

## Needs not being met?

My grandmother grew up on a large farm in Tennessee. She was one of 17 kids. Her family was self-sufficient, growing and producing all their needs except for coffee and sugar. They went to bed at dark and got up with the sun, each child working around the house or with the farm. It was a hard life, but a good life. Her parents never had the luxury of pondering “Is my spouse meeting my needs?”

Jesus’ teaching on divorce and remarriage is hard for us to take. It is so blunt, we think, “Surely, that can’t be what He meant?” Here it is: “It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery” (Mt 5:31-32).

Any situation in which one spouse leaves the other in order to marry someone else is adultery, pure and simple. It may be legal, but it is still adultery. Jesus’ greater point though was in terms of protecting the wife. The men of his day could self-righteously believe they were taking care of their about-to-be-divorced-wife by giving her a legal document. Jesus in effect says, “If you really want to take care of your wife, stay married to her.”

“But she’s not meeting my needs!” Hmmm.

The disciple of Jesus has laid down his rights, surrendered them, died to them. For the disciple, the issue is never, “Am I being loved in the way I would like to be loved?” but instead, “Am I loving my spouse as Christ loves the Church?” The love of God poured into your heart does not quit. It keeps on going. No matter what. Granted—you cannot make the other love you in return. And if he or she doesn’t, that hurts. But the days are short until Jesus returns. You remain faithful to the calling you have received in the Lord.

Perhaps you didn’t make the best choice of spouse. That happens all the time. The point is not the devil’s question to us, “Could I have chosen better?” but rather, in the Lord, “Am I becoming the kind of spouse who loves, respects, and honors the one I have joined with in a Holy covenant before God?”

One spouse can indeed save the marriage. How? By devoting it to the Lord for Him to deal with. We devote our marriage to God in FAITH, not despair. We believe the promises of God for our marriage (see Psalm 128, 1 Peter 3:1-7) – and we believe those promises to be true regardless of our feelings and circumstances—and we speak out loud the Word of God over our marriage, declaring those promises to be true! And we do not quit. We purpose in our heart to stand on the promises of God, no matter what, for “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?” (Num 23:19)