



“How To Avoid Divorce, & More” (Mark 10:1-12)

Danny Hodges - NT3690

Read the text; Verse where the disciples said “then its better not to marry” (see Matthew 19:3-12); Refer to I Cor.7 message on singleness.

We’re gonna be talking about marriage for at least the next two weekends, and possibly beyond that. So if you know of someone who has marriage problems, invite them. If you run into someone out in the marketplace who has marriage issues, invite them. This is a great outreach opportunity for us as a church.

Intro: A doctor was addressing a large audience: What we put into our stomachs will one day kill us. Soft drinks corrode your stomach lining. High fat diets can be disastrous, and most people do not realize the harm caused by the germs in our drinking water. But there is one thing that is the most dangerous of all, and most, if not all of us, have already eaten it, or will eat it one day. Can anyone tell me what food causes the most grief and suffering for years after eating it? After several seconds of quiet, a 75 year-old man in the front row softly said, "Wedding Cake."

Here’s where some of you may be disappointed – At this point, I am not going to deal with the question of whether or not it’s ok for you to get a divorce. If you are even thinking of divorce as a Christian, you may also be looking for a loophole in the Bible in order to get the divorce and still be right with God.

The whole question of divorce was a hot topic in Jesus’ day. It all centered around Deut.24:1 If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent (KJV = uncleanness) about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house.

There were two overall schools of thought in interpreting Deut.24, one was led by a Rabbi Hillel, who taught that a man could divorce his wife for any number of reasons - walking about with her hair down, speaking to men on the street, speaking disrespectfully of her husband’s parents in his presence, even spoiling his dinner! Rabbi Akiba, of the same school of thought, added it also included a husband finding another woman more beautiful. The school of Shammai limited something “indecent” to actions of sexual misconduct.

Both schools of thought readily accepted adultery as grounds for divorce. Under the law, infidelity was punishable by death, but under the Roman legal system, the death sentence for such offenses was difficult to obtain.

Jesus brings them back to the will of God regarding marriage. God's will is a monogamous, intimate, enduring marriage. Anything less is a departure from the divine model.

Permission by God for a certificate of divorce does not = God's approval. Just because God allows for divorce does not mean God approves of divorce.

Malachi 2: 16 "I hate divorce," says the LORD...

Divorce is NEVER God's will; Divorce is NEVER God's fault; Divorce is ALWAYS the result of the hardness of man's heart (our text, v.9; I Cor.7:10).

Even when there is allowance for divorce, it still is not commanded. It is permitted. Even infidelity in a marriage can be forgiven by God (Hosea, etc.). And if it can be forgiven by God, it can be forgiven by God's love flowing through a believer!

If the problems in marriage that may lead one toward the path of divorce are caused by man's hard heart, then the answer to problems in marriage is a soft heart. Soft hearts save marriages!

Divorce is not the unpardonable sin.

There can be an innocent party in a divorce.

- Spouse commits adultery, etc.
- One spouse becomes a Christian and the other spouse leaves because they don't want to be married to a Christian (I Cor.7:15).

The cause of divorce = A hard heart. A hard heart does not happen overnight. And it can begin with the smallest offenses.

Sometimes a spouse is not even aware of how they have offended their mate, especially if you are the male spouse. He thinks everything is fine, but the things he does is slowly eroding the health of the relationship. If the wife does have the courage to confront him and talk with him about his failure, he may just shrug it off, or retaliate at what he considers to be female oversensitivity, or whatever.

So what often happens when one spouse doesn't hear what the other is saying, or if they never talk honestly about the issues negatively affecting their relationship? Inevitably, they begin talking with others about the situation. Fast forward through sometimes years of this kind of thing going on, and now there are two groups of people that are absolutely convinced that all the problems in the marriage are caused by him/her, depending on which spouse you have been listening to.

I have done a lot of marriage counseling over the years, and when two people reach the point that their hearts are hard toward one another, you know what is sometimes the most difficult to do in counseling that couple? Get them in the same room together to talk.

In order to reconcile a marriage that is headed toward divorce, spouses must act in faith, not emotion.

I really thought I would end up divorced one day. The new people here suddenly perked up. More about that in a moment.

When did marriage problems begin? Gen.2 & 3

The answer to all marriage issues – Gen.3:15/Faith.

I have come to realize that every issue in life can be overcome by faith. I John 5:4 This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

My greatest challenge in marriage was a stronghold of love for another woman; See 29:28-30 “...and he loved Rachel more than Leah.”

Promo “Learning To Love By Faith”

Wendy shares here (for details order booklet “Learning to Love by Faith”)

Both Jacob and Leah grew in ***faith***, and that changed everything! Jacob ends up loving Leah more than Rachael! See Gen.49:29-31.

CONCLUSION

Leah is the wife who remained committed despite her husband’s lack of love toward her. Jacob is the husband who finally learned to love by faith.