Sermon: **Man must not separate what God has joined together** (Mk 10.9)

Divorce – we all agree it is a bad thing, but some have sadly experienced it. Even if you have not been divorced, we all know family, friends, etc who have, and thus have some experience of how awkward talking about it in church can be.

[1] Divorce is not God’s idea. TEXT.   
Bible has little to say about marriage – the daughters of priests (Lev 22.12), marriage outside the clan.

Marriage is society’s way of stabilising the rearing of children, and giving security to those not working.   
A marriage does not have to have children, but their lack signified disgrace (Hannah, Sarah).

Divorce is only mentioned here and in Deuteronomy 24.1-4.

Jesus seems to be saying: it is never OK to divorce; it is a sign of weakness.

[2] Few divorce lightly.

We invest much into marriages (more than ever before).

But they can last much longer (oak anniversaries are celebrated after 80 years!)

We all agree the original intention is for life.

We all agree there might be circumstances where this is very difficult:

* Marrying in haste, and thus not really knowing each other,
* When one or other partner radically changes – eg illness, accident.

We all agree sustaining marriage is worth effort, but not *every* effort.

[3] In God there is healing and forgiveness.

What was Jesus attitude to those in weakness? Woman caught in adultery, woman who anointed Jesus, Peter after denying Jesus. If this is Jesus’ attitude in general, it must include divorcees.

“Jesus knows our every weakness” (from What A Friend We Have In Jesus).

In Jesus we do not see an angry face, criticism, condemnation,   
 but a crying face, a deep desire for change and a fresh start.

If we only focus on the problem we can end up divorcing God; we also need to hear God’s solution as we gaze on face of Jesus.