**But To The Rest Speak I, Not The Lord**

Homer Hailey wrote “But of a mixed marriage, that is, a marriage between a believer and an unbeliever, Paul said, ‘But to the rest say I, not the Lord’ (I Corinthians 7:10-12); the Lord did not speak of the marriage relationship between a believer and an unbeliever. If Matthew 19:3-9 is universal in application, then Paul's answer to the second question would have been the same as his answer to the first. (The Divorced And Remarried Who Would Come To God, p.58). Of course this was our brother Hailey’s logic for teaching Matthew 19:9 does not apply to the unbeliever, and therefore it is okay for unbelievers to divorce and remarry (for any reason, even multiple times) and stay in whatever marriage they are in when they become a Christian.

But you should notice I Corinthians 7:10-11 does not specify only marriages involving two Christians, it speaks to “the married.” On the face of it that would be all marriages. So verse 12 is not saying Matthew 19:9 does not teach concerning mixed marriages, but shows Jesus in Matthew 19:9 (or at any other time while on earth) did not specifically state what the Christian is to do if his spouse (an unbeliever would be assumed) leaves him. Paul answers that question in verse 15 - "let him depart." In other words – “If the believer couldn't do anything to stop it, she has not sinned when the unbeliever leaves. Don’t go to the point of casting your pearls before swine in trying to convince him otherwise. Even if the marriage is restored, who knows if you would be able to convert him to Christ anyway (verse 16)?”

Verses 12-14 then are Paul's way of keeping the Corinthians from getting the wrong idea from his answer stated in verse 15. Paul wanted to make sure the Corinthians didn’t get the impression from his answer in 15 that the Christian could initiate the departing himself. I might do something similar if my youngest son were to ask me if he could play outside. Before answering his question directly, I would probably precede the answer with, “now let me make this clear; do not go near the road. If your ball goes near the road, don’t go get it; come get Daddy and I will get it for you. Don’t go near the road!” Then I would finally answer, “Yes, you may go play outside.” Consider this Biblical parallel: Suppose someone asked me - "Does baptism save?" Before I answered that question "yes" (I Peter 3:21), I might precede my answer with two points to make sure they don’t get the wrong idea from my “yes” answer: (1) baptism doesn’t earn our salvation (no, Jesus’ death does that), and (2) the power is not in the water, but in God. Then I might answer “yes baptism saves” (in the sense a sinner must be baptized to be saved by the death of Christ).

The same thing is going on in I Corinthians 7: “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord” (verse 12) is not Paul’s way of saying he is only discussing Christian marriages in 10-11 but mixed marriages in 12ff. Instead Paul tells all the married (Christian and non-Christian alike) to stay married in verse 10, and in verses 12-16 he is answering the question – “What if they leave me?” Paul’s answer is found in verse 15 (you have not sinned if they leave you), and verses 12-14 (but you can’t leave them) are Paul’s way of making sure he doesn’t leave the wrong impression with his answer in verse 15.

Conclusion: Jesus is talking about all marriages in Matthew 19:9 (“whosover”), and therefore even if an unbeliever divorces his spouse and remarries, that is adultery and needs to be repented of upon conversion. There is only one exception for everybody who marries, not just Christians.