

# *Who Do You Say That I Am?*

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

32- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 12  
The King Reveals the Deepest Meaning of  
the Divine Prohibition Against Adultery- Part 2

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Church October 9, 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 “*2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

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After the Sermon last week- a man, who doesn’t attend here; who watched the Sermon on YouTube; asked me why I’m bringing up the Issues of Marriage; Adultery; Divorce; and Oath breaking at this time. He said, “*With all that is going on in the Country- why talk about this now?*” And there is a very simple Answer: *No, I’m not aware of anyone, that this applies to. And, no, I’m not on some kick that I want to discuss. Here is why I am preaching about these Issues at this time: I am preaching verse-by-verse through the **Gospel of Matthew**. And I began this ‘Journey’ through **Matthew** on November 14, 2021, and this is the 32<sup>nd</sup> Sermon in what will, no doubt be a multi-year Effort. So, I am preaching about these Issues at this time- because it is the next Passage in our journey through **Matthew**. I’m not mad at anyone; I’m not gunning for anyone; and I don’t have an axe to grind. I am simply being faithful to the inspired Text that this is before us. That’s it! So, if*

*this Sermon applies to you- then take that as a Sign from God that God wanted you to hear this!"*

Now, we need to remember what Jesus said in verse 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 those who adhere to what this perfect Sermon teaches are those, whose Righteousness *surpasses* that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Now as you read the four Gospels- it is easy to see Jesus' great Disgust with the group of people, who were probably trying *harder* than anyone else in all of Israel- to please God and be Righteous. But it is important to understand that the Reason Jesus spoke so *negatively* about the Scribes and Pharisees was NOT because He had a

*"bone to pick"* with them; or because He was just being mean. No, Jesus was sinlessly Perfect- so, He was *always* correct in the Way He spoke to people.

The Scribes and Pharisees were MORE Wrong about MORE spiritual Truths than anyone else. And I'm not talking about personal Issues; or Issues that don't matter; or Issues about which honest believers may disagree and still be saved. I'm talking about Issues like how Lost people are saved; and how Unrighteous people become Righteous and go to Heaven. Serious; important; and meaningful Issues- about which there can be NO disagreement and no Debate. Issues that we MUST either believe; accept; trust and hope in; and love- or remain Lost. Issues like Adultery; Divorce; and Oath breaking.

So, we realize that the Scribes and Pharisees were NOT genuinely saved people, who were honestly striving to obey the Word of God from the Old Testament- but who were just a little bit off in their Doctrine and Theology. No! These men were religious Frauds. They were Hypocrites of the lowest order (**Matthew 23**). They did what they did- for the *worst* of all possible Reasons: for Money (**Luke 16:14**)! They were "Covenant-breakers" and Fakers, who did NOT love God. And they hold the frightening Distinction of being the ONLY group of people in the New Testament that Jesus NEVER said anything Good about.

The Irony about the Scribes and Pharisees was that THE most *outwardly* religious people in the entire Nation- the men, who even tithed their seeds- were the WORST sinners in all of Israel back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century! And the more they "doubled-down" on their false Doctrine- the *further* from God they got. And so, the *hardest* and the most *frightening* Diatribe by Jesus against any group was reserved for them (**Matthew 23**). In fact, Jesus went to great lengths to teach us about their abject Sinfulness with Statements like the one found in **Matthew 11:21-24**:

**21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.**

**22 "Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.**

**23 "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.**

**24 "Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you."**

Here Jesus said that the Judgment of God against the sexually perverted men of Sodom (men who wanted to rape Angels)- would not be as hard as the Judgment of God on the people of the cities, where the Teaching and Doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees was the most prevalent.

So, as I told you last time- one of the main Reasons Jesus said this in **Matthew 5:27; 31&33:**

**Matthew 5:27**

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

**Matthew 5:31**

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

**Matthew 5:33**

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

... was because, back in the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 the MOST- were the Scribes and the Pharisees!

And so, Jesus is teaching here that *part* of what it means to have a Righteousness that *surpasses* that of the Scribes and Pharisees, we need to be faithful in Marriage; and we need to understand what Jesus actually taught about

Divorce; and we need to keep the Oaths; the Vows; the Promises; or the Covenants that we make- *especially* the Vows we make when we are married. And that is what this Passage is about.

Now last time, I told you that Marriage is two things:

1. The “Doing” of God
2. 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”. So, in spite of what it may look like to us- people do NOT merely “get hitched”; or “jump de-broom”. In spite of the *frivolousness* and the *shallowness* and the *silliness* that surrounds many Marriages today- the words “**God has joined together**” means that *foundationally*- Marriage is “*God’s Doing*”. So, God did that. God joined these two people together.

And as we ponder all that this means- we should come to the SAME Conclusion that Jesus Himself came to when He said,

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

... because the word, “**therefore**” in this verse means: “*Since all that I just said is true- here is the Conclusion*”.

So, if it is true that Marriage is the “*Doing of God*”; If it is true that Marriage is “*God’s Doing*” and NOT merely an Act of Man’s Will; and if it is true that we are supposed to keep the Marriage Vows that we make- then how should we *respond* to all of that? What is the “therefore” or the Conclusion to the fact that

Marriage is “*God’s Doing*”? May I suggest that *we* should *respond* to all of that the very SAME way Jesus did and we should *also* say,

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

... and then we would understand that the phrase, “**no man**” in this verse includes “*all men*”; “*any man*” and “*every man*”.

But WHY should we be so adamant about this? Most people today are NOT adamant at all. But Christians SHOULD be adamant about this- because Marriage is the “*Doing of God*” and that makes Marriage to be special.

But then the Apostle Paul made the point most clearly that Marriage is also 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 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 Marriage has *always* contained:

**I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church**

... in other words, God created Marriage to show; or reveal; or display something infinitely MORE important than the Marriage itself.

So, Marriage was given to us by God as a visible; earthly; tangible; and temporary Sign or Symbol or Display of the Mystery of the eternal Covenant-Love between Jesus and His Church. In other words, this Covenant of Marriage that involves the Man leaving Mother and Father and holding fast to his Wife and becoming “one Flesh” is a “Display” or a “Portrayal” of the *unbreakable* Covenant between Jesus Christ and His Church. And since that is true- then we should come to the SAME Conclusion as Jesus did- and we should say,

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

So, two things:

1. Marriage exists most *foundationally* as the “Doing” of God.
2. Marriage exists most *ultimately* to *display* the Covenant-Keeping Love between Jesus Christ and His Church!

So, *foundationally*, God did NOT create Marriage for *our* Benefit- even though Marriage absolutely HAS great Benefits to both the Husband and Wife as well as to Civilization itself. But most *foundationally*, Marriage is the “Display”; or the “Revealing”; or the “Showing” of the “*Covenant-Keeping Love between Jesus and His Church*”.

And that means that, *ultimately*, God did NOT create Marriage as mainly a “civil Ceremony” that can be “entered into” and then “gotten out of”- at the drop of a hat. Most *ultimately*, Marriage is “*God’s Doing*” and should be entered into and then *maintained*; *preserved*; and *celebrated*- to God’s Glory!

So, Marriage is a Covenant between one (naturally born) Man and one (naturally born) Woman in which they make Vows; Oaths; or Promises to be faithful as Husband and Wife in a new “one-flesh” Union- for as long as they both shall live. And this Covenant (sealed with solemn Vows and sexual Union)- is designed to showcase the Covenant-Keeping Grace of God.

But that also means that the Sin of Adultery represents something that is infinitely MORE Hideous; and infinitely MORE Destructive; and infinitely MORE Serious than the mere physical Act itself. And that is *why* the physical Sin of Adultery is condemned in the Bible almost MORE than any other Sin.<sup>1</sup> In other words, there is a *spiritual* Connotation to Adultery that we need to understand- that *supersedes* the *physical* Act itself. And that is why we see verses like **2Chronicles 29:6-8** in the Old Testament that says,

**6 "For our fathers have been unfaithful and have done evil in the sight of the Lord our God, and have forsaken Him and turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the Lord, and have turned their backs.**

**7 "They have also shut the doors of the porch and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel.**

**8 "Therefore the wrath of the Lord was against Judah and Jerusalem, and He has made them an object of terror, of horror, and of hissing, as you see with your own eyes.**

Now please notice that this “**unfaithfulness**” (v.6) has NOTHING to do with *sexual* Adultery- but *spiritual* Adultery; or being Unfaithful to God. So, when

<sup>1</sup> “Adultery” or “Unfaithfulness” (or derivatives of those words) is condemned throughout the Holy Scriptures 80 times.

God the Holy Spirit “moved” on Ezra the Priest to write this Book (around 450B.C.), he knew that rebelling against the Command of the Lord as to how the Service of God was to be carried out- that this constituted “spiritual Adultery” and was considered a grave Sin. And this Sin is what unleashed the Wrath of God against God’s own people.

And this is also *why* God the Holy Spirit “moved” on the *first* Pastor of the Church in Jerusalem (around 47A.D.) to write **James 4:1-4**, that says,

**1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?**

**2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.**

**3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.**

**4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**

Now again, please notice that this has NOTHING to do with *sexual* Immorality. This Passage is about the “*Sin of Worldliness*”<sup>2</sup>. But even more specifically, James was teaching here that praying to God “**with wrong motives**” (so they may use the Answer to their Prayers for their own Pleasures rather than to glorify God) was a terrible Sin and was how the pagans of the Gentile world prayed to their false gods.

So, the half-brother of Jesus infallibly teaches here that being a “*Friend to the lost World*” is also being an “*Enemy to God*” which is being *unfaithful* to the Lord. And to really make his point- James used the *feminine* tense of the word, “*Adulterer*” to shame the members of the Church in Jerusalem even more.<sup>3</sup>

So, even with Sin- God has allowed satan to tempt people into engaging in an Act that represents something *else*- that is far *worse*; and much more deadly- than the physical Act itself.

So, we see that Adultery, at its heart- is being “*Unfaithful*”. It is a *betrayal* of Trust. Adultery is the breaking of marriage Oaths; Vows; and Promises. And many times, *especially* here in America- Adultery leads to Divorce.

But that physical Act represents a *spiritual* Unfaithfulness to God- that dishonors the Lord and that brings about the Judgment of God on that person;

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<sup>2</sup> The “*Sin of Worldliness*” is taught in great detail in **1John 2:15-17**.

<sup>3</sup> Several times throughout the Bible, God or a Prophet or another biblical Writer would equate the “strong men of Israel” or the “men of the Church” as being “feminine” to shame them- as it was considered to be weak, unmanly, and ungodly.



group; city; or Church. So, it is no wonder why Jesus teaches about these three things together in this Passage:

1. Adultery/Unfaithfulness (**Matthew 5:27-30**)
2. Divorce (**Matthew 5:31&32**)
3. Oaths/Vows/Promises/Covenants (**Matthew 5:33-37**)

But we need to understand that, like ALL Sin, way before the *physical* Act of Adultery ever took place- Unfaithfulness to God and His Will and Word was present in the Mind and Heart of the individual. So, it is true to say that BEFORE the person was Unfaithful to their Spouse- they were ALREADY Unfaithful to God. Because God is the One, Who commands everyone to be faithful. Faithful to Him, *first*; and then faithful in every area of Life- *especially* in Marriage.

So, it is true to say that the physical “*Act of Adultery*” is the visible “*Result*” or the visible “*Sign*” of the “*Sin of Unfaithfulness*” to God- that is ALREADY in the heart. Because once the “*Sin of Unfaithfulness*” reigns *invisibly* in the human heart- it then looks for ways to manifest itself- *visibly* and *physically*.

Now before I go too far into this Sermon- I want to say this: Divorce is horrible. And divorced people are some of the most hurting people on the Planet. And they need our Love and our Mercy. And walking through the Sin of Adultery and Betrayal is almost unbearable. So, if anyone here today has walked through a Divorce or the Sin of Adultery; or you are the Child of Divorce- please hear me when I tell you that there is Forgiveness in Jesus Christ. And there is Hope and there is a Divine Promise that says,

### **Hebrews 7:25**

**Therefore, He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.**

... so, draw near to God through Jesus- IN your Pain; IN your Hurt; IN your Sin; IN your Unfaithfulness; IN your Oath breaking- or IN your Divorce. And God will wash you and cleanse you and keep you. And that is a Promise from a God, Who CANNOT lie. And I will be your Friend; and your Brother; and your Pastor. And I will walk with you through this hard time in your Life; and bathe you in Prayer; and work with you. But I WILL and I MUST tell you the Truth- because NOBODY is made better by hearing and believing a Lie. Okay, so, every one of you just heard me say that.

So, the main Point today 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 Grace. And the way that our Marriages showcase

God's New- Covenant Grace- is by both the Husband and Wife resting in the Experience of God's Grace- *personally*- and then bending that Grace out- from a *vertical* Experience between each one and God- to a *horizontal* Experience between each other.

In other words, in Marriage both the Husband and Wife lives moment by moment in glad Dependence on God's Forgiveness and Justification and promised Grace for the Future. But then each one- bends that Grace that they have ALREADY received from the Lord in Salvation- out towards their Spouse- moment by moment- as a visible; tangible; and earthly 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 of our Relationships (not just married Christians): We are to live moment by moment by the forgiving, justifying, all-supplying Grace of God. But after we have received that Grace for *ourselves*- we are to then bend that Grace out *horizontally* to *all* the others in our Life. And that is why Jesus said this in **Matthew 5:16**:

**Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.**

... where the Lord said that ALL of our Lives are a "showcase" of God's Grace and Glory.

But Marriage is *especially* designed by God to be a *unique* Display of His Covenant Grace- because, unlike all other human Relationships- the Husband and Wife are "*bound by Covenant*" into the *closest* and most *intimate* possible Relationship for an entire Lifetime!

Now there are unique Roles that the Husband and Wife in the Marriage has been commanded by God to fill- of both "*Servant/Headship*" and "*Servant/Helper*" within the Marriage- but that is not my Point today. That will come later.

Because *before* a Man and Woman can apply- *biblically and graciously*- the unique Roles of "*Servant/Headship*" and "*Servant/Helper*", they must FIRST discover what it means to build their Lives on the *vertical* Experience of God's Forgiveness; Justification; and promised Help themselves; and then they will be able to bend those precious Experiences out *horizontally* to their Spouse. Or to put it in yet other Terms:

The Key to being "**naked and not ashamed**" (**Genesis 2:25**), when, in fact, a Husband and a Wife do MANY things that they SHOULD be ashamed of- is NOT to simply ignore them- but it is for BOTH to experience God's *vertical* Forgiving and justifying Grace- and then bend them out *horizontally* to each other- in front of the entire World!

Now I realize that's a Mouthful. So, let's see if we can find the Foundation for this Truth in infallible Scripture. And I'll start with **Colossians 3:6**,

**For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,**

Now if some of you are saying this morning, "*Brother Blair, the last thing I want hear about in my troubled Marriage is the Wrath of God!*" you are like a struggling salesman, who had a big lead for a large Sale in the business that was located in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 saying, "*The last thing I want to hear about in my struggling Business is an attack by Muslims in airplanes!*" But a profound Understanding and Fear of God's Wrath- is EXACTLY what many Marriages need! Because without it- the Gospel is diluted down to mere "*Human Relations*" and it loses its biblical Glory. And without that Glory- you will be tempted to think that *your* Wrath- your own Anger- against your Spouse is simply too big to overcome, because you have never really tasted what it is like to see an infinitely *greater* Wrath- overcome by Grace- like God's Wrath against you!

So, we begin with the Wrath of God and its miraculous Removal. Now go back with me to **Colossians 2:13&14**,

**13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,**

**14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.**

... and it is the last words that are the most crucial.

The "**certificate of debt**" that stood "**against us**"- has been *sovereignly; graciously; supernaturally*- "**taken out of the Way!**" IT IS NO LONGER THERE! How did that happen? God "**nailed it to the Cross.**" But *when* did that happen? Two thousand years ago! It did NOT happen *inside* of you; and it did NOT happen with any Help from you. God did that *for* you- all by Himself (Sovereignly)! And He did it OUTSIDE of you- BEFORE you were ever born! This is the great "OBJECTIVITY" of our Salvation.

Now make sure you see this most wonderful and astonishing of all Truths: God took the "*Certificate of all your Sins*" that made you a Debtor to His eternal Wrath (Sins are Offenses against God that bring down His Wrath), and instead of

holding them up in front of your face and using them as the Warrant to send you to Hell- God put them in the Palm of His Son's Hand and drove a Nail through them into the Cross!

So, *whose* Sins were nailed to the Cross? Whose Sins were punished on the Cross? Answer: *My* Sins. And Rhonda's Sins. Both my Wife's and my Sins- along with the Sins of all who despair of saving themselves and who trust in Christ alone. But Whose Hands were nailed to the Cross? Who was punished on the Cross? Jesus was! And there is a beautiful Name for this. It's an archaic word for *Substitution*- called, "*Propitiation*". God condemned *my* Sins in the Flesh of Jesus!

### **Romans 8:3&4**

**3** For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

**4** so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

You Husbands simply CANNOT believe this too much or too strongly. And you Wives simply CANNOT believe this too much or too strongly.

And if we reach back and draw in here all our Understanding of the Act of God in "Justification" from **Romans**- we can say even more. Because "Justification" goes way beyond "*Forgiveness*." Not only are we *forgiven* because of Christ- but God also declares us to be perfectly *Righteous* and "fit for Heaven" because of what Jesus alone did! So, not only have we been forgiven by what Jesus alone did on the Cross- but we have also been made Righteous- which made us "*fit for Heaven*"! This was done in the Part of Salvation called, "*Justification*". And it was NOT done by our participation in the sacraments or because we went through the "Rite of Penance". No, the Bible says we have been forgiven and made Righteous- BY FAITH ALONE! And that is why Paul wrote this in **Romans 4:1-13**

**1** What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?

**2** For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

**3** For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

**4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.**

**5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,**

**6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:**

**7 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.**

**8 "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."**

**9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."**

**10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;**

**11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,**

**12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.**

**13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.**

But that means that our Sins cause God to require two things from us:

1. Punishment for ALL our Sins
2. Sinless Perfection (Righteousness) in ALL our Life

... so, ALL of our Sins must be COMPLETELY punished! And ALL of our Life must be PERFECTLY Righteous! But we CANNOT bear our *own* Punishment:

**Psalms 49:7&8**

**7 No man can by any means redeem *his* brother Or give to God a ransom for him —**

**8 For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease *trying* forever —**

... and we CANNOT provide our *own* Righteousness.

### **Romans 3:10b**

**... *THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;***

... therefore, God, out of His immeasurable Love for us, provided His Own Son to do both. Jesus, the Christ bears our COMPLETE Punishment. And He performs our PERFECT Righteousness through His PERFECT Obedience!

And so, when we put ALL our Hope and Trust in Jesus and in His finished Work- (**John 1:12**)- all of His Punishment and all of His Righteousness is counted as ours (**Romans 4:4-6; 5:1; 5:19; 8:1; 10:4; Philippians 3:8&9; and 2Corinthians 5:21**)!

This is the *vertical* Reality that must be bent outward *horizontally* to our Spouses if Marriage is to display the Covenant-Making; Covenant-Keeping Grace of God. And we see this in **Colossians 3:12&13**,

**12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;**

**13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.**

So, two things from verse 13:

1. Bearing with one another
2. Forgiving each other

... which is EXACTLY what Jesus does to His Church every single day! He *bears* with us; and He *forgives* us!

And that is what each Spouse is to MODEL to each other. Because remember- your Marriage is the “Display” or the “Showing” or the “Revealing” of the Covenant Love between Jesus and His Church. So, IN THE SAME WAY that each of us has experienced the Lord forgiving us- that is the Way we MUST FORGIVE OUR SPOUSE! And IN THE SAME WAY we all have experienced the Lord Jesus “bearing with us”- that is the Way- we are to bear WITH OUR SPOUSE!

And honesty demands that we acknowledge that the Lord “*bears with*” us every single day- as we “*fall short*” of His Will. And part of the Reason God

allows us to sin- even after we are saved- is to humble us- *especially* within the Marriage Covenant.

So, the Distance between what Jesus *commands and expects* of you- and what you actually achieve- is infinitely GREATER than the Distance between what you expect from your Spouse and what they achieve!

The pride-killing Truth is that Jesus ALWAYS forgives MORE and endures MORE than we do. So, we are told to forgive- ONLY because we have ALREADY been forgiven. And we are to “bear with the failures of others”- *especially* our Spouses- ONLY because Jesus has ALREADY borne with ours. So, we are to allow the Measure of God’s Grace that has ALREADY been shown to us- in the Cross of Christ- be the Measure of the Grace that we show to our Spouse.

So, as the Lord counts you “*Righteous in Christ*”, even though you are NOT in actual Behavior and Attitude- so count your Spouse to be “*Righteous in Christ*”- even though, in reality- they aren’t.

In other words, **Colossians 3** says, take the *vertical* Grace of Forgiveness and Justification that you have ALREADY received- and which you CONTINUE to receive every day- and bend them out *horizontally* to your Spouse. And *that* is what Marriage is for, most *ultimately*—the Display of Christ’s Covenant-Keeping Grace.

So, a Good Marriage is NOT one that has no Problems to overcome or no Sins to forgive (because that doesn’t exist). No, a Good Marriage is one that models the Covenant-keeping Love that Jesus has for His Church- precisely because we DO have Problems and Sins.

But the main Difference between Christians and the lost World- is that we desire for our Marriages to model or display or show the Covenant-keeping Love of Jesus by NOT being Unfaithful; and by NOT divorcing; and by NOT breaking our Oaths- *especially* the Oaths or Vows or Promises we made when God joined us together in Marriage. And because we believe that what Moses and Jesus and Paul taught about Marriage is true; and because we believe that Marriage is the Doing of God and is the Display of God- we have come to the SAME Conclusion that Jesus did and we too say,

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

Now at this Point, I can think of hundreds of complex Situations that cry for deep spiritual Wisdom rooted in these Gospel Truths; as well as long years of painful, faithful Experience. In other words, there is no way I could *apply* this Message to everyone’s particular Needs.



So, in addition to preaching like this; we also need God the Holy Spirit; and we need Prayer; and we need to meditate on the Word for ourselves; and we need to read the insights of others; and we need the Counsel of wise Leaders, who are seasoned with Suffering; and we need the greater Church to support us when everything falls apart. So, I have no Illusions that I could say all that needs to be said to help you.

But it may help for me to give several Reasons why I am stressing “Covenant-Love” as “Forgiveness and counting the other Righteous”. Don’t I believe in being delighted in the other person? Yes, I do. Both the Bible and my own personal experience push me there. To be sure, Jesus is married to His Bride the Church, and clearly it is both possible and good to *please* the Lord.

### **Colossians 1:9-12**

**9** For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

**10** so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

**11** strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

**12** giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

... and Jesus is infinitely Worthy of our Pleasure in Him!

So, this is the Goal in Marriage: two people; humbling themselves; and seeking to change in godly ways; to please our Spouses; and meet their physical and emotional Needs; or to please them in every good way. Yes! The Relationship between Jesus and His Church includes all that.

But the reason I stress living *vertically* from the Grace of God and then bending out horizontally in Forgiveness and Justification toward your spouse is:

1. Because there is going to be Conflict in your Marriage based on Sin and Strangeness (and you won’t be able even to agree with each other about what is simply Strange about each other and what is Sin)
2. Because the hard, rugged work of “Enduring/Bearing” and “Forgiving” is what makes it possible for Affections to flourish when they seem to have died
3. Because God gets Glory when two very different and very imperfect people



forge a life of Faithfulness in the Furnace of Affliction by relying solely on Jesus

So, both Husbands and Wives should drive into your own Consciences these huge Truths- that is *greater* than any Problem in your Marriage: That God has ...

**13 ... forgiven us all our transgressions,**

**14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (Colossians 2:13b&14)**

Dear friends, believe this with all your Heart and trust in it yourself- and then bend it *outward* toward your Spouse! And then, we can say with Jesus,

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

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

