

Message #65 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

"Divorce Is Not A Sin-Part II"

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to conclude my thoughts on the subject of divorce. In the previous message we talked about how divorce, itself, is not a sin. The hardness of heart which brings about a divorce definitely is a sin, yet the divorce itself is not. Jesus explained to us that it wasn't what went into a man that defiled him, but rather that which comes out of a man. It isn't that which takes place on the outside that is the cause for alarm, but that which takes place in the heart. Divorce takes place on the outside. It is a physical experience written in a legal document. A divorce is not, technically speaking, the reason to approach God in a state of repentance. What you need to repent of is your hardness of heart that caused the divorce in the first place.

And this is the central point of these two messages on divorce. Please don't let yourself be destroyed by well meaning Christians who condemn you for being divorced and remarried. There is no such thing as the unforgivable sin of divorce. Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is the only unforgivable sin.

And I'll reiterate one more time before going on to the next part of the subject that there is nothing good about divorce. I'm not suggesting that divorce is something we should look forward to, or that it is something that God wants. I'm just saying that divorce is the result of sin, not the sin itself, and therefore the only thing you can repent of is the sin of hardness of heart. Because the actual sin itself is not divorce, you cannot repent of it. And like I said in the previous

message, no, I'm not splitting hairs. It's very important that everyone should understand that the actual divorce itself is not the sin, but the actual sin is hardness of heart.

Now, Satan accuses us, but can only successfully accuse us when we are convinced that we have sinned, but have not yet repented of that sin. The devil knows that if you think divorce is a sin, then you can never be free by repentance, because the divorce never goes away. Christians should realize that escape from guilt surrounding divorce is by the repentance for the hardness of heart which messed your life up so completely. No, divorce is not something good, but rather, it is the consequence for the sin you have already committed by being hard of heart. It is important to remember this so that you can repent of the sin, instead of trying to repent of the consequence. Consequences are always suffered when sin occurs. If you get a divorce you will suffer the consequences that accompany it. However, as I said, there is only one unpardonable sin in the Bible, and that is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. God will forgive you for your sin of hardness of heart. It is not an unforgivable sin. But the divorce, because it is a consequence of sin and not the actual sin itself, is not something that can be repented of. You cannot repent of a consequence of sin. God doesn't forgive you for consequences. When you sin, and you don't turn away from your sin, eventually you will earn the consequences. God will not take them away from you, for they are a learning experience for you. We know that consequences follow after sins, yet we also know that God is a forgiver of sins. Consequences for sin are God's way of chastening us, not God's way of condemning us.

But, let's change the direction of our subject and for a moment discuss the importance of marriage, and what it accomplishes, besides the bringing forth of children. In order to understand the boundaries of marriage correctly we must recognize that when sin entered the world, Adam and Eve were naked. However, before they sinned they were not aware of their nakedness. But after sin had been committed, Adam and Eve recognized that they were naked and that they required a covering to hide their shame. The shame that Adam and Eve felt was brought about by their sin, and their nakedness manifested it. Flesh has no shame without sin. Of course, no one in this world is sinless, even in the best of times. The lack of clothing allows the flesh to be seen, and brings shame because it reveals the fleshly nature of man, that sinful nature of humankind.

The real cure for nakedness is righteousness. Perfect righteousness is a robe which covers the flesh. Yes we can have a pair of denims, a shirt, jacket, shoes, or whatever, and these can be a physical way of temporarily blocking the shame of nakedness. However, eternal righteousness through Jesus Christ will take away the shame forever. Of course, robes of righteousness are not made of physical cloth, but are spiritual coverings. But because we are still locked in these physical bodies, even spiritual coverings will not eternally take away the shame of nakedness. Therefore, God has ordained that we can eventually be separated from our flesh in order that we might never experience the shame of nakedness again. As it says in 1 Corinthians 15:50, "Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven."

In scripture God's people are referred to as the bride of Christ. When we finally come to the marriage supper of the lamb we will be clothed with a robe of righteousness. Our bodies of flesh

will change in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. We shall no longer be carnal, we shall no longer be children of flesh. But until such time as we see our Lord coming for us in the clouds of heaven, we must be content with the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ. He is our righteousness. When a man marries a woman he gives the woman some of his covering, and in this manner he takes away her reproach. Let me explain. In the Old Testament which gives our physical understanding of God's principles, we see the principle established that a woman needs a covering. The story of Ruth and Boaz demonstrate this, for when Ruth visited Boaz on the threshing floor at night, the Bible tells us that Boaz promised to spread his skirt over Ruth, which symbolically demonstrated that he was willing to become her husband, which would take away her shame of being childless. Although Ruth had been married before, her husband had died without leaving her any children. Therefore she had no inheritance. Because the Bible had special provisions for these situations, Boaz acted according to the Law of Redemption, and took Ruth to wife in order to raise up children to Ruth's dead husband, in order that the inheritance to the family would not be cut off. He became her covering, in order that she would no longer suffer the shame of being childless.

The shame of Ruth's loss was covered over, and glory was restored to her by the children which she had through Boaz. In the same sense, Jesus Christ takes away our shame, and provides the groom's covering to us as prospective brides. A woman's shame, in Old Testament times, was when she had no provider, no inheritance for her children, and especially when she had no children. The husband provides these things. Jesus Christ is our provider. He is Jehovah-Jirah, just as each husband should be provider to his spouse in order to take away her reproach.

Now, let's return to the subject of divorce, and talk about how divorce and remarriage so closely represents an act of the unpardonable sin. No, divorce and remarriage is not the unpardonable sin. The only unpardonable sin is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. To blaspheme means to attribute evil toward something. To blaspheme the Holy Spirit is to attribute evil toward God's Spirit. When marriages fail, and people remarry, this is not an act of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. The sin that has transpired is hardness of heart. It is a lack of love and mercy which has continued until it has made a mess of everything. The hardness of heart may even have led to acts of adultery by one or both partners. However, this is still not an unpardonable sin.

The church is full of incorrect doctrines which attempt to convince men and women that as long as they are in a second marriage, they cannot be forgiven because they have not yet repented of that second marriage. These men and women are very often treated as if they had committed an unpardonable sin. But, once again I would like to remind you that you don't repent of a consequence of sin, but you repent of the sin that caused the consequence. The sin which destroys marriage is hardness of heart. Therefore, when you finally wake up one day and realize how great a mess you have really caused by your hardness of heart, then you can repent. If you truly go before God in truth and in spirit and repent of the evil that you have done he will forgive you.

Yes, I know this is contrary to most of the churches current doctrine. However, according to the Bible you have not yet committed the unpardonable sin. But current church attitudes concerning divorce are based on the assumption that divorce is a sin, and therefore, if you are divorced, you are still sinning unless you restore your former marriage, or remain unmarried for the rest of your life. But the sin is not divorce, but rather, it is a consequence. Even though many churches try to claim that you cannot be forgiven if you are remarried, this is not according to scripture. There is ample proof from Old Testament scripture that remarriage was practiced without the person being condemned. No, the divorce is never considered to be a good thing, but God's mercy is greater than any sin that can be committed except, as I stated before, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The problem with today's church doctrine is that it claims that people are wilfully sinning continually when they are remarried. However, once again we see that the refusal to grant mercy to remarried individuals is based on the assumption that it is divorce that is the sin, rather than divorce being the consequence of sin.

Now, here's the real problem concerning the incorrect doctrine. Because of this incorrect view, many ministers claim that the sin of adultery happens over and over and over when a person is remarried because they are continually committing adultery with another person. Although I can understand where they get the concept, I must say that they have misinterpreted the scripture because they do not fully understand the terminology they are using. Let's take a look at the word adultery. Let's break it down a little.

The word adultery means an act of adulterating. To cause adulteration is to make something impure. As an example, let's consider a glass of pure water. To start with, the water is pure. If we put a single particle of dirt into the water, the water becomes adulterated. It becomes impure. Now, notice what happens when we put another particle of dirt into the water. Although we have added more dirt to the water, the water does not become impure, for it is already impure. The water might be muddied more and more as we add more dirt to the water, but the change from pure water to becoming impure water only takes place at the first act of adding the dirt. It is the same thing for adultery. When a person is married, they have a pure relationship. They are two marriage partners who have become one flesh. The purity of a marriage is based on the premise that they are one flesh, and not that they are righteous. Now, in order to adulterate this marriage, you would have to add another person to the equation, kind of like adding a particle of dirt to the glass of pure water. When one of the marriage partners commits adultery they are actually adding another person to the flesh. Instead of being one flesh of two people, you have a third person in the mixture which isn't part of the oneness of the marriage union. The result is contrary to the principles of God's word. God's Word states that a man and woman become one flesh, and if another man or another woman is added to that equation, then the content of that flesh has become adulterated, it has become impure.

Now, let's put this into perspective concerning a marriage relationship itself. Let's say that we have a marriage between a man and a woman, which initially is pure. Let's say, by way of example, that the woman has an extramarital affair. At this time there is evidence of hardness of heart, for she has not had proper love and consideration for her mate. Because of her hardness of

heart she has committed adultery. She has introduced another person into the one flesh that existed between her and her spouse. The marriage has just become adulterated. It has become impure. If the woman carries on the affair with the man, or even with many other men, she will not cause her marriage to become adulterated each time, for it is already adulterated by the first act of adultery. Now, I'm not saying that she is not making things worse, or that her wickedness is not becoming greater. I'm only pointing out to you that the definition of adultery only means that something pure has been made impure by adding a, quote, foreign object, unquote. The foreign object in this case is the third party which causes adulteration of the one flesh concept between the man and woman.

Now, let's say that this woman finally recognizes her sin of hardness of heart against her spouse. And, let's say that she truly repents of this sin, and therefore her hardness of heart is gone. At the moment she is forgiven, the marriage becomes pure once again. The marriage is no longer adulterated. It no longer has any foreign objects mixed into it. Once again the man and woman are one flesh. Even though the marriage had become adulterated, as soon as the repentance has truly taken place, the sin is forgiven and the marriage once again becomes pure. If the woman falls prey to the temptation again after she has truly repented, and commits adultery again, then the marriage will once again become adulterated. It will change from a state of purity into a state of impurity when the third-party is introduced into the equation. However, once again, if the woman is convicted of her hardness of heart, and truly repents, meaning to turn away from the direction she was heading, then she will be forgiven. And, once again, the marriage is restored to purity. But of course, this doesn't mean that the consequences of her actions will not have to be realized. Consequences always follow sin. In fact, an extreme consequence of continued hardness of heart is divorce. Divorce can become the end result if the hardness of heart is not overcome.

Let's take the act of adultery one step further. Let's compare the act of adultery between a man and a woman with the act of adultery between a Christian and God. In this way we can envision how the unforgivable sin of blasphemy occurs. When we become one flesh with God through the saving grace of Jesus Christ, we have, initially, a pure relationship. But because we are flesh and blood, and because we always seem to slide backward into Satan's worldliness, we end up committing adultery against God. Just as Israel and Judah, represented as two sisters in the Old Testament, committed acts of adultery against God, we also become subject to the temptations of this world and enter into adultery. Yes, we're just like Israel and Judah. And if we didn't have Jesus Christ to be the covering for our sins, we would become condemned, just as Judah and Israel faced condemnation. However, when we recognize that our heart has become hardened against God, and we truly turn from our wickedness in full repentance, God forgives us. At this time our marriage with God once again becomes pure; it becomes unadulterated.

But what happens when people become so hard of heart that they no longer feel remorse for their sin and no longer consider that serving God is a good thing. If they continue in their errant path, and eventually come to the place that they no longer care enough for God to consider him good

enough to continue the relationship with him, and they then make a decision either consciously or unconsciously to go after the gifts and delicacies of this present world that Satan offers to them, they will, at this time, have committed the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. They have once determined that God is good, but have now determined that God is not good after all. And they have not done this through ignorance of who God really is, but have made their choice after having known God in spirit.

So, let's look at one more scripture that applies to divorce. Matthew 19:9 says, "And I say to you, Whoever shall put his wife away, except because of fornication, and marries another, commits adultery: and whoever marries her that is put away commits adultery."

Notice that Jesus plainly gave an exception for divorce concerning adultery. He said that when a man divorces his wife and either he remarries or another man marries the divorced wife, adultery takes place. Now think about this. Jesus made an exception. In other words, if the act of adultery takes place, and then the man divorces his wife because of it, he could remarry without committing adultery. And in fact, another man could marry the divorced woman and he would not be committing adultery either. This was the exception to the rule. And the reason that adultery would not be committed in this case is because the adultery had already taken place. When the woman committed adultery, and the man divorced her, he could be remarried without committing adultery because the marriage had already been adulterated. The marriage had already been made impure. Remember, you cannot make something impure when it is already impure. It is a one time thing. Yes, the act which adulterates the marriage can take place over and over again, but this will not make the marriage impure because it has already been made impure.

And this is the point that people need to understand who either would like to remarry or have already remarried. Either you or your first spouse have caused your marriage to be adulterated. If it was you, then you can repent of your hardness of heart, make a firm determination, and start your life over. If your spouse committed adultery, and you divorced them, then you can remarry without fear of committing adultery because the adulteration of the marriage has already been accomplished and you cannot adulterate it again.

Please do not let other Christian people condemn you for being remarried. Adulteration of the marriage does not take place over and over and over again. It happens once. As long as you have repented for any hardness of heart that you have exhibited, then you have nothing else to worry about. God forgives hardness of heart. Yes, the consequences of a divorce will affect your life, but you will not be sinning over and over again.