

## Matthew 19:1-30

### Ethics, Morality, and the Kingdom

The chapter is significant because it marks the end of Jesus' ministry in Galilee where Jesus has been preaching since the outset of His ministry.

A)The change in direction will ultimately bring Jesus to Jerusalem and to the cross.

B)Several issues of ethics and morality are raised in this chapter.

- Questions about divorce (1–15)
- Questions about the commandments (16–22)
- Questions about what God's kingdom offers (23–30)

#### #1 Questions about divorce (1–15)

Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings, that He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there.

He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea: **Great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there:**

Matthew points this out so his readers understand that the popularity and power of Jesus was not restricted to Galilee. **It was also evident in Judea.**

#### The Pharisees attempt to trap Jesus.

The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

A)**For just any reason:** These words were the center of the debate

B)The issue of divorce and remarriage was the hot controversy of the day.

1)Two schools of thought proposed by two influential rabbis fueled the debate..

#### C)Each school of thought understood that the Mosaic law gave permission for divorce in

**Deuteronomy 24:1:** When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house.

D)Each side knew and believed Deuteronomy 24:1; the question was, "What constitutes uncleanness?"

#### Hillel was the liberal rabbi who had a broad view of uncleanness

A)For example, saying anything negative about her husband's mother would render a wife unclean and justify her husband divorcing her.

B)So if your hubby is a mama's boy – don't say anything negative about his mom/ He could divorce you

#### C)Or if a husband saw a woman fairer to look upon than his wife,

1)his wife would be unclean by comparison and he would be justified in divorcing her.

D)**If your wife – cooked you a bad meal!** – Divorce her: -

1)My wife has never cooked a bad meal - Your wives – not mine – COME ON – IMAGINE THIS.

E)Needless to say, Hillel had a great following among those looking for a way out of their marriages.

#### The other school- Rabbi Shammai, (a more strict and unpopular view) was very conservative

A)He said there were virtually no grounds for divorce.

B)Thus, the debate concerning divorce and remarriage was as heated as it is in the church today.

#### Pharisees Testing Him:

A)So in their question, the Pharisees tried to get Jesus to side with one teaching or the other.

B)If He agreed with the lax school of Rabbi Hillel, it was clear that Jesus did not take the Law of Moses seriously.

#### C)If He agreed with the strict school of Rabbi Shammai,

1)then Jesus would become unpopular with the multitude, who generally liked access to an easy divorce.

D)The religious leaders had reason to believe they had caught Jesus on the horns of a dilemma.

**V.4** And He answered and said to them, “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, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

**Note this: Jesus takes them back to the word - Have you not read:**

**A)The Pharisees wanted to talk about divorce and rabbinical opinions,**

**B)But Jesus goes back to the Scriptures to talk about the origins of marriage.**

C)Always a good practice: Our opinion doesn't matter – what does God's word say: that is what matters

**D)Jesus began with the first marriage – the one between Adam and Eve. He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’**

**In quoting Genesis 1:27, Jesus indicated first that God made men and women different.**

- Different sources of creation/ Dust / Rib
- Different times of creation
- Different names at creation

Genesis: 2:23And Adam said:  
“This is now bone of my bones  
And flesh of my flesh;  
She shall be called Woman,  
Because she was taken out of Man.”

**It was as if Adam said, “You are different than me; but you were made for me and from me.**

A)We are not the same, but we are one

**B)Despite these fundamental, creation-rooted differences between the natures of men and women,**

1)God says: V.5 ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? <sup>6</sup> So then, they are no longer two but one flesh.

**C)God calls a husband and wife to come together as one, as one flesh.**

1)There is a ONENESS – God recognizes in marriage that goes way beyond the sexual UNION

**D)The law of God was not, that a man should forsake his wife whenever he had a mind to it,**

1)but that he should rather forsake his father and mother than his wife; that he should cleave unto his wife,

**V.6 Therefore what God has joined together let not man separate:**

**A) Jesus is seeking to elevate their view of marriage**

- A spiritual and physical oneness in God's eyes

**B)Marriage is a binding promise with God and each other**

**1)3 Fold cord is not easily broken – two lives intertwined in the Lord and his Word.**

“If marriage is grounded in creation, in the way God has made us, then it cannot be reduced to a merely covenantal relationship that breaks down when the covenantal promises are broken.” (D.A. Carson)

**C)Jesus is wanting us to understand that Divorce cannot be seen as a ready option when things are difficult in married life.**

**D)Marriage is like a mirror; it reflects what we put into it.**

1)If one or both partners has divorce readily in their mind as a convenient option, divorce will be much more likely.

V.7 They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?” He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 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.”

**The Pharisees wrongly thought that God commanded divorce where there was uncleanness.**

**A)One rabbinic saying of that day went: “If a man has a bad wife, it is a religious duty to divorce her.”**

B)Another said: that the man with a bad wife would never face hell, because he has paid for his sins on earth.

C)Another said that a bad wife is like leprosy to her husband, and the only way he could be cured is by divorce.

**But Jesus noted the difference between “command” and “permitted.”**

A)God never commands divorce, but He does permit it.

B)In the same way that God permitted the OT leaders to take more than one wife.

1)Even though he made it clear – kings were not to multiply wives – but many of them did.

C)God didn’t punish them- he didn’t remove them from being king –

1)He actually let them experience the ramifications of their decision.

D)You read the stories in the Bible of those who took more than one wife and it was never positive – **there were all kinds of family struggles because of it.**

**In the same way God allowed Slavery – he didn’t destroy a society for not recognizing that all men are created in the image of God.**

A)Human dignity is a huge part of the creation story

B)God allowed it – and mankind as a whole suffered greatly because of it

C)Moses allowed Divorce: He saw the hardness of the hearts between husbands and wives – hurt so deep – trust broken –

1)Hearts of the victims or hearts of the violator so hard that he allowed them to divorce their wives

D)But Jesus makes it clear – that was never God’s intent in the beginning –

1)What God has joined together – let not man separate.

**Jesus defines uncleanness:**

**Except for sexual immorality:**

A)Jesus interpreted the meaning of the word uncleanness in the Mosaic Law, showing that it refers to sexual immorality,

B)not just any random thing that might displease the husband.

C)Therefore, divorce – and the freedom to remarry without sin –

1)is only permitted in the case of sexual immorality.

**The ancient Greek word for sexual immorality is porneia.**

A)Porneia is a broad word, covering a wide span of sexual impropriety.

B)We get our English word Pornography from this word.

C)Jesus said: **Matthew 5:27,28** “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’<sup>28</sup> But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

D)Important to note: Lust means to look at someone and long for them sexually –

1)To fantasize about having sex with them.

**I point that out because I have had women say to me I caught my husband staring at a girl at the beach or I saw him take a second look – I want to Divorce him**

A)That is not what Jesus is saying in Matthew 5 – the whole point of that teaching was Sin starts in the heart

B)Long before the act – starts – fantasy – imagining what it would be like – be with someone.

C)But here in Matthew 19 by using the word Porneia Jesus is letting us know one may be guilty of sexual immorality without actually having actual sex.

**What Jesus says next is troubling to many people**  
V.9b - 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.”

**So If a person gets a divorce for any reason other than sexual immorality – and remarries**

A)They commit adultery?

**B)Worth noting: the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 7:15) added the case of abandonment by an unbelieving spouse**

**C)I have known people who have lived in a loveless marriage –**

**1)Lived under extreme emotional abuse**

**D)Lived with someone who was always lying – who they couldn't trust.**

**1)They said I can't handle this anymore – they divorced their spouse**

**Years went by – they are still walking with Jesus**

**A)Meet someone else – fall in love – get married**

**B)Are they living in Sin – are they committing adultery?**

**C)The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible**

**1)Galatians 5 – Those who are practicing adulterers will not inherit the Kingdom of heaven.**

**D)We also know that Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit – not adultery is the unpardonable sin**

**I think the key is in the word: Jesus said they commit adultery – not they are committing adultery.**

**A)The context of Jesus' answer is to Highlight God's view of Marriage.**

**B)The Bible teaches us that God hates divorce –**

**1)When someone steps out of a marriage – no reason**

**“Irreconcilable differences”**

**C)Hardness of heart – not trying –**

**1)To remarry – is to commit adultery in God's eyes.**

**Doesn't mean they cannot be forgiven and that a 2<sup>nd</sup> marriage cannot be blessed.**

**A)Again the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself**

**B)The most well known acts in scripture of adultery takes place with David and Bathsheba**

**1)Resulted in Murder of Bathsheba's husband**

**C)Cover up – David marries her – But when David finally is confronted and repents –**

**1)God forgives him –**

**D)I do think that repentance is necessary**

**1)Admit – Lord I bailed – Lord I gave up....**

**When we confess and repent – God is quick to forgive**

**A)In the story of David and Bathsheba – God does something – reveals he can bless a remarriage even one that is the result of ADULTERY**

**B)God gives Bathsheba a son and of all of God's Children – God picks that boy – Solomon**

**1)To be David's successor and radically blesses him**

**C)First 20 years – Solomon was Israel's all time greatest leader**

**But for his purpose here: Jesus is elevating marriage in a society that had torn it down**

**A)A society that had stripped away the importance in the eyes of God of the Covenant relationship**

**B)He wants them to understand the seriousness of that covenant and the ramifications of DIVORCE**

**His disciples said to Him, “If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” But He said to them, “All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: “For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it.”**

**The disciples understood Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce clearly.**

**A)They understood that it was not a commitment to be entered into quickly or lightly,**

**B)and considered that since marriage is so binding before God, then maybe it is better not to marry.**

**C)And I think that was the response that Jesus was hoping for: Marriage is serious business**

**1)Don't take it lightly**

D) This also highlights the fact that a good marriage takes work.

1) Thrive: Marriage is like a garden: Neglect it and things die and weeds grow

**The Disciples respond: Maybe it is better to not marry –**

A) Jesus doesn't say – no not what I am saying- everyone needs to be married.

B) Jesus doesn't say that at all. -

1) He instead says – not everyone can handle this

C) Mentions Eunuchs – speaks of those who voluntarily abstain from marriage.

C) Jesus here gave three kinds of eunuchs.

- Those who are born without the capacity for sex and marriage.
- Those who are made by others without the capacity for sex and marriage.
- Those who choose to live without sex and marriage for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

**Scripture: exalts singleness – Paul called it a gift**

A) Paul said: I wish more of you were single like me

B) More freedom to serve Jesus and less distractions

C) This subject came up when we were meeting with the singles in Cork Ireland

**How does a person know if they have the gift of singleness? - 1<sup>st</sup> you are single – not married**

A) How does someone know they are called to singleness? They don't desire a mate.

B) Their not struggling with lust all the time –

1) They are content being on their own.

C) Might not happen at first- a person as they get older can grow into it

1) Settled content – satisfied

**Jesus blesses little children.**

Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the

disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.

**I think the Lord has Matthew place this instance here in the gospel record to remind us of 3 things**

**#1 Children are affected the most in divorce**

A) Often the kids are overlooked –

B) Divorce is like two boards nailed together – pulled apart but holes remain

1) Often the holes are in the Kids

**#2 Children are important to Jesus**

A) The Disciples want to send them away: Jesus **REBUKED THEM** – strong – harsh

B) Let the little children come unto me – Children loved Jesus –

**#3 Dad's are called to be the spiritual leaders for their kids**

A) Of this same event Luke writes: “**And they brought unto him infants...**” (18:15).

B) The Greek pronoun he uses for “they” is masculine.

1) In other words, it was the men who brought their kids to Jesus. I like that!

**Questions about the commandments (vv. 16–26)**

16 Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”

17 So He said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

18 He said to Him, “Which ones?”

Jesus said, “ ‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ 19 ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ”

20 The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”

21 Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

**Now we spent a whole Sunday morning on this story about a month ago – briefly tonight**

A) Rich Young ruler – He is someone that we would call a seeker today.

B) He has it all – Power – Position – Prestige – Morality and religion – Not fulfilled

**THE QUESTION: “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”**

A) Eternal life = Age abiding life – Quality of Life.

**B) Despite all that he has and all that he has accomplished – Something missing.**

1) His life isn't what he hopes it would be

C) Something is missing – People today feel that too

**Notice Jesus' response: Why do you call me good? Jews taught - No one is good but one – that is God.**

B) Are you saying: I am equal with God

1) Do you see something different in me?

C) I think that was it- He was drawn to that in Jesus and others were too! – Difference

D) Then Jesus responds:

But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

18 He said to Him, “Which ones?”

**Now this is interesting: Jesus mentions commandments 5-9 – Skips 1-4 and #10**

A) Honor your father and your mother.

B) Don't Murder, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness against your neighbor.

C) So he gives him commands that all relate to how he treats people – and sums it all up with Lev. 19

1) Love your neighbor as your self.

**D) The man astonishingly responds: I have kept all of those things since I was a youth!!!!**

1) He wasn't blowing smoke –

E) Mark's account: Jesus looked at him and Loved him!

**Jesus saw in him a sincerely good man – A man who was trying hard to LIVE RIGHTLY.**

A) But there was a Problem: The man said: What else am I lacking.

B) Translation: I have tried religion – I am a very religious person: But still something is missing.

1) Despite his wealth, his power, his prestige and his religion – **He is still Restless!**

21 Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, (Telios = complete) go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

A) Why does Jesus say this to the man? Is Jesus against Wealth?

**B) The Bible doesn't say that Money is the root of all evil – but that the Love of money is.**

That was the Problem here: - This Young man loved his stuff.

A) Knowing his possessions were possessing him, Jesus' desire was to free this rich young ruler.

**B) “Simplify your life,” He said, “and follow Me.”**

C) Please understand that poverty does not produce automatic spirituality.

1) That's not what Jesus is saying. Many of the greatest men in Scripture were exceedingly wealthy.

D) Abraham, David, and Solomon; Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, and Joseph of Arimathea were all men of great possessions.

**Possessions are not inherently wrong.**

A) But when they begin to dictate how you spend your time and how you make decisions, you're in trouble.

B) Jesus was dealing with the particular issue in this man's life that was holding him back.

C) In your life, in my life, there might be another issue entirely.

**Because Jesus loves us so much: He will often PINPOINT the things that have our hearts.**

A) The things that are running the risk of taking the place of God in our lives.

**B)The thing that had this man’s heart was his wealth.**

**C)What has yours?**

**The man went away sad..... possessions**

23 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

25 When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, “**Who then can be saved?**”

**IMPOSSIBLE -**

26 But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

**Questions about what God’s kingdom offers (vv. 23–30)**

Then Peter answered and said to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

**Peter interjects (again). ‘We have left everything and followed you,’ ‘What then will we have?’**

**A)Jesus’ answer to Peter shows that it is no loss to have given up everything to follow Jesus.**

**B)There may be difficulty/suffering, persecution and death, involved in belonging to Jesus’ Kingdom**

**C)but the losses will be made good—those who follow him will receive a hundred times as much as they lost, along with eternal life.**

**D)This verse was a catalyst in my decision to leave family - friends – comforts – move to Oregon**

**God has so blessed us – beyond my wildest imaginations**

**A)Kingdom opportunities all over the world**

**B)Denise and I don’t take lightly – God calls**

**C)Married – Youth pastor \$700- before we got married sure?**

**1)Never have nice car – never own a house**

**But more than all that – Spiritual blessings for obedience to the call – far outweigh all of that**

**A)NEVER OUT GIVE GOD.**

**B)Often times people look at those who make decisions to leave it all – as stupid – giving up so much**

**C)But in reality – they in the big picture will be more wealthy – Spiritually**

**D)First last – last first - Faith grows – walk with Jesus grows – spiritual rewards grow**

**Jesus rewards Faithfulness – Well done good and faithful servant**

**What has Jesus called you to leave: **Be faithful and you will be rewarded!****