

MATTHEW

Chapter 19

Divorce

When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan. ² Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. ³ 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?” ⁴ **“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ ⁵ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” ⁷ “Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” ⁸ Jesus replied, **“Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. ⁹ I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.” ¹⁰ The disciples said to him, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.” ¹¹ Jesus replied, **“Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. ¹² For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.”******

19:1 FINISHED SAYING THESE THINGS – Matthew employs the same transitional formula here at the end of the fourth discourse (18:1-35) as he did at the end of the three preceding discourses (7:28; 11:1; 13:53). He will utilize it more time: at the end of the great Eschatological Discourse (26:1). (CC)

the other side of the Jordan. The east side, known later as Transjordan or Perea and today simply as Jordan. Jesus now began ministering there (see **note** on Lk 13:22). (CSB)

It is not altogether clear what the phrase, literally, “the boundaries of Judea across the Jordan” refers to. What is plain is that Jesus has now made His way to the south toward Jerusalem, where He will suffer, die, and be raised. (CC)

19:2 Reinforces the picture of Jesus performing countless healings during His earthly ministry. Cf Mk 1. (TLSB)

19:3 TO TEST HIM – As on numerous other occasions, Jesus’ opponents try to lure Him into self-incrimination. (TLSB)

The present stem participle *peirazontes*, “tempting,” likely expresses the purpose for which the Pharisees approach Jesus: “in order to tempt.” They do not want to learn whether he is reliable or trustworthy; instead, they are trying to trap Jesus in some way. (CC)

divorce. Then, as now, divorce presented special challenges for God’s people. (TLSB)

for any and every reason. This last part of the question is not in the parallel passage in Mark (10:2). Matthew possibly included it because he was writing to the Jews, who were aware of the dispute between the schools of Shammai and Hillel over the interpretation of Dt 24:1–4. Shammai held that “something indecent” meant “marital unfaithfulness”—the only allowable cause for divorce. Hillel (c. 60 B.C.–A.D. 20) emphasized the preceding clause, “who becomes displeasing to him.” He would allow a man to divorce his wife if she did anything he disliked—even if she burned his food while cooking it. Jesus clearly took the side of Shammai (see v. 9), but only after first pointing back to God’s original ideal for marriage in Ge 1:27; 2:24. (CSB)

Some rabbis argued that men were completely free to divorce their wives. (TLSB)

19:4-5 Rather than immediately answering His opponents’ question, Jesus first underlines God’s intent for marriage. Quoting Gn 1:27; 2:24, Jesus emphasizes God’s will that married couples share a lifelong, monogamous union, and that gender is an essential feature of God’s created order. (TLSB)

19:4 HAVEN’T YOU READ – As He does so often (cf. 12:1-14; 15:1-20), Jesus alters the terms of the debate. He asks a rhetorical question that, in effect, accuses the Pharisees of being unable to read their own Scriptures rightly or, more specifically, to know which particular Scripture passage they should be reading when it comes to the issue of God’s plan for and Law regarding marriage. Jesus redirects the focus back to Gen 1:27 and 2:24. (CC)

19:6 *God has joined*. Marriage is a divine institution, not merely a cultural institution that can be changed at will. On the issue of same-sex relationships. (TLSB)

LET MAN NOT SEPARATE – God desires that married couples remain together until parted by death. (TLSB)

Since the Law of God expresses His will for His human creatures, it is never lawful for a man to divorce His wife, not for any cause. To do so is to tear apart what God has joined, and no man should do that. (CC)

19:7 Divorce was common. See Jos, *Life*, 414–28. (TLSB)

certificate of divorce. Written statement given by a husband to a wife as evidence of a legal divorce. Cf Dt 24:1. (TLSB)

19:8 Because of the perennial problem of failed marriages, the Law given to Moses made provision for divorce. Even so, Jesus shows divorce was never a part of God’s intention, but a concession made because of “hardness of heart.” This also illustrates why the civil laws of the OT could not remain in force forever—they were designed to meet the needs of Israel. (TLSB)

JESUS REPLIED – Christ’s answer is significant for at least three reasons. In the first place, He once again denies them the ability to set the terms of the debate; He actually refuses to let the language of His opponents stand. The people to whom Moses was (and is) speaking are deeply flawed people who all too often harden their hearts against God and His holy ways. Deut 24:1-4 is not a command to divorce nor a regulation stipulating how to do it. (CC)

Second, Jesus reveals what could be described as the root cause of all the divorces that do take place in this fallen world. That fact must never be allowed to hide or obscure the reality that a divorce only happens because of human sin, because a human heart becomes hardened against God and against one’s own husband or wife. (CC)

The third reason why Christ’s answer in 19:7-9 is significant is this: it’s the same answer that He gave already in 19:4-6. Jesus resolutely refuses to allow His opponents to control the terms of the debate; He continues not to enter into a discussion of “the biblical grounds for divorce.” The phrase “from the beginning” directs the Pharisees (and Matthew’s hearer/readers) back to the Genesis passages that Christ has already cited and to the conclusion that Christ has already drawn from the scriptural institution of marriage. (CC)

The impact, however, must have been immense. Jesus labels as the grossest kind of immorality what had become standard and customary behavior. What many in Israel have been thinking is this: divorce happens in society and among the people called to be God’s, and husbands are surely justified (at least at times) in divorcing their wives, so what is needed is to define when divorce is lawful and when it is not. (CC)

Jesus is not saying, “It’s okay with God if you get a divorce when there has been sexual unfaithfulness.” Such a divorce and remarriage may not be adultery, but they could be cruelty and revenge, which also grieve the heart of the Father of Jesus. (CC)

19:9 *except for sexual immorality.* Jesus does not teach that divorce is required if husband or wife has sexual contact with another outside of marriage. In some cases, through repentance and forgiveness, couples are able to overcome such immorality. This exception clause simply allows for the possibility. (TLSB)

commits adultery. Divorce and remarriage for reasons other than sexual immorality result in a union that is inherently adulterous. Jesus permits remarriage only if one is widowed or the victim of a spouse’s sexual immorality. (TLSB)

19:10 DISCIPLES SAID TO HIM – The disciples are shocked because they have been taught by the social environment around them that divorce, though perhaps a regrettable action, is certainly lawful in any number of situations. (CC)

better not to marry. Jesus’ disciples blurt this out because they are shocked by His strictness. (TLSB)

19:11-12 Jesus changes the subject a bit, speaking about those who opt to remain unmarried for positive reasons. (TLSB)

19:11 NOT EVERYONE CAN ACCEPT – The disciples are partly correct; for some it is better not to marry – but it is only better for those to whom this gift has been given. Not every believer is able to accept that the celibate life is better, as the disciples have just partly enunciated. The meaning of Jesus’ statement in 19:11 is congruent with His further clarification in 19:12 of who may benefit from celibacy and who has been given the gift. (CC)

to whom it is given. Clear that some receive a special gift so that they can happily and chastely choose to remain unmarried. (TLSB)

19:12 eunuchs ... from birth. For a variety of physical and psychological reasons, some seem destined from birth to lead a single life. (TLSB)

The very term “eunuch” was something of a pejorative term in Second Temple Judaism. Now, however, Jesus affirms that there are actually three kinds of eunuchs. First, it occasionally may happen that a make human creature is born without the ability to be a husband and father because of a defect in physiology.

made eunuchs. Others undergo life experiences or losses that lead them to see singleness as the better option for them. (TLSB)

Second, all of the people in Jesus’ audience were aware of the practice of castration. Often this was carried out on a male (usually a slave) to render him “safe” in the company of an overlord’s wife or harem. (CC)

made themselves eunuchs. Some do not marry for the sake of the Kingdom. Paul may have been such a person (cf 1Co 7). A single lifestyle allowed him to devote all his time and effort to his missionary calling. (TLSB)

receive this. According to God’s created order (vv 4–5), the Church cannot forbid a person to marry, not even a church worker. Staying unmarried will only be a blessing if God has prepared that person to wholeheartedly embrace the single life. “The law of nature in human beings cannot be removed by vows or enactments” (Ap XXVII 51). (TLSB)

There is a third kind, however. God has given to some men (and by extension, we could also say some women) the ability to accept a different calling and to set aside the

gift of marriage in order to devote themselves more fully to the purposes of God, who is at work in Jesus to reestablish His reign in Israel and in the world. There are those who “make themselves eunuchs on account of the reign of heaven” (19:12). Jesus’ words are not to be taken literally anymore than His words about plucking our one’s eye or cutting off one’s hand (18:8-9). The celibate life of laypersons is no less God-pleasing than that of those called to full-time service in the church. There is also a life of non-married discipleship that brings honor to God and blessing to those to whom it is given. (CC)

As with many truths, there is a balance that is needed. One wonders how many marriages would never take place if the two parties were encouraged to grow and mature as Christians and human beings for a few years before their union. One wonders as well how many single Christians have been insulted and excluded by well-meaning (or perhaps not so-so-well-meaning) comments that assume that because that because they are not married, there must be something wrong with them or something incomplete about them. Jesus’ words mandate that holy matrimony is to endure “so long as you both shall live” at the same time that they declare celibacy too to be a holy estate, a God-pleasing vocation for the sake of the reign of God. (CC)

19:10–12 See 1Co 7:7–8, 26, 32–35. (CSB)

19:1–12 Few problems afflict the Church and society more than those of marital infidelity and divorce. Sin has deeply affected our human relationships to the point that its effects seem normal, but they are not. When questioned about marriage and divorce, Jesus emphasizes that a lifelong, monogamous union is God’s intent for a man and a woman. He instituted marriage to be a gift and a blessing. He also affirms the value of a single lifestyle. With His forgiveness, grace, and guidance, our relationships can be a blessing. • Be with all Christian families, Lord, granting them strength, mutual affection, and the grace to raise their children in faith. Amen. (TLSB)

The Little Children and Jesus

¹³ Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. ¹⁴ Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” ¹⁵ When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

19:13-15 The fourth great discourse of Jesus in Matthew on caring for the greatest (18:1-35), afforded the opportunity of describing the place and status of children in the ancient world generally and in Israel particularly. To summarize briefly, in the ancient world, little children were lowly in status and regarded as powerless, foolish, and (at times) unimportant. Jesus’ disciples show that they still share the common ancient view when they rebuke the unnamed people, presumably the fathers and/or mothers, who purpose to bring their children to Jesus for Him to put His hands on them and to pray for a blessing. (CC)

Christ turns them around and invites them to believe that it is precisely to people who are like these children – lowly, powerless, and without resources of their own – that He brings the reign of heaven already now. Such ones will also enter the reign of heaven on the Last Day (18:3). (CC)

lay His hands on them and pray. OT associates the imposition of hands most often with sacrificial (Lv 1:4) and consecratory rites (Dt 34:9). However, examples in Gn 27:23; 48:14–18 show that blessings and inheritance were bestowed on family members in this way. (TLSB)

rebuked. Ironically, in 18:5, Jesus had told the disciples to receive children, the weak, and the humble in His name. (TLSB)

19:14 *to such belongs the kingdom.* Cf 18:1–5; only those exhibiting childlike humility and dependence on God can enjoy the benefits of His kingdom. (TSB)

19:15 *laid His hands on them.* Jesus often touched those whom He was healing (8:3, 15; 9:29; 20:34); here He imparts another kind of blessing. (TLSB)

19:13–15 Jesus welcomes children and makes it clear that they, too, have a place in the Kingdom. For a variety of reasons—some unavoidable and others the result of selfishness—many children today are not nurtured as they ought to be. Because of His special love for children, Jesus not only allows children into His kingdom, but He also gives them pride of place!

• Give us childlike simplicity, O Lord, so that we not only love little ones as ourselves but also please You through our humility. Amen. (TLSB)

The Rich Young Man

¹⁶ Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?” ¹⁷ “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.” ¹⁸ “Which ones?” the man inquired. Jesus replied, “Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, ¹⁹ honor your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁰ “All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?” ²¹ Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” ²² When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. ²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?” ²⁶ Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” ²⁷ Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?” ²⁸ Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and

will inherit eternal life. ³⁰ **But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.**

19:16 TEACHER – A number of people in Matthew approach Jesus as supplicants, and Jesus hears their pleas and grants them what they ask, for example healing or exorcism. In every case in which such persons address Jesus, they either name Him as “Lord” (as disciples do) or else as both “Lord” and “Son of David.” Our wealthy young man does neither. What is more, his manner of speaking actually aligns with a darker theme in Matthew, that is the pattern of those who address Jesus as “Teacher.” Every time someone calls Jesus “Teacher,” that speaker is rebuffed, or even worse, they show themselves to be actively hostile toward Jesus. (CC)

what good thing must I do ... ? The rich man was thinking in terms of righteousness by works. Jesus had to correct this misunderstanding first before answering the question more fully. (CSB)

Like many in Jesus’ day, this young man assumed that eternal life is earned by fulfilling God’s Law. Elsewhere, Scripture explains that this idea is wrong (Gal 3:1–14). (TLSB)

eternal life. The first use of this term in Matthew’s Gospel (see v. 29; 25:46). In John it occurs much more frequently, often taking the place of the term “kingdom of God (or heaven)” used in the Synoptics, which treat the following three expressions as synonymous: (1) eternal life (v. 16; Mk 10:17; Lk 18:18), (2) entering the kingdom of heaven (v. 23; Mk 10:24; Lk 18:24) and (3) being saved (vv. 25–26; Mk 10:26–27; Lk 18:26–27). (CSB)

19:17 *There is only One who is good.* The good is not something to be done as meritorious in itself. God alone is good, and all other goodness derives from him—even the keeping of the commandments, which Jesus proceeded to enumerate (vv. 18–20). (CSB)

Jesus’ response echoes Israel’s creed: “Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Dt 6:4). By answering in this way, Jesus shifts the focus away from human works and toward God, the source of grace. (TLSB)

If you want to enter life, obey the commandments. † “To enter life” is the same as “to get eternal life” (v. 16). The requirement to “obey the commandments” is not to establish one’s merit before God but is to be an expression of true faith. The Bible always teaches that salvation is a gift of God’s grace received through faith, which is also a gift of God (see Eph 2:8–9). (CSB)

Jesus next challenges the young man with God’s Law. Fulfilling God’s commands earns eternal life only when perfect obedience is rendered. After the fall of Adam and Eve, of course, such perfection is impossible. “Without Christ the commandments are not kept and cannot please” (Ap V 149). (TLSB)

The typical Jewish teacher or rabbi would be expected to quote the teaching of Moses, the mediator of the covenant between God and Israel. Apparently that is what the rich man expects of Jesus, and Jesus seems to meet that expectation by continuing with citations from the Torah of Moses. Only One greater than Moses could be expected to present authoritative new teaching that would fulfill and supplant that already given in the Torah – as Jesus did in, for example, 5:17-32. Jesus refrains from doing that here in round 1, but He will in round 2 (19:21) and in His further interaction with His disciples (19:23-26). (CC)

19:18–19 Jesus summarizes the Second Table of the Law (Commandments 4–10). Though Jesus fulfilled on our behalf the ceremonial aspects of the Mosaic Law (circumcision, clean/unclean, Sabbath observance, and the like), He strictly upheld the enduring validity of the Law’s moral code, which has to do with our treatment of fellow human beings. That emphasis fits perfectly with the demand Jesus will lay upon this young man in v 21. (TLSB)

19:20 The young man’s answer demonstrates hypocrisy, naivete, or both. (TLSB)

What do I still lack? A telling question, for it shows that he is aware of his imperfections. (TLSB)

19:21 *perfect*. Perfection involves not only avoiding sins but also actively fulfilling acts of sacrificial love. (TLSB) Jesus addresses the man’s greatest weakness. Though he claimed to keep all the Commandments, he failed to keep the first one because he loved his wealth more than he loved God. (TLSB)

go, sell your possessions. In his listing of the commandments, Jesus omitted “Do not covet.” This was the rich man’s main problem and was preventing him from entering life. (CSB)

Jesus addresses the man’s greatest weakness. Though he claimed to keep all the Commandments, he failed to keep the first one because he loved his wealth more than he loved God. (TLSB)

give to the poor. Jesus proclaims a harsh Law. Though this expectation is tailored to this young man, Jesus does expect charity from all disciples. (TLSB)

treasure in heaven. Faithful generosity here on earth will result in the Lord rewarding us in heaven (cf 25:31–46), but it does not cause us to be in heaven. That is the gift of Christ’s grace alone. Neither are these rewards the best motive for serving others; that is a response of a grateful faith. (TLSB)

follow Me. How Jesus invited people into discipleship (4:19–22; 9:9; 16:24). (TLSB)

19:22 Jesus’ proclamation of the Law overwhelms the young man, yet he is not prepared to repent. (TLSB)

19:23–24 Jesus does not state that rich people cannot be saved. (TLSB)

19:24 *camel to go through the eye of a needle.* See **note** on Mk 10:25. (CSB)

Hyperbolic imagery to impress upon His hearers just how serious an impediment riches can be. Significantly, the NT depicts numerous wealthy people becoming disciples and using their money and influence in a God-pleasing way (e.g., Joseph of Arimathea, 27:57–61; Zacchaeus, Lk 19:1–10; Lydia, Ac 16:13–15). (TLSB)

We should not regard Jesus' demand that the young man sell all his possessions and give everything to the poor as a general requirement for discipleship. Even in the case of the disciples who immediately left their daily tasks behind when Jesus called them (4:18-22; 9:9), these men did not divest themselves of all their possessions. If greater riches have been entrusted to my keeping, such power is to be used for the blessing of others and not to enhance my own ego or status. (CC)

What is it, then, about wealth that makes it a potentially lethal spiritual poison? There are probably many Christian and biblical ways to answer that question, but two come to mind. In the first place, wealth can quickly become fuel poured on the fire of our appetites and lusts. (Rockefeller: "A little bit more.") How wonderful will be the day when all things are renewed by God's work in Christ, and we will once again be content! Until that day, desire all too quickly seeks gratification, but when it finds gratification, it does not rest. What once were unnecessary luxuries quickly become needs, and needs begin to control our time and energy and commitment. In the second place, wealth is dangerous because it brings a certain kind of power. Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. (CC)

19:25 **WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED** – The disciples were amazed by the rigor of Jesus' demand. Their reaction implies that they were having doubts about their own salvation. (TLSB)

The disciples have assumed, and not entirely without reason, that wealth and piety are a positive combination, a sign of divine favor. One could think of such OT worthies as Abraham and Job. The farthest thing from their imagination is that wealth could actually be working to diminish true piety and to keep a person away from God. They regarded the wealthy you man, who claimed to have kept God's commandments scrupulously, as a likely candidate for salvation. In some sense they must have generalized this in their own minds, thinking that others with similar traits would easily enter the eschatological reign. Jesus' words have once again turned their world upside down. (CC)

19:26 Stark contrast between human weakness and divine power. Salvation is only possible through God's power and grace. (TLSB)

19:27 Though based on a misunderstanding, Peter's anguished cry is nonetheless poignant, for he had left everything to follow Jesus. Owing to the heartfelt nature of Peter's exclamation, Jesus responds not with a rebuke but with a wonderful promise and reassurance (vv 28–30). (TLSB)

19:28 *new world.* How things will be after His second coming, when all will be perfectly restored. Cf Rv 21:1–22:5. (TLSB)

Son of Man ... glorious throne. Based on the vision recorded in Dn 7, where Jesus' glorious final enthronement is prophesied. (TLSB)

twelve thrones. In heaven, they will join Him in ruling the restored people of God. A similar promise is made to all believers (2Tm 2:12; Rv 22:5). (TLSB)

judging. Governing or ruling (cf. the OT "judge"; see Introduction to Judges: Title). (CSB)

The majority of scholars seem to take "judge" here with the meaning "to judge" rather than to "to rule," not least because the verb never has the latter meaning in any other NT text. What Jesus is promising to the apostles, then, is that they will participate in the final judgment. Some scholars rightly point to a connection with the "brothers" of Jesus who seem to be at Christ's side in the judgment scene in 25:31-46." (CC p. 986)

Although the apostles are simply disciples of Jesus along with others, the Twelve do occupy a unique office that, stunningly, will show itself on the Day of Judgment. They will participate in some active way in the universal judgment that the Son of Man will carry out when He comes in His glory and gives to each person according to his work of either following Jesus or rejecting Him. (CC p. 987)

Twelve tribes of Israel. The saying here is so brief and cryptic that it would be rash to try to build too much on it. Probably it is best simply to group this saying with others in Matthew when Jesus speaks in a very Jewish way to his completely Jewish audience in the first half of the first century AD. So understood, Jesus is not intimating anything about different judgments for Jew and Gentiles. His words are simply to be understood in the context in which he uttered them. The twelve apostles will judge the twelve tribes, that is, the renewed and regathered end-time Israel. (CC pp. 986-987)

19:29 *left.* "Christ does not mean that leaving parents, wife, and siblings is a work that must be done because it merits the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.... When Christ speaks about leaving wife and children, it becomes clear that He does not approve this kind of leaving. We know that God's commandment forbids leaving wife and children. God's command to leave is different, that is, when power or tyranny pushes us either to leave or to deny the Gospel" (Ap XXVII 40-41). (TLSB)

for My name's sake. Jesus will reward every matter suffered on account of faith and love for Him (cf 25:34-40). (TLSB)

WILL RECEIVE A HUNDRED TIMES – Reward for following Jesus far outweighs any sacrifice that it requires. (TLSB)

To be sure, the apostles have followed Jesus and His call, and their unique office will be exercised even on the Last Day. Nevertheless, many others have also become disciples, and they have suffered various kinds of loss as well, leaving behind their old

relationships with possessions and family for the sake of all Jesus means and does – for the sake of His name. It doesn't matter who the disciple is or how much he or she has lost. All disciples will, on the Last Day, be abundantly recompensed and blessed, and they will all receive eternal life. Ultimately, there will be no essential distinctions between believers at the consummation of the reign of God. (CC)

inherit eternal life. Jesus' description of the way eternal life is gained contrasts with that of the young man (v 16). (TLSB)

19:30 Within this context, this means that many poor and humble will be exalted in the age to come, while many of this world's rich and powerful will be brought low. (TLSB)

19:16–30 We cannot earn eternal life through our good works; we can only receive it by God's grace. But Jesus still rewards our sacrifices and service for Him. Trying to earn eternal life is a losing proposition. The perfection this requires is impossible for us sinners. Through faith in Christ, God freely gives us the gift of eternal life. And if that were not enough, He rewards the sacrifices made for His kingdom a hundredfold! • By Your grace, Father, You have adopted us and made us heirs of eternal life. Move us to respond to such kindness by willingly sacrificing for You. Amen. (TLSB)