

## God's Thoughts About Marriage Luke 16:18

As some of you know, the method that I use in my study, my teaching and my preaching through these scriptures comes simply by me following along, verse by verse through these scriptures, taking each verse in the order it's given.

And I confess that this method of study has often presented me with questions, questions like the one I have about the scriptures that we will study today.

Here, in Luke chapter 16, Jesus had been teaching His disciples about their need to make a choice between their love for God and their love for money. And as seemed always to be taking place, the Scribes and Pharisees were following along and listening. And as they often did, here on this occasion they began to voice objections to the things Jesus was saying, especially His teachings regarding money, what He described as being "unrighteous mammon".

And then, seemingly without any effort of transition of thought, Jesus suddenly began talking about the "kingdom of God", and then the "laws of God" and then about "marriage and divorce".

And folks, I must confess to you that God has not given me a good understanding of what was taking place in those moments as Jesus seemed to change the subjects of His teaching from one thing to another.

Some bible scholars and commentators have suggested that this was simply the writer, Luke, fitting in some of the many things that Jesus wanted to teach to the people. But folks, I am of the firm belief that Luke was simply, but absolutely only writing what God's Holy Spirit gave him to write. And so, these words were directly given from God in the order they were written.

And oh dear Christian, please do always remember that all of the words within these scriptures, every one of them, are intentional and they are purposeful, breathed out by God and are profitable for teaching us, for reproofing us, for correcting us, and for training us in the ways of righteousness, so that each of us may be complete and equipped for every good work.

And also, in the Book of Hebrews chapter 4, we read,

<sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

And with all of this being true, we can know that these words of our passage here in Luke chapter 16 were exactly where they were supposed to be in this text. And for that reason, we'll just move on ahead with our study of them as they are given to us.

Listen! This is Luke chapter 16 beginning in verse 14.

<sup>14</sup> The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. <sup>15</sup> And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

<sup>16</sup> "The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it.

<sup>17</sup> But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void.

<sup>18</sup> "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery. (Luke 16:14-18)

Over these past few weeks, we have studied through the first of these verses of scripture, especially verses 14, 15, 16 and 17. And now here in verse 18, we find the Lord Jesus giving us a very strong reproof about divorce, and we need to consider why He is so strong and so adamant with His words.

We know that one of the reasons is because the religious leaders of that day had thoroughly corrupted the biblical meaning and intent of marriage. Just as is taking place in our modern day, the religious leaders of Jesus' day had conveniently set the boundaries of marriage in places where they should not be, allowing a man to divorce his wife for little or no reason at all.

And to make matters worse, they wrongly ascribed their authority to grant divorces to the teachings of the Prophet Moses, saying that Moses gave permission for divorce and because of that, it was now OK for divorce to take place.

In those days, women had few options regarding marriage. The men of Moses' day had most all the rights and privileges and their hearts were often hard towards their wives, mistreating them. And to provide mercy and grace to the otherwise helpless wives, God told Moses that He could grant a divorce to the "hard-hearted" husbands.

And now here in Jesus' day, as these religious leaders were teaching that it was OK to freely grant a divorce, Jesus was saying to them that it was never that way from the beginning. That divorce was never, never intended, for any reason.

In Matthew chapter 19, Jesus gave a full and clear explanation regarding marriage and divorce. There in verse 3 we read that the,

<sup>3</sup> . . . Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"

<sup>4</sup> He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female,

<sup>5</sup> and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

<sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

<sup>7</sup> They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"

<sup>8</sup> He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

<sup>9</sup> And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." (Matthew 19:3-9)

I marvel at how those who want to have complete freedom to do away with their marriages can read these words and believe only what they want to believe about what God is saying to us.

Even these words of verse 9 that I just read can easily be misinterpreted. Those words of Jesus again,

<sup>9</sup> And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9)

Folks, even these words don't give permission for divorce. These words simply define the conditions that will take place if sexual immorality has taken place

within a marriage. And that is, if one of the marriage partners has committed sexual immorality, then if the other partner remarries, they will not be committing adultery.

But please understand that divorce was not being permitted within these words. Can one person be divided. Listen to these words again.

<sup>5</sup> . . . 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

<sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." (Matthew 19:5-6)

Two people who are married in accordance with God's design become one person, one flesh, never to be separate again. They are one. And divorce is not ever allowed. It is as simple as that.

Oh dear Christian, we must not allow ourselves to become the decision maker about such matters as serious as our marriage. Our God really does have some very firm and fixed rules regarding the relationship of marriage and we really do need to know His Heart and His thoughts about this very, very special relationship.

And let's begin our examination of God's Heart by first knowing that our God is very relational, absolutely relational. He shows that to be so in every attribute of His Person. He is our Father! And as we receive Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we become adopted sons and co-heirs with Jesus. We are a family. Never to ever be divided or separated from one another.

And as born again Christians, we are a forever part of the Body of Christ, His family, and again, never, never to be separated from one another.

And those relational bonds were put into place from the very beginning of time. As God formed Adam and Eve, His design was ever and always to be that of a family, intertwined together as "one", one person, one family.

Recall how our Lord described that to us there in the beginning in the Book of Genesis. As He was creating the earth and everything in it, He then created man, Adam, and He put Adam to work there in the Garden.

And after observing Adam for a while, God said there in Genesis chapter 2 . . .

18 . . . "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (Genesis 2:18)

And also, please take careful notice of the next words given to us there in the Book of Genesis, how God revealed that nothing else could meet that deep need within the heart of Adam, especially possessions and especially the busyness of work. Listen!

<sup>19</sup> Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. (Genesis 2:19-20)

Did you note carefully those last words,

But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. (Genesis 2:20)

And no folks, God did not suddenly discover something that He had forgotten to do. This was just His way of revealing His heart, His thoughts, His mind and His plans about marriage to us. And so in verse 21 of Genesis chapter 2, we read,

<sup>21</sup> So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

<sup>24</sup> Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:21-25)

Oh dear Christian, these words are some of the most precious words that a man and his wife could ever know. These words form the foundational relationship bond that a man and his wife share with each other. And we must never allow it to be any different. Verse 24,

<sup>24</sup> . . . and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:24-25)

This is the love relationship that God has designed for a man and his wife, a relationship that is more loving and more tightknit than any other relationship

imaginable. A love relationship where a man and his wife can walk naked before each other and not be ashamed, nothing hidden, whether it be our bodies or it be the deepest needs and desires and thoughts of our hearts and souls. We can share anything and everything with each other without concern that the other one will reject us or shame us.

That is the love relationship that God designed for a man and His wife and it is the exact same relationship that He shares with us. And He tells us so in these scriptures, like those given to us in Ephesians chapter 5, where He tells us,

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:25-27)

And dear Christian, when the Lord here uses the word church, He is speaking about how He loves us, you and me. We are the church. We are His “bride”, His wife. And He loves us so much that He not only would die for us, He did die for us, to cleanse us from our sins and to make us Holy.

This is the kind of love that God intended for a man and his wife, a love relationship where divorce is not part of any desire or any conversation.

Dear Christian, for me, these words that I just read for us are some of the most precious words to ever grace the pages of these scriptures. Listen again,

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:25-27)

And yes, I know that these words are “mystical”, completely outside the realms of natural understanding. That is why the natural mind of men never quite comprehends them. We see the proof of that being played out daily within the lives of the people of this world, relationships coming and going with every wind that blows.

And yes, all men and women everywhere do want and hope for the kind of loving relationship that is spoken about in these words. But such love as this has

only one possible entranceway into the hearts of men and no other, and that is through salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ and through the indwelling presence of His Precious Spirit. No other way! No other possibility!

Oh dear Christian men, I declare to you that as we yield our hearts to the truth of these words, Christ Himself will come to live within our souls, delighting the hearts and lives of our wives and making our marriages the most precious relationship that mankind could ever imagine or hope for.

So then, with all of this being true, let's consider why the Lord Jesus is having to give these instructions and these admonishments here in the passage that we are studying today? Those words again, verse 18,

<sup>18</sup> "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery. (Luke 16:18)

Dear Christian, the reason that the Lord Jesus found it necessary to say these words to those men of that day, and now also to you and me in our day is because so many, many people have not done the one necessary thing and taken that one necessary step that we spoke about a moment ago, that one necessary step that can prevent a divorce and make a loving marriage possible.

That one necessary step is so well said for us in some very simple words found in 1 Corinthians chapter 2. Listen to those words.

<sup>7</sup> . . . we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. <sup>8</sup> None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup> But, as it is written,

"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

<sup>10</sup> these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:7-10)

Folks, simply put, there are two vastly different masses of people who live in this world, those who love the Lord our God and those who don't. And as we see throughout these scriptures, the most vast number of people are those who don't. And therein lies the divorces.

Again, that necessary step that I mentioned a moment ago is that we really must love the Lord our God before the blessings of a loving marriage can take place. It is only as we love Him that His Spirit ministers to our spirit, telling us how we are to love our wives as we should. Verse 10,

<sup>10</sup> these things God has revealed to us through His Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:10)

These are really simple words folks, simple truth. We need first to love the Lord our God and then He makes it possible for us to love our wives as He does. And it is then and only then that we will not get caught up in the world's answer to our marriage problems, "divorce", "divorce".

One more thought about this necessary step and the answer to the problems of divorce . . . there are a whole host of secular marriage counselors out there in the world, all of them giving their professional answers and methods of reconciliation. But sadly, their solutions seldom if ever work.

And why is that? It's because of all the reasons that we've been speaking about here in these words today. Marriage is a relationship designed by God. And if that relationship is not ministered to and nourished by the Spirit of God, it simply will not work out right.

So then dear Christian, from these scriptures we can know that it is God's desire and God's plan for us to pursue after the kind of loving relationship with our wives that the Lord Jesus has with us, His beloved "Bride". And if we will do that, then He will guarantee that our marriage will last a lifetime and none of these words about divorce will become a part of our lives and our conversations.

With all this being said, may I give us one last thought . . . a question . . . what about those of us who have already gone ahead and violated God's law and have suffered a divorce.

The answer is difficult, but simple. We deal with it in the same way that we deal with any other sin, "we repent".

Unfortunately though, as we take the necessary steps of repentance, we realize that many of our sins are of a permanent nature. We cannot undo most of them. And in the case of marriage and divorce, words cannot be "unsaid". Lies



cannot be untold. Acts of adultery cannot be undone. And most of the time, divorce cannot be repaired.

But the answer for our sin is still the same, it is "repentance" and it is turning back to God. And thanks be to our Lord, He has paid the penalty for all of our sinful behavior. And as we are told in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness".

So then dear Christian, may we conclude our study of this scripture passage that our Lord has given us today about marriage and divorce by offering us an alternative to our usual response to the difficulties that take place within our marriages. And that is, as God's dearly beloved children, when the word "divorce" is ever mentioned within our presence, we immediately respond back with these precious words of Ephesians 5,

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present (her) to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:25-27)

Pray with me.