



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Remaining Single for the King!

Matthew 19:10-12

Matthew 19:10-12, *His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry."*

¹¹But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: ¹²For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

Matthew 19:1-2, give us the setting.

The Lord has finished the discourse on the childlikeness of the believer, which is recorded in Chapter 18, given in Capernaum in a home there.

Finishing that discourse, we find the end of his Galilean ministry.

For several years, he has been there teaching, preaching, healing people, doing miracles, revealing his messiahship, proclaiming the truth of God.

Jesus has finished with Galilee.

Jesus begins his journey south, a journey which in a few months will culminate in his death and resurrection.

But on the way Jesus crosses over the Jordan River in the east and goes into an area known as Perea, the beyond it is called.



Matthew chapters 19 and 20 are known as the Perea ministry.

Much like the Galilean ministry, only much more brief, the Lord preaches, teaches, and heals and the crowds follow Him.

During this Perea ministry as it begins, He is confronted by the Pharisees who are totally intimidated by Him and His teaching. Because Jesus and the Pharisees ministries are totally the opposite.

So, the Pharisees ask Jesus a question.
All they wanted to do was trap him.

Matthew 19:3, *The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"*

The intention in asking the question was to publicly discredit Jesus because they knew that it was a popular view that you could divorce your wife for every reason.

They knew that Jesus would say no as an answer.

One Jesus can be discredited among the Perea people since they were divorcing their wives for any reason, times no reason at all.

They were attempting to discredit Jesus in the eyes of the people by having him become a very hardline kind of legalistic person.

Secondly, the ruler of that area was **Herod Antipas** who had already beheaded John the Baptist for such a strong stand. They could even destroy Jesus if they could get Him to take a strong stand. Because Jesus would be contrary to Herod Antipas and his own illicit, incestuous marriage to his brother's wife.

Maybe that would result in the death of Jesus which would please them very much.

This is the reason they asked the question to Jesus.

Jesus does answer them, but He doesn't answer them on His own, He quotes God.

He takes them all the way back to Genesis, **Genesis 1:27**, **Genesis 2:24**, and he says to them in verse 4, "*Have you not read?*" In other words, your argument is not with Me, your argument is with God.

The Lord simply affirms the Old Testament standard. Their question is very simple, **can you get a divorce for every reason?**

Jesus says no.

God from the beginning intended no divorce.

Why then did Moses allow it?

He allowed it because of the hardness of heart.

At that point the Pharisees disappeared.

The reason they disappeared is they had just been made into adulterers because they were standing there having had to face reality.

Any divorce for other than adultery casus you to become an adulterer when you remarry.

But by this time, the disciples are enraptured with this teaching of our Lord.

The scene moves into a house, in verse 10.

The Lord sits down with the disciples, and they followed up on that discussion with a lot of other discussions about marriage.

V 10, *His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry."*

They are in the house and the disciples are gathered around the Lord and the strength of His teaching about marriage and divorce has left a tremendous impression on them.

They are shocked by it.

They are frankly startled by it.

Because Jesus has not extended the Old Testament law, but He simply reaffirmed it. No divorce.

If God killed the adulterers with the capital punishment that He assigns in **Leviticus**, there never would be any divorce, but God in His grace has let some adulterers live.

So, divorce can be a merciful concession there when adultery is hard-hearted and irreconcilable. There is still a place for forgiveness where there is repentance. But any other thing, no divorce.

No indecency is grounds, nothing less than adultery. So they are very curious about this. Because they have grown up in a culture where divorce was just rampant, like ours.

All that the Lord has said leaves them struggling.

How do they handle this?

It is foreign to the experience of their day, the way they have been taught.

For example, they have been raised in a culture where divorce was a virtue.

The Talmudic writings of the Rabbis. *“Among those who will never behold the face of hell is he who has had a bad wife. Such a man is safe from hell because he has expiated his sins on earth.”*

“A bad wife is like leprosy to her husband. What is the remedy? Let him divorce her and be cured of his leprosy.”

If a man has a bad wife, it is a religious duty to divorce her.

This is what they were taught.

Then the Lord comes along and says, no divorce.

Only mercifully will God concede a divorce.

Suddenly the obvious tension between what they are hearing from the Lord and what they have experienced in their society is so great that they are just non pulsed.

They look at this very narrow and hard standard.

Watch their reaction.

V 10, *His disciples said to Him, “If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”*

If you get into that deal and you cannot get out of it, you would be better off never getting in it.

You are stuck for the rest of your life, forget it. Better to be single.

They were not necessarily right. It isn't necessarily better to be single. There are a lot of people who are like them today. They avoid marriage because they are not ready to make a lifetime commitment.

Marriage is a sacred thing.

Marriage is the greatest gift that God can ever give.

When we have two people who love Jesus Christ and love each other and live a life together under God's leading and direction and in the power of the Spirit, it gets so good sometimes you must pinch yourself to think it's real and that's as God intended it.

We are never going to get married if you get stuck with the same one your whole life, don't say that. If that's the case, I want marriage because it's God's ordained plan, but I want it with the right person, so I don't get stuck the rest of my life.

V 11, *But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given:*

Christ's response to this is interesting. He did not contradict them but told them not everyone can handle it.

There are some people who really distort the Scripture saying that this statement applies to marriage and divorce. They

interpret this to mean that Christ gave the ideal that you ought not to divorce, but not everyone can accept this statement.

But if you have studied the Scripture at all, you know that is not the way God gives His instructions.

He does not tell men what to do and then say, "But not everybody wants to accept this, so that's fine."

What Christ said in **Matthew 19:11** applies to the disciples' statement in **Matthew 19:10**.

So, the disciples said, *"It is better not to marry."* Christ said, *"not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given."*

Some people have the special ability and gift of God not to marry.

Jesus here acknowledged that marriage is not for everyone. This would correspond to Paul's teaching in **1 Corinthians 7**.

However, both Paul and Jesus stressed that relatively few people were called to a life of celibacy.

Paul, who advocated remaining single if a person was called to do so.

1 Corinthians 7:24-28, *Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called. ²⁵Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy. ²⁶I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress—that it is good for a man to remain as he is: ²⁷Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. ²⁸But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.*

Also said that it was a doctrine of devils to forbid marriage to anyone.

1 Timothy 4:1-3, *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ²speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*

V 12, *For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."*

There are three types of Eunuchs.

1. Eunuchs who were born that way. Incapable of procreation and/or have no need of marriage and its associated coitus.
2. Eunuchs who were made that way by men (a reference to enforced castration or emasculation) and thus not the decision of the individual
3. Eunuchs who have voluntarily decided to be celibate for "the sake of the kingdom", that is, do not want the distraction of marriage and want to devote their full energy to proclaiming the gospel.

A "eunuch" was an impotent man (not capable of sexual relations) who usually had been castrated before puberty.

Jesus said that some men were born this way, some were made impotent by men to serve as chamberlains and to care for harems and some made themselves impotent to better serve the kingdom of God.

Esther 2:15, *Now when the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his daughter, to go in to the king, she requested nothing but what Hegai the king's eunuch, the custodian of the women, advised. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her.*

There were people who gave their children to be mutilated and become Eunuchs for their pagan god Diana.

The Hebrew word translated “eunuch” in the Old Testament is the word “**CARIYC,**” and it means “to castrate”.

The Greek word translated “eunuch” in the New Testament is the word “**EUNOUCHOS,**” and it means “a castrated person...by extension an impotent or unmarried man”

John the Baptist, Paul, and Jesus were such individuals who chose to be Eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom.

1 Corinthians 7:7-9, *For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that. ⁸But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; ⁹but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.*

In both the Old and New Covenants, eunuchs had the same standing in God’s eyes as anyone else.

Isaiah 56:3-8, *Do not let the son of the foreigner Who has joined himself to the Lord Speak, saying, “The Lord has utterly separated me from His people”; Nor let the eunuch say, “Here I am, a dry tree.” ⁴For thus says the Lord: “To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast*

My covenant, ⁵Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off. ⁶“Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, And to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants— Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant— ⁷Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” ⁸The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, “Yet I will gather to him Others besides those who are gathered to him.”

Acts 8:26-27, *Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, “Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is desert. ²⁷So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship,*

Because they often served in the courts of kings, there are many Old Testament and New Testament examples of eunuchs with high positions and authority.

Daniel 1:3-18,

Daniel Shadrach, Meshach and Abed Nego.

Paul went on to add another principle.

1 Corinthians 7:29-31, *But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none,³⁰ those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess,³¹ and those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away.*

First, Paul told of the distress that characterizes this world for believers.

Secondly, he told of the shortness of time as believers are living their lives. The things that characterize this life are in the process of passing and that puts marriage and possessions in proper perspective.

Some people give their lives to the amassing of possessions.

The futility of this impressed me during the trip. Visited a lot of ruins of the Roman civilization and went in to visit the area where the Roman Senate met, the central part of the empire.

This was the strongest empire that ruled the world. But now there are some stones that are left standing and a couple of columns. It is a ruin.

The palaces that kings have made as a tribute to themselves dwindle to a couple of columns, a few blocks of stone, and a few pieces of mosaic.

This emphasizes that no matter how much emphasis you put on trying to make yourself known and durable, with the passing of time all that is left is ruins.

Look at the pyramids, and some people climbed up into the inside of the great pyramid. They said that all that is in there is a big empty room. The ruler builds this huge pyramid as a grave and a monument to himself.

It took 20 years to build it. Then grave robbers came in and stole his body and nobody even knew where it is. The pyramid is just a big pile of stones and a reminder of the transitory nature of the things of this life.

Paul said this whole life is like that. It is short. The form of this world is passing away and the things of this world.

What foolishness for people to devote their lives to the amassing of possessions?

You don't have enough time to devote your life to the things of this life. That is Paul's emphasis.