

A New Day

Long Beach Alliance Church • June 14th, 2009 • Pastor Chris Lankford

Brethren, each one is to remain
with God in that condition in
which he was called.

~1st Corinthians 7:24 (NASB)

1) A Quick Summary Of Jesus' Teaching On Divorce

- A) The simplest statement by Jesus regarding divorce and remarriage goes back to Genesis 1:27 & 2:24 to deal with God's divine purposes.

- B) Christ's appeal to God's intentions in His creation are instructive, these are God's intentions despite the exceptions detailed in the Old Testament.* Jesus here is making an unequivocal statement in favor of the permanency of marriage!

- C) With Christ's clear and forceful answer to the Pharisees, he attaches "Therefore, that which God joined together a man must not separate" (Mark 10:9). This is not a suggestion, but an imperatival command!

* Note Fredrick Bruner's provocative observation, "...if God has supremely intended a solitary life, God would have created humans one by one; if God had intended polygamous life, God would have created one man and several women; if God had intended homosexual life, God would have made two men or two women; but that God intended monogamous heterosexual life was shown by God's creation of one man and one woman..." From *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, And Celibacy: An Exegesis of Matthew 19:3-12*, Craig L. Blomberg, Trinity Journal (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School), Fall 1990, Page 166.

D) Matthew parallels this passage (the parallels are clearly of the same event) with the inclusion of an “exception clause” that divorce is allowable in cases of “immorality” (Matthew 19:9).

E) The Apostle Paul adds a further “exception clause” for those abandoned by an unbelieving spouse (1st Corinthians 7:15). The “exception clauses” are not meant to encourage divorce, but give guidance for remarriage.

2) Remarriage As It Relates To Divorce

A) Recognizing genuine “exception clauses” in Scripture (Matthew 19 & 1st Corinthians 7) carries with it the natural association that the innocent party in a divorce is “no longer under bondage” (cf. 1st Corinthians 7:15).

B) Divorce and remarriage in Scripture pertains to followers of Jesus Christ. Those divorced and/or remarried before Christ are made “new” in Christ (2nd Corinthians 5:17).

C) Thus, like divorce, remarriage is never required, but it is allowed in cases of adultery, various immoralities, and abandonment (Matthew 19:9 & 1st Corinthians 7:12-16).

D) Many Christians have been divorced and remarried for reasons other than adultery, immorality, or abandonment. The Bible makes clear that both the divorce and the remarriage were sinful (Matthew 19:9; Mark 10:11-12).

E) These sins, like others, are not unforgivable. God desires that we repent from sin and be restored (Galatians 6:1-3). There is no second-class citizenship in Christ’s church of forgiven sinners!