

# Weaving the Word

## Committing Divorce

Part 25 – March 1, 2015

Welcome where we're learning to distinguish the difference between religion and Good News.

**Are the married forever married in the eyes of God?**

**Are the remarried committing adultery in God's eyes?**

Yes? No? What say you?



We're sitting in on Jesus' apprenticeship training, on the grass above the Sea of Galilee, as He grounds His disciples in truth and love; core teachings in key areas of God's Law, to show how God's character and will were being distorted by the religious self-righteous.

Old Testament Law allows for divorce; one situation being:



If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her ... – Deuteronomy 24:1a NIV

**Is this about his displeasure in the discovery of *her indecency*; or, is her indecency being defined by *his displeasure ... in whatever?***

Because, *that* would allow *him* to divorce *her* at whim and will!

Well, guess which way was commonly taught and practiced in Jesus' day.

Here's a hint: human nature hasn't changed.

"It has been said, [by the Religious Leaders, regarding Deuteronomy 24:1] 'Anyone who divorces his wife must [as in "need only"] give her a certificate of divorce.' [His displeasure being suitable grounds] 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.'" – Matthew 5:31-32 NIV

This isn't a comprehensive teaching on divorce in general, but specific instruction on the Deuteronomy distortion. Of all the things to teach His young, mostly unmarried disciples; *why this?*

He just finished teaching on adultery-of-the-heart, confronting 'em with their *unwillingness* to cut off body parts to avoid adultery.

Now, in a brilliant back-to-back maneuver He brings up *marriage* (wherein God joins two to become one flesh), confronting 'em with their *willingness* to cut off body parts to *cause adultery!*

**“Hack my own body apart to *prevent* adultery?! *Unthinkable! Unspeakable! Horrific!*”**

**“Hack my own body apart to *commit* adultery? *Sounds reasonable.*”**

To get what He's going after, we have to see *who* He's going after.

It feels like He lays guilt on the gal who “becomes an adulteress” and blame on the guy who “commits adultery” by marrying her. But, is He?

**Jesus teaches in ways that force His followers to think.** His disciples question His custom of confusing the crowds. (Mat 13:10) **He came to *engage. Seek. Ask. Knock. Think. Ponder. Pray.***



If a man holds your child at gun point, outside a bank, and tells you to give the teller a note demanding money, and you do ...

**Have you “become” a bank robber? Yes.**

**Did you do anything wrong? No.**

Will you be held responsible? No.

If a caring passerby helps you, is *he* committing a robbery? Yes. Will *he* be punished? No.

**Who will the law go after? The one who *caused it.***

**All three were involved, but only one will be charged.**

And, this is the one that Jesus is “going after”: *the causer.*

**“It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ [To get himself off the hook with God] But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, [i.e. *adultery*] *causes* her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman [who thus] commits adultery.” – Matthew 5:31-32 NIV**

The word “commits” is correct *in this sense*; because the original language only says:

**“Anyone who marries the divorced, *adultery.*”**

Jesus *isn't* saying, “If you selfishly divorce an innocent woman, she becomes a dirty adulteress and God's going after *her!* And, if any man sees her and her children in need, and marries her, and cares for them as you sinfully neglected to do, God's going after *him* too!”

That's absurd. And out of alignment with His entire point.

Jesus *is* saying, “When a man selfishly severs what God has joined, a terrible crime is committed. An innocent woman becomes an adulteress; a better man commits adultery; and God’s coming after the cause! *Especially* when the cause camouflages it as God’s will.”

Matthew later records a further interaction with Jesus, on the topic:

Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?” “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” – Matthew 19:3-6 NIV



He doesn’t say, “Man *can’t* separate,” as though marriage somehow continues in God’s eyes no matter our actions, but “let man *not* separate,” meaning man *can* separate but *shouldn’t*.

Divorce is like amputation; you can survive it, but not intact. But, sometimes amputation is necessary for survival.

Yet, only a fool would use amputation for “any and every reason”.

“Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. [You’ve distorted the design] I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman [And, there’s the reason they divorced without grounds] commits adultery.” The disciples said to him, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.” [And, there’s the reason they needed this teaching] – Matthew 19:7-10 NIV

Jesus is saying: Don’t put your efforts into escape clauses that satisfy a hard hearts.

Instead, align with God’s original design so your heart can be softened by His Spirit.



Jesus’ step-dad, Joseph was a great example of a good man who stepped up and stepped in when Jesus’ mom was accused of adultery. (Mat 1:18-24) And, you heard about His real dad’s divorce:

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

So, did God sin when He divorced His “wife”, Israel? No.

Legal proceedings and official endings aren’t the divorce.

God was documenting *His* divorce that *Israel* had caused.

God was the *victim* of divorce, even though *He* carried it out.

What defines a divorce in God's eyes? A broken marriage.

What defines a broken marriage? Broken vows. **A broken covenant.**

When an unmarried couple sleeps together, believers often say they're "married in the eyes of God". Not true. They're fornicating in the eyes of God. **Sex is the symbol, not the substance of the covenant.** We're married in God's eyes when we enter into a marriage covenant together with God.

And, **a divorce is committed when the covenant is destroyed.** By either spouse. **The one who disregards the covenant is the cause. The one who desires to restore it is the victim.** And, if the causer doesn't wish to restore the covenant, the victim is often left to officially certify the reality of the divorce. And, **if both disregard it, both commit divorce.** (Mark 10:11-12)

**But, no matter what the cause, or *who* the cause, the whole messy mess can be redeemed and restored because of God's grace.**

You know, Jesus' *spiritual dad* was an adulterer in the *worst way*.



Jesus is the "Son of David", who committed adultery, got the gal pregnant, killed her husband, and married her to cover his sin. **Jesus isn't just the *friend* of sinners, He's the "Son of ... Man".** You know, Jesus' spiritual dad was a repenterer in the *best way*!

And, the wise King Solomon, who built God's Temple, was the product of David and Bathsheba's adulterous affair and marriage. **God works in ways that force His children to think.**

As He said to that gal *caught* in adultery: "Go and sin no more." (John 8:11)

**Adultery isn't beyond God's redemptive reach of restoration. *Far from it.***



And, it sure better not be a sin to remarry, as some teach, *no matter the circumstances of the divorce* ... because, I don't know if you heard but, ***the Lord's preparing a new bride for Himself!***

And, it's *us*. And, it's that woman caught in adultery.

**God can take your biggest, stupidest, mistakes and turn 'em into something so beautiful, it won't even make sense!**

**But, it'll sure make you *think*.**

**That's what He does.**