**Sermon Notes – Sunday 22nd October**

John Stott says “Divorce is a controversial and complex subject that touches people’s emotions at a deep level. Yet in spite of the painfulness of the subject, I am convinced that the teaching of Jesus on this and every subject is good—intrinsically good for individuals and for society.”

**As we begin our study, how is this comment helpful?**

**Read Matthew 5:31-32 & Matthew 19:1-12**

1. **How do Jesus’ statements contrast with the questions he was asked? (19:1-6)**
2. **Jesus points back to Genesis. What does this teach us about God’s original design for marriage? (See Genesis 1:27 & 2:24).**
3. **What difference does this understanding of marriage make to couples? How is it different to other understandings today?**
4. **How might a married couple live as ‘one’ rather than remain as ‘two’? What are the challenges?**

Some things to consider: individualistic outlook, ambitions, relationships with others, relying on parents, communication, time together, shared values.

1. **The pharisees refer to Moses’ instructions about divorce as a ‘command’ (v7). What does Jesus’ reply teach us about divorce?**
2. **What does Jesus mean when he talks about ‘hard hearts’ (v8)?**
3. **How could ‘hardness of heart’ lead to a breakdown in any relationship (not just marriages)?**
4. **How does the gospel soften our hearts and help us to navigate our relationships?**
5. **For those experiencing difficulty in marriage, or those who are divorced, how might the gospel be truly ‘good news’?**

If you are married, are there some practical things you can do to strengthen your marriage?

If you are single, how can you support other married couples?

What can this life group do to support marriages?

**Pray**

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