

THE KING'S SPEECH
On Earth as it is in Heaven
The Character of the King's People (Part II)
Matthew 5:31-37

Big Idea: The King's people resemble the King's character.

- The King's people do not obey Him because of outward constraint but because of an inward life, the power of the Spirit of God.

I. The King's people are characterized by marital fidelity (5:27-28; 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 lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

31 "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' **32** 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.

A. The scribes and Pharisees relaxed God's standard for marriage (v. 31).

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

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

1 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecent in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, **2** and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, **3** and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, **Command > 4** then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the LORD. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.

- *The primary purpose of (Deut. 24:1-4) was not to give an excuse for divorce but to show the potential evil of it. It was not a mandate for divorce but a protection of marriage.*

B. Jesus reinforced God's standard for marriage (v. 32; 19:3-10; Mk. 10:2-12; Lk. 16:18).

32 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.

- *Jesus was insisting that the law was pointing to the sanctity of marriage.*

- *Adultery is not, in this text, the cause of divorce, but the product of divorce and remarriage.*

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

10 To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband **11** (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

II. The King's people are characterized by personal integrity (5:33-37).

A. The scribes and Pharisees relaxed God's standard for keeping one's word (v. 33).

33 "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.'

Numbers 30:2

2 If a man vows a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

B. Jesus reinforces God's standard for keeping one's word (vv. 34-37).

34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.

James 5:12

12 But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

As A. M. Hunter puts it, 'Oaths arise because men are so often liars.' The same is true of all forms of exaggeration, hyperbole and the use of superlatives. We are not content to say we had an enjoyable time; we have to describe it as 'fantastic' or 'fabulous' or even 'fantabulous' or some other invention. But the more we resort to such expressions, the more we devalue human language and human promises. Christians should say what they mean and mean what they say. Our unadorned word should be enough, 'yes' or 'no'. And when a monosyllable will do, why waste our breath by adding to it?

John R. W. Stott - *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7): Christian Counter-Culture, The Bible Speaks Today, 101-102.*