we need it. Thank You for giving us the Scriptures and making us Your people. You have brought us to this amazing Gospel to learn more about your Son, Jesus. We ask You this morning to give us the grace to **hear and believe** these hard words. We live in a time where vows are temporary, promises are easily broken, and commitment is anything but, so we find it hard to believe when it comes to marriage because marriage itself is hard work and too often set aside. We need Jesus. We need to hear His words of both grace and truth. We need the faith, hope, and love that comes from seeing the risen Savior. So help us to see Jesus in Your Word this morning. Help us to have renewed faith, help us to have restored hope, and help us to reset our love this morning. And so we pray, speak through the Gospel of Mark, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, **help us see Jesus**, for in His name we pray, amen ... and amen.*

INTRODUCTION: What are you choosing? ¹

In **Mark 10:7**, Jesus says, quoting **Genesis**, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife.” Which begs the question ... Why would a man leave his father and mother? Now, truth be told, I know some men who have it pretty good living with their parents. They’re single. They’re cared for. Somebody does their laundry. They don’t have to pay room and board. They have life by the tail ... and then they **throw it all away**.

What do they do? They decide to leave their parents, giving up all that security, **and get married**, picking up all the expense of a wife and home of their own. Why on earth would they do that? Because, **verse 6**, “from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’” A divinely created male felt a response to a divinely created female. If it’s right, it’s also a divinely created response. For that reason, the man **chooses** to leave his old life and move into a new life. But notice the key to this. **He chooses** to leave.

Now, to be fair, this scenario particularly relates to the society in which Jesus was living and to which He was addressing His remarks. In those days, the man left his family to move to

¹ The introduction is adapted from the sermon, “What Are Real Marriages Made Of?” found in What It Means to be Real by Dr. Stuart Briscoe, reprinted at www.preaching.com.

the area in which his wife lived for a very simple reason. If anything should happen to him (for example, if he should suffer an untimely death), then her father and brothers would care for her. She had no welfare or insurance. Her father and brothers were her insurance.

Even though the situation is a lot different now, this matter of **choice** still applies. One of the reasons marriages get into difficulty is this – people **choose** to get married. They **choose** to leave the single life to get involved in a new married life. Accepting responsibility, they say they will **leave** their old life ... **but then they don't**. Although **they say** they're ready and willing to move into this new life, they look back. They lack commitment because they don't know what the new relationship involves. Marriages fall into all kinds of problems in this area.

Let me illustrate this from a premarital counseling experience – not one of mine, I don't generally share those, this one comes from the pastor and author Stuart Briscoe. He writes, "One very cold night in November a young couple with whom I'd met for premarital counseling came to my home for a late appointment. As they came in the door, the cold blast of air outside seemed **warm** compared to the atmosphere between them. Something was wrong, I quickly detected. Tactful that I am, I decided to be diplomatic. So I said, "I see you had a fight on the way over here." After several denials, they finally admitted it.

This is what had happened. For many years, the young man had gone deer hunting. I said, "Don't tell me. ... Your wedding day is the opening day of deer season."

She looked at me and said, "Right. And you know what he said?"

"Yes. I know what he said. He said you're going to spend your honeymoon deer hunting." "Yes. Can you believe that?"

I glanced at him and he said, "Well, I go to the symphony with her, don't I?" This was a problem. I had to do something to defuse the situation, so I said to him, "I think we have a problem here. As I understand it, you feel that your young bride should go sit up in northern Wisconsin, freezing and shooting deer as part of your honeymoon?"

She interrupted, "I know, right."

"And you feel that because you've gone to the symphony with her, she should go along with this?" He nodded yes.

"We've got to compromise, haven't we?" I turned to her, "Why don't you go with him, and take all your music of Beethoven and Mozart and Haydn and play them up there in the woods?" Then I looked at him, "How about you take your hunting rifle to the symphony ... see if you can bag yourself a cellist?"

By this time they were smiling a little, and we could begin to address the problem. The solution to their problem was not compromise. Taking Beethoven deer-hunting was as ridiculous as hunting at the symphony. That kind of compromise simply wouldn't work.

This was my counsel to them: "To the best of my knowledge **you don't have** to get married. Why are you **choosing** to get married?" Looking at the man, I said, "If hunting is more important to you than marriage and your wife, why do you need a wife? Stick with deer. The simple fact of the matter is this ... If you're going to enter a new relationship, it ought to be because **you've chosen that new relationship over the old one**." I'm happy to say the young fellow recognized how unfair he was being, and the couple worked out their differences. Even though they didn't go deer hunting on their honeymoon, they did go later on!" And I'm pretty sure he didn't shoot any cellists.

Now, that's a humorous introduction to a serious topic. It's a light intro to a heavy subject. And that's because this issue of divorce poses some ...

BACKGROUND: *Significant Challenges* ²

There are a few challenges that make preaching on divorce and remarriage especially difficult. One challenge is that there are so many legitimate approaches I could take with this sermon. I could make the sermon a warning — “Marriage is sacred. Remember your vows. Jesus never encouraged divorce. Don't do it.” I could preach that way because the weight of the New Testament falls on the side of warning against divorce. But I could also use the sermon to talk about God's compassion for those who have been hurt in marriage, for those left behind in marriage, or for those sinned against in marriage.

I could take the sermon in a different direction and encourage those who have sinned in divorce or sinned in remarriage to repent and receive God's merciful forgiveness. I could also take more of a theological approach and try to explain the acceptable grounds for divorce and remarriage, asking questions like: Are there any justifiable reasons for divorce? If so, what are they? And if you may get divorced under certain circumstances, what about remarriage? I wish I had time to go really deep both pastorally and theologically in **all these ways**, but I just can't in one sermon. That's the first challenge.

The other challenge in preaching on this topic is that there are so many unique scenarios that don't lend themselves to easy answers. Many of you will listen to this sermon not simply for theological information, but you'll be listening to hear if I think ... God thinks ... your divorce was acceptable, or whether your parents' remarriage was appropriate, or whether you are free to remarry now that you are divorced. There are so many intricate, specific situations that I can't possibly speak to all of them. These situations require tremendous wisdom because it's not always clear what the correct counsel should be. For example ...

- A wife commits adultery. She's repentant and wants to save the marriage. The husband knows he must forgive but wants to file for divorce. Would you grant him that right? Does it make any difference if the unfaithfulness was frequent?
- A wife gets a divorce because of marital unfaithfulness. You've determined she has grounds for that divorce. Is she free to remarry? What if the husband repents, is he free to remarry? Or only to his ex-wife? And if she gets remarried, does that change his obligation?
- A non-Christian couple gets a divorce. Later he becomes a Christian and realizes the divorce was wrong. Is he obligated to try to win back his non-Christian ex-wife? What if he tries and she has no interest, is he free to remarry?

2 The Background and Exposition of the text is adapted from my sermons, “What Jesus said about the Law” 6/30/02, and “Family in the Kingdom” 3/9/14, both preached here at Potomac Hills.

And the sermons, “What Did Jesus Think of Divorce and Remarriage” by Dr. Kevin DeYoung, Senior Pastor of Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church, Matthews, NC preached when Senior Pastor of University Reformed Church, East Lansing, MI, 10/24/10, www.universityreformedchurch.org, reprinted at www.thegospelcoalition.org; “The Kingdom and Marriage” by Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III, Chancellor, Reformed Theological Seminary, preached when Senior Minister at First Presbyterian Church (PCA), Jackson, MS, 12/27/98, www.fpcjackson.org. **And the book, Lent for Everyone: Mark, Year B by Dr. N.T. Wright, pages 94-97. For further study I recommend Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage: Critical Questions and Answers by Dr. Jim Newheiser.**

- A remarried couple comes to realize their divorce and remarriage was sinful. Are they committing adultery by staying married? If they stay married, what should they do to make things right? Can they be members in the church? What about leaders in the church?
- Both husband and wife commit adultery. They both have grounds for divorce, and they're both the "guilty" party. Would you allow a divorce? Two years later they're both sincerely repentant. Should they remarry each other? Could they remarry someone else?

There are as **many scenarios** as there are couples in the world. How do we know what's right in each situation, especially when so many of the scenarios have no specific parallel in Scripture? The simple thing is to turn a blind eye to divorce in the church. Just pretend it doesn't happen. Don't ask about it. Don't bring it up. Don't say anything during the membership interview. **The hard thing** is to take **a few biblical principles** about marriage, divorce, and remarriage and then try to apply them prayerfully and wisely to **a thousand different situations**.

So, those are the challenges of taking on this text. It's way too big a topic to cover in one sermon and there's so many different personal situations that I can't cover all of them. Now, this subject is addressed repeatedly in the Old Testament, Jesus Himself addresses divorce and remarriage four times in the gospels (**Matthew 5, Matthew 19, Luke 16**, and here in **Mark 10**) and the Apostle Paul addresses it at length in **1st Corinthians 7**. And to have a thorough understanding of divorce and remarriage you really need to look at all the whole counsel of God and what the entire Bible has to say.

Now, we don't have time to do that this morning, so let me recommend a relatively new book that does that. It's Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage by Dr. Jim Newheiser, who teaches at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte. It's accessible, thorough, Biblical, and I can't recommend it too highly. So let's get to our text, **Mark 10:1-12**, and we'll start with ...

v. 1-2: A QUESTION OF TESTING

*"And He left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to Him again. And again, as was His custom, He taught them. ² And Pharisees came up and in order to test Him asked, **"Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"**"*

Apparently, the issue of divorce was a hot topic in Jesus' day too, and there's some evidence to suggest that divorce was at epidemic proportions in that time, as it is in our own. Divorce was a significant problem. Some of you will have heard the name of at least one divorced Pharisee. This tells you that divorce was not just a problem amongst common folk, but it was also a problem among the ancient clergy in Jesus' time (the rabbi's, scribe's, and Pharisees). Have you ever heard the name **Josephus**, the famous writer of the Antiquities, and the Jewish War? He was a divorced Pharisee. There was a real problem of divorce even among the clergy of Israel and there were great differences among those clergy as to what the Biblical views of marriage, divorce and remarriage was. You might say that it was just as controversial an issue then as it is now. So the Pharisees take the opportunity to force Jesus to make His views public. Much as we try to do with politicians today. Ask hard questions and pin them down ... so we can come back and use that against them later.

There's one more thing you need to keep in mind before we look at this passage. The Pharisees came to Jesus and asked Him, *"Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"* or, as the parallel passage in **Matthew 19** has it, *"Is it lawful for man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?""* And what I want you to keep in mind is that the Pharisees asking this question ... couldn't

have cared less about the marriages involved. They couldn't have cared less about your marriage. Their one and only goal was to trap Jesus. Their desire was to get Him involved in a controversy which would cause His reputation to suffer ... no matter what answer He gave. And so they had no concern for your soul; whereas, throughout this passage, Jesus shows every concern for your soul.

With that in mind, the first thing we see in **verses 1 and 2** is that Jesus is beginning His ministry in the border region of Judah just on the other side of the Jordan. What we learn from this brief, seemingly insignificant detail, is that Jesus is the one who cares about people. And that's important in light of the difficult things that He's going to say in a few moments. Jesus is going to have a view of marriage, divorce and remarriage which is **narrower** than the Pharisees. The Pharisees have a **broader** view of the grounds for divorce. And so Jesus is going to say things that are **unpopular**. But it's important, that before we see what Jesus says, to see that Jesus is the one who actually cares about people. It's not the Pharisees that care. It's Jesus who's investing Himself in the lives of people.

Notice **where** He is ministering. He's in '*the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan*' — in the territory of Herod Antipas, who had imprisoned and then executed John the Baptist for having the nerve to say that Herod should not have divorced his first wife and then married Herodias, who in turn divorced Herod's brother Philip to make the second marriage possible. The Pharisees knew that Jesus was likely to take a strict line, and that an unguarded word from Him, suitably reported back to Herod, might do the trick. They would be able to sit back and watch Herod do their dirty work for them. Now let me ask you — Were the Pharisees out there caring for these people? No, they were out there to trap Jesus. Jesus was out there ministering to people. He was teaching them. He was healing them. And they were following Him. Jesus is the one invested in the lives of people.

Although He's single, Jesus shows greater understanding of marriage than the Pharisees. To be a Pharisee **you had** to be married. And yet Jesus showed a greater sensitivity to God's statements about marriage in the book of Genesis than the Pharisees did. Jesus is the practical one. But Jesus also knows that **truth**, even when it's uncomfortable for people to hear, makes their lives better. And even if it hurts to hear it, it always pays eternal dividends. And so He sets forth His teaching on divorce in the context of this hostile question asked by the Pharisees.

It's important to know the Pharisees were somewhat lax on the issue of divorce. That may be surprising because we think of the Pharisees as legalists who dot every "i" and cross every "t" when it comes to the Law. You may wonder ... What in the world are they doing with a lax view of divorce and remarriage? Well, their legalism plays into that because the Pharisees paid a lot of attention to a passage in **Deuteronomy 24** from which they drew their teaching on divorce. And they parsed it very carefully. But they **overlooked** the fundamental teaching on marriage in **Genesis 1-2**. Does that not fit with the pattern that Jesus accuses them of? They strain at a gnat ... and they swallow a camel. They make a great deal about the lesser things of the law while ignoring the weightier matters of the law on these issues of divorce and remarriage. So, the first thing we have to see is the question is a **test**. It's not about getting better information; it's about trying to **trap** Jesus. And so Jesus answers their question of **testing** with ...

v. 3, 6-9: A QUESTION OF LAW

³ He answered them, “**What did Moses command you?**” ... ⁶ But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ⁷ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, ⁸ and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. ⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

Now, to really understand this passage, we have to focus on the main point that Jesus makes, and simply put, that’s before you get to the issue of **divorce**, you have to know what God meant for **marriage** in the first place. And then, and only then, can you go on and speak about divorce. So, the setting is that the Pharisees come to Jesus with this trick question back in **verse 2**. Now why do I say this is a trick question? It looks straight forward enough, “***Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?***” But it’s a trick question because the Pharisees want one of several things to happen. Either they want Jesus to get into a theological debate because this was an actual debate. And the Pharisees themselves were divided on the question of what qualified as legitimate grounds for divorce. Those who followed Rabbi Shammai said that divorce was only legitimate in the case of adultery. They held the “strict” view. Those who followed Rabbi Hillel said that divorce could occur for any reason at all. In fact, one Rabbi said that a man could divorce his wife if she burned the toast. So, any cause at all was grounds for a divorce.

Now, you may have noticed the wording of the question itself, “***Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?***” Why is it phrased that way? Well, historically, men are usually the initiators in divorce. And in ancient Israel, a man could get a divorce very easily. Back then a man didn’t even have to see a judge to get a divorce. All he had to do was to have two witnesses and a write a bill of divorce, and he was out of there. Now if a woman wanted to get a divorce, she had to go before a judge, and there had to be a trial, and there had to be cause. And so there’s a real sense in which Jesus is protecting the rights of married women with what He says in this passage. In Jesus’ day there was a problem with lax divorce, just like in our day. It is easier to get out of marriage than it is to get in one. And Jesus is speaking precisely to that situation, so often precipitated by a man.

Now the Pharisees based their opinions on **Deuteronomy 24**. And they very carefully **misread** Moses to argue he was commanding broad grounds for divorce. And Jesus, in response to their question, takes them back to **Genesis 1-2**, and says, “Look, what does God institute marriage for?” He instituted marriage in order to present **oneness** between a man and a woman who would **leave** their parents and **cleave** to one another. And so He quotes from **Genesis**, and then He adds, “*So they are no longer two but one flesh.*” ⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” Jesus says, “Marriage promotes **oneness** and, therefore, we’re never to break up an institution **lightly** which is designed to promote **oneness**. We’re never to take that **lightly**. Basically, He tells the Pharisees, “Shame on you, you’re ignoring what Moses taught in Genesis.”

Now the Pharisees thought that either He was going to get trapped in the theological debate, or that Jesus was going to oppose Moses, by saying, “Moses was wrong when he said such and such in Deuteronomy.” But of course, Jesus doesn’t do that. He tells the Pharisees, “Once again, your problem is not that you care **too much** about what Moses said, it’s that **you don’t care enough** about what Moses said, because you haven’t carefully read the foundational statements in **Genesis 1 and 2**. Which, finally, after they challenge Him with a **test**, and Christ challenges them with **the Law**, we get to ...

v. 4-5, 10-12: THE QUESTION OF EXPLANATION

⁴ They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.” ⁵ And Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. ... ¹⁰ And in the house **the disciples asked Him again** about this matter. ¹¹ And He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, ¹² and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

So the Pharisees come back to Him with another challenge, **verse 4**, “They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.” And Jesus explains that Moses’ statements gave **permission** to grant a divorce in certain circumstances. And he did it as a **concession** to the hardness of their hearts (**verse 5**). But more importantly, in **verses 10-12**, He goes on to say that violation of the marriage covenant is a violation of the 7th Commandment. It’s adultery. Now remember the Pharisees were hard on immorality. They were hard on adultery. They were ready to execute people caught in adultery. But they’d let anybody who walked in the door get a divorce.

And Jesus was saying, “Let me tell you something, Pharisees, an unbiblical divorce and an unbiblical remarriage **is tantamount to adultery**. You’re promoting adultery in Israel. He’s using **really hard words** against the Pharisees in order to get their attention. And so Jesus teaches the Pharisees that instead of asking the question, “What will God let me **get away with** in the matter of divorce? ... they ought to be asking the question, “What does God desire for us in marriage?” Instead of asking, “What do I **get out** of marriage?” we ought to be asking, “How can this marriage **be good** for my spouse, **good** for my children, **good** for my grandchildren, **good** for my church, **good** for my community, and **good** for God’s Kingdom?” The Pharisees aren’t asking, “What does God **intend** marriage to be?” They’re not even asking, “How can we **help** hurting people in broken relationships stay together?” They’re asking this **one technical question**, “When can I **get out** of the commitment I made before God?” That’s what they’re asking. And it’s Jesus that cares for us and wants the best for us. It’s Jesus who comes back and says, “You’re asking the wrong question. The question is, ‘What does God **intend** for marriage to be?’”

Jesus’ words completely reshape the debate and ask us to think about what we’re doing when we commit to one another in marriage. When we make these vows, this isn’t just some **ritual** we go through that’s of no real significance. We are making **vows** before God and man. And I hope, for the rest of this year, and this strange season of being at home, that everyone will devote themselves to strengthen the family life of our congregation. If you’ve gone through a divorce, you have an opportunity to minister to struggling marriages, to be able to say, “Let me tell you what I had to go through. Let me encourage you in overcoming these difficulties and staying together.” Perhaps right now you’re in a struggling marriage, and you need to reach out to someone who’s been through this before. There are people in this congregation that have struggled in marriage, and who have been through the pain of divorce. And most of them are willing to say “yes, I’ve been there and I’m willing to help.”

Perhaps you’re in an irreparable situation. A situation where the marriage has been so grossly broken, that the opportunity for reconciliation is no longer there. You still need to gather around and say, “It’s not my lack of respect for marriage, but just the opposite. My esteem for marriage leads me to say that this relationship must end because of the infidelity that’s occurred.” Whatever the case, we all need to devote ourselves to upholding the status of marriage. It’s not just a foundation of our nation, it is the foundation of this congregation. We

all have a **vested interest** in helping one another in our marriages. Whether we're single, whether we're divorced, whether we're married, happily or not, all of us have a **vested interest** in helping one another in this area. Let me briefly address three groups of people, who, by this time, are probably asking ...

APPLICATION: *What about us?*

To the married — Stay married. Guard your marriage. Don't think you're above falling. Don't think you're above temptation. Pray for each other. Take walks together. Get away from the kids to be together. There are few things more precious in life than your marriage. Don't take it for granted. And if you are contemplating divorce, please talk to someone. Please don't give up. If you have biblical grounds for divorce, consider what glory it might be to God to work patiently toward reconciliation. And if you don't have biblical grounds, consider what offense it will be to God to break the promises you made in His name. Consider the harm to your kids. Stay married.

To the divorced and single — If you had grounds for a divorce, the leaders of this church want to do everything we can to make sure no one looks down on you. If you have been sinned against, we don't want to treat you as the sinner. We don't want you to run from the church but find grace and fellowship here.

If you are divorced but shouldn't be, can you find hope in your heart that God might be able to reconcile you and your spouse? It would be a great trophy of His grace to bring you two back together. If that doesn't happen, don't get remarried right away. And don't get remarried until you're Biblically free to get remarried. Don't think you can always repent later. You never know: the next time you blatantly sin may be the time the Lord gives you over to the hardness of your heart and puts you beyond the pale.

To those who have sinfully divorced, to those whose sin caused the divorce, to those who are now remarried when you shouldn't be — I have one thing to say to you ... **run to the cross**. It is not a light thing to tear asunder what God joined together. It is no small mistake to pursue an adulterous second marriage. But God's grace is **not light** ... and it is **not small**. Divorce is not the unpardonable sin. There is mercy yet for you. But the contrition must be real, the admission of guilt must be honest, the repentance must be earnest. A broken heart and a contrite spirit the Lord will not despise. So, run to God. Plead with God. Know His adopting love. Experience again His justifying grace. *There's a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins. And sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.* And that promise is for you too.

Now, I know I didn't cover all the situations and scenarios for divorce and remarriage. I'm attaching a simple list of Biblical principles for divorce and remarriage at the end of the sermon outline and at the end of the manuscript that will give you more concrete guidance. And I haven't taken the time to cover all of that in great detail because I don't want to miss ...

CONCLUSION: *The Real Question*

The world doesn't understand the Biblical view of marriage because the world doesn't understand **the commitment of Christ**. The world doesn't understand that God cares deeply about marriage and divorce. The world will try to convince you that Christian views on marriage and divorce are too narrow and outdated for today's world. "I don't like what Christianity has to say about this area of my life." But if a doctor prescribes an unpleasant tasting medicine, what do you do? If you're truly sick, you take it! And it's just a wrong-headed to taste-test

Christianity as it is to taste-test medicine. Christianity will not allow itself to be evaluated solely on its sexual ethics. And that's because the real question is ...

“Is Jesus Christ really the Son of God?” Is He who He said He is? Is He the Way, the Truth, and the Life? Has He really died for you because you're a sinner? If He **is** and He **has**, then who cares what He asks you to do or not do? You should do it! In a sense, the gospel doesn't let you talk about **anything else first**. It says, “I won't talk to you about marriage or divorce or sexuality or gender roles or suffering or anything else until you determine **what you will do with Him**. **Who He is** determines everything else.”

But they object, “Christianity has such an outdated view of marriage and divorce.” **Really?** The Christian view of marriage is enormously lofty. The Bible says that marriage points to the relationship we have with Christ. The Bible tells us that God made marriage so important because it's capable of bringing so much glory and so much joy into your life that only two people **fully committed to one another for a lifetime** can receive it. No higher view is possible! It's not by coincidence that His **chosen** imagery to characterize His relationship with His people is the covenant of marriage. And hopefully by now, you've learned that lasting marriages are marriages **that put Jesus first**.

Perhaps we should pray that we do just that.

Take a moment to do that, and then I'll close.

Our Lord and our God, thank You that You have given us a King. This morning we ask you to renew our faith, restore our hope, and reset our love. Open our eyes that we might see our sin and then see our Savior. Our Father in heaven, these are solemn issues that we've dealt with today. You know our hearts; you know our marriages. You know the marriages that are broken; you know the marriages that are in trouble. You know the husbands and wives who are not speaking to each other. You know the husbands and wives who are not relating to each other as husband and wife. And so, O Lord, if there is anyone among us this day, who comes here struggling with sin, struggling with relationships, struggling with their marriage, struggling with their past ... bring them the grace of Your forgiveness and the mercy of Your redemption. And if need be, bring them to repentance, and hold them with a love that will not let them go. For the sake of Your Kingdom, Amen.

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Romans 8:38-39

“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Seven Principles of Divorce and Remarriage

1. Marriage is the sacred union between one man and one woman and God's intention is for marriage to last a lifetime.
2. Divorce is not always sinful.
3. Divorce is permitted, but not required, on the ground of sexual immorality.
4. Divorce is permitted, but not required, on the ground of desertion by an unbelieving spouse.
5. When the divorce was not permissible, any subsequent remarriage (to someone other than the original spouse) results in adultery.
6. In situations where the divorce was permissible, remarriage is also permissible.
7. Improperly divorced and remarried Christians should stay as they are, but repent and be forgiven of their past sins and make whatever amends are necessary.

Taken from "A Sermon on Divorce and Remarriage" by Kevin DeYoung, 11/3/10,
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/a-sermon-on-divorce-and-remarriage/>