

VILLAGE

CHURCH

Bible Study Notes

Intro Question:

1. What is your experience with divorce - share if you are willing.

Pray: for God's help wrestling with deep and often painful topics.

Read: Matthew 18:15-19:15

Questions about the passage:

1. What should we do if we are aware of a brother/sister's sin? How might Ephesians 4:15 qualify who/how we speak to a brother/sister about their sin?
2. What do you notice about the questions in 18:21 & 19:3? What is Jesus' answer (how would you summarise) and what do you think that means for Christians today? What about for non-Christians?
3. What do you think 9:11-12 means? How does it apply?

Questions for us:

- What wisdom can you offer for approaching brothers/sisters about sin? What would you do if they didn't respond well?
- Why do people get married today? What do you think marriage is? Why might people find Jesus' teaching on divorce difficult? Why might others abuse his teachings?
- How can we love those who have been divorced at Village?

Pray: for strong marriages at Village & divorced people feeling loved.

Homework: do one thing to encourage a married person at Village

Remind: register for Church Camp www.myvillagechurch.net/camp

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For the next bunch of weeks, until Easter, we will be working through the end of Matthew's gospel (starting at chapter 17) as Jesus continues his ministry up to it's final endpoint - his death & resurrection.

This week, we consider some hard topics like brothers and sisters sinning, unforgiveness and divorce.

Questions about the passage:

- *What should we do if we are aware of a brother/sister's sin? How might Ephesians 4:15 qualify who/how we speak to a brother/sister about their sin?*

Jesus gives us a bit of a template. However, we should be wise to Ephesians 4. Jesus' is not suggesting that we approach ANY brother or sister who we believe to be in sin. There should be an environment of love for truth to be spoken. That is, we should only do this with brothers and sisters who we share some decent relationship with.

- *What do you notice about the questions in 18:21 & 19:3? What is Jesus' answer (how would you summarise) and what do you think that means for Christians today? What about for non-Christians?*

Notice that they seem to be asking, what do I have to do - to be right with God? Like - how many times must I forgive and under what circumstances can I divorce. Where is the line rather than, how do I honor God with my life? Jesus turns their thinking around. How should we respond to God's grace? I would suggest this means for Christians today that they should do whatever they can to forgive and whatever they can to not divorce. Even as - sometimes these things are out of our control and sometimes they feel impossible to overcome.

- *What do you think 9:11-12 means? How does it apply?*

I think Jesus is acknowledging that not everyone will be able to keep his teaching. Christians will still get divorced, some won't, some will. Divorcing is not a 'mortal sin' in terms of salvation. Even as it is, like many things, to be avoided. Some will have the faith to remain unmarried, some won't remarry, some will remain separated but not divorced and others will divorce.

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Questions for us:

- *What wisdom can you offer for approaching brothers/sisters about sin? What would you do if they didn't respond well?*

Encourage people to share stories of where they have challenged someone on their sin or been challenged themselves. How did they do it? What would they do differently?

- *Why do people get married today? What do you think marriage is? Why might people find Jesus' teaching on divorce difficult? Why might others abuse his teachings?*

Here is an opportunity to wrestle with what our culture says about marriage. Why do people get married today? Christian? Not Christian? How should Christians think about marriage? How does that affect how we think about divorce? Might some abuse Jesus teachings to force their husband or wife to stay in abusive relationships?

- *How can we love those who have been divorced at Village?*

Consider how a divorced person might feel in a Church environment. What could we do to love them/support them? What shouldn't we do?