



The Voice of Truth



October 18, 2009

Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

By Jimmy Pettigrew

First, I want to say that marriage is an institution of God given to man. It was not given to Adam as an individual, or to him and Eve as a pair. It was given to man, and they were the first to enjoy its blessed provisions. *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh”* (**Gen. 2:24**). That this applies to man generally is true because strictly it was not true of Adam; he did not leave his father and his mother to cleave unto Eve, but man generally does so have to do. Since marriage is for men generally and universally, we conclude that the law regulating the institution is for all man. It is a mistake to think the laws of marriage only apply to people in the church, and not people of the world. If the laws regulating marriage are binding only on the church members, it would follow that God does not join in matrimony those who are not Christians. Marriage is not a church ordinance. Marriage did not begin on the day of Pentecost; it began with Adam and Eve.

In **Matthew 19:3**, the Pharisees came to Jesus, they came testing Him, tempting Him. These Pharisees asked Jesus, *“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?”* The Lord's response: *“And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made (them) from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”* (**Matt. 19:4-6**). Jesus settled the question by the original design of marriage, as shown in **Gen. 2:24**. The Pharisees asked the Lord, in view of His answer that there is to be no break in a marriage, *“Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce-*

ment, and to put (her) away?” (**Matt. 19:7**). They are saying you have to be wrong because you are contradicting Moses in **Deuteronomy 24**. Jesus answered this question by saying; *“Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so”* (**Matt. 19:8**). Notice, first of all, that the Pharisees had interpreted **Deuteronomy 24:1-4** as a command (**Matt. 19:7**), but Jesus corrects that in this verse by implying that Moses didn't command divorce; rather, he permitted, allowed, suffered it. God permitted this, says Jesus, because of your hardness of heart. This was not God's original intention, from the beginning it has not been this way. In other words, God's law about marriage had never been taken away. God had only granted through Moses a temporary exemption from its observance. This is extremely important to keep in mind as one evaluates the claims of certain people who maintain that **Matthew 19:9** is a covenant passage and therefore limited in application to those who are already members of the church. Since Jesus' teaching in **Matthew 19:9** is designed to reaffirm Jehovah's original marriage code, the verse cannot be so-called covenant passage that it only applies to a Christian husband and wife. Christ's teaching on marriage was a restoration of heaven's original plan. But God's original plan surrounded mankind as a whole. Thus, Christ's teaching on marriage surrounded mankind as a whole. He will restore marriage to the level of the Father's original intention.

“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his -wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery” (**Matt. 19:9**). “Whosoever”, meaning any one, that is, this teaching is not limited to just members of

the church, it applies to whatever man divorces in the manner Jesus describe, "fornication". Fornication indicates the one reason for which a person might divorce a mate and remarry and still be innocent before God. Anyone who holds there is some other door, than the one, named by Jesus holds that Jesus did not tell truth! Whoso, that is, what ever person marries the woman put away by her husband, whether the reason was fornication or because she burned the bread, doth commit adultery, because she is not marriageable in either case. The Lord had stressed that there is one scriptural ground upon which there can be divorced and remarriage acceptable to God. This, the cause of fornication! To the disciples this was a hard saying (**Matt. 19:10**).

It is alleged by some that since baptism washes away all sins (**Acts 22:16**), it sanctifies marriages which existed at the time of baptism - so - those involved in adulterous marriages (Those which violate **Matthew 19:9**) do not have to separate after baptism. They say baptism sanctifies a sinful relationship. Baptism does not destroy a sinful marriage and create a righteous one. Repentance is before baptism. Repentance demands a reformation of life. In the case of an unscriptural marriage (one which violates **Matt. 19:9**), repentance demands that one get out of that marriage. If a man has stolen a horse, if he truly repents, he will not keep the horse. Suppose a man is living in polygamy, and he decides to obey the gospel, may he continue to live with a dozen wives after his repentance and baptism? Does his obedience to these commandments of the gospel change his polygamy from unholy relations to holy relations? Polygamy is one form of adultery; living with a person who has been divorced from another for any cause except fornication is another form of adultery. Repentance means that one ceases to live in sin. The thief quits stealing when he repents; and the one living in adultery with a divorcee must dissolve his adulterous union.

Divorce for any cause than fornication does not destroy the union in God's sight. "What God joined, no man can put asunder".

Since God joins a man to his first lawful wife and since divorce for trivial cause does not destroy that union, if the man marries he is living with one woman while bound to another. That is what makes the second union unholy. Baptism does not change the nature of that union. Jesus taught that fornication was the only cause whereby one could dissolve the marriage bond and be eligible to remarry. ♦

"Characteristics Of Preachers"

By Jarrod Jacobs

Knowing that the preacher, due to the public nature of his work, is subject to public scrutiny and criticism from time to time, I thought it would be good for us to examine what God considers godly characteristics of a preacher of the gospel. Many are sometimes confused as to the nature of a preacher's work, and how he ought/ought not be. Let us simply take the Bible, and learn what ought and ought not be a part of the preacher's life. While we could study this subject in a number of ways, and from a number of Bible passages, I have chosen to focus this article on **I Thessalonians 2:1-12**. Please read that section of Scripture, and then study with me. Godly characteristics of the preacher include:

Boldness (v. 2)

Boldness is missing from much of our preaching today. Yet, this was characteristic of Paul's preaching (**Acts 13:46, 14:3**). In fact, such an attitude is encouraged no less than 31 times in the Scripture. It is imperative that we be "bold," i.e., "*to be frank in utterance, or confident in spirit and demeanor to venture plainly*" (**Strong's**) in our preaching. There is a world of lost sinners to teach, and Satan fights daily to try to keep them in his clutches. However, armed with the "*sword of the spirit*" and wearing "*the whole armor of God*" (**Eph. 6:13-18**) let us be bold and attack his strongholds and win those precious souls to Christ. This is what the folks did in the first century, and it is what needs to be done today.

**“Speaking the gospel
in much contention” (v. 2)**

Let no one deceive himself into thinking that preaching is “easy” and “free from worry.” A casual reading of **Acts 17:4-8** lets us know that when the apostle Paul was in Thessalonica, he had to deal with contention (“*an effort or anxiety:—conflict, fight, race,*” **Strong’s**) among the people who did not like the message of the gospel! In like manner, we will face much the same thing when we boldly proclaim the word of God to people who do not wish to repent. Preaching the gospel is not for the faint-of-heart, nor the thin-skinned!

Not deceitful (v. 3)

The apostle Paul had no intention of misleading people, but spoke the truth (**Rom. 9:1; II Cor. 11:31; Gal. 1:20; I Tim. 2:7**). Any man who wishes to preach must be of an honest character (**Rom. 12:17; II Cor. 13:7-8; Eph. 4:29; Col. 3:9**). Dishonesty/Deceit will ruin a man’s reputation and his effectiveness in the spreading of the gospel. After all, if we cannot trust a man to speak the truth concerning “earthly” things, how can we trust him if he tells us about “heavenly” things? Despite what some may say, we cannot separate our “religion” from the other aspects of our lives!

**“Not as pleasing men, but God
Nor of men sought we glory” (v. 4, 6)**

Let the preacher never forget who he is serving! Paul told the Galatians, “*if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ*” (**Gal. 1:10**). Preachers work FOR the Lord, and WITH the brethren! Let there be no mistake about that. Reversing the prepositions in that phrase is the recipe for apostasy. Those who try to please men rather than God are like those described in **II Timothy 4:3-4**. They are like the people described in **Galatians 1:6-9**, where the apostle said they should be “anathema” for changing the words of God.

**Not using flattering words
(v. 5)**

Flattering words do nothing to help a lost soul who needs to repent of sin. Christ taught His apostles not to use such words (**Matt. 23:7-12**). Even in Job’s day, Elihu knew not to “*accept a man’s person*” nor “*give flattering titles unto man*” (**Job 32:21**). Let us learn that lesson today!

Not covetous (v. 5)

A preacher preaching for money will not preach for the Lord (**I Tim. 6:10**)! God said covetousness is idolatry (**Col. 3:5**). This fact has not changed. Sadly, there are those today who claim to be preachers, but are, in fact, idolaters because they are covetous for the money. Yes, may every preacher be paid according to his work (**I Cor. 9:14**), but let God defeat every man preaching for money. I thank God for men like the apostle Paul who sacrificed in years gone by and that the gospel was preached around the world, and that souls were (and are) saved.

“Gentle” (v. 7)

Preachers must remember to be gentle in dealing with people. Men, like sheep, must be led to the living water, not driven (**Jn. 4:10, 14; Ps. 23:2**). Let us care for those who are lost, as well as for the saved. There is a time for having “*compassion, making a difference*” and a time to “*save with fear, pulling them out of the fire*” (**Jude 22-23**). “*Boldness*” and “*gentleness*” are not contradictory. This chapter makes that clear (**v. 2, 7**). A preacher must be both! There are times when people need the gentleness, just as there are times when people need boldness.

“Labor and Suffering” (v. 9)

A stereo-type often joked about is one of the “*lazy preacher who works two hours a week*.” While this is not true of the vast majority of those preaching the gospel, a preacher mustn’t be guilty of contributing to the stereo-type! Preaching God’s word is work from beginning to end (**II Tim. 4:5; Col.**

1:28-29). When we forget this, we open ourselves up to covetousness, i.e., just preaching for the money! (see: **v. 5**)

Behaving “holily and justly and unblameably” (v. 10)

How necessary it is that our behavior reflect what we preach! This is true whether we “preach” from the pulpit, or “preach” from the kitchen table! Our behavior needs to reflect our teaching. In other words, practice what we preach! When we look into the Bible, we see where there are many good people for us to follow. For example, what the apostle Paul taught is what he practiced (**I Cor. 9:27, 11:1**). In like manner, Ezra did old practiced what he taught, as did Jesus (**Ezra 7:10; Acts 1:1**). Brethren, do your actions match your preaching? Some need to repent!

Exhorting, Comforting, and Charging (v. 11)

This is the final responsibility noted in this section. Notice please that the preacher is to “exhort,” “comfort,” and “charge” that men and women, “*walk worthy of God who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory*” (**v. 12**)! Paul’s prayer for the Colossians was that they might do this as well (**Col. 1:9-10**). How this type of living is needed today. Chris-

tians need to be reminded of who they are serving and why! Let us then use **I Thessalonians 2** as an exhortation to walk worthy of God that we might see Heaven one day.

Conclusion

Is the preacher here obeying **I Thessalonians 2**? If not, he needs to repent today!

“Truth is universal – that is the reason a person sometimes thinks the speaker is aiming every thing he says at him.”

- R.L. Whiteside

A young Christian packing his bag for a journey said to a friend, “I have nearly finished packing. All I have to put in are a guidebook, a lamp, a mirror, a microscope, a telescope, a volume of fine poetry, a few biographies, a package of old letters, a book of songs, a sword, a hammer, and a set of tools.”

“But you cannot put all that into your bag,” objected the friend. “Oh, yes,” said the Christian. “Here it is.” And he placed his Bible in the corner of the suitcase and closed the lid.

- Anonymous

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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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