

Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

Matt 19:1-9

The Challenges of Preaching this Text

- A text-critical challenge
- A semantic challenge
- A grammatical challenge
- A preaching-emphasis challenge
- An application challenge
- A time challenge

Testing Jesus

- The Pharisees' loaded question
 - Shammai or Hillel?
- “the more original, the weightier”
 - Two kinds, one enduring union
- But our certificates!
 - Pragmatic provision, not initial intention
- Jesus's Bottom Line | Four Crucial Questions
 - Which reading?
 - What counts as “sexual immorality?” (Gr. *porneia*?)
 - “even for” or “except”?
 - Exception: divorce only or divorce *and* remarriage?

Nine Principles for Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

- Marriage is an intimate union created and designed by God to be shared between one man and one woman for a lifetime. (19:5)
- While the state keeps record of marriages and acknowledges them for economic and legal processes, the institution of marriage is ultimately defined and regulated by God. (19:6)
- Divorce always involves sin and hardness of heart in one or both spouses, and it testifies against the Gospel of Jesus Christ (19:8; Eph. 5:22-33).
- When one divorces a spouse because of “sexual immorality,” divorce is *permitted*, but not *required* (19:9).
- When one is abandoned by an unbelieving spouse, divorce is *permitted* but not *required* (1 Cor. 7:10-15).

Nine Principles for Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

- When there is a permissible divorce, remarriage is *permissible*, but not necessarily *wise* or *required* (19:9-12)
- Those *who have divorced a spouse* for any reason other than “sexual immorality” or “legally formalizing” their own abandonment should remain as they are or reconcile with their spouse (19:9-12).
- Those who have re-married after divorcing a spouse for reasons other than “sexual immorality” or “legally formalizing” their own abandonment should also remain as they are—God does not desire a second divorce.
- Finally, given both the glorious nature of marriage and the tragedy of divorce in God’s eyes, let’s be people who spend more time discussing how to make marriages thrive and experience fullness of joy and less time discussing theologically acceptable ways to get out of being “stuck” with a spouse.