

I want you to know, I struggle greatly with writing on this subject, because of how easy it is to be seen as the troublemaker. Some have even demonized me in their minds and hearts. I think, "Lord, is there not anything else I could talk about?" I'll try to describe the response I get when I ask this question. STONE SILENCE! Oy! Not even a little sound comes, not even a "still small voice". Nothing! So, this is how I interpret it. Once God has given a mission, why then should we ask Him for another one? I have found His silence is a sublime, profound answer to my question. He has called, He has given a mission, His silence is actually a confirmation that He hasn't changed His mind. Am I then to become double minded? Of course not! Am I to fear man? No again! You know better, right? God is sometimes silent with us, because He has already spoken!

So here we go!

Jesus said, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." Luke 14:26

Although I have deep love for some whom I've known for many years, if I do not tell the truth concerning the Word of God, if you or anyone else will not tell the truth concerning the Word of God, but rather, instead of, hating in the sense of what Jesus spoke of, some would rather love the father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and in hardness of heart, being found to be hating Jesus in preferment to loving whoever we wish to love in His place; much to their own surprise even, when they are found out by their unwillingness to obey Jesus. If this is the case, then these Words of Jesus should be taken heed to today! For what we are dealing with here, what Jesus is dealing with, is a hardening of the heart against Him. If you do not hate! A very strong term used, to get the point across. If you do not hate in comparison to your love of Jesus, your willingness to give up all, everyone and everything to Jesus; Then Jesus says, "you are not worthy of Him." Strong language! Let me remind everyone, these are not my words I'm saying! These are the Words of Jesus! You can forget my words; you can drop them like rocks tossed in a lake. But I would beg you today, don't treat Jesus in this way. If you get angry at me, I'm willing to tell you that the anger you have is not about me. I'm just the simple little messenger. It's much easier to hit a messenger with a stone, than it is to throw something at Jesus. Misplaced anger is just that, misplaced.

I want to talk about something that's been on my heart for a long time. I talk about it all the time. It is a large part of the burden in my soul, for my brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Hardness of heart:

Do you remember reading about a conversation Jesus had with the religious leadership in Israel, concerning hardness of heart?

They questioned Jesus on something Moses wrote. The original Law handed down to Moses by God, was overwritten, and a permission was given, an exception, if you will, to the Law of God, given to Moses, by Moses.

“The Pharisees came and asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?” testing Him.”

Normally in Jesus ministry, when referring the Law, the Law that He was to fulfill, He often began by saying, “It is written”! He did not mention anything about Moses, but His perspective was that of His Father’s Will. Saying it is written, for Jesus, this is like saying, “My Father said!” Jesus, at times, said “You have heard that it was said”! Especially do we find Him teaching like this in Matthew 5. Jesus was quoting from the Law of God, His Father! In other words, you might view it like, “You have heard that My Father had said to them of old!” (btw, if you have time, a study of these things Jesus mentions in Matthew 5 is a worthy study for anyone’s time)

Remember this! Jesus said of Himself, that He only did what He saw His Father doing. He said, “Not My Will but Thy Will be done!” The Jews wanted to kill Him for this, of course, because of their self-love.

“18 Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. **20** For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.”

When asked the Question, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?” Notice, carefully, how Jesus chooses to answer their question. He only uses this perspective here, in Mark 10, in a particular instance, addressing a particular question. And His response is very different in context with any other conversation on the Law in question. He does not refer to what His Father has said. No! He takes it right to Moses himself. Not, what is written, nor what was said of old (by His Father), but rather, He makes a distinction here. He differentiates between the Law of His Father, or, what the Commands of God are, through the mediator Moses, in this instance, and what Moses himself permitted because of hardness of heart. He asks:

Vs 3 “And He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?”

Vs 4 “They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss *her*.”

There are so many things here that should be addressed, but I’ll never get through this paper. One quick notice that I won’t go into now, is that the writing was only against the woman. This is quite telling. Perhaps in the future we can discuss this together.

Herein is the main problem with what Moses permitted, although Jesus asked what Moses commanded, they did not answer that. Notice, they responded with what Moses permitted, not commanded. This is something very important not to miss in this dialogue. Jesus new their answer was not actually concerning the Law, of which He Himself was the fulfillment of. They were going on a permitted exception, not actual law of God. This is the problem, this is where the trouble began, and this is where the leading Rabbis of Jesus day went into deep error. If Moses could permit things that went contrary to the Law of God, the Rabbis saw this as a way to permit other things, according to the very same principle that Moses used. The main term for this error, in Jesus' day, was "Traditions". It doesn't end with the Rabbis of New Testament times! My friends, it is going on today in Christendom. In the Church! Men are still using their self-made permission slips to sin against a Holy God. And this dreadful trend is ever increasing in speed, down a steep, perilous slope into perdition. One more thing on this; if the Jews had not given in to the hardness of heart in this way, they would not have missed, MISSED! their messiah. He stood right in front of them, and yet, they did not see Him. How are we doing with Jesus words today, any different? Do we accept His teaching, or are we giving out permission slips?

5 "And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept."

What was the issue with the hardness of heart, that would provoke a writing of such a character as to, in effect, dismiss the Commands of God? Hardness against what?

Since we are talking about marriage in general. And the question specially has to do with marriage, the hardness must be in regard to marriage. This is simple reasoning, and I know you don't need it spelled out so simply, but I ask you to allow me to use this reasoning for a little while right here. And yet, this hardness was indicative of a fundamental hardness, that proved itself time and time again. Hardness of hatred of God. Of His Perfect Ways. Of His Holiness! Jesus was hated for the very same reason His Father was hated.

Most of us who regularly read our Bibles are aware of the fact that The Children of Israel were known, throughout the Bible, to be a stiff necked, rebellious people. God on many occasions addressed the hardness of their hearts. We today are no different, when it gets right down to it. We today repeat the same old sinful ways that the Children of Israel committed in their day, for the very same reasons! It is due to the same condition, that is, hardness of heart!

What did the Law actually say concerning Adultery? Or for that matter, as in Matthew 5, concerning fornication. During the betrothal, engagement, if fornication (premarital promiscuity/sexual immorality) was found out, only in a Jewish context is this found, as Matthew is a book written to Jews, for Jews, there is allowed a writing of "separation". No other culture in all the earth had actual betrothal/engagement as a legal commitment like the Jews did. It was unique to them. Originally, the Children of Israel

took the marriage bond quite seriously, as this bond was severely punished if one or the other sinned against it.

The answer Jesus was giving in Luke was concerning actual married couples, not engaged couples. The question in Matthew 5 was meant to be an indictment on Jesus Himself, whose parents (Joseph being His stepdad) were not married when He was conceived of the Holy Spirit. This was a real issue in Israel, and many young women were stoned to death over this very thing. This is the reason why Joseph, we are told, protected Mary when she was found with child, and when He realized the Hand of God, He married Mary. He had every right according to Jewish Law, to separate, and even stone Mary, if not for the intervention of the Angel who appeared to Him in a dream. Let's take a look at the verses:

Matthew

5:31 "Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' **32** But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality (the word here for sexual immorality is actually pornea, which means fornication, that is, sex before marriage. Jesus is dealing, again, with those who are betrothed to be married, not those already married. The writing of separation was for those who were engaged, according to Jewish tradition.) causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery."

Notice how Jesus uses the phrase "it has been said", and not "You have heard that it was said to those of old". He, again, is differentiating between His Father and Moses. What His Father said, that is, what His Father gave as commandments, and what Moses permitted. Jesus followed His Father, in everything.

So, we come to the actual Law of Jesus' Father concerning adultery. His Law was stoning to death. Now, the hardening of the heart was against this Law of Jesus' Father, God. The Children of Israel continually rebelled, and this is another area where they made their demands of Moses. They would rather rebel like nothing ever seen before, if Moses didn't fix this problem. They already were giving themselves over to sexual immorality with neighboring peoples of the land. The stoning thing was too much for them. Although, even in Jesus' day, according to Jewish records, stoning's, conveniently, when it served self-righteous indignation/purposes, were still carried out. For an example, the woman caught in adultery in John 1:11. If indeed God had allowed writing of divorce, why were they stoning the women? The hypocrisy was potent! Also, there was stoning for blasphemy, and whatever else the religious leaders saw fit to stone people for. Stephen, the Apostles, etc. The key, it would seem, to successfully getting yourself stoned was the ability to generate enough hate. Hate, not love. Think about this a minute. In order to keep the Commands of God, one would need hate in their heart, rather than love of God to keep His commandments. I'm reminded of Phinehas, who, for zeal of God, speared through a fellow Israelite man and a Midianite woman while they lay together in the man's tent, driving the spear through the man and

the belly of the woman, thereby bringing to an end the plague sent by God to punish Israel for sexually intermingling with the Midianites. God's commands were too harsh for Israel in the end, however. The zeal for God waned, self-love took over, and traditions were made. Conveniently so. To the point where one of the two leading Rabbi's of Jesus day, Helel, even sunk to the point of saying, divorce for any reason, even if your wife burns the dinner, you can write her a writing of divorce, and she's out on the streets, as simple as that. They took what Moses permitted, and sunk deeper and deeper into abominable traditions, of which Jesus addressed on numerous occasions, calling them whited tombs, brood of vipers, of their father the devil. One of these days I can write on this from the book of Malachi, where this horrific habit of divorce was flinging unwanted wives and their children out on the streets. They were as widows, and their children lived as orphans. And God spoke, through the prophet Malachi, that "God hates divorce!" We can get to that study at another time.

The point here is, once the permission was given, the writing of divorcement, the cancer grew and grew. The reason is because the permission to do so was contrary to the Law of Jesus' Father. This is the point Jesus made to those who asked. So, Jesus now turns to His Father, and away from what Moses had said on his own initiative. He just flies right over it!

6 "But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' **7** 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, **8** and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. **9** Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

What is Jesus saying? He purposefully went far back in time, well before Moses, well before the Patriarch Abraham, long before Noah, before Enoch, Before Cain and Able; Jesus went all the way back to Adam and Eve. He now spoke of the Law of the Almighty from creation itself. If you're aware of what the Apostle John wrote in his Gospel, and first epistle concerning Jesus as the One Who made all things, you have a special insight on this event in Genesis 2.

The main point of Jesus' dialogue here is: "what God has joined together, let not man separate." Does man have a right to usurp the Authority of God? Absolutely not! Not even for his own pleasure? Absolutely not! What about if he's been abused, or cheated on, or abandoned? No, absolutely not! We don't have space here to get into all of these things. If anyone has questions, please send them and we can discuss them together. So, what is the Law concerning abuse, adultery, abandonment, just plain old not liking her anymore? The Law of the Kingdom of God in Christ Jesus is FORGIVENESS! 70 TIMES 7. We'll get into this a little later.

What God joins, when God joins two people, a man and a woman in marriage, it is not by the will of man that they are joined in God's eyes. The will of man may attempt to join who knows what, man with man, woman with woman, but does it count? No, absolutely not! Only God can join together a man and a woman into one flesh. This is important to see. It is God who joins them. He does it! He joins two into one! What God joins

together, let not man separate! What about a judge in a divorce court? No! Absolutely not! Only God has the authority, the power, to cause two to become one flesh! Man has no part in it! Even to the point that, in God's eyes, they are no longer two, but one flesh. What about a pastor who says its ok? No! Absolutely not, what God joins together, let not man put asunder! Pastors have no authority on the matter, counselors have no right, no authority to challenge God's Word. What if it's mutual agreement? No! Absolutely not! What God has joined, let no man separate.

What Moses has done with his permission, not law on betrothal/engagement, but permission concerning, as it is taken, married couples, was to take the right that only God has, to separate what God has joined together, and He alone has decided that it is death itself, that can separate two who are one. This is not my teaching, my friends, it is the teaching of Jesus Christ! Do you love Him? Do you know Him?

Jesus closes this conversation in the Gospel of Mark with this statement, after His disciples questioned Him on it:

10 In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter. 11 So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. 12 And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Jesus wasn't adding a second point to the conversation. He was asked again, by the disciples, about the same matter. And Jesus gave a clear, unequivocal answer.

This is not dependent on whether a person is quote "saved" or not. There were no "saved" and "unsaved" when Jesus taught these things. These are truths for all men, everywhere, since the Garden of Eden, since Adam and Eve.

I could go into the transferring of Matthew 5:32 to Matthew 19:9 by Erasmus in his little Greek translation, maybe another time. I may have already done that, I'm not sure. I'll have to check my notes. I would like to go into that in depth sometime, if not. It's worth taking a good look at. This paper is already going to be a long one. I'll try to stick to just a few points, before I write a book on you! Lol.

So, you may know someone who has been divorced. Maybe that person was married young, and divorced young, and then remarried. Now, they have a beautiful family, great kids, wonderful "in-laws", two cars, swimming pool, whatever, and so on. This couple is genuinely in love, they love their kids, and their kids love them. They are involved in a local church, a local outreach, a local food bank. They may even sing in the choir, teach Sunday school, and all their friends love them. What I have to say may seem very harsh to some. I find no pleasure in it. We must go back to the scripture I shared at the beginning of this paper.

Jesus said, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." Luke 14:26

Herein, my friends, is where the hardness begins. Because of the hardness of their hearts, Moses wrote those things, giving permission, when he had no authority to do it. Jesus did not fulfill the permission's of Moses, Jesus fulfilled the Law of God. The hardness comes in opposition to the Law of God. Once, under the old Covenant, it was stoning. The twinkling of the great Light is seen piercing through in the prophets. We see it plain in Isaiah, where he wrote of "A Great Light" shining in the darkness. The book of Hosea, a light shining in darkness, as an example of what was to come. Rather than destruction, there would be setting captives free! Rather than stoning of an adulterous wife, FORGIVENESS, MERCY!

It is hard to think on, but we must! If anyone does not hate his wife and children. What can this mean? We have heard often the simple treatment of this, that we shouldn't put wife our children, jobs or country, first, before God. But this is not the context. The context is hardness of heart. Hardness of heart is rejection of the One we harden against. It is an act of hatred. We, according to Jesus, cannot serve two masters. We will hate the one and love the other. Jesus commands that we love Him, above all others, even to the point, in comparison, of hating the other. Amazing stuff this is.

If Jesus says that divorce and remarriage is adultery, and one of us finds ourselves involved in a remarriage. Whether we truly, fully, love in this relationship, this is where the hardness lies. Can we say that we are willing to hate what God hates? Are we willing to choose between God and our self, let alone wife, children, husband, etc? Jesus said it is better to go into eternity lame, cutting off a hand, or plucking out an eye, than to enter Hell Fire whole. Can we truly say we are willing to hate a relationship we are in, in comparison to our love for Jesus. This is what is at stake my friends. If you are in a divorce/remarriage relationship, or in any sinful relationship, such as premarital sexual relation, you are in a state of hardness of heart, and need to come to repentance. No matter what the cost. This is what Jesus taught, and it is what He means to Judge according to. What do you think is really important?

And finally. What is the Law concerning the Kingdom of Heaven today, with Jesus as King? Hallelujah!

The Law, as it differs from Jewish tradition, is forgiveness! We are commanded, by the Law giver, to forgive! Not divorce, certainly no remarriage, but forgive. Forgive what? Everything! How often? Not just 7 times a day, but 70 times 7! But what if our spouse wants to leave? As the Apostle Paul wrote, let them leave, but you cannot divorce what you have no authority to separate. You have no rights that allow you to reject the command of God in this matter, for it was God who joined you. The divorce courts have no say in the Throne Room of the Almighty Creator. Pastors who dispense "permission" slips will be held accountable to God for this devilish act. Does God then divorce people? May it never be! He does not divorce people, but rather, He commands us to

forgive, and to love one another. What if the spouse does not seek forgiveness? Then wait for it! If you decide to divorce and remarry, you deny your spouse the ability to repent, and ask forgiveness. This is a great sin my friends. You are literally the cause of his or her committing adultery if you divorce. Even if you decide to stay "single", which is a godless term from the devil, for anyone who is married. You are never single until death do you part. But lets say you decide you will remain "single" after a divorce. If you allow this so called divorce, you are accountable because of giving the divorce credence. Your spouse will take it as a release from the marriage, and because of your divorcing, will feel free to marry again. This is an abomination to God, and only the pagan world should be the one's practicing this, not Christians!

When a man or woman divorces from their spouse, according to the spirit of this world, the anti-Christ spirit, then marries another, that man, or that woman, defiles him/her self because they have had sexual relations with more than one man or one woman still living. When a woman divorces and remarries, she defiles herself in this way. She is a defiled woman. So with the man. So, if a second divorce takes place, now she thinks she is "single", and her first husband, or wife, dies, does this then release her to marry again a third husband? No, because she is still being defiled by having sexual relation with more than one living man, or, in case of the man, more than one living woman. If he or she needs to be married, he or she must repent of the adultery, and go to the one living who they had sexual relation with, forgive, love, and marry! What if she goes ahead and marries for the third time, having first husband dying, and second husband living. She cannot marry in the sight of God, for only God marries, only God bonds us in marriage, that we become one flesh. This would be considered fornication, sexual immorality.

It is much cleaner a thing to repent, forgive, and love God with the whole heart, soul, body, and love our neighbor as our self.

If you are thinking of divorcing, please reconsider, listen to the Lord of All, who says to you and to me, Forgive! Forgive! Forgive! And Love! Love! Love! If you have been divorced, make reconciliation to your spouse a priority. For you have been joined together by God Himself, and no man, no court, can separate what God has joined. Do what you have to do, repent, say you're sorry, obey God by loving your spouse. If you are divorced and remarried, or are married to someone who has been divorced, repent of this adulterous relationship. Hate what God Hates, love what God loves. Get yourself right with God now, while you have opportunity. Nothing else can matter more. If you're first spouse had died, and you remarried before your first spouse died. You have been living in an adulterous relationship, you have never been married in the sight of God. Only God can marry, only God can make the bond, and man cannot break it asunder, only death can accomplish that. You must cease living as a married couple, until you are actually married in the sight of God. If your first husband, or wife, has died, you are free to marry. Now, if you are on a third husband, your first husband dies, your second husband is alive, and you are living with a third husband. You have been an adulterous from the moment you defiled yourself with a second living man. You are not married but living in sin. Repent, go to the second husband, ask for forgiveness, and love him or her

as a wife should love her husband, or a man should love his wife, and get married. If the second husband is divorced himself, then the third. If the third was divorced, then stop it! For heaven's sake, stop! Start reading your bible, start praying, start living for Jesus, and stop all of this nonsense!

Is it any wonder we are hearing of Churches, like the Methodist Church, with such a rich history, now, after decades of divorce and remarriage, abortion, and now, the acceptance of homosexual marriages? Do you think for a moment God bonds two men as He does a man and a woman? Or two women? Jesus already answered this question when He answered the question on whether divorce was allowed. God made them male and female.

Once the permission slips are handed out, the hardening is completed. How then, shall they come to repentance? How can those who have hardened their hearts to the Savior now come and take up their cross and follow Him? Will they hate wife, husband, sister, brother, children, father, mother, father n law, mother n law, in comparison to their love of Jesus, shown in their obedience? I spoke with a retired missionary a few weeks ago, who defended divorce and remarriage. After about an hour, what it came down to was, he was unwilling to follow the teaching of Jesus, for he even said so. He had dispensed too many permission slips to retract. I found it heart breaking. I don't believe he knew what was at stake.

There is so much more that could be written on the subject. This paper is not meant to be a marriage counseling. There are times, circumstances, when an abusive husband, or wife for that matter, needs to be escaped from. This does not condone Divorce, no, not at all. The truth still applies, "What God has joined, let no man separate." For the one who is suffering in a marriage, give your spouse time to repent, even if it takes the rest of your life.

I hope you can say, with all your heart, that I love Jesus, with my whole heart!