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Praise the Lord! We have already heard some truly precious words from Holy Scripture and it is a real comfort when the Word is read and the Lord can speak to us, granting us comfort and confidence anew time and again by His grace. It is a great privilege that we can allow God's Word to be spoken so freely and openly in this place, no matter what topic is addressed or proclaimed. We have always taken care not to pass on traditions, but to speak what God has said in His Word.

I have something quite special planned for today. One does think about it from time to time with all these flights. One doesn't know how much longer my time on earth will be, after all no one knows that. But since last Saturday, this thought, or rather the teaching, on marriage and divorce has been weighing on my mind. How does God view all this? What does Holy Scripture say on the matter? We have of course been asked about this, but you weren't all here. So I think, do you all have your Bibles with you? Who doesn't have their Bible with them? They could go and fetch it, or let's say, bring it along another time. But be that as it may. Do you think that's a good idea, brother Russ?

We need to be well informed about everything. We need to be well informed about every subject to be found in the Bible. We are asked whether we are affected or not, perhaps not you, perhaps someone else. But we do realize that life can bring certain things that one hadn't anticipated. Either we are affected ourselves or we hear that others are affected. I'd actually like to hold a Bible study today, and may the Lord help us with that.

You know, there are various ministries, and one such ministry consists precisely in teaching the Word and expounding it correctly. And I believe that we have this ministry in this place, and that God has spoken to us often enough and given us answers from Holy Scripture.

I would like… Yes, where should one begin? There are a number of scriptures, in any case. The main point is how God has organized a person's life, how He judges what is happening. And I just want to read the relevant scriptures on this subject without arranging them in any particular chronological order.

We know that God instituted marriage, He said in Genesis chapter 2, Genesis 2, verse 18:

[18] ***And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.***

These are the words that the Lord our God did not address to Eve, but to Adam. And He then went on to create Eve and brought her to Adam, so that the two might become one flesh as it is written: "***Wherefore, they are no more twain, but one flesh.***" [Mat 19:6; Mar 10:8] And we will probably not speak much more about marriage, after all there is no wedding taking place here in this hall today. Rather, we shall move straight on to the difficult scriptures, specifically those from the Law given on Mount Sinai in Exodus, Exodus chapter 20. We read Exodus 20, here we read verses 14 and 17, Exodus 20, verses 14 and 17:

[14] ***Thou shalt not commit adultery.***

Then comes the answer in verse 17:

[17] ***Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife...***

And so forth.

I would like to read directly from Deuteronomy 22, Deuteronomy 22, verse 22:

[22] ***If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.***

We must always listen very carefully, especially on this subject, and read very carefully too: "***If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband...***" A man cannot break his own marriage, he breaks another man's marriage when he takes another man's wife as his own. For example, we may come back to this later, when we look at the life of David. We know, as is proverbial, that he lived, rarely has a man on earth lived life as generously as David, he was a man after God's own heart. [1Sam 13:14; Act 13:22]

And now I have a question: I am not sure who has counted how many wives he had, I haven't counted them, they say 300, I don't know, how many? Well, I don't know exactly, as I said, counting isn't my strong point anyway. But how often did he commit adultery? Pardon? How often did David commit adultery? Once. All right, then let's read about that one time. In 2 Samuel chapter 11 it is written from verse 2. I'll just read verse 3, 2 Samuel 11, verse 3:

[3] ***And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?***

[4] ***And David sent messengers...***

And so forth.

In 1 Kings chapter 15 we read verse 5, 1 Kings 15, verse 5:

[5] ***Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.***

God had this recorded in Holy Scripture to let us know what He thought about it.

In Deuteronomy 21, Deuteronomy 21 from verse…, perhaps from verse 15 to 17, something very interesting is said. It is connected with a law set out in Exodus chapter 21, verse 10. I will not read all these scriptures, you can note them down, you can also read them: Exodus 21, verse 10 and then Deuteronomy 21, verses 15 to 17.

I would then like to read from Deuteronomy 24, Deuteronomy 24 starting with verse 1:

[1] ***When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.***

[2] ***And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.***

[3] ***And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;***

[4] ***Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled…***

And so forth.

So this makes it quite clear that God has drawn a distinction between man and woman. There is not a single passage in the Bible where God has permitted a woman to give a man a certificate of divorce, that does not exist. The only possibility was, as God has ordained here, that a man could give a woman a certificate of divorce. We shall come to the New Testament scriptures later. That is why the term "divorced man" does not appear even once in the entire Bible, it does not exist at all. There is no such thing as a "divorced man", that cannot be. In people's minds, yes, in the vocabulary of traditional dogmas and statutes perhaps also, but not in the Bible, it simply does not exist.

There are of course many who read the book Nicodemus or other books, but in the books of Holy Scripture, such a term does indeed not appear even once. It is very important that we pay attention to these things.

Let us move straight on to the New Testament, for that is where it becomes much more interesting, after all we live in the New Testament. That is why we want to read and consider specifically the words from the New Testament: Matthew chapter 5, verses 27 and 28. Here it says, Matthew 5, verses 27 and 28:

[27] ***Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:***

We read that in Exodus. [Exo 20:14]

[28] ***But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a wife to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.***

Why? The woman belongs to another man forever and ever, and she must not be touched by any one other than the man to whom she is married. Anything else is adultery in the eyes of God.

In Matthew 5, verse 32 we read:

[32] ***But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.***

This scripture too is very clear: If a man divorces his wife… Look, people today are so frivolous, they don't even ask who initiated the divorce, what are the facts of the matter, they just want to talk big and then go their own way and cause harm. There is a world of difference between a man getting a divorce from his wife and a wife getting a divorce from her husband. In God's eyes that is by no means the same thing. I know that within the denominations everything has been lumped together, but that simply won't do. I shall read a few more scriptures to make this clear. Here in verse 32 it says:

[32] ***But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife…***

So if a brother divorces his wife, the only exception made here is, namely "***except for the cause of fornication***", that is, if the wife goes her own way and so on, then according to this passage it would be permissible. But even the wife, so if the man divorces his wife and this woman marries someone, provided it was not on the grounds of fornication, if that woman then marries, the man bears the responsibility, because he was the cause of her remarrying and thus living in adultery. In that case the blame would fall on the man and not the woman. Is that clear? I read it again:

[32] ***But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her… causeth her…*** Did you all read it? ***…causeth her to commit adultery…***, because she has got married.

So if the man puts her away and his wife enters into a new marriage, the man is to blame for this happening, because he had himself divorced from his wife. So it's very clear, we only need to know a little English and then it's very easy to understand,

that she will then be subjected to adultery. Whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery, so there's really nothing more to add to that.

Similar words are found in Matthew 19. Let's read them together as well. In Matthew 19, verse 3, the scribes and Pharisees ask a question. It's always a bit odd. When they come up with questions, things are generally not in a very good state. Here is Matthew 19, verse 3:

[3] ***The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?***

[4] ***And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,***

[5] ***And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?***

[6] ***What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.***

[7] ***They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement and to put her away?***

[8] ***He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.***

[9] ***And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife...*** now it comes***..., except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.***

Once again it is confirmed. The apostles, of course, were listening and wrote down only what the Lord and Master had said. So, "***whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery***", and so forth.

Let me also read from Mark chapter 10, Mark 10. This is one of the most important passages, but it also conveys the same message. It must, of course, be read in conjunction with all the other scriptures. One could start here with verse 1. This is roughly as we have already read in the Gospel of Matthew. Then in verse 6 it also says:

[6] ***But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.***

[8] ***And they twain shall be one flesh.***

[9] ***What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.***

Now it was the disciples who questioned him, not the Pharisees and scribes, but the disciples who really wanted to know exactly what the matter was. I shall read Mark 10, verses 10 and 11:

[10] ***And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.***

[11] ***And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.***

Here the reason is no longer specified, as in the other Bible passages, where it was stated, ***"except on the grounds of fornication."*** [Mat 5:32; Mat 19:9] Here the reason is no longer specified, instead it is stated in general terms, ***"Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her."*** Yet it is not written here, if the wife puts away her husband. And most people do not understand this at all. In fact, they read the Bible so phlegmatically, that it is sometimes astonishing.

So, ***"Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her."*** But if a woman shall put away her husband, in what situation is he then? See, as I said earlier, one simply has to read this, as it is written. What God says about the wife, is meant for the wife. What he says about the man, is meant for the man. What he says to both, applies to both. You must always read carefully. To whom is he speaking? To whom is it addressed? That is what matters.

I shall read on, from Romans, so that you may also understand, why this is so. From Romans 7. It is that well-known scripture. Romans 7, verse 2:

[2] ***For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.***

But where in the Bible, does it say even once, that a man is bound to his wife for as long as she lives? It doesn't. Not once in the book of God. It exists in people's minds. It exists in tradition. But not in Holy Scripture. Not once. As I said earlier, one must read, listen and discern to whom the word is addressed. To the woman, to the man or to both. I shall read it again:

[2] ***For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.***

Do you see how clearly the Lord's Apostles passed on what He had already said and wrote it to the churches so that they might receive guidance and instruction.

In 1 Corinthians 7, 1 Corinthians chapter 7, verses 1 to 7, it is stated in general terms what ought to be done, that it is not good for man to be alone. Every man should have his wife, every woman her husband. [1Cor 7:2] The husband should fulfill his marital duty towards his wife and vice versa, so that Satan may not come between them. [1Cor 7:3, 5] It is all described very beautifully. And then in 1 Corinthians 7, verses 10 and 11, the Apostle returns to this difficult matter and there it says the following. 1 Corinthians 7, 10 and 11:

[10] ***And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband;***

[11] ***But if she has already departed, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife.***

Anyone who recognizes the parallel scriptures here will see that they go back to Mark 10 and so on. This is also stated very clearly and you will have noticed, it is wonderful to observe how even a great Apostle like Paul who said earlier, "to those who are married I say" such and such and "to those who are married I command" and then the Spirit of God stops him and then he suddenly realizes that it is not he who is passing on a rule of his own here but that he is now quoting the Lord and the Word of God and then he changes tack and says ***"Yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband."*** And I tell you the truth, I wouldn't want to be in the shoes of a woman who goes to court or to a lawyer to file for divorce, not for all eternity.

That is the worst thing that can happen on earth.

Let us look at some other scriptures. Also in 1 Corinthians chapter 7, similar to Romans 7, verse 2, here in 1 Corinthians 7, verse 39 it says, 1 Corinthians 7, verse 39:

[39] ***The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth.***

[39] ***But if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord.***

So, a wife is bound as long as her husband lives. Only afterwards, when he dies, is she free. As for believers and unbelievers, there is also a very clear teaching in 1 Corinthians 7, verses 12 to 16. I shall read from verse 15. 1 Corinthians 7, from verse 15:

[15] ***But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.***

This passage, therefore, refers to situations where the brother or sister is a believer and their husband or wife is not. If the unbelieving partner puts up with the believing partner and agrees to this, then God's blessing also rests upon the children and the marriage is blessed by God. But if things turn out differently, and they do turn out differently from time to time, after all exceptions prove the rule, the Lord has also made provision so that we know what applies in such cases. "***But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart.***" [1Cor 7:15]

No one could prevent them from doing so. If that is what they want, or if they have made that decision, then they will go their own way. In that case, the believer is not bound to the marriage. And both, the brother and the sister are placed on an equal footing. In that case, neither the brother nor the sister is bound to the marriage. Rather, they are free, for God has called us to live in peace. That too must be

taken into account. So it is not merely a matter of having a general understanding of a situation. One must know the specific circumstances in order to make a correct judgment.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 11, the subject of order or hierarchy is also discussed once again. 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verse 3, here it says:

[3] ***But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.***

This is the divine order. God, Christ, man, woman. This is what God intended. This is how He arranged it. And blessed are the people who submit to this divine order. If we, as men and as brothers, submit to Christ, the head, then may the rest also find their place and submit as well.

I would like to read on in 1 Corinthians 11, specifically verse 9. Verse 9:

[9] ***Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.***

We have read that, too. The Lord God created Eve for Adam, and not Adam for Eve. [Gen 2:18, 22] Here, too, we must consider the exact sequence of events in order to understand how God has ordered these things.

If we summarize this now, we realize that there is a little leeway, and that a rigid interpretation of the law cannot be proclaimed unless one could do so on the basis of the Word of God. Usually we have handled it in such a way that we have passed a certain judgment, and I heard someone ask whether a man whose wife had divorced him is still allowed to preach. A man whom God has called will preach even if a thousand marriages were to fall apart. A calling of God is without repentance. [Rom 11:29] Anyone who knows the Holy Scriptures will know this.

However, I have said time and again, if there were just one chance to sit down and listen, I would be amongst those who would sit down to listen to the preaching. But all those who take the easy way out, perhaps to discredit someone so that they themselves may shine and clear the path to the podium, the Lord will find such people, too, one day.

I had brought Brother Branham's sermon on this subject with me. I won't read much from it. But I do have one request for all of us: that we read it through once more. What did you say? You are just getting round to it, all right. Brother Ross says he has just read it. That fits in with tonight's topic.

It is indeed the case that this topic, too, was given through special revelation. Brother Branham, too, did not know beforehand the things he proclaimed and set out here. As I said, I don't intend to read much from it, as we can all do that at home. I've marked a passage with a clip. If you start from the middle of the sermon—as you know, there are people who don't like to read much, there are those who talk a lot, and some do read a bit more—but if you start from the middle, you'll

actually get an overall picture which will then help you to better understand what is already written in the Bible so that you can form a proper judgment. I believe that is very important.

And Brother Branham explains here what was in the beginning, what came after the original beginning—after the fall—and how God then reordered and arranged everything anew. I mean, that's part of it, and I'll tell you why. When Brother Branham saw the various things of the end times in 1933, he also saw that women would abandon their original place, the one God had assigned to them, and would seize power over men, and so on. And as a result, the entire divine order would simply break down.

And I think you can see this in the world, especially in America. You cannot imagine how the roles have been reversed there. The man does everything: he vacuums, he washes the dishes, he does the shopping, and a lady rules and reigns over him. It really is something one can only take in whilst shaking one's head. But I've read a passage on page 32, and please don't take it seriously—have a listen to it, but don't take it seriously. Brother Russ says: "This is serious; we must take it seriously." All right, you know what I mean.

Notice. Don't fail this now. Take it all down in your heart.

But not one of those women could even have one more husband.

He is the original creation, not her.

Not one of those women could have one more husband, but that one husband could have a thousand wives.

That's Thus Saith The Lord.

That's the Bible.

Hard for us to accept. But he's referring to David and Solomon, and so on, whom God did not rebuke except on the occasions when it was right to do so. In the same passage here, he goes on to compare Abimelech, who wanted Sarah, and says he was not allowed to take her, for she was married to Abraham. [Gen 20:3]

I read: **"But he could not take her because she was married to Abraham, whether a believer or an unbeliever."**

A woman belongs only to her husband, and to no one else. And as Brother Branham went on to explain here, these are the laws of God which indeed apply to everyone, and this is still the case today throughout the world, that these rules are observed and upheld everywhere.

I had jotted down a few notes, but as I said, he also refers here to 1 Corinthians 7. I shall read just this one passage, and perhaps no more. **"Now you notice, in 1 Corinthians 7:10, Paul commands the wife that divorces her husband to remain single or be reconciled, not to remarry. She must remain single..."**

—if she has divorced her husband, not if her husband has divorced her. Have you understood that? I want us all to pay close attention; this is very important.

I'll read on:

...she must remain single, or to be reconciled back to her husband.

She cannot remarry.

She must remain single.

But notice, he never said that about the man.

See, you can't make the Word lie.

From the beginning, the sex law...

I'm deliberately not reading any further because it doesn't really fit here anyway. But I would still ask that we read this, and then also the Holy Scriptures, truly in the light that God has given.

As you know, there were actually only two direct appearances in the heavens—appearances in the heaven, in the cloud—where something special was to take place. The first occurred when the supernatural cloud came down and Brother Branham saw the seven angels within it in the shape of a pyramid, and he was told that he should return to Jeffersonville, for the time had come to open the seven seals. And the second time was when he received the revelation concerning marriage and divorce, and so on. The supernatural cloud came down; he recounts how the teachers took the pupils out of the classrooms, and everyone saw this supernatural cloud hanging in the sky right where Brother Branham was on the mountain and where these matters concerning marriage and divorce had been revealed to him.

And for this reason he was indeed able to say at the end… I'll read it out:

Oh, are you happy? I have told you the truth, THUS SAITH THE LORD, all the way through.

And it was indeed the case that the Lord came down in that supernatural cloud. I don't know, perhaps it's even written here. I haven't read it all. I'll have a read; if it's there, it's good. I'll just read:

And to bear record here today of many people sitting here that even saw that sign up in the mountain where the angels of the Lord came in the whirlwind, where it came in the seven angels, where the revealing of the seven mysteries was unfolded.

And that same angel in the same direction, on the same mountain, the day that this was revealed...

On the very same mountain, exactly at the spot where the seven seals were concerned, where the seven angels had appeared, this vision also took place, and it was indeed

revealed to Brother Branham there. I'll read a little more here:

...and the whole city, people looked at it, on a bright day with no clouds nowhere at all, with this big amber cloud hanging there, coming down like a funnel, and going back and spreading out.

And then, of course, it was precisely with this absolute certainty and divine authority that he was able to proclaim what he proclaimed. Ah, here it is:

Something said to me: 'Go up yonder in the mountain, and I'll talk to you.'

And while I was up in the mountain, not knowing that down in Tucson they were seeing it, but even the teachers called the children from the schoolroom—my little girl and them—and said: 'Look yonder in that mountain. There is a fiery-looking amber cloud going up in the air and coming back down, going up in the air and coming back down...'

And so forth.

Why are we reading this today? Why am I saying this? Simply so that you, too, may know how to respond to anyone when anything is said. After all, it is no secret that Satan will not attack those who have no role whatsoever in the kingdom of God, but rather those whom God has placed at the forefront. Satan will attack them from all sides and will seek to undermine them so that the influence of their ministry is simply diminished and called into question, and so on. And this is of course mainly driven by those who themselves would like to come to the fore, to make themselves seem important, and to occupy a special place.

Personally, I pay no heed to anything anyone might say. I have examined myself, have read the Holy Scriptures, I am aware of this sermon and of what God has revealed, and feel absolutely free before the face of God. If I had been able to get married, I would have done so long ago. I submit to the words spoken by Paul: ***"Let it be done in the Lord."*** [1Cor 7:39] And I would indeed like to commend myself wholeheartedly to your intercession that God's will may be done.

I actually intended to bring it with me, but Martin Luther is a bit blunt in his statements. But he also states quite clearly that every man who is a man needs a wife, and every woman who is a woman needs a husband. But let's not get into that. I would just like to ask that if unbiblical terms are applied—in this case to me as well—then you will know in future how to respond and how to silence such people.

For I'll say it again: the fact is, whoever God uses is attacked by the devil from all sides in an attempt to destroy the ministry. And even today, I can still hear the words ringing in my ears: "I must destroy this work." These are people who at some point have placed themselves at Satan's disposal. They may be people like those who were with the Lord Himself, who dipped their bread into the same dish, who ate at the same table, into whom Satan then enters. [Mat 26:23; Luk 22:3; Joh

13:26-27] After all, an outsider could not cause any harm. But when someone says, "I have eaten and drunk with him," "I," "I," right? And then the harm is indeed very great.

May God help us in this, granting us guidance, instruction, understanding and revelation. And as mentioned earlier, may He enable us to place these matters biblically and recognize who bears responsibility for what, who has done what, so that, as already said, we may also have clear understanding, a scriptural understanding that will stand before God. That is what matters.

And I believe it was very necessary, especially after last Saturday, when the brothers also asked about this. In this place no one has preached or practiced polygamy, nor will anyone ever do so. But we can see clearly that God has provided a way, whereby a brother in this case is not bound, but is free to make a new decision, provided it is done in the Lord. I hope this has helped us and done us good, and that perhaps we will see things a little more clearly in the future. May God bless us. Amen.