

“Thinking Rightly About Marriage” Matthew 19:1-12

The Point: Marriage is a gracious gift from God designed to reflect his purpose and character.

I. Marriage is more sacred than you think (19:1-4).

- There is an implicit challenge to know the Word and to have great confidence in the Word. Jesus exposes the Pharisees lack of knowledge, and at the same time, attributes the words of Moses in Genesis 2:24 to being the word of God (pointing to the Word being divinely inspired).
- Many believe that marriage is man’s idea. They treat the blessing of matrimony as if it is a human institution. But marriage is God’s idea. It is a divine institution, and it is given for one ultimate purpose: the glory of God. Marriage is to be a continual act of worship.
- Because marriage is God’s idea, that means he gets to define it. The biblical witness from Genesis all the way through the New Testament, as we see here, defines marriage as a covenant relationship between one man and one woman. We believe in the sanctity of marriage within those guidelines.

II. Marriage is more intimate than you think (19:5-6).

- Look at the strong language Jesus quotes from Genesis 2:24. “a man *leaves and holds fast*.”
- The ESV says, “leave & hold fast.” The NIV says, “leave and be united.” The King James, speaking of old school, says, “leave and cleave.”
 - “Leave” – There is a break from the previous familial structure... The verb in the Greek can mean “abandon.” “Hold fast,” or “cleave,” is a strong word that can mean to glue, or cement together. These are no half-hearted actions.
- To what end? That they may be “one flesh.” The oneness of a married couple is a great mystery. It is also a great privilege and responsibility.

III. Marriage is more difficult than you think (19:7-12).

- Jesus teaches that Moses allowed for divorce but did not command it. Divorce should always be a last resort. A husband or wife could experience marital unfaithfulness and still seek restoration.
- When sin is rampant in a relationship, the natural consequences is for the heart to become hardened toward God and hardened toward others. Spiritual truths no longer stick.
- The strong encouragement of verse 9 and the whole tenor of the passage is: “Go the distance!” God desires marital faithfulness. Just go read the prophet Hosea. God commands him to marry and be faithful to a faithless prostitute. Why? As a picture of his unconditional and undying love!

A few encouragements for singles:

#1) Since marriage is more sacred than you think: a) if you desire it, wait for it patiently, pursue God more than any man or woman, and trust him to provide a spouse.

#2) Since marriage is more intimate than you think, be patient for God’s provision with purity. We live in a world full of temptation. Honor God in your singleness and use this time to maximize your service to the kingdom.

#3) Since marriage is more difficult than you think: don’t rush into marriage without discerning God’s will. It would be better to not marry than to marry the wrong person. If you are a believer in Christ, pray for a godly spouse that will enable you to live out the truth of Psalm 34:3, “Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.”

Your marriage was made to tell a story. Your marriage was made to go the distance. This is the power of Christian hope.