

**Series: God & Man & Woman #795**

**Title: Genesis 2.24, Part 13**

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world! Following along from where we left off yesterday, we want to move over to the New Testament and the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will end the week together with Jesus, which is always a good place to be. There never was a man like Jesus. He is the single most compelling person to ever live and who ever *will* live. Do you know Him? Are you drawn to Him? What is your relationship to Jesus?

I *love* Jesus! And one of the things I find so wonderfully compelling about Him is how He interprets the Scripture (what is now our Old Testament). We must remember that at the time Jesus receives this upcoming question from “some Pharisees,” the Bible has not been put together the way we have it today. The New Testament (of course) has yet to be written! But Jesus, the learned Jewish Rabbi, knew the Hebrew Scriptures best. And whenever Jesus references our Old Testament, I like to pay particular attention to what He says. The best commentator on the Bible is Jesus Christ: the Son of God! We have such an interpretation before us here in Matthew 19 and the verse the Lord comments on is Genesis 2.24!

If you want to find your place in Matthew chapter 19, you can do that while I remind you that you and I have been talking about Genesis 2.24 for a while. It is packed with truth. And what we’ve come to is this: the permanency of one’s marriage. Marriage, as God defines it, is to last a lifetime. Marriage is **one man as one flesh with one woman for one lifetime**. We have seen why this is true according to Genesis 2.24 and now let’s see why Jesus affirms this.

Now, if you have your place at Matthew chapter 19, join me as I read verses 1-9. This is the Gospel According to Matthew 19, beginning at verse 1. **“When Jesus had finished these words, He left Galilee and came into the region of Judea beyond the Jordan; <sup>2</sup> and large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there.**

**<sup>3</sup> Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, ‘Is it lawful *for a man* to divorce his wife for any reason *at all*?’ <sup>4</sup> And [Jesus] answered and said, ‘Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning made them male and female, <sup>5</sup> and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? <sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no person is to separate.’**

**<sup>7</sup> They said to [Jesus], ‘Why, then, did Moses command to give *her* a certificate of divorce and send her away?’ <sup>8</sup> [Jesus] said to them, ‘Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. <sup>9</sup> And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”**

That was Matthew 19, verses 1-9 and there is a lot to unpack here. We only have time to focus ourselves on two statements, and one in particular. Focus with me now. Let’s both avoid the temptation to digress from our journey in Genesis getting off course here in Matthew. We’re not yet ready to discuss Jesus’ view on divorce in full at this time. It’s Friday. The clock is ticking. It will soon be the weekend and our mandatory two-day break so let me draw your attention to some specific verses.

And capture our purpose for coming to Jesus. We want to see how He affirmed that marriage is between one man and one woman who become one flesh for one lifetime. I’ll use my marriage as an example. I married my wife in 2004 and it is God’s expectation that I will be married to her until death. Either her death or my death or both of our deaths. Death ends our marriage. Nothing else. That is what I mean by one lifetime. Well, in what way does Jesus address God’s command in Matthew 19? He does so at verse 6 and especially at verse 8.

You will (hopefully) have picked up on the fact that when Jesus answers the Pharisees' question Jesus immediately takes them back to the beginning and Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Verses 4 through 6, **"4 [Jesus] answered and said, 'Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh."** Genesis 1.27 says, **"27 So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."** That matches verse 4 here. And then in verse 5 Jesus directly quotes Genesis 2.24, adding in verse 6 that man and his wife are no longer two, but one flesh. It is remarkable how closely Matthew 19 reflects Genesis 1 and 2.

You can read all of this and see it for yourself this weekend. This is a worthwhile way to spend some time: read Genesis 1 and 2 and compare it to Matthew 19.1-9. What God says, Jesus says and what Jesus says, God says. It's a perfect match.

And listen now (again) to the remainder of verse 6. This is Jesus speaking, **"Therefore, what God has joined together, no person is to separate."** That sentence, right there, tells us that God intends for marriage to last a lifetime. When God puts together one man and one woman in marriage, no person is to separate them. Nothing is to separate husband and wife, wife and husband. At every wedding we attend the expectation must be that this is the only marriage the bride and groom will ever have in both of their lifetimes.

I'll say more about this in a minute, so if you have a question or criticism, hold onto it.

Let's go to the other comment of Jesus that greatly interests us. Look at (or listen) to verse 8. These are the words of Jesus again, **"8 [Jesus] said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.'** Ah, the Lord answers on why divorce was permitted in the Old Testament, *but* Jesus adds this key line: **"...but from the beginning it has not been this way."** In other words, from the very beginning marriage is designed to last a lifetime. Marriage is not designed to end in divorce. Divorce is a violation of God's command for marriage.

Wow! **"From the beginning it has not been this way."** I tell you: that ought to really stand out to us. Marriage is permanent. "Until death do us part," yes! It's true: there is no marriage in heaven or hell, but until we die our first marriage is to be our last marriage. Until we die our first marriage is to be our last marriage.

I hope you did not miss how Jesus points the Pharisees back to the beginning. What God has said in Genesis 2.24 *is* to be applied to every marriage, beginning with Adam and Eve, and lasting until the very final marriage that will ever exist before the coming judgment of God. Genesis 2.24 was not some temporary verse to be used to apply only to Adam and Eve or only for Old Testament times. It is not outdated nor is it outlandish. To agree that marriage is for one lifetime is not to be "old fashioned and out of touch." It is not!

To agree to this, to agree with Jesus, is to be *in touch with God!*

But obviously there is a mismatch between what God says and the direction in which many a marriage has gone. Many marriages are *not* one lifetime marriages. And this is true for multiple reasons, the most common of which is divorce. This is where the questions or even criticisms you might have had earlier come into the discussion. I, myself, alluded to these good and fair questions at the beginning of this week, on Monday.

What about divorce? OK, you might even agree, God's command, God's ideal is for one marriage that lasts one lifetime, but if a marriage ends in divorce, can the divorcee marry again? Is marrying after divorce acceptable to God? Someone else might critique my interpretation: one marriage lasting a lifetime? "My husband died young. I became a widow. Was it not alright by God that I have married again? Was God expecting me, even commanding me, to be an unmarried widow for the rest of my life?" And there is this: should one remain married for life to an abusive spouse? Is God actually expecting me to stay in this for a lifetime? And there are other questions, comments, and criticisms along these lines.

Can my interpretation of Genesis 2.24 stand up to these questions? We will soon need to end for today and for this week. So here is what I want to do: let's carry this over into Monday. I want to make certain we do not lose our focus on Genesis 2, verse 24 so we'll need to figure out a way forward on answering these questions while sticking to Genesis. I hope that you will be willing to come back again next week and hear what I have to say.

As we close out this week, we have finished answering our third question of Genesis 2.24: *what is marriage?* Marriage is **one man as one flesh with one woman for one lifetime**. Join me again on Monday for God Is!

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