

Matthew 19:1-12 | Ted Tash

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[0:00] Good afternoon. It is Saturday, January 4th. This message is supposed to take place Sunday, January the 5th at Bethel, but we are forecasted to have a whole bunch of snow.

So for our future selves looking at this video, the forecast currently is that sometime around Saturday 9pm we are supposed to get an inch or a half inch of ice and freezing rain, which is not good.

And then Sunday into Monday get 3-7 inches of snow on top of it. And so we have chosen to pre-record the message, which we will post on YouTube, and that is hopefully where you are watching this right now.

And then scrap the service on Sunday. We really didn't want to push the speaking schedule back, and we also really didn't want to miss out on a passage. So we decided that just pre-recording this and posting it online for everybody to view there was the best course of action.

So that's what we're going to do. Today's message is back in the book of Matthew, which we've taken about a three-week break from. And we've taken that break because we had Christmas on a Friday service.

[1:19] We had New Year's on a Friday service. And now here we are, January 4th, returning back to the book of Matthew. It's kind of exciting.

We're getting towards the end of the book of Matthew. We're starting chapter 19 today. I think the first half of the year schedule takes us through like Matthew 24, 25, something like that.

So getting close to the end of a really long book and a really good book, obviously, the Gospel of Matthew. Today's passage is, like I said, Matthew 19, verses 1 to 12.

And it's an interesting one. It talks about the topic of divorce. So I really wanted to make the joke, new year, new spouse. But that's not a good joke to make, so I'm not going to make that joke.

And shame on you for laughing at it if you did. But we are going to be looking at Matthew 19. And like I said, the topic is divorce. And I want to say right out of the gate that divorce is definitely a tricky topic to speak on.

[2:30] It is a topic that definitely has some stigma, some taboo nature to it. And so I think just about everybody in the room has been touched by divorce one way or the other.

As someone who has gone through it, as someone whose parents have gone through it, maybe someone whose in-laws have gone through it. It's very prevalent in our culture.

About half of marriages end in divorce, sadly. And so today we're going to look a little bit about what the Gospel of Matthew has to say about it. And then also just about marriage in general is what we're going to look at.

So that's what we're going to do. So ride along if you'd like. And yeah, we'll get into it. I do want to say right out of the gate, you know, I've been married to Lydia for 10 years this year, which is exciting.

Obviously, love Lydia a ton. She's my favorite person on earth. I am very glad that I married her. She is the person that is 100% I was supposed to marry. And so very, very thankful for her.

[3:36] We have a great marriage. We love marriage in general. We've done together eight weddings, which is kind of exciting. And I think I'm going to do number nine in 2026.

My friend Corey is getting married. So yeah, we love marriage. We love the topic of marriage. And so this should be a fun one. Interestingly, you know, in the entirety of the Bible, which is a big book,

there's very little about marriage.

You know, marriage is obviously something that is very important, very much a part of everyone who's married's daily life. You know, it takes up a big portion of our life, being married to one spouse.

And there's really not a whole lot of guidance about it in the Bible. There's a little bit of laws about it in the Old Testament.

We'll look at just a very little bit of that today. Obviously, Jesus says a few things here in the book of Matthew. But other than that, it's pretty sparse. There's just a very little bit covered in Paul's epistles.

[4:50] And then Peter mentions it a little bit. And so what I want to do before we look at divorce is I want to go and look at what the Bible has to say about marriage.

And so if you turn to Ephesians chapter 5, we've got about 12 verses here that talk about marriage and what they, just what the biblical account of it is.

And so in Ephesians chapter 5, this, when I've done weddings, is typically the passage I will speak out of. I think it's a very beginner-friendly, it's a very approachable passage for those that, you know, at weddings you have like aunts and uncles that might not be believers, whatever.

It's just a pretty easy one to swallow. And so we'll look at that here starting in verse 22. It says, I would also add that, you know, Christ was submissive to the will of his father in going to the cross. And so again, the example is Christ and the call is to wives to be submissive. Verse 25 says, And so the call to the husband is to love his wife and to nourish his wife and to cherish his wife.

[7:12] And once again, the example is Christ and how Christ loves and nourishes and cherishes the church. And so both for husbands and for wives, even though the role is different, the example of the Lord Jesus Christ is the same.

And then you go to verse 33 and it says this, Nevertheless, let each one of you in particular, so love his own wife as himself and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

And that's the easy to swallow wedding message. You know, love and respect. Those are some good wedding buzzwords you can throw out there. And people say, Oh yeah, love and respect. That's good. And then they, you know, go back to scrolling on their phone or not paying attention or whatever they do. But let the husband love his wife and let the wife respect her husband.

Now, if you go to Peter and what he has to say about marriage, it's very, very similar. Obviously, different guys, same Holy Spirit guiding the words.

[8:13] But in first Peter chapter three, it says this, it says in three verse one, Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands that even if some do not obey the word, they, the husbands without a word may be won by the conduct of their wives.

So again, the call to the wife is one of submission. Husbands, verse seven, likewise, dwell with them with understanding. Understanding, giving honor to the wife as to the weaker vessel and as being heirs together of the grace of life that your prayers may not be hindered.

So the call there to the husbands, very similar to the, to the call that Paul had to love your wife is to dwell with them with understanding. And so I think that is a great thing to do.

I also think that we should give them honor as it says. Uh, and so to honor the wife, to, to nourish the wife, to cherish the wife, for the wife to be, uh, submissive and respectful.

And then finally, the one I really want to look at is in first Corinthians chapter seven. Uh, and this is again, Paul writing and, uh, there's a lot of good things in here.

[9:38] Uh, but I think I want to start at verse three. Uh, yeah, we'll read three and four. So again, the call here is for the husband, uh, to love his wife.

I actually really like this verse. I think it's kind of a romantic verse here. It says, uh, let the husband render to his wife, the affection do her, uh, husbands, you should come home and tell your wife.

I am going to now render the affection that is due you and see, uh, see how she reacts. Uh, and then it says, likewise, the wife to her husband. So maybe wives, you should say that when your husband comes home.

I don't know. Uh, and then it says the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. And we're going to look later in Matthew that the two have become one flesh.

Uh, and so, uh, each other's bodies are each other's, uh, and we all know how that works in marriage. And so the husband is to render to the wife, the affection do her.

[10:40] Now, this is the important part. Verse 10 in verse 11 here, speak about divorce. And this is, as far as I can tell, uh, and I'm a hundred percent willing to be wrong here.

The only, uh, writing that we have on divorce from the current dispensation, uh, from the age of grace that is written directly to us and directly for us as admonition comes from right here in Corinthians seven, first Corinthians seven.

Verses 10 and 11, again, a hundred percent willing to be wrong on that. As far as I could tell. And as far as I could search, these were the only two verses that spoke directly about divorce, uh, from, from the age of grace.

Obviously in Matthew, where we're going to look at divorce, um, that is for us, maybe not directly to us as that was still under the law there in the gospel of Matthew. Uh, but these two verses are, are very important.

And once again, I want to say, clearly say, uh, for all to hear that divorce is a tricky topic to speak on. Uh, and I, I know plenty of people who have been divorced and it was a tough thing for them to go through and they have gone on to walk with the Lord and they've gone on to serve the Lord and they've gone on to remarry and have wonderful families.

[12:00] So, so by no means am I casting any judgment here. Uh, and I am by no means going to start throwing stones. Not, not at all. Um, I think a good example that you could look at of someone who has been divorced and is still serving the Lord, uh, with all his might is Jimmy Fitzgerald down at Turkey Hill.

He's doing wonderful work down there. We all know him. It's a public example. Uh, it's a good example. So I, I want to make that clear, um, before we, before we look at this, but this is what the apostle Paul says in first Corinthians seven verses 10 and 11.

It says now to the married, I command yet not I, but the Lord commands that a wife is not to depart from her husband.

Even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband.

And a husband is not to divorce his wife. Do you get that? It says that a wife is not to depart from her husband and a husband is not to divorce his wife.

[13:14] So that's what the apostle Paul says there in Corinthians about marriage and then about divorce. And so kind of with that in mind, let's go back to Matthew to our passage. And we'll, we'll take a look at what, uh, what it has to say there.

Now this, the majority of this passage, actually almost the entirety of the passage is a conversation between Jesus and some Pharisees. And then at the end, Jesus and Peter, or, uh, actually, you know what?

Sorry. It doesn't say which, uh, which disciple. One of the disciples, perhaps Peter. It was always Peter. He's always talking. Uh, Matthew, Matthew 19 verse one says this.

It says, now it came to pass when Jesus had finished these sayings. And I'd like to pause there. What sayings had Jesus just finished? Well, who knows?

That was three weeks ago. Back when we were in Matthew, we've had two holidays since then. Uh, no, let's look. So in Matthew 18, like the 20 verses preceding today's passage, Jesus is talking about forgiveness.

[14:19] And I think there's a good lesson in there, right? Like verse 35 says, so my heavenly father also will do to you. If each of you from his heart does not forgive his brother, his trespasses.

Uh, Matthew 18 verse 21. Uh, Peter, there's Peter. I knew Peter was in here somewhere, uh, said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me?

And I forgive him seven times. And Jesus said, I say to you up to 70 times seven, right? And so it's talking about forgiveness. Immediately after that, Jesus talks about, uh, the debtor who was

forgiven his debt, who then went to shake down the man who owed him money.

So the debtor is forgiven, then goes and shakes every last dime out of the man who owes him money. And Jesus says, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. You as sinners and us as a church have been forgiven.

Therefore we ought to forgive others their trespass. Super important. And I think kind of, kind of cool that immediately after teaching about forgiveness and it says after Jesus had finished these sayings, these sayings on forgiveness, then he talks about marriage and he talks about divorce.

[15:44] And I would say that it will do you well to understand forgiveness before entering into marriage or a relationship of any kind.

Uh, my wife, like I said, love her to death. She's my favorite person on earth. Uh, there's zero other people I would rather marry than her. Very thankful to be married to her.

She is still a sinner, probably less so than me. I am much more of a sinner than her. But at the end of the day, in our marriage, albeit a great marriage, it is two sinners living in dangerously close proximity to one another.

Forgiveness has to be a part of that picture. Do you get that? That, does that make sense? It's like in any marriage or relationship, it is two imperfect people interacting with one another on a daily, even more than daily, hourly, minutely, moment by moment basis.

I work from home and she homeschools the kids. We are together a lot. So forgiveness has to be part of the picture. Uh, now I will say Lydia has very graciously dealt with me, uh, throughout our time together.

[16:56] Uh, early on I had to work through a lot of issues around forgiveness. Uh, I did not want to forgive and I did not particularly like being forgiven because I still wanted to be mad. Uh, and we still deal with this from time to time.

Uh, but you have to understand forgiveness and understand that you have been forgiven of your sin before entering into marriage or relationship.

So I just thought that was an interesting aside there in verse one. Uh, but it says that, uh, after it finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan and great multitudes followed him and he healed them there.

Then the Pharisees came to him, testing him and saying to him, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?

Uh, I believe the ESV says for any reason. Uh, so the Pharisees come and they ask him this question and the question is bad.

[17:56] Uh, and the question is bad in two ways. One, excuse me, one, uh, Pharisees are only concerned with the lawfulness of the divorce, which is always their problem.

Uh, they are looking for concrete, black and white. Is it right? Is it wrong? Letter of the law, not spirit of the law answers.

Is it lawful? And we already know from like back in Matthew chapter five, Jesus all the time said that the law says, but I say the law says, but I say, and one of the things that's in there is adultery.

He says, the law says you should not commit adultery. But I say to look at a woman with lust in your heart is the same as committing the act of adultery. And so they're saying, is it lawful?

And that's not even the right question. In fact, the law is about to be fulfilled and done away with on the cross in eight chapters. You know, at the end of Matthew 27, there's no more law.

[19:00] So anyway, wrong question, wrong frame of mind. Is it lawful? Who cares if it's lawful? But then they say to divorce his wife for just any reason.

So like without any, any issue at all, can I just divorce my wife? And Jesus answers. And he says, have you not read that he who made them at the beginning made them male and female and said, for this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife in the two shall become one flesh.

I'm in the middle of, uh, framing my basement. In fact, I was working on it a little bit last night and, uh, I wanted to take two boards and glue them together or nail them together and have them as a demonstration that once they are glued together, uh, specifically when they're glued together, you can pry some nails apart, but man, if you have wood glue on there, it's tough.

They are one board. The two boards have become one board and you cannot separate them. They are stuck together. They are bound together. Hey, good news, everyone.

At 20 minutes, my screensaver comes on and takes the, uh, video away. So anyway, as I was saying, uh, two boards together can't pry them apart.

[20:28] That's what God, that's what Jesus says here. He says that the two, uh, the two have become one flesh. Uh, and it's interesting that he goes to the design, uh, of marriage in the design, even in creation that he made them male and female, uh, and that the two shall become one again, uh, all being adults here with the male and female, we know how the male reproductive organ and the female reproductive organ work.

Obviously the two of those can come together and create offspring, which is exactly why God created Adam and Eve. He said, be fruitful and multiply. Uh, and literally the two of those together become one flesh.

You have kids, which is a set of your chromosomes and your wife's chromosomes coming together as one kid in the flesh. Uh, and it's a miraculous design.

It's a beautiful design. And it's a design where those, uh, those two sets of people are not to be undone. Uh, God has joined them together and they are not to be undone.

And that's exactly what he says in verse six. He says, so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate what God has joined together.

[21:46] Let not man separate. So the Pharisees once again, put their foot in their mouth and they say, uh, they, they try to argue with him, which I would always recommend against arguing with God.

Uh, and they say, why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce and to put her away? Now that should raise some red flags to you.

Uh, it did to me. Uh, it didn't sound right that Moses would command anyone to divorce their wife. And Jesus subtly corrects them in his response.

He said to them in verse eight, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts permitted, the ESV would say allowed you to divorce your wives.

But from the beginning, it was not. So again, from the beginning, the two become one. What God has joined, let not man separate. Jesus says, Moses didn't command you to divorce your wife, but because of your stubbornness, because of the hardness of your heart, because of your sin, Moses allowed divorce.

[23:01] He permitted divorce. Now I got to tell you, I'm pretty unfamiliar with that, uh, in, in regards to the Mosaic law in divorce.

And so I went and looked it up and, uh, it's in the book of Deuteronomy. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Deuteronomy is not how the song goes.

Um, Deuteronomy chapter 24, which is after, uh, numbers there. Verse one, and this is very much letter of the law here.

So, uh, a bit of a boring read, but, but this is, uh, an interesting, interesting note. So this is Moses allowing or permitting divorce in the law.

It says this when a man takes a wife and married her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her.

[23:59] And he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house. When she has departed from his house and goes off and becomes another man's wife.

If the latter husband, husband number two detests her poor lady and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house.

Or if the latter husband, husband number two dies, who took her as his wife, then the former husband, husband number one who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled for that is an abomination before the Lord.

And you shall not bring sin on the land, which the Lord, your God is giving you as an inheritance. So that verse one kind of reads like, yeah, you could kind of just divorce your wife.

Like that's how I read it. It says like, if, if it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes, because he has found some uncleanness in her. Like that's pretty arbitrary.

[25:07] You know, that's not, that's, that's very ambiguous. Like, eh, I detest you because you're unclean. Okay. Bye. Like that. I don't know.

It definitely seems like Moses is permitting or allowing, uh, a certificate of divorce to be written kind of willy nilly. And Jesus says, yeah, he allowed that.

He permitted that because of the stubbornness of your hearts. And because of the hardness of your hearts, he allowed the certificate of divorce to heaven. But from the beginning, that was not the intent.

Yes. The letter of the law allows it, but the spirit of the law and the one who wrote the law, God designed it in such a way that man and woman shall be joined together.

The two becoming one flesh, what God has joined, let no man separate. It's so interesting. That spirit of the law, the design from the very beginning is exactly what Paul tells us in first Corinthians seven, that the wife is not to depart from her husband and the husband is not to give her a certificate of divorce.

[26:21] Now, kind of an interesting plot twist here in verse nine, Jesus goes on to, to mention, uh, an edge case of, of divorce, uh, in regards to immorality.

If there's some immorality involved. And again, the immorality here is pretty ambiguous. He doesn't explicitly say what it is. Um, but it's interesting that Jesus brings us up in verse nine.

He says, and I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality and marries another commits adultery.

And whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery. And so here Jesus brings up almost a, I don't want to say a loophole.

That sounds really wrong. Um, an exception, a, a scenario, maybe that's all it is, is a scenario that if the cause of the divorce is immorality, then the, the husband and the wife can remarry.

[27:37] But other than that, if the cause of the divorce is not immorality, then the husband and the wife, if they were to remarry were, are to be committing adultery.

Kind of an interesting, weird add on to the end of this chapter, but it must be important because Jesus mentions the exact same thing word for word in Matthew chapter five, uh, during his sermon on the Mount, Jesus is going through those lists of like, you have heard it said, but now I say the law says this, but now I say, uh, he says this in Matthew chapter five, verse 31, furthermore, it has been said, whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.

And that again is Moses, uh, permitting or allowing the divorce. But I say to you, verse 32, whoever divorces his wife for any reason, except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery.

And whoever marries a woman who is a divorced commits adultery. So once again, there seems to be this, uh, this edge case, this scenario where if the divorce happens because of sexual immorality, the man, uh, or the woman is expunged from adultery.

If they are to remarry, look, I don't know. I don't understand why, why that is. I mean, it kind of makes sense, right? Like, it's not like the divorce was just because of, uh, the buzzword you hear is irreconcilable differences.

[29:15] Um, it was because of immorality. So, I mean, it makes, it makes sense, but it's just an interesting thing that Jesus two times, uh, mentions this case of if the divorce is due to sexual immorality, uh, the husband or the wife, uh, is expunged and is free to remarry.

It's kind of an interesting thing. Again, I would say that Paul, uh, in Corinthians, uh, would, would say husbands are not to divorce wives.

Wives are not to depart from their, uh, husbands. You know, when you get married, you take a vow until death do we part. Um, in the design from the beginning has been that the two joining together, uh, into one flesh shall not be separated.

Um, so anyway, kind of an interesting edge case. And I love the disciples response here in verse 10. They say, if such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.

Hey, this sounds like too many rules for me. I'm out. I don't want to get married. Uh, not, not true at all. That's not my opinion. That's what the disciples are saying. And I think it's kind of funny. Uh, but he said, all cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given.

[30:35] Uh, I would say that marriage is a wonderful thing. It is designed from the very beginning from the Lord. You know, God, uh, Vodibachum says this, and I've stolen a couple of times now.

Uh, but Vodibachum says that in the very beginning, in the book of Genesis, God's creating the earth and he creates all kinds of things. He creates the earth. He creates the water, creates the land and it's good.

And it's good. And it's good. He creates the fish. He creates the birds. He creates the animals and it's good. And it's good. And it's good. He creates man and he's good. And then finally it says it is not good.

And the only thing that's not good is that it wasn't good for man to be alone. And so God fashions Eve out of Adam's rib, brings her to him as his wife.

The two become one flesh. And what God has joined, let not man separate. And the command is to be fruitful and to multiply. And then it was good. The first not good thing was for man to be alone.

[31:35] So marriage is a great thing. It is designed by God. It is a picture of Christ in the church both ways for the wife's submission to the husband and for the husband's love and nourishment of his wife.

And so hopefully you get something out of this from the book of Matthew here. And yeah, I will see you guys next week.