

Sermon on the Mount
Lesson #9
“Kingdom righteousness”
Considers how we effect others Part III

Matthew 5:31-32

Scripture: Matthew 5:20 *“For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

Introduction:

Growing up as a child I heard many discussions on marriage divorce and remarriage. Among my friends I saw the horrors of broken homes and realized what a good friend told me just the other day....that the children are the biggest losers of divorce.

When I went to Sunset School of Preaching I couldn't wait for them to set this whole discussion straight so I would know the real truth and never have to listen to the arguments again. But like a good school should they simply told us to open our bibles and study the issue and let God guide our thoughts on the matter. Yes they helped us with questions but refused to formulate our thoughts for us.

For some crazy reason I began to count how many hours that I studied this topic and I finally quit counting at around 500 hours.

When I came to the understanding that I may never know all the answers this side of heaven I moved on to spiritual growth matters.

Preparing for this sermon I spent around 60 hours not including lost sleep. I spoke to some of our elders about it and Friday evening late I threw my sermon in the trash. I threw it away because it seems complicated and you know God's word really isn't complicated.

Disclaimer:

I realize today that there are those here who have been divorced and I am ever concerned about anybodies feeling getting hurt, but I have a sacred responsibility to preach God's word as He gives it without fear of human judgment.

Transitional Statement:

Righteousness starts with God's authority, necessitates a seriousness about sin, and today we will see that righteousness demands that we consider how we effect others.

I. Introductory words

Matthew 5:31a *"It was said,.."*

A. Notice the changing of the introductory words from *"You have heard"* verses 21, 27 to this statement *"It was said"*.

1. I think there is some significance to this

- a. Before, with the *"you have heard"* Jesus had brought up undisputed facts from Ten Commandments and explained their deeper and fuller meaning throughout the whole of scripture.
- b. Now, by using the phrase *"it was said"* Jesus is going to talk about a point in the Law of Moses that had been taken out of context according to its meaning basically since the start.

II. Let's begin by looking at the Old Testament source of corruption

A. With that in mind let's start by taking a look at the Old Testament passage that Jesus is going to talk about in our Lesson today.

Read with me Deuteronomy 24:1-4

1 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house, 2 and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's wife, 3 and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, 4 then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance."

1. Boiled down, what exactly is this passage saying?

a. What the Law is saying is that **When:**

-Man marries a wife and then divorces her and she gets remarried and then gets divorced again or her second husband dies.
Verses 1-3

b. **Then**

-The first husband can't remarry her because she has been defiled. (Verse 4)

3) Now, there is a huge question that naturally comes up in this text that we need to take a look at: **What was it that made this woman defiled?**

-At this point it would be a real stretch to know for sure without a lot of guess work and speculation.

III. By the time the New Testament had rolled around God's people had grown so much spiritually (I'm getting sarcastic in case you can't tell) that holiness and purity before God was the first thing on their mind Right?NO!

A. By the time of Christ the Scribes and the Pharisees had all but ceased to care what caused the defilement of the woman in Deut chapter 24 and honed in on verse 1 to look for what would justify divorce or make it acceptable to God.

1. Because they thought, along with a widely respected school of the day (Hillel), that divorce was acceptable based on anything that was found to be unfavorable in the husbands eyes from Deut 24:1

a. I'm sure that you can guess that this was the widely popular view of people in the first century, accepted by most everyone.

b. I'm sure you will also note it seems to be the most popular thought in our world today.

-After all we live in a disposable world in which we simple get rid of what we get tired of or don't want.

B. The Scribes and the Pharisees tried to get Jesus in hot water over this issue.

1. Read with me Matthew 19:3

3 Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, " Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?"

2. To which Jesus explains to them: Verse 4-6

4 "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, 5 and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'? 6 "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

a. He basically tells them....no you can't ditch your wife for any old reason....as a matter of fact you don't have the right to separate what God has joined together.

1) Can you imagine what would happen to our divorce rate today if people gained some understanding into this simple idea?

2) The really sad note here is that God's own people can't seem to get a handle on this elementary principle.

- a) Then when they totally mess their lives up they run to the church to try to figure out what God will and will not allow them to do.
 - b) Or they walk out on God all together.
3. So with this in mind, the Scribes and the Pharisees jumped in to slam Jesus into His place by saying:

7" Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?"

- a. Now, quick review.....when we read Deut chapter 24:1-4, did you see Moses commanding men to write certificate of divorces if they sent their wives away?
 - 1) No, he simply says "when" this happens.
 - 2) Note: If your using the KJV or the ASV versions they both make it sound like Moses is commanding it, but the Hebrew doesn't support that position at all. Both these are simply out of context.
- b. But Jesus turns to the Scribes and Pharisees and tells them what their problem really is.

8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.

- 1) Their hardness of heart has all but stopped the effective penetration of God's word into their lives.
 - a) They like politicians of today were looking at God's Law for what they could get out of it.....or what they could get away with.
 - 2) Jesus says that Moses "permitted to divorce" which in the Greek means that he gave them over to it, pointing to the fact that He allowed it from the patient suffering of His mercy.....not because it was intended....and certainly not because it was ok.
 - a) As a matter of fact God says that He hates it Malachi 2:16
4. The Scribes and the Pharisees had missed the point all together.

IV. So what defiled the woman in Deut chapter 24?

A. Let's read our text for today Matthew 5:31-32

31 "It was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE';

1. That is what the Scribes and Pharisees had made the Law of Moses say.

32 but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of un-chastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

B. The husband in Deut 24, using human reasoning and legislation, separated what God had joined together. He divorced his wife for any old reason and he even had a legal binding certificate of divorce to prove it.

1. Which by human invention gave her the right to remarry as she saw fit

a. If you would like to see a copy of their certificate of divorces you can look in the I.S.B.E.

2. So the wife goes ahead and remarries

a. Then she and her new husband end up living in adultery....why?

1) Because God has never dissolved the first marriage.

b. She became defiled by adultery with a man she thought was her new husband.

1) That is what adultery does...it defiles Heb 13:4

2) Moses tells the first husband that he can't take her back because she has been defiled and the penalty under the Old Testament for adultery is death

C. The scary truth here that many people dismiss so easily is that this verse states beyond question that it is possible to get divorce and remarry someone else and be living in adultery.

1. Maybe instead of worrying ourselves to death about what God will and won't allow.....maybe we should get more serious about the preservation of our marriage unions and our commitment to covenant promises.

V. Jesus has a way of really bringing the point home when He directs His disciples to consider who caused the woman's defilement.

A. The husband by his reckless approach to God's Law

1. Cast his wife into sin....

B. It is my belief that on the day of judgment there will be more than a few husbands standing before an angry God.

1. On the day of judgment I think there will be more than a few Christians who will held responsible for sin that they have caused in others.

VI. Interestingly enough to all this Jesus' disciples said in Matthew 19:10

“If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry.”

A. Church marriage is a wonderful thing, when God is at the center of it.

B. When we loose societies disposable view of it.

C. When Covenant and Commitment burn in our hearts.

Conclusion:

Have you approached your salvation with an attitude of what can I get out of this deal?

-Or what can I get away with.

Have you been the cause of sin in others lives?