

09-25-2022, COTR Texarkana

Title: Jesus Said, WHAT? Pt-3

Purpose: Provoke people to pursue the Biblical path of sexual morality and do everything to make their marriage work.

Truth for Today: God's plan for sexual morality is best and divorce is permitted but not prescribed.

Text: Matthew 5:27-32

Topic: Adultery, Sex, Lust, Divorce, Reconciliation, Sermon on the Mount

Series Title: Jesus said, WHAT?

Series purpose: Provoke people to apply the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount to everyday life.

### Jesus Said, WHAT? Pt-3

- I. Introduction (disclaimer kids talk about sex KZ)
  - A. Review: Jesus Said, WHAT? It's about applying the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount to everyday life. His 1<sup>st</sup> sermon shaped western civilization.
  - B. Today we'll see what Jesus had to say about adultery, sexual sins, lust and divorce.
  - C. Title: Jesus Said, WHAT? Pt-3 (seatbelt installed in chairs in case of turbulence)
  - D. Truth for Today: God's plan for sexual morality is best and divorce is permitted but not prescribed.
- II. Life application #1: Sexual sin begins in the heart. God's plan for sexual morality is best.
  - A. Context: Jesus references 5 OT passages and reinterprets/ properly interprets them. 'You have heard it said' but 'I say unto you'. Last week murder and anger.
  - B. [Matthew 5:27-32 (ESV) "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.** 29 If your **right eye** causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your **right hand** causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into **hell.**] Legalism vs. sin in heart.
    1. Jesus didn't literally mean self-mutilation. We can be blind or crippled and still lust. It's figurative and hyperbolic language, to tell us to take

drastic measures to avoid temptations to sexual sin. Sexual sin is a serious matter. Unrepentant and unforgiven sexual sin will lead to eternal judgment/ hell, a literal place. Sexual sin can be forgiven when we confess our sin to God and repent. <sup>3</sup>

2. Def. adultery: a married person having sex with someone other than their spouse. 7<sup>th</sup> cmdt. Def. lust: lust is more than a look or noticing someone is attractive. Lust is the desire to have sex with someone other than your spouse. Jesus said adultery begins within our heart. The lustful desire is sinful and is as wrong as the act.<sup>1</sup>

C. What does the Bible teach about sex? Good news! Sex between a married man and woman is God's idea for pleasure and to have children. [Ge. 2:24 (NIV)...a **man** leaves his **father and mother** and is united to his **wife**, and they become **one flesh**.] [Pr. 5:18–20 (NLT)...Rejoice in the wife of your youth. 19...**Let her breasts satisfy you always**. May you always be **captivated** by her love. 20 Why be **captivated**...by an immoral woman, or fondle the breasts of a promiscuous woman?]

D. What are sexual sins? Any sexual act with a person outside of marriage between a man and a woman, heterosexual or homosexual, including lust created by porn.

E. How do we control lust?

1. Offensive strategy: // weights, get stronger spiritually and it's easier to say no.
2. Set up boundaries in advance. Stay away from places where you're likely to fall. Stop relationships that could lead us into immorality, e.g., FB, block Porn.
3. Seek prayer and confess to a mature Christian during the struggle, [Proverbs 28:13 (NLT) People who **conceal** their sins will not prosper, but if they **confess and turn** from them, they will receive mercy.] Pers. test. Dr. Lacy.

III. Life application #2: Jesus permitted divorce but didn't prescribe it.

A. [Vs. 31 "**It was also said**, (*Deut. 24:1*) '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**, (*Gk. Pornea*) **makes her commit adultery**, (*he is the one responsible for making her commit adultery assuming she remarries*)."<sup>2</sup> and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.] 7<sup>th</sup> cmdt.

1. The *certificate of divorce*, T. “a paper stating he had put an end to the marriage,”<sup>2</sup>

B. Matthew 19:3–9 (NLT) Some Pharisees...tried to trap him with this question: “**Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife for just any reason?**”<sup>4</sup> “Haven’t you read the **Scriptures?**” Jesus replied. “They record that from the beginning ‘God made them male and female.’<sup>5</sup> And he said, ‘This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’<sup>6</sup> Since they are no longer two but one, **let no one split apart what God has joined together.**”<sup>7</sup> “Then why did Moses say in the law that a man could give his wife a written notice of divorce and send her away?” they asked. <sup>8</sup> Jesus replied, “Moses permitted divorce only as a **concession to your hard hearts** (*NCV you refuse to accept God’s teaching*), **but it was not what God had originally intended.** <sup>9</sup> And I tell you this, **whoever divorces his wife and marries someone else commits adultery—unless his wife has been unfaithful.**”

1. Def. divorce: to legally put an end to the marriage.<sup>2</sup> Siri told me 50% of marriages end in divorce and America has the 6<sup>th</sup> highest divorce rate in the world. The director of the National Marriage Project, states that “**active conservative protestants who attend church regularly are actually 35% less likely to divorce** than those who have no religious preferences”<sup>5</sup> Why? Marriage triangle.

C. Among the Jewish leaders were two schools of thought regarding divorce. The Jewish rabbi, Hillel, said it was permissible for a husband to divorce his wife for any reason, e.g., burning food (// modern-day no-fault divorce) but the rabbi Shammai said divorce was permissible only for adultery.

D. Observations from Jesus words:

1. God’s perfect plan is that we marry a person of the opposite sex and make a lifelong commitment, and never divorce. Ge. 2:24. The purpose of marriage is to complete us (help mate) and be the place for God-blessed sex to raise godly kids. Jesus said marriage is a serious commitment and divorce is to be pursued only if a valid Biblical reason exists and all attempts at reconciliation have failed.

2. Jesus didn’t say we have to divorce (hopefully there can be reconciliation), but He limited the reason for divorce (with an assumed blessing on remarriage), to any form of sexual immorality. Gk. *Pornea*, any immoral sexual relations, homosexual or heterosexual; to be unfaithful to your marriage partner by sleeping with another person.<sup>3</sup>

Paul gave 2 other reasons: (1) [1 Cor. 7:15 (NCV) But if those who are **not believers decide to leave**, let them leave...the Christian man or woman is free.] Desertion/ abandonment/ unwilling to provide a living for the family. Some ‘believers’ may be unbelievers in disguise. [1 Tim. 5:8 (NIV) Anyone who does not **provide** for their relatives, and **especially for their own household**, has **denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**] (2) [1 Cor. 7:39 (NCV) A woman must stay with her husband as long as he lives. But **if her husband dies, she is free to marry any man she wants, but she must marry another believer.**]

E. Pastoral advice/response:

1. Sadly, many of us know the pain of divorce. \*\*\*Divorce is not the unpardonable sin. Even Christians get divorced. Divorce doesn’t make you a 2<sup>nd</sup> class Christian. God can forgive us and give us a happy life. Divorced people will be loved, healed, and accepted at COTR.
2. Choose a marriage partner based on godly character and values, not just looks.
3. Before divorce, separate and seek help to change and reconcile. Divorce doesn’t fix all problems; it also creates a whole other set of problems that affect you for a lifetime, e.g., finances, children’s struggles (see stats), holiday stress, etc.
4. The Bible doesn’t mention violence or abuse as a cause for divorce, but I encourage a person to protect themselves and separate in hopes of reconciliation.
5. When it’s hard, hang in there for the children’s sake. [Mal.2:13–16 (NLT)...the Lord witnessed the vows you and your wife made...And what does he want? **Godly children from your union. So guard your heart; remain loyal to the wife of your youth. 16 “For I hate divorce!”** says the Lord.] God doesn’t hate divorced people, but He hates the pain/ problems caused by divorce.
6. It takes 2 people to have a fight. Usually both partners bear responsibility for the divorce. However, there’s typically a victim, i.e., one spouse genuinely trying to apply Biblical principles and not give up. I try to support that person the most.

IV. Conclusion/ Summary: God’s perfect plan is that we marry a person of the opposite sex for life. Marriage is intended to complete us and provide the place for God-blessed sex and to raise godly kids. When conflict arises, we should do everything in our power to forgive and reconcile. However, divorce

is not the unpardonable sin; divorce doesn't make you a 2<sup>nd</sup> class Christian. If God has forgiven you, don't let the devil condemn you. Hold your head up and live the rest of your life for Jesus.

A. At COTR we'll encourage people to uphold Biblical standards of sexual morality. We'll counsel singles before marriage; help marriages with small groups, conferences, and counseling; love and accept divorced people and help them find a path to healing and happiness.

## V. Response

A. Prayer

B. Souls

## VI. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

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3. Blomberg, C. (1992). [Matthew](#) (Vol. 22, p. 108). Broadman & Holman Publishers.
4. Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). [Divorce](#). In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (Vol. 1, p. 635). Baker Book House.
5. <https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-divorce-rate.html>
6. Barbieri, L. A., Jr. (1985). [Matthew](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 63). Victor Books.
7. <https://www.verywellfamily.com/children-of-divorce-in-america-statistics-1270390>
8. Lenski, R. C. H. (1961). [The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel](#) (pp. 234–235). Augsburg Publishing House.

## VII. Supplemental material

- A. (1) There is a 16% increase in the risk of behavior problems if the child is between 7 and 14 years old when their parents divorce. (2) Children of divorced or separated parents are 1.5 to 2 times more likely to live in poverty and engage in risky sexual behavior as they get older. (3) Children from divorced parents have an 8% lower probability of completing high school, and an 11% lower probability of college completion. (4) adolescents whose parents have divorced are more likely to experience

injury, accidents, and illness than children whose parents have remained married. (5) Children living in intact, nuclear families are about half as likely as children in step, blended, or one-parent families to have a mental disorder or need psychological help. The psychological effects and emotional strain of divorce even linger into adulthood. For instance, researchers at the University of Toronto found that men from families that divorced during their childhood were more than three times as likely to consider suicide than men whose parents never divorced.<sup>7</sup>

- B. According to Deuteronomy 24:1, a man may divorce a woman “because he finds something about her that he doesn’t like.” However, in the case of Deuteronomy the man was required to write out divorce papers before sending the woman away from his house. Previous to this time, it was possible for a man to divorce the woman without any action other than the mere statement that he had divorced her. As an attempt to regulate and restrain this tendency, Deuteronomy required a written statement of divorce. However, according to Matthew 19:8 Jesus teaches that even this was an allowance made by Moses because men were not willing to live according to God’s Law.<sup>2</sup>
- C. Ancient Jews (like Greeks and Romans) almost universally agreed that lawful divorce granted a person the right to remarry. So Jesus’ words would almost certainly have been taken as permission for remarriage when divorce was permitted, i.e., after marital unfaithfulness. In other cases divorce causes adultery. The phrase “causes her to become an adulteress,” however, is misleading. The Greek does not use the noun “adulteress” but the verb *makes her commit adultery*. There is no indication here that a second marriage, even following an illegitimate divorce, is seen as permanently adulterous. Divorced Christians who have remarried should not commit the sin of a second divorce to try to resume relations with a previous spouse (see again Deut 24:1–4) but should begin afresh to observe God’s standards by remaining faithful to their current partners. What is more, it was probably not the taking of a new husband that made the wife commit adultery, since some divorced women remained unmarried. Jesus maintains that the divorce *itself* creates adultery—metaphorically, not literally—through infidelity to the lifelong, covenantal nature of marriage (cf. the characteristic Old Testament use of “adultery” to refer to breaking one’s commitments to God—e.g., Hos 2:4; Jer 5:7; Ezek 16:32).

D. 1 Corinthians 7:10–16 (NLT) — 10 But for those who are married, I have a command that comes not from me, but from the Lord. A wife must not leave her husband. 11 But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else be reconciled to him. And the husband must not leave his wife. 12 Now, I will speak to the rest of you, though I do not have a direct command from the Lord. If a fellow believer has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to continue living with him, he must not leave her. 13 And if a believing woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to continue living with her, she must not leave him. 14 For the believing wife brings holiness to her marriage, and the believing husband brings holiness to his marriage. Otherwise, your children would not be holy, but now they are holy. 15 **(But if the husband or wife who isn't a believer insists on leaving, let them go. In such cases the believing husband or wife is no longer bound** to the other, for God has called you to live in peace.) 16 Don't you wives realize that your husbands might be saved because of you? And don't you husbands realize that your wives might be saved because of you?

E. Instead Jesus is responding to a specific debate in first-century Judaism. At least Paul seems to have recognized Jesus' words as not comprehensive, since in 1 Cor 7:15 he introduces a second legitimate ground for divorce that Jesus never mentioned.<sup>3</sup>

F. Jesus never commands divorce but only permits it if all attempts at reconciliation have failed because he recognizes that the adultery has already undermined one of the most fundamental elements of a marriage—sexual exclusivity.<sup>3</sup>

G. In either case, adultery or desertion, the aggrieved party has the right to seek divorce from the offending spouse and, having obtained it, becomes again a single person. Should repentance and reconciliation fail to restore the violated union, the aggrieved spouse is not bound to the marriage. According to Scripture, a person who is not bound is free to remarry, but only “in the Lord,” meaning to another Christian (1 Cor 7:39). The injunction for a single person who does not have the gift of celibacy to marry (1 Cor 7:9) applies to a person formerly married but who has become single by a scripturally legitimate divorce. In keeping with Christ's teaching in Mark 10:11, 12 and Luke 16:18, the remarriage of believers may not be approved when the divorce has been used as a means of changing mates, since such intent makes the divorce adulterous.<sup>4</sup>

- H. Divorce is a devastating experience that commonly leaves its victims broken and scarred. The church has a special opportunity to minister in love and compassion to divorced people and their kids by reaching out to surround them, support them, and integrate them into the redemptive fellowship of the new community, and thus provide favorable conditions for their healing and restoration.<sup>4</sup>
- I. But the effect of the husband's evil act of driving out his wife affects not only the wife but also any man who may eventually marry her. Note the passive τὴν ἀπολελυμένην, "her that has been released or dismissed," restating what Jesus said about the wicked act of this husband; he is the agent back of this passive participle. The man who marries this wronged woman, he, too, μοιχᾶται, "is stigmatized as adulterous." The verb μοιχᾶω is in sense identical with μοιχεύω. But here again the passive should not be overlooked. This man as little "commits adultery" as the woman "commits adultery." Neither "commits" anything, both have had something committed upon them. The man who marries this woman thereby shares her position. Hence also the present durative tense μοιχᾶται: he constantly bears this stigma; he is joined to a woman whose marriage has been destroyed by her former husband. As long as both live, this shadow will follow them. It is thus that Jesus unfolds to his Jewish hearers in the Jewish environment in which they live the vicious effects upon the innocent when the Sixth Commandment is wickedly transgressed by rending the marriage tie.<sup>8</sup>