

Teaching Series: Saved for Eternity

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Chapter 2: Objections against Eternal Salvation

Divorce and Remarriage

Divorce has long been a complex and controversial topic in the church. In our culture today, many people are affected by it in one way or another. We all know someone, whether a family member or close friend, who has experienced the pain of a broken marriage. Or maybe you have gone through or are going through a divorce right now. If so, I'm sure I don't have to tell you how painful and devastating it can be for both the adults and children involved in the situation. Moreover, as a child of God, I am sure you may have asked yourself more than once: "Will God still forgive me if I get a divorce or remarry? Will I remain saved, or will I lose my salvation forever?" Those are all good and pertinent questions, especially for believers who have already been through it or are planning to. First, we need to find out from the Bible which cases of divorce or remarriage are sins. Second, for those situations where separation from the marriage partner is a sin, we must determine, again with the help of Scripture, whether that kind of sin is unforgivable and may cause believers to forfeit their eternal salvation.

There are two definite instances in which divorce is allowed by God and not considered a sin in Scripture. The first admissible reason, depicted by Jesus in Matthew 5:31–32 and Matthew 19:9, is unfaithfulness through sexual immorality, which applies to both spouses:

Matthew 5:31–32 (NKJV)

³¹ *Furthermore it has been said, "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce."*

³² *But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except **sexual immorality** causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.*

Matthew 19:9 (NKJV)

⁹ *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.*

Some spiritual leaders in the body of Christ today contend that, based on these two

passages, only sexual immorality is a valid reason for dissolving a marriage. If that's the case, then the apostle Paul contradicted Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 7:15, he adds a second situation in which divorce is not a sin, that of an unbelieving spouse wanting to separate:

1 Corinthians 7:12–15 (NKJV)

12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.

13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise, your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

*15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister **is not under bondage in such cases**. But God has called us to peace.*

Later, we will see that when Jesus says in Matthew 5:31–32, Matthew 19:9, and Mark 10:2–12 that a man should not separate from his wife for any other reason except sexual immorality, he is addressing a specific hot debate of His day on this topic that was based on Deuteronomy 24:1–2.

You may ask: “What about physical abuse, emotional abuse, or the neglect of a spouse? Are any of these acceptable reasons for divorce? What does the Bible say about this?” There is no easy answer because the Bible doesn't have a clear-cut, black-and-white answer to this dilemma. Here is where things get complicated and into the gray area; that's why we need to rely on the Holy Spirit to give us revelation and understanding of His heart. If we look carefully at Scripture with an open and sincere heart, we will discover that it has a solution to this challenging issue.

First, through a few examples, I invite you to observe that, as a general principle, God's love and mercy are always greater than His justice. Without diminishing His righteousness and punishment for sin in any way, He is always in the business of encouraging, building up, and restoring people's lives despite their mistakes and failures. He always rejoices to see His children happy and well. Even in Old Testament times, during the Law of Moses, when God seemed very cruel and harsh in His punishments for people's acts of disobedience, He still did everything out of care for them and because there was no other way to accomplish what He needed to accomplish for humanity. When we become parents, we can understand and experience a glimpse of God's heart for His children. No matter how bad children can be and what evil things they might do normal fathers and mothers will never give up on them, and they will always do everything in their power to see them well and happy. When Adam and Eve sinned by eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God could have left them to die forever according to His justice and never redeem them. However, because of His great love, He found a way, though painful, tedious, and costly, to save humanity from eternal destruction without lessening His righteousness. In Matthew 12:1–8, Jesus's disciples plucked off heads of grain and ate them on the Sabbath

because they were hungry, and the Pharisees accused them of doing something unlawful on the day of rest. Let's see what Jesus's response was:

Matthew 12:1-8 (NKJV)

- 1 *At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.*
- 2 *And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing **what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!**"*
- 3 *But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him:*
- 4 *how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which **was not lawful for him to eat**, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?*
- 5 *Or have you not read in the law that **on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?***
- 6 *Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple.*
- 7 *But if you had known what this means, '**I desire mercy and not sacrifice,**' you would not have condemned the guiltless.*
- 8 *For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."*

Jesus first reminds them from the Old Testament of the occasion when King David ate the showbread from the house of God, which was not lawful for him because only the priests were allowed to eat it, and God didn't punish him. Again, this is a situation where His love and mercy were greater than His already established law. Then, Jesus provides another example where priests violate the sanctity of the Sabbath, and they are still guiltless. In Mark 2:23-28's account of the same story, Jesus even says the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, again putting the well-being of humans above the written law. Finally, Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for condemning the guiltless because God desires mercy and steadfast love more than sacrifices.

Another example of God's love going beyond His given law comes from the story of the apostle Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10. In this passage, Jesus tells Peter in a vision to eat unclean animals that the Law of Moses forbade to prepare him to accept the fact that the Gospel and the Kingdom of God were for the Gentiles as well, not only for the Jews.

Let's go a step further and recognize God's care and protection for the vulnerable in Scripture, especially for married women. Some of the material presented on this point, in particular, but not only, is taken from Gretchen Baskerville's book entitled: *The Life-Saving Divorce: Hope for People Leaving Destructive Relationships*. There are certainly cases of marriages where a husband is abused physically or emotionally by his wife, but those are rare. Usually, the wives and the kids are abused by the husband. Nevertheless, the principle applies to both husbands and wives. A key verse that shows God's heart for the oppressed or the abused is Jeremiah 22:3:

Jeremiah 22:3 (ESV)

³ *Thus says the LORD: Do justice and righteousness, and **deliver from the hand of the oppressor** him who has been robbed. And **do no wrong or violence** to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, **nor shed innocent blood** in this place.*

Moreover, in Old Testament times, when the culture and society were patriarchal and women had fewer rights than men, the Law of Moses protected the wives, who were more vulnerable. Even in those times, they had significant legal rights. The Law of Moses allowed divorce (and even commanded it) for breaking any of the three marriage vows found in Exodus 21:10: food, clothing, and marital or conjugal rights, which, in this verse, can be defined as “intimate relations.” Let’s read the passage:

Exodus 21:10–11 (NKJV)

¹⁰ *If he takes another wife, he shall not diminish **her food, her clothing, and her marriage rights.***

¹¹ *And if he does not do these three for her, then **she shall go out free, without paying money.***

In the book of Exodus, if a man took a second wife, it was against God’s command to reduce the first wife’s food, clothing, or marital rights. He was not allowed to demote her to slave status. If he was unwilling to treat her as a wife, he had to let her go (or she could go free), so she could marry someone who would treat her properly. You may say: “I’ve read the Bible cover to cover, and I’ve never heard about this verse before. How can you claim this obscure verse is important? We’ve never heard it in Sunday school, youth group, or adults’ sermons.” However, as it turns out, this passage was the cornerstone for Jewish marriage and divorce law in the Old Testament and during the time of Jesus. The Jewish rabbis discussed precisely how much food, what types of clothing, and for how long you could neglect your wife or husband before you crossed the line. So, in terms of food, it had to be above the quality of a slave or servant. Also, it was the amount of food a man would have to give his neighbor to provide for his wife if the husband went on a long trip. Clothing had to be suitable for her age and the season of the year. Marital or conjugal rights meant intimate relations, physical affection, and basic kindness. Moreover, the rabbis specified clearly that sex had to be pleasing and intimate. Marital rape was not allowed.

In his book *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible*, David Instone-Brewer writes:

There are no records of disputes among the rabbis about any of these grounds for divorce based on Exodus 21, except in matters of detail. The rabbis of that time disputed about the length of time by which emotional abuse could be defined, but the principles appear to have been universally accepted from a very early date. From at least Jesus’s time, it was recognized that the three obligations of Exodus 21:10–11 could form the basis of a claim for divorce.

In addition, these three conditions were referred to in the New Testament as well, in Ephesians 5:25–33, where husbands were instructed to love their wives in the same way Christ loved the church, as their bodies or as themselves, to nourish, and cherish them:

Ephesians 5:25–33 (NKJV)

- 25 Husbands, love your wives, just **as Christ also loved the church** and gave Himself for her,*
- 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word,*
- 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*
- 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives **as their own bodies**; he who loves his wife loves himself.*
- 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but **nourishes and cherishes it**, just as the Lord does the church.*
- 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.*
- 31 “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”*
- 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*
- 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife **as himself**, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

Returning to the Old Testament, let’s talk about how a woman captured during a battle was treated. If a man took a captive as his wife, which meant she wasn’t even a Jew, he had to do her the honor of letting her mourn before sleeping with her. As his wife, she had to be adequately treated. The Law of Moses required divorce in cases where a man attempted to reduce his wife to an enslaved person or sell her. He had to let her go and give her the freedom to marry someone else by giving her a divorce certificate. The husband could not treat this woman any way he wanted; she was either a wife with rights, or she had to be set free:

Deuteronomy 21:10–14 (NKJV)

- 10 When you go out to war against your enemies, and the LORD your God delivers them into your hand, and you take them captive,*
- 11 and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her and would take her for your wife,*
- 12 then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails.*
- 13 She shall put off the clothes of her captivity, remain in your house, and mourn her father and her mother a full month; after that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife.*
- 14 And it shall be, **if you have no delight in her, then you shall set her free**, but you certainly shall not sell her for money; **you shall not treat her brutally** because*

you have humbled her.

Let's look at another example in Deuteronomy 24:1–2, where God protects the betrayed husband but does not destroy the indecent or immoral wife:

Deuteronomy 24:1–2 (NASB95)

- ¹ *When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because **he has found some indecency in her, he writes her a certificate of divorce** and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house,*
- ² *and she leaves his house and goes **and becomes another man's wife.***

In this case, a man divorces his indecent wife by giving her a divorce certificate and sending her out. Being expected that she would remarry, a certificate of divorce allowed her to do that. Instone-Brewer said: "It would have been a most valuable document for a woman to possess because it gave her the right to remarry. Without it, she would be under the constant threat of her former husband, who could claim at a later date that she was still married to him and thus charge her with adultery." The bottom line is that remarriage for both parties—the guilty and the innocent—was acceptable. Marriage was both a fundamental right and an obligation in ancient society.

Now it's time to connect this passage from Deuteronomy 24:1–2 with what I said earlier about Jesus saying sexual immorality or adultery was the only valid reason for divorce. In the time of Jesus, some rabbis claimed they found a loophole in Deuteronomy 24:1 for men who wanted to dump their wives for any reason, even trivial ones, such as burning a meal. So, there was an intense debate between two interpretations of this Old Testament passage. The controversy was this: Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any matter (any cause or any reason)? It was an issue because men wanted to get a divorce in a court that favored their interests. There were two schools of thought: (1) the Jewish School of Shammai and (2) the Jewish School of Hillel. The School of Shammai had the most rigid rules about divorce. They believed Deuteronomy 24:1 meant a man should not divorce his wife unless he found **a matter of indecency** in her. They thought this passage was explicitly talking about **adultery**. They also believed in the Law of Moses that breaking the marital contract (food, clothing, and love) represented valid grounds for a divorce. The School of Shammai was the one protecting women from unjust divorce. Let's contrast that with the Jewish School of Hillel, which had the laxest rules on marriage separation. They believed Deuteronomy 24:1 meant a man might divorce his wife for **any matter**, for example, anything that seemed objectionable to him. They called this "any cause." This verse opened the door to divorce for **any reason**, similar to no-fault divorce or divorce due to irreconcilable differences today. Like the other school of thought, they believed that breaking the marital contract (food, clothing, and love) from Deuteronomy 21 was also a valid ground. However, their viewpoint made women vulnerable to

unjust, broken marriages. So, in Matthew 19:3, when the Pharisees came to Jesus and asked Him if it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason, they were testing Him to see what His position was on Deuteronomy 24:1 and with which school of thought He agreed. The Bible says in Matthew 19:3 that they were testing Him. The Pharisees were jealous of Jesus's popularity and wanted to trap Him. It is worth mentioning here that there is another version of this question in a parallel account of the same story in Mark 10:2, where the words "for any matter" are missing. In the Mark passage, the question sounded simply like this: "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" However, as it stands, Mark's version doesn't make sense because we already know the Law of Moses allowed divorce, sometimes even commanding it, and the Jewish law specified the conditions as well. Anyone in Jesus' day knew it was allowed and how it would be permissible. So, it is safe to assume that Mark's account referred to the same issue from Deuteronomy 24:1, but Matthew's account is more explicit. In response to the Pharisees' question, Jesus first suggests they go back in time and think about God's original purpose in marriage, expressed in Genesis 2:24:

Genesis 2:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Then Jesus adds:

Mark 10:8-9 (NKJV)

*⁸ and the two shall become one flesh; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.
⁹ Therefore **what God has joined together, let not man separate.***

Jesus says that, from the beginning, God intended marriage to be lifelong, monogamous, and binding. He affirms clearly why it is supposed to be a life commitment neither spouse should break. It was not merely a temporary agreement. Its purpose was for two people to grow together in love and commitment to become one flesh. But this is not the answer the Pharisees were looking for, so the religious leaders pushed back and asked in Matthew 19:7: "Why then did Moses command to give her a divorce certificate and send her away?" Jesus replied: "Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning, it has not been this way. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." Jesus taught them divorce was not God's ideal. Still, He agreed with the Law of Moses that sometimes it was necessary because of "hardheartedness." He didn't prohibit a "certificate of divorce," a document that women needed to remarry. He agreed with the School of Shammai on the interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1, that it meant adultery and not "any cause." In the Bible, the concept of "hardheartedness" applied to the unrepentant person. We can infer from this that they broke at least one of their vows, repeatedly. The term "hardhearted" doesn't

apply to the victims of the hardhearted behavior. It does not refer to a person who has decided to leave due to abuse, adultery, or neglect.

In Matthew 5:31–32, Jesus addresses the same issue from Deuteronomy 24:1 because Verse 31 quotes exactly that passage from the Old Testament. To summarize, when Jesus says in those three passages (Matthew 5:31–32; Matthew 19:3–9, and Mark 10:2–12) that adultery was the only valid reason for divorce, He did not delineate a general and universal principle that would exclude any other acceptable grounds for separation. Still, He defined the term “indecency” or the matter of indecency from Deuteronomy 24:1 concretely, and in that context, He excluded all the other trivial reasons for divorce the religious leaders were trying to insert in the text there.

Next, let’s analyze the very definition and meaning of the marriage covenant. Marriage should be a lifelong commitment to love, care, and kindness, as seen in Ephesians 5. But what if it’s the opposite? If one side doesn’t keep the vow, has already broken the covenant, and “divorced” their spouse one way or another, the other is free to go. Justin Holcomb, a minister and a professor of theology and apologetics at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Reformed Theological Seminary, says, “When a man chooses to be abusive, he breaks the covenant. An abusive man forfeits the right to remain married.”

You have probably figured out where I am going with this. Based on what we’ve seen so far, do you think God is a cold-hearted deity who thinks anything your spouse does to you is fine and doesn’t care if you’re being abused or neglected? No, that’s not the God of the Bible! If we put together all these three principles—God’s love over His justice, God’s protection of the vulnerable, and the very definition of marriage—we can safely conclude that divorce in the case of physical or emotional abuse is biblically acceptable, and ***IT IS NOT A SIN***. The same goes for remarriage in those instances. Of course, every avenue to avoid separation should be employed first (i.e., Christian counseling or pastoral counseling), but if abuse doesn’t stop, you can love God and get a divorce, and He will still love you. God will be on your side if you need one to save your sanity or even your life. Yes, even if the abusing spouse is a believer and has not been unfaithful through adultery but continues to abuse the other spouse or children, divorce and remarriage are not sins before God for the abused victims.

Despite the amount of scriptural proof that divorce is not a sin in the three cases we’ve just analyzed (sexual immorality, abandonment of the unbeliever, and physical or emotional abuse), some spiritual leaders in the body of Christ dismiss this evidence, advocating that there are no acceptable reasons for separation in the Bible whatsoever. This view is based on their interpretation of Malachi 2:16, where it says God hates divorce, and Mark 10:9, which says what He has joined together, let no man separate. The proponents of this view suggest a truly godly disciple of Christ would never divorce, no matter what. However, by their stance, they put pressure on the abused, betrayed, or neglected spouse to stay in that relationship and endure it even to death.

First, it is critical to recognize that God Himself is like a “divorced” person. In Jeremiah 3:8,

He gives Israel a certificate of divorce. In other words, God has parted with Israel:

Jeremiah 3:8 (NKJV)

*⁸ Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and **given her a certificate of divorce**; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.*

One could argue that God was not exactly united to Israel the same way a man is married to a woman. Still, against this, it could also be argued that the covenant relationship He had with Israel was far stronger and far more binding than the relationship shared between a husband and wife. Some might also say it was okay for God to divorce Israel because of her numerous acts of infidelity to Him, and those were the one basis by which divorce was allowed (Matthew 19:9). Of course, Jesus says the only reason for this exception was the hardness of people's hearts (Matthew 19:8). Ideally, not even marital infidelity should result in divorce, as in God's eyes, the marriage union lasts as long as both spouses live. This is even more true of God, whose patience and longsuffering are nearly without limits. Yet the limit was reached, and He gave Israel a divorce certificate. So, we can say that God is like a "divorced" person.

Next, let's analyze Malachi 2:16, where supposedly it's written that God hates all kinds of marriage separations. This one verse is very influential, and it keeps Christians, whose sanity and lives are in danger, trapped in destructive marriages. It seems like it tells faithful spouses that there is no way out but death and that they are caught up in a trap for the rest of their lives. This interpretation leads to depression, suicide, domestic violence, and homicide of many faithful spouses. Does the Bible quote God saying: "I hate all divorce"? No! The translation of this verse from the ancient Hebrew language to English is incorrect. The earliest English Bibles (Wycliffe, Geneva, Bishops, and the Great Bible) didn't translate it as "I hate divorce" or "God hates divorce." And neither do the three most recent English Bible translations (NIV, ESV, and HCSB). Malachi 2:16 was written about five hundred years before the time of Christ. For the first twelve hundred years of Bible translation (from about 500 BC to AD 1600), no Bible translation said, "I hate divorce" or "God hates divorce." The entire context of Malachi 1 and 2 is God's stinging rebuke of hypocrites who make showy displays of loyalty to the Lord but, in reality, are cheating Him. God says He doesn't answer their prayers because of how badly they treat their wives. This verse is not about God's anger at divorce but His anger at hypocritical, unfaithful, violent husbands who dump their wives without a just cause. The Hebrew text does not say, "I hate divorce," instead, a more accurate translation from Hebrew to English of this phrase can be found in the New International Version of the Bible:

Malachi 2:15b-16 (NIV)

¹⁵ So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.

*¹⁶ **The man who hates and divorces his wife, says the Lord, the God of Israel, does***

*violence to the one he should protect, says the Lord Almighty. So be on your guard, and **do not be unfaithful.***

The same verses in the English Standard Version read like this:

Malachi 2:15–16 (ESV)

¹⁵ *So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.*

¹⁶ ***For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So, guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.***

The Holman Christian Standard Bible, published by Lifeway (Southern Baptist), translates it like this:

Malachi 2:15–16 (HCSB)

¹⁵ *So watch yourselves carefully, and do not act treacherously against the wife of your youth.*

¹⁶ ***If he hates and divorces his wife, says the LORD God of Israel, he covers his garment with injustice, says the LORD of Hosts. Therefore, watch yourselves carefully, and do not act treacherously.***

God is not against all separation in marriage; He is against treacherous divorce, where the vow breaker abandons the faithful spouse. God is also against the treacherous treatment of spouses, such as abuse, abandonment, neglect, and exploitation, as we've already seen. This entire passage is about breaking promises, and God's hatred toward divorce is focused on those who break the marital contract. Notice God's summary statement from the end of Verse 16: "So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless." God doesn't say, "Don't divorce for any reason." In fact, in Ezra 9–10, the Israelites return from exile and take vows before God to divorce their foreign wives. He understands divorce when it is justified, and since God hates treachery toward wives, we can conclude this: divorce is not evidence of moral decay in society. Tolerating abusive marriages is. Divorce is just a symptom of the "disease," not the root problem.

What about Mark 10:9, which says what God has joined together, let no man separate? First, I believe we can agree that He has not joined the two together in all marriages. Sometimes, two people marry without even asking God about it, out of lust, social pressure, or maybe parental pressure. Second, Jesus was quoting Genesis 2:24, where God said, before the fall of man, that a man shall leave his father and his mother and cling to his wife, and they shall be as one flesh. Yes, the intended purpose of marriage was that the two spouses would never separate, and that ideal still stands firm today. Couples, especially Christian ones, from the very beginning, should not even

conceive the idea of separating. In case of issues, they should always attempt to get help and try any other option of solving different conflicts, except divorce. However, sometimes it remains the last resort. If we look at Verse 16 of the same chapter, we also see God commanding this to man before the fall: “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for, in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die.” In this case, God’s ideal and intention from the beginning was that man would not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and die. Did man obey His command? No! What did God do? Did He leave him to die forever? Of course not! He immediately began working on man’s way of salvation. The same applies to divorce. It is not God’s first choice, but He will always be involved in the restoration if it happens.

Now, it is true that in the body of Christ, there are many today who just throw away their marriages and leave their spouses for all the wrong reasons. The Bible is clear that this type of divorce is a sin. However, is that sin unforgivable? Are divorced individuals condemned for life and eternity? The answer is an undeniable no; this sin is not unpardonable. God forgives divorce even when there are no valid reasons for it. If you have done that, there is grace and forgiveness for you. Usually, divorce is singled out as particularly bad among other sins because it is thought to be something bad that people cannot properly repent of, for if someone breaks a marriage and then asks for forgiveness of it, they remain still separated. The sin remains. For this reason, people think divorce is unforgivable.

But even divorce or remarriage happens at some point in time, and the blood of Jesus has removed both sins. If we follow the same line of thinking, killing another person is also a sin that remains and cannot be rectified even if the guilty person has asked for forgiveness. In the same way, the woman caught in adultery and forgiven by Jesus could no longer turn back time to undo the deed done. But Jesus shed His blood on the cross to wipe away all our sins. The thief on the cross was forgiven on the spot without giving back everything he stole. God does not have a bucket of some mistakes Christians can be forgiven of and others that cannot. Jesus applies the same forgiveness to divorce as He does to lying, cheating on taxes, or any other sin. The moment you were saved, your identity and nature changed, and you received complete and total forgiveness for all your trespasses. The only unforgivable sin in the Bible is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which in the context of Matthew 12:22–32 meant rejecting the Gospel because the Pharisees were confusing the work of salvation performed by the Holy Spirit with the work of Satan, thus rejecting the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The only unforgivable sin is rejecting the Gospel and remaining an unbeliever. You will not lose your salvation over divorce.

One last question might arise in your mind, especially if you are divorced, and maybe not for the reasons approved by the Bible: “Can I get remarried if I had a divorce?” Yes, especially in cases of biblically valid divorce, you are free in Christ to remarry. But, even if you divorced for other reasons since all your sins have been forgiven, you are also free to remarry and get your life back. However, if you could not save your marriage the first time, I would encourage you to make sure

you are slow to marry again. If you do, be sure they are a believer in Christ. Be sure they are gentle, loving, and honorable. The same applies to you. Make sure you become like the person you are looking for. Before you remarry, you must also be sure that you are getting your happiness and joy from Jesus. Don't expect to get all of this from a spouse. If you do, you'll end up disappointed every time. And above all, never forget they are human; they will probably offend you as well, and this hurts. Our ability to forgive our spouses as well as that of apologizing or asking for forgiveness dramatically improves the quality of our marriage. I will conclude this section with this: if you are married, stay married if you can because that's God's heart. If you still can't, He will not punish you. He won't ignore your prayers or withhold blessings from you. You are not blessed because of your goodness but because of HIS goodness. You still remain the righteousness of God in Christ, and your sins are dealt with. But above all, if you are married, and as long as it depends on you, let your marriage reflect Jesus. Be forgiving, loving, and kind. Jesus is love.

Can believers abuse this liberating teaching? Yes, of course! However, those who do this usually do it in other areas as well, and they don't care that much if divorce or remarriage are sins. They are usually the oppressing and unfaithful who are interested in getting safely out of a marriage they don't want anymore. I doubt they are genuinely born again. At the same time, there are Christians who love God and go through abusive and painful situations but remain bound by wrong teachings and are not able to fulfill the destiny they have been created for. They need to hear this message of grace. Should we not tell God's people, especially the abused and victims, the truth about divorce and remarriage just because some might abuse this message? Definitely not! Apostle Paul is confronted with the same dilemma in Romans 6 when he preaches grace and security of salvation: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" Paul says, "Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" The fact that some people abused the message of grace didn't stop Paul from preaching it, and neither should it stop us because, for those born of God, the message of grace is the actual secret to their freedom in Christ.