

## Matthew ch 19 vs 16-30

Matthew ch 19 houses a few very powerful lessons for us today, last week we took a look at God's desire for and heart concerning marriage and divorce. Which is for many in our culture a very sensitive issue, and understandably so considering that we've had a 50% divorce rate for the last 30 yrs in America (statistically speaking). But that's all the more reason for looking into the scriptures and seeing what Jesus had to say concerning the issue, and is it lawful for a couple to get a divorce for just *any* reason? What are God's thoughts on divorce and what are we to do about it? How can it be prevented and what are we to do if we've become victims of divorce, or have gone through divorce.

The bible addresses all of the above and we touched on those topics with out specifically heading each one of them as it was addressed last week. Because in Deut 24 the allowance for divorce was given and the command for the certificate of divorce to be given to the woman in such case, and there were reasons for that that safe guarded the woman. The law was never given as a license to get rid of your wife at the slightest contention and find a new one. and Jesus made that very clear by taking the Pharisees clear back to the beginning to God's original plan and ideal for marriage. Because since God is infinite, it's logical to conclude that upon creating the man and the woman, He had an infinite amount of choices from which to choose from that would instigate how they would interact and relate to one another. He could've given them one or more than one of limitless options to choose from. He could've created 1 man and several women, He could've created 1 woman and several men, or what ever He wanted to, but He created 1 woman and 1 man thereby demonstrating His desire, and that being that 1 man and 1 woman was to be together and stay together until death separated them. Because in the beginning that was their only choice, Adam could only choose Eve, and Eve could only choose Adam, and God created them that way because that was His desire for their relationship. and Since that was God's original design, they serve as a model more or less for all who would follow after them as to what God's desire is for their lives.

So Jesus really shipwrecked their whole premise right from the beginning, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason? Jesus was basically saying that it wasn't lawful for man to divorce his wife period; that the law did not condone or approve of any such action. and So they were all, why then did Moses *command* to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away? and Jesus quickly corrected their misinterpretation by telling them basically that Moses never *commanded* anything. At best he permitted it and it was because of the hardness of your own hearts, and the very fact that it was ever even placed with in the law is really a witness against yourselves and your lack of ability to reconcile and it shows (again) the hardness of your own hearts. and As I said it was really a safe guard for the woman, not a license for the man (we discussed that last week you can get the tape).

The only legitimate reason in the eyes of God for divorce, or the only thing that can dissolve the marriage contract before God is sexual immorality on the behalf of one of the individuals with in the marriage. Or Paul said if a non-believing spouse leaves, let them go, because God has called us to peace and so we're not under bondage in such a case. and Of course we touched lightly on battery as well, but other than that it is sin in the eyes of God, and even as God never ordained sin, so He never ordained divorce either.

That's not to say that it's unforgivable and that God can't restore that individual and use their lives for His glory, but God sternly warns against it. and So if you love God, if it's at all possible, work it out and stay together. Jesus then blessed the children, after having taught on the issue of divorce and the pain and suffering and tornness that it brings, He turned to the children and laid hands on them and prayed for them, I believe emphasizing the necessity of bringing them to Jesus and investing Jesus in their lives. Divorce can destroy a child and cause them to turn bitter towards God, and so Jesus immediately turned to the kids and told the disciples to let them come to Him, and do not forbid them, for such is the kingdom of God. and Matt tells us that after He laid His hands on them, He departed from there.

Vs16

Now Marks gospel gives us a little more insight and tells us that this man came running to Jesus and knelt down before Him, Luke's gospel tells us that he was a ruler, now he doesn't say of what but more than likely of a local synagogue and he said to Jesus, (repeat). and Remember that Matthew uses those words "now behold" he wants us to be aware that something of significance is getting ready to take place that he wants you to pay close attention to. He's basically saying listen carefully or check this out and don't miss it. and The 1<sup>st</sup> thing we take notice of is that he isn't sure of his salvation, if he was he wouldn't have any question, but he approaches Jesus because he's uncertain. Where are you at this morning as it pertains to *your salvation*, are you sure that if today was your last day that you enter into the everlasting presence of God? Or is there a question in your heart much like this young mans and you find yourself with that same probing thought and so you're inquiring of the Lord this morning? What good thing should you do that you may have eternal life?

Which brings me to the next observation, by the very way that he approaches the Lord, you can tell that his theology is all messed up, and there are many who fit in to this category of "works related righteousness." What good thing shall *I do*, he's a moralist, and there are many who are like this today, basically Pharisytcal in their thinking and they think that if I could only do some magnanimous good deed, then I'll have God's favor and He'll give me eternal life. After all don't all good people go to heaven?

There are always those who are trying to work their way into God's favor, and into God's blessings. If you'll just pray *then* God will bless you, or if you'll only fast *then* God will bless you, or if you'll count so many beads and so say so many repetitious prayers, God will owe you and bless you.

There is always that tendency for people to want to do some work whereby God's favor will abide upon them. "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" You see in that very question lies a problem, because there isn't even one, single good work (or for that matter any number of good works) that you can do any kind of a work that will save you. The bible is very clear it's by God's grace that you are given salvation "*through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **not of works**, lest anyone should boast.*" Eph 2:8-9 John 3:16 "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*" Salvation is the free gift of God and it's granted by simple trust and belief in Jesus Christ and the finished work of atonement that He made for our sin by the shedding of His blood upon the cross. But notice Jesus doesn't immediately take that line with him, but rather He focuses on the way that he approached Him and the words that he used in his confronting him.

Vs17

Now the man had said to Jesus "Good Teacher" now in some of your bibles in vs 16 you may not have the word good, but if you cross reference this account with both Mark and Luke's record of this event they both have it recorded in this way. and So we know that that's the way that he approached the Lord, and so Jesus says here, (Read 1<sup>st</sup> ½) Now when you read this you're left with no choice but to draw 1 of 2 conclusions. Either Jesus is saying I am no good so don't call Me good, or He's saying I am God, and so the choice is yours, which do you think He's saying? and The conclusion that you draw is absolutely critical to your eternal well being. You see this man has had a divine revelation and he doesn't even realize it, and so Jesus is trying to get him to stop for a moment and think about what he just said and why he said it. He's seeking more or less to awaken his consciousness to the fact of what has just happened. He's getting close to something here.

Why did you call Me good? The reason you called Me good is because you, (even though you don't realize it) see something in Me, you recognize something about Me, why did you call Me good? You recall when Peter had that divine revelation when Jesus said to His disciples who do *you* say that I am? and Again that's the most important question you'll ever have to answer, but Peter said, "*You are the Christ the Son of the Living God.*" and Jesus said, "*blessed are you Simon bar Jonah, flesh and blood did not reveal this to you but My Father who is in heaven.*"

Peter had a divine revelation, Jesus is saying much the same thing here, why did you call Me good, flesh and blood didn't reveal that to you, you had a divine revelation. You called Me good, no one is good, the scriptures teach that very plainly "*There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.*"

It doesn't get much plainer than that, and so Jesus tells this young man, hey no one is good but one, and that is God, you called Me good because I am God. That's what Jesus is telling this young man, and he's observed in Jesus a certain quality of life, age abiding life, and he wants to know what do I have to do to obtain that it. and Jesus is beginning to lead this man in that direction 1<sup>st</sup> of all why did you call Me good, reason through why you've said what you've said. (Finish last ½ of vs 17)

#### Vs18-19

Now notice what Jesus didn't say, He didn't say, if you want to enter into life, you have to be baptized, the topic of baptism can split a church right down the middle, and yet when confronted about things necessary for everlasting life, Jesus didn't say you have to be baptized. Did Jesus command it, yes, do we do it, absolutely, is it a salvational issue no way, why because baptism is a work of the flesh. and Having begun in the Spirit are you going to be made perfect in the flesh, no, it's simply the way that we identify with His death and resurrection.

But I also find it interesting that Jesus here points him to the law, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> table of the Decalogue. He says nothing about the 1<sup>st</sup>, He didn't say You shall have no other gods before Me, or you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. Nor did He say remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, but rather He concentrated on the aspect of the law that dealt with his interaction with his fellow man. Why, because Jesus will meet you right where your at, this man is a moralist, he's looking for a good work, and so Jesus is meeting him where he's at and leading him on from there. and So He quotes the Decalogue right down the line in vs 18 and then in vs 19 He throws one in that's out of order to place emphasis on it "Honor your mother and father". It's pure speculation, but it's possible that this man had acquired his worldly wealth and yet his parents remained poor and he wasn't taking care of them and through the law of Korban (which Jesus had condemned earlier in Matt) still been justified. and Then Jesus throws the icing on the cake by quoting Lev 19:18 (read).

Now I am of the persuasion that Jesus was seeking here to reveal to this man in exactly how desperate of a situation that he was in. Why, because he wanted to know what good thing he could do to have eternal life, so Jesus pointed him to the law. Now the bible tells us that the law is a schoolmaster or a tutor that leads us to Christ, and how does it do that, by revealing to us what sin is so that we might recognize our need for a savior. So do you want to inherit salvation apart from a savior, fine, keep the law, but know that to break even one part of it (as far as God is concerned) is to be guilty of breaking all of it, so how do you fair. Oh and by the way the law was never meant to be understood on the physical plain either, it was meant to be understood on the spiritual plain, which means that it was intended to govern the inward attitudes of the heart, more than the outward actions of the body. So to even be angry at a person with out cause is to be a murderer in the eyes of God, to lust in your heart after another individual is to be an adulterer before God.

So what are you saying Jeff, that if I'm to obtain salvation through means of the law that if hatred ever seeds in my heart I'm out, or if I ever have an impure thought, I'm out, and that's just for starters. Yep, That's impossible, that's the point, when you realize the futility of trying to be righteous in and through your own efforts and your own strength, it drives you to Jesus. Who being God in the flesh was in all ways tempted as we are and yet with out sin and so it's only when we're covered (by faith) in His righteousness that we are given eternal life. Jesus was trying to show this young man his need and his inability to do any "work" worthy of eternal life.

Vs20

Put the brakes on here, all of these things I have kept from my youth! It's obvious at this point that this young man is not tracking with Jesus in regards to what Jesus was seeking to show him. He was reasoning purely in the physical, but not at all in the spiritual when Jesus said the words that I speak are spirit. and I can just imagine the Lord sort of sighing (not in frustration) but more in (I don't even know if disappointment is the right word) because this young man just isn't getting it. Now had he said teacher it's impossible that I should keep all the commandments, though I've never committed adultery physically my heart is wicked and sinful, then Jesus could've continued to reason with him leading him ultimately to Himself, which He will do in a moment anyway just out of love. But I want you to recognize the fact that even though this young man was a very good and upstanding citizen whose life had consisted of good works and doing right by people.

Notice that he still realized that there was something lacking in his life. He said what is it that I still lack, I am conscious of the fact that I don't have what you have, deep in my heart I know that there has to be something more than just living a good life and being wealthy. So many people think, man if I could just be rich *then I'd be happy, I'd be complete, I'd have no more needs.*

This young man had it all according to this world's standards, he was young, had good moral ethics, he was religious, and he was wealthy, but still found himself lacking. Now at this point we're told in Mark's gospel that Jesus' heart really went out to this young man, it says that he looked at him, meaning that He earnestly fixated His gaze upon him. And it tells us that Jesus loved him, in other words like so many times before Jesus upon hearing him and knowing the honesty of his heart, that he was sincere in his desire. and That to the best of his understanding he had done what he was supposed to do, but it just wasn't coming together for him in his heart, He was moved with compassion for him and so He cut to the chase and told him.

Vs21

Now with in this vs there is a 2-fold application, one for the individual young man, and one that's universal. There are those who try to make this "*go, sell what you have and give it to the poor*" the universal application. However that's an incorrect division of the word of truth. It is not necessary for every person who wished to be made perfect, or that word really means complete, or whole, not perfect as in sinless, to go and sell that they have and give it to the poor in order to have eternal life.

The real emphasis that Jesus is stressing here is that if you want to be made whole, come and follow Me. and What's found in between could more or less be in parentheses and you could fill it in however it might need be depending on the individual that you're speaking to. The point is that whatever it is that's hindering you from following Jesus in total abandonment needs to be removed from your life. with this guy it was money, with you it might be something totally different, for you Jesus might say if you want to be made whole get rid of your bass boat, or your satellite dish, or that career that is choking out your relationship with him or whatever. Whatever it is that has you in it's clutches and is keeping you from following Jesus has to go in order to find eternal life, you have to lose your life for His sake.

That is the universal demand, you can't have eternal life apart from following Jesus, and if he was to follow Jesus where would he wind up? Where was Jesus headed? The cross, following Jesus will always lead you to a crucified life and to the foot of the cross. and When you begin to inquire of the Lord about what needs to happen in your life in order for you to be made right with Him, He will always put the finger on whatever it is that's keeping you from following Him. For this man it was his riches and in reality Jesus is now confronting him with the 1<sup>st</sup> table of the law. Because his response to this challenge will reveal whether or not he has another god before the One true Living God, or not, it will reveal whether or not this man's relationship to God takes priority in his life or if something else does.

Vs22

Or maybe it should read his great possessions had him. It's OK to have things, just make sure that those things don't have you, you can not serve God and money, the bible is clear. Nor can one *“serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other.”* 1 Tim 6:8-10 says that, *“having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money (not money itself but the love of it) is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”*

Jesus said why did you call Me good, because you've recognized that I am God now follow Me. Get rid of that which is hindering, again for this man it was his money, and abstractly we all grieve for this young man who was so unwilling to give up his money for Jesus. and I'm not going to go on a binge here but before you chastise this young man for being unwilling to give up everything for the Lords sake check where your at with even your tithe. Now I don't look at the record books here so I don't know where your at, and usually the one's that get uptight when the issue comes up are the ones that aren't where they need to be.

As I was studying this I was kind of bummed when I started thinking about the fact that this guy was standing before the Lord and was unable to give up everything for Him. and The Lord just ministered to my heart, the fact that yeah it is unfortunate that this man wouldn't give up everything for His sake, but so many people won't even give up 10% for His sake. and I'm not going to turn this into a teaching on tithing, nor am I seeking to propagate that tithing is a salvational issue. But I just wanted to give you some food for thought, so before you get to down on this guy, examine your own willingness. Jesus probably won't ask you to give up all your money, He may, but probably not, but take the principle of the tithe, times about 90, and that's what this young man was faced with.

Vs23-24

Now you may've heard the teaching that in Israel there was a gate called the eye of the needle and the only way that a camel could get through was to have all of its load removed, get down on all 4s and grunt and squeeze to get through. That teaching didn't arise until centuries after Christ and it completely destroys what Jesus is trying to teach here. Because it teaches you that if you just struggle hard enough and grunt and groan enough that you can actually save yourself, that couldn't be farther from the truth of the gospel and more blasphemous in its opposition to the cross. It makes salvation possible for you apart from the cross if you just work hard enough at it, that's exactly the opposite of what Jesus is teaching here.

He's drawing a (somewhat humorous actually) picture of a literal camel, the biggest animal basically to that region, trying to squeeze through the literal eye of a needle. You say Jeff that's an impossibility, you got it, and that's what prompted the disciple's reaction.

Vs25

You see it was a commonly accepted view at that time that to be rich meant that you were living right and that God was in turn blessing your life, and so they're setting there thinking man if that's the odds of a rich man making it. One whose life has been blessed, then what kind of odds does that make for the rest of us.

Vs26

That vs is key and should be underlined in your bible, when the disciples asked Lord who can be saved, our ears should perk up, because that's something that we should all be very interested in, and what was Jesus' response? with man this is impossible! Remember that, He didn't say it takes concentrated effort, and you've got to strain and struggle and grunt and groan and give it your best. He said with man it's impossible, in other words man can not save himself, the moralist or anyone else, rich and poor alike there is no work that man can do that will merit him everlasting, age abiding, eternal life. It is a miraculous and gracious gift of God, because even though it's impossible with man with God all things are possible, it's even possible to save you. and God has done the impossible in saving the likes of us who know Him.

Remember the words of Jesus, with man it's impossible, and maybe this morning you don't know Jesus, you're not saved, God wants to do the impossible this morning and grant you salvation as well, but not by your works. But rather by you simply trusting in the work that was already accomplished in His Son Jesus at the cross, for there is no other name given among men by which we must be saved. Salvation only comes through Jesus Christ Jesus said I am the way the truth and the life and no man comes to the Father but by Me.

Vs27

Peter's mind is still back in the earlier conversation, when Jesus told the rich young man that if he forsook all that he would have treasure in heaven. and Peter's thinking hey, what he wouldn't do, we've done, so Lord what do we got coming.

Vs28

Many people believe that of the 24 elders on the 24 lesser thrones in heaven around the throne of God found in Rev 4:4 that 12 of the elders there are the 12 apostles. Whether or not that is fact we'll have to wait until we get there in order to find out. Still others believe that this is in direct reference to the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ here on the earth, again 1 day we'll all know for certain exactly what this statement entails, until then all we can do is speculate.

## Vs29

In other words when Jesus is the love of your life, and your relationship with Him costs you your relationship with those closest to you, even your immediate family. God will reward exceedingly your commitment to Him, because at the same time Jesus said if you don't love Me more than these you aren't worthy of Me. But again as Paul said all of the hurts of this world aren't even worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us. So just hold on to the plow and don't look back.

## Vs30

Again in God's kingdom, the way up is down, the way to greatness is in humility and servitude. To be great in this worlds sense is to be last in the kingdom, but to take on the role of the servant for the sake of Jesus Christ who Himself didn't come to be served but to serve, is to become great in the kingdom of God. But also in direct context Jesus could be speaking in regards to the Jewish nation, to whom the gospel was to be preached to 1<sup>st</sup>. Paul said Rom 1:16 "*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*" and Here we see that the apostles will be judging the 12 tribes why? Because they basically rejected their Messiah, and so those that were 1<sup>st</sup> will be last, and they that are last, that is the gentiles shall be 1<sup>st</sup>.