

JESUS: BOTH REDEEMER AND JUDGE

I. Luke 12:49-59

A. Thousands have gathered to hear Jesus speak but our Lord directs His teaching to the Twelve. (So was Jesus a mega-church guy or a small church guy?) Why didn't numbers matter more to Jesus? Why wasn't He more seeker-sensitive? Why did Jesus like doing big things with small things? How many loaves and fishes did He need to feed thousands? How much did that widow give when she gave more than anyone else? How many men did He need to turn the world upside down (right-side up)? How much training was required for those Twelve?

B. Jesus' words today, first spoken 2,000 years ago, were weighty and ominous. These are not family friendly *make-me-feel-good* sentiments from dear sweet Jesus. These words are more conducive to shrinking numbers than growing them. They're words of warning--sifting and separating the wheat from the chaff.

C. Luke 12:49-59 (ESV) Jesus begins cryptically: **49** *"I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled!"* ("Casting fire on the earth?!" What's all this about?! I thought Jesus came as the Redeemer, not the Avenger! This sounds like judgment--is judgment in Jesus' wheelhouse?! Luke 3:15-17 (ESV) were prophesied of Jesus by John the Baptist: **15** *As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ,* **16** *John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but He who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.* **17** *His winnowing fork is in His hand, to clear His threshing floor and to gather the wheat into His barn, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."*) Yikes!

D. Last week we talked about Jesus coming back. We determined that some will greet Him joyfully while others will immediately be filled with terror. Next time Jesus comes He won't be a helpless Babe in a manger. He will return with a different mission. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-10 (ESV) is all about that Day: **3** *We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.* **4** *Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.* **5** *This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—* **6** *since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you,* **7** *and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels* **8** *in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.* **9** *They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might,* **10** *when He comes on that Day to be glorified in His saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. (More Yikes!)*

E. The late Arthur W. Pink tells it straight up: "The first time [Christ] came to slay sin in men. The second time He will come to slay men in sin." (Triple the Yikes!)

F. Luke 12:49-59 is main text for today. Let's break it down and pass it around:

1) **V49: 49** *"I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! (How do we juxtapose these words from John 3:16-18 (NIV) ?) 16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. 18 Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." (What if a person doesn't want to be saved? What if a person doesn't want to be rescued? What if a person doesn't want set free from slavery? What if a person doesn't want to be adopted? What if the one needing redemption rejects the One and Only Redeemer? It happens!)*

2) **V50: 50** *I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is My distress until it is accomplished! (What kind of baptism is Jesus talking about here? John the Baptist already baptized Him in water. Jesus is talking about a baptism of suffering, shedding His blood on the cross to redeem us. The Bread & Cup will remind us.)*

3) **V51: 51** *Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. (What happened to peace on earth and goodwill towards man? Nothing! But how can you bring peace to someone who insists on remaining your enemy? You have either made peace with God through Jesus or you're still His enemy. There's no middle ground. There's no temporary truce. If you have not surrendered, you're still at war. Remember Matthew 5:9 (ESV) from the Sermon of the Mount: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.")*

4) **V52-53: 52** *For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. 53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." (So much for focusing on the family! It's wonderful when a family is united in Christ. It's awful when a family is divided because of Christ. There's a reason the Bible instructs Christians to marry Christians. [See 2 Cor. 6.] Likewise, the only Biblical grounds for divorce outside of adultery is when a non-believing spouse wants a divorce from a believing spouse. [See 1 Cor 7.]*

5) **V54-56: 54** He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming.' And so it happens. **55** And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat,' and it happens. **56** You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time? (Jesus believes the signs of **Who He is** should be recognizable. Like those famous lyrics from Bob Dylan, "It doesn't take a weatherman to know which way the wind blows!")

6) **V57-59: 57** "And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? **58** As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. **59** I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny." (In other words, do business with God before it's too late!)

II. Communion

A. But here's the problem--you owe too much! You're in too deep! You'll never be able to afford your freedom. The ransom for your emancipation is too high, too costly! Who is there to redeem, to pay for your transgressions and moral failures? Who is there to redeem, to cover your enormous debts? Who is there to redeem, to free you from slavery to sin and death? Is there anyone? Isaiah 59:20 (ESV) says there is Someone: "'And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,' declares the LORD." The Bread & Cup remind us.

B. And who is this Redeemer, does He have a name? Yes--He has a name above all names! His name is Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord! He has paid what you could never earn. He has paid it in full! Your debt of sin has been washed away by the blood He shed for you! The Bread & Cup remind us.

* Pray and Serve Communion...

* **Galatians 4:4-7 (AMPC) is our Benediction: 4** But when the proper time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born subject to [the regulations of] the Law, **5** To purchase the freedom of (to ransom, to redeem, to atone for) those who were subject to the Law, that we might be adopted and have sonship conferred upon us [and be recognized as God's sons]. **6** And because you [really] are [His] sons, God has sent the [Holy] Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba (Father)! Father! **7** Therefore, you are no longer a slave (bond servant) but a son; and if a son, then [it follows that you are] an heir by the aid of God, through Christ.

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Luke 12:49-59 (ESV)

49 "I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! **50** I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is My distress until it is accomplished! **51** Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. **52** For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. **53** They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." **54** He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming.' And so it happens. **55** And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat,' and it happens. **56** You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time? **57** "And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? **58** As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. **59** I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny."

Luke 3:15-17 (ESV)

15 As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, **16** John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but He who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. **17** His winnowing fork is in His hand, to clear His threshing floor and to gather the wheat into His barn, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."

2 Thessalonians 1:3-10 (ESV)

3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. **4** Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. **5** This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— **6** since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, **7** and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels

8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might, **10** when He comes on that Day to be glorified in His saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

[Isaiah 59:20 \(ESV\)](#)

20 "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD."

[Galatians 4:4-7 \(AMPC\)](#)

4 But when the proper time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born subject to [the regulations of] the Law, **5** To purchase the freedom of (to ransom, to redeem, to atone for) those who were subject to the Law, that we might be adopted and have sonship conferred upon us [and be recognized as God's sons]. **6** And because you [really] are [His] sons, God has sent the [Holy] Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba (Father)! Father! **7** Therefore, you are no longer a slave (bond servant) but a son; and if a son, then [it follows that you are] an heir by the aid of God, through Christ.

[Quote by Arthur W. Pink](#)

"The first time [Christ] came to slay sin in men. The second time He will come to slay men in sin."

[Film Clips & Other Links](#)

"There is A Redeemer" - Kathryn Scott

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yp1NAwRDp3Q>

"Redeemer, Savior, Friend" - Performed by Eric Nuzum

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkb873Z_oSq

The Second Coming of Christ - Francis Chan (Full Sermon)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WS7aJ33fMx0>

How Will God Judge Us? - John Piper

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LnlYEaL3zw>

[Bonus Stuff](#)

[Matthew 10:24-39 \(ESV\)](#)

34 Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. **35** For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. **36** And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. **37** Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. **38** And whoever does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. **39** Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

[2 Corinthians 6:14-18 \(ESV\)](#)

14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? **15** What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? **16** What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make My dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. **17** Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, **18** and I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty."

[1 Corinthians 6:8-18 \(ESV\)](#)

8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. **9** But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion. **10** To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband **11** (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife. **12** To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. **13** If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. **14** For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. **15** But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to

peace. **16** For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

Unequally Yoked

Q & A with John MacArthur - Grace to You

<https://www.gty.org/library/Questions/QA196/Unequally-Yoked>

Question:

Some people have told me that being unequally yoked is talking exclusively about marriage. Others have said that it applies also to business partnerships and other situations. Could you please expand on this? What does it mean to be unequally yoked and what type of a guideline should I have if it is okay for me to have a business partnership with a non-believer?

Answer:

Well, this is a very important question. Second Corinthians, chapter 6, is what you're asking about. The concept of "yoke" gives you the key. A yoke was something that was put over two animals in a common enterprise.

In [2 Corinthians 6:14](#), Paul says, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness? And what fellowship has light with darkness? And what harmony has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?"

The point is that if you are in the same yoke, pulling the same plow down the same furrow — that is, if you are working side by side in the same enterprise, partnering together with an unbeliever – you've got a problem.

Truly, that would refer to marriage because there's no firmer, stronger, more binding yoke than marriage, right? If you go beyond that and ask, "What about a business partnership?" it would depend upon the nature of that partnership. If, for example, there's a limited partnership involving a group of investors and you're one of those investors, that's one thing. A person might put money in a bank; that's also a form of partnership with other people. I don't think that's the issue here.

The issue here is linking up with an unbeliever, side by side, under the same yoke, pulling the same furrow, in the same direction, with the same goals and objectives. Now, that might mean a partnership in a common business — if it is likely that the nature of your partnership will lead to compromising situations down the road when your worldviews collide.

Beyond all that, however, the primary application of 2 Corinthians 6 is with regard to spiritual enterprise. The primary warning is to never link up with an unbeliever in spiritual pursuits.

So the obvious thing, first of all, is to avoid any common spiritual enterprise with an unbeliever (including things like marriage or religious ecumenism). And then secondarily, to be very careful in other areas of life (like business) if you're pulling the same yoke with an unbeliever, because it's inevitable that there will be conflict – since the standard by which you operate is inherently different.

Practically speaking, you will have to make the judgment as to what a particular partnership involves and whether you can be part of it – based on biblical principles, prayer, and godly counsel. The Spirit of God will lead you in that.

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Honoring God in an Unequally Yoked Marriage

By Sarah Flashing - The Gospel Coalition - June 19, 2012

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/honoring-god-in-an-unequally-yoked-marriage>

In the church, she appears to be single. She's the believer whose husband never joins her because, while he may or may not believe in God, he has no interest in Christianity. While she is devout, he can be found somewhere on the continuum between tranquil unbelief and agitated intolerance. Such unequally yoked unions are not ideal and definitely not recommended, but it's reality for many evangelical women—myself included.

Recently, TGC published an [article by M. Connor](#) on how she came to understand prior to her wedding that marrying an unbeliever is not what God intends for Christians. Unfortunately for many believing women, this realization doesn't occur until well after the rings have been exchanged. Other women come to faith during their marriage, and often without their husbands. For all of these women and their families, there is an important question that needs our attention: How does a wife honor God's intended plan for marriage in a circumstance that doesn't comport with God's plan to begin with?

Ministry of Wives to Husbands

Scripture provides clear instruction to those married to unbelievers. Paul writes, *"If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy (1 Corinthians 7:13-14)."*

The apostle doesn't specifically deal with how we navigate the every-day difficulties in this kind of marriage, nor does he encourage "missionary dating." He does, however, speak to the ministry potential in unequally yoked situations. That the unbelieving husband "is made holy" does not say that he enjoys salvation vicariously through the believing wife, but rather that proximity to his wife's Christ-centered living creates opportunities for godly influence. Each time a wife models godliness ([1 Peter 3:1-6](#)) to her husband, that's another moment he's not being influenced by the godlessness that desires to lay claim on his soul. In this way he "is made holy" because he is set apart from the world and more likely to receive the gospel. Similarly, because of the decision to remain intact as a family, children of the marriage have a greater opportunity for exposure to the influence of biblical truth.

As difficult as it is to accept—and it was for me—these words on marriage between believers and unbelievers written to the church at Corinth are not merely recommendations but timeless truths that apply today. By choosing to stay in the marriage, the unbeliever provides an opportunity for ministry to the believing spouse, aiding the restoration of two relationships. We can't change the person we are married to—even when we want to; we can only work on becoming the person God has called us to become. This isn't psycho-babble but an appeal to the grace and mercy of God.

I've seen firsthand how it has transformed my own spouse in various ways and at various points during almost 20 years of marriage. When we choose to live as Jesus lived, with a tender influence that avoids anger and provocation, the "hidden person of the heart" can soften the hardest of hearts. Husbands sometimes soften to the work of the Spirit and miraculously transform from the natural to the spiritual. Sometimes they don't. But we are called to be faithful to Scripture despite our circumstances and individual longings.

Unequally Yoked: Functionally Egalitarian?

For some women in spiritually unbalanced marriages, it's difficult for them to understand how they can honor God's design for marriage in their marriage. If her husband isn't a Christ follower, he cannot provide leadership in matters of faith even though he might be able to function with the borrowed capital of godly wisdom in other meaningful ways. Then again, he might not. In the absence of a husband fulfilling his God-ordained responsibilities, wives should not seek to assume his role but to fulfill their own God-ordained responsibility of living in a way that demonstrates respect and purity, "that he may be won without a word" ([1 Peter 3:1](#)). This, of course, doesn't restrict her to unqualified silence but guards the relationship by asking her not to pressure him to fit her own standards in her own time.

The responsibility that belongs to her husband parallels Christ as head of the church ([Eph 5:22-24](#)) and is rooted in the order of creation ([1 Tim 2:13](#)). Believing this truth does not detract from her spiritual maturity, nor does it lessen the need for a husband and wife to communicate and learn together what is best for the well-being of their family.

Some argue that in these situations where the husband is present yet essentially absent, functional egalitarianism results. But we cannot expect an unequally yoked marriage to represent the best of either a complementarian or an egalitarian framework. Yet when a wife chooses to honor the model for marriage God instituted prior to the fall, the trajectory of such a marriage can be oriented toward the design that reflects the relationship between Christ and his Bride, the church ([Eph 5:32](#)).

Spiritual Health Promotes Marital Health

A wife's spiritual maturity shows forth when she encourages her husband toward faith in the same gentle and affirming way she would share Christ with any other person she encounters with the gospel. Because of the stress and other difficulties in such marriages, husbands can often be the last person to experience the same compassion and grace other unbelievers might expect from his wife. For this reason, every wife should study God's character and allow Christ's example of grace and mercy to permeate every single thought with a particular awareness for interaction with her husband.

This spring I reckoned with my husband's eternal destiny when he was diagnosed with a genetic heart disorder often first discovered in the morgue. His emergency situation helped remind me that for my ministry to him to be effective, my love for the truth of God's Word needs to be deliberately coupled with a gentle spirit and ongoing, intentional expressions of love and compassion. Over the years, it's been easy to blame his behaviors and addictions for any of my growing callousness in the relationship—a mindset to which any person in an unequally yoked marriage can fall prey. But Paul's words to wives of unbelievers remind us that God calls even us to participate in the redemptive stories of those he has called to lead. It matters that we are spiritually mature.

As our culture becomes less church-ed, more single-marrieds will be in our midst. The challenge is not just for wives of unbelieving husbands—or husbands of unbelieving wives—to know how to glorify God in his design for marriage, but even for pastors and ministry leaders to connect, equip, and minister to them. Wives can be grateful to know that God, in his revealed Word, provides grace-filled instruction for how to live in a circumstance that falls short of his intended plan for marriage. Through the work of his Holy Spirit, these marriages can truly be redeemed in both structure and function.

- Sarah Flashing writes on theology and contemporary issues relevant to women's lives. As director of [The Center for Women of Faith in Culture](#), she resides in northern Illinois with her family.