

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

31- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 11
The King Reveals the Deepest Meaning of
the Divine Prohibition Against Adultery- Part 1

Church October 2, 2022

Matthew 5:27-37

27 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY';

28 but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

29 "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

30 "If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

31 "It was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE';

32 but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

33 "Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.'

34 "But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,

35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.

36 "Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

37 "But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Beginning Note: This *perfect* Sermon- that we call, the “*Sermon on the Mount*” is the *first* of five different Sections of Divine Teaching that Matthew wrote in his Gospel Record- which represent the five Books of Moses in the Old Testament (the *Pentateuch*). And that is because, in addition to Matthew wanting the Jews to see Jesus as being the long-awaited “*Mashich*” (*Messiah*); and the promised “*Immanuel*” (*God with us*)- he wants them to also see Jesus as being the “*2nd Moses*”- Who will bring God’s people out from “*spiritual Bondage*” (*Sin*) and lead them into the “*Promised Land*” (*the Kingdom of Heaven*).

So, what this Sermon is illustrating is the Attributes and the Characteristics of the *new* people- that God is raising up; who will inherit this *new* Kingdom of Heaven; which is sovereignly ruled and governed by the *new* King- Jesus Christ- as He ushers in the *New Covenant*.

So, this Sermon is what this “*new chosen people*” look like- AFTER Jesus has “paid for” ALL of their Sins; AFTER God the Father has imputed to them the Righteousness of Jesus Christ (Justification); and as they are actively and continuously “*killing*” the remaining Sin that is in their Flesh (Sanctification).

And so, this part of the “*Sermon on the Mount*” has to do with:

**Jesus illustrating His full Deity- by revealing the deepest meaning of
the Law of God**

So, the Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew 5:21-47**) contains six different Sections of infallible Teaching from Jesus Himself. And today we are going to explore what Jesus meant when He taught the people in verses 27-37- about the *full*; *complete*; and *deepest* Meaning of the Divine Prohibition against Adultery. And as we get into this- we will also go into two other side Issues- which are related to this Divine Prohibition- and has to do with the issue of Divorce; and making and keeping Oaths; or Promises; or Covenants. And as we get into this- we will see, Lord willing, how both of these Issues are related to the Divine Prohibition against Adultery.

Now there is a spiritual Principle that we need to understand that goes something like this:

**God created certain Things (or allowed Man to create them) to illustrate
another Thing that is much *greater* and more *important* than the
Thing God created.**

For example, **Bread** is the “*Staff of Life*”. And it is very important that Nations harvest Wheat and Barley and Oats and other things- so that the people in that Nation will not die from starvation.

And as of this morning, there are about 203 different *kinds* of Bread. And they are all made differently- using different ingredients- which is why they taste differently and are used for different reasons. And that is wonderful and Good and

is an example of the “Love of God” within “Common Grace”- to give us so much variety when it comes to Bread.

But the Reason God put it into the Heart of Man to make Bread- is much *greater* and is more *important* than the Bread itself. God sovereignly dealt with people to make Bread- so we would understand what Jesus was talking about when He said,

John 6:48

I am the bread of life.

... and ...

John 6:41b

... I am the bread that came down out of heaven.

... and so, we would pray,

Matthew 6:11

Give us this day our daily bread.

... but even though we would pray that way- God gave Bread- so, we would understand,

Matthew 4:3

MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.

Now most of us are familiar with a Door or a Gate. But the Reason God dealt with people so they would invent a Door; or a Gate is so we would understand what Jesus meant when He said

John 10:9

I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

... and ...

Matthew 7:13&14

13 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.

14 "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

And so, we see that God either created Things Himself or allowed Man to created them- so that we would understand that those Things represent something else. And what they represent is *greater* and more *important* than the Thing itself.

And God Himself created Marriage. Marriage was God's Idea. Marriage did NOT exist in any Culture; or on any Continent; or with any People- until God established it- in the Garden of Eden- BEFORE Adam and Eve sinned. About 1,450 years before Jesus was born- God the Holy Spirit "moved" on Moses (probably on Mt. Sinai)- to write this in **Genesis 2:15-17:**

15 Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

Here, God sovereignly took the Man and put him in the Garden- so Adam would cultivate the Garden and keep it. So, from the very beginning- God ordained that Man would be busy- *working*. And that tells us that "Work" is pleasing to the Lord. And it also tells us that NOT working is a reproach to God.

Next, we see that God *limited* Man's Behavior. That is what ALL Commandments do- they *limit* our Behavior. So, God allowed Adam to eat the fruit of every tree in the Garden- except one. And God prohibited Adam from eating the fruit of a single tree- the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil". And God promised Death to Adam if he disobeyed. And we can only guess what Adam thought about this- because he had no reference to what Death was- anywhere. He had never seen it. Because before Adam sinned- there was NO Death. NOTHING died until after Adam sinned. But once Adam sinned- EVERYTHING dies. Stars die; plants and animals die. And now-

Humans die. But then notice what happened next in **Genesis 2:18:**

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."

Please notice that God didn't ask Adam if he wanted a date. And He also didn't ask if Adam wanted a Wife. God also didn't ask Adam if he was lonely. In

fact, God didn't ask Adam ANYTHING! All God did was to tell Adam what He wanted Adam to know. So, here, God made a "*Divine Declaration*": It is **NOT GOOD** for the Man to be alone. But please notice that this Divine Declaration was made AFTER God had already said this in **Genesis 1:31a**:

God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good...

Now you would think that it would be right after God made this Divine Declaration that He would have made the Woman. But that is NOT what happened. Please read **Genesis 2:19&20**:

19 Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

20 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

Now this proves that there is NOTHING on earth like a Woman. God paraded ALL the animals on earth before Adam- yet there was "**NOT found a helper suitable for him**"! And that means that the Woman's existence is tied to the Man. And that makes a Woman to be the single most *unique* and *special* Creation of God in the entire Universe. And the Woman was made differently than anything else in the Universe. Please read **Genesis 2:21&22**:

21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.

22 The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

Nothing is like a Woman. And nothing is like the Church. The Woman is the single most unique part of God's Creation; and the Church is the single most unique part of God's Creation. The Woman was created *from* the Man and *for* the Man. The Church is created *from* the Lord Christ and *for* the Lord. The Woman receives her Life; her Protection; and her Provision from the Man; while the Church receives her Life; Protection; and Provision from Jesus. So, we see that God created a Woman- so we could visualize what the Church is to be like. And God created Man- so we could see a "type: of Jesus Christ.

Now this does NOT mean that Husbands may put their foot on the neck of their Wives and be brutal towards them. That is Sin and has ALWAYS been Sin.

The Husband is commanded to love his Wife- TO THE SAME EXTENT- that Jesus loves the Church. And the BEST word to describe this type of Love- is “*Sacrificial*”. The Apostle Paul said this in **Ephesians 5: 25-33**:

**25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,
26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,
27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.
28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;
29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,
30 because we are members of His body.
31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.
32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.
33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.**

Now I understand that, through the years, Husbands have failed in doing this. And the Testimonies are many, where the Husband has been brutal and unloving and sinful toward his Wife. That is a fact of History. But that Testimony of Sin does NOT give the Wife the leeway to disobey this Passage of God’s Holy Word. It merely will be used to judge and maybe even damn her Husband.

So, the “fix” is NOT for both the Husband and Wife to rebel against the Lord- but for BOTH to struggle against the Lusts of their Flesh (by the Power of the indwelling Holy Spirit) to be joyfully and humbly submitted to the Authority of Scripture in their daily lives- all to the Glory of God.

God *could* have created the Woman at the *same* time; and in the *same* Way that He created the Man. But manifestly- He DIDN’T. And that is not an Accident. That is Meaningful. The Woman came *from* the Man- establishing an eternal “Pattern” that is still true today. And the Result of this is- that the Woman will find the height of her own Femininity and Purpose before God in this Life- ONLY- in the arms of a strong, loving, and godly Man. And if the Woman has no Husband- then the Woman will find these things in her Father; her Brothers or her

Sons. And if she has no Father; Brothers; or Sons- she will help the Elders of the Church carry out their Mission and Vision.

Likewise, God Almighty decreed, “*It is NOT GOOD for the Man to be alone*”. And that is an *eternal* Decree. So, if the Man seeks to rise to the fullness of his own Masculinity and Purpose before God in this Life- he will do so, ONLY- because the Woman- either his own Wife; or his Mother; his Sisters; or Daughters have *supported* him- in the Call of God on his Life- in a “suitable” Way. And if the Man has no Women in his Life- he is to dedicate himself to the Church- in ways that other Men would not be able to do.

The Contribution that a godly Wife makes in the Life of her Husband- is *incalculable*. And the Contribution that a strong, godly, and loving Husband makes in the Life of his Wife- is also more valuable than can be known.

Now please notice that in the *first* Marriage- God gave the Bride away. But then look at what happened next,

Genesis 2:23; 3:20

23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

20 Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living.

In the same Way that God gave Adam the Authority to name all the animals- it was Adam- NOT God- who named his Wife; and spoke again about the *uniqueness* of the Woman.

But then Moses gave an inspired and infallible “*Commentary*” about what Adam just said in **Genesis 2:24&25:**

24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

... which is where we get the Divine “one-flesh” Parameters of Marriage- as the Man *leaves* his Father and is *joined* to his Wife.

And as Jesus calls wicked sinners to Salvation- He calls them to *leave* and *abandon* the old ways of Sin that he has learned and become a part of- and to be “united” with Christ- in a Covenant- that makes us “ONE” with Jesus.

So, like all of those other things- God did this- because what the Covenant of Marriage *represents* is much *greater* and more *important* than the Marriage itself.

You see, Marriage- between one, naturally born Man; and one, naturally born Woman- is an earthly, tangible, visible, and temporary Symbol; or Sign; or Representative of the mysterious; glorious; and eternal Covenant between Jesus Christ and His Church.

And the various Aspects of the Holy Relationship between Jesus and His Church- which is infinitely greater and more important than ALL of the various components of the Marriage Ceremony as well as the Marriage itself. So, Marriage was God's idea. And when it is engaged in- according to the written Instructions of the Lord Christ- God is ALWAYS glorified and Man is ALWAYS helped and encouraged and blessed.

But when the Marriage Covenant is thrown down and trampled under-foot; when it is tarnished and made dirty; when people sinfully engage in Marriage- by doing what is right in their own eyes- God is NOT glorified and we are severely damaged.

And so, because of Sin and Rebellion- when I teach about the beautiful and glorious and God-honoring "*Covenant of Marriage*"- sadly, I also have to teach about the *Results* of Sin and Rebellion *inside* the Marriage Covenant- like "Divorce"; and "Adultery" and "Oath Breaking". And so, did Jesus. And that is what this Passage in **Matthew 5** is all about

God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit have made an everlasting Covenant between *Themselves* to save a people (who were NOT a people- i.e only Jews) by what God alone does for them. Now *why* did God choose to do this? Because by saving wicked rebels- by what He alone does for them; and by so radically changing their Nature- so that they find the fullness of their own Joy- is loving and obeying Him- THAT brings God MORE Glory than doing ANYTHING else! And those God has chosen to save- He called, the "*Church*". And so, this "Covenant of Redemption" consists of two main Parts:

- **God, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit-** will love His Church; and feed her; and protect her; and nourish her; and He will sustain her; and bless her; and comfort her; and cause her to become glorious! So, Jesus will build His Church; and will make it so that the very gates of Hades itself will not be able to defend itself against the onslaught of the "church Militant"- as we go into ALL the earth- preaching the Gospel to every creature- making disciples of Jesus; baptizing them; and holding them accountable to all that Jesus said.
- **The Church, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit-** will love Jesus and seek to be submissive to His Word and Will. And we will live our lives to the Glory of God; and seek to make Jesus look magnificent in every area of Life. The Church will also cause ALL of God's Enemies to be made a

Footstool for His Feet by going out into the world and living our Lives and bearing godly Fruit; and by doing Good Works. And we will, by God's Grace and to God's Glory- subdue ALL who oppose Jesus.

Now Jesus begins this Explanation in this Section of the Sermon on the Mount- by *re-stating* how the Jews had been taught their entire lives about NOT committing Adultery, when He said this in verse 27:

"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY';

... and then in verses 31 and 33- Jesus talks about the two other “side Issues” that are *related* to the Divine Prohibition against Adultery, when He said,

31 "It was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE';

... and ...

33 "Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.'

So, there are three *surface* Issues that Jesus is dealing with in this Section of the greatest Sermon ever preached:

1. What God through Moses taught about **Adultery**
2. What God through Moses taught about **Divorce**
3. What God through Moses taught about making **Oaths** (Vows/Promises)

But what is actually at stake here- is the *deeper* and more *important* Issues that Jesus wants to bring to this new people:

1. What Marriage really is
2. What Divorce really is
3. What an Oath really is

Now you should notice that all three Statements by Jesus are in all Capital Letters- meaning they are direct quotes from the Old Testament.¹ And that means that these Prohibitions are “Divine” and are “Absolute Truth”. They are Inspired; Infallible and Inerrant and were given to Moses by God the Holy Spirit- at some point within the Law of Moses.

And then also notice that in each case- Jesus teaches the *fullest*; the *deepest*; and the most *complete* Meaning of what those Old Testament Prohibitions mean and what Obedience to them looks like.

So, right after He quoted the Old Testament about the Prohibition against Adultery in verse 27- Jesus said this in verse 28:

but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

... and right after He quoted the Old Testament Prohibition against Divorce in verse 31- Jesus said this in verse 32:

but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

... and to give you a “Preview of Coming Attractions”- the word here is “**Unchastity**” and NOT “**Adultery**”- even though it is commonly misquoted by many in the Modern Church. And I will get into that in a future Sermon.

But then right after He quoted the Old Testament about the Divine Prohibition against breaking an Oath in verse 33- Jesus said this in verses 34-37:

34 "But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,

35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.

36 "Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

37 "But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil.

Now the Reason Jesus included the Prohibition against Divorce and making Oaths in with the Prohibition against Adultery- is because Marriage IS a Covenant. And both Adultery and Divorce have to do with *destroying* the Marriage

¹ This is how the NASB95 handles Old Testament quotes within the New Testament

Covenant- along with, making the Oaths that we freely engaged in during the Marriage Ceremony- to become a mockery that dishonors God.

Now please keep in mind that what Jesus said in verse 20 also comes into play here as well. There Jesus said,

Matthew 5:20

For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

... and back in the 1st Century- the people who were dishonoring Marriage the MOST; the people, who were breaking the Marriage Covenant the MOST; the people, who were committing Adultery the MOST; and the people, who were making their Oaths a dishonoring Mockery- were the Scribes and the Pharisees!

So, by *re-enforcing* the Divine Prohibition against these three Sins (by giving the fullest and deepest Meaning of the Old Testament Prohibition against Adultery; Divorce; and breaking Oaths)- Jesus was *exposing* the Scribes and Pharisees as the Hypocrites that they were. And He was also *revealing* the great Contrast; or the great Division; or the great Distinction between those religious frauds and the *new* people of God who will inherit the *new* Kingdom of Heaven- by their Faith and

Hope and Trust in Jesus and what Jesus alone has done.

Now this Passage is pretty deep water- so, I'm going to preach about this- "*comprehensively*". In other words, I'm going to give a lot of background material- that may seem tedious at times. But it is my Conviction that the Reason that the Scribes and Pharisees were trampling on the "Covenant of Marriage" back in the 1st Century- is the SAME Reason Marriage is being devalued and walked on by far too many in the modern Church: They have never been taught what Marriage really is and why God created it in the first place.

So, if you don't know *why* Marriage was God's idea in the first place- then dishonoring the Marriage Covenant; being guilty of Adultery; and breaking Oaths- is not that big of deal- which is why it was so common back then as well as today.

So, today we are going to begin a small "sermon Series" on why Jesus said what He said in this Passage. And some of this may be familiar to you- but I promise you- that some of what I will preach about- that comes directly out of the Holy Bible- will shock you and perhaps, if you are not careful- offend you.

So, let's take these one at a time. And even though we can't finish this in a single Sermon- we will get a good ways into this.

1. Jesus Re-Enforces the Divine Prohibition Against Adultery

Matthew 5:27-30

27 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY';

28 but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

29 "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

30 "If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

We need to understand that, like Marriage itself- “Sex” was God’s Idea. God *could have* set things up- so that babies came out from tulips or actually did come from a stark. Instead, God created Man and Woman- in such a way- that they could enjoy and thrive together in a repeated “Act of Intimacy”. And, at the same time- God also created Man and Women- in such a Way that they *reproduce* themselves through this same Act of Intimacy.

But, like Bread and Doors and Gates and even Marriage itself- Sex is a Sign or a Symbol or a Representation of something else- that is infinitely *greater*; infinitely *more important*; and infinitely *better* than Sex itself. So, what Sex represents- is the Meaning behind WHY God created Sex in the first place.

But right after God created Sex- God did something very strange. He then *restricted* the Act of Intimacy to be engaged in only ONE SINGLE Way. But He did more. God then condemned every other Way that sexual Intimacy is expressed- except that one single Way.

So, in other words, the ONLY Way; the SINGLE Way; the ONE Way that sexual Intimacy is honoring to God; and is blessed by Him; and is Good for us- is when it is engaged in between one, naturally born Man and one, naturally born Woman- within the very *narrow* confines of the Covenant of Holy Matrimony. Every other Expression of sexual Intimacy that the fallen mind of Man can conceive of- is categorically condemned by God as “Sin”.

So, sexual Intimacy is ONLY Good for us; and sexual Intimacy is ONLY a Glory to God- when it is engaged in very *narrowly*. And every time that people try to *expand* the Act of sexual Intimacy; or *enlarge* it; or *widen* it- it ALWAYS dishonors God; and it is ALWAYS hurtful to us. Look at what the Apostle Paul taught about how unique the Sin of sexual Intimacy is- when it is carried out by *ignoring* the God-ordained

Restrictions placed upon it when he wrote this in **1Corinthians 6:18**:

Flee [sexual] immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

So, we see that the Sin of sexual Intimacy outside of the one way that God blesses- is very different from every other kind of Sin. And that is Why so much is written in the Bible about people engaging in the Sin of the Act of sexual Intimacy- in a widened or expanded Way that God has specifically condemned.

And then look at how God the Holy Spirit “moved” on Moses to write down the immutable and eternal Truth about the Act of sexual Intimacy from **Genesis 2:24**:

For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

So, when a Man engages in sexual Intimacy with a Woman- a Miracle happens. Those two individuals become “*One Flesh*”. They are now “*United together*”. And they are “*One*” in God’s Eyes. And that is true- within the Marriage Covenant. But it is *also* true with a “one night Stand” with somebody from Work. And it is *also* true when someone hires a Prostitute. You have now become “One Flesh” with that individual. But you are also “one” with every other person- with whom that person has been Intimate. And it doesn’t matter if it was just one time. And it doesn’t matter if you didn’t love that person. You cannot “un-ring” the Bell. Once it is rung- it is rung. And that is why Paul said,

... **the [sexually] immoral man sins against his own body.**

... and this Statement is immutable. It NEVER changes.

We need to understand that there are several ancient Civilizations that were completely annihilated- NOT by another Army- but by sexually transmitted diseases. Those thriving and powerful Civilizations no longer even exist- precisely because they were NOT satisfied with the Narrowness and the Restrictions that God placed on the Act of sexual Intimacy- and so, they tried to *expand* it and *widen* it- foolishly thinking they could get away with it.

Let me illustrate both the Wonderful and Dangerous aspects of sexual Intimacy. When you place wood in a fireplace and light it on fire- it warms the room and brings Comfort to all who are sitting there. But when you place that very same amount of wood in the middle of the living room floor and set it on fire- it burns the house down. Why? Because that Fire was not engaged in- correctly. It was misused. The *narrowness* of how the

Fire should have been engaged in- was expanded. The Restrictions were ignored. And the result is that something that *should* have comforted us- hurts us.

And this Logic displays the Distinction between the Lost and the Saved. Those, who are saved- struggle to engage in the various Blessings that God has wondrously given to Man- in the narrow Way God has intended- which is to say- “to God’s Glory”. So, Gifts from God are to be used and rejoiced over. But they are to be used and rejoiced over- to a specific End. And that End is”: “TO GOD’S GLORY”! So, it is possible to use the Blessings that God has given- to another End that does NOT give God Glory. And so, we must guard our hearts that when we discuss Marriage- the Gifts and the Blessings of Marriage are absolutely to be used. But they are to be used to ONE specific End”: “The Glory of God”. And using those Blessings for any other Reason- does NOT glorify God. It simply feeds into the sinful Flesh of Man.

But the Lost are NEVER satisfied with the Way God has restricted anything. So, the Lost ALWAYS seeks to *expand* or *widen* the Way that God has narrowly defined that particular Blessing. And the Result is ALWAYS the same two things:

1. God is dishonored
2. Man is hurt

... and that is true- *especially* inside the Gift of Marriage!

But why did God give us a Blessing and then restrict its Use? Since He didn’t *have* to create things like He did in the first place- why did He create things like this- and then give them to us- only to restrict their Use?

The main Reason is because of our fallen Flesh- we can be deceived and think that the Fact that God blessed us with something is because we deserve it; or because He was obligated to give it. And neither one of those things is true. We can also be so carried away with Gifts and Blessings that we see them as an End to itself. And that is especially true with the Gift and Blessing of Marriage.

And that is why you hear all sorts of Man-centered definitions of Marriage, like: “*God gave me my Wife- to help complete me.*” Or “*Marriage makes both of us better than we were individually*”. But definitions like that see Marriage as a tool for OUR Glory. And not only is that not true- it is blasphemy! Because the Thing that God created represents something else that is *better* and *greater* than the Thing itself. So, for example, Sex- *narrowly* engaged in between one Man and one Woman withing the *restrictions* of the Covenant of Marriage- *represents* the Intimacy between the three Persons of the Trinity. So, the Reason Sex exists- is because it shows us something that is *greater* and *better* and more *fulfilling* than Sex itself. And that is *why* God created all sorts of things. It is true with Marriage

and with making and keeping Oaths. But it also highlights how Wicked and Evil and Destructive Adultery and Divorce are.

So, *why* did God create Marriage in the first place? And *why* is Adultery so Wrong? And *why* is making and then breaking an Oath so dishonoring to God? And *what* was Jesus trying to say in the Passage that Brother Vern just read to us?

So, the *first* thing we need to discover is this, “*Why did God create Marriage in the first place?*” And if our Principle holds true- “*What does Marriage represent that is better and greater than the Marriage itself?*”

Marriage: *The visible; tangible; earthly; and temporary Sign; Symbol; or Representation of the Covenant of Redemption.*

... okay, but what is the “Covenant of Redemption”?

The Covenant of Redemption: *A Covenant between God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit to redeem sinful Mankind (by what God alone does for them)- to the End that these people will love God and will find the fullness of their own Joy- in striving to obey Jesus Christ.*

So, Marriage publicly *displays* the Relationship between Jesus and His Church. And it does so- ONLY- because of what each Person of the Trinity has *done*.

So, the most *foundational* Thing you can say about Marriage is that it is “the “***Doing of God***”, and the most *ultimate* Thing you can say about Marriage is that it is “***for the Display of God***”. And those two things were *originally* revealed to Moses by God in **Genesis 2**. But they were revealed *better; completely; and finally* by Jesus and the Apostle Paul.

Mark 10:6-9

6 "But from the beginning of creation, God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE.

7 "FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER,

8 AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; so they are no longer two, but one flesh.

9 "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

This is the clearest Statement in the entire Bible that Marriage is *NOT* a merely human “doing”. The words “**God has joined together**” means that foundationally- Marriage is “*God’s Doing*”.

But if we really believe that Marriage is God’s Doing- then we will *repeat* over and over- constantly repeat what Jesus said at the end of verse 9:

What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate
What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate
What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate

let no man separate

Let... NO... MAN... Separate!

... why? Because neither spouse has sinned? NO! Because if the Truth is made public- BOTH spouses have sinned REPEATEDLY against each other.

There is ONLY one REASON. We can’t allow ANY MAN to separate because Marriage is “God’s DOING”! And if we really believed this- where is the Place for Divorce?

And then the Apostle Paul made the point most clearly that Marriage is designed to be the “*Display of God.*”

Ephesians 5:31&32

31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

... and again, we must repeat this Truth over and over and over again:

MY Marriage is God’s Display of the Covenant between Jesus and the Church!
MY Marriage is God’s Display of the Covenant between Jesus and the Church!
MY Marriage is God’s Display of the Covenant between Jesus and the Church!

MY MARRIAGE DISPLAYS CHRIST AND THE CHURCH!

... and if we really believed this- where is the Place for Divorce? You tell me what Sin would cause the Lord Christ to break off the Covenant that He made with the

other two Persons of the Trinity- to save and keep and glorify His Church? Now if Jesus had made a Covenant with His Church- then there may be some Sin that would cause Him to end it. But the New Covenant is NOT between the Church and God!

You see, the Old Covenant was between God and His people. And that is why God said, *“If you do this... THEN I will do that.”* But, *“If you do NOT do this... then I will NOT do that.”* So, the Old Covenant was all about OUR Performance. And what was the Result of that Covenant? Look at what the Prophet said in **Jeremiah 31:31&32:**

**31 “Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,
32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord.**

So, what is different about the New Covenant- is that this Covenant is NOT between God and His people. The New Covenant is between God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit. And the Church is merely the recipient of the Covenant that God has made with HIMSELF! Look again at the Prophet’s infallible Words in **Jeremiah 31:33&34:**

**33 “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.
34 “They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”**

Notice that the ONLY one, who does anything in the New Covenant is God. We don’t “DO” ANYTHING! And that is why the New Covenant CANNOT be broken! It is no longer dependent on our Performance. It is dependent ONLY on WHO God is and WHAT God alone has done for His Church!

And that is why just like Jesus- Paul is quoting from **Genesis 2:24**-when he taught about Marriage. And then Paul tells us the Mystery that it has always contained:

I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church

... in other words, the Covenant of Marriage involved in leaving Mother and Father and holding fast to a Spouse and becoming “one Flesh” is a “display” or a “portrayal” of the *unbreakable* Covenant between Christ and His Church. So, Marriage exists most *ultimately* to *display* the Covenant-Keeping Love between Jesus Christ and His Church!

Now nobody has ever said, “*Marriage exists as a model of Christ and the Church*” too much. And that is true for at least three reasons:

1. Saying that- lifts Marriage out of the foolish sitcom images and gives it the magnificent Meaning God meant it to have;
2. Saying that- gives Marriage a solid Basis in Grace, since Jesus obtained and sustains His Bride by Grace alone
3. Saying that- shows that the Husband’s “*servant-Headship*” and the Wife’s “*servant- Submission*” are both *Crucial* and *Crucified*. They are woven into the very meaning of Marriage as a “*Display of Christ and the Church*”, but they are both defined by Christ’s Own Self-denying Work on the Cross- so both their Pride and Slavishness are cancelled.

This means that the Foundation for Marriage is NOT the Love between the Husband and Wife. It isn’t that Marriage “completes” both people; and it also is NOT that Marriage allows for both to experience more than they could separately. All of those kinds of Statements are designed to do one thing: Make MUCH of Man.

But when we realize and believe and say that Marriage is a “*Display of the Covenant Love of God*”- God alone is glorified. So, Marriage is a Covenant between one Man and one Woman in which they promise before God; and to each other; and to those present- that they will be a “*faithful Husband*” and a “*faithful Wife*” in a new “*one-flesh*” Union- as long as they both shall live. And this Covenant is sealed with two things:

1. Solemn Vows
2. Sexual Union

... and it is designed to showcase before the entire world- the “*Covenant-Keeping Grace of God!*”

And nobody has ever said too much that Marriage is, “A model of Christ and the Church.” Because that gives to Marriage a solid Basis in Grace- since Jesus obtained and sustains His Bride (the Church) by Grace alone.

In other words, the main Point is that, since Jesus’ New Covenant with His Church is created by and sustained by Blood-bought Grace- therefore, human

Marriages are meant to showcase that New-Covenant Grace. And the way they showcase it- is by *first*, each one- the Husband and the Wife- resting in the Experience of God's Grace individually; and then, *secondly*, bending that Grace out- from a *vertical* Experience with God; into a *horizontal* Experience with their Spouse.

In other words, in Marriage, you live hour by hour in glad Dependence on God's Forgiveness and Justification and promised Grace for the Future. And you bend that Grace out- toward your Spouse- hour by hour- as an extension of God's Forgiveness and Justification and promised Help.

Now I am fully aware that *all* Christians are supposed to do this in all our Relationships (not just married Christians): live hour by hour by the forgiving, justifying, all-supplying Grace of God, and then bend it out to *all* the others in our Life. And Jesus says that all of our Lives are a "Showcase of God's Glory" (**Matthew 5:16**).

But Marriage is designed to be a very *unique* Display of God's Covenant Grace- because, unlike all other human Relationships- the Husband and the Wife are bound "by Covenant" into the closest possible Relationship (Intimacy) for an entire Lifetime.

So, as the Husband is united to his Wife- he is to read and study and think and ask and ponder how Jesus would shed abroad His Love into her heart. And as he strives to do this- he will make 10,000 mistakes. But if the Goal is the Glory of God and if the Knowledge of the Marriage lies in both the Doing of God and the Display of God- the Husband will begin to love his Wife like Jesus loves the Church.

And as the Wife is united to her Husband- she is to read and study and think and ask and ponder how the Church should respond to the Love of Jesus being shed abroad in her heart by way of her Husband. And as she strives to do this- she will make 10,000 mistakes. But if the Goal is the Glory of God and if the Knowledge of the Marriage lies in both the Doing of God and the Display of God- the Wife will submit to the Authority of her Husband- trusting that, as she does this- he will continue to love her.

And when two sinners- who have been saved by Grace alone through Faith alone- in Christ alone- are both struggling to fill; the Divine Roles that God has ordained us to play within the Marriage Covenant- God will be glorified- and both the Husband and Wife will experience the fullness of Joy!

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone