

1**Announcements****Jokes****Matthew Lesson 86****“The Sermon on the Mount”****“Divorce and Remarriage” Matthew 5:31-32****18 October 2026****FINAL EDIT:**

Okay, so let's jump right back into our lesson this morning. And I want to call your attention for a moment to Ephesians 5:22 - and here we find the apostle Paul giving us God's view of marriage and he says, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.” Now, immediately there we face the fact that marriage is a picture of Christ and His church. Further, verse 24, “Therefore, just as the church is

subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” Verse 25, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church.” And when you come down finally to verse 32, you have the sum of it, “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” In other words, marriage becomes a symbol defining for us in visible terms the relationship between Christ and His church. Now I ask you very simply: Is the relationship between Christ and His church permanent? Yes. Then it is demonstrably significant that marriage be permanent if in fact it is to reveal the truth about Christ and His church. 2

Go back to verse 31, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” And the reason it should be that way and the reason it should sustain its relationship in that way is because it is an emblem of Christ and His church. Husbands are to be

as faithful as Christ is to His church, wives are to be as faithful as Christ is to the church and the church is to Christ. That is the imagery of Ephesians. And what this does, beloved - I want you to see this – what this does is, it lifts marriage out of purely the human dimension into the divine perspective. 3

That's important! Okay so considering that, let's look at our SS now. Matt. 5:30-31.

So, let's start taking this passage apart. Number one, we have to understand the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees. Number two, we have to understand the teaching of the Old Testament, and number three, the teaching of the New Testament.

So, the scribes and Pharisees are teaching according to their rabbinic tradition. This is what they have been taught. If you want to divorce your wife, divorce her. In Jesus' time the prevailing view was that you could divorce your wife for anything, didn't matter what it was, burn the bagels, too much

salt on the dinner, or she went around without a veil, or anything you want, but be sure you do the paperwork, that's all. 4 That was their view.

You see, they were just trying to touch base with the legal requirement that they thought they understood in Deuteronomy chapter 24. You could get a divorce for any reason. Kinda like today. Right? I've counselled with people and heard them say, "the Lord has given me peace about divorcing my spouse." Now that's absolutely ludicrous. But that's what these Rabbis were saying too.

And so, Jesus wants to show them this isn't what the Bible teaches at all. 5 Now I want us to see the true teaching of Moses. How did they get this so messed up? What did Moses really teach?

For that we go to Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and try to determine what it means? And this has been very misinterpreted by many people, and everybody's

been confused as a result of it. Now, remember, God hates what? Divorce. So, you're not going to find a section in the Bible where God says, "Now, if you find something wrong with your wife, write her a bill of divorce." I mean that would be totally inconsistent with what God says elsewhere. So, we've got to look at it differently.

What, then, is Moses doing with this bill of divorcement thing here? And why did our Lord mention that Moses gave a bill of divorcement in Matthew 19? And let me hasten to say this. The writing of divorcement was not designed by God, okay? **6 God did not invent it, prescribe it, or command it. Jesus only recognized that it existed. That's very different.**

That's why in Matt. 19:8, Jesus tells the scribes and Pharisees, 'Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.'" In other words,

it's not a command, it was simply a permission based on their sinfulness. Big difference, right?

Remember what Jesus said in 19:6 – “what God has joined together, let not man separate.” God’s design was no divorce. However, God knew in a cursed world where sin existed and relationships were strained because of the curse itself that divorce would be a reality, 7 and so God simply permitted that when divorce happened, there had to be certain things followed to ensure what would come about as a result. God was trying to regulate the consequence of divorce. Nowhere will you ever find on any page of the Bible God condoning or commanding divorce. But God and Jesus recognize that it exists. And so, to ease that and to regulate future behavior, there was a writing of divorcement.

And what was its purpose? It was a testimonial to the woman of her freedom from the marital obligation to the husband who divorced her. In the

bill of divorcement was a statement that the woman was set free by the man so that she wouldn't be accused of being a harlot, she wouldn't be accused of having forsaken her home.

Secondly, the writing of divorcement was evidence for a new husband of her legal freedom to remarry. 8 And by the way, remarriage in every passage that talks about divorce is always assumed, it's always assumed. It's assumed in Deuteronomy 24, it's assumed in Matthew 5, it's assumed in Matthew 19, it's always assumed that when somebody's divorced, they're going to remarry. And so, the bill of divorcement gave a legal freedom to remarry.

Thirdly, it is a protection for a woman's reputation from slander. Now, that's really what it was for, to show that she that she was free to remarry as far as her husband was concerned.

Now, as far as God was concerned, such a writing of divorcement was only legitimate in one case and that was a case of adultery, right? 9 But listen, that is not to say that it was necessary and that is not to say that God endorsed it. When Hosea had an adulterous wife, did he divorce her? No. When God had an adulterous nation, did He divorce them? No. When Christ has an adulterous believer in His church, does He divorce them - no. Nor is it required that that be done in this case, but where there is adultery, Jesus recognizes and God recognizes divorce will happen. It's never God's solution, never, 10 because if both people would get right with God, the marriage would be right, too. But it does and will happen.

Now, you'll remember that adultery was to be punished by death originally, but as time moved on, it was not always followed. Sometimes lives were spared. Sometimes, apparently, divorce would take

place instead of a stoning. You know, if a person committed adultery, they were to be stoned, but sometimes divorce would be the result. They were gracious.

And Matthew chapter 1 is a perfect illustration, where you find that Joseph has that option. He finds his wife Mary is pregnant, verse 19, he's a just man, he's not willing to make her a public example, so he could divorce her, privately. He could have stoned her by the law, the Romans had taken away the right to kill, so he really couldn't do that. Could have made her a public spectacle but he didn't choose to do that, so he did what he could have done in his own mind, he would divorce her, *apoluō*. It's the same word used for divorce in other places in the New Testament. So, he could have divorced her for adultery. That just gives you a little insight into how the law was at that time. And, by the way, Joseph

was a true **Old Testament saint**. **11** It says in verse 19 he was a just, upright, righteous man.

So technically speaking, we must admit that a person could divorce, you could technically divorce. But beyond that, you've got to see the grace and the mercy and the forgiveness of God. Sure, technically, if you've got an unfaithful wife or an unfaithful husband you can chuck them, move on. But in so doing, you bring about a divorce, and God always hates divorce because divorce is never the best solution to anything. Never. To love and forgive is what God desires. **12**

Now, understanding that, let's go back to Deuteronomy 24. This is tremendous. Moses gives us the Old Testament standard - now, I want you to notice this. He gives an illustration here, - not a command to divorce but the evil of divorce. He's not trying to provide for it; he's trying to prevent it. **13**

Now, here's the illustration, starting in verse 1. A man takes a wife, all right? And he marries her. And it comes to pass that he doesn't like her anymore because he's found uncleanness in her. Now, the word "uncleanness" doesn't mean adultery. The Torah actually translates it "obnoxious." So, he says, "My wife is obnoxious. I'm going to get rid of her." Notice, "Then" - it says in the King James - "let him write her a bill of divorcement." That is not the proper translation. Moses is not saying that. In the Greek language, we have two words you have to understand. I'll give you a little Greek lesson prior to closing here. One is called *pro ta sis* and the other is *a pod o sis*. The first is a minor conclusion, the second is the major conclusion.

You can think of it like this. The *pro ta sis*, the minor conclusion, leads to the *a pod o sis*, a main conclusion. It goes like, "if this," [pro ta sis] "then this." [a pod o sis] Now, a lot of people put both the

protasis and apodosis in verse 1 but that's not how it is properly translated.

Here's the KJV "When a man has taken a wife and if he marries her and if it come to pass she find no favor in his eyes, and if he finds some uncleanness, then let him write her a bill of divorcement." But that is not in the Hebrew. You don't find a "then" in the Hebrew until verse 4. There no conclusion here. [no apodosis]

The whole thing should read like this. "If a man takes a wife and if he marries her and if it come to pass she find no favor in his eyes, and if he has found some uncleanness, and if he writes her a bill of divorce, and if he gives it to her hand, and if he sends her out of his house, and if she departs out of his house, and if she goes and marries another person" - you see, it's all the same conditional clauses. You never get a conclusion until the end, and the conclusion is, when it's all said and done,

she can't come back and marry her first husband because she's so defiled. That's why it is talking about. And how did she get defiled? Because beloved, she was divorced for something less than what? Adultery. 14 That's the whole point. That's the whole point. And that is exactly what Moses is teaching.

**The Call = Salvation *Fear hell *Humility –
you can do nothing *Repent – be rescued and
forgiven *Believe the Gospel Accept the Lord,
Burden Box**

Baptism, membership, prayer, the altar, etc.

BDs – Solomon Carrillo, Courtney Warner, Joanna Rogers, Curtis Dupee, Ron Graves, Victoria McAndrew, Sharon Gladman, Kennedy Nichols, Julia Coleman, Bill Anderson, Mike Steel, Kayti Plumley

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Why He Must Return