

What God Has Joined Together

I. Slide#1 Intro:

- A. Slide#2 I want to take this portion of Scripture & deal with *Marriage & Divorce* but also I have been waiting to address a few **hot button issues** that go right along with it **like**:
1. Slide#3 How do we **keep** or **fight for** the sanctity of marriage in our day & age?
 2. How should **CM** should respond to same sex marriage issue.
- B. Slide#4a **Setting**: His final departure from Galilee.
1. **The other side of the Jordan** or **region of Perea** – [across(other side) i.e. across the Jordan]
- C. Slide#4b **The Question**: was a *'political, religious, emotional, experiential, physical, moral & ethical'* Hot Potato.
1. Divorce & Remarriage remains **controversial & complex**.
 2. It is also an **emotional one** as it concerns many people's lives & therefore requires **great sensitivity**.
- D. Slide#4c **The Motive**: was malicious. *Testing him*.
1. They really **weren't** concerned where Jesus stood on the issue.
- E. Slide#4d **The Danger**: Intense. This was Herod Antipas region (divorced his wife to marry his brother's wife)
1. John the Baptist lost his head over this topic in this region.
- F. Slide#4e **The Dilemma**: rock & a hard place.
1. **Condemn divorce** – Risk John's same fate.
 2. **Condone divorce** – Lose the confidence of devout people.
 3. A **yes** or **no** & He'd be in trouble (*at least the Pharisees thought!!!*)
- G. Slide#5 **2 Schools of rabbinical thought in Jesus' day**:
1. Slide#6 **Rabbi Shammai** (50bc-30ad) – **Very Strict**. Only if a man married a woman & **then** found out she wasn't a virgin.
 2. **Rabbi Hillel** (100bc-10ad) – **Very Liberal**. One of Hillel's followers said a man could divorce his wife **simply if** he found another woman more attractive.
 - a) Slide#7 The **liberal view** was the more popular. Divorce was tragically even more common then than today. [slide: rock, paper, scissors]
 - b) The issue was the **interpretation** of one phrase *some uncleanness* in Deut.24:1.
 - (1) **When a man takes a wife & marries her, & it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, & sends her out of his house.**
- H. Slide#8 **Now, Let's interview the top 4 Leaders in Marital Counseling**:

1. **Moses**; **God**(the Father); **Jesus & Paul**.

II. Slide#9 **MOSES (3-5)**

- A. Jesus ignored the **current debates** & focused attention on **the Word of God** so took them to **Moses**.
 1. The **Pharisees** considered **Moses** their highest authority.
 2. And note He answers not from the **negative**, regarding **divorce**, **but from the positive** regarding **marriage**.
 3. **Slide#10** They were more concerned for **the grounds for divorce**; **Jesus** was more concerned about **the principles of marriage**.
- B. They quote **Deut.24:1** **When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house...**
 1. Jesus then explained the reason for this **concession**.
 2. Divorce was **already taking place** among the Israelites.
 3. **Slide#11** Moses put **limitations** on it requiring **“a certificate of divorce”** to be made out, indicating the reasons for it.
 - a) This required **hiring a scribe & going through a legal procedure**.
 - b) This thus **protected the wife** by restraining the husband from impulsively divorcing her. **Because she would become a social outcast, no man could marry her, & she would be left defenseless & destitute.** [even our liberal state of California knew to have a 6 month **Cooling Off Period**]
 4. Moses was not **encouraging divorce** **but** seeking to **discourage it**.
 5. **However** this was not **the divine plan**.
 - a) “The marriage of one man to one woman for life is the foundation of stable society.”

III. Slide#12 **GOD (6-8)**

- A. **From the beginning** – Jesus went back to Moses, Moses takes us back to **the beginning**.
 1. God made **marriage** & He has the right to make the **rules**.
 2. Gen.2:24,25 gives **4 instructions for marriage**: **Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.**
- B. **Severance, Permanence, Unity & Intimacy**
 1. **Slide#13a Severance** - Leave behind. **a man shall leave his father and mother**
 - a) The healthy goal of the parent is to prepare the child to **leave, not stay**.
 - b) A **different relationship** starts up on the wedding day.

- c) Here is a change in authority. The new husband goes from *a father's son*, to *the Headship of his own home*.
2. Slide#13b **Permanence** - Joined/yoked. *and be joined to his wife*
 - a) As an oxen team had to function in **close unity**, so should a **husband & wife team**.
 3. Slide#13c **Unity** – 2 people wanting to share everything. *and they shall become one flesh*
 - a) Their bodies, their possessions, insights, ideas, abilities, problems, successes, sufferings, & failures.
 - b) Praise God **Jesus** in His marriage to **us**, *His Bride*, holds back with **NO Prenuptial's**.
 4. Slide#13d **Intimacy** – Gen.2:25 *And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*
 - a) 1 Cor.7:3 *Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.*
- C. I would like to note that twice, in the 2nd chapter of the bible, God specifies **man/wife, husband/wife**.
1. We **used to** not have to qualify this, **but now** we do.
 2. Slide#14 Do to the recent Supreme Court rulings on DOMA(Defense of Marriage Act) and Prop 8, **How** do we protect/keep the **sanctity of marriage** in our day & age? **How** do we battle for biblical marriage? **What** do we do regarding Homosexual couples getting married now?
- D. **I have the answer**. **First** let me say, sure **vote** carefully, **bring about** laws, legislature, bills, etc. **Sign** petitions. Rally, write your Senators, Lobby...all that.
1. But let me ask you, **can you legislate a heart?** What is the **best testimony** for our homosexual friends & family members? **What can we do?**
 2. I know its easy to **say the right things** from inside the bunker of church.
 3. **But** some are acting like **bible verses** meant to be thrown like **grenades** at others. **Weren't** they meant for us to **use to point** each other towards love & grace; repentance & forgiveness?
- E. Slide#15,16 **Heterosexual divorce** has done more to destroy marriage than all the gay activists in the world put together. [**Sign**: Their perspective of Heterosexual marriages :(]
1. We're so quick to **point the finger**, we need to point it at **ourselves first**.
 2. **How about we apologize** to the to the homosexual community for the failings of the Heterosexual church?
 3. **And also for hypocrisy** making this out to be the worse of all possible sins?
- F. Slide#17,18 **Here's my answer**: Have a marriage that **glorifies God**. Have a marriage that **rocks** all other **earthly relationship**. Have a marriage that **others want**. **Have a marriage where you invest 100% of yourself**, even if your spouse wont. Display a marriage where your **children**

say, *I want that for my life when I grow up.* Exhibit a marriage where the **homosexual community** will understand how beautiful a **heterosexual marriage** can be.

- a) So, if I haven't made myself clear, **what I'm saying is instead of proving why a homosexual marriage is bad, why not show how a heterosexual relationship is best? - Because we haven't yet Christians!**

IV. Slide#19 **JESUS** (vs.9-12 & Mt.19:9,10)

- A. (9) Jesus adds His commentary to this.
1. Again, He gives God's intention, that marriage should be a **permanent** commitment.
 2. He spoke in these terms to **discourage** all divorce in **principle**, **but not to prohibit** divorce in **every circumstance**.
- B. (11) This is exactly what Herod Antipas did.
- C. (12) Mark seems to include this for his **Roman** readers.
1. Matthew omits it because **Jewish women** did not have the legal right to divorce their husbands. (Roman & Greek wives did)
 2. **This is very revolutionary.** Both men & women have **equal rights & equal responsibilities** in this matter.
- D. Slide#20 Here we must add Matthew's account, in 19:9,10 where 1 other thing is discussed... **Marital unfaithfulness**(9).
1. **The exception clause.** Which is a **justifiable** ground for divorce.
 2. Jesus adds this because OT time adultery **wasn't** grounds for divorce...it was grounds for getting **STONED TO DEATH!**
 3. **This doesn't make it necessary or require it, but simply permits it.**
 4. Divorce is always a **tragedy** & we will always want to look for **forgiveness & reconciliation** even when adultery has taken place.
- E. Slide#21 Paul Tripp writes, "Your marriage **isn't** what you expected **because** you are a **sinner** married to a **sinner** and you both live in a **fallen world**." The good news is that there is **sufficient grace** to bring your marriage **back to life**.

V. Slide#22 **PAUL** (1 Cor.7:15)

- A. **Abandonment clause** - if the **unbeliever** **departs**, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases.
- B. **Let me also add:** The church needs to **hold** to the teaching of God's Word & **show** compassion for those who have **failed** & to those whom we do not know all the details.

VI. **3 ways CM should respond to gay marriage:** [excerpts from Joe Dallas, 2002]

- A. Slide#23 **First, the Church must repent of whatever immorality exists w/in her own ranks.**

- B. E.g. Imagine a severely overweight man dressed in spandex shorts, shirtless in his pot-bellied glory, selling workout equipment on a televised infomercial. "This stuff works!", he enthuses while he jiggles about. "You gotta try it!" Of course nobody's buying it. *The equipment he promotes may be great, but because of his own condition, you'd never know it.*
1. Slide#24 Alfred Adler observed, "It is always easier to **fight for our principles** than it is to **live up to them.**"
 2. Slide#25 Columnist **Cal Thomas** posed the question: "Why should the majority **accept** something they have **not seen fully lived out** by those who **profess to believe?**"
 3. Jesus warned us to *remove the log from our own eye* before addressing someone else's speck. **Not only does it prevent hypocrisy; it enhances credibility.**
 - a) To this end, the Church must **admit** her own **moral shortcomings**, take remedial action to correct them, **and then**, with appropriate **humility**, address immorality in the culture.
- C. Slide#26 **Second, the Church must repent of hostility towards homosexual people.** When Christians are **angry** over the celebration of sinful behavior, they do well. **Anger**, properly used, sees a problem and attempts to correct it. - **But hostility, expressed through contempt or disrespect, corrects nothing and sullies everything.** Too often, the Church's **anger** over homosexual sin has been accompanied by a tone of **hostility** towards homosexuals themselves. And it is the **hostility** of the anti-homosexual message that is remembered long after **the message itself** has been disregarded.
1. The prophet Jonah was commissioned to preach to a group of people he loathed. He took great pains to get out of his commission. God's intervention via a whale is the most well known aspect of the story, **but Jonah's message and apparent attitude afterwards are noteworthy.** After arriving on Ninevah's shores, he preached what went on record as being **the world's worst evangelistic sermon. "Destruction's coming"**, he proclaimed. And that was all he proclaimed. No invitation to repentance was offered; no concern for his listeners was expressed. In fact, having predicted that judgment would soon fall, we find Jonah grabbing a front row seat to watch Ninevah's doom!
 2. A similar attitude, which we can call **The Jonah Syndrome**, seems to have **infected too many believers.** To hear some of us talk, you'd think it's more important to **politically defeat homosexuals** than it is to see them **won into the Kingdom.** To be sure, good stewardship requires **involvement in the political system.** **But there are more important issues than defeating pro-gay legislation.** There are the **souls** of gays and lesbians themselves. **And when our desire to block their agenda is greater than our desire to see them reconciled to God in Christ, then our priorities are clearly skewed, and the Jonah Syndrome has taken hold.**
 3. It is possible - necessary, actually - to **condemn homosexuality** without needlessly **alienating** homosexual people.

a) Pastor Ed Dobson, a former member of the Moral Majority in the 1980's, realized this when he began ministering to AIDS patients, many of whom were openly gay. After visiting several of them at the local hospital, word got out that this **conservative Pastor** had *a heart for all people, homosexuals included*. This led several openly gay people to attend his church, not necessarily to *abandon* their behavior, **but** to at least **hear** what this man had to say. He welcomed them from the pulpit, and from the same pulpit, when teaching on sexual mores, condemned **all forms of sexual sin, homosexuality included**. In so doing he **compromised neither his compassion nor his convictions**, and his acts of charity towards AIDS patients gave him **added credibility** when he upheld Biblical standards of morality.

D. **Slide#27 Finally, I believe the Church must repent of being intimidated by the gay rights movement, and reassert Her prophetic role. Slide#28** Dr. Martin Luther King declared **that the Church must be reminded that it is neither the master of the state nor the servant of the state. Rather, it is the conscience of the state.** That being the case, we Christians dare not abandon our prophetic responsibility to **speak truth** in a time of error.

1. A man without a **conscience** becomes that most frightening of all horror movie characters: **a sociopath**. The sociopath, absent a conscience, will do whatever is expedient, feeling no remorse or compunction over his behavior. Perhaps the only thing more frightening than a sociopathic **man** is the prospect of a sociopathic **state**.
2. **Yet if Christians abandon their role to speak as the conscience of the state, what other possibility is there for the culture's future?**¹

E. **Slide#29,30 It's time to pick a fight. It's time to get in the game.** Not just pick a jersey, or a favorite team.

1. Let's pick a fight...**but not with the homosexuals...with the devil...for our marriages!**

¹ Joe Dallas, Copyright 2002, <http://genesiscounseling.org/resources/How%20Should%20We%20Then%20Respond-Article.pdf>