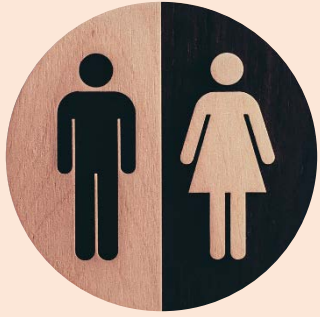


# *Jesus, Gender & Sexuality*

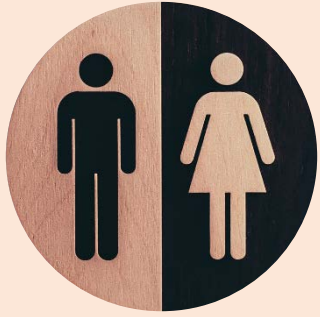
Week 6:  
Jesus and Marriage





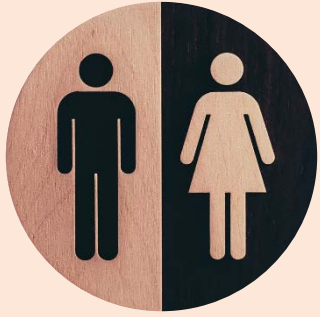
# Jesus, Gender and Sexuality

- Question time after the service each week:
  - You can put your hand up ...
  - ... or ask a question at [slido.com](https://www.slido.com), #872255
  - Grab a coffee and come along – we will aim to start 5-10 minutes after the service ends.
- Aggressive questions will not be tolerated; arrogant questions will receive short shrift!
- Feedback, in person (preferably) or by email will be welcomed.



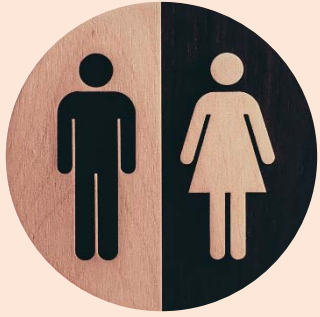
# Jesus, Gender and Sexuality

- Living our motto: “walking in truth, living in love”
- Consider Matthew 11.28-30
  - “<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”



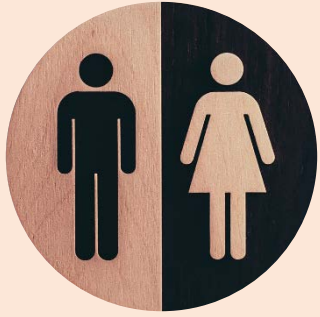
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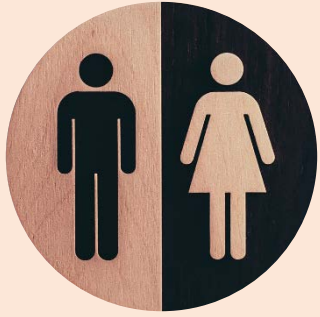
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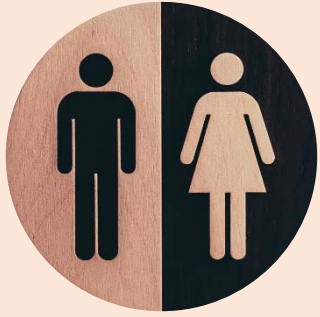
- Last week: Jesus' marriage
  - “<sup>31</sup> For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. <sup>32</sup> This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church.” (Ephesians 5.31-32)
  - Jesus' marriage to his people is established and sustained by his self-sacrificial love; his (infallible) purpose is to “present [us] to himself”.
  - As the prophets testify, God's “marriage” is indissoluble – although he may “divorce” his people for their sin, he will never marry another bride.
    - “Return, faithless people,’ declares the LORD, ‘for I am your husband.’” (Jer. 3.14)



## Week 6: Jesus and Marriage

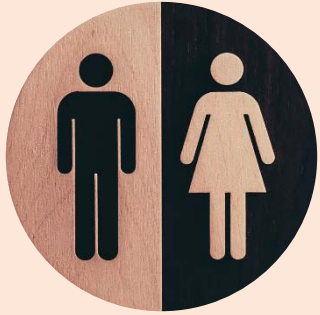
- Today, Jesus *and* marriage
  - We will focus on Matthew 19.1-12
  - Many of the themes of the series will resurface:
    - asking difficult questions
    - God's purposes in gender and sexuality; marriage and singleness
  - We will consider what is perhaps Jesus' most difficult teaching:
    - “<sup>11</sup> Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. <sup>12</sup> And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.” (Mark 10.11-12)





## Week 6: Jesus and Marriage

- Matthew 19.1-2: suffering and grace
  - The journey to Jerusalem begins (v1): suffering and opposition increase
  - “Large crowds followed him, *and he healed them there.*” (v2) (**Week 2**)
  - Consider the encounter with the woman at the well in John 4:
    - Grace: “the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (v14)
    - Truth: “The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband.” (v18)
    - Worship: “a time ... has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.” (v23)



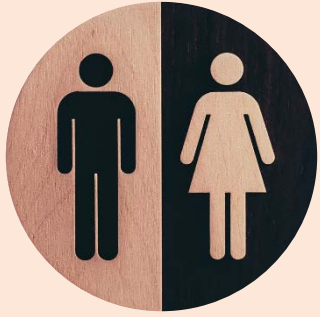
## Week 6: Jesus and Marriage

- Matthew 19.3: The Pharisees did not listen to my first sermon!
  - “Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?’”
  - A dangerous question: Jesus is now in the territory of Herod Antipas, who had decapitated John the Baptist for declaring his incestuous marriage to Herodias.
  - A live debate raged between the theological liberals (following Rabbi Hillel) and conservatives (following Rabbi Shammai)
  - But everyone agreed: divorce brings the right to remarriage.



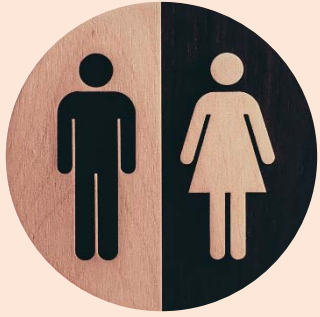
## Week 6: Jesus and Marriage

- Matthew 19.4-6: marriage
  - Jesus will not discuss divorce its human grounds before expounding marriage and its divine purposes. Neither should we!
  - V4-6 correspond to our last three weeks:
    - Gender: “at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female’” (v4; week 3)
    - Sexuality: “a man ... his wife ... one flesh” (v5; week 4)
    - Marriage: “they are no longer two, but one” (v6; week 5)
  - Jesus speaks to the Pharisees, not the crowds: to synod, not in assembly
    - “Haven’t you read ...”: of course they had, and his response was provocative.



## Week 6: Jesus and Marriage

- Jesus' teaching on marriage is foundational:
  - “The Church of England affirms, according to our Lord’s teaching, that marriage is in its nature a union permanent and lifelong, for better for worse, till death them do part, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side, for the procreation and nurture of children, for the hallowing and right direction of the natural instincts and affections, and for the mutual society, help and comfort which the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.” (Canon B30)
  - We must *hold* to it, *teach* it and *live* it.
  - This is (part of) Jesus’ “yoke” for the married.

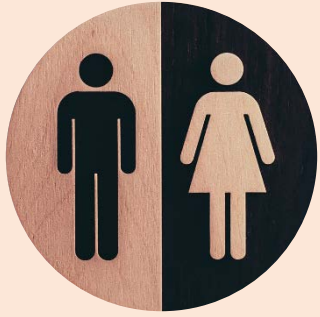


# Jesus' Teaching on Marriage

- **Leaving:**

- “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother ...”
- marriage begins with an ending: a change in loyalties and priorities
- a new family is being created: the law recognises this by seeing your closest relative as your spouse.





# Jesus' Teaching on Marriage

- **Uniting:**

- “... and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one.”
- “One flesh” means
  - ‘one family’ and ‘one person’
  - sex!
- “**God** has joined together”





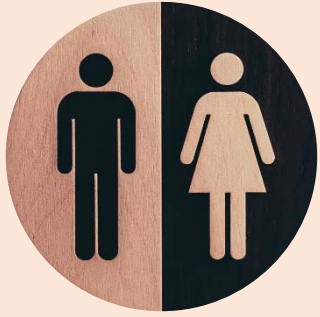
# Jesus' Teaching on Marriage

- **Guarding:**

- “Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”
- Other Bible passages show how:
  - “Guard yourself in your spirit, and **do not break faith** with the wife of your youth.” (Mal. 2.15)
  - “Each one of you also must **love** his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must **respect** her husband.” (Ephesians 5.33)



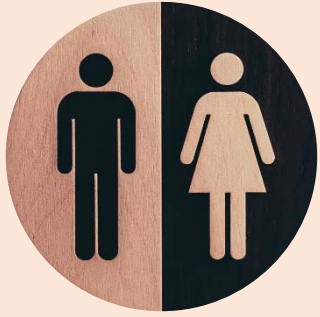




## Week 6: Jesus and Marriage

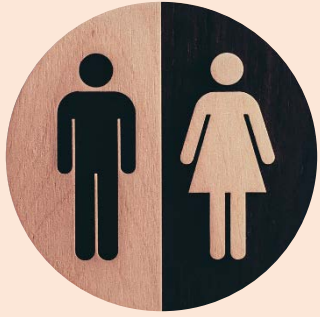
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- The Pharisees are unsatisfied!
  - “Why then ... did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” (v7, alluding to Deuteronomy 24.1-4)
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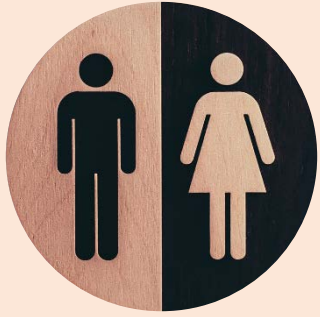
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  - “Moses *permitted* you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.” (v8)



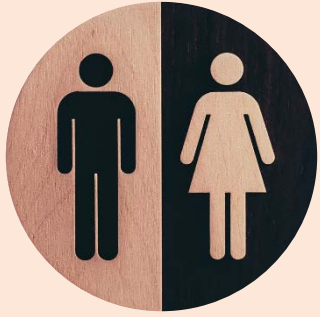
## Week 6: Jesus and Marriage

- “your hearts were hard”: σκληροκαρδία
  - “Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, circumcise your hearts, you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem, or my wrath will break out and burn like fire because of the evil you have done – burn with no-one to quench it.” (Jeremiah 4.4)
  - “I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.” (Jeremiah 24.7)



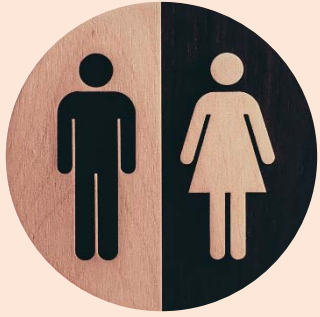
## Week 6: Jesus and Marriage

- We want softer *laws*: we need softer *hearts*.
  - Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem to fulfil the promise of “a new heart to know me”: a new covenant that will bring cleansing and renewal.
- Only a renewed heart can bear Jesus’ “yoke”:
  - “But it was not this way from the beginning. <sup>9</sup> I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.” (Matthew 19.8b-9)



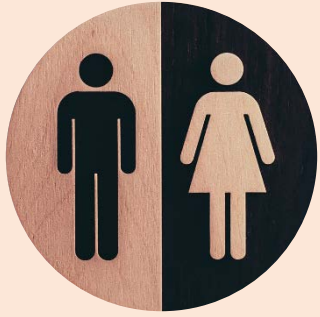
## Week 6: Jesus and Marriage

- Matthew 19.9:
  - The main point is (painfully) clear: remarriage following divorce is adulterous. This contradicts 1<sup>st</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century assumptions.
  - It is not that divorce is *unforgiveable* – but that the marriage bond is *unbreakable* because it pictures God’s unbreakable bond to his people.
- “... except for marital unfaithfulness ...”
  - There is an exception in which a person may divorce their spouse.
  - Does this leave such a person free to remarry?



## Week 6: Jesus and Marriage

- Marriage pictures God's indissoluble bond to his people.
- Paul applies this (and Jesus' teaching) to our marriages:
  - “<sup>10</sup> To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. <sup>11</sup> But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.” (1 Corinthians 7.10-11)



## Week 6: Jesus and Marriage

- The disciples are as disturbed as we are:
  - “The disciples said to him, ‘If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.’ (v10)
- He doesn’t agree with their over-reaction!
  - But some are “given” a hard calling – imposed singleness.
  - “born that way”: the reality of intersex conditions and DSDs.
  - “made that way by men”: remember the Ethiopian eunuch.
  - “because of the kingdom of heaven”: in obedience to Jesus’ teaching.
- “The one who can accept this should accept it.”