
BIBLE TALK

This week topic is: **Remembering the past: The celibacy of the clergy.**

The First Lateran Council (1123), a General Council, adopted the following canons:

Canon 3: We absolutely forbid priests, deacons, and sub-deacons to associate with concubines and women, or to live with women other than such as the Nicene Council (canon 3) for reasons of necessity permitted, namely, the mother, sister, or aunt, or any such person concerning whom no suspicion could arise.

Canon 21: We absolutely forbid priests, deacons, sub-deacons, and monks to have concubines or to contract marriage. We decree in accordance with the definitions of the sacred canons, that marriages already contracted by such persons must be dissolved, and that the persons be condemned to do penance.

[\[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clerical_celibacy\]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clerical_celibacy)

Such is the history of the Catholic Church and its doctrine.

In Rom 4:3 the apostle Paul write these words:

Romans 4:3

³ For what does the Scripture say? ...

That's a good question and should be asked concerning everything we do in our secular and religious lives – *“What does the scripture say?”*

First: It is wrong to dissolve a legitimate marriage.

The First Lateran Council decreed *“that marriages already contracted by such persons [as priests, deacons and monks] must be dissolved, and that the persons be condemned to do penance.”*

Those were the words of a council of uninspired men. Here are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ:

Matthew 19:4-6

⁴ And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' ⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶ So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, **let not man separate.**"

It is wrong for people to dissolve legitimate marriages for no reason. A church council has no right whatsoever to contradict God's law.

Second: To forbid marriage is a doctrine of demons.

1 Timothy 4:1-3

¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³ **forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods** which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

From the very beginning of time it was God's intention that one man should marry one woman and that they should be companions for life.

1 Corinthians 7:1-2

¹ Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. ² Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.

There is a difference between saying on the one hand, "It would be better not to marry," and then saying on the other hand, "*We absolutely forbid priests, deacons, sub-deacons, and monks to have concubines or to contract marriage.*"

This council may have had a good point concerning concubinage, but not concerning marriage.

Third: Bishops are commanded to be married.

Think about this carefully! According to the scriptures, a bishop is the same thing as an elder in the church. When the qualifications for the elders or bishops were given, one of the requirements was for the bishops to have a wife and another requirement was to have children. Listen to the scripture:

1 Timothy 3:1-5

¹ This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a **bishop**, he desires a good work. ² **A bishop then must be** blameless, **the husband of one wife**, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; ³ not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; ⁴ one who rules his own house well, **having his children in submission** with all reverence ⁵ (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);

There you have it. This is inspired scripture versus the doctrine of men.

Are all churches and religions equal? Absolutely not! Some churches, like the Catholic Church, are governed by uninspired men and councils. The doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy is just one example.

When churches ignore the scripture and make their own church laws, God Himself rejects them.

Matthew 15:9

⁹ And in vain they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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