

## Matthew 19:10-12 The Whole Institution of Marriage Questioned

Introduction: Many today challenge the institution of marriage. They are not the first to do so. Long before our day the very disciples of our Lord questioned the advisability of marriage.

### I. The question about divorce raised by the Pharisees.

- A. The Pharisees first asked if it were lawful to divorce a wife for just any reason, verse 3.
- B. The Lord answered by pointing out that God set the example by creating only one man and one woman, verse 4. (This was God's will in the first marriage; it is God's will for all marriages to follow.)
- C. Jesus further pointed out that in marriage the two were to become one flesh (verse 5) and concluded (in verse 6) that what God had joined together no man should put asunder. (Thus God's desire is that there should be no divorce for any reason.)
- D. The Pharisees then asked why Moses commanded divorce, verse 7.
- E. Jesus pointed out that Moses never commanded divorce but only permitted divorce, and that only under certain conditions, verses 8-9.
- F. Jesus further added that in the beginning no divorce was permitted, verse 9.

### II. The disciples' reaction to what Jesus said.

- A. The disciples said that if this be the case it would be better for a man not to marry at all, verse 10.
  1. The twelve apostles were all married, even the apostle Peter, I Corinthians 9:5.
  2. But they had been brought up to believe that if a man grew to be dissatisfied with his wife he was free to divorce her and get another.
  3. They did not at all like what Jesus said.
- B. Is it not strange that some of the most dedicated people will react negatively to some particular teaching of our Lord?
- C. They did not, however, as some today, propose that marriage be abandoned in favor of living together unmarried.
- D. What they proposed was living a life of celibacy, abstaining from all sexual relationships.

### III. Jesus' response to the proposal of celibacy.

- A. Jesus said that celibacy simply would not work, verse 11.
  1. At least it would not work for the majority.
  2. The average male has a sex drive that virtually demands to be fulfilled.
  3. God has forbidden that he fulfill this drive by means of fornication and adultery, Exodus 20:14.
  4. Likewise God disapproved of homosexual conduct, Romans 1:26-27.
- B. It is far better for a man to be married so that his sex drive may be fulfilled in a manner that God approves than to remain unmarried and burn with desire that can only be fulfilled in a way which displeases God, I Corinthians 7:9.
- C. Jesus said that only a relative few can successfully live the celibate life.

### IV. Three classes of eunuchs.

- A. Some are born eunuchs, verse 12.
  1. They have some physical or mental deficiency that makes them unsuited for marriage.
  2. They may or may not be capable of sex, but they are not capable of the responsibilities of marriage.
  3. Marriage for them would be a tragedy.

- B. Some are made eunuchs by men, verse 12.
  - 1. Surgery is performed which makes a marriage relationship impossible.
  - 2. This was done to certain slaves in order to make them suited to do certain work that they would not otherwise be suited to. (For example: a male attendant in a harem.)
- C. One might voluntarily become a eunuch for the purpose of doing God's work in the world, verse 12.
  - 1. He may be perfectly capable of sex physically, but he voluntarily remains unmarried and he keeps himself morally clean although single.
  - 2. Jesus is an example. (He came not to seek a wife but to die on the cross for all mankind.)
  - 3. Paul is an example, I Corinthian 9:5. (II Corinthian 11:24-28 tells why it was better for him to be unmarried.)
  - 4. Jesus suggests that there would be others.
- D. Do not make the mistake of thinking that God requires that all preachers be unmarried.
  - 1. The apostles were married, even Peter, I Corinthian 9:5.
  - 2. The Bible nowhere requires the celibacy of the ministry.
  - 3. Jesus said that for most men it would not work and is true with most preachers.

V. Some conclusions.

- A. Marriage is still the best plan for most people.
  - 1. Those who are wise will seek God's will in their marriage in order to build a good strong marriage.
  - 2. Divorce should be considered only when there is scriptural grounds and then only as a last resort.
- B. We should have sympathy and understanding for those who have been denied the privilege of marriage.
- C. We should have sympathy and understanding for those who have lost a mate in death. (Or divorce.)
- D. We should live a clean moral life whether we are married or unmarried.
- E. We should serve the Lord faithfully whether married or unmarried.
  - 1. Every man, woman, boy, and girl needs to be saved. (Not all need to be married, but all need to be saved.)
  - 2. Every saved person needs to be dedicated to God.

Conclusion:

- 1. Are you saved?
- 2. Are you committed to serving Jesus?

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