

Sermon Notes

Exodus – The Revealing of God’s Glory and His Design for the Chosen #73

“Maidservants, Divorce and Remarriage” – Exodus 21:7-11

I. Introduction.

A. The ordinance concerning slavery becomes the social safety net for troubled families.

1. The goal was always that they would be set free in the sabbatical year with a means to earn a living.

B. Today’s text: Exodus 21:7-11.

II. Exposition

A. Verse 7

1. Is it sexist?
2. All of God’s laws have a benevolent purpose.
3. The daughter sold was not for the purpose of abandonment but rather improved prospects for life.
 - a. Philip Ryken
 - b. Keep in mind Ancient Near East practice.
 - c. Abuse is possible as it is for any law.

B. Verse 8

1. No mistreatment if the master had no need of the maid-servant. Failure for the arrangement to work out was not the maidservant’s fault.
2. “Displeasing” – General term and not necessarily an indication of wrong doing.

C. Verse 9

1. Engagement is in view and not marriage.
2. She would become a full member of the family.
3. God’s concern for the woman is once again in view.
4. “According to the custom of daughters” – a legal designation -- “To treat as a free woman.”

D. Verse 10-11

1. This text concerns a maidservant when the engagement or marriage fails.
2. If a maidservant, then no bride money was received by her adoptive father. This is unlike a free woman where a

dowry is required. A maidservant had no protection.

3. Consequently, there are three things the master/husband had to provide:

f _____

c _____

m _____ r _____

- a. Failure to provide these three means she was released from servitude.

4. These three criteria become ground for divorce within Judaism.

- a. It is from a lesser to greater argument. If true for a maidservant, then it must be true for a wife (who was always free.)

III. Deeper look at divorce and remarriage.

A. Jesus remarks on divorce.

1. Matthew 19:3-9, Mark 10:2-12 in view of Deut. 24.

2. Two schools of Rabbinic thought.

Shammai – conservative

Hillel – liberal

3. Why the surprise in the disciples’ response to Jesus’ remarks.

- a. Was their response over a prohibition of all divorce or of no-fault divorce?

- b. Pastor Don’s position is that this concerns no-fault divorce.

1. John Piper disagrees.

2. Yet, sin in all areas of life is a constant, and God’s grace is just as constant. – II Corinthians 5:16-17.

B. Westminster Confession, Chapter 24.

1. Sections 5-6

C. Practical application of these verses to marriage.

III. God’s troubled marriage with Israel.

A. Hosea 1:2-3 and 2:14-23

1. The harlotry of Gomer.

2. God is the all-together faithful husband.

IV. Points for Reflection.

A. Church Authority is an expression of God’s gracious help for His people.

1. Matthew 16:19; 18:18; John 20:23

B. God’s unfailing love leads us to the wilderness to woo us back because like Gomer we still are prone to spiritual adultery.

- a. Jer. 32:44; II Tim. 4:18; Heb. 9:12,15, I Peter 1:3-5