

# SOTM - Integrity - Matthew 5:31-37

## The Joy Of the Lord Is Your Strength!

Hardly anything beats a "radiant face"

1. WELCOME TO THE BRIDGE - I'm Jared and here's why we're here.
- 2.
3. Now - **BECAUSE** WE WANT TO SEE A GOSPEL MOVEMENT THAT REACHES EVERY PERSON OF THE HILL COUNTRY - we actually have to make some space 😊
4. Beginning August 9th - we are going to 3 services and if you're thinking "I don't know what service to attend!?" Let me help... the 11:30.
5. But... Not just what SERVICE WILL YOU ATTEND - but what SERVICE WILL YOU SERVE?
  - a. We have all kinds of places for you to use your spiritual gifts!
  - b. What are you good at - we can help you use your gift!
  - c.

## 1. FATHERS DAY!

- a. **"Human fatherhood exists to display the beauty of Gods fatherhood.**
- b. **Our highest calling as fathers is to be the image of Gods fatherhood to our children."**
- c. Consider God as Father to Jesus!
- d. **He showed up in the big moments.**
  - i. God was there at Jesus baptism and transfiguration.
  - ii. Not every moment - sometimes they need to have some independence - but the big moments.
- e. **He used his words.**
  - i. God said this is my son with whom I'm well pleased!
- f. He showed up and he used his words!

1. One of the main reasons I love golf is because it's **one of the most honest sports there is.**
2. Golf requires a tremendous amount of integrity because many times there isn't a referee standing beside you.
3. **IN GOLF - YOU ARE THE PLAYER AND REFEREE! IT'S ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT....**
4. One of the most famous examples happened when **Brian Davis was in a playoff on the PGA Tour in 2010 against Jim Furyk at the RBC.**
5. As he was making a swing from a hazard, he noticed that his club barely brushed a reed during his backswing.
  - a. Nobody saw it.
  - b. No official called it.
  - c. The cameras barely caught it.
  - d. **But Davis reported the violation on himself, accepted a two-stroke penalty, and lost the tournament.**

6. Why would someone do that?
7. Because (MOST OF US) golfers are taught that their word means something. (**Not Patrick Reed**)
  - a. Integrity matters.
  - b. Honesty matters.
  - c. Keeping your word matters.
8. And as we come to Matthew 5 this morning, that's exactly what Jesus is talking about.
9. Whether He's addressing **marriage vows or everyday speech**, His concern is not merely with rules.
10. His concern is with integrity.
11. He's teaching us that God's people should be known as people whose word is honored and trusted.
12. Let's jump in!

Matthew 5:31-32

"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' 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."

1. Now, just a bit of context:
2. In Jesus' day, there was a massive religious debate centered on what counted as a sufficient reasons for divorce.
3. Instead of *protecting marriage*, many were searching for acceptable loopholes that would justify ending it *while still appearing righteous*.
4. What's interesting is that the Pharisees had *reduced marriage* to a legal contract and divorce to a common technicality.
5. *They were looking for a certificate that could release them from their vows rather than cultivating the character that would help them keep those vows.*
6. What's fascinating is that whenever people bring divorce to Jesus, He almost always redirects the conversation to marriage.
7. They wanted to discuss how to get out of a covenant; Jesus wanted to talk about how God designed the covenant in the first place.
8. So let's go the same direction for a minute...
9. So what is marriage?
10. **At its simplest, marriage is "me becoming we."**
11. Nothing reveals our selfishness more than getting married - why? Because it's "me" becoming "we".
12. I still remember getting married and two things I never thought about came up:
  - a. First, Golf. I remember Meredith saying "now help me understand, we're going to pay \$60 (and we were so poor that we could barely even *pay attention*) AND you're going to be gone 4-5 hours? I thought "I've never thought about it that way before"... Why? ME BECOMING WE...
  - b. Second, when we had kids, Meredith realized that ... WHY? ME BECOMING WE.
  - c. Now, certainly we all have funny ways this works for each of us - but it's also GOD'S PROVISION!
  - d. Our Church - The Bridge Fellowship - is such a stronger church because WE planted this church not "I" planted the church...
13. Here's what happens - you become ONE...
14. **In the wedding ceremony, we become *one positionally*.**

- a. Before God and before witnesses, two lives are joined together in covenant.
15. **On the wedding night, we become *one physically*.**
  - a. The union of husband and wife becomes a tangible expression of the covenant they have made.
16. But that is not the end of becoming one. In many ways, it is only the beginning.
17. **Over the next four or five decades, a husband and wife become *one progressively*.**
  - a. Their dreams, habits, struggles, victories, joys, and sorrows are woven together over a lifetime of covenant faithfulness.
18. Now, listen closely - the Pharisees were not asking how to strengthen that covenant.
19. **They were looking for loopholes that would allow them to break it.**
20. And if we're honest, this is the exact same language we use today.
21. We live in a world that asks, "how close can I get and not sin" - or "
22. So here's what I want you to hear me say: **Stop looking for loopholes and start looking for grace.**
23. We still look for loopholes in marriage today.
24. We ask, "How much can I get away with and still say I'm being faithful?"
25. We excuse emotional attachments because "nothing physical happened."
26. We justify flirting, hiding things from our spouse, or consuming things that slowly erode our commitment because we haven't technically broken our vows.
27. But friends - that's not a marriage that is fulfilling NOR honoring to God. It's not the design...
28. *Quit looking for loopholes and START looking for grace!*
29. **Because grace is what sustains a marriage.**
  - a. Grace is what helps us forgive when we've been hurt.
  - b. Grace is what helps us stay when it's difficult.
  - c. Grace is what allows two imperfect people to keep moving toward one another instead of away from one another.
30. Now, are there situations where divorce is permissible? Yes.
31. Jesus acknowledges that there are real circumstances where the covenant has been profoundly violated.
32. There may be reasons for divorce.
33. **But a reason for divorce is not always a requirement for divorce.**
34. **Paul says "all things are permissible - but not all things are beneficial"...**
35. Whenever possible, God's heart is **repentance, reconciliation, and restoration.**
36. And yet, I know that in a room this size, divorce is not merely a theological issue. **It is personal.**
37. Nearly every person here has been touched by divorce in some way.
38. Some have walked through it themselves.
39. Others have watched parents, children, or friends experience its pain.
40. **That's why the final word of this passage is not condemnation. The final word is the gospel.**
41. Because every broken covenant ultimately points us to the One who never broke His.
42. The covenant we failed to keep, Jesus kept perfectly.
43. The faithfulness we could not provide, Jesus provided on our behalf.
44. And when He went to the cross,
  - a. He carried not only our failures in marriage but every sin,
  - b. every regret,

- c. every act of unfaithfulness,
  - d. and every source of shame.
45. There is no sin too great for the cross of Christ.
  46. There is grace for the divorced, grace for the wounded, grace for the guilty, and grace for the broken.
  47. The same Jesus who calls us to honor covenant is the same Jesus who offers forgiveness when covenant has been broken.
  48. And that is the hope of the gospel.

Jesus continues:

"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black."  
 "Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil."

1. Now at first glance, this passage sounds like it speaks nothing to today's language.
2. We might think - well the only time I'm going to take an oath is if I have to testify in court or if I get elected as mayor or something...
3. Well, kinda - that is an element...
4. But just like the previous passages, *Jesus is going deeper than the surface issue.*
5. The real issue is not oath-taking.
- 6. The real issue is integrity.**
7. In Jesus' day, the religious leaders had developed an elaborate system of vows and promises.
  - a. Certain oaths were considered binding.
  - b. Other oaths were considered less binding.
8. Listen closely, in this time people had become experts at *sounding trustworthy* without actually *being trustworthy.*
- 9. In other words, they were looking for ways to manage their reputation rather than cultivate their character.**
- 10.
11. So Jesus addresses the root problem.
12. Why should a person need an elaborate oath in order to be believed?
13. I remember vividly in Elementary school - when someone asked me a question and I answered.
14. *It was almost required that you had to ADD words to your words so that it carried weight...*
15. Someone would inevitably say "Do you swear on your grandmothers grave"???
16. And I, being shocked, was like - well both of my grandmothers are still alive!! haha..
17. In Jesus' time they were saying things like, "I swear to God," in order for their words to carry weight?
18. And what Jesus is saying is -
- 19. A person of integrity should not need to ADD MORE WORDS to make their words believable.**
  - a. Their character should do that.
  - b. Their life should do that.
  - c. Their consistency should do that.

- d. Their "yes" should already mean yes.
  - e. Their "no" should already mean no.
20. What's interesting is that we still do the same thing today.
21. We may not swear by heaven or earth.
22. But we have our own versions.
- a. "I promise."
  - b. "I really mean it this time."
  - c. "Trust me."
  - d. "Honestly."
23. Here's the deal, if someone continually feels the need to tell me that their being honest - I assume they're not being honest.
24. Why?
25. We don't need stronger LANGUAGE, we need to have a track record of faithfulness.
- 26. *Credibility is not built by stronger promises, but by consistent character.***
27. Guys ultimately, every relationship in our lives *runs on trust*.
- a. Marriages run on trust.
  - b. Friendships run on trust.
  - c. Churches run on trust.
  - d. Businesses run on trust.
  - e. Leadership runs on trust.
28. And trust is built one truthful conversation at a time - and it takes a long time.
29. But - trust can be lost in a single conversation...
30. Here's what I want you to hear me say:
- a. Stop managing your image and start cultivating integrity.
  - b. Stop trying to appear trustworthy and become trustworthy.
32. Because integrity is who you are when there is no advantage to telling the truth.
- a. Integrity is keeping your word when nobody is checking.
  - b. Integrity is being the same person in private that you are in public.
  - c. Integrity is when your character and your confession match.

33.

## CONCLUSION

- 1. This is where the gospel shines.
- 2. Because if we're honest, none of us has perfectly lived Matthew 5.
  - a. We've all failed with our words.
  - b. We've all made promises we didn't keep.
  - c. We've all spoken carelessly.
  - d. We've all been less truthful than we should have been.
- 3. **But Jesus never did.**
- 4. Every promise God ever made was fulfilled in him.
- 5. Every covenant found its completion in him.
- 6. Every word God spoke found its confirmation in him.
- 7. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1:20:

"For all the promises of God find their Yes in him."

1. Jesus is God's "Yes."
2. And unlike us, Jesus never broke his word.
  - a. When he promised to come, he did.
  - b. When he promised to save, he saved.
  - c. When he promised to die, he died.
  - d. When he promised to rise, he rose.
3. And when Jesus hung on the cross and declared, **"It is finished," he meant every word.**
4. AND That's the promise you can stake your life on.
5. Because Jesus kept every promise we failed to keep, **sinners can be forgiven.**
6. Because Jesus fulfilled God's covenant perfectly, **covenant-breakers can be redeemed.**
7. Because Jesus is perfectly faithful, **unfaithful people can be transformed.**
8. The gospel doesn't just forgive liars.
9. *It creates truth-tellers.*
10. It changes us from people who need constant qualification into people whose lives prove our words.
11. The goal isn't simply that people hear us tell the truth.
12. The goal is that our character becomes so shaped by Christ that **our yes is enough and our no is enough.**
13. A person transformed by the gospel doesn't need an oath to be believed - their plain word is enough, because their life backs it up.
14. I pray that integrity and faithfulness because of what Jesus has done will mark us as His...

THE GOSPEL: Jesus Christ is the ultimate hope for every person. Though we are all sinful and our sin separates us from God, God made a way for us to be in right relationship with him again. That way is Jesus. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. God promises that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ will be saved. This is the good news of the Bible.

COMMUNION: 1 Corinthians 11

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said,<sup>[b]</sup> "This is my body, which is<sup>[c]</sup> for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

<sup>25</sup> In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." <sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

"May the Lord bless you and protect you;  
may the Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
may the Lord look with favor on you<sup>[b]</sup>  
and give you peace."

