

Who Do You Say That I Am?

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

33- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 13 What Did Jesus Teach about Divorce and Adultery?

Church October 16, 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 major 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 also 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.

The Issue today will be very *narrowly* looking at what Jesus Himself taught about Divorce and Adultery from verses 27&28 and then verses 31&32.

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.

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.

Now every Man in this Church this morning has been confronted with and has probably been taught about verses 27&28. We Men have to be concerned-

NOT merely with our outward Actions- but with our eyes and hearts and minds- as it pertains to Lust.

God created Women with the Gift of Beauty. And every single Woman on earth has that Gift in one way or the other. And female Beauty is Good; it is God-given; it is a Gift from a loving Father. And Women should know that it is Right and Good for them to have their Beauty and to *accent* their Beauty and to develop it.

So, it is NOT wrong for a Woman to wear make-up; or to dress and adorn her Gift of Beauty with outward things like hairstyles and even jewelry. But we all need to know that the Bible teaches that the REAL Beauty of a Woman is for them to:

1 ... be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,
2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.
3 Your adornment must not be merely external —braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses;
4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.
5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands;
6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.
(1Peter 3:1-6)

And it isn't Wrong or Bad or Sinful for a Man to look at a Woman and admire her Beauty. Part of why I was attracted to Rhonda was because I thought she was absolutely gorgeous. What *is* Wrong, however, is when looking to admire Beauty crosses over into looking with Lust. And God has told us clearly right here in verse 28 that Men are committing the Sin of "*Sexual Immorality*" when admiring a Woman's Beauty crosses over into Looking with Lust.

So, in verse 27- Jesus repeated the Divine Prohibition against Adultery that God the Holy Spirit "moved" on Moses to write on tables of stone while in Mount Sinai- almost 15 Centuries earlier when He said,

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

... but then in verse 28- Jesus- acting as fully and truly God on the earth- gave us the fullest and the deepest Meaning of what God spoke to Moses when He said,

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.

So, what we have now is way beyond the normal sinful Act of sexual Immorality. What we have now is a Sin that is going on in both the eyes and the heart (and mind) of a Man- WITHOUT any physical contact. And please notice that Jesus said that if a man looks at a woman with lust for her- he has ALREADY committed Adultery with that Woman in his heart. And by using the word, “**already**” here- Jesus is saying that BEFORE the physical Act of sexual Immorality ever takes place- or even if the physical Act NEVER takes place- the Sin of sexual Immorality has occurred in the human heart. And that means that there does NOT have to be a physical Act for the Sin of sexual Immorality to occur. It is accomplished in the eyes and heart and mind of a Man.

Now it is very important for us to understand that what Jesus said here is NOT an Addition to the Old Testament Scriptures in **Exodus 20:14**. All that Jesus is doing here in verse 28 is giving us what the full and complete Meaning of **Exodus 20:14** always was. So, this was God’s Intention from the very beginning- NOT merely for a Man to control himself concerning the physical Act itself- but also having control over the eyes; the heart; and the mind as well.

So, this involves a Man NOT merely containing his physical sexual urgings- but to have control over his Thoughts as well as what he looks at. And I would suggest to you that this is exactly what Jesus had in mind when He said this in **Matthew 22:37**:

YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.

... where “*loving God with ALL of our Mind*” has to do with what we read; who and what we listen to; look at; and what we think about.

So, now this opens up a Discussion about a whole other aspect of “*Feeding*” that we may not have considered. Most of the time, when we talk about “feeding”- we are referring to what we are putting into our mouths. But there is another type of “feeding” that the Bible mentions and that is the “feeding” of our Minds. What is going into our minds through these entry Points:

1. What we are reading or looking at (our eyes)
2. What we are listening to (our ears)

... which contribute to what we “believe” in our minds- which contributes to what we “do”.

And now I hope we can now see that the entire time that God has been speaking to us (through His Word as we read and study the Bible; and through us sitting and listening to Teaching and Preaching) about how important it is for us to listen to wise Counsel; and for us to become very familiar with God’s Word; and for us to eat a steady diet of solid, biblical Preaching and Teaching- He wasn’t trying to get us to become dull, dry, and boring. Instead, our Good God was trying to equip us to fill our eyes and minds and hearts with Him; and the Beauty of Holiness; and the Magnificence of Grace- so that we will not sin against Him by looking and lusting.

Now I use the word, “Discussion” here- because there is no way that I can cover every conceivable situation about looking and lusting in a single Sermon. But we, as a Church, need to begin a Discussion about how this impacts ALL of us. For example,

- If a Man will sin against God by looking and lusting- then a Woman should be concerned that she is not *contributing* to the Problem. (A Woman does NOT carry the full Burden about this Situation- because the real Problem is in the mind and heart of the Man. However, the Bible clearly and repeatedly condemns Immodesty. And a godly Woman should NOT want to *contribute* to her brothers in Christ sinning against God.)
- What helps one Brother may help others in the Fight against Lust. Brothers should pray and talk about this subject together- often.
- Wives should pray for their Husbands and make sure that she is fulfilling her marriage Duties and Obligations as it pertains to Intimacy. And this should be part of what older Women teach the younger ones.

And that is a Sin that is fairly well-known; and has been preached on very well for many years now; and one that we must guard against on a daily basis- *especially* since we live in such a sexualized Culture. It is hard to find *anyone* in the Church today, who has not, at least been *exposed* to that Situation.

But what is NOT preached on very much- or even discussed- is the second Way that Jesus said that this Sin is manifested. And that is found in verse 32 where Jesus said:

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.

Now the Issue here is Divorce and Remarriage. And you will notice here in the very center of this verse, the word, “**EXCEPT**”. So, this verse is known today to contain what they call, the “*Exception Clause*”- as it *supposedly* gives an “Exception” to the clear-cut Divine Prohibition against a Man to Divorce his Wife and then marry someone else that we find in two other Gospel Records. And to get the impact of *why* people call this verse the “*Exception Clause*”- we need to read from those two other Records.

Now I have been faithful to teach you, that the first three Gospel Records (**Matthew, Mark, and Luke**) are what are called, the “*Synoptic Gospels*”; while the **Gospel of John** is called, the “*Spiritual Gospel*”¹. And the word, “*Synoptic*” comes from two Greek words (“*syn*” and “*optic*”); which mean: “*seen together*”. So, **Matthew, Mark, and Luke** have many of the *same* Parables and Accounts of Jesus’ Life and Ministry; that when “*seen together*” give us a well-rounded view of what Jesus was actually teaching or doing. And nowhere is that more important than with the Issue at hand today- “*What Jesus taught about Divorce; Remarriage; and Adultery*”. So, let’s see what Jesus said about this Issue from both **Mark** and **Luke**.

Mark 10:11b&12

**11... Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her;
12 and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.**

Luke 16:18

Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.

Now, here in both Mark and Luke’s Gospel Record, their quotes of Jesus on this Subject are very clear and very cut and dried. Both of these Gospel writers say the VERY SAME thing:

Mark 10:11b

... "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her;

Luke 16:18a

Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery...

¹ The reason that the **Gospel of John** is considered to be the “*Spiritual Gospel*” is because the Apostle John’s Record deals with Jesus’ Deity more than the others.

... and ...

Mark 10:12

and if she [the Wife] herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery

Luke 16:18b

and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.

Now I realize that there aren't five churches in this city that pays any attention at all to what Jesus said here. Today most churches have almost *universally* ignored what Jesus said in both **Mark** and **Luke** and they go straight to what Jesus said in **Matthew 5:32**- for one reason: They think that Jesus is giving them an "EXCEPTION" to the very clear and precise Condemnation against Divorce and Remarriage that our Lord gave in both **Mark** and **Luke**.

In fact, so many people (and churches) today ignore both the **Mark** and **Luke** Teaching that the Words of Jesus in **Matthew 5:32** are now considered to be the ONLY time Jesus ever addressed this Subject. But as you can see, it isn't. Jesus was crystal clear in both **Mark** and **Luke** and yet all that most people know- is what Jesus said in **Matthew**.

So, **Matthew 5:32**- is supposedly the "Exception" to the clear Condemnation that Jesus gave us in **Mark 10** and **Luke 16**. And this Sermon today will, hopefully, show you that that is NOT the case.

Now it is no Mystery that since **Matthew 5:32** has been emphasized- TO THE EXCLUSION- of both **Mark 10** and **Luke 16**- the soc-called, "*Exception Clause*" is now used- *more than anything else*- as to why Christians can now supposedly Divorce and Remarry WITHOUT being guilty of committing Adultery.

And I find that so curious since almost every time they quote this so-called, "*Exception Clause*"- they *misquote* and *mis-apply* what Jesus actually said. So, what I want to do today- is to set the Record straight and get into this rightly and fully- so we know what Jesus actually said and did NOT say.

Now in the *first* part of **Luke 16:18**- Dr. Luke used the Greek word (*pas*; Strong's #3956), that has been translated into English as "**Everyone**"; and John Mark infallibly wrote down that very SAME Greek word, (*pas*; Strong's #3956) that has been translated into English as "**Whoever**" in **Mark 10:11**. And the Greek word, "*pas*" has to do with "*the whole- without using a definite number*". So, we should all agree that the words, "**Everyone**" and "**Whoever**" has to do with Everyone and Whoever.

But the Context in both of these verses has to do with the Husband ONLY. And the Context also involves two distinct Acts:

1. The Husband divorcing his Wife
2. The Husband then marrying another Woman

And the Divine Warning from Jesus about the Husband NOT divorcing and then remarrying- is a “UNIVERSAL” Warning to ALL Husbands. Because it applies to “everyone”, who is thinking about divorcing their Wife and marrying another it; and it applies to “whoever” actually does divorce their Wife and then remarries. Now let’s look at the next Part of both verses:

Mark 10:12

and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.

Luke 16:18b

and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.

... here in **Mark**- Jesus deals with ONLY the Wife; while in **Luke**- Jesus again deals with the Husband.

But it is hard to read this and then say that it is okay for a Man- especially a Christian Man- to divorce his Wife and then marry another woman- while his Wife is still living- and NOT be committing Adultery. So, the ONLY reason people feel free to do this- is because of what they THIUNK Jesus said in **Matthew 5:32**. Because it is abundantly clear that Jesus said right here, “*Don’t do it!*”

Now as we have already discovered, “*Sexual Intimacy*” was God’s idea. And God not only *created* Intimacy- but He has blessed it. BUT ONLY- as it is carried out very *narrowly*: “*Between one (naturally born) Man and one (naturally born) Woman within the Covenant of Marriage.*” Every other form of Sexual Intimacy carried out by anyone for any reason- is Sin. It does NOT honor God and it is (long term) destructive to us.

Now we have also found out that because Marriage is a Sign of something infinitely MORE important than the Marriage itself- Sexual Immorality is also a Sign of something far more hideous than the sexual Act itself. Sexual Immorality is being Unfaithful. And so, *before* a person is Unfaithful to his Spouse in a sexual Act- they have ALREADY been Unfaithful to God in their heart. So, the *physical* Act of Adultery itself is actually nothing more than a physical and tangible and outward Sign of spiritual Unfaithfulness to God in the human heart. And every genuine Believer should have a vested interest in NOT being Unfaithful.

But this is where we MUST get specific because Sexual Immorality manifests itself in different ways. For example, when Sexual Immorality is carried out among *married* people- it is called, “*Adultery*”; but when carried out among *unmarried* people- that same sinful Act is NOT called, “*Adultery*”. It is called, “*Fornication*” or even “*Sexual Immorality*”. And as the New Testament was being produced, the writers wrote *infallibly* in the Greek language. And the primary Greek word for “*Adultery*” used *throughout* the New Testament is, “*moicheuoo*” (Strong’s #3431). And this is the word that Jesus used here in **Matthew 5:27&28**.

But the Greek word for “*Fornication*” is “*porneia*” (Strong’s #4242). And so, when Jesus said this in **Matthew 5:32**:

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.

The Greek word that was translated here in English as “**unchastity**” is the word, “*porneia*”; while the word that was translated twice in this same verse as “**adultery**” (**makes her commit adultery**; and “**a divorced woman commits adultery**”) comes from the Greek word, “*moicheuoo*”. And that means that these two Acts are NOT the same.

Now in verses 27&28- Jesus was teaching us that committing Sexual Immorality has MORE to do than merely the physical Act itself. It also (and sometimes ONLY) involves the eyes; the mind; and the heart as well.

But now as we get into verses 31&32- Jesus is now going to *expand* the way we need to understand the Sin of Sexual Immorality to also include Divorce and Remarriage. Let’s read that part again together:

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.

Now before I get too far into this- I want to say something: 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 and Hope in Jesus Christ. And there is a Divine Promise that *cannot* fail 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.

Now please remember what this entire Sermon (that we call, the “*Sermon on the Mount*”) is all about. In verse 20, Jesus said,

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 this Sermon is revealing to us just how we may obtain a “Righteousness” that *surpasses* the phony, fake, and man-made righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

So, one of the ways we display a Righteousness that is infinitely *superior* to the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees is in, by, and through our Marriages and how we handle Divorce and Remarriage. Because we need to remember that, 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 Marriage Oaths a dishonoring Mockery the MOST- were the Scribes and the Pharisees! So, throughout all Palestine in the 1st Century- there were a literal sea of ex-Wives of the Scribes and Pharisees- which made a mockery of both Marriage and the Vows they had made. And so, Jesus moves here to stop that “tidal wave” of Sin- by clearly teaching on this in this perfect Sermon.

Now while He was on this earth, the Lord Christ spoke with the very SAME Authority as God Almighty. And the human writers faithfully penned down those spoken words- INFALLIBLY (without Error). But after those men received the Divine Revelation that we now call, the 27 Books of the “New Testament”- God also performed a thousand different Miracles and Acts of Providence to *preserve*

this magnificent Book through War; Famine; and Trouble- all throughout the Centuries.

And after that- many brave and godly men *knowingly* broke the Law and risked their lives to give us this Book in English. But those men didn't risk everything they had- including their own lives- so we would NOT know- but that we WOULD know what Jesus taught about the Issues He thought was important- *including* Marriage; Divorce; and Remarriage.

And by God's Grace; and whether you end up loving me or hating me- by the End of this Sermon- you too will know what Jesus taught about this Issue. And then it will be between you and God as to how you will go about to obey what you know.

But by talking about Marriage; Divorce; and Remarriage- the way He did- Jesus was telling us that this is a real big Deal to God. And that means it should be a real big Deal to us as well. And it is a real big Deal to me and, I hope, to you as well.

Now, over the last several weeks- we have been learning what Marriage is:

Marriage: the visible; tangible; earthly; and temporary Display or Sign or Symbol or Revealing of the Mystery of the eternal and invincible Covenant- Love that is between Jesus and His Church.

In other words, the ONLY Reason our Salvation is Eternal and *cannot* be destroyed- is because the "Covenant Love" that exists between Jesus and His Church- that flows out from the New Covenant that God the Father made with the other two Persons of the Trinity- is Eternal and cannot be destroyed. So, the "*Eternality*" of our *own* personal Salvation is tied in with the Eternality of the Covenant Love that exists between Jesus and His Church in the New Covenant.

But if that is true- then it makes Divorce to, *fundamentally*, be a Lie. Because Divorce says that there ARE some Sins; there ARE some Acts; there ARE some Behaviors; and there ARE some Beliefs that CANNOT be forgiven; they CANNOT be overcome; and they have the Power and Ability to destroy the Love and the Covenant between Husband and Wife- which is the Symbol of the eternal and indestructible Love between Jesus and His Church. And that simply is NOT true.

But Divorce would also mean that the Vows that were exchanged between the Husband and Wife are also not lasting; they aren't real; and they are, in fact, a Lie. But wait! Those Vows between Husband and Wife are but a tangible Sign of the Promises that God made to His Church, like:

Hebrews 13:5b

... I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

... and ...

Romans 8:28

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

... and ...

1John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

... and ...

Jeremiah 31:33

... 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.

... and ...

Ezekiel 36:25-27

25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

... and ...

John 6:40

... everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.

So, let's review. If it is true that the Vows that were made between Husband and Wife at their Marriage are tangible and earthly Signs and Symbols of the

Promises made between Jesus and His Church- then we cannot trust ANY of them- and NONE of those Promises are reliable- if Divorce exists. Because Divorce testifies loudly and proudly that Vows are made *meaningless* and *powerless* against certain Sins; Acts; Behaviors; and Beliefs.

But if that is true- then the Promises made between Jesus and the Church are also *meaningless* and *powerless* against certain Sins; Acts; Behaviors; and Beliefs. Because whatever has the Power to overcome the Sign- ALSO has the Power to overcome the Thing that the Sign represents.

But the Bible says that God CANNOT lie. And so, the Promises made by Christ to His Church ARE real- and they are Eternal. They ARE Lasting and they are Reliable. They are Indestructible and CANNOT be defeated! Ever! By ANYTHING! And we rejoice at that!

So, what I am trying to say is that we either have both or we have neither. We have the Reality of the Promises between Jesus and His Church that is *signified* by the Vows between Husband and Wife- or we have Vows that can be broken that *signify* that the Promises can also be broken. We cannot say that the tangible Sign of the Reality can be defeated- but then turn around and say that the Reality that the Sign represents- is still indestructible. If that were true- it would make the Purpose for having the Sign in the first place- to be useless. If the Reality is Sure and Certain and Steadfast- so is the Sign- or the Sign has no meaning. That is a fundamental Contradiction. It is a logical Impossibility. And it violates the “*Law of Non-contradiction*”.

Now having said that- there IS one major Distinction we need to understand between the eternal and indestructible Covenant-Love between Jesus and His Church (the Reality) and Marriage (the Sign). Marriage is always Temporary while the Covenant-Love between Jesus and His Church is eternal. Marriage is ONLY for the Lifespan of the Husband and Wife. So, contrary to what the cult of Mormonism teaches- Marriage is NOT eternal. There is not one shred of Bible to suggest that Marriage is Eternal. It isn't. Marriage ends with the Death of either the Husband or Wife. And that is why it is NOT a Sin for people to remarry AFTER their Spouse has died.

So, Marriage is NOT Eternal; and Marriage is also NOT a “*Sacrament*”² as the Roman religious System teaches. Marriage is *temporary*; and Marriage is a Sign or Symbol of the eternal Covenant-Love between Jesus and His Church- that flows out from the “*New Covenant*” itself that is between God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit.

² It is precisely because Marriage is NOT commanded for ALL and some are called by God to serve Him in this Life- without being married- as to why Marriage CANNOT be considered as a “*Sacrament*”. Because ALL Sacraments are commanded for ALL Believers to participate in- and the Bible is crystal clear that *some* people are called by God to be “*Eunuchs*” in this Life (Matthew 19:3-12).

And that is why God hates Divorce (**Malachi 2:16**). He doesn't hate Divorce merely because it destroys lives and children and causes bitterness and years of living with hollow hearts (even though that's true). And God also does NOT hate Divorce- because God is cruel; and wants to *impose* His Will on people; and be a "kill-joy". God wants us to be *happier* than we want to be Happy. God wants us to literally "*delight ourselves*" in Him; and to find the *fullness* of our own Joy- in striving to obey Him.

In fact, God has actually COMMANDED us to be happy (**Psalm 37:4**). And He has promised *terrifying* Punishments on those who refuse to find Joy- in glorifying Him alone. So, never think that God simply pushes His Weight around because He can. EVERYTHING that God does is designed to ALWAYS accomplish two things:

1. Bring Himself Glory
2. Bring the fullness of Joy to His people

So, rather than be a "kill-joy"- God hates things that kill the Joy that He wants for His people. And NOTHING has the Power to sap Joy from a human heart more than Divorce.

*"Okay, Brother Blair, we get it that you want to honor Marriage- but what about what Jesus Himself said in **Matthew 5:32**? Doesn't that "Exception Clause" override both the **Mark** and **Luke** Passages and give married people the "Right" to Divorce, when there has been unfaithfulness? No, it doesn't. And now please allow me to tell you why. The King James renders **Matthew 5:32** like this: **But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.***

... the New King James says this:

But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

... the English Standard Version (ESV) says this:

But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

... the Hollman Christian Standard Version (HCSB) says this,

But I tell you, everyone who divorces his wife, except in a case of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

... while the New American Standard Bible says this:

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.

Now, remember, it is the so-called “*Exception Clause*” of **Matthew 5:32** that many churches and people, who say they are saved use- that supposedly allows them to “get around” the Divine Warning found in both **Mark 10:11&12** and **Luke 16:18**.

Yet, when using this so-called “*Exception Clause*” they almost universally MISQUOTE what Jesus said. As you can see from five of the MOST accurate English versions of the Bible- NONE of them say, “*except in the case of Adultery*”. Most of them (3) use the term, “**sexual immorality**” while the KJV says, “**fornication**” and the NASB95 says, “**unchastity**”. But NONE of them use the word, “*Adultery*”!

“*Brother Blair, why are you making a big deal about this? It’s all talking about the same Sin!*” Yes, it is! But NOT among the same people! Adultery is Sexual Immorality among *married* people; while Fornication; Sexual Immorality and Unchastity have to do with UNMARRIED people! “*Wait a minute- how do you know that?*” Because they all use the SAME Greek word, “*porneia*”- even though they translated it into English differently. But even at that- it is NEVER translated as “*Adultery*”- which it *should* have been if it were talking about Adultery.

So, what we have, dear friends, is THE single most common Reason as to why Christians are divorcing their Spouses today (based on the supposed “*Exception Clause*” of **Matthew 5:32**)- that does NOT mean what they say it means! But if that is true- then those who are divorcing their spouses have NO Exception to either the **Mark** or **Luke** Passages. And that means that if they remarry after they have wrongly divorced- THEY ARE COMMITTING ADULTERY! And the Church, for the most part, is sanctioning it!

But why did Jesus talk about this in **Matthew 5:32** if He was NOT talking about Adultery? To answer that requires a little patience I pray you will grant to me. Let’s review what we know to be factually true:

- Matthew's Gospel Record was NOT written to Gentiles- but to Jews. So, *everything* in it- pertains to the Jewish way of Life and the Jewish mind-set. If we are going to understand this part- we need to be in the "Jewish mind".
- ONLY **Matthew 5:32** seems to give an "Exception" to the clear and precise Statements by Jesus in both **Mark 10** and **Luke 16**. If **Matthew 5:32** did not exist- there would be no doubt about this. Remarriage (after Divorce as long as the former Spouse is alive) would constitute the Sin of Adultery.
- **Matthew 5:32** does NOT give an Exception for the Sin of "Adultery"- even though it *could*. It gives an Exception for the Sin of "Fornication"- which is ONLY between unmarried people.

If we go back to **Matthew 1** and look at the language that this former tax collector used to describe both Joseph and Mary- it will help.

Matthew 1:16

Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

Matthew 1:19

And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.

Matthew calls Joseph the "*Husband*" of Mary- even though, at the time of this writing, they had not yet been married. And Matthew himself makes that clear in verses 18&20:

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

The key to understanding this Mystery is found in the word, "**betrothed**" and how the Jews handled Engagements between a couple that were to be married.

First of all, back during this time- it was normal for the Father of the Bride to receive a "*dowry*" for the Daughter. And this was normally paid in money (gold, silver, or equivalents); in livestock; or even with land. The Daughter was

now going to be part of the Husband's Family and so, the Family of the Daughter was suffering a real financial Loss due to the fact that the Daughter would now be working toward the success of the Husband's Family rather than her own.

So, when the couple became engaged- it was a real big deal that even involved the transfer of wealth. So, this was a lot more than the Husband-to-be giving his Bride-to-be a "ring and a date". Both Families were very involved.

It also meant that, for as long as a year- the "Bride-to-be" went and lived with the Family of the Husband-to-be so she could learn their ways and learn what foods and customs she would have to live under after they were married. Again, this indicates a very serious; drawn-out; formal; and official period of time BEFORE the Wedding.

And all of this meant that the Wedding could NOT be called off- except for some very serious Problem that would arise during the Engagement period- like a health Issue or SEXUAL IMMORALITY between the, as yet, UNMARRIED couple. And THAT is exactly what Jesus was talking about in **Matthew 5:32**- NOT that married people may divorce (and remarry) if one (or both) of them commits Adultery (as is commonly taught).

Now for many years, even before I became a Pastor- I was deeply troubled by a few things about Divorce and Remarriage such as:

- The crystal clear and absolute Condemnation by Jesus against Divorce and Remarriage in both **Mark 10:11&12** and **Luke 16:18** seemed to be so casually; easily; and completely overridden by what Jesus said in **Matthew 5:32** and again in **Matthew 19:9**. I believed then the Bible was true (I still do) and I did not (and do not) believe that Jesus spoke out of both sides of His Mouth. But this was as close as anything I knew to be a complete Contradiction. And I couldn't find a "fix".
- The Casualness in which the Pastors I spoke to about this- handled it with me- with a complete lack of Concern.
- The lack of Concern that the word, "Adultery" as the Exception in **Matthew 5:32** was simply NOT the correct English translation
- The Way that the Connection between Marriage and the Covenant Love between Jesus and His Church along with the permanence of Vows that we make- was ignored and excused in the case of Divorce and Remarriage among Believers

I was troubled by the casual Assumption that so many of my fellow-believers made that **Matthew** was making *explicit* something that would have been *implicitly* understood by the hearers of Jesus or the readers of **Mark 10** and **Luke 16**. Would they really have assumed that the absolute Condemnation in both **Mark**

and **Luke**- included an Exception? They would not. So, why do we? And why did we do it so quickly and easily?

If we truly believe that God the Holy Spirit *superintended* the development of the 66 Books of the Holy Bible- to the point where the Scriptures are “Infallible”- then explain why Matthew used the word *porneia*- in **Matthew 5:32** which means: “*Fornication*” instead of the word *moicheia*- which means “*Adultery*”- even though he used *moicheia* all through his Gospel Record?

The only other place besides **Matthew 5:32** (and 19:9) where the Apostle used the word *porneia* is in 15:19 where it is used *alongside of moicheia*. And that conclusively proves that Matthew meant to NOT use it in **Matthew 5:32**. He knew that *porneia* was something different than Adultery.

The Apostle John also used the word, *porneia* in **John 8:41** where the Jewish leaders indirectly accuse Jesus of being born of *porneia*. In other words, since they didn’t accept His virgin Birth- they naturally assumed that Mary had committed Fornication (NOT Adultery) and Jesus was the result of this sinful Act.

Matthew tells us that Joseph and Mary are “Husband” (*aner*) and “Wife” (*gunaika*). Yet they are described as only being “betrothed” (engaged) to each other. This is probably owing to the fact that the words for “Husband” and “Wife” are simply, “Man” and “Woman”; and to the fact that “betrothal” back in the 1st Century was a much more *significant* Commitment then than Engagement is today with us.

In **Matthew 1:19** Joseph resolves to reluctantly “Divorce” Mary- *privately*. And the Greek word for Divorce here is the SAME as the word in **Matthew 5:32** and 19:9. But most important of all, Matthew says that Joseph was “**Just**” or “**Righteous**” in making the Decision to divorce Mary- *precisely* because he thought she was guilty of *porneia*, (Fornication).

Therefore, as Matthew proceeded to construct the Narrative of his Gospel Record, he finds himself in Chapter 5 and then later in Chapter 19, in a difficult situation. He has before him the absolute Sayings of Jesus that, if a man divorces his wife and marries another, he commits Adultery- in other words, he commits a grave “Injustice”. Yet Matthew says that Joseph was “Just”.

Therefore, the so-called “Exception Clause” had more to do with a Situation like Joseph’s than it does to married people. In Matthew 5:32- the Apostle was talking about people, who are engaged breaking off the Engagement (divorcing) and then becoming engaged to another- because the one has committed “*porneia*” (Fornication) NOT Adultery!

And that means that every single married person, who was led astray by a wrong understanding of **Matthew 5:32** and divorced and then later remarried- has committed Adultery!

Now I am not immune to the enormity of what I just said. I personally know dozens of Believers, who have divorced and remarried- thinking it was okay with God. So, what do I expect people to do- who find themselves in Sin because they now agree with me about what Jesus was talking about?

First of all- you cannot “un-ring the bell”. What has happened in the Past CANNOT be undone. But secondly, I don’t expect anyone to do anything. But Jesus does. I didn’t write the Bible. But I do believe it is true. So, the Question is NOT what do I expect people to do- it is what does the Lord Christ expect from us? And I think that, we can’t fix one sin by sinning again. So, No! I do NOT believe that people, who are now married, but who genuinely see that they should have NOT remarried- should NOT sin again by divorcing. It should NOT have happened. But they were led astray by well-meaning people. So, they should ask God to forgive them- and then live IN their current Marriages as godly as they can and do as much as they can for Jesus.

BUT- we MUST tell the Truth! And so, the Church must stop others from committing this Sin in the Future- by teaching the Truth about Divorce and Remarriage- so that our Righteousness *surpasses* the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees!

Amen. Let’s pray.

© 2021-2022 by *Enjoying God Ministries, Inc.* All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America

Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. PO Box 147 Saucier, Mississippi 39574 www.covenantofpeace.net
Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from *The New American Standard Bible* © 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of a verse- by- verse “Journey” through the **Gospel of Matthew**. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this Transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete Copyright Statement be at the end of all copies.

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