

Sermon.



I am sure that some of you are a little concerned about today. We have all had family and friends who have had to deal with Divorce. I imagine maybe it is around 50 % of you in this room. Today's gospel message always hits hard. Usually when we read the gospel we can point the finger at those crazy Pharisees or the other people in our lives which are blatantly sinning around us. However this one seems always to hit home and resonate more than some others. This one is talking about splitting the nature which God has put onto a couple.



2. The Pharisees came to Jesus in our passage with only one intention. And that was to make Jesus go the way of John the Baptist. For those of you who don't remember, John the Baptist died by beheading from Herod Antipas. This beheading was not just a normal beheading from some prophet. Is it ever really a normal beheading. Herod was in the middle of a pretty huge marriage scandal. John the Baptist was condemning the marriage of Herod to Herodias. Who was the former wife of his half brother Herod the 2<sup>nd</sup>. This was not the same Herod from the Christmas but is the same one from the Easter stories. So Harold was married to a daughter of a neighboring Middle East Kingdom. However in one of his trips to Rome he fell in love with a Roman royalty daughter. They then both decided to divorce their previous spouses and get married. This action, just like today, would have caused a great scandal, imagine John and Kate times 8. It might be better in line with the Prince Charles Princess Diana divorce of the early 90s. Everybody would have been talking about it. Because everybody knew that divorce was wrong and Harold was not even living in the laws laid down by Moses. So back to the story. Now here is Jesus, who has been spending his time healing the sick, hanging out with sinners, and condemning the religious teachers of the day, the Pharisees. Jesus has now walked into the land which is ruled by this Harold who is in this marriage scandal and the Pharisees jump on him so that they can get Harold to kill him. They come up to him and asked in what I can guess is the most innocent tone they can gather up "now Jesus since you are very bright in the ways of the law is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife. Then Jesus seeing what they wanted to do asked in what was a similar innocent sounding voice. what did Moses

command you. Their response was that Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her way.



3. Jesus responds to the question on what Moses allowed. He said that he only wrote the law because your hearts were hard. The Law was written to protect those who were weaker in the culture. Your hearts are hard and you cannot live in the original will of God. For the original will of God is found in the genesis passage today. It is saying That they will leave the father and mother and become one flesh. God looks at marriage as being one flesh. The two different people have become one. This is how God created marriage, this is what happened to Adam and eve. We are reminded of this at just about every wedding we attend. And the next truth is not easy to take. But it must be heard. Jesus says that anybody who diverse their spouse and remarries commits adultery. Just the uttering of that phrase that I just said, is controversial and not well accepted. But we are stuck with it. This news of our faith is not easy to take. And makes us stand back and sit and just go (whooooah). So many people. Living such lives of sin. So many people; in here living lives of sin, of adultery. My mother; who was married to another man before I was born. Lives a life filled with horrible sin, which Jesus is pointing out in scripture. It would be easy for a pastor or vicar to ignore this fact, to simply preach on how Jesus loves the little children, as it would be for any of you. Yet we see here something so common as divorce, not being swept under the rug but is being so publically proclaimed as a terrible sin. This was a problem in jesus day just like it is today. We can't ignore

this. Some here maybe in their heart are also condemning those who have had divorces, or those who are thinking of having one. Let us not condemn one another for just as Jesus says let us get the log out of our own eye before we judge others. We are all sinful, and because we are the church, the bride of Christ our sin divorces and separates us from God.

Divorce is very serious to God and he hates it.



4. But everybody is in the same boat. Jesus hates sin, all of our sin. Some of you are divorced and are committing adultery. Some of you are struggling with the thoughts of adultery. Some are struggling with pornography. Some with greed for money or power, some with the greed to be correct. Some in this room are struggling with homosexuality, others are struggling with the fear of the homosexual. We are all in the same boat. We all have things we are struggling with, things which divorce of from God. I have things in my life which I struggle with, things which I am ashamed to admit. Things which God knows and only he knows. He knows the thoughts of my mind, the moving of my flesh. God knows the thoughts of all of our minds. The feelings of all of our hearts. He knows the very moments of our flesh. And yet. He still loves us. God sees everything, all the times we turn from him; not trusting in his lordship. Yet he still loves us. He died so that we might live.



We are all in the same boat. We have all sinned and fall short of

the glory of God. He has taken that sin and has put it as far from us as possible from us . The bible says as far as the east is from the west. And if you think about it, that is pretty far, because they are never in the same place



There was a woman who was known for prostitution. Her street walking. She one day broke into a house, and barged into the very room which a special guest was eating. She immediately through aside her cares of the world and feel down at the feet of the guest, Jesus and began to wash his feet and perfume them. The host could not believe that this hooker was in his house and bothering Jesus. But The lord of all creation did not care nor did the sinful woman because she was at the feet of the very man who could save her. And that man said to her has he has said to all of you who are at his feet in humble service. Your sins are forgiven.



5. We live in that forgiveness now. We live not as people who are slaves just trying to figure our way into freedom. No we live like children who live in their freedom. We live in the freedom which Christ has given to us. I imagine that woman felt like a gity child when the Lord said her sins were forgiven. We are given a simple freedom which assures us that we are in his saving grace. That everything we have done wrong is Gone. And

now that we are living in Gods forgiveness. Lets forgive others. It does not matter what others are struggling with; adultery, divorce, pornography, or homosexuality; They are the same to God. They still need the forgiveness of the Christ. They need his salvation. They need our forgiveness. We forgive and love because God has first forgiven us. Lets go out into the world proclaiming our forgiveness which we have received from God to all those who need to know that they too can be forgiven. You are forgiven from the sin in your life though the eternal gift of God. Yes Divorce is terrible, but so is anytime God is not everything to us, when we are not a his feet. Go into this world living as redeemed Children of God telling the world of his eternal forgiveness.