

Except It Be for Fornication

Matthew 19:1 – 15

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~ Every report from our Spiritual Safari through the Gospel of Matthew has been jam-packed with spiritual food for our hearts and minds. Some of us are having trouble walking in this section of Scripture because we have spiritual indigestion from the words of Jesus. Well, we have to keep moving because some of the natives hanging around have not been friendly. It is difficult for me to even finish a report in Matthew because everyone is so rich and creamy that I could easily expand each account in to several, much larger reports; what to leave in – what to leave out? We will have forty-one reports containing some one hundred twenty-five thousand words in Matthew that could EASILY be quadrupled – several times over. I hope this is all as meaningful to you as it is to me, my dear readers?

In this chapter we're walking with Jesus to Judaea where He will proclaim God's standard for marriage. Jesus is going to clearly explain on what grounds divorce is acceptable. Perhaps you have had a discussion about divorce recently with someone you know? If so, then you may want to share this report with them this time. Jesus will bless the little children in this chapter. I, on the other hand, am going to be about as blunt and straightforward as I can possibly be in this report. I pray it will be a blessing to you. You may want to stop reading right now. We will also listen to the Lord Jesus appoint the apostles to their position in the Kingdom to come! The geography alone of this chapter can only be crossed by supernatural means in one report; so, let's get moving....

1 And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings from chapter sixteen, seventeen and eighteen, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan;

~ If you have a good Bible with a map you should take the time to follow the physical movement of Jesus and the disciples across the land of Israel. When we know the land, culture of the day and certain other societal specifics in their correct details, then we can really start to grasp what is

actually happening in our Spiritual Safari. We began at Caesarea Philippi where the announcement was made that Jesus was going to Jerusalem to die. Then, we followed Him down to Galilee and hung out with Him for while in Capernaum. We swung over to Gadara and went beyond Jordan; and with that we have literally covered northern Israel – the entire Northern Kingdom. If you will acclimate yourself to Israel these next sixty-four books can really become a meaningful tour we take together....

2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

~ “Multitudes” and “healed” are two words we all need to underline spiritually in our minds. Not just a few people, as is in our safari team – but many, many thousands were healed at the time in which we are studying. I become more impressed by this every time we cross this place in Scripture. I’m going to say this again: if faith healers are legitimate, then we need to have the hospitals cleared out. The Lord Jesus made the office of physician obsolete when He was walking around. He is the Great Physician today – not you. You can’t bring anyone to Christ because it takes four people – at least two – to carry a stretcher, my beloved. I am sure that’s why Luke closed his practice and hit the road to make some house calls with the Lord! Anyone without an insurance plan could stop by and get healed up....

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,

~ So, Jesus deals with the Pharisees question by taking them all the way back to the beginning of Genesis to the original intention of marriage when the Mosaic Law had not yet been given. Sin had not even entered the human family at that time in Genesis! Divorce was never in the original plan of God because SIN was not in the original plan for man from God. Friends, divorces are ALWAYS the result of SIN! I don’t care what you say – there is sin in there somewhere that is the cause – and it’s equal on both sides – every time; and you can just write that down! Later, the Mosaic Law

permitted divorce on a very broad basis. Basically, if your wife didn't keep the house clean you could send her on down the road.

Let's flip over to Deuteronomy chapter twenty-four verse one, just to be sure about what we are reading, "...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." Okay, that's pretty easy to understand. Now, we also learn it was better to divorce than it was to marry a stranger from outside the camp! For example, if a priest's daughter married some stranger she was put out of the camp of Israel – no questions asked. This also indicates the Mosaic Law has been made meaningless to Israel because they could divorce on the flimsiest of pretexts. Maybe she didn't have dinner ready fast enough when he got home from work so he had to let her go? There was as much discussion about this in the days of our Lord as there is today, too; so, we're moving on....

5 And Jesus 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.

~ So, the religious rulers have come to Jesus to tempt Him into re-stating God's ideal for marriage and divorce so that they might trick Him; not because they're interested in what He has to say. They actually NEED to trip Him up at this time because He is turning many people away from the religious rulers customs; and they need to discredit Him on the basis of a blaspheme accusation - because they want to kill Him! Make no mistake: they are after Jesus and they think they can confuse Him with a problem that was just as complicated and hurtful in their day as it is today. Many people botch ministries, friendships and families over marital advice. The question of divorce is, perhaps, the most hot button topic amongst Christians.

Well, God has given mankind certain institutions that are helpful and good for mankind. Marriage establishes and protects the home. Marriage should be a blessing to mankind; irrespective of their position in Christ. As a side note, Capital punishment is another blessing God gave to mankind. Capital punishment is essential for any nation that wants to protect its people and enforce its laws. It is a blessing. The law of the Sabbath is given to mankind for the protection of an individual. God allows even the unsaved man to have one day of rest each week - or mankind simply could not make it through this life, friends. And with that, Jesus has covered the individual, the family and a nation! These are only vague and general laws concerning tremendous principles; and man can barely grasp it in its most over-simplified form. These laws are made specific for His people, too, by the way. Here, we have the marriage question in the smaller context of the nation Israel. Amazingly, Jesus gives this in light of the Christian today! That should be an incredible revelation to us, but....

7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

~ Read verses one through four of Deuteronomy chapter twenty-four for a complete perspective of what we have going on here with the religious rulers. Moses had permitted divorce because of the hardness of their hearts. The most tender and sweet relationship between man and woman was given to us by God in His mercy and love. The marriage relationship represents that of Christ and His church. When believers fail to set forth this high and holy relationship due to the bitterness in their hearts, then that marriage becomes a hollow sham of a contract and it's a mockery of God's love for us. At that point, the marriage ceases to glorify Christ and becomes as a whore. Marriage is made in one of two places: Heaven or hell! They don't manufacture marriage anywhere else. When it's not made in Heaven it will begin in trouble and end in disaster – every – single – time. Even the best Christians come to realize that marriage is a dicey proposition....

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.

~ God is merciful to us, friends; and how merciful He really is we do not know! His ideal is always happiness and love – NEVER divorce! God hates divorce as it is written in Scripture. I recognize the times we live in and the culture that is frivolous to the core of its institutions, and there are many, many people who have been thorough divorces that are reading right now. I say to you again it's time to realize the background for your divorce was always sin. After all, we're all sinners in need of a Savior. God forgives murderers and thieves; divorce is no worse than any other sin. Recognition of the cause is imperative to understanding the effects of this sin in our lives....

9 And I, Jesus Christ, 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.

~ So, adultery – fornication – call it whatever you want to - provides the only grounds for the Scriptural breaking of the marriage relationship and covenant, according to God. So, what about the woman married to a drunken bum or the man married to a godless woman? I think there are times when they are to separate and I base that on first Corinthians chapter seven; but, if that marriage has not experienced infidelity, there is no basis for divorce – irrespective of how bad it is! That's what God says, friends – not me. There's no sense arguing this with me.

I knew a man who drank and gambled and neglected his family. His wife wanted to divorce him so she might remarry and give her children a future opportunity. I had to advise her to remain married. She never spoke to me again. That was very harsh, yes; but friends, I didn't write this book we're reading and I didn't make the law. I'm telling you what's in the Bible and if you want to throw your Bible in the garbage can – go ahead – I don't care! Doing things His way, regardless of our comfort and happiness, is well-pleasing to God.

Scriptural divorce protects the innocent party by permitting them to remarry. I am only talking to believers here and if you don't believe I would just stop reading – if you haven't already! God is not pandering to you and

God has no intention of regulating the life of your unbelief. Unbelievers are held to the message of the cross – FIRST! All God wants from the unbeliever is for them to come to the Lord Jesus Christ. Those people are lost whether they're married, divorced or single – makes no difference until you accept Christ as your Savior.

Let's look at an example of a husband – or a wife – that got a divorce on grounds of infidelity. Usually, adultery is the case that leads both the saved and the unsaved to divorce. Money would be next. The innocent party of an affair who is not guilty of adultery is permitted to remarry. Under the Mosaic Law the ONLY acceptable reason for a remarriage was when the other had died. Well, under the Mosaic Law an adulterer was to be stoned to death. So, under that circumstance, the innocent party was free to take another spouse – and this is exactly what the Lord Jesus has in His Mind as He states this to the Pharisees....

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.

~ Well, the apostles conclude it's best to stay single. Frankly, you'll avoid a whole lot of headache and heartache if you do remain unmarried. A tremendously sound principle is now put down and this one has literally destroyed the Roman Catholic Church and their entire religious theory. If they would bother with the Bible many of their problems could easily be solved; but, they don't – and I digress – so, let's keep reading....

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.

~ I know this may be a shock for most of my readers but there are some men and some women that simply have neither need nor desire to marry. A whole lot of people get along very well all by themselves. If you have a

stove that smokes and a dog that barks and a parrot that cusses and swears then why would you even need a spouse that does nothing but contradict you and back talk you? There's noting wrong with being single except that many people today attach a weird stigma to it. Some are very hurtful in their attempts to help you out of your "problem" of singleness that they perceive you suffer from.

The Catholics have a rule that their priests can't get married. I don't think most Catholic priests have made themselves eunuch's for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake; no, they have done it for the money and it has led to the absolute filthiest of abominations: child molestation, homosexual perversion, abject unbridled greed – and on and on - that has all but brought the Catholics to a burning heap of ruin. They will eventually burn out, friends – mark my words. That satanic place of worship will be consumed by the fires of hell and death on earth – something else you can write down. If you take to the mission field in another country your chances of getting married in God's direct will are probably less than zero. If you do it will be a big mistake. Many missionaries make a sacrifice to go - but it's never for the riches of a church. They are usually dirt poor and couldn't afford marriage if they wanted to. We have no rules about marriage and remaining single. Here is a supreme example of free will, also – in the marriage principle. There are so many facets to this I could just write all night, but I have to move this safari along somehow....

13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

15 And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

~ Here, we have three of the sweetest verses in the Bible; and we considered the importance of children's salvation in our last report. If you have not read our previous safari report then I highly suggest you go back and do so now. There is not ONE – NOT ONE – child that will reject Jesus when He is presented on the basis of Holy Writ. That is absolutely true and

that makes a children's ministry very fruitful. That does not mean we could get everyone saved because the age of accountability will come along in the life of the child later. THAT is when they make the decision to accept or reject God based upon what they have been taught. Obviously, that's why it's pretty important to teach them the right thing about Christ.

I realize children aren't going to quite comprehend these reports - but I do try to keep on an eighth-grade reading level. That seems to be about as far as I am capable of taking it down to – or up to – depending on your viewpoint. The testimony of one saved at seven years old is not to be relied on, friends. God will put His protective hand over their life until the age of accountability; but the day will come when they are going to be forced to make a very definite decision one way or the other – for or against – the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world. As their parents, their choice is YOUR responsibility because it is directly correlated to what you have taught them – or not.

This brings up the topic of the age of accountability – which we will discuss at length later during this safari. It very well may be when they have understood the death, burial and resurrection of the lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. All I do know is that instead of arguing about whether to teach them the Gospel – let's just do it! A thorough follow-through at the age of accountability is a good idea, too. Isn't it interesting that immediately following the issue of divorce the Lord Jesus talks about the children? The only ones that are really important in a divorce – are the children. They are also the only ones that really suffer. What about YOUR children? Is there love in your house? If you love your children you'll provide them a proper home - with their parents – BOTH of them – glorifying Christ by correctly and completely living the Word of God ~

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