

Theme: Divorce is a tragedy arising from man's sin which produces devastating effects on all involved, so Christians should always work to save marriages.

I. Intro – A Very Difficult Topic

- A. Have been looking at strong families
- B. Divorce is a tough topic
 - 1. Not pleasant to talk about
 - 2. Goes against spirit of age – no fault divorce
 - 3. A lot of divorced Christians!
 - 4. A lot of disagreement among Christians
- C. What does the Scripture teach on divorce & remarriage?
 - 1. A lot of texts; can't cover all in 2 weeks
 - 2. We will try to look at highlights of this doctrine

II. The Pharisees Test & Jesus' Response

- A. Some Pharisees wanted to test Jesus
 - 1. They wanted to trap him
 - 2. Debate over divorce in Judaism
 - 3. No win situation for Jesus
- B. "Lawful to divorce – any and every reason?"

- 1. Dt 24:1 – see back for literal rendering
- 2. Hillel – any reason; Shammai – adultery
- 3. Who is right? Rules for divorce?

C. Back to Genesis (vv4-5)

- 1. Original text on marriage
- 2. Marriage – two become one

D. Implication – two are one; don't divide

- 1. No longer two – one!
- 2. Implication – don't divorce
- 3. Marriage – God's work; divorce – man's

III. Why Does Divorce Exist?

- A. Pharisees - Why did Moses **command** divorce?
 - 1. Referring to Deut 24:1-4
 - 2. Was Moses wrong?
- B. Jesus – Moses **permitted** because hard hearts
 - 1. Permitted – not commanded
 - 2. Permitted – because of hard hearts
 - 3. Not God's design though

4. We will look at possible exceptions next week

IV. Confronting Our Culture of Divorce

A. Recognize we live in a divorce saturated culture

1. About 40% of marriages end in divorce¹
2. Exact percentages debated – but divorce is common
3. We see and hear of it everywhere
4. Relatively little social stigma/pressure any more

B. Recognize we live in a no fault divorce culture

1. All states, most with no wait period
2. Some states don't allow "fault" divorces!
3. Three primary causes
 - a. No right or wrong – quick, no thought divorce; success (Pitt)
 - b. False 'tolerance' – no one held accountable
 - c. False 'freedom' – isn't free – others pay (Betts; study)

C. Recognize the tragic results of this mindset

1. A steep price is paid for this 'freedom' (Betts)
2. Lingering effects of divorce on kids (study)

3. No wonder God hates divorce (Mal 2:16)

D. The solution – guard yourself to not break faith

1. Too much divorce in church! Buying the lies! (Poll)
2. We must strive to build strong marriages
 - a. Seek God as to whether called to single or marriage
 - b. Carefully, prayerfully choose our mate
 - c. Work to build a strong, biblical marriage
 - i. Purposes
 - ii. Roles
 - iii. Communication, dating, romance, etc.
3. We must encourage one another to stay together

The Tragedy of Divorce

Matthew 19:1-9; Mal 2:16

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???

Numbers 6

¹ NY Times "Divorce Rate: It's Not as High as You Think"
By DAN HURLEY April 19, 2005

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....

Deuteronomy 24:1

Literally “find no grace in his eyes because he finds nakedness of the thing/an unseemly thing”

Freedom, Lord what a funny word,
We search for it just like some kind of fool,
Woman leaving home, man sits there all alone,
Little child is paying all the dues

Dickey Betts, Allman Brothers *Just Another Love Song*

Study by Elizabeth Marquardt “Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce”

- Grown children of divorce say no such thing as good divorce
- Say they spent a lot of time alone
- Say they feel emotional distance from parents
- Children often pawns in struggle between parents
- Even in amicable split, kids live in 2 worlds

Poll by Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly

71% of Americans believe in ideal of lifelong marriage

22% believe divorce is a sin

52% - divorce can be best solution if problems can't be worked out

34% of evangelicals believe divorce is sinful

30% of Catholics believe divorce is sinful