

Divorce (Separation) and Remarriage

“3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. 10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. 11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. 12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.”
(Matthew 19:3-12 KJV)

The Lord stated with His discussion with the Pharisees about the issue of divorce that things were not as such from the beginning, *“But from the beginning it was not so.”* (Matthew 19:8 KJV) Divorce was not in the mind of God when He created man and put him in a family. Jesus also told the Pharisees that Moses allowed them to divorce and to have a certificate of divorce because of the hardness of their heart.

Jesus put one condition that He would allow divorce and remarriage and that is fornication: *“9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”* (Matthew 19:9 KJV) Now according to the law of God, the woman who proved to have fornication will be put to death by stoning, she and her partner who is committing adultery or fornication with her. John 8 it confirms to us that at the time of Jesus and when spoke that to the Jewish that their practice was putting the adulterous partner to death, *“2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. 3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? 6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. 7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone,*

and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” (John 8:2-11 KJV) They were convicted by their own conscience because they did not bring the man that was with her. But their practice was stoning to those who commit adultery.

So if she is put to death then the man is free to go and marry another woman. So now clear to us the only condition that man will be allowed to marry again is when his wife is dead. Likewise the only condition that woman will be allowed to marry again is when her husband is dead.

So what Jesus suggested to divorce and remarry after adultery or fornication was again applied after the death of the partner. So now if your partner is still alive then you cannot go and remarry. Even if he or she is doing adultery, living with another, or married to another, that what is stated in *Matthew 19:9*, *“Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication,”* cannot be applied to you; you cannot divorce and remarry another because your partner is still alive. If you are divorced you cannot go and remarry another partner if your first partner is still alive.

Now the other thing about adultery is that it could happen also because there are some other issues between the woman and her husband. It may be that the woman had gone and had a relationship with another man because the man had affairs with women and that had caused her to go to other man. In such a case we need to work out to bring the man and his wife together, separate them from their partners and not to entertain the thought of divorce.

As well as, if that marriage of that particular man and woman was based on the principle of Godly marriage, divorce, should not take place. So preparation for Godly marriage is a good base to prevent divorce. So here to find out the condition that Jesus had put to allow divorce, practically, it will not be easy, and so it will not be permissible neither for the man nor for the woman to have a divorce that is acceptable in the eyes of God.

But even if the adultery or the fornication was confirmed, in the New Testament because we cannot put those who commit adultery or fornication to death, therefore as long as the wife is still alive the man cannot go and remarry another woman. We cannot put those who commit adultery and fornication to death as well as we cannot approve divorce and remarriage because the condition that Jesus put at the time that He came dictates that the woman needed to be dead before the man can marry another woman.

So the Jewish who heard what Jesus said understood that divorce and remarriage is impossible in the sight of God if the wife is still alive. So here the church should not be allowing and entertaining the thought of divorce and remarriage. The church should investigate and go through Scriptures to discover ways and reasons to restore the relationship between man and woman. But in certain times the relation cannot be restored as in the followings:

I. When one or both partners are involved with extramarital affairs with other partners. For example if the man having another woman and he is live-in with her, then we cannot advice the wife to go and live with him and he is in adultery with other woman because such will defile her, so she need to wait for him to leave that woman and come back to her before she can go back to him and restore the marriage use of bed with him, and meanwhile we advice the wife not to divorce her husband.

II. When the woman who is having affair with other man need to repent first and separate from that man before her husband can restore his copulation with her, therefore, meanwhile we advice the husband not to divorce his wife.

III. When the man is having a mistress and got children from her then before his wife can go back to him and resume the marriage use of bed with him he needs to send his mistress and his children from her away, and meanwhile we advice the wife not to divorce her husband.

IV. When the man had married another woman he cannot go back to his wife and his wife cannot receive him any more even if he divorced his second wife or even if she died because his second marriage considered defilement and an abomination in the sight of God, and only after his death his first wife can marry another man. This is explained based on *Deuteronomy 24:1-4* that we will tackle in the next point.

V. The other possibility is what we read in *Deuteronomy 24*, *“1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. 3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; 4 Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.”* (*Deuteronomy 24:1-4 KJV*) See notice here the man who divorced his wife and she went and married another man she cannot go back to her first husband because here her second marriage is considered as defilement and an abomination in the sight of God. So it is clear from here that divorce and remarriage is defilement and that is another reason for us not to approve it. God put such law to restrict men from divorcing their wives. We apply the Scripture of *Deuteronomy 24:1-4* in this way: * If she went and married other man then she cannot come back to her first husband any more even if her second husband died. * If she will go and live with another man without marriage then she can go back to her husband if she repent, but if she has children then she cannot go back to her first husband even if she repent. Imagine a woman living with her husband having children from other man with her, what example is given here to the children and what message is given to them and to others who see such a family but the following: Just go and do the same immorality and you will be accepted. * Therefore if she repent then we advice her that she need to live alone and to care for her children. * In such circumstances when she is not allowed to

go back to him we advice the husband not to marry again while his wife still alive but to live for God and care for his children

Other situation is when somebody who already divorced walked inside the church and expresses his desire to remarry as if it is something Godly. Yes, it is common and normal now among the people, but it is not acceptable before God. The reason that the Pharisees asked Jesus, *“Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?”* (*Matthew 19:3 KJV*) because the people were practicing divorce as an option or a way of life that God approves, that they can put away their partners as long as they can replace them with someone else. * That is why Jesus put a condition that the wife should have done fornication and in such she had been put to death otherwise while she was still alive then no way for divorce and remarriage. * What it is also understood from what Jesus said that the Jewish were practicing divorce and remarriage for any reason and not only for marital unfaithfulness therefore needed Jesus to correct them in that matter.

Jesus also stated, if that condition of fornication to allow divorce is not observed, then divorce and remarriage are an instigation of another adultery, *“9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”* (*Matthew 19:9 KJV*) The Pharisees did not argue with Him anymore, and they understood that He was not approving divorce, especially because according to the Law of Moses that they believe on, the woman who does fornication is to be stoned. Therefore there is no more need for divorce; for after she is stoned with the partner that she did the fornication she is dead, and so her husband is free to marry another.

God's instructions in Ezekiel prohibited the priest to marry a divorced woman, *“22 Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before.”* (*Ezekiel 44:22 KJV*) In the New Testament, all of us are royal priests through the blood of Jesus, and we should avoid divorce or marrying divorced peoples for their ex-partners are still alive and in such a situation such a marriage is considered adultery.

The disciples of Jesus understood the lesson also, that He was not approving what was going on at that time, were marriages and families were broken for any cause by divorce. They understood that He was not approving divorce. The disciples of Jesus and the people who fear God will not do something, such as divorce and remarriage that God is displeased with. That is why His disciples told Him the following: *“10 If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.”* (*Matthew 19:10 KJV*) When they told Him that, He did not object. He did not tell them for example ‘No, no, you can divorce your wife’, or ‘No no you can marry, it is good to marry’, but He confirmed it to them and with a strong tone: *“All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. 12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.”* (*Matthew 19:11-12 KJV*) This saying of Jesus is directed to everyone, but those who are ordained for salvation and eternity with God they will obey, and to them and us it is given.

If Adam had rejected Eve, God would not give him another wife. Jesus told His disciples and to us today, it is better to be eunuchs than to break the arrangement of God by introducing and justifying divorce and remarriage. Jesus said that there will be some who will make themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. Not that to renounce marriage, but to renounce divorce and remarriage. Notice that when Jesus said, ***“and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.” (Matthew 19:12 KJV)*** He linked salvation with what He instituted, that those who go through divorce and remarriage will not be acceptable in God's Kingdom because divorce and remarriage are adultery and those who live in adultery are unacceptable and cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Now those who are already divorced and seeking to marry again, we as a church need to advise them not to remarry but to live for the Lord and to serve Him and care for their children, so they will be saved and have eternal life with God: ***“He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” (Matthew 19:12 KJV)*** The other option is to go back to the previous partner if he or she is not yet remarried.

Now, how about those who are divorced and remarried and their ex-partners are still alive and you find them come into the church? Those to be handled in this way: If they are believers then we need to explain to them that their marriage is unlawful and their relationship is adultery because their partners are still alive. If they are non-believer, we might be more patient toward them; we need to give them the Word of God and invite them to follow Jesus, and we may need to wait a while for an opportunity, while we are praying for them, but finally, the truth needs to be told to them; that their marriage is unlawful in the sight of God. Certain times with such marriages God would allow such couples to be separated for whatever reason. This will be our opportunity to counsel them not to reconcile or to seek another marriage because their previous partners are still alive.

In my experience in the ministry, I witnessed a good number of men and women who walk inside the church and are already separated from their second marriage, or God had made a way for them to be put apart, in such a situation I just needed to comfort them and to confirm to them that what was taken place of separation between them and their second partner is just God's work and His doing. I found a good number of them are doing good in the church and are happy to live for God and to serve Him and to care for their children.

The following are further Scriptures we can read about the same subject, that God does not support divorce and remarriage:

“11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.” (Mark 10:11-12 KJV)

“31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever

shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.” (Matthew 5:31-32 KJV) Here Jesus also stated that divorce by itself will cause the partner to do adultery.

“18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.” (Luke 16:18 KJV) Here Jesus clearly stated that any divorce and remarriage is considered as adultery.

Apostle Paul also understood that Jesus is not agreeing with divorce and remarriage, and this what he instructed: ***“10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: 11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:10-11 KJV)*** Now with the statement about the wife: ***“But and if she depart,” (1 Corinthians 7:11 KJV)*** What Paul meant here that there must be a grave reason for her to depart like the man has another woman besides his wife, or the physical life of the wife is threatened with her husband that he is a drunkard, aggressive, keep beating her or threaten her with murder. **Now certain times the wife may seek divorce if her life is under high threat being with the man, and in such when we are aware that she might be harmed and killed by the man then we don't oppose legal divorce when we cannot protect her or do anything to solve that issue and that seem the only way for her to be safe and her life preserved.** But if she divorced her husband she cannot marry another because he is still alive. What I want to say that the apostle here when he allows the woman to depart it is allowed to depart for a serious issue and not for a trivial and non-Biblical reason. So in counselling, we need to be aware and not to allow divorce or separation for a non-Biblical and not a clear reasonable reason. Many men and women will try escaping their marriage responsibilities or quit their responsibilities using non-convincing reasons and stories to be separated, in such situations we as a church are accountable before God; we should not give them approval, but instead, we need to tell them again their responsibilities and accountability to the vow of marriage that they had made to God in their wedding date. We need to advise them and pray for them to go back and obey God.

If the man or the woman had already, left his or her partner for any reason, then counselling and advising should be started with them till circumstances or situations are rectified and got reconcile and reunited again. No room will be allowed for separation, divorce, and remarriage.

Now when Paul said, ***“15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.” (1 Corinthians 7:15 KJV)*** He does not mean that the brother or the sister whom their partners had left them, they are allowed to remarry. Because that would contradict with what Paul said earlier in verses 10 and 11, ***“10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: 11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:10-11 KJV)*** and with what he said later on, ***“39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she***

is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 7:39 KJV)

Apostle Paul stated the same in Romans, that woman cannot remarry under any condition as long as her husband is still alive. “1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” (Romans 7:1-4 KJV)

***My dear and beloved:** Let us abound with love and let us be bounded with the Word of God and with the law of Christ, and let us teach against divorce and remarriage and let us teach and live what is in line with the will of God according to what we studied in this message. Let us pray . . .*

***My prayer:** Father God, I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your clear message to me about the issue of divorce and remarriage. Lord I commit myself to abide with your Word in this message and to implement what is goes in accordance to your will.*

Come now to God in repentance. Confess the sin of divorce and remarriage. Confess and renounce your wrong stand in approving such sin to take place and your compromises with those who do it. Confess and renounce your extramarital affairs, fornication and whatever immoralities you are doing outside the Godly marriage life. Confess and renounce your worldliness and your love for material things. Confess your fear of man. Confess and renounce your lack of reading of God’s Word and your lack of prayers. Confess and renounce your yoke with non believers and in bondage with many friends and with the Media. Confess and renounce being bad example to others and your non willingness to serve God and suffer for him. Lord forgive me the following sins _____. Lord I ask you forgiveness for your churches and your people who had involved in the sin of divorce and remarriage in doing them and in condoning them.

Lord thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who repented of the sin of divorce and remarriage, Lord I pray that they will be separated from their unlawful partners and send them away from them. Lord I pray for them to be responsible to care for their children and to live their lives for you. Lord as they obey you provide all their needs and bless their children and make their lives good example to others to follow.

Lord bless us as your church, protect us from the evil one and provide all our needs as we go to serve you. Lord give us wisdom discernment and strength to deal with such sins of divorce and remarriage, and to persevere in giving the right and timely

advices to those who are involved in this sin. Lord prepare us for your coming to go with you when you come. Lord refill us again with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts to go and evangelize and to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, ‘Multiplication in peace with implementing the whole will of God’. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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