

Theme: Although God hates divorce, He does allow it if there has been sexual immorality or if an unbeliever leaves a believer.

I. Intro – Review of Last Week

- A. Basic idea – God hates divorce!
- B. Divorce is always the result of human sin
- C. This week: Does God ever allow divorce?
- D. Is divorce and remarriage always sinful?

II. The Exception Clause in Matthew

- A. Basic point – divorce and remarriage is adultery
 - 1. v9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18
 - 2. Adultery – violating covenant vows of first marriage
 - 3. General rule – divorce and remarriage is sin
- B. Exception clause – “except for marital unfaithfulness”
 - 1. v9; Mat 5:31-32 - πορνεία - sexual immorality
 - 2. πορνεία – Distinct from adultery - Mat 15:19
 - 3. πορνεία - Same as adultery - Jer 3:8-9; Hos 2:2
 - 4. πορνεία - broad term for sexual sin

III. Paul’s Additional Exception

- A. Paul’s basic point – believers stay together! (10-11)

- 1. Not I but Lord – quoting Jesus’ basic point
 - 2. If you do split – stay unmarried (v11)
- B. Paul’s exception – unbeliever departs
 - 1. What about unbelieving spouses – Jesus did not say (v12)
 - 2. If they want to stay – do not divorce! (vv12-13)
 - 3. If they leave – you are free (v15)

IV. Objections to the Exception Clauses

- A. No exceptions in Mark and Luke – they are correct
 - 1. Matthew is fuller version of saying
 - 2. Basic principle – always go with fuller text
 - 3. Possible that Mark and Luke *assumed* this exception
- B. OT and Gospels do not apply to Church – only Israel
 - 1. Very common objection based on false theology
 - 2. Deut 24 and Matthew passages do apply
 - 3. God’s moral law has NOT changed
- C. The term porneia does not refer to adultery
 - 1. Either prostitution or incestuous marriages
 - 2. WRONG! – all sexual sin is included

D. Only death can break the marriage bond

1. Jesus said adultery and desertion can
2. They so violate marriage that it is broken

E. God would never allow divorce – it is sin

1. Assumes what must be proven
2. Jesus and Paul did give these exceptions
3. God divorced Israel for adultery – Jer 3:8a

V. Are There Any Other Exceptions?

A. These are the only exceptions given in Scripture

1. Scripture does not give any other lawful reasons
2. We are governed by Scripture – not culture

B. What about physical abuse or incest?

1. Civil authority should be immediately involved
2. Church also intervene to bring discipline
3. If no change in person, treat as an unbeliever
4. If unbeliever, 1 Cor 7 applies

C. What about incompatibility or ‘mental anguish’

1. These are not within the guidelines given
2. We must work for change, submit to God

VI. Conclusion & Summary

A. We must remember the importance of marriage

1. God’s institution – not man’s
2. Purposes – Trinity; Christ & Church; godly seed; complete
3. A lot at stake here; must preserve marriages

B. We must not look for reasons to divorce

1. This was the mistake of Jesus’ contemporaries
2. Even when exceptions apply – try to reconcile

C. We must accept the exceptions given by God

1. There seem to be 2 – and only 2 exceptions
2. Marriage is covenant duty – my happiness secondary
3. We should not allow others in the Church
4. We must allow these – no strings attached

D. Receive God’s forgiveness

1. If you have sinned – repent & confess
2. Might confess to previous spouse – get counsel
3. Receive God’s forgiveness

Does God Ever Allow Divorce?

Matthew 19:1-9; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16

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1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

11 He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. 12 And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery." Mark 10:11-12

18 Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. Luke 16:18

31 It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' 32 But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, **except for marital unfaithfulness**, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery. Matt 5:31-32

19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, **adultery, sexual immorality**, theft, false testimony, slander. Matthew 15:19

8 I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her **adulteries**. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and **committed adultery**. 9 Because Israel's **immorality** mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed **adultery** with stone and wood. Jeremiah 3:8-9

2 Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove the **adulterous look** from her face and the **unfaithfulness** from between her breasts. Hosea 2:2

10 To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): **A wife must not separate from her husband. 11 But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.** 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

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12 To the rest I say this (**I, not the Lord**): If any brother has **a wife who is not a believer** and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. **13 And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer** and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. 1 Corinthians 7:12-13

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15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is **not bound in such circumstances**; God has called us to live in peace. 1 Corinthians 7:15

8 I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries... Jeremiah 3:8