

9-14-2025, COTR

Title: The Sermon on the Mount, pt-6

Purpose: Provoke people to embrace a Biblical view of divorce and marriage.

Truth for Today: Divorce is permitted but not prescribed; Happiness in marriage is possible if we follow Biblical principles.

Text: Matthew 5: 31-32

Topic: Marriage, Divorce, Adultery, Forgiveness

Series Title: 100% Jesus...pure, undiluted truth.

Series Purpose: Provoke people to embrace the spiritual reality that true, lasting happiness is found by following Jesus Christ and obeying His words.

The Sermon on the Mount, pt-6

I. Introduction

- A. Make Room, building expansion: **Wed pics**, Sept 1st fruits cash offering, 2-year commitment card, PJ and LaNell, P Travis in Connect Room ?s, place in ushers offering bag or in offering boxes
- B. Violence and murder: Charlie Kirk, children at Catholic school, stabbing train N.C.
 - 1. **[2 Tim. 3:1-3 (NLT)]** ...in the **last days there will be very difficult times**. ² For **people will...scoff (ridicule or mock) at God**...They will consider **nothing sacred**. ³ They will be **cruel and hate what is good**.] Violence is the result of satanic evil and is often directed at Christians because we follow Jesus.
 - 2. **[John 15:18 (NLT)]** **If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first.** **[John 16:2 (GW)]** the time is coming when **people who murder you will think that they are serving God**.] In their perverted mind they're doing the right thing.
 - 3. Reason why? **[Hosea 4:1-3 (NLT)]**...The LORD has brought charges against you, saying: "There is...**no knowledge of God in your land**...There is **violence everywhere— one murder after another**. ³ That is why your land is in mourning..." Violence and murder are increasing. In the 1960's we began removing God from our culture and values. E.g., the 10 cmdts. taught: (1) There is a God, (2) Murder is a sin. (3) He will hold us accountable for our actions. Now our godless, self-centered worldview calls evil good and good evil. It's in Texarkana, **Pic** parent of a TMS middle-schooler after the death of Charlie Kirk.
 - 4. Our response: (1) Pray for a spiritual awakening in America and pray against the forces of evil (2) People need Jesus; tell them. Be salt and light; 'speak the truth in love' to a deceived world, (3) Be alert and protect yourself if evil attacks.
 - 5. To those who hate Jesus and Christians, you have awakened a sleeping giant! **Pic**
- C. Review Series: '100% Jesus...pure, undiluted truth'. This is a verse-by-verse study from the words of Jesus, called the Sermon on the Mount, Mt. ch. 5-7.
- D. Today, we'll see what Jesus said about a very painful and emotional subject, divorce.
- E. Title: The Sermon on the Mount, pt-6

II. In my discussion of marriage and divorce, I'm addressing 5 groups of people

- A. You've been divorced. You've probably experienced pain, condemnation and shame. You're not a 2nd class Christian. God can forgive, restore, and help you find happiness. Divorce isn't the unpardonable sin.
- B. You're divorced and remarried. Don't look back. Ask God for forgiveness for any mistakes you made and make the marriage you're in now work.
- C. You're thinking about divorce. Stop; slow down; wait! Work on your own relationship with God and seek help through counseling and classes.
- D. You're married. Never stop working to make your marriage better. Outside of Jesus, it's the most important relationship you'll ever have.
- E. You're single. (1) Decide who will control your life, Jesus or self (2) Determine what God wants you to do with your life and start doing it. (3) Become best friends with someone you're attracted to heading in the same direction and marry your best friend.

III. Marriage and divorce (context: Vs. 27-30 lust & adultery often leads to divorce)

- A. [Mt. 5:31-32 (NLT)] "You have heard the law that says, 'A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce, *Deut. 24:1*'³² **But I say** that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful (*ESV sexual immorality*), causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.] In Mark 10:12 it is the woman who initiates divorce. Divorce leads to the sin of adultery.
- B. Historical context for Jesus' words
 - 1. Jesus is affirming lifelong marriage and challenging easy divorce. Marriage is not a contract to be cancelled when no longer convenient but a covenant relationship that calls for sustained faithfulness.⁴ [Mark 10:5 (ESV)] Jesus said to them, "Because of your **hardness of heart** he wrote you this commandment.]"
 - 2. Def. divorce: "Whoever returns his wife to her family," "sends his wife away," or "puts an end to the marriage."² The Pharisees Shammai and Hillel, vigorously debated the legitimate grounds for divorce. Hillel permitted a man to put away his wife for "any good cause" (which could be as minor an issue as frequently burning his food!), while Shammai limited it to "adultery"³ Jesus addresses this.
 - 3. Women were helpless in a male dominated Jewish society. A man who divorces his wife compels her to marry someone else to survive. That remarriage makes her an adulteress.⁴ The divorce *itself* creates adultery—metaphorically, not literally—through infidelity to the lifelong, covenantal nature of marriage.³ Divorce doesn't mark you as an adulterer for life. Like any sin, it shouldn't be taken lightly, but it can be forgiven and start afresh.
- C. Legitimate reasons for divorce and remarriage
 - 1. Jesus said any form of sexual immorality is legitimate grounds for divorce.
 - 2. [1 Cor. 7:15 (NLT)]...**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...] However, if you can stay married you may bring Jesus to your kids and spouse.
 - 3. [1 Cor. 7:39-40 (NLT)] A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. **If her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but only if he loves the Lord.**...but you can't kill him.

4. 2 views on divorce and remarriage: (1) These 3 are the only legitimate reasons for divorce or remarriage, (2) They are examples. I'd include violence, abuse, or neglect. However, I counsel separation unto reconciliation, if possible, in any potential divorce. I will remarry a divorced person if (1) Biblical criteria is met, (2) If they have repented and tried reconciliation and it failed, (3) If their former spouse is remarried, (4) If their new partner loves the Lord. * Even though a person is divorced, it's still not good 'to be alone', Gen. 2:18.

IV. Life Applications

- A. Divorce is permitted but not prescribed. God originally intended for marriage to be for life. Divorce might happen, but it's not God's perfect plan.⁴
- B. God's will is reconciliation except in the face of ongoing, unrepentant, behavior that destroys the marriage covenant.⁶
- C. Children benefit from a godly marriage, [Mal. 2:13–17 (ESV)]...the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth...though she is your companion and your wife by **covenant**.¹⁵ Did he not make them one...what was the one God seeking? **Godly offspring...**
- D. Married people should always be seeking ways to improve their marriage rather than wondering how they can get out of the commitment they made. Those who divorce and remarry on any grounds must repent of the sins that led to the divorce, and vow to remain faithful to any subsequent relationships.³
- E. If you marry or remarry, be sure you marry a dedicated Christian.

V. Conclusion: Dedicated Christians have a greater chance to be happily married

- A. Research from a 14-year Harvard study shows that regular religious service attendance is associated with 50% lower divorce rates in later life.⁸
- B. Another study found that married people who follow simple Biblical practices in their lives i.e. prayer, church attendance, choosing not to cohabit before marriage, and more, are shown to have a greater relationship quality and less likely to divorce.⁷ "couples who pray together stay together."⁷
- C. Prayer:
- D. Souls

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

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4. Morris, L. (1992). [The Gospel according to Matthew](#) (p. 121). W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.
5. Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). [Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible](#) (Vol. 2, p. 23). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
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7. Journal of Marriage and Family 72 (August 2010): 963 – 975 DOI:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00742.x
8. <https://hfh.fas.harvard.edu/religion-and-divorce>
9. <https://ifstudies.org/blog/religious-service-attendance-marriage-and-health/>

VII. Supplemental Material

- A. Marital unfaithfulness” here translates *porneia*, a broader term for sexual sin of all kinds³
- B. [Mark 10:11–12 (ESV) And he said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, ¹² and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”]
- C. Deuteronomy 24:1 (NLT) “Suppose a man marries a woman but she does not please him. Having discovered something wrong with her, he writes a document of divorce, hands it to her, and sends her away from his house.
- D. 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 exclusivity³
- E. 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
- F. just as vv. 22 and 28 do not prohibit all forms of anger or sexual desire, and just as the exceptions to Jesus’ commands there are more implicit than explicit, so also v. 32 most likely does not reflect a consideration of every conceivable legitimate or illegitimate ground for divorce. Instead Jesus is responding to a specific debate in first-century Judaism. ³
- G. Shammai, placing the emphasis on “indecent,” took this to refer to sexual unfaithfulness; Hillel, placing the emphasis on “anything,” allowed divorce even for as trivial an offense as a wife burning her husband’s food³
- H. The intention of the present Gospel text is to challenge easy divorce, whether initiated by the husband or provoked by the wife, in each case by labelling the subsequently formed relationship as adulterous. In each instance the challenge is addressed to the man: whether he be the one contemplating divorce or the one planning to collude with the stratagems of a woman who has found her way out of a marriage in pursuit of something better. Marriage is not a contract to be cancelled when no longer

convenient but rather, as testified to in Mal. 2:14–16, a covenant relationship that calls for sustained faithfulness.⁴

- I. 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 exclusivity³
- J. Among the Jewish leaders were two schools of thought regarding the matter **of divorce** (Deut. 24:1). Those who followed Hillel said it was permissible for a husband to divorce **his wife** for any reason at all, but the other group (those following Shammai) said divorce was permissible only for a major offense. In His response, the Lord strongly taught that marriage is viewed by God as an indissoluble unit and that marriages should not be terminated by divorce. The “exception clause,” **except for marital unfaithfulness** (*porneias*), is understood in several ways by Bible scholars¹
- K. Ro 7:1–3 (NIV)...a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him and is not an adulteress. . .³ So then, if she has sexual relations with another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress if she marries another man.
- L. Mark 10:2–12 (NLT) “Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife?”³ Jesus answered them...What did Moses say in the law about divorce?”⁴ “Well, he permitted it,”...⁵ But Jesus responded, “He wrote this commandment only as a concession to your **hard hearts**.⁶ But ‘God made them male and female’ from the beginning of creation.⁷ ‘This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife,⁸ and the two are united into one.’ Since they are no longer two but one,⁹ **let no one split apart what God has joined together.**”¹⁰
- M. Children benefit from a godly marriage, [Mal. 2:13–17 (ESV)...the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.¹⁵ Did he not make them one...And what was the one God seeking? **Godly offspring**. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.¹⁶ “For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.”
- N. Whether the innocent party, after a just divorce, may lawfully marry again, is not treated of here. The Church of Rome says, No; but the Greek and Protestant Churches allow it.⁵
- O. Both recognize the extreme seriousness of **divorce as a last resort** and as an admission of defeat.³
- P. Matthew 19:3–8 (NLT) Some Pharisees came and tried to trap him with this question: “Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife for just any reason?”⁴ “Haven’t you read the Scriptures?” Jesus replied. “They record that from the beginning ‘God made them male and female.’⁵ 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.’⁶ Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together.”⁷ “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. ⁸ Jesus replied, "Moses permitted divorce only as a concession to your hard hearts, but it was not what God had originally intended.
- Q. Mark 10:2–12 (NLT) Some Pharisees came and tried to trap him with this question: "Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife?" ³ Jesus answered them with a question: "What did Moses say in the law about divorce?" ⁴ "Well, he permitted it," they replied. "He said a man can give his wife a written notice of divorce and send her away." ⁵ But Jesus responded, "He wrote this commandment only as a concession to your hard hearts. ⁶ But 'God made them male and female' from the beginning of creation. ⁷ 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, ⁸ and the two are united into one.' Since they are no longer two but one, ⁹ let no one split apart what God has joined together." ¹⁰ Later, when he was alone with his disciples in the house, they brought up the subject again. ¹¹ He told them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries someone else commits adultery against her. ¹² And if a woman divorces her husband and marries someone else, she commits adultery."
- R. Ezra 10:3 (NLT) Let us now make a covenant with our God to divorce our pagan wives and to send them away with their children. We will follow the advice given by you and by the others who respect the commands of our God. Let it be done according to the Law of God.
- S. Thus, couples who engage in regular devotional practices, such as family prayer or scriptural study within the home, may enjoy richer unions than others.⁷
- T. In addition, the frequency with which couples engage in regular in-home worship activities (e.g., prayer, scriptural study) was also positive linked with relationship quality. the findings are broadly consistent with the popular aphorism that "couples who pray together stay together."⁷
- U. such cohabiting relationships are more likely to be characterized by instability and lower relationship quality than are marital relationships (Kennedy & Bumpass, 2008; Landale & Oropesa, 2007).⁷
- V. Our work also indicates that religious service attendance is associated with greater marital stability—or more specifically, with a lower likelihood of divorce.⁹
- W. 1 Corinthians 7:12–16 (NLT)...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...) 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?
- X. Purpose of marriage: Be a helper and companion, [Gen. 2:18 (NLT) Then the Lord God said, "**It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper** who is just

right for him.”] He created two complementary genders for each other precisely because God wants *all* marriages to be permanent.³
Y. A new marriage is not continuous adultery.³