



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!

May 31, 2015

“Does Baptism Wash Away Marriages?”

Bryan Garlock

A few years ago I went to baptize a couple that had decided to put on Christ through baptism. While at the building, I found out that the twenty-four-year-old woman had been married and divorced twice and her fiancé had never been married. She had put her first husband away for sexual immorality. She and her second husband "fell out of love." Thus she was bound to her second husband. As uncomfortable as it was for me, I had to do exactly what led to John the Immerser's death (Matt. 14:1-12). I had to tell both that they had no right to marry each other. For her to be in good standing with the Lord, she would have to remain unmarried or be reconciled to her second husband (Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:10-11). It was at this point that the couple left and I never saw them again. A few days later, however, I did receive a text message from the woman claiming that she had talked to her "pastor" and he comforted her by saying that Jesus' blood washes away all sin, even her previous marriage.

It is true that the blood of Jesus, which is applied to a sinner at baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4), washes away sin (Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:22; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5, etc.) Thus the question is not: "Are all my sins washed away at baptism?" That answer is obvious. Nor is the question: "Are all my sins washed away by the blood of Christ?" That too is obvious. Therefore, the only question we want to answer is: "Does baptism wash away previous marriages?" This question is different in scope than the preceding questions because it deals with consequences of sin rather than sin itself. The consequence here is not being able to marry again.

All sin is a transgression of God's law and all sin has consequences; some earthly and all eternal (Rom. 6:23). We should not assume consequences of sin are washed away at baptism. For instance if I rob a bank and then come to Christ in humble obedience, His blood certainly washes away sin, even the sin of robbing the bank. However, God still holds the robber accountable to earthly consequences. He must return the money if possible, turn himself in and plead guilty and serve his jail term (cf. Matt. 3:8). Likewise, there are consequences to marrying and divorcing at will. Though obvious, we should note that robbing a bank is just as sinful before baptism as it is after baptism. Submitting to Christ does not make anything God calls sin automatically holy! For instance a homosexual relationship does not become holy after baptism.

Repentance must precede baptism and the fruit of repentance would demand ceasing the unlawful relationship. In like manner an unscriptural marriage must end for those in it to receive forgiveness. You cannot continue to do the wrong for which you are asking forgiveness. We must not separate what God has joined together (Matt. 19:6), but we must separate what God has *not* joined together (19:9; Matt. 14:3-4).

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church Of Christ

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Announcements

- Remember the shut in's.
- Pray for the church and one another.
- Men's Bible June 14th @ 3:30 PM
- Kid's drill next week @ 4 PM
- Ladies' Bible study Tuesday 7 PM
- Remember the spiritual sick among us
- Call or email me to add announcements, thanks.

Chronological Bible Reading Plan

May 31 1 Kgs 3-4, 2 Chr 1, Ps 72
Jun 1 Ps 119:89-176
Jun 2 Sng 1-8
Jun 3 Prov 1-3
Jun 4 Prov 4-6
Jun 5 Prov 7-9
Jun 6 Prov 10-12

Jesus said, "...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). First, Jesus says *whoever*. Thus Jesus is speaking to you, me, the atheist, etc. Some say He is speaking to the Jews only. This is false (see John 12.48). Some say He is speaking to Christians only. This is also false. Those who take the "Christians only" view believe that God's marriage laws are only for those in a covenant relationship with Him; a relationship admittedly entered by baptism. However, to be consistent, those who hold to this view must not teach anyone the gospel. You see if sinners are not amenable, that is, subject to God's marriage law, they are not subject to any of God's laws. Paul said, "...where there is no law there is no transgression" (Rom. 4.15). Elsewhere we read, "...sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3.4 KJV). Therefore, as long as they do not hear and obey the gospel, they are safe to do as they please. God will not hold their sins accountable until and only when, they are baptized. While many do not believe such, such is the consequence of this damnable doctrine. Further proof is seen in that both sinner and saint will be judged by the gospel (John 12.48; 16.8; Rom. 2.16; 2 Thess. 1.7-9). 1 Peter 4.17 is telling: "For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?"

Second, Jesus says that one may not divorce except for sexual immorality. This means that when one divorces another apart from the exception clause, that this person has transgressed God's law. Divorce for the wrong reason is a sin because Jesus said, "...what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt. 19.6).

Next Jesus says he who marries again commits adultery. If one divorces for a reason other than the exception, he is still bound to that person. God creates this bond when two individuals, male and female, who are eligible for marriage, come together to be married to one another. There are only two ways that this bond may dissolve, that is, by divorce for sexual immorality (Matt. 19.9) or death (Rom. 7.1-4; 1 Cor. 7.39). Jesus makes it clear that those who remarry after putting their spouse away for any cause other than sexual immorality commit adultery. Again, they are still bound to their first spouse. Finally, Jesus says those who marry the one put away commit adultery because the "put away" is required by God to remain unmarried.

Though all sin is washed away at baptism, the bond created by God stays intact and is not washed away at baptism. If one was to argue that the bond is washed away too, we must respond that the bound couple coming to Christ must then be remarried / rebound by God. Who can believe such? We've noted that divorce for sexual immorality and death dissolve the bond. If baptism does too, where is the Scripture? Further, sin is lawlessness (1 John 3.4) and baptism is said to wash away sin (Acts 22.16), but since the bond is not equivalent to lawlessness another Scripture is necessary to prove that baptism washes away that which God has joined together. This is why baptism has nothing to do with whether or not you can remain in an unscriptural marriage or if you can remarry another after an unscriptural divorce; it is simply a smokescreen and an effort to provide a loophole to sanctify an unsanctified relationship.

Finally, what baptism does for the sinner, confession and prayer do for the saint (1 John 1.9). Therefore each time one wants another spouse, he can pray for forgiveness of the previous marriage and repeat one spouse after another. Surely none would so contend! Thus baptism does not wash away marriages!

To say that God does not consider previous unscriptural marriages or unscriptural divorces after baptism is an attempt to dodge Jesus' words (Matt. 19.9). The pastor who told the woman above that the blood of Christ washes her marriage and divorce away created a false sense of security within her. She and her fiancé have now married, though she is still bound to her second husband, making her current marriage an adulterous relationship. Finally, they have never been baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins. Pray for them that they will come to their senses before it is eternally too late. BG