*\*I will add the notes from verses 1-7 tomorrow… They are located on a computer to which I currently do not have access.*

Mat 19:8 - He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

Mat 19:9 - And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”

* This is an interesting text.
* It appears, God *tolerated* the Children of Israel in the Old Testament to divorce their wives.
* The reason given for this toleration was the hard hearts of the Jews.
  + Many examples of this hard heart appear in the Old Testament writings.
  + Deu 9:6 - “Know, therefore, that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stubborn people.
* At first, it struck me as very strange that God would permit something to continue which wasn’t in line with His ultimate desire.
  + Then I realized, “Wait a second, couldn’t that be said for the whole Old Testament?"
  + The Old Testament and the laws it consisted of weren’t the ultimate and final desire of God but they were permitted to exist for a time.
  + Why? Because they were designed to teach humanity an important lesson and they acted as a teacher to lead people to Christ.
  + The Old Testament was part of the ultimate plan of God and was permitted for a period of time to accomplish His purpose.
  + I think we should understand God’s allowance of divorce in the same way.
  + God allowed divorce for a purpose, the details of that purpose are not all revealed to us, but we can be confident that, like the Old Testament, it was leading His people to His final plan.
* Jesus then made His command on divorce clear (essentially the same teaching He gave in Matt 5:31-32).
  + I want to point out the differences between the KJV and the ESV on this text:
  + [ESV] Mat 19:9 - And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”
  + [KJV] Mat 19:9 - And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery**: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.**
  + You’ll notice the inclusion of one additional phrase in the KJV
  + The oldest Greek manuscripts exclude the final phrase contained in the KJV.
    - Manuscripts containing the phrase include: 017K, 28, 700, 892, and the Byzantine texts.
    - Manuscripts without the phrase include: 01א, 04C-corrected, 05D, 019L, 1241.
    - The translation difference depends on which set of manuscripts the translators use.
  + No matter which translation you’re using, this statement is a repetition of Jesus’ instruction during the Sermon on the Mount.
  + A man is not to divorce his wife unless she is unfaithful to him (a sexual relationship with another man).
  + A woman is not to divorce her husband unless he is unfaithful to her.
  + Adultery is the only reason for a divorce.
  + Anyone who divorces his/her spouse (for a reason other than adultery) and is sexually involved with another is guilty of adultery.
    - Why? Why are they guilty of adultery if they divorced the old spouse?
    - Because the text implies the original husband and wife are still bound to one another.
    - They may have been legally divorced by a human court but they are still bound before God.
    - They are not free to exit that relationship.
    - So when a man divorces his wife for a reason other than adultery and marries somebody else, he is violating his unbroken bond with his first wife.
    - I think this is even more clearly implied in Mark’s account
    - Mar 10:11-12 - And he said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery **against her**, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”
    - I understand 1Corinthians 7:10-11 to imply the same
    - 1Co 7:10  To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or **else be reconciled to her husband**), and the husband should not divorce his wife.
  + I Know there are additional verses in the New Testament that we need to account for in this discussion, particularly in 1 Corinthians, and we will address those verses as we approach them in their context. (I just want you to know I am aware of them and they are being taken into account).
  + Right now, we are dealing with Jesus’ words.
* Jesus’ words in verse 9 are not particularly difficult to understand from a reading comprehension point of view but they are some of the most hotly debated words of Christ.
* There are at least two reasons for this:
  + (1) People don’t like the implications of the command.
    - They may be shocked by the strictness of the command.
    - They may try to debate their way to some loophole
  + (2) There are innumerable hypothetical marriage possibilities and circumstances with which people approach this text.

Mat 19:10 - The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”

Mat 19:11 - But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

Mat 19:12 - For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”

* The disciples of Christ were among those who were shocked at the strictness of the command.
  + I like Matthew Henry’s comment on the disciples response:
    - “It seems, the disciples themselves were loth to give up the liberty of divorce, thinking it a good expedient for preserving comfort in the married state; and therefore, like sullen children, if they have not what they would have, they will throw away what they have. If they may not be allowed to put away their wives when they please, they will have no wives at all;”
  + Imagine growing up in a culture where you were told you could divorce your wife for any reason and then hear Jesus tell you the only reason for a divorce is unfaithfulness.
  + That is our world!
  + Jesus’ command is shocking to many who grew up in a world where marriage isn’t taken seriously and divorces happen for any and every reason.
* My paraphrase of the disciples response: “If the rules are that strict, its better to just stay single!”
* Jesus seems to imply in verse 11 that there are occasion in which it is good for a man to remain single but it is possible only for those “to whom it has been given.”
  + In other words, that won’t work for everyone. In fact, it won’t work for most people.
  + Gen 2:18 - Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”
  + Yes, as Paul will later discuss, there are benefits a single man has that a married man does not have.
  + He has more time to devote himself to Kingdom work.
  + But the majority of men/women are not given a temperament or disposition to singleness.
  + Hence the institution of marriage.
* In verse 12, we are introduced to a new word that may or may not be familiar to modern readers.
* The technical definition of a “eunuch” is a man who has been castrated.
* Jesus is likely using the term to refer to those who fall within the technical definition but also those who are eunuchs in practice, meaning they do not participate in any kind of sexual activity.
* These three groups would fall under the heading “to whom it has been given.”
  + (1) Eunuchs who have been so from birth.
    - These would be those born with some kind of sexual disfunction.
    - May include those born with no sexual interest.
  + (2) Eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men.
    - This would refer to eunuchs in the technical definition.
    - Eunuchs were often used to care for women in a wealthy household.
  + (3) Eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.
    - Some choose not to marry so they can dedicate themselves entirely to the Lord’s work.

Mat 19:13 - Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people,

Mat 19:14 - but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”

Mat 19:15 - And he laid his hands on them and went away.

* In the Old Testament we have examples of blessings being given while the blesser laid his hands on the blessed.
  + Gen 48:14
  + Deut 34:9
* The people respected Jesus and recognized He possessed the power of God so they brought their children to Him to receive some spiritual benefit.
* Contrary to the thought of His disciples, Jesus welcomed the presence of the children and didn’t run them off.
  + It's not uncommon for people to believe children are a nuisance to important individuals.
  + Many suggest important people shouldn't be bothered with children’s nonsense because their time is too valuable to be wasted.
  + But here Jesus teaches His disciples that they have a lot to learn from children and what children offer adults is far from nonsense.
  + In fact, contained in their innocence and “childish ways” are many characteristics of those who belong to the Kingdom of Heaven.
  + If we think our time is too valuable to be given to children, we have an overestimation of the value of our time and think more of ourselves than we are actually worth.
* Remember, Jesus spoke about children in the beginning of chapter 18 and is now driving the point home again.

Mat 19:16 - And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”

Mat 19:17 - And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.”

* We are going to encounter this story in 3 of the gospels so I do not intend to exhaust all of the points of the text in these notes. We will pull out a few highlights.
* A young man approaches Jesus with a question, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life.”
  + We might say, “What do I need to do to go to heaven?”
* Jesus doesn’t immediately respond to the man’s questions but points out the wording He used in his approach.
  + “Why do you ask me about what is good?”
  + There is only one being who has the authority to speak on what is good and what is evil, God.
    - Jesus doesn’t tell the man he is wrong for coming to him for information on what is good.
    - In fact, He goes on to answer the man’s question!
    - What is Jesus teaching the man and those in the audience by starting the conversation this way?
    - He is making it clear that only God has the authority to speak on these things, He will now speak authoritatively on these things, therefore what is the conclusion He’s leading them towards? He is God and speaks with God’s authority!
    - Example:
      * Let me try to illustrated (hopefully this is helpful lol)
      * Let’s say you approach me a question…
        + You: “How do you send a rocket to the moon?”
        + Me: “It would take an expert physicist to answer that question!”
        + Me: *Proceeds to explain how a rocket is sent to the moon.*
      * I would be implying I am an expert physicist.
  + Jesus is making a claim of deity.

Mat 19:17b - … If you would enter life, keep the commandments.”

Mat 19:18 - He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness,

Mat 19:19 - Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Mat 19:20 - The young man said to him, “All these I have kept. What do I still lack?”

Mat 19:21 - Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

Mat 19:22 - When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

* Jesus tells the young man he must keep the commandments of God to have eternal life.
* The man asks, “which ones?”
* Jesus provides him with a list of commands to which he responds positively to their compliance.
* Jesus tells him there is one more thing he must do in order to have eternal life. He must sell all of his possessions, give them to the poor, and follow Christ.
* Sadly, the young man was not willing to do this and he went away sorrowfully.
* We learn in verse 22 the man was very rich.
* Why does Jesus require this of the rich young man?
  + It isn’t a blanket rule that all Christians have to sell all their stuff and give it to the poor.
  + So why does Jesus ask him to do it?
  + Because Jesus knew to what his heart belonged and Jesus wanted that heart in His possession.
    - Yes, this man kept the commandments…
    - Yes, he had given himself to God in many ways…
    - But Jesus, with pinpoint accuracy, just as He said in Matt 6:21, identified the location of his heart.
    - As we’ve mentioned in other texts, Jesus wasn’t only concerned with external compliance, He wanted the heart of His listeners.
    - The man’s treasure was laid up on earth (Matt 6:19-21)
    - Christ told him if he would have treasure in heaven he must purge his life of the object of his greatest affection (riches) and make God his hearts desire.
    - For this man, this may have been the equivalent of plucking out the eye that causes you to stumble or cutting off the hand that leads you into sin.
  + APPLICATION:
    - It is likely every one around this man thought he was a godly man.
    - He may have also believed he was a godly man (he seemed honest).
    - But even though he and others thought he was on the right track, he still came to Jesus and asked what else he needed to do.
    - When he did, Christ revealed an area of improvement he had never recognized before.
    - We need to ask God the same question.
      * We may appear to others to be on the right track.
      * We may believe we are on the right track.
      * But we need to go to God and ask Him to reveal to us what we aren’t seeing.
      * I suspect we all have blind spots.
      * Things that because of our upbringing or because of the way we’ve been taught to study the Bible or because of the examples in our lives, we miss.
      * We need to go to God in full submission and ask for them to be revealed.
      * And, unlike this man, have a heart willing to be shaped in any direction to be what God desires.
  + APPLICATION:
    - This is another picture of the point Christ is trying to drive home, external actions are not enough, your heart must belong to God.
    - But in this case, rather than the hypocritical Pharisees/scribes illustrating the point, we see a man who came to Jesus in apparent honesty.
    - He had the externals right but God wouldn’t be satisfied till he had the entire man.
  + APPLICATION:
    - Conviction isn’t obedience!
    - I think there are many people who attend worship or study their Bible and they walk away convicted.
    - But often that conviction wears off after a while without us making the actually changes in our lives.
    - Its easy to feel “spiritual” when we’ve been convicted but we are not practicing godliness unless there is transformation following the conviction.

Mat 19:23 - And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven.

Mat 19:24 - Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

* This statement is very important to spend some time thinking about.
* Jesus doesn’t try to sugar coat the fact that riches and the pursuit of riches have a powerful lure that lead many people away from the Kingdom of Heaven.
* Billions of people throughout time have devoted themselves to accumulating stuff.
  + Physical possessions promise satisfaction and joy but the promise is always empty.
  + Yet, how many people have failed to learn the lesson the rich of previous generations tried to teach us, that chasing money will not make you happy.
  + Not only will it not make you happy, it has no ability to save your soul.
  + Mat 16:26 - For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?
* Jesus says it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter God’s Kingdom.

Mat 19:25 - When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?”

* This is the second time in the chapter the disciples have been shocked at Jesus’ teaching.
* They were shocked at Christ’s strict teaching on marriage and now they are shocked at the difficulty of entering the Kingdom of Heaven.
* Jesus ensures them, while it may seem impossible to them, God can turn a man’s affections

Mat 19:26 - But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

* In order to escape the empty promises of the world, a man must be presented with something greater on which to fix his eyes and heart.
* God is the only one capable of presenting greater promises.
* Only He can work in our hearts to free us from a suicidal obsession with wealth.

Mat 19:27 - Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?”

Mat 19:28 - Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Mat 19:29 - And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.

* Peter asks Jesus, “Since we’ve left everything to follow you, what reward are we going to receive?”
* Rather than rebuking Peter for patting himself on the back and asking for a reward, Jesus confirms that, in eternity (new world), people like Peter and the rest of the Apostles will be rewarded for their devotion.
* The Apostles didn’t always get everything right (especially Peter lol) but they had given their hearts over to God (at least the majority of them) and Jesus commends them here.
* Everyone who sacrifices worldly affections to follow Christ will receive a “hundredfold” reward.
  + An exponentially greater reward than the price paid.
  + 2Cor 4:17 – For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.
* Jesus seems to promise the Apostles themselves a specific reward of honor.
  + They would sit on 12 thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
  + How would they judge the 12 tribes?
    - It may be that their lives would be held up as examples of how the Jews should have responded to Jesus.
    - Those Jews who rejected Jesus will have no excuse on the Judgement Day.
  + The wording of this text doesn’t lead me to believe this is just the general promise of blessing given to all Christians but rather it is specific to the 12.
  + This may be because of their role in laying the foundation of the Church.
  + The text does not provide us with many specific details beyond these about the nature of their reward.

Mat 19:30 - But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

* On earth, it is the rich who are “first.”
  + They are highly respected by the world.
  + They have privileges not given to others.
* On earth, those whose lives are not devoted to material gain are often considered “last” or of low social status.
* In heaven, this standard will be reversed.
  + Those who devoted their lives to material riches and men’s praise will be separated from the glory of God.
  + Those who sacrificed for the Kingdom of Heaven and abandoned material pursuits for spiritual pursuits will be honored with the glory of Christ and highly exalted!

<http://lavistachurchofchrist.org/LVanswers/2016/06-07.html>