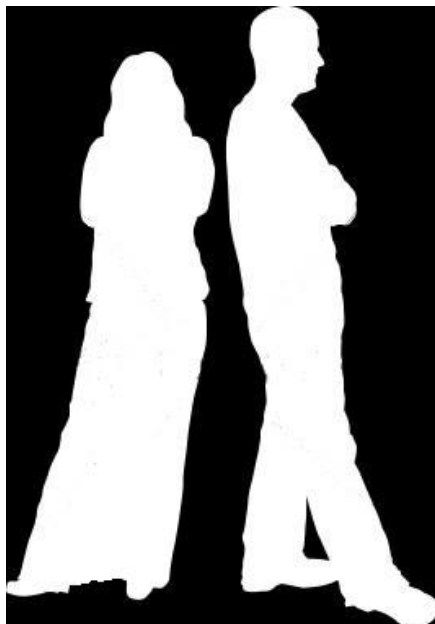


The Gospel of Matthew

Booklet 21 – Two Lessons

Lesson 57 - 19:1- 12

Lesson 58 - Matthew 19: 13-30



Teachings on Divorce

International ESL/Bible Lessons Intermediate to Advanced Level

Glenda Reece
Glenda@eslts.com

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Much of the material in these lessons come from *The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. I*, by William Barclay. Daily Study Bible Series. Other content comes from Bible Commentaries, Dictionaries and on-line sources. All pictures are from Google Images.

The Gospel Of Matthew

Material for this section is from William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew: The Daily Study Bible Series*. The Westminster Press. Philadelphia. 1975.

Matthew's Gospel is carefully designed.

Section One includes The Genealogy of Jesus, The Birth Story, The John the Baptist Sequences, Baptism and Temptation of Jesus.

Section Two, from Chapters 5-7 is The Sermon on the Mount, or the Teachings of Jesus. These are gathered into a group from all the time of Jesus's ministry. These are the *words* of Jesus.

Section Three shows the actions or *doings* of Jesus.

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| Chapter 18 | Gives the greatest of ethical teaching: humility, responsibility, self-renunciation, individual care, discipline, fellowship, and forgiveness. |
| Chapter 19 | Teaches on divorce and wealth. |

The Gospel Of Matthew

Lesson 57 - Matthew 19: 1-12 Divorce

19 When Jesus had finished saying these things, / he left Galilee / and went into the region of Judea / to the other side of the Jordan. /

² Large crowds followed him, / and he healed them there.

³ 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?”

⁴ “Haven’t you read,” / he replied, / “that at the beginning / the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ / ⁵ 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’? / ⁶ So they are no longer two, / but one flesh. / Therefore / what God has joined together, / let no one separate.”

⁷ “Why then,” / they asked, / “did Moses command / that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce / and send her away?”

⁸ Jesus replied, / “Moses permitted you / to divorce your wives / because your hearts were hard. / But it was not this way from the beginning. / ⁹ I tell you / that anyone who divorces his wife, / except for sexual immorality, / and marries another woman commits adultery.”

¹⁰ The disciples said to him, / “If this is the situation / between a

husband and wife, / it is better not to marry.”

¹¹ Jesus replied, / “Not everyone can accept this word, / but only those to whom it has been given. / ¹² For there are eunuchs / who were born that way, / and there are eunuchs / who have been made eunuchs by others—/ and there are those / who choose to live like eunuchs / for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. / The one who can accept this should accept it.”

Vocabulary

1. Adultery: Voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a person who is not his or her spouse.
2. Eunuchs: two meanings: A man who has been castrated, especially in the past one employed to guard the women’s living areas at an Oriental court. Also, an ineffectual person. (*A nation of political eunuchs.*)

Questions

1. Is divorce a problem in your country?
2. Jesus sets out the ideal. How do we as a people fall short of the ideal?
3. What modern reasons do we give to accept and allow divorce?
4. Why are the Pharisees trying to trap Jesus?
5. How does Jesus avoid the trap?

Notes

1. Divorce, even today, presents great difficulty for society and the family. The Jewish ideal was to marry by the age of twenty and to begin a family. The Mosaic teachings on marriage meant that it was never taken lightly.
2. Also the marriage laws of purity for the bride were very high. She was to be a virgin. If a man raped or seduced a girl, he must marry her. Remember, in the Jewish view, a woman was a thing or a possession. She was bought and sold and protected, but she had no rights of her own. Those rights belonged to the husband, the brother or the father. A woman could not divorce.
3. In Deut. 24:1, it states: *When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house...* The bill was a simple one-sentence statement.
4. The one safeguard a woman had was that the man must return her dowry. The dowry belonged to the woman and was always hers. Without it, the man could not leave her or cast her out.
5. The Jews had two schools of thought on Divorce: Hillel and Shammai. The rule of Rabbi Shammai was that the only reason to divorce was the sexual sin of *indecency* which meant sex outside marriage. In the rule of Rabbi Hillel, *indecency* was interpreted

quite liberally. It was for anything the man found unhappy in his marriage. So, of course, the popular school of Hillel was the general rule for the population.

6. The Jewish rule of divorce was *compulsory* only for adultery and sterility. If the woman could not have children, the divorce was compulsory.
7. So in effect, the Pharisees were asking Jesus which school of divorce did he favor. Jesus surprised them all when he answered with the principal that ALL divorce was wrong. This was not a LAW, but a PRINCIPLE. What Moses had allowed we call a *concession*.

The Gospel Of Matthew

Lesson 58 - Matthew 19: 13-30 The Little Children and Jesus

¹³ Then people brought little children to Jesus / for him to place his hands on them / and pray for them. / But the disciples rebuked them.

¹⁴ Jesus said, / “Let the little children come to me, / and do not hinder them, / for the kingdom of heaven belongs / to such as these.” / ¹⁵ When he had placed his hands on them, / he went on from there.



The Rich and the Kingdom of God

¹⁶ Just then a man came up to Jesus / and asked, / “Teacher, / what good thing must I do / to get eternal life?”

¹⁷ “Why do you ask me about what is good?” / Jesus replied. / “There is only one who is good. / If you want to enter life, / keep the commandments.”

¹⁸ “Which ones?” / he inquired.

Jesus replied, / ““You shall not murder, / you shall not commit adultery, / you shall not steal, / you shall not give false testimony, / ¹⁹honor your father and mother,’ / and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’”

²⁰ “All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?”

²¹ Jesus answered, / “If you want to be perfect, / go, / sell your possessions / and give to the poor, / and you will have treasure in

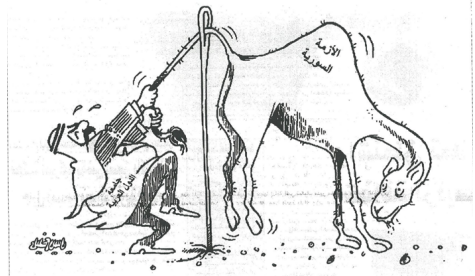
heaven. / Then come, / follow me.”

²² When the young man heard this, / he went away sad, / because he had great wealth.

²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, / “Truly I tell you, / it is hard for someone / who is rich / to enter the kingdom of heaven. / ²⁴ Again I tell you, / it is easier for a camel / to go through the eye of a needle / than for someone who is rich / to enter the kingdom of God.”

²⁵ When the disciples heard this, / they were greatly astonished / and asked, / “Who then can be saved?”

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



²⁷ Peter answered him, / “We have left everything to follow you! / What then / will there be for us?”

²⁸ Jesus said to them, / “Truly I tell you, / at the renewal of all things, / when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, / you / who have followed me / will also sit on twelve thrones, / judging the twelve tribes of Israel. / ²⁹ And everyone / who has left houses / or brothers or sisters / or father or mother / or wife or children / or fields / for my sake / will receive a hundred times as much / and will inherit eternal life. / ³⁰ But many who are first will be last, / and many who are last will be first.

Vocabulary

1. To rebuke: To express sharp disapproval or criticism of someone because of their behavior or actions.

2. To hinder: To create difficulties for someone that delays or obstructs their actions.
3. Testimony: a formal written or spoken statement, especially one given in a court of law. Also it can be a public telling of a religious conversion or experience.
4. Possessions: Something you have, own or control. An item of property.
5. Astonished: Greatly surprised, impressed, or amazed.

Questions

1. Why would mothers or fathers bring children to Jesus?
2. Why would the disciples rebuke Jesus?
3. What does the richest person you know about do with his or her money?
4. What is the difference in the legality of something or the duty of doing something and the grace of God?
5. Does this make you think rich people cannot go to heaven?
6. Why is the simile about a camel and the eye of a needle humorous?
7. What question does Peter ask Jesus in verse 27? Is this a very human question?

Notes

1. Probably the mothers brought the children to Jesus. He had healed and helped many and they wanted this influence in the lives of their children.

2. The disciples sound pretty rough or upset, but they are being protective of Jesus. He had been busy teaching them about the cross and responding to the people who came to him for help.
3. Jesus was obviously the kind of person that children loved. He was definitely not unapproachable. No one was ever a nuisance to Jesus. It is a lovely two-verse story.
4. This story often called the Rich Young Ruler is found in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Only Matthew says he was *young*, and only Luke says he was a *ruler*. Our composite takes elements from all three Gospels.
5. “This story teaches one of the deepest of all lessons for it has within it the whole basis of the difference between the right and the wrong idea of what religion is.” (Barclay, p. 214.)
6. The basic question from the rich young ruler is: “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?” Here is a man who equates action, do, with eternal life. His thinking is about keeping rules and laws of his faith. We cannot do enough to earn our way to God. This man knew nothing about the grace of God.
7. The man had kept the commandments. Both Jesus and the man spoke only of the commands that related to the last of the Ten Commandments. These are the commandments that deal not so much with God as with our relationship and duty to other men and women. They deal with our attitudes toward our fellow men.
8. Here was a selfish young man. In a legal sense he had obeyed the commandments, but in a spiritual sense he had not. He was utterly selfish and was so chained to his money and possessions that nothing less than letting them go would help him.

9. “The great truth of this story lies in the way it illumines the meaning of eternal life. Eternal life is life such as God himself lives. The word for *eternal* is *aionios*, which does not mean *lasting forever*; it means such as benefits God, or such as belongs to God, or such is characteristic of God. The great characteristic of God is that he so loved and he gave.” (Barclay, p. 216.)
10. One can't help but smile at the example that Jesus gave of the camel going through the eye of a needle. Why is it difficult for a rich man to be unselfish?
11. Riches encourage a feeling of false independence. He can afford to do anything or fix anything he can afford. And he can afford a lot. Also Riches chain a man to this earth. All the man owned was earth bound and needed his continual attention. Sometimes we say the possessions own us, rather than the other way around.
12. Riches make us selfish. Man never has enough and always wants more. *Enough is always a little more than a man has*. When a man has comfort and even luxury, he is always afraid he will lose them through inattention or thievery or whatever. Riches are not a sin, but a danger.