



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

**“What Does Jesus Say about
Marriage and Divorce?”
Matthew 5:31-32**

**³¹“Now it was said, ‘WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE’; ³²but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.
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Introduction

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B. Marriage is such a sacred, happy, and joyful celebration. Divorce, on the other hand, is a painful, destructive, and hurtful experience.

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C. When we consider the disastrous impact of divorce on children, other family members, and society in general, it becomes obvious that few practices match divorce for sheer destructiveness.

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D. The difficulty of this subject is so painful many people will go to great lengths to avoid it. Other people brush it off, wrongly, as no big deal in our sexually progressive twenty-first century context. Fortunately, Jesus did neither.

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E. In this section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is confronting the sins of the scribes and Pharisees and unmasking their hypocrisy. He also corrects their misinterpretations of Scripture concerning marriage, adultery, and divorce.

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F. Big Idea: By the grace of God, Christians should do everything they can to remain faithful in their marriages.

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C. “Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce.”

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E. Jesus introduces His discussion of divorce and remarriage by quoting a loose paraphrase of Deuteronomy 24:1.

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G. The phrase “some indecency in her” had become a hotly debated issue over time. There were two primary views debated by the rabbis.

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I. Guess which view was most popular? Rabbi Hillel's view was embraced by the majority of men in that day.

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K. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 does not teach that if a man wants to divorce his wife all he has to do is process the paperwork by giving her a certificate of divorce.

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L. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 teaches that “if a man finds some uncleanness in his wife and divorces her, giving her a certificate of divorce, and she then marries someone else who in time divorces her, then her first husband cannot remarry her” (D. A. Carson).

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L. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 teaches that “if a man finds some uncleanness in his wife and divorces her, giving her a certificate of divorce, and she then marries someone else who in time divorces her, then her first husband cannot remarry her” (D. A. Carson).

M. Bad theology hurts people. We must preach the Word of the living God accurately.

II. Jesus Clarifies the Biblical Grounds for Divorce and Remarriage (5:32)

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A. “But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”

B. Jesus says the only ground for divorce that is permitted by God is sexual immorality (porneia).

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**C. Jesus interpreted the ground for divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1 much more narrowly than most of His contemporaries.
(See Matthew 19:3-9.)**

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D. Sexual immorality (porneia) is a broad term referring to any illicit sexual activity, whether or not either of the parties is married. It includes premarital sex, incest, prostitution, homosexuality, and bestiality—many of these sexual acts demanded the death penalty in the Old Testament (Leviticus 20:10-14).

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F. As we study the Bible, we learn there are only two biblical grounds for divorce and remarriage. “A man or woman who has no right to divorce has no right to remarry” (John MacArthur).

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(Revelation 21:2).**

**B. "Then one of the seven angels who have
the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues
came and spoke with me, saying, 'Come here,
I will show you the bride, the wife of the
Lamb'" (Revelation 21:9).**

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**C. "For this reason a man shall leave his father
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D. Check out Ephesians 5:15-30.

E. Jesus Christ is the faithful bridegroom who will never leave you or forsake you.

**III. Jesus Confirms God's Ultimate Purpose
for Marriage (Revelation 21:2, 9; Ephesians
5:31-32)**

**F. Our marriages are to point to the ultimate
marriage of Christ to His bride, the church.**

Conclusion

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Jesus does not address the “how” in Matthew 5:31-32. His “how” is found back in Matthew 5:27-30.

Conclusion

B. Marriage is a covenant (Proverbs 2:17; Malachi 2:14). Enter into marriage as a lifelong covenant to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health; in the bad that may darken your days and in the good that may lighten your ways, until God shall separate us by death.

Conclusion

C. “Failure to keep that covenant is to live a lie before God and man. Bind it, therefore, on your heart. Decide that nothing will breach it. Strengthen it by genuinely having and holding your partner, loving and cherishing them by God’s grace. And tear out from your heart anything that might destroy the joy of that relationship” (Sinclair Ferguson).

Conclusion

D. “Let all bitterness and anger and wrath and shouting and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Instead, be kind to one another, tender-hearted, graciously forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has graciously forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:31-32).

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F. Turn from your sin and trust in Christ.

The gospel is the good news that the just and gracious God of the universe looked upon hopelessly sinful people and sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show His power over sin in the resurrection so that everyone who turns from their sin (repentance) and believes in Him (faith) will be reconciled to God forever.

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G. The Gospel Definition