

The Hardness Of Your Heart

These Pharisees who came to the Lord Jesus with questions did not come looking for answers or seeking wisdom. They came tempting Him. These enemies of our Saviour designed their questions to trick, embarrass and divide. They made a god of their legalism and logic, and picked through the wreckage of broken lives like a pack of hungry dogs.

What about divorce?

Their question on divorce is an example. The Lord had come into the coasts of Judaea, bringing good news to sinners, teaching and preaching the gospel, and, Matthew tells us, healing the sick. The Pharisees callously interrupted all this with their intrusion. How often religion gets in the way of the gospel! We thank the Lord for promptly dismissing these men with an answer that has blessed the church of God ever since. An answer that teaches us of sovereign love, divine mercy, and persevering grace.

God hates putting away

These schoolmen argued about what reasons justified putting away one's wife in divorce but the Lord cut through their arguments by pointing to their own sin and cruelty. God hates divorce. He never intended marital separation and it was condoned through Moses only because of the hard-heartedness of the Jews. Moses' suffrage likely averted greater crimes such as domestic violence, or even murder, but God merely tolerated it. Even the bill of divorcement gave safeguards. It took time to prepare, had strict applications and lasting implications. It was designed not to be given lightly or hastily. It made the best of a bad situation.

A gracious gift

Everything about marriage in the sight of God points to better things than man's hard heart is capable of. Marriage was a creation gift from God to Adam. God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.' The woman, made from the side of the man, for the side of the man, shows God's design for marriage. There existed only two people when marriage was first instituted which excludes all possibility of divorce and remarriage in the original pattern.

Attacking marriage is attacking God

In God's world Adam and Eve were made male and female and their union divinely ordered such that when joined in marriage they were no longer two, but one flesh. God Himself joined them together and man dare not break them apart. Here we note how every attack upon marriage is an attack on God's will and wisdom. Lust, pride, self-interest and every evil that emanates from the human heart to disavow or deface wedlock is not merely an attack on marriage but an attack on God.

Marriage reveals a spiritual mystery

Furthermore, God the Holy Spirit tells us there is a spiritual mystery of eternal significance in marriage. Human marriage between a man and a woman is a type and shadow of Christ's union with His Bride, the church. As a husband bears headship in marriage so Christ is Head of the church and her Saviour. This relationship is fixed, unchangeable and everlasting.

Our Lord Jesus will never divorce His Bride. He will never send her away. He will never leave her for another, but will love, cherish, nurture, comfort and embrace her despite the waywardness, wickedness and worldliness of His betrothed. Paul asks, 'Hath God cast away his people? God forbid ... God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.'

Christ loved the church

It is true that we give our Saviour many reasons to reject us. The Bible does not sugar-coat unfaithfulness. We are guilty of spiritual adultery, fornication and prostituting our faith, yet the Lord Jesus Christ loves us still. Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it. This act of sacrificial love measures the grace that overcomes our sinful hearts, wins our affections, and earns our enduring gratitude. This is how and why our blessed Saviour won His Bride, 'That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish'.

Love triumphs and grace prevails

By the hardness of man's heart the patterns of divine wisdom are overthrown and trampled down, but God is not mocked. We reap what we sow. Sin brings sadness, hurt and disappointment, but we praise God that for the love of His people our Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins. He took up our flesh, joined Himself to our nature, betrothed us to Himself forever, and He never shall put us away.

Amen

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