

Introduction:

- A trap setters nightmare is to get caught in the very trap you are setting.
- The Pharisees set the trap: *Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife for just any reason?*
 - This is the point where Jesus now takes them all to school! The trap has been set and they have been caught in it.

I. The Original Intent vs. 4-6

- A. Jesus stance in vs 6, and 9 are the same as was laid out in 5:32 but here we are given more fully developed.
- B. *"Haven't you read the scriptures?"* is a formula often used by Matthew. (12:3, 12:5, 21:16, 21:42, 22:31) It suggests that what Jesus is about to say should have been obvious to anyone who had any experience with the OT scriptures! Read Mt 19:4-6
 1. Jesus lays down the positive principle of unbroken marriage. Only then does he approach Dt. 24:1-4 (Moses teaching on divorce).
 2. God's view is about relationship. Gen 1:27
 3. And God's view is about covenant. Gen 2:24 to be joined together.
 - a) One flesh
 - b) Leaving father and mother to be join to the wife.
 4. These two things reveal to us God's view of marriage...in the Garden, before the fall. God lays our His view of marriage in order to demonstrate what He expects of the marriage between His Son and His Son's bride.
 5. It is a spiritual matter having to do with covenant relationship. (Proverbs 2:17; Ezekiel 16:8; Malachi 2:14).
- C. vs 6 Jesus draws out the ethical implications of the two principles just given.
 1. What God joins together let no man split apart.
 2. "The "one flesh" metaphor, if it is taken seriously, makes marriage indissoluble. To break it is like tearing apart a single body." France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 718). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
 3. "Jesus' argument up to this point is one of total rejection of divorce: it is a violation of what God has created."
 4. In God's original plan for marriage, there was no provision for divorce. The original intention was one man for one woman for all of life. Jesus said it...
 5. Matthew 19:8, *"from the beginning it was not so."* That is, from the beginning, when God first instituted marriage, divorce was not an issue.
- D. Sin is what wrecked the couple. It did not nullify the Word!

II. The Exposing of the Lie vs 7

- A. It is Jesus' total rejection of divorce that stirs up the Pharisees objection.
 1. They seize the opportunity to remind Jesus (remind God) about what is written in Dt 24:1-4.
 2. They remind Him of what Moses said (NLT)...of what Moses commanded (Gk).
- B. The very fact that they are giving Moses more authority than God. They are giving what was brought about by the sinfulness of man vs the plan of God in Gen. These thoughts literally snap their trap for Jesus upon themselves.

- C. We can't forget what God is after. (See Mt 5:32) He is after relationship. The cause the de-valuing of the relationship and of the person. To devalue what God has called precious is a big 'no-no!' Mt 5:32 taught us that the value of human life begins in the heart. And the Pharisees were not looking at the heart of God in the beginning. They were looking at man and from man's perspective.

III. **The Truth of the Matter** vs. 8

- A. Matthew's wording of this exchange carefully observes this distinction, with Jesus using the verb "permit" in response to their verb "command." France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 719). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
1. Jesus accepts that Dt 24:1-4 permits divorce.
 2. So how does the square with the absolute position that He has just taken? The Dt 24:1-4 "is a response to human failure, an attempt to bring order to an already un-ideal situation caused by human "hardness of heart."
 3. "It was the fact that divorce was taking place in defiance of God's stated intention for marriage that made it necessary for Moses to make appropriate provision. But it should never have been so. The existence of divorce legislation is a pointer not to divine approval of divorce but to human sinfulness." France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 720). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
- B. Jesus settles it: as usual Mt writes, "And I tell you..." common in sermon mount. Have you not read...but I say" vs 9.
1. Believe it or not, divorce was just as common and easy then as it is today.
 2. People disregarded the higher call of God for the lesser but closer action of evil.

IV. **The Importance of the Kingdom**

- A. The disciples "comment rather humorously that in the light of Jesus' radical challenge to conventional thinking about marriage it would be better not to marry at all than to be saddled with a marriage from which you cannot escape!" France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 722). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
1. The disciples unknowingly introduce the subject of celibacy to which Jesus seriously responds.
- B. vs 12 for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, yes...it is better not to marry.

Conclusion:

- Interesting Mt's progression. From divorce, to eunuchs, to children.
- Again Jesus is calling His disciples to go deeper than the teachers of the law. All of this in light of the cross that is drawing ever so close.