

The Lord Seeks a Godly Seed

CLASS THREE

If You Say “I Don’t”

READING: 1st Corinthians 7

- **SLIDE** - Let’s spend a few minutes and talk about some of the **“What if’s”**...
- It’s rather awkward to talk about Divorce and Remarriage during a weekend on Marriage, because it seems like we aren’t sticking to the Ideal
 - It’s like your Diet Counselor at Weight Watchers giving you a long lecture on eating healthy, and then telling you, *“But, If you are going to go off the diet and eat some junk food, here are the ones that I recommend.”*
- We read from Ephesians 5 in our last class...
- **SLIDE**
- Ephesians 5:31-32 (NLT)
 - 31)** As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.”
 - 32)** This is a **GREAT MYSTERY**, but it is an illustration of the way **CHRIST AND THE CHURCH ARE ONE**.
- We pray that everyone understands that the example of Christ and his Bride, the Ecclesia, is the clearest picture we have of what marriage is supposed to be
- We all can understand this example of Christ as the perfect, faithful and forgiving husband
 - The perfect balance of Righteousness and Truth – Justice and Mercy
- We can understand the Ecclesia being the Bride that he loves and cares for

- **SLIDE**

- But, just as there are those in the **ECCLESIA** who will prove to be **UNFAITHFUL** to Christ

- **SLIDE**

- There are also those who will be **UNFAITHFUL** in **MARRIAGE**

- **SLIDE**

- This **DOESN'T** make it **RIGHT**, but it should be **EXPECTED**
- The Ecclesia needs to accept this and come to grips with the impact of it
- It is unreasonable for the Ecclesia to think that there will not be sin in this area
 - Jesus calls us to be a Hospital for the sick, and not a resort for the healthy
- So, it is important for us to spend some time and discuss what happens when a marriage breaks down
- And how the Ecclesia should react...
- The overall principle that I keep coming to after reading more and more, and studying the Word of God is...

- **SLIDE**

- God is very **PRACTICAL**

- **SLIDE**

- God **TOLERATES** things that He doesn't necessarily **APPROVE** of

- **SLIDE**

- God **ALLOWS** things that He doesn't necessarily think are **GOOD** for us
- We need to keep that clearly in mind

- **SLIDE**

- Just because God **ALLOWS** something, doesn't mean that it is the **RIGHT** thing to do

- **SLIDE**

- Just because God **ALLOWS** for Divorce, doesn't mean that it is the **RIGHT** thing to do
- A good example is Bigamy...
- Jesus was quite clear on God's intentions from the very beginning...

- **SLIDE**

- Matthew 19:4-6 (NIV)

- 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**. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

- **SLIDE**

- If, from the beginning, God's plan involved one man and one woman joined together into one flesh...
 - Then why does he allow Bigamy?
- So many of the Faithful Men of Old were Bigamists: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David
- Why did God allow it?

- **SLIDE**

- **BIGAMY** is an example of **TOLERANCE** by the LORD in matters of human behavior where a "Common Practice" made perfect obedience difficult
 - This was an agrarian society
 - Your wealth and your success were dependent on how many head of sheep you could manage, or how many fields of grain you could plant
 - The more sons you had, the more richer you became
 - The more wives you had, the more sons you could have

- **SLIDE**

- This wasn't God's **IDEAL**, but it was **TOLERATED** by Him, due to the circumstances
- Bigamy is also a good example, about how God deals with us, when we accept choices less than the Ideal

- **SLIDE**

- Because another of the basic principles that we want to express about God is that **GOD** is the **PROTECTOR** of the **DEFENSELESS**

- **SLIDE**

- God **CARES** for the **INJURED** and the **OFFENDED**
- Look at His instructions regarding a second wife:

- **SLIDE**

- Exodus 21:10-11 (NIV)

- 10)** If he marries another woman, **HE MUST NOT DEPRIVE THE FIRST ONE** of her food, clothing and marital rights.
- 11)** If he does not provide her with these three things, she is to go free, without any payment of money.

- **SLIDE**

- The **RIGHTS** of the first wife were **NOT** to be reduced if a man took another wife
- If they were reduced, the first wife can go free because she has been treated dishonourably

- **SLIDE**

- God **TOLERATED** Bigamy, **BUT**, the tolerance was **CONDITIONAL** and **LIMITED**
- He was not just concerned about the food, clothing, and marital rights of the first wife, he was also concerned about their emotional condition also
- God not only protects the injured physically, but he was also concerned about their reputation, and the type of life that they live

- **SLIDE**

- Leviticus 18:18 (KJV)

18) Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to **VEX HER**, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time.

- We can't even imagine what kind of emotional rollercoaster it could be to be one of several wives married to the same man
 - But, to have one of the other wives be your own sister, would be almost unbearable
- God didn't want to put a woman through that, so even though he allowed for multiple wives, he put conditions upon the practice
- Even the concessions that God allowed still pointed the way to the rightness of God's original commands, and to his love and caring to protect the injured party
- Bigamy raises an interesting question, and is a good segue into our next discussion...
- ***If you are allowed to have multiple wives, why would you ever Divorce one in the first place?***
- Specifically because of what we have seen here

- **SLIDE**

- God **PROTECTS** the **INJURED**
- God didn't want men to become bored with their first wife, and to trade her in every two years for the latest model, just like you would for a car
 - God didn't want to leave behind a string of "Used Women", with very little resale value
 - Women who wouldn't be able to provide for themselves, and who wouldn't be able to raise healthy, productive families

- **SLIDE**

- So, God instituted laws to **CONTROL** the practice, and allow for the **PROTECTION** of the rights of the first wife
- And, that is what lead to Divorce...

- Jesus describes it as...

- **SLIDE**

- Matthew 19:8 (KJV)

8) He saith unto them, Moses, **BECAUSE OF THE HARDNESS OF YOUR HEARTS**, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

- Their hearts were so hard that they were unwilling to continue to care and provide for their first wives, so they wanted to be rid of them entirely

- **SLIDE**

- God **ALLOWED** this to happen, but again, He **CONTROLLED** it so that the **INJURED** would be **PROTECTED**

- The Certificate of Divorce provided for the woman being divorced

- It provided for her financially, and also protected her reputation

- **SLIDE**

- So, we see God **ALLOWING** Divorce, **NOT** because he thinks that it is a **GOOD** thing, but, because He is **PRACTICAL** enough to realize that it happens, and wants to provide for the **PROTECTION** of the injured party

- But, we see Jesus turning all of that on it's head...

- **SLIDE**

- Matthew 19:7-9 (NIV)

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 marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

- And, isn't this always the case!?! Jesus **ALWAYS** turns the Law completely on it's head

- The Law was very specific, very analytic, very black and white on the topic of Marital Relations

- Numbers and Deuteronomy are full of verses that explicitly detail ALL of the different possibilities of sexual sins that might arise:
 - If a man sleeps with a virgin consensually
 - If a man forces himself upon a virgin
 - If a man sleeps with a woman who is betrothed to another consensually
 - If a man forces himself upon a woman who is betrothed to another
 - If a man marries a woman and discovers she is not a virgin
 - If a man marries a woman and suspects that she is not a virgin
- But, the Law of Christ is very general in it's teachings
- This is in keeping with the way that Christ taught
- Consider Matthew 5...
- **SLIDE**
- Matthew 5:21-22 (NIV)
 - 21)** “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘**DO NOT MURDER**, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’
 - 22)** But I tell you that **ANYONE WHO IS ANGRY WITH HIS BROTHER** will be subject to judgment.
- There were pages and pages of Laws on the books regarding Murder...
 - If an axe head flies off your axe and hits someone accidentally
 - If you purposely lie in wait in the woods, and hit them with the axe
 - If your animal accidentally kills someone
 - If your animal has a habit of getting loose, or being fierce, and you haven't don't anything to control him
 - And on and on and on...
- But, Christ simply says, ***“If you are angry with your Brother, it's just as bad as Murder”***
- **SLIDE**
- Christ called us to an even higher standard than the Law of Moses, **BUT** the big difference is that he brought **GRACE** into our lives and provided for our weakness and sins
- Let's consider just **ONE** of the Rules under the Law regarding a sexual sin...

- **SLIDE**

- Numbers 5:12-22 (KJV)

- Let's read it ourselves...

- 12) Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him,
- 13) And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and *there be* no witness against her, neither she be taken *with the manner*;
- 14) And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled:
- 15) Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth *part* of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it *is* an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.
- 16) And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD:
- 17) And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put *it* into the water:
- 18) And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which *is* the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse:
- 19) And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness *with another* instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse:
- 20) But if thou hast gone aside *to another* instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee beside thine husband:
- 21) Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell;
- 22) And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make *thy* belly to swell, and *thy* thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, amen.

- Don't we wish that we had some Holy Water sitting around the hall sometimes?

- Wouldn't so many of those meetings be easier, if we could just do a little test?
- You wouldn't have the constant confusion of "He Said" and "She Said"
- You could just sprinkle some dust into the water, and BAM!

- The point is, that we **DON'T!**
- The more we try to live under the Law, the worse things become for us
- I've heard the horror stories of Ecclesias getting themselves in situations where they hire Private Detectives to spy on their own members, just to verify whether or not someone is sleeping with someone that they shouldn't
- ***We don't have the Holy Water!***
- We are living under an entirely different dispensation
- **SLIDE**
- We are living in a time of **GRACE, MERCY** and **FORGIVENESS**, and not of exacting **DIVINE RETRIBUTION** upon someone who has fallen
- Let's approach our Brothers and Sisters in compromised positions with love, mercy and patience
- These problems took months, sometimes years, to develop, and we are not going to solve it in one Tuesday Night meeting from 7:30 to 9:00
- To Fellowship means "To come alongside" someone...
- **SLIDE**
- Let's come alongside our Brothers and Sisters and help them **THROUGH** these times of trouble, as opposed to forcing them to **STAY** in it forever
- **Failures in marriage should be anticipated and that is why Grace is essential**
- Let's make sure we approach the situation in the right frame of mind, keeping in mind what we read this morning in 1st Corinthians 7
- **SLIDE**
- 1st Corinthians 7:1-2 (KJV)
 - 1) Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: *It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*
 - 2) Nevertheless, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.
- In a very real sense, most of us are weak and have accepted less than the ideal

- We should therefore be very forgiving in our dealings with those who through weakness have fallen short of the ideal in marriage
- So, let's look at this with a careful, patient and forgiving eye...
- Let's begin by comparing the many Divorce Regulations under the Law of Moses to the spirit of the Law of Christ...
- Remember, how Jesus came not to destroy the Law, but to **FULLFILL** it
 - Jesus called us to an even higher standard than the Law of Moses, **BUT** he also brought us **GRACE** and provides for our sins
- Let's continue to look at the comparison in Matthew 5:
- **SLIDE**
- Matthew 5:31-32 (NIV)
 - 31)** "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'
 - 32)** But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, **EXCEPT FOR MARITAL UNFAITHFULNESS**, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.
- **SLIDE**
- And so the **EXCEPTION CLAUSE** arises...
- I believe that this verse causes so much discussion, not because it is hard to understand, but because it opens up such a chasm of issues
- **SLIDE**
- You can see that modern translations translate the Greek word, **PORNEIA** into **Marital Unfaithfulness**, instead of Fornication
- Some argue that the word **PORNEIA** is exclusive to Fornication, and Jesus was only making the exception for the case of pre-marital sex
 - If, on his wedding night, a man discovers that his wife is not a Virgin, **THEN, AND ONLY THEN**, he is allowed to Divorce her
- But, the word **PORNEIA** is used of adulterous behavior as well
- Here is a list of the places where the behavior is clearly adulterous in nature...

- **SLIDE**

- Acts 15:20, Acts 15:29; Acts 21:25; 1st Corinthians 5:1; 1st Corinthians 6:13, 1st Corinthians 6:18; 2nd Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; 1st Thessalonians 4:3; Revelation 2:21; Revelation 9:21

- **PORNEIA** describes illicit sexual intercourse of **ALL** kinds, both premarital sex **AND** adulterous sex

- **SLIDE**

- If we understood this any other way, we would have to conclude that Jesus would be allowing Divorce in the case of pre-marital unfaithfulness, but **NOT** in the more grievous case of unfaithfulness **AFTER** having taken the vow of Marriage

- So, to summarize...

- **SLIDE**

- Moses did not **TEACH** Divorce, but rather **SUFFERED** it because of the hardness of human hearts

- **SLIDE**

- The Law stated that a man could put away his wife for **ALMOST ANY CAUSE, BUT**, it also made certain provisions to **PROTECT** the **INJURED** Party

- **SLIDE**

- Jesus denounces the putting away of a wife in order to marry another, **EXCEPT** for the cause of **MARITAL UNFAITHFULNESS**

- **SLIDE**

- Thereby, Jesus calls us to a **HIGHER** calling, while still **PROTECTING** the **INJURED** Party when there is one

- Why do I say that Christ is **PROTECTING** the Injured Party in the case of **MARITAL UNFAITHFULNESS**?

- It would be cruel and uncaring if Christ forced a woman to stay in an abusive relationship with a man who has broken faith with her

- **SLIDE**

- Adultery **BREAKS** the Marriage Covenant and **DESTROYS** the Vows

- **SLIDE**

- God views adultery so serious that **HE** considers the Marriage Covenant dissolved by it
- Look what God says when Israel played the Harlot, and committed Adultery on Him, God gives Israel a Bill of Divorce...

- **SLIDE**

- Jeremiah 3:8 (KJV)

8) And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery **I HAD PUT HER AWAY**, and **GIVEN HER A BILL OF DIVORCE**; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.

- And once that vow is broken, God considers the marriage over:

- **SLIDE**

- Hosea 2:2 (KJV)

2) Plead with your mother, plead: for **SHE IS NOT MY WIFE, NEITHER AM I HER HUSBAND**: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts;

- **SLIDE**

- Jeremiah 31:32 (KJV)

32) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I **WAS** an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

- But, we know that Divorce is something that God hates

- Is God Hard Hearted?

- **SLIDE**

- **NO!**

- **SLIDE**

- God divorce His people on the only grounds permissible: **UNFAITHFULNESS**

- **SLIDE**

- It **IS** Hard Hearted to divorce your spouse for “*any reason whatsoever*”, but the **EXCEPTION** to that is **UNFAITHFULNESS**
- Adultery breaks the marriage covenant and separates us from our spouse

- **SLIDE**

- Consider this quote from, “*The Lord Hateth Putting Away*”

Adultery is a breach both of the covenant and of the spiritual and physical union which underlies it. It is because the Lord’s ideal of marriage is so high that adultery is so odious, and so catastrophic in it’s results, for it means that the lofty ideal has been besmirched, the solemn covenant dishonored, and the spiritual principles repudiated.

- **SLIDE**

The **EXCEPTIVE CLAUSE** recognizes not just the collapse of physical restraint; it is the horrified response to the cruel and fleshly blow, which has defiled something spiritual and holy. **IN NO WAY IS IT A LOWERING OF THE IDEAL**; if anything, it heightens the ideal and clothes it with greater sanctity.

- Although, it can be uncomfortable for us to live with as Ecclesiastes, we need to grasp this understanding
- God is **PRACTICAL**
- Although he calls us to a lifelong vow, God realizes that there are going to be marriages that fall apart
- God is concerned with **PROTECTING** the **INJURED** Party

- **SLIDE**

- Notice I didn’t use the word, “Innocent”

- **SLIDE**

- When a Marriage fails it is **USUALLY** the result of **TWO** People’s actions
- I remember vividly helping a young Sister move one Saturday Morning

- Her Husband had had left her, and was living with another woman
- We were packing up the truck, and the neighbor wandered over to see what was going on
- I explained that her husband had left her
 - *“Left her!” he said, “I’m surprised he didn’t kill her!”*
- Then he proceeded to tell me way more stories than I wanted to hear about having to call the police on her several times at 2:00 in the morning, as **SHE** was screaming at him so loud that it was waking up the whole neighborhood

- **SLIDE**

- There is hardly ever an **INNOCENT** Party in a Divorce

- **SLIDE**

- But, **NOTHING** that one party can do is **JUSTIFICATION** for Adultery and the desecration of the Marriage Vows
- Once Adultery has entered a Marriage, we really need to talk about two other very important concepts

- **SLIDE**

- **REPENTANCE** and **RECONCILIATION**

- **SLIDE**

- **IF** a man or woman is **UNFAITHFUL** to their spouse, they are expected to **REPENT**
- Should we punish the other party as if they too were unfaithful?
- Repentance is the key to how the Ecclesia is to deal with Marital Unfaithfulness

- **SLIDE**

- **IF** we are **REPENTANT**, we can find **FORGIVENESS** in Christ

- **SLIDE**

- Therefore, **IF** there is **UNFAITHFULNESS** in a Marriage “In Christ”

- **SLIDE**

- And **IF** there is **REPENTANCE**

- **SLIDE**

- Both Parties are expected to **RECONCILE**

- **SLIDE**

- The **UNFAITHFUL** is expected to show **REPENTANCE**, and the **INJURED** is expected to show **FORGIVENESS**

- **SLIDE**

- Each case is **UNIQUE**, and each case needs to be dealt with on it's own
 - Don't get trapped into thinking that precedents apply

- **SLIDE**

- Consider the **REPENTANT ATTITUDE** of those involved
 - At Simi Hills we find it very helpful to ask them to write letters to be read to the Ecclesia at a Business Meeting

- **SLIDE**

- And remember that acceptance back into fellowship does **NOT** mean their behavior is condoned, but merely that their **REPENTANCE** is recognized

- **SLIDE**

- It is important to remember that just because the **ECCLESIA** accepts them, that doesn't mean that they are accepted at **JUDGMENT**
- Let's consider what Christ says in Matthew 19 in this light...

- **SLIDE**

- Matthew 19:6 (KJV)

- 6) So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, **LET MAN NOT SEPARATE.**

- **SLIDE**

- The verse does **NOT** say that man **CANNOT** separate

- **SLIDE**

- It says that he **SHOULD NOT** separate
- It is the responsibility of those that enter a marriage contract to make sure that it is not broken
- This understanding does not weaken the intended permanence of marriage, nor should it provide a loophole for those who wish to end a marriage
- However, it does put a responsibility on those who enter into a marriage in the Truth to observe Christ's teaching
- Every person who has taken Vows is committed to observing those Vows to the best of their ability as long as they shall live
- That is the message that Paul had for us in the reading we did earlier
- Let's continue looking at Paul's teaching in 1st Corinthians 7

- **SLIDE**

- 1st Corinthians 7:10-11 (Message)

10) And if you are married, **STAY MARRIED**. This is the Master's command, not mine.

- That really is the simplest way to look at it, isn't it?
- All of this problem and discussion goes away if we stick to the Lord's Command
- Gary Smalley talks about a man buying a new house, and when he buys it there is a huge, roaring fire in the fireplace
- The man thinks that it is the most beautiful, warm, cozy house in the entire world, and he just absolutely **LOVES** the place
- He cares and tends the fire to keep it going and keeping the house warm
- But, after a few years he gets distracted, he gets busy at work, and involved in a new hobby

- The fire eventually dies out
- The man realizes this, and is all sad and dejected
- In a fit of anger and passion he decides to sell the house, because it no longer has that feeling of warmth and coziness that it used to have
- **INSTEAD** he should have just **REKINDLED THE FIRE!**

- Marriages are not self-sufficient organisms

- Love doesn't have a life of it's own
- It doesn't just **HAPPEN**
- You have to **WORK** at it!

- You need to care and tend for your relationship to keep it healthy and happy

- Don't give up!

- **STAY MARRIED!**

- This is the Master's command, not mine

- **SLIDE**

- 11) If a wife should leave her husband, she must **EITHER REMAIN SINGLE** or else **COME BACK AND MAKE THINGS RIGHT** with him. And a husband has no right to get rid of his wife.

- Again – **EXCEPT** for Marital Unfaithfulness – As we have seen earlier – There is no **LAWFUL** reason to Divorce

- If a spouse leaves they either have to Reconcile or remain single

- **SLIDE**

- 1st Corinthians 7:12-13 (NLT)

- 12) Now, I will speak to the rest of you, though I do not have a direct command from the Lord. If a Christian man has a wife who is an unbeliever and she is willing to continue living with him, **HE MUST NOT LEAVE HER.**

- 13) And if a Christian woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he is willing to continue living with her, **SHE MUST NOT LEAVE HIM.**

- **SLIDE**

- 1st Corinthians 7:14 (NLT)

14) For the Christian wife brings holiness to her marriage, and the Christian husband brings holiness to his marriage. Otherwise, your children would not have a godly influence, but now they are set apart for him.

- Marriage **IN CHRIST** is Sanctified

- By extension, therefore, Marriages in which only one member is a believer are also sanctified

- Becoming a Christian is not a **LAWFUL** reason to leave a marriage

- **SLIDE**

- 1st Corinthians 7:15 (NLT)

15) But if the husband or wife who isn't a Christian insists on leaving, let them go. In such cases the **CHRISTIAN HUSBAND OR WIFE IS NOT REQUIRED TO STAY WITH THEM**, for God wants his children to live in peace.

- The Unbelieving partner is not bound by the same moral code as the Believer

- **SLIDE**

- 1st Corinthians 7:16 (MESSAGE)

16) You never know, wife: The way you handle this might bring your husband not only back to you but to God. You never know, husband: The way you handle this might bring your wife not only back to you but to God.

- Faithfulness is a wonderful example!

- **SLIDE**

- 1st Corinthians 7:17 (MESSAGE)

17) And don't be wishing you were someplace else or with someone else. Where you are right now is God's place for you. Live and obey and love and believe right there. **GOD, NOT YOUR MARITAL STATUS, DEFINES YOUR LIFE**. Don't think I'm being harder on you than on the others. I give this same counsel in all the churches.

- It's hard to hear when you are facing the rest of your life as a single parent...
- But, try to remember that God, not your marital status, defines your life
- We are called to such a great and high calling
 - The joy that waits before us far outweighs the momentary troubles that beset us
- These troubles **ARE** momentary
 - ***Everything changes***
 - ***THIS TOO SHALL PASS***
- God isn't calling you to go the rest of your life in this state
 - He simply asks you to make it through this day
- These things are very hard for all of us to understand and live with...
 - I hope that you will be patient and forgiving with me in my interpretation of them...
- It's hard for me also
- I grew up in a Ecclesia that was very strict in these matters
 - Automatic Disfellowship for Marrying out of the Truth
 - Automatic Disfellowship for Divorce
 - Automatic Disfellowship for Remarriage
- To open your mind up to the depth of the Practicality and the Grace extended to us in the Exception Clause can be very difficult
- Marital Sins are different than other sins...
- Remarriage after an Unlawful Divorce or Marriage outside the Truth are probably the only sins that we do that we actually print up invitations and mail them out
- But, that doesn't mean that many of our other sins are not pre-calculated
- The fact that it is calculated has no bearing on it
- A divorce is a terribly devastating force that affects every member of the family

- We **ALL** want to do whatever we need to do to try to avoid it
- Put the effort necessary into your marriage to Divorce-Proof it
- Be aware of your own weakness and avoid the temptations of infidelity
- But, if Divorce occurs in our Ecclesia, we should try to remember two important things about God's character and His dealings with us

- **SLIDE**

- God is **PRACTICAL**
 - Although He calls us to follow Principles, God is always very Practical in His dealings with us
 - He **TOLERATES** things that aren't necessary the **BEST THING** for us...
 - Because He made us, and he understands our weaknesses...

- **SLIDE**

- God **CARES** for the **INJURED** and the **OFFENDED**
- The Divorce Laws, and the Exception Clause are perfect examples of God's care and love for us

- **SLIDE**

- God calls us to a **HIGHER CALLING**, but because **HE LOVES US** so much He makes allowances for us if we fail...