

80. Holy Wedlock is a Lifelong Union.

What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. *Matt.19,6.*

The marital bond is a lifelong union of man and wife unto one flesh. God wants to have His creation and ordinance preserved intact and inviolate. Marriage is indissoluble. God says of man and wife: "They are no more twain, but one flesh"; and again: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away committeth adultery." Only one exception does Christ give to the rule, Matt. 5, 32: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication." Fornication means unfaithfulness of one spouse to the other in the marriage relation. Illicit intercourse with another is given as a just cause for severance of the marriage tie. As for other causes, the Bible recognizes not one. And even in cases of fornication it does not *demand* a divorce. But since the guilty party in such a case has already broken the marital bond, the innocent party does not on his or her part break it in obtaining a divorce, or legal acknowledgment of the actual nonexistence of the bond of marriage.

This is the position of Scripture and of our Lutheran Church. This is the practise of her clergy. Divorcing one's spouse for any other reason than the one stated is adultery, and therefore forbidden by God's "Thou shalt not" as a sinful and godless act.

Therefore, ye husbands and wives who live in unhappy wedlock, consider this well: the man is to be man and stay man, who in love cares for his wife, and is to be a model in life. The wife should be and stay wife and not pretend to be man, which, according to God's wise plan, she is not; she shall love her husband truly and sincerely and make life as sweet as possible for him. When misfortune and sufferings come upon one or the other, then each has the duty to abide with the other and not to desert another. "Where you stay, there I will stay; nothing but death shall separate us."

Prayer.

O gracious God, heavenly Father, to Thee I render thanks from my inmost heart for granting me a safe and honorable life in a loving family. It is due to Thy fatherly care that I have been preserved from all harm of body and soul and have received many and great blessings. For all this I owe thanks to Thy fatherly love, care, and almighty protection, and I heartily pray Thee that Thou wouldst further graciously extend to me and my family Thine almighty protection and sustain body and soul by Thy power unto life eternal, for Christ Jesus' sake. Amen.

O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in His grace
And guide us when perplexed
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next.

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