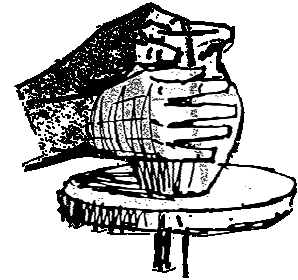


His Workmanship Westside

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”
—Ephesians 2:10



Vol. XXIII

February 2, 2014

No. 5

Isaiah 64:8

“What God Has Joined Together, Let Not Man Separate,” Divorce and Remar-

*And Pharisees came up and in order to test Him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.” And Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” And in the house the disciples asked Him again about this matter. And He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.” **Mark 10:2-12.***

It is fitting that we think together about the implications of the meaning of marriage for divorce and remarriage. For many of you who have walked through a divorce and are now single or remarried, or whose parents were divorced, or some other loved one, the

mere mention of the word carries a huge weight of sorrow and loss and tragedy and disappointment and anger and regret and guilt. Few things are more painful than divorce. It cuts to the depths of personhood unlike any other relational gash. It is emotionally more heart-wrenching than the death of a spouse. Death is usually clean pain. Divorce is usually dirty pain. In other words, the enormous loss of a spouse in death is compounded in divorce by the ugliness of sin and moral outrage at being wronged, betrayed, abandoned.

The Devastation of Divorce. It is often long years in coming and long years in the settlement and in the adjustment. The upheaval of life is immeasurable. A sense of failure and guilt and fear can torture the soul, as falling asleep each night with tears, Ps 6:6. Work performance is hindered. People don’t know how to relate to you anymore, and friends start to withdraw. You can feel like you wear a big scarlet *D* on your chest. The loneliness is not like the loneliness of being a widow or a widower or person who has never been married. It is in class by itself. (Which is one reason why so many divorced people find each oth-

er.) A sense of devastated future can be all-consuming. Courtroom controversy compounds the personal misery. And there is often the agonizing place of children. Parents hope against hope that the scars will not cripple the children or ruin their marriages some day. Tensions over custody and financial support deepen the wounds. And then the awkward and artificial visitation rights can lengthen the tragedy over decades. And add to all of this that it happens in America to over four out of every ten married couples.

Responding to Divorce. There are two ways to respond lovingly and caringly to this situation. One is to come alongside divorced persons and stand by them as they grieve and repent of any sinful part of their own—to stay by them through the transitions and help them find a way to enjoy the forgiveness and the strength for new obedience that Christ obtained when He died and rose again. The other way to respond lovingly and caringly is to articulate a hatred of divorce and why it is against the will of God, and to do all we can Biblically to keep it from happening. Compromises on the sacredness and life-long permanence of
continued on p. 2

"And Jesus said to them, 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.' "
—Mark 10:11-12

marriage—positions that weaken the solidity of the covenant-union—may feel loving in the short run, but wreak havoc over the decades. Preserving the solid framework of the marriage covenant with high standards may feel tough in the short run, but produces ten thousand blessings for future generations. May both of these ways of loving and caring flourish at Westside.

The Covenant Remains until Christ Removes It. One of the reasons for emphasizing the ultimate meaning of marriage in last week's article is because the meaning of marriage is of such importance to God that human beings cannot legitimately break it. **The ultimate meaning of marriage is the representation of the covenant keeping love between Christ and his church.** To live and show this truth is what it means, most deeply, to be married. This is the ultimate reason that marriage exists. There are other reasons, but this is the main one. Therefore, if Christ ever abandons and discards His church, then a man may divorce his wife. If the blood-bought church, under the new covenant, ever ceases to be the bride of Christ, then a wife may divorce her husband. But as long as Christ keeps his covenant with His bride, the church, and as long as the church, by the sustaining grace of God, remains the chosen people of Jesus Christ, then the very meaning of marriage will include: *What God has joined only God can separate, not man.*

Getting Serious about Sacredness. We must be a people profoundly serious about the sacredness of marriage. The world treats this diamond as if it were just another stone. But in fact, marriage is sacred beyond what most people imagine. It is a unique crea-

tion of God, a dramatic portrayal of God's relation to his people, and a display of the glory of God's covenant-keeping love. Against all the diminished attitudes about marriage in the world—Jesus's world and our world—Jesus's words about marriage are breathtaking. This is the work of God, not man, and it does not lie in man's prerogative to end it.

Jesus Knew His Moses. In Mark 10:1ff., the Pharisees came to Jesus and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" That's the question. Today, people don't even ask it. It is assumed that divorce is not only lawful, but easy and cheap. Just Google the word "divorce" and see what you get ("Easy Online Divorce,"

What God has created and joined only God can separate, not man.

"Simple Divorce Online," "No Fault Divorce, \$28.95," "Easy Online Divorce, \$299"). Let me say cautiously and seriously: Those who scorn the design of God and the glory of Christ, those who build their lives and businesses and whole industries around making divorce cheap and easy are under the wrath of God and need to repent and seek His forgiveness through Christ before it is too late. Jesus knew that the Pharisees in general were an adulterous generation, Mt 12:39. He knew how they defended their divorces. So he led them to the law instead of their traditions and asked them, "What did Moses command you?" Mk 10:3. He took them to Moses. But they should have been careful here. Moses not only wrote Deuteronomy, which they were about to quote; he also wrote Genesis. They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce

and to send her away." That's a reference to Deut 24:1-4. What did Jesus say in response to this defense of divorce? "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment," v 5. This is amazing. It implies, in other words, that there are laws in the Old Testament that are not expressions of God's will for all time, but expressions of how best to manage sin in a particular people at a particular time. Divorce was never commanded and never instituted in the Old Testament. But it was permitted and regulated—like polygamy and certain kinds of slavery were permitted and regulated. Jesus said that this permission did not reflect God's ideal for His people; it was a reflection of the hardness of the human heart. "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment."

Back to Creation. Then Jesus took the Pharisees (and us) back to God's will in creation and quoted Gen 1:27 and 2:24. He showed us the way it was supposed to be. "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh,' " vs. 6-8. That ended His Scripture quoting. Now the question was what He would do with it. Jesus clearly saw a tension between Deuteronomy 24 and Genesis 1 and 2. The *but* at the beginning of Mk 10:6 ("But from the beginning of creation...") means that God's will about divorce in Gen 1-2 is not the same as what was allowed in Deut 24.

Which way would Jesus go? Would He say, "Well, there is still hardness of heart today, even in my disciples, and so Deuteronomy expresses God's will
continued on p. 3



Psalm 133:1

Let your faith be seen in 2014
“I rejoice to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.” —Colossians 2:5

Divorce & Remarriage, from p. 3 for Christians today”? Or would He say, “I AM the Messiah, the Christ. The Son of Man has come into the world to gather a people who by faith in Him and union with Him display the true meaning of marriage in the way they keep their marriage covenant”? Would the emphasis fall on the fact that in the church there is still hardness of heart, or would He emphasize the fact that the old has passed away and the new has come, 2 Cor 5:17? **Jesus’s Three Conclusions.** Jesus drew three conclusions in vs. 8b-9. **1. One flesh.** He said in v. 8b, “So they are no longer two but one flesh.” In other words, since God said in Gen 2:24, “The two shall become one flesh,” therefore Jesus concluded for His day and ours: “So they are no longer two but one flesh.” Marriage is that kind of union—profound, just as Christ and the church are one body, Rm 12:5. **2. God’s creation.** The second conclusion Jesus drew is that this union of one flesh is the creation, the work of God, not man. He said, “What therefore God has joined together...,” v. 9. So even though two humans decide to get married and a human preacher or justice of the peace or someone else solemnizes and legalizes the union, all of that is secondary to the main actor, namely, God. “What God has joined together...” God is the main actor in the event of marriage. **3. No right for man to separate what God has**

Discipleship Here At Home

Divorce, Remarriage from left made. Then Jesus drew the conclusion in Mk 10:9: “Let not man separate.” The word translated “man” here is not the word for male as against female, but the word for human as against divine. The contrast is, “If God joined the man and woman in marriage, then mere humans have no right to separate what He joined.” That’s Jesus’s third conclusion from Genesis 1 and 2. Since God created a sacred union with a sacred purpose to display the unbreakable firmness of His covenant love for His people, it simply does not lie within man’s rights to destroy what He created. **Finished with the Pharisees.** That’s the end of the Jesus’s conversation with the Pharisees about divorce. He had more to say to His disciples, but He was finished with the Pharisees. They asked no more. He told no more. They came with their question. Jesus gave His answer. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” Jesus replied: “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” No. It is not lawful. It contradicts the ultimate meaning of marriage. Of course, we might say that divorce has always contradicted the meaning of marriage—even when the permission of Deuteronomy was written. But Jesus was not thinking that way. He was calling His followers to a higher standard than the compromise with hardness of heart in Deuteronomy. **Jesus Didn’t Come to Reaffirm Moses.** Jesus did not come to affirm the Mosaic law. He came to fulfill it in His own consuming, forgiving, justifying obedience and death, and then to take His ransomed and forgiven and justified followers into the higher standards that were really intended when all of Moses is properly understood. “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them

continued on p. 4

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Letha Fink’s husband Ed—10 chemo treatment for prostate cancer that has spread’
Autumn Hadders—biopsy last Thurs for celiac disease, an immune system reaction to gluten
Szymanskis’ granddaughter Molly and friends—witnessed teen friend **Vince Nett** putting himself on fire Mon in suicide attempt; **Vince** in critical condition; all friends traumatized
David Hull, a friend of **Randy Reames**—leukemia relapse; infection; pray open to gospel
Eric Perry’s 2 coworkers—**Elaine Vigil’s** sister-in-law to hospice; **Linda Duncan** in PT after hip surgery
Caleb Howell’s friend Cage—body rejected liver transplant; colon cancer
Mark Campbell—cardio issues; cards to 2535 Brady Dr, CO Springs 80917

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr; Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes—asthma
Autumn Hadders—epilepsy
Jonathan Hadders—RA
Danielle Huelsman—vertigo, CV syndrome
Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; needs help around his house
Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak;
Virginia, worsening rapid macular degeneration; high BP
Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes; kidney failure, may need dialysis
Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia
Nell Free—pacemaker, heart; back pain
Judy Sartin—spinal stenosis; severe arthritis
Judy Sartin’s grandson Tristen—autism
Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

Traveling Pat Campbell returns from AR Wed; **Larry** to FL for work Thurs.
Job concerns **Linda Szymanski**
Expecting **Liz Kosik**, early April—blood platelets low; **Christina Adams’s** daughter **Kayla**, May
Directory Updates **Sarah McMurray** has moved to her first own house: 2577 Eaton St Edgewater, CO 80214
Pearl Chapman to assisted living care: 555 S Pierce St #321 Lakewood CO 80226 Phone 720-239-3090

Divorce and Remarriage, from p. 3

but to *fulfill* them.” Mt 5:17. Then He gave six examples of what this radical obedience would look like in His disciples. Mt 5:21-47: “You have heard...but I say unto you...”

Jesus Came to Fulfill Moses. Jesus came not only to fulfill the law in His own work, He also came to take His people to a radical understanding of the law and a radical obedience to the law that is not based on law but on Himself, and therefore reflects the fullness of what God wills for us—and especially reflects the gospel, the covenant-keeping work of Christ at Calvary for his church. Marriage among Christians is mainly meant to tell the truth about the gospel—that Christ died for His church who loves Him, and He never breaks His covenant with His bride. In essence, Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You are permitted to divorce.’ But I say to you, ‘I have come to conquer the hardness of your heart. I have come to die for your sins. I have come to count you as righteous. I have come to show you the drama that marriage was meant to represent in My sacrificial, covenant-keeping love for My sinful bride. I have come to give you the power to stay married, or to stay single, so that either way you keep your promises and show what My covenant is like and how sacred is the covenant bond of marriage.” So when the Pharisees had left and Jesus was in the house with his disciples, He put the matter even more bluntly and more radically: “And in the house the disciples asked Him again about this matter. And He said to them, ‘Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery,’” Mk 10:10-12.

For Next Week. Mark did not report how stunned the disciples were at these words; Matthew did. We will show next week from two important passages in Mt 5:32; 19:9, three in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, 12-16, 39, and one in Romans 7:1-3 why we should take Jesus at face value and counsel against all remarriage after divorce while the spouse is living. That’s what Jesus calls us to as His followers. Keep your marriage vows in such a way as to tell the truth about the unbreakable covenant love of Christ.

Divorce and the Gospel. What Jesus said here in Mk 10:10-12 is incredibly good news—even to those who have been divorced and are remarried. Here’s why: Jesus said, “Don’t divorce your spouse and marry someone else. If you do, you’ve committed adultery.” Why is it adultery? Ultimately, it is adultery because it betrays the truth about Christ that marriage is meant to display. Jesus never, never does that to His bride, the church. He never forsakes her. He never abandons her. He never abuses her. He always loves her. He always takes her back when she wanders. He always is patient with her. He always cares for her and provides for her and protects her, and wonder of wonders, delights in her. And you—you who are married once, married five times, married never—if you repent and trust Christ—receive Him as the treasure Who bore your punishment and became your righteousness—you are in the bride. And that is how He relates to you. “Whoever believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins through His name,” Ax 10:43. The radical call of Jesus never to divorce and remarry is a declaration of the gospel by which people who have failed may be saved. If Christ were not this way, this loving, we would all be undone. But this is how true, how faithful, how forgiving He is. Therefore, we are saved.



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DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning:

Adult Bible study, “Come out from among Them” Series, 2 Cor 6:17:

“Remarriage,” Larry Campbell

Sermon: “Peaks and Valleys,” by Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon theme for February—COMMITMENT

Sermon: “Commitment—the Zeal of Jesus,” by Larry Campbell