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HONORING
— M A R R I A G E —
MALACHI 2:11-16

Big Idea:

Divorce is an act of spiritual violence that stifles spiritual formation.

Three Qualifications about Divorce

a.) Divorce is not necessarily a *Sin*

-- Two Ways There Can Be a Guiltless Party of a Divorce

- i.) Marital Unfaithfulness (Matthew 5:32)
- ii.) Abandonment (1 Corinthians 7:15-16)

b.) Divorce is not an *Unforgivable sin*.

-- Although God hates divorce, the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is sufficient to save every sinner from every sin.

c.) We do not *Condemn* you.

-- We hate divorce, but we truly love divorced people, and we vow to help you get from wherever you are to where God wants you to be.

1.) Practice the *Politics* of personal righteousness (v. 13-14).

- Israel was so troubled about their distance from God that they were covering the altar in the temple with tears.
- Israel was lacking the favor of God because of their unfaithfulness to the covenant of marriage.

- Rather than shaking our fingers at those around us, God would call us to shake our own **Complacency** first.
- What hindered the prayers of God's people was not the culture around them, but the corruption within them.
- Transformation of the culture around us begins with the people of God living in obedience to God by the Spirit of God.

2.) Divorce stifles spiritual **Development** (v. 15).

- Widespread divorce in Israel was hindering the growth of godly offspring.
- The Public Religion Research Institute: "The children of divorced parents have grown up to be adults of no religion."
- As divorce breaks apart families, it has terrible tendency to break children away from faith in Christ.
- If mother and father are not united in their pursuit of Christ, there is little likelihood that their children will be.

3.) Divorce is spiritual **Murder** (v. 15-16a).

- The union between one man and one woman in covenant marriage was established by God to be a picture on earth of the gospel.
- Marriage was created by God, and it can only be sealed by His power and according to His design (Matthew 19:5-6).
- Divorce not only breaks a covenant with one's spouse, but it also breaks a covenant with **God**
- In a real spiritual sense, divorce is the gruesome ripping in half of a husband and wife who have been fused together as one flesh by God.

Application (v. 16b)

- *"So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless."*

Christ Focus

- Although the men of Israel were faithless to their wives, Jesus is perfectly faithful to his bride, the church.

-- God means for the world to see and understand the truth of the gospel through the faithfulness His people demonstrate in **Marriage**