

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ
SoM, Part 15: Greater Righteousness, Part 3

v20

Thus far...Jesus has taught 2 radical, counter-cultural truths to the multitude assembled at the Mount of Beatitudes, a mixture of Jews and Gentile

- Murder: committed in the mind and by the tongue as well as by the hands
- Adultery: committed in the mind and by the eyes as well as in action

Anyone who so much as looks at

- sees with a self-indulgent, self-gratifying motive
- gazes (checks out) with lustful fantasy
- covets in his heart

a woman who is not his wife is also guilty of adultery

- breaking the marriage contract established by God from the very beginning
 - one man + one woman
 - until death
- breaking the Law of God
 - 7th Commandment
 - 10th Commandment
- attacking the “image of God”
 - man = 1 male + 1 female (Gen 1:26-27)

In God’s eyes, fornication (marital relations outside of the marriage contract) is as adultery...no escape for women or singles

As with the sin of murder, the sin of adultery starts in the heart with a corrupt motive and thought...guilt comes long before any action

Adultery is a carnal sin and a spiritual sin – worshipping any false god

This time...3rd Topic: Divorce

Another radical, world-shaking, counter-cultural truth from the True God

We think divorce is the end of a marriage

Culture is “marrying and giving in marriage” repeatedly, routinely breaking the Marriage Contract

God says Divorce and Adultery cannot be separated

This is one of those “hard sayings” of The Son of God –
the sanctity of Marriage and the terms of the Marriage Contract

v31 It has been said...put away his wife:

The teachers of Israel taught that if a man was to divorce his wife
(put her away from him, unilaterally dissolve the marriage contract),
he was to give her a legal document declaring her “freedom” and “availability”,
a bill of divorcement

Deut 24:1-2

If you are a lawyer, you look for loopholes in the Law...it’s what you do
Loopholes exploited by Israel’s lawyers from these verses: man, favor, some

The teachers of Israel...the scribes/”learned”/lawyers...taught regarding divorce:

- husband alone had the power/authority of divorce, wife did not
 - man could divorce his wife for extramarital relations...adultery
 - the man could not commit adultery unless he had sexual relations with a woman married to another man
 - he could have sexual relations with any number of unmarried women or prostitutes and not commit adultery
 - however, if a married woman had sexual relations with any man other than her husband, married or unmarried, she committed adultery

result: Woman has no voice, was a 2nd Class citizen in marriage

- man could divorce his wife if he found no favor with her for any reason...even if he was no longer attracted to her

no favor...what she does or does not do for him, to please him

result: Woman “held captive”, a slave (Mormon doctrine)

- man could divorce his wife for any “indecentcy”: hair down in public, uncovered arms in public (sleeveless), a slit in the sides of a skirt

some uncleanness...unspecified, unqualified

result: Woman live in doubt, uncertainty, fear, without hope

The lawyers/scribes taught

- a. glaring Double Standard
As if woman was taken from man's foot vs his side
man > woman vs man = male + female
- b. glaring self-serving license with Word of God,
terms of the marriage contract legalistically defined by lawyers,
men interpreting Scripture vs Scripture interpreting Scripture,
bringing confusion where God established order

v32 Let's look at the pieces first

v32a But I say unto you:

The Spirit of the Law being taught directly and Personally by the Lawgiver
Jesus is going to correct all the glaring errors being taught by the teachers/lawyers
of Israel

v32b Put away his wife saving the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery:

Immediately taken off the table as grounds for divorce are the loopholes for the
trivial, emotional, subjective, self-serving reasons

- if he finds no favor with her for any reason...no longer attracted to her
- for any "indecenty": as defined by culture or by him...
hair down in public, uncovered arms in public,
a slit in the sides of a skirt, some unspecified uncleanness

Jesus closed the loopholes the lawyers thought they found that could be exploited
for their advantage to lord over their wives

With Scripture interpreting Scripture instead of man interpreting Scripture,
let's examine the context of Deut 24:1-2

Deut 22:13-19
Deut 22:20-21
Deut 22:22
Deut 22:23-24
Deut 22:25-27
Deut 22:28-29
Deut 24:3-4
Deut 24:5

self-serving false accusation of fornication
fornication/adultery is a very serious matter
if fornication/adultery, both man and woman die
betrothed = married but not "official"...both die
only the rapist dies, not the victim
fornication by singles "made right" by marriage
God of order is anti-confusion
1st Things 1st...marriage takes precedence

Therefore, the context of Deut 24:1-2 is

- Marriage is sacred in God's eyes
- Marriage is not a carnal relationship of convenience but one of commitment of "one" in every dimension
- Marriage is not to a revolving door of "consenting adults"
- Marriage is not dictated/governed by the flesh (emotions) but by the Word of God
- The basic building block of family/society is not to be "confused"

In none of the scenarios with which Deut 24:1-2 must be viewed are silly reasons

- if he finds no favor with her...he is no longer attracted to her
- for any "indecent": hair down in public, uncovered arms in public, a slit in the sides of a skirt

In all of the scenarios with which Deut 24:1-2 must be viewed is sexual sin...
fornication, adultery – confusion of God's order

The Lord "accepts" only one grounds for divorce – fornication

- "harlotry"...broadly speaking, any sexual sin
- "including adultery and incest"

Fornication > adultery

Fornication = adultery

Breaking the marriage contract (v27-28), the thoughts and intents of the heart to be proactively cut off (v29-30)

Marriage: Two become one...no clean division of one
Only tearing and ripping (ala broken plywood)

Adultery being both a carnal and a spiritual sin
(His beloved playing the harlot with false gods),
the Lord knows the depth of that pain, the tearing and ripping of hearts

Finite and fragile humans may not be able to "survive" that pain that He knows better than any person...Jesus understands

But apart from fornication/adultery, to divorce one's spouse is to cause her/him to commit adultery – putting them out/away, to

- look longingly/lustfully at another woman/man
- re-marry...to marry another that is not their God-joined spouse

In teaching the Greater Righteousness regarding divorce, Jesus is saying that adultery is a cause of divorce
and
divorce is a cause of adultery

Jesus is still teaching on the Spirit of the 7th Commandment

Safe to say that the Lord hates divorce, the breaking of the marriage contract,
just as He said in [Mal 2:16](#)
He said what He meant and He meant what He said
And Jesus says even more!

v32c marry her that is divorced commits adultery:

Jesus removed the glaring self-serving license being taken with God's Word via
perceived loopholes in v32b

Now Jesus removes the glaring Double Standards established by self-serving man

- only man can divorce his wife, wife could not divorce her husband
- for any extramarital sexual relations by a married woman but not necessarily for a married man

He will repeat/expand His teaching in response to a challenge by the Pharisees
who enjoyed the loopholes taught by the scribes/lawyers

[Matt 19:1-12](#)

v3 a trap: divorce for every/any reason (knew His stance...Matt 5:32)

v4 Jesus' reference point in time: the beginning (God changes not)
Jesus' correction: man = male + female ("them" or "man" of v3)

v5 1st Marriage, God's Marriage Contract

v6 God-joined is off-limits for man's tampering

v7 bringing up Deut 24:1-2...but not in context

v8 divorce was only legit because of hardness of heart (result of sin),
but it was not that way in the beginning (God's design)

v9 the man commits...in addition to [Ch 5:32a](#): cause her to commit
ALL parties involved commit adultery...all are guilty (Rom 3:19)
Jesus in the broadest terms unmistakably links divorce & adultery
divorce and adultery are inseparable

v10 "If all (including men) are guilty, it is better to not marry."

v11-12 God's marriage contract is a VERY serious matter

v6 God-joined is off-limits for man's tampering
man and woman must be equally serious about marriage contract

Mark 10:11-12

no Double Standard as taught by the scribes

In v32c, God's justice for adultery says that not only does the divorced spouse commit adultery if/when they re-marry, so does their new husband/wife!
Someone who marries a lawbreaker becomes a lawbreaker...
because two become one and the filth defiles God's purity

Jesus Christ proclaimed the Father's words/heart on marriage and divorce:

- Men and Women are equals in the marriage contract
- Only one "acceptable" grounds for divorce – sexual sin, infidelity
- The "acceptable" grounds for divorce was only given because of the hardness of men's hearts
- Even then, a bill of divorce does not dissolve the marriage contract... the married couple are still married in God's eyes

Having looked at the pieces, let's pull back and look at the whole of what Jesus is teaching in v31-32

Jesus is proclaiming that the lawyers/scribes unilaterally changed/modified the terms of God's Marriage Contract

Jesus re-established The Original Marriage Contract as the Only Contract

- Parties: one man + one woman (no other combination)
- Term: until death

Jesus corrected man's corruption of the Word of God, re-establishing the intent, the Spirit, of God's Marriage Contract

Every corruption of the Word of God leads to confusion

Every form of confusion is harmful to our health

The issue in marriage, even when fornication introduces confusion, is

- not how and when a person is able/allowed to break the contract
- the condition of our heart in an unbreakable contract
- the heart and mind of God, as revealed in the Word of God

Jesus is teaching God's view of marriage, and will later bring greater revelation of that via the Apostle Paul in Eph 5

3 person relationship...1 man + 1 woman + 1 LORD

In a 3 person marriage, neither the man nor the woman can unilaterally dissolve the marriage contract

Because it is not their contract!

It is God's contract and only He can dissolve it...He does upon death

But when there is confusion caused by sin, it is only the Lord to Whom is
given the ministry of reconciliation that can
heal and re-establish His order

If our hearts are soft (humble, merciful, meek)...as God desires...
If our hearts are in one accord with God's heart...as God desires...
then there is never a reason for divorce because God can

- break any hard heart
- heal any broken heart
- heal any marriage damaged by any man-made trauma/distress

With v32 in mind, as it is in God's mind, divorce is not a dissolution of the
marriage contract

What is needed is a time of healing and reconciliation

Divorce as taught by the scribes and practiced by the Jews,
that which is right in the eyes of man, is prohibited by the Lawgiver
Divorce, in the eyes of God, is not the end of the marriage
What is right in the eyes of God is a time of "being single" with the Lord while
He heals and reconciles

Matt 19:6

Matt 19:8

1 Cor 7:10-11

Our Creator and the Author of the Marriage Contract is saying,
"Divorce – don't go there. You will get hurt."

No matter what the problem/confusion/sin, even infidelity, God is saying in the
entire counsel of His Word that there is

- no place for "finger-pointing" (Rom 3:10, 23)
- place only for
 - "heart examination"
What about my heart?
 - "submission testing"
Will I or won't I abide by the terms of God's contract?
 - "Lord identification"
Who is the Lord of my life and my marriage?

According to God's design and per the terms of His marriage contract,

- marriage is permanent in time
- only the Conjoiner can separate the "one"
- the only "way out" of marriage is...death (Rom 7:1-3)

Jesus is teaching all who hear His voice...then and now...
that the Marriage Contract established by the Creator is today as it
was then
He has never changed it...it is not given to us to change it (parties and terms)

But humans are flawed...they have a sin nature (no good)
Sometimes a hard heart “trumps” the heart of God...
to be dealt with later by God Himself

1 Cor 7:15

Keyword: unbelieving (spiritual fornication/adultery)
Key phrase: not under bondage...because of 1 Cor 6:14-18
Key phrase: God has called us to peace...yet Rom 12:18

v31-32

The Greater Righteousness regarding Divorce
The teaching and the interpretations of the lawyers/teachers of Israel vs Jesus
concerning who can divorce and what are acceptable grounds for divorce

Jews: only man can divorce his wife, wife could not divorce her husband
Jesus: False...wife is an equal of man in marriage

Jews: grounds for divorce is extramarital relations by a married woman
Jesus: False...man also (cannot pick-and-choose Scripture)

Jews: man can divorce his wife for any “indecent” or if he finds
no favor with her for any reason
Jesus: False...only for fornication and that only because of the hardness
of your heart (not a good thing in the eyes of God!)

Jesus corrects/rebukes the tradition of the elders that so viciously oppressed and
ravaged women and children through the self-serving destruction of this
foundational (and prophetic) relationship.

Jesus takes away the glaring

- Double Standards
- ways men took license with the Word of God...
men interpreting vs Scripture interpreting

Jesus re-established The Original Marriage Contract

- Parties: one man + one woman + 1 Lord
- Term: until death

In USA, divorce was uncommon because it was shameful –
blame had to be established in public court
a judge had the final say

Then “no-fault” divorce (any reason, no reason) became the law
1/1/70 in CA (Reagan, “biggest mistake”) and soon spread nationally
divorce rates hit 50%...marriage contract was not at all binding

In our culture, secular and Christian, what we have is a failure to communicate

- hear the Word of God
- believe the Word of God
- agree with the Word of God
- do the Word of God (vs look for loopholes that do not exist)

Is anyone here squirming? Who isn't?! The Word turns cultures upside down!

Have you committed adultery/fornication?

Have you been divorced and have re-married or desire to get married again?

Have you married someone who was divorced?

Be still, know that He is God, and remember:

- The Law proclaims the whole world guilty (Rom 3:19)
- Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God Who came to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29)
- Divorce/Adultery is not the unpardonable sin (Matt 12:31)
- Jesus Christ bore that sin on the Cross (2 Cor 5:21)
- Jesus Christ is the perfect and complete satisfaction of the legal requirement of God for those who believe (Rom 10:4)
- Whosoever believes is made a new creature in Christ (2 Cor 5:17)
- Whosoever believes is justified by faith and has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1)
- Whosoever believes is made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor 5:21)
- Whosoever has the Son has everlasting life, by grace thru faith (1 John 5:12)
- You are crucified with Christ, the life you now live is His life (Gal 2:20)
- If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9)
- Being dead to the Law, serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter (Rom 7:6)

Are you presently contemplating divorce or will you ever in the future?

Are you in your right mind (orderly, God's order)...

or are you governed by emotion (confusion, self-order)?

Think about what you are thinking!

- Do not take the grace of God as a license to sin
- Be not deceived, God is not mocked and you will reap what you sow (Gal 6:7-8)...flesh or spirit
- Get very SERIOUS about "heart examination" and "submission testing" and "Lord identification"
- Embrace reconciliation with your spouse as Jesus Christ embraced reconciliation with you
- Submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and trust Eccl 4:12

Are you currently contemplating marriage?

Marriage is a hugely SERIOUS matter, a commitment unto death,
not an emotional rush,
not a trial program or a revolving door
not a cell phone provider contract with a buy-out clause
not a ever-changing professional sports contract

It is a contract of 3 parties...One of Whom

- wrote the contract (it is His)
- changes not
- cannot fail
- can do that which is impossible for man

Does it make sense to let Him choose your spouse and you submitting to
His making you into the spouse for the one He has chosen for you?

Unless you are unto-death-ly serious too...don't get married

The Father thru the Son (Deut 18:18-19) put His stake in the ground regarding marriage/divorce
The Father will then put His Son on a stake in the ground to pay for all the corruption and
confusion the sin of man has defiled marriage/divorce

By His Word we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error
Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be a propitiation
for our sins
We love Him because He first loved us

Rather than a closing song, we will conclude our worship service with “Closing Prayer Groups.”

Let us break into groups of no more than 4 and pray...

for forgiveness and mercy

with thanksgiving for His forgiveness, mercy, and righteousness since we are “in” Him!

about what we have just learned

about what the Holy Spirit is saying to each of us individually

If married: promise the Lord and your spouse that you will never divorce

If you are unmarried: pray for the mind of Christ

Whether married or unmarried: pray for the Holy Spirit to guide and empower obedience
to God’s unchanging contract

Let us leave here in one accord with the Lord God Almighty