

Briefing Document: Matthew Lesson 83-Sermon on the Mount – Divorce and Remarriage

Sunday AM-September 27, 2026

Executive Summary

This briefing document synthesizes the key themes, biblical exposition, social observations, and ministry announcements from Lesson 83 of the *Sermon on the Mount* series, delivered at New Life Church. The sermon focuses on Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage in *Matthew 5:31–32*.

The core takeaway is that while human sin and societal decay have created widespread confusion around marriage, God's Word presents a clear and elevated standard. Society's shift toward easy divorce has caused severe emotional and social harm, including rising rates of mental illness, self-control issues, and family breakdown. However, the primary reason to address divorce is that it violates God's established Word. Jesus challenged the religious leaders of His day for twisting Scripture to justify easy divorce, pointing believers back to God's original design in Genesis—where a man and woman become "one flesh." While upholding biblical standards, the message offers grace and restoration, emphasizing that divorce is not an unpardonable sin and that God offers healing and forgiveness to all who seek Him.

Context and Worship Service Overview

The service combined congregational worship, Scripture readings, and performance by the children's praise team to establish the underlying themes of God's guidance, mercy, and majesty.

Key Scripture Readings Integrated into Worship

- **God's Guidance:** The children's praise team presented a song paired with *Psalms 119:105*:

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

- **God's Mercy and Redemption:** The second song drew directly from *Psalms 103:1–5*, encouraging believers to praise God for His redemptive blessings:

Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

- **God's Holiness:** The third worship selection highlighted God's majesty, referencing the vision of the Prophet Isaiah in *Isaiah 6:1–3*:

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!"

Main Teaching: Divorce and Remarriage (Matthew 5:31–32)

Biblical Clear-Mindedness vs. Cultural Confusion

The teaching emphasizes that any confusion surrounding divorce does not originate from God. God's standard in the Bible is clear and straightforward. The confusion occurs when human sin enters society and the church, lowering standards to accommodate cultural trends.

Social Impacts of Family Breakdown

The sermon outlined several social consequences resulting from the decline of the traditional family unit:

- **Historical Rise in Divorce:** During the 20th century, the divorce rate rose by 700%. Currently, over 40%—nearly 50%—of marriages end in divorce.
- **Impact on Children:** Quick, "no-fault" divorces subject children to physically and emotionally absent parents.
- **Mental Health Decline:** Deteriorating family life strongly correlates with an increase in mental illness. It is estimated that if all mentally ill individuals in America were hospitalized, they would occupy 95% of available hospital beds.
- **Behavioral Consequences:** Children raised in broken homes frequently struggle with a lack of self-control. This lack of emotional stability contributes to societal violence, domestic crime, political violence, and rising suicide rates.

Primary Reason to Oppose Divorce

While the negative social impacts of divorce are significant, the sermon stressed that the most critical reason to stand against divorce is that **it violates the Word of God**. Many modern churches fail to address the issue, offering poor or unbiblical guidelines out of fear that speaking out will not change behavior.

The Four Contemporary Perspectives on Divorce

To help believers navigate modern debates, four primary viewpoints on divorce and remarriage were identified:

Viewpoint	Core Principle	Biblical Alignment
Option 1	No divorce ever, under any circumstance.	Not supported; Scripture provides specific exceptions.
Option 2	Divorce is allowed, but no remarriage is ever permitted.	Partial view held by some traditions.
Option 3	Divorce and remarriage allowed whenever and for whatever reason.	Culturally popular, but unbiblical and rejected by Jesus.
Option 4	Divorce and remarriage permitted only under limited, specific circumstances.	The position aligned with Scripture.

Exegesis of Scripture: Jesus' Teaching and Creation Intent

Correcting Misinterpretation (Matthew 5:31–32)

During Jesus' earthly ministry, the scribes and Pharisees had distorted Old Testament law (specifically passages like *Deuteronomy 24:1–4*) to justify divorcing their wives for virtually any reason. Jesus confronted their hypocrisy and re-established God's true standard:

Furthermore it has been said, "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce." But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

Creation Standard (Genesis 2:23–24)

To understand God's heart regarding marriage, believers must look back to the creation account in Genesis, where God established the union between one man (*ish*) and one woman (*isha*):

And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

God's original design establishes marriage as a permanent, binding unity between a husband and wife.

Pastoral Care, Healing, and the Gospel Message

Despite the firm biblical stance on divorce, the sermon strongly emphasized grace, love, and acceptance for individuals affected by marital breakdown:

- **No Rejection:** The church does not reject individuals who have experienced divorce.

- **God's Stance:** God hates divorce because of the destruction it causes to families and lives, but God loves the individuals involved.
- **Forgiveness Available:** Divorce is **not** an unpardonable sin. The only unpardonable sin according to Scripture is the deliberate, final rejection of Jesus Christ.
- **Offer of Restoration:** Jesus offers healing to those carrying emotional wounds, guilt, or bitterness from past marital failures. Through repentance and faith in the Gospel, believers receive total forgiveness and grace.

Summary of Church Ministries and Community Events

The service concluded with updates on local church initiatives and community outreach events:

- **New Life Mentorship Program:** A monthly program following the Men's Breakfast where adults teach practical life skills (such as basic auto maintenance, checkbook balancing, and home repairs) to youth.
- **Operation Christmas Child Support:** Collecting items including hairbrushes, combs, clothing, toothbrushes, and plastic cups (no paper cups). Online shoebox construction is also available.
- **Children's Ministry Need:** Volunteer teachers are needed on a rotating schedule for the nursery and Children's Church.
- **Fall Break Schedule:** No youth or children's mid-week programs for two weeks during the school fall break.
- **We Care Pregnancy Center:** Hosting a baby clothing giveaway on October 3rd.
- **Intended Hope Ministries Fundraiser:** October 24th at the VFW, supporting a local ministry that assists victims of spousal abuse.
- **We Care Pregnancy Center Trivia Night Fundraiser:** October 24th at First Baptist Church.
- **Other Events:** Hospitality meeting (October 4th), Men's Breakfast (October 10th at 7:30 AM), and First Baptist Team Trivia Night.

Section on Language and Terminology

Note on Source Language Usage: The sermon transcript mentions two ancient Hebrew words from *Genesis 2:23*—**ish** (יִשׁ, meaning "man") and **isha** (יִשָּׁה, meaning "woman"). No Greek words or Greek terminology were utilized or referenced within the source text for this sermon. Consequently, no Greek phonetic pronunciation guide or Greek terminology table is required for this document.