

Jesus on Divorce & Remarriage

Matthew 5.31-32

Overview

A. Vs. 31: Paraphrase of Deuteronomy 24.1-3:

1. Jesus doesn't refute the Law (vs. 17), but is providing the wider scope of where the Law reaches
2. Deut. 24.1-3 allowed for a husband to divorce his wife in cases of 'indecency'
 - a. This was a concession, but never a prescription
 - i. The concession was given to curb greater sin to the wife from husband
3. God never intended Divorce to be an option: Matthew 19.1-9
 - a. God joins a man and woman together as one, therefore man should not attempt to separate what God has joined together:
 - i. Therefore God hates Divorce: Malachi 2.16

B. Vs. 32: Jesus decries the ease at which others are issuing divorces and entering into other marriages:

1. The thrust of Jesus' words are against the person issuing the divorce (note: v. 32b):
 - a. The thrust of His words are not regarding that 'exception clause'
2. His enabling his wife to commit adultery is due to the wife needing provision from a spouse therefore she would 'have' to remarry:
 - a. Instead of modeling forgiveness, he enables her to sin in his ease of divorcing her
 - i. It was possible to get a divorce in Jesus' day for flippant reasons
 - i. Jesus is trying to help them see that God's design is not for divorce remarriage
3. Marrying a divorced woman is also committing adultery b/c the covenant of that previous spouse has not been dissolved

C. The 'exception clause': Two main views among evangelicals:

1. Those opposed to Divorce & Remarriage in all circumstances (Minority Position):
 - a. They would see these exceptions both here and in Matt. 19.9 as Jesus addressing a 'betrothal period' that would be similar to our engagement period:
 - i. You can see an example of this betrothal period in Matt. 1.18-19
 - b. Since these two instances are the only two instances and other texts make Divorce and Remarriage not possible (Mark 10.1-2, Luke 16.18, etc.) they conclude their position
2. (My Response: Nathan): I don't find the Betrothal Period taught in the Bible:
 - a. Therefore, we have to go to history (not the Bible) in order to understand Jesus' words
 - b. Also: Jesus seems to be addressing marriage in these passages, not in an engagement period
3. Allow for Divorce & Remarriage for the Innocent party in the case of sexual immorality and abandonment (1 Cor. 7.12-15) (Majority Position):
 - a. The case for divorce is seen here in Matt. 5.32 and in Matt. 19.9 where Jesus is clearly excepting a divorce in these cases:
 - i. Since Jesus excepts divorce for the innocent party in these instances it is understood that the marriage is dissolved upon the innocent party issuing the divorce (release)...consequently, remarriage is possible for them
 - i. The same may be true for those who have been abandoned (1 Cor. 7.12-15)

D. How can we work against a culture of divorce & remarriage and be salt and light and reflect the righteousness that Jesus requires? Colossians 3.12-15

Questions

Discussion Starter: *How many of you have been affected by the issue of Divorce & Remarriage? How so?*

1. What's Jesus doing in these examples of anger, lust, divorce, etc. ? (Matt. 5.13, 14, 20)
2. Who is the subject of Jesus' words and why is this important to understand the passage?
3. Was divorce and remarriage part of the original intention of Gods plan for marriage? (Matt. 19.1-9)
4. How was Jesus giving a more complete understanding of divorce & remarriage?
5. Why would Jesus offer such a restricting view of Divorce & Remarriage?
6. In what way does marriage picture God? God's relationship to His people (cf. Eph. 5:22-33)?
7. How does the Gospel speak to those who have been Divorced and Remarried?
8. How can we help facilitate healthy relationships/marriages at Restoration Church so that we can be salt and light and model the kind of righteousness that is needed for the Kingdom?

Accountability Question: *Which of those commands in Colossians 3.12-15 do you find most difficult?*