

DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE:
Meet Goliath
Message 5

INTRO: At the close of our last message, here is what I encouraged you to. I said, "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. 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 be like David."

I believe that the hardest thing about determining what the Bible teaches on divorce and remarriage is not coming to an understanding of what the difficult passages of Scripture mean. It is getting those difficult passages to mean what we want them to mean, and thus to cause the clear passages to come under question. And we do that while at the same time we seek to maintain a respectable system of Bible interpretation. Our difficulty is getting the clear passages to give way to the unclear.

But when we conclude that divorce is permissible in one or some or more cases, honest readers of Scripture are again and again faced with texts which seem to be contradicted, and they are made to feel uneasy with those views. And again and again the question sets in: Is divorce really acceptable to God in any case at all? It seems to me that there is true comfort in the heart only when no divorce is allowed at all. But there is a nagging discomfort when divorce is allowed for any one or more reasons. But because it creates such Goliath like circumstances in our lives when someone is already divorced and remarried, there remains one thing to do. Look for some teacher that can silence the whistle of our conscience, so that we can accept divorce and remarriage and keep the racket of our conscience down to a level we can tolerate.

In the last message we began to look at the solution to this problem. We looked at what, according to the Bible, is the solution to divorce and remarriage. Now we want to look at what this solution looks like in real life. Here, of course, we meet Goliath as big as life.

II. THE SOLUTION TO DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE - Meet Goliath

B. What This Looks Like In Real Life

1. In Evangelism towards the unbeliever

I think the solution lies first of all in changing a fatal flaw in the evangelism in America, especially since the 1960's or so. And that flaw is related to the flaw in American thinking that has its roots in the reformation, which relegated marriage to the secular state and allowed for divorce and remarriage.

In this very serious issue of divorce and remarriage, if you listen carefully to all modern evangelism, you will notice what Benjamin Netanjahu called a deafening silence on an important matter in his country. Once you notice this silence it becomes a deafening silence. There is not a sound. It is the silence of the Christian on divorce and remarriage in evangelism.

If you should attend revival meetings, you will notice this silence. If you attend evangelistic meetings, you will notice this remarkable silence. If you are instructed on how to counsel the seekers at special services, you will not hear a sound on this matter. And if you should ask this embarrassing question, well please don't ask it. And if a seeker should be troubled about this problem, and you ask your instructors, it will become very awkward. Nobody, nobody, nobody will address it. There has been a deafening silence for 100 year or more, from men like D.L. Moody, Billy Sunday, and Billy Graham.

If you should listen to modern evangelists like Ray Comfort or Mark Kaihil, you would hear this deafening silence. It is unthinkable that we should not mention this subject at the most crucial time of all, the time of evangelism; the time of sharing the wonderful news of Jesus Christ. And what is this silent roar? No mention of the sin of divorce and remarriage.

Let me show you where this silence did not reign. Go to Matthew 14 (read 1-4). And maybe you say, "Oh, that

was before grace. That was still in the time of the OT. That was before the cross." Right, I forgot. That was a different God. That was the God of the OT, the law. I forgot. There was no grace back there. Now we have the God of grace. Such is the reasoning of modern Christians.

Now, if you listen to Ray Comfort, and I am not down on him. God bless him for returning many to the use of the ten commandments in evangelism and for evangelizing. He does come down on heart adultery, but the divorce and remarriage kind of adultery is not so much as mentioned. Silence. You will hear Ray Comfort say this again and again, "Have you ever looked at a woman with lust." Have you ever heard him say what John the Baptist said? He said to Herod, regarding the woman he was living with, "It is not lawful for you to have her." In other words, you are breaking the law. You are sinning. Have you noticed this strange silence on this issue? Is it any wonder we have mass divorce today? At the very place it should be used, in evangelism, there the mouth of the Church has been successfully silenced. The conscience of the nation refuses to sound its alarm.

How about in counseling seekers in evangelistic meetings or revival services? What is the instruction regarding divorced and remarried people? Silence. And what if the seeker is troubled and dares to ask about his life with another woman? Silence. Goliath keeps our mouth shut.

What about in personal evangelism? What about teachings on personal evangelism? Before a person can be saved he must come to the knowledge that he is lost. It is harder to get people lost than to get them saved. And in personal evangelism one of the huge sins on which silence reigns is that of the adultery of divorce and remarriage.

When it comes to evangelism, and our subject, Satan has sent Goliath, and he has successfully shut our mouths. Pastor, evangelist, counselor, Christian

psychologist, personal worker; everyone's mouth is shut.

With regard to our subject, we have failed in one of the most important areas of all, evangelism, and now divorce is rampant in the Church.

B. In our personal lives

And because there is so much of it in the church, now it affects us as Christians in our personal lives. So what is the solution to this problem in our personal lives? This sin is a sin with more tentacles into every area of life than any other sin I know. It is a sin harder to remove than any other. And now, those of us who believe it is a very high sin are forced to make decisions regarding family members or church members who are divorced and remarried. We have no choice but to make a decision. And because it is such a monumental issue, most of us simply give in to the fierce pressure. We do not know what else to do.

But if we do not give in, and when we find in Scripture that it calls for separation from such sin, and we set about obeying that command, there we meet Goliath. And his face is ugly. The disdain felt for those who dare separate from such professing believers runs so deep that you want to crawl in a hole somewhere and hope nobody notices what you believe.

Turn with me to the book of Ezra. Israel had gone into captivity for their multiple sins. Idolatry was a major problem. And for seventy years God kept them in captivity, and then in a most gracious way, He allowed them to return and you can read all about this in the books of Nehemiah and Ezra. We want to read Ezra 9-10. We begin in 9:1:

1 When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the

Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.

2 *"For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass." (There is our problem in the church, the leaders)*

3 *So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished.*

4 ***Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.***

5 ¶ *At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God.*

6 *And I said: "O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens.*

7 *"Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been very guilty, and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to humiliation, as it is this day.*

8 *"And now for a little while grace has been shown from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage.*

9 *"For we were slaves. Yet our God did not forsake us in our bondage; but He extended mercy to us in the*

sight of the kings of Persia, to revive us, to repair the house of our God, to rebuild its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem.

10 "And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments,

11 "which You commanded by Your servants the prophets, saying, 'The land which you are entering to possess is an unclean land, with the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from one end to another with their impurity.

12 'Now therefore, do not give your daughters as wives for their sons, nor take their daughters to your sons; and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land, and leave it as an inheritance to your children forever.'

13 "And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, since You our God have punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and have given us such deliverance as this,

14 "should we again break Your commandments, and join in marriage with the people committing these abominations? Would You not be angry with us until You had consumed us, so that there would be no remnant or survivor?

15 "O LORD God of Israel, You are righteous, for we are left as a remnant, as it is this day. Here we are before You, in our guilt, though no one can stand before You because of this!"

1 ¶ Now while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the house of God, a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very bitterly.

2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, "We have

trespassed against our God, and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this.

3 "Now therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them, according to the advice of my master and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

4 "Arise, for this matter is your responsibility. We also are with you. Be of good courage, and do it."

5 Then Ezra arose, and made the leaders of the priests, the Levites, and all Israel swear an oath that they would do according to this word. So they swore an oath.

6 ¶ Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib; and when he came there, he ate no bread and drank no water, for he mourned because of the guilt of those from the captivity.

7 And they issued a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the descendants of the captivity, that they must gather at Jerusalem,

8 and that whoever would not come within three days, according to the instructions of the leaders and elders, all his property would be confiscated, and he himself would be separated from the assembly of those from the captivity.

9 So all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered at Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth of the month; and all the people sat in the open square of the house of God, trembling because of this matter and because of heavy rain.

10 Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have transgressed and have taken pagan wives, adding to the guilt of Israel.

11 *"Now therefore, make confession to the LORD God of your fathers, and do His will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the pagan wives."*

12 *Then all the assembly answered and said with a loud voice, "Yes! As you have said, so we must do."*

13 *"But there are many people; it is the season for heavy rain, and we are not able to stand outside. Nor is this the work of one or two days, for there are many of us who have transgressed in this matter."*

14 *"Please, let the leaders of our entire assembly stand; and let all those in our cities who have taken pagan wives come at appointed times, together with the elders and judges of their cities, until the fierce wrath of our God is turned away from us in this matter."*

15 ¶ *Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah opposed this, and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite gave them support.*

16 *Then the descendants of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, with certain heads of the fathers' households, were set apart by the fathers' households, each of them by name; and they sat down on the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter.*

17 *By the first day of the first month they finished questioning all the men who had taken pagan wives. End quote.*

And what did they find? Of the priests sons, they found seventeen. Of the Levites they found six. Of the singers one, and of the gatekeepers three. Of the rest they found 88 who were guilty. Altogether there were 115. Their names are all given. And look at verse 19: "And they gave their promise that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they presented a ram of the flock as their trespass offering."

Now I want you to notice verse 44, It says, "All these had taken pagan wives, and some of them had wives by whom they had children." Now we might ask, how could they put these wives away? First, these were not legitimate marriages because God had strictly forbidden such marriages. Second, it could well be that as in Malachi's day, which was only about 100 years later, they may have put their own wives away and married women who served foreign gods. If these men had legitimately married these women, the women would have had to convert to Judaism and then their marriages would have been acceptable in the same way as were women like Rahab the harlot. But these men had idol-worshipping women!

Let us say, for instance, that some or many of these men had divorced their own Hebrew wives, and married these pagan women. And let us say that they had children by their first wives. What we read in the study done in California, if this should happen in many homes where the second marriages were broken up, and they went back to their first partner, in the California study, almost all, if not all the children would have declared a national holiday to celebrate such good fortune!

If this is the case, this may have been a great day of rejoicing for the original wives and their children. No more blended families, or divorced wives! It is beyond all doubt that these Jewish men who feared the Lord, met Goliath, and they overcame. And the passage tells us why. Look at 10:4, *Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.* That is what is missing today.

Now look at verses 10-12, 10 Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have transgressed and have taken pagan wives, adding to the guilt of Israel. 11 Now therefore, make confession to the LORD God of your fathers, and do His will; separate yourselves

from the peoples of the land, and from the pagan wives." 12 Then all the assembly answered and said with a loud voice, "Yes! As you have said, so we must do."

May I ask you what this looked like when they obeyed? They said, "Oh Lord God of Israel. I have sinned. You said in Your Word we were not to marry pagan wives. I did. I even have children by her. Oh Lord, forgive me this most grievous sin. I promise you to be true to my own wife. I will not depart from You ever again, Amen and Amen."

But listen to Keil and Delitsch on this verse. They say: Strictly as this separation was carried out, this evil was not thereby done away with for ever, nor even for very long. After the arrival of Nehemiah at Jerusalem, when the building of the wall was concluded, the congregation again bound themselves by an oath, on the occasion of a day of prayer and fasting, to contract no more such illegal marriages. {#Ne 10:31} Nevertheless, Nehemiah, on his second return to Jerusalem, some five and twenty to thirty years after the dissolution of these marriages by Ezra, again found Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Moab, and Ammon, and children of these marriages who spoke the tongue of Ashdod, and could not speak the Jews' language, and even one of the sons of the high priest Jehoiada allied to a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite. {#Ne 8, etc.}"

This was only 25 years after this great revival. And then, only another 75 years later, we have Israeli men divorcing their own wives and marrying pagan wives again. After Malachi, God never sent another prophet until Jesus came. Four hundred years, the Lord remained silent. And when the Messiah came? The liberal camp of Rabbi Hillel had the largest following. Did divorce and remarriage play a part in the downfall of the nation of Israel?

Isn't it amazing how unthinkable we would find it to call people to separate from their present partner;

but we do not think it unthinkable to do that in the first place with their first partner? Why is that? In the first it is their choice. In the second it is our choice.

Let me insert a question here: What is the cost if divorce and remarriage is not allowed in any circumstance? If it is not allowed at all, who pays the price? The couple, that chose each other, made vows and married in the first place, and then cannot get along, they pay the biggest price. It does affect the rest of the family, and sometimes to quite a degree, but the couple pays the biggest price. The children pay a price. But it is amazing how much children can take, as long as the couple stays together. They can even handle separation but they cannot handle divorce.

And if you do not allow for divorce and remarriage, there will always be troubled couples. But if you allow for divorce and remarriage, you will multiply, I mean multiply the pain. There can be no question about that.

But, what is the cost if divorce is allowed? The major attack is on the foundational building block of society; the home. The battle is at its highest when divorce and remarriage strikes the family. That is also where the cost is the greatest. Divorce is bad for everyone in the family. First, the couple themselves go through excruciating pain. There would be innumerable stories of horrific pain here. The children experience an endless death. The nights of crying. The uncertainties. And then everyone in the family, siblings, on both sides; aunts and uncles on both sides and cousins and nieces and nephews have to battle the question, what is right to do now? It is hard on all. It is everyone in the family that is not involved in the sin that has to make very, very difficult decisions.

[[In our culture we seek to maintain family unity at any cost. But we will not win this battle or other

battles with sin until we desire unity with God above unity in family. Jesus said, "Do not think I came to send peace." And then He proceeded to show how the price of following Him would divide up the family. And unless one is willing to pay this price, sin will continue to abound and grow. We are facing a formidable foe, a Goliath.

I have heard things like this, "Oh, everyone is welcome in our home." That means this: If you take this stand, and you cannot have them into your home, then you are unloving. We love everybody. That sounds very spiritual, but it is the manifestation of spiritual sickness.

In our community many say they believe divorce is wrong, they just won't say how wrong they think it is. So, because of the stigma in the community, they won't have their divorced and remarried friends to their house for night, but then they go camping or fishing with them. And they have just said in loud words, "I think what you are doing is not that bad." And the couple has been encouraged to continue in their sin. Others won't get together with them, but then they send texts or call on the phone. They have not excommunicated them. It says, "I really don't mean it that much. You are still welcome to talk."

One of my siblings said, "I know your stand is wrong because of the pain it causes in the family members." I come from a family of 14 children. One couple has been separated for years. One couple is shackled up and has been for years. Three are divorced and remarried, and one of those is divorced the second time already.

And who is at fault that our family is divided? I am! If only I got together with them all, everything would be kind of normal. And I say, "I am at fault? Each one of my siblings could change their sinful state in a moment. I can't change it at all. Yet I am at fault? My mind can't do that kind of gymnastics logically.

But to say what I am doing is wrong because of the pain it causes, does that sound like a biblically based argument to you? Was there a chapter and a verse? Listen to Jesus words again of Matt. 10:34-37, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 "For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; 36 "and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' 37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

I ask, did Jesus not know the pain He would cause if He was the fault of such separations? When following Him separates us from others and it causes pain, is it therefore wrong? What does the cross do, but cause the most excruciating pain known to mankind. And we avoid the cross as much as we can. We can't sing, "To the old rugged cross I will ever be true." We aren't true to it and we refuse the pain of being nailed there.

So I say, when you come to the interpretation that divorce is wrong, you have not yet met Goliath. He is not even on the hill yet. The devil is behind Goliath, and he is not greatly disturbed by your discovery. He might even use you for his own end. When you come to believe that the divorced and remarried are living in habitual sin, you have not yet met Goliath. If you leave it at that, you could yet be a help to the devil. When you come to the view that to be biblical you must separate yourself from those who live in this sin, now you will meet Goliath. He will come out in full array, red in the face, and he will seek to destroy you. How do I know? By experience.

I was asked by a pastor a short while ago if I would separate myself from him, because he did not see things like I did. No, I do not separate myself from people with whom I disagree. I have friends of various persuasions that differ from mine. I even think that

it is possible for me to be wrong in this matter. All I say is that from all I can find, searching as objectively as I know how, I am convinced that this is the correct teaching on divorce and remarriage and before you preach what I am preaching, you have to be very convinced.]]

Now I want to show you what you may well face in your personal lives if you take a stand on this matter. One of our families went through a very, very difficult time last summer, and I asked for the story and will give it to you. I have asked to share something with you experienced by one of the young ladies of our church, whose name is Brooklynn. Some time ago her family went on a tour to Israel. Brooklynn became friends with some of the ladies on the tour and last summer she was invited for a visit down to the United States to visit one of them, whom I'll call Mrs. B. While she was there another lady from the tour and the lady she went to visit were going to take her to a special retreat place where they would also spend the night. I'll call her Mrs. L.

Here is the account: *We were on our way to Branson, me, Mrs. L., and Mrs. B. I don't know how far along on our way we were, or how the topic began, but somewhere along the line they began to praise their pastor for the stand that he made against homosexuality. I listened, silently at first, to their exchange. It went something like this:*

Mrs. B.: "I'm so glad that our pastor is willing to make a stand against it [meaning homosexuality] and to preach against it in our church."

Here Mrs. L. commented something or other in agreement.

Mrs. B. continued: "I went to him the other day and thanked him for his willingness to bring it over the pulpit." Then she talked about how many pastors disagree with homosexuality but never speak of it over the pulpit.

I can't remember what else she said, but she went on like that for a bit. My mind was churning. They were sort of directing their praises of him at me, but I was somewhat checked to cast my praise in among theirs. So I just nodded and then casually asked what stand he took on divorce and remarriage. I had a pretty good guess what the answer would be, but I suppose I was hoping that asking would make them realize that not standing on divorce is what led to not standing on homosexuality. I wasn't prepared for the answer that I did get.

They seemed unfazed by the question. Mrs. B. answered, "Oh, I don't know. I don't even know if he's ever studied it." She turned to look at Mrs. L.. "He's never even talked about it over the pulpit, has he? I don't think so. Anyways, I'm divorced and remarried."

How instantly I wished I had not asked! I had been fully prepared to hear that their pastor did not stand against it, but to hear that she was in such a situation herself! I just stared out of the window in shock.

"What do y'all believe?" Mrs. B. asked.

I didn't want to tell her. But I looked at her and said, "We believe it's wrong."

Now, I won't say that they didn't react at all, because that wouldn't be entirely true. I suppose that I was just expecting them to react a lot more than what they did.

Her immediate response was a slight nod, and then she too just stared out of the window in silence. She was wearing sunglasses, so I couldn't read her expression. There were a few awkward moments of silence, and then Mrs. L. said something like, "That's between Mrs. B. and the Lord." And if I remember correctly, then I believe it was at that time that Mrs. B. said that she was going to be the one to stand before the Lord for that sin.

If I remember correctly, she called it a sin. I believe she did, because I remember being rather shocked that she would have called it sin herself. It was the comment that surprised me most. First, she called it a sin herself. Second, she knew she'd stand in judgment for it. And lastly, if she recognized it as a sin, then she should have also recognized that the Bible was clear on the consequences of that sin! I can only describe my feelings at that time as being utterly horrified.

Aside for those comments that they made rather casually as I recall, the conversation took a turn and it was like they forgot that we'd talked about it at all. This was another thing that I hadn't expected. I thought that my words would have said more to them than what they seemed to. I thought we would turn around, or stop, or something! But that wasn't the case. We kept going on like everything was normal. They seemed willing to ignore what I believed—they didn't even get offended! —as long as I was willing to ignore the situation.

This is when I texted Mom and people began praying for me. It was such a blessing to know I had a church family standing behind me! In that atmosphere where no one was making a big deal about it, I hardly felt like it was a big deal. It almost took me by surprise when I realized that I was going to have to make a stand! All throughout my life I'd just taken for granted that I would stand on divorce and remarriage. But now, when I was faced with it, it seemed so unreal. I really learned that the mountain looks smaller from a distance.

In the end I asked Mrs. B. to stop the vehicle at the side of the road. By this time, we were not far from Branson, maybe twenty minutes or so. When we stopped, I told them the situation. They were shocked, but Mrs. B. didn't argue with me, or say that I was wrong. She asked what I wanted her to do, and even offered to get out of the vehicle and have someone pick her up so we

could keep going without her, but that didn't seem right. So we decided to turn around and cancel the trip.

Mrs. L. almost seemed more bothered than Mrs. B. did. She began to say how unfair I was being. She told me that it was not my duty to judge Mrs. B..

"Don't you think that Mrs. B. already has it settled between her and the Lord?" she asked. Also, I think that it was Mrs. B. who mentioned that God was a forgiving God.

I told her that yes, God was a forgiving God, but that even the prodigal son couldn't be forgiven until he left the pig pen. They agreed with that—but kind of didn't agree with me. Mrs. L. was working herself up, saying that I was being judgmental, when Mrs. B. told her just to stop. I was surprised though, that Mrs. B. wasn't going on herself about how 'judgmental I was being.' Besides, it was against her that I was making the stand. But she didn't say a thing. We drove back in silence.

We dropped Mrs. B. off at her house and then went back to Mrs. L.'s house where I was staying. I didn't see Mrs. B. again. Mrs. L. was very upset—kind of like a bowl of soup that someone jostled with their elbow. And I was that elbow. Her whole world had been turned upside-down. Throughout the rest of the day, the situation would come up again and again in her conversation. This is some of the things she would say.

"Mrs. B. is a very nice and wonderful lady. There isn't another Christian woman I know that would be willing to do more for other people than what she is. She has done more in our church than any other person. She teaches Sunday school classes, goes on missions, and puts so much into everything. She isn't a child; she's a full-grown woman. And she knows her Bible."

In another incident, Mrs. L. kept saying that I'd hurt Mrs. B. very much 'by what I said.' She kept saying 'by what I said', so finally I asked her what it was that I said.

"Well," she answered, "You said that she was going to Hell."

I could remember saying that. I can't even remember if I mentioned Hell. I think I may have spoken of judgement, but either than that, I'm not sure. So I told Mrs. L., "No, I did not say that."

She answered, "Well, you read it in the Bible!"

I think my jaw almost dropped. All I could do was say, "But the Bible is God's Word!"

Well, of course she agreed with that. It surprised me over and over again that basically everything I said, they would agree with! They just didn't agree with the fact that what I said affected what I did.

At another time, Mrs. L. was telling me that even if I felt that I had to make the stand that I did, it was the way that I did it that was wrong. This was a big concern for me. I had been greatly afraid of saying something wrong, or doing something wrong. In fact, it felt like everything I said was wrong. (Looking back, I see things I could have done differently, but in the moment, it is so hard to see clearly.) As Mrs. L. went on, though, I realized that she didn't have anything against what I said, or how I said it, it was when I said it.

"We had our whole trip planned," she said, "and were looking forward to having a good time. Couldn't you have waited till after the trip to tell her, instead of ruining it like that."

I just shook my head. Inwardly I was wondering how that would have worked anyways. How can you compromise for two days, and then take a stand?

"It was just the wrong time," she said.

I told her, "Mrs. L., it is never the wrong time to stand on God's Word."

Well, she agreed with that, "But," she went on, "you're only sixteen!"

Well, I had to agree with that. I only wished that the fact could've made a difference.

"Mrs. B. has been in shock all day," she said. "she says she'd been praying and reading her Bible since she got home."

"Well," I mused, "Praise the Lord."

But Mrs. L. hardly heard me. "You made her feel dirty," she continued, "she told me she's even going to call our pastor."

I felt a sinking feeling. Her pastor would probably console Mrs. B. and tell her that she was fine.

Another time, Mrs. L. took out her phone and read me all the texts that Mrs. B. had sent her when she had heard about me coming to Arkansas. How excited she would be to see me, how much she was looking forward to Branson with us, and being able to visit with me and see me. After Mrs. L. had finished I just looked at her and prayed for the Holy Spirit to give me an answer. Finally, I said, "Mrs. L., I do feel really bad, but I don't feel guilty."

That seemed to bother her.

And then, the next day, when Mrs. L. and Mr. Foster were driving me to the airport to fly home, I saw Mrs. L. had taken along her Bible. She turned to 1 Corinthians 5:11, the verse that I had brought up. As she turned there, she told me that she had been studying the night before and had come to a conclusion. She read the verse, and then began to read the commentary in her Bible. I was disappointed to see that reading someone's opinion in the footnotes of her

Bible was enough to convince her I was wrong. (I remember asking who the writer of the commentary was, but it wasn't the name of anyone I was familiar with, so I forgot).

She told me the reason I didn't understand the scripture properly was because I didn't understand the context properly. This is what she said: Corinthians was written to a church, not to an individual, so the scripture there applies to the church and not individuals. She said that her church totally agreed with church discipline. She also said that the verse I read didn't apply to people like Mrs. B., but that it was meant for people who lived wickedly during the week and then came to church on Sundays and pretended that they were nice Christians. She said 1 Corinthians 5:11 meant hypocrites (or unbelievers, I guess) and not people like Mrs. B.. According to her interpretation, since Corinthians was addressing a church, I wasn't as an individual supposed to apply it to myself. She gave me the feeling that 1 Corinthians 5:11 was speaking about 'bad' people, not 'good' people. I didn't really know what to say in response. She didn't really give me a chance to say anything anyways. I finally just said, "Mrs. L., we know we aren't going to agree, so let's not spent our last bit together talking about it?"

So the rest of the way, we visited about something else, and then I flew home.

CONCL: And so we conclude these messages on divorce and remarriage. I said earlier that when you come to the interpretation that divorce is wrong, you have not yet met Goliath. He is not even on the hill yet. The devil is behind Goliath, and he is not greatly disturbed by your discovery. He might even use you for his own end. When you come to believe that the divorced and remarried are living in habitual sin, you have not yet met Goliath. If you leave it at that, you are could yet be a help to the devil. Let me add that not even when you speak out to the divorced against divorce and remarriage have you met Goliath. They don't mind if you are only in

disagreement. But when you come to the view that to be biblical you must separate yourself from those who live in this sin, now you will meet Goliath. He will come out in full array, red in the face, and he will seek to destroy you. How do I know? By experience.

For our last thought, turn to Ephesians 6. I have also said, do not face Goliath on the basis of what I have said. Let me read from Ephesians 6 at to what to do. We begin in verse 10: *10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

Consider this. No matter what position you hold on divorce, it is beyond all doubt, and cannot be argued, that Satan is behind it. Paul then says, *13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day...* Let me add this here. If you take this stand, prepare yourself for evil days. They will come. We go on. *and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness...* and he goes on to show how we must be prepared.

Now I believe that a better punctuation of verses 13-14 would be this: *13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day.* End of sentence. Then we go on with a new sentence, *And having done all to stand, 14 stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness...*

First, if you take this stand, you will have evil days. You will meet Goliath. And your greatest need will be that you have done all to stand. And having done all to stand, now you need to stand. (Phil & Mimi). And Paul tells us what all needs to be done. First, having girded your waist with truth. This is absolutely essential. Second, live right in your own life. This is the breastplate. Third, having your feet shod with the foundation of the Gospel of peace. Divorced and remarried people need this as much as anyone. Then taking up the shield of faith, the faith, the whole of the faith. That includes this doctrine.

And then taking the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God, praying always with all prayer. In this way, go out and meet Goliath.