

November 24, 2010

The Havoc of Divorce

***"It would be better for [that couple] to be thrown into the sea
with a millstone tied around [their] neck
than for [them] to cause one of these little ones to sin"
(Luke 17:2)***

The dramatic havoc that divorce brings about was made clear to us while we were administrating and teaching at a retreat center in eastern Connecticut in the 1980s and early '90s. During a youth retreat we found through discussion with the teenagers that only one out of the nineteen in the group lived in a home with both of their parents. Not long after that sad revelation we were leading a ministry for students from the University of Connecticut. One evening just before Christmas we were sitting around the lounge with 40 or so students. One asked if he could stay with us over the holidays. When we asked why, he told us how difficult it was to be at home with his divorced mother and her live-in boyfriend. Then the majority of the other students voiced similar tensions concerning their divorced parents. They all wanted to stay with us where they felt safe and at peace...

These two occurrences touched our hearts so profoundly that we began to pay particular attention to divorce within Christendom at large, since so many of these young people came from "churched" homes. Over the years we've noticed that spouses who are considering divorce try hard to get others to *side with them* and their decision. Yet so few weigh heavily the consequences of divorce *on their children*. As we noted in our previous e-mail:

"The sin of divorce is always the result of a *pattern of sins* the husband and/or the wife have failed to truly repent of. When one or both spouses keep on sinning (1John 3:9) — never truly repenting and developing the character of Jesus in those old sin-nature driven areas of their lives — divorce becomes the all-too-accepted option. And with it come inevitable consequences for any children involved. (More about the traumatic consequences for children, below.)

Please heed this advice: *Don't take sides* when one party of an impending or potential divorce shares the particulars of their situation with you. You'll only get entrapped in the sin of slander (Proverbs 18:17), and then your own prayers will go unanswered because you participated in that sin (Mark 7:21-23). Refrain from offering sympathy to anyone who is seeking a divorce:

- **Until** they've repented of their own sins, and have the mind of Christ on the matter.
- **Until** they're completely free of strongholds, and the ruts of demon-produced attitudes and behaviors have been filled in.
- **Until** they've fasted and prayed to save their own marriage.

- **Until** they've gotten their relatives and friends in Christ to do likewise.

What Happens to the Children of Divorce?

We did some research to discover just how devastating the impact of divorce is on children. The following statistics describe children from all socio-economic levels. We hope you are as grieved as we are about these statistics, because they aren't just numbers and percentiles. They're individual *boys and girls* who bear the pain of their loss into their own adult relationships — the dire generational consequences that come about when God's ways are rejected. Even if you are single or no longer married, open your heart to represent *our Lord's perspective* to those you know who may be pondering divorce.

Experts report that the divorce rate among *children of divorced parents* is *fifty-seven percent*, as opposed to only eleven percent for children of married couples.

Half of all American children will witness the breakup of a parent's marriage. Of these, *close to half* will also see the breakup of a parent's *second marriage*.

Among the millions of children who have experienced the divorce of their parents, *one of every 10* will also live through *three or more* parental marriage breakups.

Forty percent of children growing up in America today are being raised without their fathers.

Of all children born to married parents this year, *fifty percent* will experience the divorce of their parents before they reach their 18th birthday.

Teenagers in single-parent families and in blended families are *three times more likely* to need psychological help within a given year.

Compared to children from homes disrupted by death, children from divorced homes have more psychological problems. The DEATH of a parent is LESS DEVASTATING to a child than a DIVORCE is.

Children of divorce are at a *greater risk* to experience injury, asthma, headaches and speech defects than children whose parents have remained married.

Following divorce, children are *fifty percent* more likely to develop health problems than those from two-parent families.

Most victims of child molestation come from single-parent households or are the children of drug ring members.

A child in a female-headed home is *10 times more likely* to be beaten or murdered.

A study of children six years after a parental marriage breakup revealed that even after all that time, these children tended to be *lonely, unhappy, anxious and insecure*.

Seventy percent of long-term prison inmates grew up in broken homes.

Children of divorce are *four times more likely* to report problems with peers and friends than children whose parents have kept their marriages intact.

Children of divorce, particularly boys, tend to be *more aggressive* toward others than those children whose parents did not divorce.

People who come from broken homes are almost *twice as likely* to attempt suicide than those who do not come from broken homes.

Children of divorced parents are roughly *two times more likely* to drop out of high school than their peers who benefit from living with parents who did not divorce.

And, as we recently heard on the news from a nationwide survey, *thirty-nine percent* of Americans now consider marriage to be *obsolete*. If children of divorce are so negatively impacted, what will become of children who are role-modeled by a revolving door of *expendable relationships* throughout their young lives?

If *you* are seriously considering divorce, it's vital that you fully evaluate the consequences of divorce on everyone else who will be affected by it. If there are children involved, you're about to curse them and possibly generations to come by role modeling how to *give up*. They will have grown up without the stability and self-worth that can fully develop only with both a mother and father. The effect on grandparents and other family members is also incalculable.

When it comes to remarriage, we've noticed that a person generally marries someone with the same prevalent demonic strongholds the previous spouse had. There's a *familiarity of spirit* there with each partner! Paul's warning applies so fittingly to Christians who are considering divorce: ***"that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will"*** (2 Timothy 2:26). Satan delights in destroying the bonding relationship of marriage that was established by God from the beginning. The enemy of our souls thereby wreaks havoc on what it takes to raise a Godly generation: the stability of a loving father and mother who are determined to keep covenant with one another.

Currently, 85% of divorces are instituted by women. The following warning is especially applicable if you've been deceived by the media's "romantic view" of subsequent marriages:

The divorce rate in America for first marriage is 41%.

The divorce rate in America for second marriage is 60%.

The divorce rate in America for third marriage is 73%.

We encourage any of you who are considering divorce to *not even contemplate* an option that God hates! Before you consider divorce:

- **Make sure** you've repented of your own sins, and have the mind of Christ on the matter even when exceptional circumstances are involved.
- **Make sure** you're completely free of strongholds, and the ruts of demon-produced attitudes and behaviors have been filled in with God's ways.
- **Make sure** you've fasted and prayed to preserve your marriage insofar as it depends on you.
- **Make sure** you've asked your relatives and friends to do likewise, so that many may rejoice when God intervenes in power to accomplish His will.

We've written you quite boldly on this issue because of the grace God has given us to warn you against giving Satan victory and defaming our Father's purposes for marriage. The enemy's attack on marriage is spreading like a cancer across the globe as he tries to thwart God's good and righteous purposes. We almost lost our own marriage many years ago, and have tasted the power and the mercy of our God to restore and resurrect what seemed beyond hope. We continue to remind you that *your marriage* is His way of reflecting your Covenant with Him in Jesus.

Again, 39% of the people in this nation consider marriage to be obsolete. It will *never* be obsolete in our Father's eyes:

"At the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' 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.' So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matthew 19:4-6). It can't be said any more plainly...

Mike & Sue