

## THE INHUMAN ANTI-DIVORCE ETHOS OF FOLLOWING JESUS

The Bible, the claimed word of God, is against divorce for remarriage under all circumstances for it holds that once a valid marriage takes place it can only be dissolved by death. If the Bible is really authored by God as the Church says then what it says is true and matters very much.

The gospels speak of man and woman becoming one flesh in marriage. Becoming one flesh is a metaphor for merging. It is man and woman becoming inseparable in marriage. The metaphor is that as you can no longer separate two eggs that you have scrambled you cannot separate man and wife. Realistically man and woman cannot merge that much so it is the law merges them. It is about law. For Catholics it is about divine law. Only a God doing miracles could merge two people who are not that merged! The judgementalism of Catholicism is apparent when it says that people fail not marriage for marriage is a sacrament, a channel of help from God that helps you transcend the flaws of your human nature.

Twice in Matthew's Gospel, people think they read of Jesus allowing divorce when adultery has happened. That would still virtually ban nearly all divorce for it is hard to prove that adultery as in sex took place.

In both instances, Jesus says that whoever divorces his wife except for unfaithfulness makes her commit adultery and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. It is believed that women in those days could not survive long without a husband so to divorce a woman was almost to force her to marry somebody else.

Bernard Hoose thinks the word means fornication but as in marriage between a Jew and a pagan. The idea is that such a marriage is not technically fornication but is spiritually so and the couple can part. So why then is it that only a man can divorce? Jewish women could have married pagans. And so Jesus is accused of being racist! The marriages would have been too rare to have been in Jesus' mind.

Another suggestion is that as marriage in those days was a process that was finalised in a ceremony a marriage was not real if it was found that the woman was pretending to be a virgin. The man would not find out to after the ceremony. That is not permitting divorce then but an annulment. Or is Jesus saying divorce and annulments are the same thing? This is not too likely either for the women were children and the law had to understand that girls have accidents where the hymen can break.

Father Richard P McBrien refers to these texts in his tome Catholicism page 853. He notes that Jesus says that marrying a divorced person except on the ground of porneias or unchastity is adultery and therefore forbidden. McBrien says that one interpretation says the exception is not a real exception at all. It refers not to divorce but to separation without marrying somebody new such as what happens in the case of an adulterous wife who had to be stoned to death for her sin in Jewish law. So what Jesus is saying then according to this interpretation is, "Whoever divorces his wife unless she is an adulteress and therefore will be stoned to death makes her commit adultery." But McBrien says this idea is wrong for the text does not use the word for adultery.

McBrien says the more accepted solution is that it does not mean an exception to the ban on divorce but is referring to incestuous marriage. In such a case the marriage can be annulled and husband and wife can remarry. The reasoning is that porneia means prostitution among the Hebrews and was used to refer to incestuous marriage. An annulment may have been called a divorce. Marriage between relatives who were too close and marriage between a Jew and a Gentile was considered invalid.

Porneia which is translated as unfaithfulness may be translated incorrectly for the word may mean fornication. Porneia is a Greek term. It appears meaning adultery in Ezekiel 16:32, prostitution in Hosea 2:2 and Jeremiah 3:9 and in the New Testament it appears sometimes as sex outside marriage and is distinguished from moicheia which is adultery. This happens in Matthew 15:19; 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Galatians 5:19. However, fornication is the least it could mean so that must be what it does mean for we must accept the simplest understanding. Both reason and the Bible forbid us to say that Jesus said except for adultery. When he did not make it clear he meant adultery he did not mean it. Jesus was undoubtedly trying to restrict divorce. In Matthew 5:28, he said that even looking at another woman with desire was adultery evidently showing that he did not really think that adultery was enough to dissolve a marriage. If he did, thinking about adultery being adultery would be enough to dissolve it which would mean that very few marriages could not be dissolved.

Even if porneia sometimes means adultery it was not the usual word which is moicheia. That is significant.

If a married couple fornicate with one another then they cannot be validly married. They are married in name and law only.

Jesus is saying that if you have a wife who is not really your wife for some reason it is not a sin to divorce her. He forbids divorce except to end invalid marriages. They didn't have annulments in those days. Jesus is probably saying that legal divorce is better than looking for an annulment which is probably right.

Jesus allows what amounts to artificial divorce in the eyes of God and real divorce in the eyes of the law to end a fake marriage for even God could not dissolve a true marriage. He said then that a man cannot divorce his wife unless he fornicates with her and that whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. The woman that was fornicator was not married so to marry her would not be adultery. The assertion that whoever marries a divorcee is an adulterer stresses that the exception was not about real marriage.

The Catholic Church forbids divorce as in ending a marriage in the eyes of God. But under grave circumstances it allows civil divorce as long as this is understood to be just a man-made decree that has no real power to dissolve the marriage. The Church allows divorce for example when the Church annuls a marriage and the state doesn't agree with that annulment and the man and woman want the state benefits of being single again so they divorce in the eyes of the state.

Jesus could have had the same attitude with regard to invalid marriages. But since he complained that divorce was making a person commit adultery and therefore bad he would not have allowed it as freely as the Catholic Church does and would have allowed it only when the marriage was not real.

By the way, the hypocrisy of allowing civil divorce when it will lead to the temptation of remarriage which the Church says would be so serious a sin that it would not be worth the benefits of the divorce proves its hypocrisy. It is still making the state think and act as if the marriage is over when it still exists. It is making the state try to dissolve a real marriage and marriage is a legal affair as well as a religious one. The Church says the state has no rights except what God gives it so how could the state have the right to say a marriage that God created is no more? How could it be right to divorce even under the conditions allowed by the Church and as long as one doesn't think the marriage is truly dissolved? Is it okay for the state to legislate that somebody is not a thief when it knows they are?

It is hypocrisy to say that divorce is a great evil not just because it is the false declaration that a marriage bound by God is no more but for what it does to the children and then allow divorce within the confines of Church teaching. Availing of it is like supporting something bad.

When Jesus allowed divorce on the grounds of fornication he said that whoever divorces his wife except for unfaithfulness or ponia makes her commit adultery. If a man divorces his real wife that is what he is doing making her commit adultery. But what if the marriage is not real because the man is already married and not divorced or married and divorced to another woman? Then for him to divorce his new wife would not be making her commit adultery for their fake marriage is adultery against the woman he is still married to in the eyes of God. Perhaps this is what he meant by the exception.

The exception is still more unlikely to mean that divorce is allowable over adultery when Jesus said that life-long valid marriage was the ideal and that we should forgive. Divorce and separation could not possibly be approved by a man who said that if our brother hurts us several times a day we should still forgive him and take his word for it that he is sorry though it does not look like he is. So if your husband beats you up ten times a day you must still stay with him (another interesting indication that the twelve apostles who allegedly set up the Church and who all agreed with this drivel were nutcases who should not be taken seriously). The fact that Christianity cares about your virtue more than your happiness could mean nothing else. They excuse God being so cruel on the grounds that God wants us to suffer so that we might learn virtue. Even belief in God implies divorce and separation are immoral. The Church sometimes says it is not being cruel and unsympathetic. It is for it allows killing in certain circumstances and remarriage after divorce in none so controlling people is more important than looking after them. For the Church to be telling the truth it would need to be the case that the Church would oppose remarriage after divorce even if Jesus had not mentioned it. The Church would be opposing divorce and remarriage just because it is bad. This is wrong for it can't be always bad. The Church opposes them because Jesus says so and that is fanaticism for no authority has the right to make demands without being able to prove that these demands are good for us. Jesus was claiming this authority and proving that he had no right to any obedience for he gave no hint that evidence had anything to do with his demand. He gave no examples of how bad these things are – another mistake that proves that whatever he was the Son of it was not a good God.

To interpret Matthew as saying that only fornication or invalid marriage was a separate case for divorce is the right interpretation.



