

Divorce and Wealth: No Sugar Coating, Matthew ch.19

There are rules and there is forgiveness for breaking the rules. This is a biblical guarantee. But there isn't a Biblical doctrine of forgiveness for ignoring the rules as if one has a special "hall pass" from God to do as he pleases. Far too many evangelical Christians today operate under the false notion that, because they are redeemed and guaranteed a spot in the kingdom, they can now ignore the rules as it suits them. Yet, rather than judging those as either false believers or deliberately ignorant, lets look at Jesus words regarding the issue.

The Pharisees and Divorce, Q&A, v.1-12. Parallel: Mark 10:1-12

- The question: "is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?"
 - The historical practice: surrounding culture and the Mosaic rule, Deut. 24:1-4. _____
 - The Rabbi Hillel school of thought. _____
 - Rabbinic tradition, Rabbi Shemei, _____
 - The prevailing notion at Jesus' time: _____
- The answer: (two parts)
 - God's purpose in creating us in our heterosexual nature.
 - *From the beginning he made them male and female . . . in order for them to be attracted and bond together. . . and become one flesh.* _____
 - *What God has joined together, let no man separate.* _____
 - Yet regarding Moses and the "certificate of divorce."
 - Hardness of heart (*sklerocardia, gr.*), Obstinate, stubborn: emotional rejection and isolation. _____
 - Exception: immorality (*pornea, gr.*), a slightly broader definition might include betrayal, emotional adultery, etc. _____
- A brief, enigmatic statement regarding eunuchs.
 - *He who is able to accept this . . .* _____
- The Mosaic application of this rule to the nation of Israel. _____

Children interrupt the "adult" discussion, v.13-15.

- The disciples at first try to run them off. _____
- But Jesus again uses childlikeness to describe the character he desires in us. _____

The rich man and wealth, v.16-26. Mark 10:17-31. Luke 18:18-30.

- The question: "*what good thing must I do to obtain eternal life?*"
 - Seeking a guarantee by virtue of an act. _____
- Faithfulness viewed as an act, rather than demonstrated by our actions. _____
- The answer: a rebuttal and a challenge.
 - "*Why do you ask me about what is good?*" (See Mark 10:17)
 - Sort of, *are you making fun of me or are you serious?* _____
 - The short answer "*keep the commandments.*"
 - Though the young man indicated he had kept them all, Jesus next response betrays that. _____
 - "*If you wish to be complete,*" *liquidate your wealth and give it to the poor.* _____
 - Wealth was an obstacle for him: a betrayal of the first commandment. _____
 - Mark 10:21, Jesus displayed a definite love for him. _____
 - "*Easier for a camel . . .*" _____
 - The disciples "*then who can be saved?*" _____
 - But, "*with God, all things are possible.*" _____

Closing dialogue with the disciples, v.27-30.

- "*We have left everything and followed you; what then will there be for us?*" _____
 - A fearful question, but answered with compassion and promise, *You shall reign with me.* _____
- The promise to all who follow Jesus.
 - *If you leave (or sacrifice) your life for my name's sake you shall receive many times as much, and inherit eternal life.* _____

The final verse, long form: *those of you who attempt to be the first in line and get the greatest glory will be moved to the back of the line. Those who are humble and willing to be last will be moved to the front.*