***The Sermon on the Mount***

**God’s Law and Kingdom Citizens, And the Issue of Divorce; Matthew 5:31-32**

**Background to Matthew 5:31-32**

* **In Matthew 5:31-32, Jesus is dealing primarily with God’s will for marriage set in contrast to the prevailing view of the religious leaders of His day**
* **One of several statements by Jesus concerning marriage**
* **One of several passages in the Bible concerning marriage**
* **Putting together all the teachings about marriage, divorce, remarriage provides a more complete view of what the Bible teaches on the subject**
* **Just as with the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, both God’s grace and God’s righteous standard must be upheld**
1. **Old Testament Statements Concerning Divorce, Matthew 5:31**
	* Original statement Deuteronomy 24:1
	* Similar to murder and adultery, the Pharisees’ application of this Old Testament Law fails to take seriously the righteous standards of God
2. **Jesus Explanation of this Old Testament Truth, Matthew 5:32**
	* As with murder and adultery, Jesus gives a restatement of God’s intent
	* Not intended to be a complete discussion on divorce and remarriage, but to set in contrast the will of God to the prevailing low standards of righteousness in His day
3. **Practical conclusions**
	* Jesus affirms the sanctity of marriage
	* If you are married, stay married
	* If your spouse dies, you are free to remarry
	* If you divorce, remain single
		+ Divorce should be used only in extreme circumstances that involve protracted sexual immorality, protracted abandonment, legitimate threat to life
		+ In these cases, it is still best to remain single, waiting prayerfully for reconciliation
	* If you remarry, remain remarried
	* For all believers in Christ, grace covers our past, present and future decisions
	* With malice toward none, we must all pursue His righteous standards and cling to the grace that covers us
4. **Closing: Jesus’ response to a multiple divorcee in John 4**

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**Scripture Reading and Prayer**

* **Read Genesis 2:24**
* **Read Deuteronomy 24:1**
* **Read Matthew 5:31-32**
* **Read Matthew 19:3-12**
* **Read I Corinthians 7:10-17**
* **Read I Corinthians 7:27-28**

**Exposition Matt. 5:31-32 (Slide 1 – Header Slide)**

**Background to Matthew 5:31-32**

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* **One of several statements by Jesus concerning marriage**
* **One of several passages in the Bible concerning marriage**
* **Putting together all the teachings about marriage, divorce, remarriage provides a more complete view of what the Bible teaches on the subject**
* **Just as with the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, both God’s grace and God’s righteous standard must be upheld**
1. **Why Preaching on Divorce Is So Difficult**
	* Often times, this is best in a dialogue than in a sermon
	* Grace is needed today
	* Grace for yourself if you have ever been through a divorce
	* Unremitting guilt will eat at your soul in devastating ways, but God’s grace is greater than our guilty heart
	* Grace is also needed by all who have good marriages today toward those who are struggling
	* Ravi Zacharius “The difference between heaven and hell is the person of Christ. However, the decision about your spouse will determine whether you make your experience in this life a heavenly one or hellish one.”
	* Some among us made some poor relationship decisions in their past and may even be feeling the pain of those decisions today
	* We must all be gracious toward one another
	* The reason that preaching on divorce is so difficult is that it is one of the sins that is far more public than most
	* This, after identifying in each of us the last two weeks that we are murderers and adulterers, everyone, everyone here has committed murder in our heart, adultery in our heart and have been liars with our speech
2. **Let’s do some biblical background work here**
	* From the beginning God placed His approval on marriage
	* **Read Genesis 2:24 (Slide 2)**
	* Jesus affirms this: Affirmation by Jesus of God’s covenant of marriage
	* **Read Matthew 19:6 (Slide 3)**
	* **Read Matthew 19:7-8 (Slide 4)**
	* Jesus views marriage not as merely an institution by humans but by God
3. **Old Testament Statements Concerning Divorce, Matthew 5:31**
	* Original statement Deuteronomy 24:1
	* **Read Deuteronomy 24:1 (Slide 5)**
	* “uncleanness” is very difficult to ascertain what Moses is describing
	* However, I think Jesus may be on to this in Matthew 5:32 that the Pharisees had taken this statement by Moses and applied it too broadly
	* Similar to murder and adultery, the Pharisees’ application of this Old Testament Law fails to take seriously the righteous standards of God
	* By the way, Deuteronomy 24 also has a terrific verse for issues within the nation and marriage, Just for fun see what Moses to the nation a few verses later
	* **Read Deuteronomy 24:5 (Slide )**
	* Jesus seems to be referring to this statement by Moses in Deuteronomy 24:1
	* **Read Matthew 5:31 (Slide )**
	* As such I think verse 32 is connected to this statement about the man finding in his wife some indecency
4. **Jesus Explanation of this Old Testament Truth, Matthew 5:32**
	* As with murder and adultery, Jesus gives a restatement of God’s intent
	* Matthew 5:32 is not a new revelation by Christ, but an expansion of the statements made by the Law of God
	* Jesus is explaining and clarifying the Law given by Moses
	* As such this is not a complete discussion on the nature of marriage
	* Not intended to be a complete discussion on divorce and remarriage, but to set in contrast the will of God to the prevailing low standards of righteousness in His day
5. **Practical conclusions (Header slide – slide 9)**
	* Jesus affirms the sanctity of marriage
	* If you are married, stay married
	* If your spouse dies, you are free to remarry
	* If you divorce, remain single
		1. Divorce should be used only in extreme circumstances that involve protracted sexual immorality, protracted abandonment, legitimate threat to life
		2. In these cases, it is still best to remain single, waiting prayerfully for reconciliation
	* If you remarry, remain remarried
	* Take this opportunity to say to the world, this is what marriage should be and this is what Christ believes about His church
	* Vow that have been made in the Bible, even if they are unwise, should be kept
	* For all believers in Christ, grace covers our past, present and future decisions
	* With malice toward none, we must all pursue His righteous standards and cling to the grace that covers us
6. **Conclusion:**
	* Jesus encounters a woman in Samaria and she has a past
	* “Give me this water.”
	* Jesus says go call your husband. Jesus calls those five “husbands”
	* Sin is a barrier to receiving living water
	* She says “Give me the water” He says “go call your husband”
	* However, in the end of this event Jesus demonstrates His grace to all individuals – even a person with five divorces on their record and a person that is currently living with someone outside of marriage
	* This is not an endorsement by Jesus of any of that, but it is an affirmation that none of that is so serious to keep a person from Christ

Announcements:

1. VBS (Maggie)
2. Reading seminar