

THE MEANING OF A HAPPY MARRIAGE

Matthew 19:1-15

Key Verses: 19:4-5

"'Haven't you read,' he replied, 'that at the beginning the Creator "made them male and female," and said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh"?'"

In the last passage we learned that we must be strong in the grace of our [Lord Jesus Christ](#). We also must grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ so that we can be happy all the time by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we must have compassion on a [lost person](#) more than the ninety-nine people who are men and women of fame and wealth. In order to grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we should not hold a grudge against anyone. We must forgive those who have wretchedly wronged us. Forgiveness should be unconditional. Most of all, we must know that we are great sinners as Paul testified about himself in 1 Timothy 1:15. It says, "...of whom I am the worst." We always think that St. Paul is the greatest. But he confessed about himself, "I am the worst sinner." King David became the root of Jesus not because he was a mighty warrior but because he confessed his sins before God with many tears, and he also forgave many kinds of adversaries instead of doing away with them. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us. Bible scholars entitled today's passage "Divorce." What a despicable title to think about! In fact, when we carefully study this passage, we find that it is about the true meaning of marriage. So let us think about happy marriage.

First, a happy marriage (1-6). Jesus had finished his Galilean ministry mainly in the Galilean district. Now he is on the way to Jerusalem. He arrived in the region of Judea. As you know well, the Samaritans were captured by the Assyrians and their blood was mixed. So the Judean people thought of them as if they were Gentiles. Most Jews avoided Samaritan soil and took a long route around it because Samaria occupied a huge territory between Galilee and Judea. But Jesus came to the region of Judea directly passing through Samaria (Jn 4:4). Jesus mainly worked in the Galilean district, healing the sick, preaching the gospel of Jesus and raising his disciples. But the people of the region of Judea knew who Jesus was. Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there out of his compassion (2).

His healing in the region of Judea was indeed gracious to look at. But the frantic Pharisees, because of their jealousy, tested Jesus. Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" (3) If Jesus had said, "You can divorce according to Moses' law," then his answer would contradict his own teaching, especially about love "love one another." If Jesus had said, "Do not divorce," Jesus would seem to be opposing the law of Moses. Here we must think about the Pharisees' mentality. There are so many questions they could ask Jesus. Why did they ask about divorce? The other day a man [divorced](#) his wife. Then the wife, out of her sense of betrayal, killed her three children. When the happy marriage was broken, her heart was broken. When her heart was broken,

she was totally irrational. Then innumerable demons crept into her soul and she did what she should not do. Divorce breaks mostly women's hearts; divorce also breaks children's hearts and makes them useless. There is a nice-looking boy. His parents divorced. Everybody feels he is like a vegetable man. One of the great men in the United States of America was a philanthropist who went around most parts of the world almost all his life. When his strength was exhausted, he came home. His wife talked about her lonely life without a husband. Then the famous philanthropist who had established 3,000 orphanages in many countries was upset, thinking that his wife did not understand his suffering and hard work, and only complained about her lonely life. When he was upset, a regiment of demons came into his soul. He decided to divorce his wife at the age of around seventy-eight and died after three days. The other day some said that a sixty-eight-year-old man divorced his wife simply because his wife was not young and beautiful enough. We learn that divorce is not a natural phenomenon; it is precisely the work of Satan. In this country so many divorces have been filed. At first, the courts of the United States of America carefully examined the cause of divorce and encouraged people not to divorce. But in 1970, American courts decided to allow uncontested divorce simply because they could not deal with so many divorces, and the budget for divorce court was too costly so much so that the court could not be maintained. So they decided that those who wanted to divorce could just divorce without any question. So in this country divorce is easier than cooking one pan of lasagna. The most sorrowful thing is not the divorced husband and wife, but their children. Most children trust their parents and they think their parents are number one in the world. But when they beat each other and divorce, their children lose the joy of life to live in the world. Finally their hearts are broken and they become homeless. We cannot understand homeless children's sorrow and the melancholy that overwhelms their daily lives. The Pharisees who asked about the divorce problem to test Jesus may have wanted to divorce the wife of their youth.

What did Jesus answer? Look at verse 4. "'Haven't you read,' he replied, 'that at the beginning the Creator "made them male and female..."'" This verse explains that God made the world and mankind to bless their marriage. Verse 5 says, "...and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.'" As you know well, every father thinks that his first son or his children love him most and that they are his possession forever. So they work hard and invest in them unsparingly. Fathers have great expectations, which are written about in many books. But when sons and daughters become grown-ups and finish their school studies, they only think about their future beautiful marriage. Sorry to say, but the Bible says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (5). This verse tells us that when a boy is grown up and gets married, he has already left his father and mother to be united to his wife. There was a beautiful wedding ceremony last October 9th. But the groom's father said to him, "If you have a wedding ceremony, don't go on a honeymoon and don't sleep with your wife. Come back to your father. After you get a Nobel Prize you can sleep with your wife." But his son, who had never disobeyed his father, disobeyed his father's instructions and enjoyed a beautiful honeymoon. Then there was no more room for his father in his heart, but only for his beautiful wife. His

father was upset. But his father had to know that a son is a son until he gets married, and a daughter is a daughter as long as her parents are alive. Sometimes it is better for us to know important sayings of the ancients. Parents and married couples sometimes forget the meaning of happy marriage. Jesus emphasized in verse 6: "So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." Jesus' defense against the Pharisees' question about divorce was, "So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." In this verse we learn that divorce is not at all possible. God instituted marriage. God ordained marriage. God blessed marriage. Marriage was established at the cost of each father's and mother's love and undying affection, for their children left them without reservation to marry. Marriage is not meeting together by chance. Marriage is the focal point of God's creation. So Jesus said to them in his apology, "Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." Marriage is a happy event. But marriage is related to the absolute providence of God. If anyone divorces, his relationship with God is automatically broken and he or she is cursed irrevocably. What is more, their children's hearts are broken and they don't grow up as normal human beings. The meaning of marriage is for young people to leave their fathers and mothers and become one and be happy as long as they live in this world. And what God has joined together, let man not separate. So married people cannot imagine even the idea to separate.

God is wise in matching a couple. One man is intelligent and his wife is gracious, but not so intelligent. One man is very hardworking and diligent and has a vision of world conquest with the gospel of Jesus, but his wife is like a genuine country girl. When we observe a couple, the husband and wife are very different and opposite in character and in their view of the world and way of using money. But when we prayerfully think about why they are so different, we find that it is God's wisdom. If two persons are just the same kind, then there is no harmony and universal beauty and their children cannot inherit both sides' good qualities of integrity and character. Most importantly, if a husband and a wife are not different, the world is boring. Because they are different, they have many stories to tell and there is ample reason to love each other. For two to become one takes a little time. But when two different persons become one, they can have two thousand horsepower and nothing is impossible for them.

Second, Jesus' answer to the Pharisees' theory of divorce (7-9). Look at verse 7. "'Why then,' they asked, 'did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?'" What the Pharisees asked was theoretically and rationally very right. But their motivation was diabolic. When we look back to Moses' time, we find that Moses' people were full of a slave mentality. What they wanted was to work and eat, sleep and mate, and quarrel and divorce. These are the main parts of slave people's life. Moses was a shepherd for six hundred thousand people who used to live in Egypt. Most of their petitions and complaints to Moses were about their wives. At that time women were objects of pleasure to men, and the society was male-dominant. So many Israelites did not like their wives and wanted to divorce. There were too many divorce petitions. Moses could not deal with their divorce problems. And if a man wanted to divorce his wife, he did as he pleased and divorced her anyway because of their slave culture. Finally, Moses

permitted divorce on the condition that a man must give his wife a certificate of divorce so that the divorced woman may have a chance to marry another man. Moses permitted divorce on the condition that they give the woman a certificate of divorce. It was to protect women from misery. At that time, to be born a woman was a tragedy, even if she was an Egyptian.

Look at verse 8. "Jesus replied, 'Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.'" In this verse Jesus urged, "But it was not this way from the beginning." When Jesus said this, Jesus was crying, understanding the agony and sorrow of Moses in being a shepherd for slave-like Israelites. Jesus continued in verse 9, "I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery." This verse clearly nails down that the motive of divorce is for the sake of adultery. When a man divorces, he has many reasons to divorce his wife. When a woman divorces her husband, she has mountain-like excuses. But Jesus tells the truth about the motivation of divorce: It is to commit adultery. Why are there so many divorces, even among senior citizens? According to Jesus, it is in order to commit adultery. We pray, "May God establish America as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." This prayer includes that the perverse and adulterous generation may be gone, and that the kingdom of God come in the hearts of young and old American people. We must pray with the prayer topic: "May God establish America as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," sometimes all night, sometimes with fasting. Most importantly, we must pray throughout our lifetimes. Whatever we do, it should be prayer itself.

Third, the disciples' surprise (10). Look at verse 10. "The disciples said to him, 'If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.'" This verse shows that the disciples were still very immature. They were not yet sanctified by the truth, and most of them were not married yet because of their ambition in Jesus. But they were indeed surprised by Jesus' lecture about a happy marriage. They did not understand what Jesus said about a happy marriage, but thought it was chaining together and enslavement of a husband and a wife. This is the reason there are so many homosexuals and lesbians. They think that if they marry, they would have to be responsible for their spouses and children. But they want to satisfy their physical desire, so they become homosexuals or lesbians. Human freedom without Jesus misguides people not to be responsible for something, even for their families. His disciples were so pessimistic about marriage and said, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry." There are so many immature people who do not marry because they don't want to be responsible for their wives or husbands. One man is almost a genius. But his smart mind made him calculative. He really wanted to marry from the age of nineteen. Now he is fifty, but he could not marry because he wanted to be free from any responsibility. He soothes his sorry feeling through painting. We should not be like the disciples who were surprised at Jesus' lecture about a happy marriage. We must learn Jesus' secret about happy marriage. We must learn before marriage how to be responsible persons and how to make harmony between different characters and personalities. We must learn before marriage the happiness of marriage in Jesus.

Fourth, the renouncement of marriage (11-12). Jesus understood the disciples. So he said in verse 11, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given." In other words, the secret of a happy marriage is not understood by man's calculation, but comes from God. Those who do not believe in God do not know the secret of a happy marriage. Jesus also said in verse 12, "some are eunuchs," and, some "have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven." Usually people want to marry a beautiful woman or a handsome man. That's the desire of ordinary people. But Jesus told them the truth that some became eunuchs. They were not necessarily physical eunuchs, but those who renounced marriage. Jesus is talking about many women who renounced marriage. Until the seventeenth century in the British Empire and in all the Catholic countries, if a family had two daughters, one had to become a nun. The world is perverse and immoral. It seems to be impossible. But it is possible when we pray, "May God make this nation a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" to the end.

Fifth, a pure mind like children (13-15). When Jesus and his disciples were talking about the happiness of marriage, children suddenly surrounded them and made a lot of noise. Probably Andrew and Philip, who had heavy marriage problems, rebuked them, "You children! Go away! Go away!" Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (14). He placed his hands on them, and he went on from there to Jerusalem. Those who are enslaved by the divorce problem and those who are paralyzed by the marriage problem cannot enter the kingdom of God. They should be as pure as children.

In this passage we learned the happiness of marriage and its principle, and at the same time, the motive of unhappy divorce. We must know: What God has joined together, let man not separate. And Moses did not give a certificate of divorce to a divorced woman for the sake of divorce; it was to protect underprivileged and sorrowful women who were divorced for no reason. May God bless us not to be like the Pharisees, but to remember Jesus' teaching about a happy marriage. In order to have a happy marriage, let's be as pure as children before marriage.