**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**What God Has Joined Together Let Not Man Separate**

In Matthew 19:6 Jesus made the statement, *“Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”* If God joins something together, man does not have the right to come along and separate it. In this context Jesus is talking about a husband and wife. He was asked the question, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?” In answer to the question Jesus shows from Scripture that when a man and woman get married they are joined together by God. And then He said, *“Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”* Since husband and wife are joined together by God, man is not to separate what God joined together.

But, you know, there are other things that we read about in Scripture that God has joined together that man has tried to separate. This morning on our program I want to talk about some things that God has joined together that man must no separate.

First of all, we must not try to separate Christ and His church. There are some people who believe they can be in Christ without being in His church. You may hear them say something like, “I have a relationship with Jesus Christ, but not with the church. You don’t have to be in any church to be in Christ.” Those who have taken this position have separated Christ from His church.

The Bible teaches that Christ and His church are inseparable. Paul said in Ephesians 1:22-23, *“And He* [that is God the Father] *put all things under His* [that is Christ’s] *feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”* The church is the body of Christ. And the church is the fullness of Christ. The church completes Christ. As a head is incomplete without its body, so Christ is incomplete without His body, the church. To be in Christ is to be in his body, His church, and to be in His body, His church is to be in Christ. One cannot be in Christ without being in His church.

What is the church? The church is people. The church of Christ is saved people. All who have been saved by the blood of Christ are the church of Christ. Acts 2:47 says, *“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”*  All who are saved are in the church because the Lord adds them to the church. Acts 20:28 says that Christ purchased the church with His own blood. And so the church is made up of people, all who have been purchased by the blood of Christ (Read 1 Cor. 6:20). If a person is saved by the blood of Christ, he is in the church of Christ. Therefore, you cannot separate those who have been saved by the blood of Christ from His church because they are one and the same.

And the Bible teaches that how one treats the church is how they treat Christ. In Acts 9 we read of Christ appearing to Saul of Tarsus. Saul was a persecutor of the church (Acts 8:3). Christ said to Saul, *“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”*  How was Saul persecuting Christ? He persecuted Christ by persecuting His church. How you treat the church is how you treat Christ. You can’t separate one from the other. If we think we can be in Christ and faithfully serve Him without being a part of the church, then we are trying to separate what God has joined together.

Secondly, we must not try to separate faith and works. There are those who believe that man is saved by faith alone, that is, faith without any works of obedience. You may hear someone say, “If there is any command that one must obey to be saved, that nullifies salvation by grace through faith.” Is that true? Is one saved by faith apart from any works?

The Bible teaches that saving faith must be accompanied with works of obedience. As a matter of fact it teaches that faith apart from works is a dead faith, it cannot save. James 2:15-17 says, *“If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”* As one who is in need of food and clothing cannot profit from just kind words and fair speeches, neither is there any profit in a faith which does not prompt faithful obedience to the Lord’s commandments. In verse 20 it says, *“But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?”* In this passage James is talking about the kind of faith that will save us, the kind of faith we must have if we are going to be saved from our sins and please God. Look at verse 14, *“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?”* Can faith without works save a man? That is the question James is asking? It is a rhetorical question. The answer is in the question itself. James is saying, No, faith without works cannot save him. Faith without works is a dead faith. In verse 24 he says, *“You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”* Notice the word “justified.” To be justified means to be free from the guilt of sin. James says we are justified by works and not by faith only. In order for one to be justified, his faith must be accompanied with works. The only time in scripture where the phrase “faith only” is found is here in this passage, and James says that justification is not by faith only. Yes, we are justified by faith, but it is a faith that is demonstrated in obedience. Without the obedience the faith is dead.

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is filled with examples of saving faith. In the last verse of chapter 10 the Hebrew writer says, *“But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul.”* But what does it mean to have faith unto the saving of the soul? The Hebrew writer answers that question for us in the very next chapter, chapter 11. He shows us what it means to have faith by showing us what faith did in the lives of others, such as Abel, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Moses, etc. *“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain...” “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household...” “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance...”* Notice, their faith was accompanied with works of obedience, and if they had refused to obey, their faith would not have been unto the saving of the soul.

For one to say that one is saved by faith alone apart from works of obedience, he is separating what God has joined together. Faith without works will not save.

That leads me to my next point. We must not try to separate belief or faith, and baptism. Many people teach that one is saved the moment he believes in Jesus, and that baptism is not necessary for salvation. They separate belief and baptism for salvation.

But Jesus said in Mark 16:16, *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”* Jesus here joins belief and baptism for salvation. One is not saved by belief alone, and neither is one saved by baptism alone. Jesus says, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved.” He clearly joins baptism with belief for one to be saved.

In Galatians 3:26-27 Paul said, *“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”*  Notice, Paul says in verse 26, they are all sons of God “through faith in Christ Jesus.” But the next verse says, “*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”* The word “For” at the beginning of the verse relates this verse to the preceding verse. The word “for” comes from the Greek word “gar” which Thayer says in his Lexicon that it can mean “It adduces the Cause or gives the Reason of a preceding statement or opinion.” The preceding statement is “you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” The reason they were sons of God through faith” is “as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” This explains how the Galatians became sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. They became sons of God through being baptized into Christ. Therefore, their baptism “into Christ” was a part of the faith by which they became sons of God. Baptism is an act of faith, a constituent part of the faith by which one becomes a son of God. You cannot separate the two.

Let us illustrate this further with a Biblical example. Look with me also in Hebrews 11:30. It says, *“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.”* This is a reference to the 6th chapter of the book of Joshua. God tells Joshua *“I have given Jericho into your hand…”* But God commands Joshua that certain ones are to march around the walls of the city, once a day for six days and then on the seventh day they were to march around it seven times. The priests are to blow the trumpets. At a certain time the people are to shout, and then the walls would fall. But the Hebrew writer said that the walls fell “by faith.” We understand that the marching, the blowing of the trumpets, and the shouting of the people were essential for the walls to fall and for Israel to take the city. But at the same time the walls fell by faith.

The fact of the matter is that the marching was faith. It was faith in action, faith expressed, faith embodied. What is seen in that marching certainly is not the embodiment of human reasoning. From the standpoint of human reasoning the marching was senseless. Human reason would never have suggested such a plan for taking a city. It is faith in action that is seen in that marching.

It is equally correct to say that baptism is faith. Baptism is an act of faith. It is faith in action, faith embodied. That is why the Bible can tell us at the same time that baptism is essential to salvation and that the sinner is saved by faith. Baptism is an element of faith. You cannot separate the two.

For one to say that we are saved the moment we believe apart from baptism is to separate what God has joined together.

We have emphasized today that what God has joined together, man is not to separate. God joins husbands and wives together. Marriage is for life. God joins Christ and His church. One who is in Christ is in His church. God joins faith and works. Faith without works is dead. God joins faith and baptism for salvation. What God has joined together let us not separate.

Our time is gone for today.

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