

DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE:
Meet Goliath
Message 4

INTRO: We have now completed the first point, the sin of divorce and remarriage. We will now consider the solution to this sin. I have not come across any treatment of this subject that suggests a solution, and this is the most painful of all. Here we meet Goliath. In this message, you will learn how to arouse Goliath out of his sleep, and this time Satan won't tell him to lie back down again. If you will obey God's Word here, you will most likely suffer at least some persecution. Goliath will roar, and the Israelites, or should we say the *Churchites* will tremble, even those who are as big and tall as Saul was.

Over the years, when I read through the Bible, time and again I come to passages like this regarding the Israelites. God may have disciplined them, and they repented. And in spite of the great reforms that happened at times, one matter was seldom dealt with. For example, Jehoshaphat was a good king and brought about many good changes, but here is what we read in 2 Kings 12:3, *But the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.*

Over the years my wife and I have seen a few small revivals. Never have I heard divorce addressed. Never! It is an evangelical doctrine. It is a high place we continue to worship on. We cannot bring ourselves to deal with it. It is a canker every time it comes up. In the counseling room, when such people come under conviction, the counselors do not know how to answer.

But how do we remove this high place? Is there a solution? Well, every Christian has an obligation. You cannot make anyone else do what needs to be done, but you can do it. And if you do it, you will meet Goliath. You will suffer. And the suffering for many will be of such a nature that you will search and search until you find someone who will explain how it is acceptable in Scripture, and he will be able to give you enough Scripture to help you see what you already so desperately want to see.

So we look at the solution to divorce and remarriage; and now, welcome to the world of Goliath. Already he is rousing out of

his sleep. Go to 1 Samuel 17. (read 1-51). We are going to go back 3,000 years and visit the Valley of Elah.

We begin in verse one:

1 ¶ Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle, and were gathered together at Sochoh, which belongs to Judah; they encamped between Sochoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim.

2 And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and they encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array against the Philistines.

3 The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with a valley between them.

4 And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

5 He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze.

6 And he had bronze armor on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders.

7 Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him.

8 Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, "Why have you come out to line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me.

9 "If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us."

10 And the Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together."

11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

Well, you remember the story. Jesse, the father of young David sent him to check on his brothers and take some cheese for them. And we begin again in verse 23:

23 Then as he talked with them, there was the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, coming up from the armies of the Philistines; and he spoke according to the same words. So David heard them.

24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid.

25 So the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be that the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father's house exemption from taxes in Israel."

26 Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

27 And the people answered him in this manner, saying, "So shall it be done for the man who kills him."

28 Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle."

29 And David said, "What have I done now? Is there not a cause?"

30 Then he turned from him toward another and said the same thing; and these people answered him as the first ones did.

31 ¶ Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported them to Saul; and he sent for him.

32 Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

33 And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."

34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock,

35 I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it.

36 "Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God."

37 Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

38 So Saul clothed David with his armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail.

39 David fastened his sword to his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them. And David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested them." So David took them off.

40 ¶ Then he took his staff in his hand; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag, in a pouch which he had, and his sling was in his hand. And he drew near to the Philistine.

41 So the Philistine came, and began drawing near to David, and the man who bore the shield went before him.

42 And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him; for he was only a youth, ruddy and good-looking.

43 So the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

44 And the Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"

45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

46 "This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47 "Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD'S, and He will give you into our hands."

48 ¶ So it was, when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hastened and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49 Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung it and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. But there was no sword in the hand of David.

51 Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

In this message we will meet Goliath. We look then to the Scriptures for a solution to this sin.

II. THE SOLUTION TO DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE - Meet Goliath

A. What The Bible Says

We want to look at what the Bible says is the solution to divorce and remarriage. In OT times, in Judaism, the spiritual and secular were both run by the nation of Israel. We would call this Church and state. Today, other than the Anglican church, we run church and state as separate institutions, and that is as it should be, I believe.

And so it should not be hard to answer this question: Whose job is it in the Church age to see to it that there are laws and that those laws are maintained in a country? Is that the Church's job? No, the state, under God has the responsibility to run the country. Whose task is it to see that professing Christians uphold God's law on marriage? Well, that is the task of the church. And if the church does that, it will have a powerful impact on the state.

So, if it is the task of the Church, what should the church do on our subject? Christian weddings should be performed by the church, not the state. And those wedded should be instructed on the permanence of marriage. Let me say that many ministers say marriage is for life, but they don't mean it. They mean that ideally marriage is permanent, not really. Because when it really happens, they have a few, and sometimes many kinds of arguments why people may divorce and remarry in such circumstances.

So, first, those who marry ought to be instructed in the Church on the permanence in marriage. That is a given. But what if it happens in unbelievers? What is the task of the Church, or the believer?

1. If unbelievers are divorced and remarried

That then, is our first major question: What if unbelievers are divorced and remarried? How should we handle that? Well, from what we have covered already, their own children want nothing more than to have their real parents back. But the question that must be answered is, you can't expect them to divorce again, can you?

Well, first if God makes them one in their first marriage and marriage is permanent they do not need to get divorced from the second partner, they are not married to this second partner in the first place. It is an illegitimate marriage. As I view it, and I believe the Bible teaches, such a person is living in continual adultery because the second or third marriage is illegitimate. It is not a marriage in which God made them one. That is the only reason why it is adultery. So, what they need to do is separate, not divorce.

You see, what if one is a drunkard before you get saved? Well, one has to repent and quit drinking! What if one is a liar? One has to repent and quit lying. And what if one is an adulterer? Now let me ask, if one repents of lying and one gets saved, can you then continue lying? If one is a drunkard and one repents and gets saved, can you then continue in drunkenness? Such questions are totally unnecessary for the most immature of believers. How then do we believe one can live in adultery, repent, and then continue to live in adultery? Did repentance erase the fact that God made them one with their first partner? An unbeliever who has let him or herself into the sin of divorce and remarriage, if he or she repents, must let him or herself out of that sinful relationship with the second partner.

And now, for the very first time we meet the real Goliath! If one takes that stand, and follows through, Goliath will come more than forty days. He will bellow and shout and make fun and ridicule you. And if you bow to him and compromise, you will have a hard time standing on anything else anymore. Unconditional love and unconditional grace and unconditional eternal security and unconditional forgiveness will start to look very comforting.

And only if we have repentance of such a quality that people are willing to get right and live right until their original partner dies, or until they can get

back together again, is a change in our land foreseeable. Otherwise, it is only more and more sin.

If children of many such parents, if they were old enough to know them when their parents divorced would see such a repentance, and should see their rightful parents together again, it would have a profound impact on these children's lives. These children might now once more find it safe to marry. And these children would almost certainly not divorce.

But, somebody will ask, but what if their former partner is also remarried? It doesn't change a thing! You see, when John the Baptist confronted Herod, if Herod wanted to get right with God, He would have had to separate from Herodias. And maybe you say, "Well, what about 1 Corinthians 7?" I deal with that in the first series on divorce and remarriage which is available at sermonaudio.com/mecl. Let me just say that 1 Corinthians 7 does not change this standard.

Let me say this here once again. It is permissible in Scripture, 1 Corinthians 7, for a couple to live apart if there is no other solution to their problems. It is not permissible to remarry if the first partner is alive. So let me show you that and one other thing in 1 Corinthians 7. We begin in verse 10. It says,

"10 Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. 11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife." Here we learn that separation is permissible, divorce is not.

But as Paul goes on he shows a most profound thing. We go to verse 12: But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. 13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is

sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. 15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. 16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?"

Let me give you the case. This is not talking about a believer having married an unbeliever. This is idolatrous and immoral Corinth. They have never heard the Gospel. Then Paul brought the Gospel, and some got saved. And sometimes only the wife or only the husband got saved, and now you have a believer married to an unbeliever.

And here is the Corinthian's question: Since an unbeliever is unholy, and the believer lives with the unbeliever, will living with the unbeliever not defile the believer and make the believer unclean? So let me quote from an earlier message I did on this. Here is what I said:

Now let me ask a question: Why would the Corinthians have wondered if a believer should remain together with an unbelieving partner? Well, verse 14 gives the answer. It is because of the question of sanctification or holiness that this question is raised.

Let me read to you from Haggai 2:11-13, to understand the principle in view here: "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Now, ask the priests concerning the law, saying,

"If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?'" Then the priests answered and said, "No." And Haggai said, "If one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?" So the priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean."

The principle is this: When something holy touches something unholy, the holy does not make the unholy clean. When something unholy touches something holy, it makes the holy unholy. When a person becomes a Christian, he or she becomes holy, a saint. Therefore, if a Christian has an unbelieving partner, then does not the Christian become contaminated or unclean?

Paul then says, If a man becomes a Christian and his wife does not, let him not leave her. And if a woman becomes a Christian and her husband does not, let her not leave him. Now notice the almost unbelievable words of verse 14, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified, or made holy, by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy by the believing husband." So powerful is the husband/wife bond, that in this case the law of holiness is reversed! Rather than the believer being defiled by the unbeliever, the unbeliever is sanctified by the believer!

Let me just add this, that sanctification is not salvation, and I don't have time to explain further.

2. If Professing Believers Are Divorced and Remarried

That brings us to a second question, what if professing believers divorce and remarry?

a. The responsibility of the Church

Well, let us look first at the responsibility of the Church. Let us say you are in a church and you have a member, and that member divorces his or her partner and is looking for or seeing another woman or is planning on marrying another woman?

Go to 1 Corinthians 7 (read 10-11). If this separation is viewed as divorce and they do not plan to remarry, that is one thing. But you do not need a divorce to separate. If a couple cannot co-exist, they are allowed to separate, but they may not remarry. If a person divorces, it is only for the purpose of remarriage.

So, let us say that this person is now seeing another or marrying another. What should the

Church do? Well, it is very clearly spelled out in Scripture, so we go to 1 Corinthians 5. A man who claimed to be a Christian had married his step-mother. Paul was shocked! He said that even the Gentiles know better (read verse 1).

Now you may say, "Well, divorce and remarriage is not like the sin mentioned here." Well, look at verses 11-12 (read). By the way, this is an incomplete list of sins that call for excommunication. Adultery, 1 Corinthians 6 and Galatians 5, calls for excommunication as well. In the OT they stoned such, in the Church stoning is not called for but excommunication is.

Now these Corinthians seemed to even boast about their liberties and were puffed up about it (read v. 2). And now Paul spells out what to do (read 3-5). Now that is what we call excommunication. The person is excommunicated.

If you have been around American churches, you will know that by far the majority of evangelicalism does not obey this command. The low morality of our country is largely due to this, and the low morality in the church is almost entirely due to this failure.

The Church today, by and large does not meet Goliath. They simply avoid the issue, or give in to it and Goliath sleeps. Why fight if you have won already? Any church that will deal with sin as it is to be dealt with in the Church, will meet Goliath; there is no question about that.

Albert Mohler, president of the theological seminary of the Southern Baptists, whom I quoted last week on divorce has an article called, "Church Discipline: The Missing Mark." It starts like this, "The decline of church discipline is perhaps the most visible failure of the contemporary church. No longer concerned with maintaining purity of confession or life-style,

the contemporary church sees itself as a voluntary association of autonomous members, with minimal moral accountability to God, much less to each other. The absence of church discipline is no longer remarkable - it is generally not even noticed...As a matter of fact, most Christians introduced to the biblical teaching concerning church discipline confront the issue of church discipline as an idea they have never before encountered... And yet, without a recovery of functional church discipline - firmly established upon the principles revealed in the Bible - the church will continue its slide into moral relativism."

He notes that in the Belgic Confession of 1561, the third mark of a true church was church discipline. According to that, a church that does not exercise church discipline is not a true church. Mohler says, "The mandate of the church is to maintain the true gospel doctrine and order. A church lacking these essential qualities is, biblically defined, not a true church. That is a hard thing to say, for it clearly indicates thousands of American congregations who long ago abandoned this essential mark and have accommodated themselves to the spirit of the age. Fearing lawsuits and lacking courage, these churches allow sin to go un-confronted, and heresy to go unchecked" (26).

He says that John Leadley Dagg, the author of the well-known and influential church manual of the nineteenth century, noted: "It has been remarked, that when discipline leaves a church, Christ goes with it." Mohler then says, "If so, and I fear it is so, Christ has abandoned many churches who are blissfully unaware of His departure" (26). He says, "The Theological category of sin has been replaced in many circles, with the psychological concept of therapy", end quote. So what do we do?

We send people to professional counselors when they should be excommunicated.

He quotes another as saying, "Sex is on the loose. Shame days are over. The Devil has absconded with sin." And again this writer laments, "'Go and sin no more' has been replaced with 'Judge not lest you be judged.'" Mohler then says, "Liberal Protestantism has lost any moral credibility in the sexual sphere. Homosexuality is not condemned, even though it is clearly condemned in the Bible. To the contrary, homosexuals get a special caucus at the denominational assembly and their own publications and special rights. Evangelicals, though still claiming adherence to biblical standards or morality, have overwhelmingly capitulated to the divorce culture" (18).

What is the job of the church with regard to divorce and remarriage? Excommunicate!

b. The responsibility of the believer

Let me now ask a much more difficult question: What is the responsibility of the individual believer? What if divorce happens and this person or persons are in your family or church or a neighboring church, but they are not dealt with by the Church? As a matter of fact, it could even be that this church did the wedding? What now?

Once more, we thank God that the Scripture is clear. We go to 1 Corinthians 5 again. Let me point out a few things here. We left off at verse 5 before. Look now at verses 6-8 (read). The Corinthians had gloried in their freedoms in Christ so that they could have a man married to his step-mother and they boasted of it. But there are no such freedoms in Christ. Paul was shocked at their behavior.

Now he says their glorying is not good and in verse 7 he instructs them to purge out such leaven. When

the Jews kept the Passover feast, one of the great events was getting rid of all the leaven in the house. So Paul says in verses 7-8 that they should not keep the feast with leaven or with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but in sincerity and truth.

Some take this to mean that we should not have communion together with such people. That is not the meaning at all. The word means to mix with or associate with. Paul's instruction is that they should not keep company with such a person.

So somebody will say, "Well, the church didn't excommunicate so and so, so I can't very well not fellowship with them. I need to wait until the church excommunicates them." Look at what Paul says in verse 9, "I wrote to you (plural) in my epistle not to keep company with fornicators." So there were Christians at one time who were not married who lived promiscuously and Paul said, "I told you not to company with them." What does that mean? Well, it does not mean communion. It means not to mix with them. And what happens to Christians who mix with professing Christians who live in such sin? You have said, "It's OK with me."

So Paul said he had written to them not to mix with such people. So he should not have needed to write to them about this man in their church. This is how I understand verse 5, "I am not there to deal with this. I don't need to be there. Excommunicate him!" Now notice most carefully he did not say, "Send him for counseling!" He did not say, "Send one person, then two" etc... He said deal with him now. Scripture says that because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore people are fully set to do evil. Here is the cure. Do it now!

So, in verse 9, you don't need a church to excommunicate someone before you separate yourself from them. The instruction here is to Christians to continue mixing with them. I know the common

language: you have to love them. The greatest love you will ever show them is to separate from them. When our children are bad, the greatest love will spank them. Hate loves them too much to spank.

Now note verse 10 (read). Separation from such sinners is from those who profess to be believers. Now note verse 11 (read). Let me clarify something here. You might say, "You know, they once said they were a Christian, but I don't think they are. I think I should do the seeker friendly thing and have coffee and try to win him or her back."

So let us deal with something very important. It says if somebody is named a brother. Why is anybody named a brother? Because we wish they were? No! It is because they have professed to become a Christian. In the kingdom of God it is a very, very serious thing to profess to be a believer. Not in the modern church, but in the real church. It is so serious that if we then live in such sins we should be excommunicated and avoided.

So you say, "They only said they were a Christian because they wanted to marry so or so." Well, they should not have done that. And because they did, they now need to be held accountable for what they professed.

Now let me add here that when a professing believer lives in any of these serious sins, and we as believers continue to get together with them and laugh and joke or have a good time, we are just like these Corinthians who gloried in this sinning brother, and we are contributing to the downfall of family, church and country.

You say, "Hey, wait a minute. This kind of thing bothers me greatly. I have family and I tell them exactly what I think. If I did not get together with them to try win them back I could not even do that." May I say in love, here is what you are like. You are like a parent who says to their

child, "I told you once already. I am only going to tell you once." And a little while later, "Did you hear what I said? I am only going to tell you one more time, so you better get moving." And a while later, "Did I not say before I am only going to tell you only one more time?" And the child doesn't say it, but they think, "Ok, according to the decibels, now I better start thinking about doing something." All your words were wasted breath. You are the fool and the child is wiser than you.

So you tell these people exactly what you think? And you do it over and over? You are accepting their behavior, and that is all they want. What you say means very little. And so I ask you to look at the fruit of your words. What have they accomplished? I am not saying it will never work. Surely the devil is wise enough to help us out often enough for us to think it works, even as parents with children. But he will win the majority.

I think of men like S.M. Davis. What tremendous insights into Scripture. I would not discourage you from learning from him, but not in this matter. Do you know what he says? I preach it right down the line. Oh, I don't spare anything. I tell them divorce is wrong. But when they are divorced and profess to have repented, though they now have a new partner, he accepts them as members. And guess what? His church is half full of divorced and remarried members.

I would say that not only is it bad to speak out like this against divorce, and continue to get together, it is destructive. It is a help to the devil. I have found that divorced and remarried people do not mind if you disagree with them. You see, then you are both Christians, you just have a disagreement. But when you separate yourself, as our text so very clearly says, now you will have war. Goliath will come to their aid. And if Goliath

can't win you, he has five brothers. He will bring the family members of this person against you too. One thing must happen. You must be taught you must accept this sin, and Goliath knows how to do that.

CONCL: And in conclusion to this message, I want to ask you not to do what I have said. Do not take on Goliath. You will die if you do. Neither you nor I are a match for Goliath. Here is what I will encourage you to do. Ponder these messages. Study the Word of God. Make very sure of what you believe. And when you are done with those studies, and you are very sure that the Bible allows for no divorce, then do what I have encouraged to do. Try to picture this now as Goliath said, "'Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?' And the Philistine cursed David by his gods." You see the sight this kid with a sling before this 10 foot giant was so ridiculous, that it made Goliath very angry that they could not at least have sent someone who might put up a little fight.

When you meet Goliath, he will threaten you and every calculation of the odds will say, "You are a fool if you do this. If you do this, you won't have a church to go to. If you do this, you will be in such a deplorable little camp, you will look like David with his sling against this 10 foot giant. There are people out there with family circumstances so difficult, if they took this stand, it looks absolutely impossible for them to continue their Christian walk. But do you remember what David said to Goliath? Here is what we read a moment ago, "Then David said to the Philistine, 'You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.'"

David and Goliath, pretty much a hopeless looking picture, right? I mean for Goliath.