**God’s View of Marriage (Matthew 5:31-32)**

In God’s eyes, the marriage bond between a man and a woman is until death.

 Greetings to you dear brothers and sisters as we talk today about family issues, especially the truths spelled out in the Scriptures regarding marriage. Given that next Sunday is Valentine’s Day here in America, let us speak about this essential institution in society. As we have said before, Jesus reinterprets the Word of God, bringing about the right explanations and spirit of the Scriptures to our attention. During His time of ministry on earth, the Laws of Moses were clearly being misinterpreted/misapplied with negative consequences in Israelite society. The Lord had come to bring order to people’s lives, because marriage was a foundational command from God, and without that orderly marriage bond, the world would be a chaotic place. Again, I stress, that for God, the marriage bond between a man and a woman is until death. Let’s clarify Jesus’ sayings, then…

 When God established the institution of marriage, it was an indissoluble law. In those days, the religious leaders had made it easy for the people to divorce, based on Deuteronomy 24:1-4, by giving a certificate of divorce for frivolous reasons so that men could marry other women. The leaders belonged mostly belonged to the school of Hillel, which encouraged divorce for any reason, provided there was a certificate. Even Josephus the Jewish historian had done that, saying, “At this time I sent away my wife, displeased with her behavior…then I took as wife a woman from Crete…”. Jesus’ issue was not with the certificate itself, but with the reasons for its issuance to begin with. Jesus had come to bring to the fore the seriousness and holiness of the institution of marriage. It was not possible to issue a certificate of divorce to a woman for any reason – because a marriage could only be dissolved through adultery, and that would happen immediately if there was a new illicit union between one member of the couple and someone outside the marriage bond. The first marriage would immediately be considered ended, annulled, erased. If, however, there was no adultery, Jesus said that a divorce had not and could not take place, even if the certificate of divorce was given. It was for this reason that Jesus considered a remarriage without a violent breaking of the first marriage bond as adultery.

In this line of thought, and in order to make the challenges a bit easier in a marriage, the following pieces of advice are important for the single guy or girl who intends to find a spouse: First, for the young man:

1. Don't marry a woman who does not pray.
2. Don't marry a bad-tempered or jealous woman.
3. Don't marry a woman who loves the moving pictures and the matinee more than the home.
4. Don't marry a woman who drinks. It is bad enough when a woman marries a man who drinks, infinitely worse when a man marries a woman who drinks.
5. Unless you have plenty of money, or she has plenty of money, so that you can employ someone to do it for you, don't marry a woman who cannot cook or cannot learn to cook.

To the young woman:

1)Don't marry an unbeliever.
2) Don't marry a man of bad habits.
3) Don't marry a coffin man, that is, a man with room for himself and no one else.
4) Don't marry a peacock man, a conceited man.
5) Don't marry a man of low moral standards.

So, we are called to always pray both for those that are already married, but especially for our young people who have not yet chosen a spouse. Instead of having the thought in their minds to unbiblically dissolve a bad marriage (should things be rough early on in the marriage), let us help them to see the importance and holiness of the marriage bond before getting married. A holy marriage means one that is uniquely devoted to God and His purposes.

Here it is important to say that today, if you are already divorced, God forgives and desires reconciliation and peace. If you did your best and the related issues were not resolved, let God solve that which needs to be solved. Pray that God will give you a forgiving heart and that He will open the right doors for you to be able to continue your life. Especially in the case where a marital unfaithfulness has happened, which is the only way a marriage is annulled outside of the death of one of the couple, stop blaming yourself. Know that the Lord does not consider that marriage which was violated by adultery as valid anymore – the Lord desires tranquility for you. If you were the one who committed the sin, turn back to the Lord, and if you are single, try to reconcile with your spouse, if they accept to work on things with you. If not, cling to the Lord, and do not commit that sin anymore; the forgives even you, if you turn to Him with your whole heart.

Therefore, let us encourage our young people to make wise decision in their choice of a spouse. And, if you are married, may your spiritual life unite the two of you even more, so that God is glorified and even the *word* divorce doesn’t come from your lips.

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