

The Plain Truth about Divorce According to Paul (1 Cor 7: 8-16)

- Last week we explored Jesus' teaching on marriage & divorce in Mark 10:1-12
- We looked at the parallel passage in Matt 19:1-12 with the exception clause
- Pharisees ask: Matt 19:3 is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?
- Jesus points to creation: in the beginning divorce was not part of God's plan
- The Pharisees object citing the exception clause, Jesus answers with Moses' words
- The provision was made because of Israel's hardness of heart & only for adultery
- The disciples respond to the radicalness of Jesus teaching, "it is better not to marry"
- Now we come to the only other exception given in the New Testament by Paul

Paul's Teaching on Marriage & Divorce (1 Corinthians 7:8-16)

- Paul instructs unmarried (v.8,9) married believers (10,11) mixed marriages (12-16)
- Paul begins his teaching by saying (I say this, not the Lord) – apostolic authority
- What Paul deals with here Jesus never addressed, so he does as Christ's apostle
- The Corinthian context: many converted to Christ but their spouse remained pagan
- Paul is clear: this did not nullify the marriage between a Christian and pagan spouse
- The saved spouse is not defiled, but both spouse & children are sanctified (vs. 14)
- What if the unsaved spouse wants out of the marriage, Paul answers this question

I. Paul's Command: If the Unbeliever Wants to Separate Let it Be So (15a)

- The sense is if the unbeliever deserts and wants out, Paul states, don't try to stop it
- The word is separating, & has in view that the unbeliever has taken steps already
- Paul uses a passive imperative, which is a command: 'let them separate'

II. Paul's Explanation: The Position of the Believer in Such a Divorce (15b)

- 'In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved' what does, 'not enslaved' mean?
- The unbeliever has broken the marriage bond, releasing them from all obligations
- Paul uses a similar word in vs. 27, when he speaks about being released from a wife
- The word in vs. 15 is a stronger word, the ESV translates accurately - 'not enslaved'

III. Paul's Concern: God Has Called You to Peace (15c)

- God does not want there to be any loose ends dangling about in a Christian marriage
- It does not please God with such problems in such a marriage, He desires peace
- The matter must be set to rest one way or the other so that there will be peace
- This is the only other legitimate grounds apart from adultery for Biblical divorce