

Chapter 2

Provision For Broken Covenant

What is “divorce?” Oh, we know what happens when divorce occurs. One spouse or both decide they do not want to be married. They have an attorney draw up legal papers stating the terms of the dissolution of the marriage. If they do not agree on the wording or division of property and children, (usually in that order) then another attorney is hired to oppose, or negotiate with (do violence to) the first attorney and there is a small negotiation war. The children always become the first casualties of this war. This is pretty vague but pretty much sums up what happens in short. People can choose an acrimonious, friendly, or civil divorce depending on the problems or proclivities of the participants. Regardless of how “nice” the divorce, no one escapes the corresponding pain.

I cannot help but remember the poetry of one of my all-time favorite secular singer/songwriters Linda Ronstadt, as she wrote concerning this pain:

Shattered, like a window pane
Broken by a storm
Each tiny piece of me—lies alone
And scattered, far beyond repair
All my shiny dreams—just lying there
I’m broken, but I’m laughing
It’s the sound of falling glass

I hope that you won't mind
 If I should cry
 In public
 while I wait for this to pass
 Cause sweet darlin—I'm shattered
 Into fragments cold and gray
 Sweep the pieces all away
 Then no one will ever know
 How much it mattered

Something deep inside of me—shattered 1

This pretty well sums it up for me. Another word for shattered is “broken.” Hope falters, dreams die, and grief happens. Others just call it “hell on earth” and leave it at that. Let's look at the definition a bit closer. For all who think they want a divorce or may use this book as an excuse, it is no picnic and is not to be taken lightly or entered into without reservation and wise counsel. However, if you presently abide in a “marriage” you consider to be “hell on earth” then you may find what you are about to read quite liberating.

To all who find themselves entering into the grip of divorce proceedings or those who already find themselves past “final decree” day; there is life after divorce; divorce is not the end of the world; you will live; you can find love; you must forgive and learn to trust again. You are not a failure; You are not a second class Christian, and God is not mad at you. Got it?

The question is, “what is divorce?”

Webster defines divorce as, “1-legal dissolution of a marriage
 2-complete separation 3-to dissolve legally a marriage between 4-to dis-

solve the marriage with (one's spouse)." It is taken from the Latin words "dis," apart, and "vertere", to turn. 2

Roget defines divorce as, "1-Law, a legal dissolution of the marriage relation. 2-Disunion, separation. 3-to put away 4-to disunite; sunder; sever 5-no longer together 6-no longer married." Roget's International Thesaurus further defines divorce as "disjoined, unmarry, a disjunction, or parting of the ways." 3

In a book by a popular author, who will remain nameless, divorce is defined as, "primarily a defector" or "literally a standing off from." And he states that the dictionary defines "defect" as, "1. lack of something necessary for completeness; deficiency; shortcoming; 2. An imperfection or weakness; fault; flaw; blemish; or in this usage, to forsake a party, cause, etc." However, in context, the author strongly states that "divorce is like a soldier going to the general and saying, 'I don't like this. I want to be a civilian again.'" The author goes on to say, "If a soldier in action defects, he is apt to be shot." 4

This is an unfair application of the definition and a judgment of all who have been through a divorce and I dare venture to guess that this author, at the writing of his book, had never been divorced. I would even go so far as to assume that the author had neither ever awakened with both eyes swollen shut or his teeth knocked out! I think it is noteworthy that soldiers who become overweight are punished and sometimes discharged from service. I am well aware of his literary accomplishments and international ministry. I regret his statement and the casual levity of a virtual death sentence to all divorced. It is not his definition with which I take issue, but rather, the significant application. Even acknowledging, in his same book, that God on one occasion orders his people to get divorced, this particular author still makes a grievous judgment of all divorced.

I would agree with him, however, that without a doubt in every divorce there is a "defection," and I must say now, and will say it again, in

many cases, using his own words, it is a necessary “defection,” and some “parties” need to be “forsaken.” There needs to be a literal “standing off from,” as well.

The author's application is highly significant due to the fact that many denominational protestant churches, as well as the Roman Catholic Church, obviously agree with his definition and application since it is their procedure and common policy, as well, to metaphorically speaking, “shoot” those who become wounded by divorce. Then, somehow, for whatever reason they may decide to use, consider the divorced unforgivable. It has been said that the “army of God” is the only army that shoots its wounded. I can only hope that the publication, distribution, reading and understanding of the words of this book will be the beginning of healing in our hearts to set us at liberty from such misguided ambiguity.

As far as, “lack of something necessary for completeness,” or an “imperfection or weakness,” with which this popular author labels all divorced, well, this pretty much describes every living, breathing soul on earth, divorced or not. I know there are those who claim otherwise. However, do we not all lack something necessary for completeness? Are we not all imperfect and weak? If I recall, that's why we all need Jesus Christ? It is certainly part of the reason we all want and need a faithful, nurturing spouse. Every living, breathing soul on earth wants to love and be loved and have faithful, nurturing relationships, too. It just is not a perfect world and we do not always get what we want and need. Everyone does, however, deserve to have faithful, nurturing relationships, where they are loved, validated, and safe. One would think all of these could be found within the context of the church?! Unfortunately, this is not the case.

I have had minister friends ask me to come sing while apologizing for not being able to ask me to preach, since I have been “divorced and all.” In other churches where I am asked to come and sing, when I ask how many songs, or how long they would like me to sing, the reply is