

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- BELIEVE – ACTS 16:31
- REPENT – ACTS 17:30; LUKE 13:3
- CONFESS – ROMANS 10:10; I TIMOTHY 6:12
- BE BAPTIZED – ACTS 2:38; MARK 16:16
- BE FAITHFUL – REVELATION 2:10

PRAYER LIST

North Ridgeville church of Christ
36364 Chestnut Ridge Road
North Ridgeville, OH 44039

Website: nrcoc.net

Times for Meeting

Lord's Day

9:30 AM Bible Study (all ages)
10:30 AM Worship

Wednesday

7:00 PM Bible Study (all ages)

Elders

Bruce Dean
Mark Ullman

Evangelist

Steven Wallace

THE NORTH RIDGEVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only,
deceiving your own selves.” James 1:22

August 07, 2022

“Except for Sexual Immorality”

Steven J. Wallace

“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery”
(Matt. 19:9).¹

Our Lord was challenged by the Pharisees in Matthew 19 over the doctrine of divorce. They sought to trap Him and pit Him against Moses. They also wanted to believe that a man could divorce his wife for many different reasons and marry again (Matt. 19:3). Our Lord had taught on this earlier and it evidently didn't sit well with the Pharisees (Matt. 5:31, 32). From the Lord's teaching, we can understand three absolute truths.

1. *Whoever puts away his wife apart from sexual immorality and marries another commits adultery.* The Lord's general rule is that when one divorces and remarries, he commits adultery. This applies equally to women, “And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery” (Mk. 10:12).

2. *Whoever marries the spouse that was put away in the above example commits adultery.* Luke writes, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery" (Lk. 16:18, emp. add, SJW).
3. *Whoever puts away his spouse because of sexual immorality and marries another does not commit adultery.* Of course, this remarriage must be to someone who has the right to be married. Remarriage is to be "in the Lord" or with His approval (1 Cor. 7:39). One cannot marry a person that the Lord doesn't permit (such as the one He spoke of above).

Jesus gave one permissible reason to put a spouse away, granting permission to remarry—fornication. The "except for sexual immorality" that our Lord speaks of is important. It grants implicit authority for one to act in a marriage where the bed has been desecrated by unchaste behavior. It serves as an *exception* to the *general rule* that *whoever divorces and remarries another commits adultery*.

A Parallel

"All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, *he has* but one law: put *all* to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days" (Esth. 4:11, emp. added, SJW).

During the time Queen Esther lived, there was one general law that the King of Persia had when bothered in his inner court. Every man and woman who stands before him would be put to death, Jew or Gentile. *That general rule*, however, had one clear *exception*. Of all men and women who stood before the king, all were put to death *except those to whom the king extended the golden scepter*. If they stood before him, and he held nothing, or a book, a shoe, or even a golden cup, then they were put to

death. Without the golden scepter being extended to them, they were finished; end of story!

Now the King of kings has a general law about divorce and remarriage. That law states whoever divorces (puts away) his wife and marries another person commits adultery (cf. Mk. 10:11, 12; Lk. 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10-13, 39). This is God's general law, and it is true regardless of who that person is (Jew, Gentile, Christian, non-Christian, bond or free, etc.).

But the Lord holds out the golden scepter, so to speak, to one particular person: the *one* who puts away his/her mate for violating the marriage bed with *fornication* (any unlawful sexual act with another). Why is this law difficult for some to see where Esther 4:11 is not? It may be due to those who are in sin or have loved ones involved in it.

The danger of any *sensual* sin is not only that it separates us from God (which all sin has in common), but that it also attacks our *reason* and replaces it with *reckless reaction*. Solomon demonstrated it well in Proverbs 7:7, 22, 23:

"And saw among the simple, I perceived among the youths, A young man devoid of understanding... Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, Till an arrow struck his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, He did not know it *would cost* his life."

Like the prodigal, it works to take us away from who we really are (Lk. 15:13, 17).

Can one in adultery be forgiven? Absolutely! The woman caught in adultery was forgiven but was told to *go and sin no more* (Jn. 8:3-11). Although married, Herod could have been forgiven for taking his brother's wife. How? He must be willing to *repent* and *restore* her to Philip (see Mk. 6:17, 18).

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