



Divorce- Matthew 5:31-32

In Genesis 2:24, God explains His plans for marriage by saying that “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” This

31 “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

was to be a lasting union that would strengthen both husband and wife, enabling them to better navigate their way through life together than on their own. Further, God instituted marriage with a mind toward the propagation of the human race within the nurturing confines of the family as built upon the bonds of marriage. Sadly, by Jesus’ day, the practice of divorce was quite lax. Later in Matthew, Jesus was asked about divorce, specifically why Moses allowed for divorce in some circumstances. Jesus’ response was to explain that “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.” (Matthew 19:8-9)

Here Jesus is pushing back on the prevailing attitude of His culture. Moses opened the door for divorce as a practical matter, but this did not change God’s desire for the commitment between a husband and a wife to be life-long. After all, is it really full commitment if the door is open to break one’s pledge? Now, this does not exclude all divorce, Jesus does mention that sexual immorality does justify divorce. This makes good sense as the commitment to remain faithful is already broken when sexual relations are engaged in outside of the marriage bed. Divorce in this instance can be seen as merely the confirmation of what has already been discarded.

Once again the tone that Jesus uses is all law, yet underlying His message is the Gospel message of the grace that ought to permeate our marriage relationships. God’s original vision for marriage remains as true today as it was for Adam and Eve. Eve was created for Adam. They were designed for one another. Their commitment to one another required effort and after the fall, lots of hard work, but God’s design for humanity and marriage remains unaltered. We are better together and maintaining our commitments to one another provides us strength to get us through life.

Thoughts for Reflection

How do you see the commitment of marriage as a point of strength that can be relied upon?