

# Brigham Young Discourse on Marriage

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*Brigham Young Papers, MS 12341 Box 49, Folder 8*

*Church History Department*

A few Words of Doctrine given by President Brigham Young in the Tabernacle at Great Salt Lake City, October 8th, 1861, a.m.

I will give you a few words of doctrine upon which there has been much inquiry and with regard to which considerable ignorance exists. Br. Watt will write it, but it is not my intention to have it published, therefore pay good attention and store it up in your memories.

Some years ago I advanced a doctrine with regard to Adam being our Father and God. That will be a curse to many of the elders of Israel because of their folly with regard to it. They yet grovel in darkness, and will. It is one of the most glorious revealments of the economy of heaven, yet the world hold it [in] derision. Had I revealed the doctrine of baptism for the dead instead [of] Joseph Smith, there

are men around me who would have ridiculed the idea until doomsday, but they are ignorant and stupid, like the dumb ass.

Relative to the doctrine I shall now make known, if anyone should wish it otherwise, it will not alter the fact in the least. It is the principle of sealing. We are continually sealing women to men, and continually giving divorces. I now inform every one of my sisters that when they come to get a divorce, paying me ten dollars for it, you may just as well tear off a piece of your shirttail and lay it by and call it a divorce so far as any good that piece of paper called a divorce will do you. I express myself in this wise not because I admire course figures of language, but my object is to use language that will rivit the idea I wish to convey upon your memories.

Can a woman be freed from a man to whom she is sealed? Yes, but a bill of divorce does not free her; there is no such law given by the God of heaven to the children of men.

Moses gave a law to the children of Israel as follows: "When a man hath taken a wife and married her and it come that she find no favor in his eyes because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorcement and give it in her hand and sent her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife."

Jesus, in the gospel by Math. says, "It hath been said, whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement, but I say unto you that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery, and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."

In the gospel by Mark it is said, "And Jesus answered and said unto them (the Pharisees) For the hardness of your heart, he (Moses)

wrote you this precept (referring to the law on divorcement) but from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and they twain shall be one flesh. So then, they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

I am suffered to give bills of divorcement unto you because of your blindness, ignorance and hardness of heart, otherwise it would be a sin in me. How can a woman be made free from a man to whom she has been sealed for time and all eternity? There are two ways.

All the elders in Israel will not magnify their priesthood, that are now in the habit of taking women, not caring how they get them. They get them frequently by stealth. I will diverge a little here to comment on the way some get their wives: they will actually commit adultery for the sake of getting a woman sealed to them. But they will probably find in the morning of the resurrection that they have not attained their end;

wives obtained in this way will be given to those who are more worthy. This I mean to apply to you elders on my right and left who forfeit your covenants and violate the regulations of this holy order of matrimony which is to live godly in Christ Jesus every hour of our lives.

To return to the thread of the subject before us: if a man magnifies his priesthood, observing faithfully his covenants to the end of his life, all the wives and children sealed to him, all the blessings and honors promised to him in his ordinations and sealing blessings are immutably and eternally fixed; no power can wrench them from his possession.

There is, however, one provision that must be added here. You may inquire, in case a wife becomes disaffected with her husband, her affections lost, she becomes alienated from him and wishes to be the wife of another, can she not leave him? I know of no law in heaven or on earth by which she can be made free while her husband remains faithful and magnifies his priesthood before God and he is not disposed to put

her away she having done nothing worthy of being put away.

If that disaffected wife could behold the transcendent beauty of person, the godlike qualities of the resurrected husband she now despises, her love for him would be unbounded and unutterable. Instead of despising him she would feel like worshipping him, he is so holy, so pure, so perfect and so filled with God in his resurrected body. There will be no disaffection of this kind in the resurrection of the just. The faithful elders have then provided [proved?] themselves worthy of their wives, and are prepared to be crowned gods, to be filled with all the attributes of the gods that dwell in eternity. Could disaffected ones see visions, even of the future glorified state of their husbands, love for them would immediately spring up within you and no circumstance could prevail upon you to forsake them.

The second way in which a wife can be separated from her husband while he continues to be faithful to his God and his priesthood I have not revealed except to a few persons in this

church, and a few have received it from Joseph the Prophet as well as myself. This other path a woman may take if she can get a choice.

If a woman can find a man holding the keys of the priesthood with higher power and authority than her husband, and he is disposed to take her, he can do so, otherwise she has got to remain where she is. This is the second way in which a woman can leave her husband to whom she has been sealed for time and all eternity. In either of these ways of separation you can discover there is no need for a bill of divorcement.

To recapitulate: First, a man forfeits his covenant with a wife or wives, becoming unfaithful to his God and his priesthood--that wife or wives are free from him without a bill of divorcement.

Second, if a woman claims protection at the hands of a man possessing more power in the priesthood and higher keys, if he is disposed to rescue her and has obtained the consent of her husband to make her his wife, he can do so without a bill of

divorcement. Then a piece of blank paper will answer just as good a purpose for a bill of divorcement as the bills the wives get from me. If after she has left her husband and is sealed to another she shall again cohabit with him, it is illicit intercourse and extremely sinful.

In a few words I have laid before you the important items of doctrine. I have not time to give you an elaborate discourse on it that will answer the thousand and one questions that may occur to your minds and show its workings in social life. To do this would require much time. I will, however, extend my remarks a little further. I do not wish any of the elders to speculate upon what I have now advanced, but ponder these words in your hearts in silence. There may be only a few that can understand this item of doctrine and retain it in their memory, as I have spoken it.

A few remarks on woman: She is the glory of the man, but she is not at the head in all the creations of God pertaining to his children on this earth. She is not accountable for the sins that are in the world.

God requires obedience from man, he is lord of creation, and at his hands the sin of the world will be required. Could the female portion of the human family fully understand this they would see that they are objects of tender mercy and greatly blessed.

This, no doubt, on a casual view, appears to my sisters a glorious doctrine for them, and some might be tempted in their ignorance to take unwarrantable liberties, corrupt themselves with sin and then take shelter under the doctrine that man is culpable for the sins they commit.

There are, however, restrictions placed upon woman. I will quote a passage of scripture to illustrate this, "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." When the crime was thus atoned for, then was she free and prepared to receive in full the blessings she otherwise would have received had she not committed sin. Woman must atone for sins committed by the

volition of her own choice. But she will never become an angel to the devil and sin so far as to place herself beyond the reach of mercy. She will suffer all that she has strength to suffer according to the venality of her sins.

The woman is the glory of the man. What is the glory of the woman? It is her virginity, until she gives it into the hands of the man that will be her lord and master to all eternity. She in many instances trifles with her virtue, and will be damned for so doing, if it were not for more than five minutes.

When a woman can say truly to her husband who magnifies his priesthood, "I am as pure as you." She ought to remember that she is the glory of that lord. Is it her glory to have illicit intercourse with a gentile and then be sealed to a good elder and faithful servant of God? No, she will be damned for it and suffer the pangs of hell. It is her duty to let wickedness alone.

Our sisters are very tenacious with regard to a man's having more than one wife. Says the wife,

"Husband, I am capable of making your dinner, I can make your bed, I can tend to your fiscal wants, you do not need another woman in this house." Do you not know that is a curse pleased upon the woman? Why so? That she may not become an angel to the devil.

It is the order of heaven she should suffer in the flesh. Will you say you will not suffer in the flesh? That you will not be cursed? that you will have the fullest satisfaction of this life and let the next life take care of itself? "And now Mr. Husband, if you do not make a heaven for me I will leave you." You have a curse upon you that the male portion of the human family have not got.

Their curse is to toil for subsistence for themselves and wives and children, to obtain from the ground by the sweat of their brow, bread and fruit etc. "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee saying Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake. In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also

and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread etc."

Now notice the curse that is placed upon the woman: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children and thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee." Yes, your desire shall be for him, and it is one of the hardest things you can think of to consent that your husband should take another wife. And when you bring forth, it shall be in extreme pain. Were it not for this curse woman would not have suffered pain in child bearing. She has taken the lead in committing sin and she will fill her days with sorrow. She shall desire this and that and the other, and her disposition and affection and her whole being shall be afflicted as much as the man, but his afflictions are of another kind.

Let me say one thing to the young girls, and what I shall tell you I wish you to ponder in your hearts and say nothing about it, for the wicked world has no business with

these things, nor half-hearted Mormons, and if there is any here who will not make a good use of what they hear, the evil shall be upon themselves. I wish to say to my young sisters, if you can go into the hands of a man that will lead you into the kingdom of heaven and exalt you there, to become an Eve, a queen of heaven, the wife of a god, and you can remain with that man whom your soul delights, and you take to him your virginity, you have obtained a treasure that millions of worlds like this could not buy from you, for there is your glory to all eternity. Trifle with this matter and you will reap sorrow and affliction. When you make your choice of a husband for time and eternity and you are sure you have got your choice, hang on to him and not come to me for a bill of divorcement which amounts to nothing at all.

I have told you the only ways that a woman can be freed from a man. There are other items pertaining to this doctrine you will learn from time to time. Many have asked for this matter which I have opened to you. You have got it. Let it envail your noble hearts,

expand your capacities, aid subduing your ungovernable passions and encourage everything within you that is godlike and enables you to live a pure and holy life.

The whole of mankind according to the words of the prophets anciently, have gone a whoring after strange gods. They worship they know not what. Men can sin with their wives by violating the law by which we are. This law is pure and holy, and every act of our lives should be to promote that and not destroy it. We should preserve the life that is within us and permit it to multiply.

If any other course is pursued in the midst of this people, the curse of God will come upon those who do it.

We will now adjourn. Amen.