

Married for the Lord

2024.01.28 Morning Sermon in Matthew 5:31–32

³¹“Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³²But 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.”

Main idea: Marriage is for Christ, so Christians mustn't end their marriages.

Introduction: Jesus also corrects (not just expands) our interpretation of the law.

1. Hermeneutics of a Sinner, v31

1. Deut 24: “when a man does this thing that leads to adultery, he must not compound it by taking his wife back, because her remarriage defiles her, and then he also would be defiled, it would be an abomination to YHWH, and bring sin upon the land of inheritance.” (paraphrase of 24:1–4)
2. Pharisees and disciples: “so that thing that led to the original adultery must be ok!” (n.b. Mat 19:7–10)
3. Lesson: do not go to the Bible looking to justify what you want to do.

2. Hermeneutics of the Savior, v32

1. “Rightly dividing” Dt 24 as actually being against divorce as something that leads to adultery.
2. Recognizing that the need for Dt 24 is not only hardness of heart to divorce, but even to commit compounded adultery after divorce.
3. Reasoning that adultery of the other is proper cause for divorce; the bond is broken.

3. Divorced Christians?

1. Divorce is something that happens to Christians through adultery or abandonment (cf. 1Cor 7:10–16; n.b. about abuse in the subpoints). In these cases, it is not just that promises have not been kept but that the bond itself has been broken.
 1. Abuse as abandonment.
 2. Refusal to permit to live as a Christian as abandonment. This includes isolation from the church, and from the protection of shepherding in the church.
2. But a Christian does not have to divorce, even in that case.
3. Even when a Christian does divorce, he/she must do with a view to the honor of the other's name (cf. Mt 1:19).

4. Married Christians!

1. Married for Christ's ministry to each other (cf. Gen 2).

2. Married for Christ's employing them to multiply and mature godly seed (cf. Gen 1, Mal 2:13–16).
3. Married as a hedge against impurity (cf. Dt 24:1–4, 1Cor 7:2–9)
4. Married for Christ's glory in the picture of Him and His bride (cf. Song of Songs, Psalm 45, Eph 5:22–33)

Conclusion: View marriage as for Christ. Commit to it first for His sake, and then for your spouse's sake, your children's sake, and your church's sake. Christ is for you in all of this, but the last thing that you must do is marry out of selfish self-interest.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Matthew 5 verse 31-32. Let us take heed how we hear these words. For they are the words of God. 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. A man that sends this reading of God's inspired. And then Aaron twerked. Rejoice to know. That he adds his Blessing to it. Well, the powerful working of his Spirit. Please be seated.

In the past two sections. Lord, Jesus began. You have heard that it was said to those old. And in each case, he took something from the Ten Commandments and An appropriate application at least in. The first case that they had heard an appropriate Exposition and application, but expand it.

Uh, the their understanding expanded upon the teaching that they had received. To read and understand. The Commandments. Well. A, he has modeled an approach. To interpreting and applying the law that of course, our own catechisms have taken from the Lord Jesus. Uh, seeing not only the external command that is given, but the heart that is commanded by implication and application to many other areas of Uh, and we have seen that with With murder and adultery.

In the first section 21-26 and then in 27 through 30 that often there is so much more to what the Lord is saying than than we have heard. And especially when we come to understand that Jesus Christ is the Lord God. That God's great plan in all of creation and all of history.

And all of redemption is to glorify himself in his son to display. His son as the Brilliance of his glory and to glorify his son, particularly in mankind. Whom he creates by his son in his own image, with the purpose of his son, eventually becoming man in order to redeem mankind, who sin and fall in their first Adam.

So that Christ is not the second Adam so much as he is the last Adam or as we would even better say it the ultimate Adam. Because there is a new heavens and a new Earth that are not Plan B. They are plan a from eternity. That God would glorify his son and himself in his son in

these whom he has adopted and gathered to himself in his son, but also gathered to his son as a bride.

And it is when we begin to understand the law of God, as the law of Christ, and the Royal law and the law of Liberty as we have taken times in previous sermons. And I hope what we heard and considered. At those times. And, and Bless God for having us also in the Book of James at the same time, As he often does for us.

Uh, when we come to understand the law, As the law of Christ and the law of Liberty, we discover that it addresses more deeply and more broadly. Uh, than we had ever imagined. Uh, the believer loves to say about the love of God as he begins to experience, it not only in the more General provinces that fall upon all men and the beauty of creation and the abilities that he gives us.

And the supply for all our needs and all of those wonderful things. But as we come to, To experience the love of God in the redeeming love of Jesus and the adopting love of the father in Christ and the the accompanying Fellowship love of the spirit who pours out in our hearts, the love of God we say how Broad and how deep is the love of God with joy.

And also, with joy, the believer should be coming to say as we hear the Lord, Jesus opening up the law, As we hear the one on the mountain revealing himself, as the Lord of Sinai and his goodness to us and the usefulness of the law in describing his character and explaining to us what he is making us to be and laying out before us how to imitate him.

How to follow him, how to bring him glory? And how to please him, Ought to be making us to say with How broad and deep is the law of God. The believer mustn't. Be someone Who sets law against love? No, as he conforms us to Christ, we have the same mind that the spirit gave in Psalm 119, the same mind that causes the psalmist to say how exceeding broad.

Is the law of God. Not how exceeding broad is this? Insufferable weight. That I must bear. But how exceeding broad are. Applications of the implications of the character of my glorious God upon how I live in fellowship with him and before his face. Uh, and so we find now that not only does the Lord expand upon what they have heard.

There is also, and this should not surprise us at all, if we are familiar with the gospel materials, Because of how much correction the Lord has to do with the Pharisees and the Jews themselves. There's not only the need for expansion upon what they have heard. There is Need for correction.

Of what they have heard. About the law of God. Uh and so we too having remaining sin in us. Hopefully not in the same position as an unconverted Pharisee or Jew because that word unconverted literally, has all of hell in it for us. But we too do have that remaining flesh those aspects of Of ourselves that are from our former nature from outside of Christ and if you're not in Christ, it's all you have.

That. To sin and that read God's word. Therefore. With a bent of mind with an attitude of mind and heart, that is seeking to be justified in conducting ourselves as we are. And even as we would like to do, And, One of the things that we especially find in in these two verses and the lesson that the Lord Jesus gives us in hermeneutics, Which is the primary lesson in Matthew, 5, 31, and 32.

What is hermeneutics? Hermeneutics is The study or the discipline or the principle of how to get at what the Bible means, finding out what the Bible says, it is, it is how to interpret the Bible

correctly. And as you know, in every other area of life, the right way of doing something, is the way the Bible says to do it, well, what does the Bible say to do?

Uh, we could get ourselves caught in a circle. There. Couldn't we well bless God. We also know that the right way of doing something is the way Jesus does it. And he gives us here an opportunity on a specific passage. To compare. How men in their flesh, would interpret that passage and approach that passage and then how Jesus our savior approaches that passage.

And then we'll get into what the secondary teaching of the passage is. And that is the teaching of the Lord Jesus here on marriage and divorce, which will bring us full circle. Because the the great truth behind his teaching on marriage and divorce. Is that marriage is not for ourselves.

It is a gift from God for our good, but each of us, when we get married, we are to get married. And each of us when we are married, we are to be married for the Lord. We are to marry for Christ. And we are to be married in our marriages for Christ and so we'll see.

Then and these four points and uh, really the conclusion is A fifth point, an applicational. So, the Lord Helping us to get through all of this. We hope to see you by his help first. The hermeneutics of a sinner. Second, the hermeneutics of the Savior. Third, the Lord answering the question of divorced Believers or divorced Christians.

Well, fourth, the Lord. Uh, giving this answer of divorced, Uh, with respect to divorced questions, the answer to the question. Of divorced Christians. Providing more of the. The biblical Theology of marriage that is. Is behind this. And then, Uh, an application. Uh, that That we would approach our own marriages, according to what we hear.

You know, one of the Sections. And what Elder Mangum taught this morning. Those things that are obstacles or hindrances or enmity enemies or excuses against spending. A concerted effort and time in biblical meditation. One of them was, I'm too practical. You know, I'm a doing person, not a thinking person.

So I am too practical to spend lots of time meditating on things before. God. But as James says, be hearers of the world, be doers of the word and not hearers only. And as As many of our Reformed Presbyterian. Forefathers abbreviated it. The Bible's doing book But the the person Uh, the person who says, I'm too practical to do that is like, The carpenter who says, I'm a doing person, I'm too practical to plan and to measure.

Uh, and just goes ahead and starts cutting and constructing and we all know the Folly of that. And carpentry Well, there is a similar Folly, isn't there in Christianity? Uh, if we say, well, I don't have time for all that meditative stuff reading in prayer and dwelling on things before God, and having fellowship with him, I want to live for God.

I'm just go out there and do it well. See what a mess you make without your planning, and without your measuring And especially since the carpenter doesn't draw power. From the planning and the measuring. Whereas, the Christian does draw his power from fellowship with God. And dependence upon him but also there is the Folly, isn't there?

There is the falling of being an only meditative Christian Who is obviously not understanding. That he is to live in fellowship with God. And so what God has given him to do, he must do. Or. Not knowing the god before whom or upon whom he meditates. So we'll hope to do that at the last first.

Then the hermeneutics of a sinner is important for us. To to get before us. The. The passage. That. Those whom they had heard here, he doesn't say, Um, you have heard that it was said to those of old, he says, furthermore, it has been said, how does Jesus know?

Well, Jesus grew up in synagogue. Uh, and because Uh, Jesus is Uh, perfectly righteous, not like we are He neither had the effects upon his thinking of sin. The noetic, the thought, Distorting effects of sin. Nor was he easily distracted or offering himself up to anyone or anything? Other than God, by means of his word, when he heard a sermon in synagogue, and so, children, even when it's hard, especially when it's hard to listen.

Well, to the sermon, you have an opportunity to depend upon G to depend upon Jesus who listened perfectly to every sermon. He heard his whole childhood long. Than to Mary, of course, one less kid to throw the elbows into and correct, and take out, and apply God's remedy, and bring back in, and whatever it was that Mary would have to do in synagogue, but one of the things that he had heard said, Whenever they got to Deuteronomy 24 was whoever divorces his wife.

Let him give her a certificate of divorce. Now what is the passage That he had heard that application made from. This is at Deuteronomy 24 verses 1 through 4, when a man takes his wife and marries her and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her and he writes her, a certificate of divorce puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house.

When she has departed from his house and goes and becomes another man's wife. If the latter husband, detests, her and writes, her, a certificate of divorce puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house. Or if the latter husband dies, who took her as his wife, Then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled for, that is an abomination.

Before y'all play. And you shall not bring sin on the land, which Yahweh your God is giving you. As. Inherent as an inherent inheritance. Excuse me. Uh, and so that is the passage. Uh, that is the only passage that we have in the Old Testament. That refers to these certificates of divorce.

Uh, well. Among men. Uh, there there is a text in which the Lord prophesying about the The wickedness of Israel's Covenant-breaking. Describes himself metaphorically, as writing her A certificate of divorce. But doing so in a context when he in which he is declaring that he will refuse to let her marry another and that he will, then take her back to himself.

Um, bless God. But that's the passage. Uh, that That the rabbis in the synagogues. Had been using to teach whoever divorces his wife. Let him give her a certificate of divorce. You notice their assumption. Uh, that divorce is permissible and that divorce. Will happen and even their teaching, then by implication the divorce is fine, so long as it's legal.

The doors is fine. So long as you've got the paperwork, you know, make sure when you divorce your wife to dot the eyes and cross the t's and give her the certificate, so that everybody knows that you are free and everybody knows that she is free and then she can marry another.

That's the rabbinic interpretation in verse 31, whoever divorces his wife. Let him give her a certificate of divorce. Now you, or I would be in great danger of reading, Deuteronomy, 24 verses 1 through 4 exactly the same way. Often, when we come to a text of scripture, we come with our own agenda and we come especially with the question.

How far can I go? How much can I get away with? May I do this thing that I want to do. And if we want to be able to get divorced and we come to Deuteronomy 24 verses 1 through 4 with that desire. We'll see. He only regulates what happens after a divorce.

And he does. So in the context of saying that when a man divorces, his wife and gives her a certificate of divorce. Therefore divorce must be fine. As long as I've got the paperwork, as As I write the certificate. But the Lord helping us. Inspiring us to one another and getting us all the way to Deuteronomy 24.

That is not going to be. The application or the exposition or application that we make from Deuteronomy 24, why? Because the main point in those verses, Is that divorce leads to defilement? The man can't take his wife back after she's married another, because she's defiled even if she remains married to that other one.

Until he dies. He may not take her back. And so by implication, Deuteronomy 24 1-4 was teaching exactly what the Lord teaches here. He has not making a change in the law of divorce and adultery. He's correcting a misinterpretation, a wrong reading. Of Deuteronomy 24. And so if he's divorced his wife, he's put her away because she has been naked to him.

That's the language of the uncleanness there. It's not that she was found to be a fornicator or defiled, or whatever. There's something that happens. Once you get married, you really find out who you married. And there is no way to find out who he really is who she really is.

Until there, there's no way to find that out in the fullness that you will find out after marriage. There's all sorts of wisdom that can be employed. Yeah, in a courtship model in which others are helping you, uh, come to a wise decision and filling out your your rose-colored evaluation, uh, of them and, uh, in trying to prevent against falling into hormone with one another before you make a wise decision and, uh, and Premarital counseling, which is post-marital counseling really for the premarital couple, you know, teaching them how to do the things that you don't you hope not to have to

To remedy later, you could do all those things but still you find out what they're like after you get married in a way that you didn't before.

And they are exposed before you. And so, the situation, Deuteronomy 24 is a guy finds out what his wife is really like Uh and because in their culture, he can be the certificate writer. He says, you know, not satisfactory writes a certificate and sends her away. Now, if she marries again, she commits adultery.

And the one who marries her commits adultery,

And so Deuteronomy, 24 is teaching when a man does thing. This thing that leads to adultery. He must not compound it by taking his wife back because her next marriage her remarriage defiles her. And if she is already an adulteress and he then takes her back, the Lord ramps up the language, doesn't he?

At the end of that, passage an Abomination to the Lord, and bringing sin upon the land. And so the Lord here in Deuteronomy 24 is teaching, he hates divorce and he hates adultery. And he hates it, when his people, do, whatever they want to do, according to their desires and not thinking according to that, which pleases God that, which glorifies God that, which God loves You know, the phrase an abomination to the Lord, it means the thing that God hates.

And he wants his people to, to live according to that. Which God loves. And he wants his people to think not only about themselves, but upon the Lord's Church upon the Lord's

inheritance, it's the Lord's land and the Lord's people as, in his Providence, we've been hearing in Leviticus and by his help, we hope to hear again, uh, this afternoon, And so here's something that God hates.

And how did the rabbis and the Pharisees and even the disciples. Who in Chapter 19 after the Lord teaches this in public, or the Pharisees are going to hear about what he teaches in The Sermon on the Mount, and they're going to say that one's so unpopular. We're gonna, we're gonna trap him.

We're gonna come right up to him and ask him about divorce. And we got Deuteronomy 24 in our pockets. But even the disciples you know, how does the sinner respond? They say The Sinner says oh, so divorce is okay. But having understood the passage. Now, you can hear how they're actually saying.

How we would actually be saying. Oh, so the thing. That. Just about compelled that woman into adultery is okay. It's almost exactly opposite. The intent of the text, isn't it? And so, you can hear that and I think it's helpful if you Turn to or listen carefully, while I read to you from.

Chapter 19. Uh the Pharisees came to him, testing him saying to him. Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason? And he answered and said to them, have you not read that? He who made them at the beginning, made them male and female. And he 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. And Lord helping us will come back to that. I think it's more important to cover the subject thoroughly than it is to cover it quickly. So We may end up with two sermons. So then they are no longer two but one flesh.

Therefore what God has joined together. Let not man separate. Notice in verse 6, just as an aside. All defensive polygamy, dies impaled upon Matthew, 19 verse 6. Uh, the Lord says too, he uses the number They said to him. Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and to put her away?

Very, very Dishonest. Reading, isn't it of Deuteronomy 24 verses 1 through 4? And he said to them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts. Permitted, you To divorce your wives. See you saying? Moses was not saying that divorce was permissible. Moses, knowing That you are going to sin and divorce because you're heart of heart.

Gave you? A procedure by which to guard from the The consequences. The worst consequences. Of that. Of that, which the hardness of your hearts produced. But from the beginning, it was not. So hear what he's saying? He's saying divorce didn't come from Moses divorce. Did not come from God, it was not part of what God taught, as permissible in marriage.

Divorce, is something that Sinners do. And many of the regulations in the law are for Sinners. There are the laws full of regulations for what to do when a man injures a man or man steals from a man or a man damages, another man's property. Or when Sinners are caught in, in various sins.

Etc. And so, we're not. Not then to read the law saying, oh well those things are permissible so long as we follow the procedure.

Jesus continues. Then to say and I say to you, whoever divorces his wife except for sexual immorality and marries another commits adultery Note the difference. It's not just the woman.

Who has been divorced to commits adultery, isn't because Jesus teaches on the other end now, in Matthew 19. If the man divorces her and he marries another Except for sexual immorality.

And commits adultery. And whoever marries her, who is divorced. Commits adultery.

And his disciples said to him, Not the Pharisees, the disciples. If such is the case of the man with his wife, It is better. Not to marry. You hear the disciples, they're still thinking about themselves. If that's how it is for me, if I get married to her Then it's not worth the trouble and it's not worth the risk and it's not worth the difficulty.

But the disciples are thinking about how it is for me. We don't get married for me. It's good for me. Because the Lord has given that, which is good. And there are many benefits that he has added to marriage for me and it's not wrong for me to seek those benefits as a seeking from the Lord.

But we are to The Lord not from a selfish self-interest. But first from a Christ, interest, and second, for from an interest, from the interest of our spouse and third for the interest of our Godly seed and forth for the interest of the church which is strengthened by proper marriages and proper households and propagated by the multiplication of Godly seed.

And finally, last by a self-interest that isn't a selfish self-interest but coming as it does after. All of those is a submissive self-interest. Christ dependent Christ. Delighted Self-Interest. If you can even call it self-interest by the time. You get to that? And so we see the difference now not just in Christ interested versus self-interested approach to marriage.

But remember the Lord Jesus here is giving us samples case, studies in handling his law, as those who hoped to enter the kingdom in handling his law as belonging to the king who is cleansing those whom he's Justified. He's sanctifying those whom he's justified so that he by the time he brings us at last to Glory, we will have been conformed to His Image, remembering by the way.

Does 99.99 of that at your death? But he gives you. The honor. Of participating in his sanctifying you in this life. And as he does, so you have the even greater honor of glorifying your king, who made this difference in you. So that's what he's doing as a whole.

And when we we come to this sample, before we get into the meeting, we've already said a lot about the meat, haven't we? But before we get into the meat, we need to understand that this is a hermeneutics lesson. That whenever we come. To Christ's law, Christ's instruction the Lord's law.

Remember, praise God for this historic reality. They're Greek copies of the New Testament did not transliterate Yahweh. It put kurios for law, Yahweh, they read, and heard Lord. So that when they came to refer, especially to Jesus as Lord, they were continually confessing Jesus as Yahweh. So we are to come to the Lord's word, not out of self-interest.

But out of Christ interest. Seeking that which he says about himself. And and for his glory and that which he has given to us for our good, as those who are being redeemed unto. His glory. So, do not come to the Bible looking to justify what you want to do.

Now, this doesn't mean not to make applications from passages. Jesus is making further applications from the passage than exactly what it says. But what he's doing is he's reading Deuteronomy, 24 1-4 in the context of what it says, which you find in verse. Verse 32. She

who is divorced if she marries another she commits adultery Whoever marries a woman, who, is divorced?

Commits adultery. That's what Deuteronomy 24 1-4 says, isn't it? But then the implication is that you ought not to divorce. Except for the cause of adultery. And he makes that further. That further inference. From which he makes the application. Whoever divorces. His wife for any reason except sexual immorality.

Causes her to commit adultery. So that brings us, then from the hermeneutics of this of the sinner. To the hermeneutics of the Savior. The, the passage clearly teaches. About the adultery of. The divorcee who is not lawfully divorced, meaning God's law and not the certificate thing. Uh, remarrying. And so, Jesus.

Sees and reads and teaches us that this is not Accommodating of divorce. It teaches us that God himself is against divorce. And so, if we read, God is against divorce. And he has given to Israel because of their sin and doing things that he is against laws that further regulate, uh, Even over against their sin, then we must conclude with Jesus and with Deuteronomy 24, That God.

Is against. Divorce. In fact, we may even reason from Deuteronomy 24. Uh, that Adultery.

Adultery is the only proper cause for divorce. The bond has already been broken. And so, the man who puts his His wife away on account of fornication or an account of adultery. Is doing so because the marriage Bond, Has been broken note. This is, uh, this is different from Uh, they haven't kept all of their promises.

Uh, one of the, one of the things that we must be careful of. Ex in saying that divorce is Valid in the case of Covenant breaking is that the person who really wants to get divorced, then comes and says, well, they made all of these promises when we were covenanting.

And I feel like they haven't been kept as well as I wanted them to be. And therefore, the Covenant has been breached and I may get divorced. Uh, Uh, the adultery actually breaks the bond itself. And requires the reforging. Uh, then of the marriage Bond as the Lord does.

With, and for his people for In the, the picture in the book of Hosea. Uh and that marvelous and because of the the greatness of what he does there to some extent, mysterious prophetic book in which he commands the prophet to take a wife, knowing that she is going to commit adultery so that he can command the prophet to take her back after she has broken the bond.

Israel was in breach of Covenant on a continual basis. Uh, you know, we're going to be hearing uh, this afternoon about something that was at least in what God presented through, Moses an essential part, Of the life of Israel that we actually don't have any evidence in the Bible they ever did once.

And yet there was a point at which the Lord would declare to them that the bond was broken and he was putting her away. And so, the Lord Jesus comes to Deuteronomy 24 and he says Remarriage after divorce, is adultery just like it says here. And adultery then is the only A proper cause.

For an actual. Uh, for an actual divorce. And you see Jesus, then teaching us to read our Bibles in context. To come to the passage and sit. What the passage intends for us to take away. And then the further applications that we make must come underneath in submission to the primary intent of the passage Right?

A passage may have applications implications for many things. But they may only properly be taken away under the primary teaching of the passage itself. And so the Lord Jesus teaches us Uh, some hermeneutics there. Well then. What is he teaching us? About proper divorce. Well, he teaches us from Deuteronomy 24, then.

That adultery is a proper cause for divorce. In other words, divorce is something that happens to a Believer. It's not something that a Believer does, it's not something That. That a Believer seeks out. Similar to when Joseph and Mary had been betrothed, which means not that they were married.

They hadn't entered into a marriage covenant, but they had covenanted to get married. And so it actually required in in chapter one. In verse 19, the language have put her away is the language of divorce in chapter one and it would have required a divorce for Joseph to put Mary away.

And he viewed the adultery that she had committed as something that had been done to him. Uh, a breaking of the, the bond that they hadn't even fully formed, they had only covenanted to form as something that had been done. Uh, to them. Similarly In the only other cause for divorce, proper biblical cause for divorce.

That the scripture gives us, it's something that is done to the believer. First Corinthians 7, First Corinthians 7 verses, 10 through 16. Now, to the married I command yet. Not I but the Lord. Now, when we went through First Corinthians, there were several of these sayings in First Corinthians that you, you have to be very careful with.

Paul is speaking. He says, later in the book as someone who has the spirit, he gives commands that are the commands of God as Apostolic commands, when he says, I not the Lord or not, I but the Lord, he's, he's specifically stating whether he's quoting something that they have already heard the Lord, Jesus say, Very similar to how he quotes scripture.

And, and so he sees All scripture is having the authority of the Lord Jesus, but he will say, when he's quoting scripture, he'll often say doesn't he? As Isaiah says, or as the prophet says, or as David says, Etc. And so he says he's quoting the Lord here. A wife is not.

To depart from her husband. Okay, so he's quoting the Uh, the teaching of the Lord Jesus on divorce, Christians are not to do it. Citizens of the Kingdom to use the language that we have. So far in the Book of Matthew are not to do it, disciples are not to do it.

But even if she does depart, Let her remain unmarried. Or be reconciled to her husband, it's the same thing. Jesus is teaching here, isn't it? If? If she breaks God's command, if she goes against God's intention concerning marriage and does depart. Then she needs to remain unmarried because if she remarries, she's going to commit adultery.

Let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. Praise God, that, that biblical concept of the possibility of the reforging of the bond. Once it's broken continues here and a husband is not to divorce his wife. So, all of that is Is him just teaching the same thing that we have in Matthew 5 verse 31 and 32.

And now Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, letting them know. Now That he is speaking by the spirit of Christ upon the authority of Christ, more than Christ had previously said. You remember in John 16, when Jesus is prophesying, the completion of the New Testament. And he says, I have much more to say to you now that you cannot bear.

But I'm going to send the spirit of of Truth and when he comes he will tell you, the things that remain. He'll not going to speak from himself. He's going to speak from me. Okay, so when he says, I not the Lord here in verse 12, he's not saying this less authoritative word.

He's saying this part of that, which remained to be said that Jesus had not said during his Earthly life and Ministry. Okay, but to the rest, I not the Lord, say if any brother has a wife, who does not believe and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.

Now, she's under his headship. Which means she is willing to be brought to church and she is willing to be brought under gospel preaching. And she is willing to bring up their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord even though she herself Does not believe. Okay, so there's a lot that's packed into The the she is willing there.

And a woman who has a husband, who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, Let her not divorce him. Now, she cannot make her husband. Commander husband to do that, which he does not want to do, but She as a Believer has to obey Jesus Christ, which means he is willing as an unbeliever to have a believing wife, who is a member of the church, he is willing for her to attend the Assemblies of the church attend upon the worships and under the preaching.

Bring their children up and the fear and admonition of the Lord. He is willing for her to have access to the under Shepherds that Christ has set over. Her doesn't isolate her from the congregation. Uh, he, you know, she has recourse. If she's having difficulty even in her marriage, Yeah, she can come to.

To the elders and get help with that, but he's willing. She's a Christian. He knows what her being a Christian means. Even though he is not a Christian, if he's willing to have her live with him in that condition, then she should stay. Let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving, husband is Sanctified by the wife and the unbelieving wife is Sanctified by the husband.

What does that mean? Well, he completes the thought, in the rest of verse 14. Otherwise, your children would be unclean but now they are. Holy And so there's especially a regard for the children. So if you have one believing parent, but the other parent Even though they are unbelievers willing to let the children, let the the believing spouse and the children remain in the household.

Those children are as consecrated to God as if both parents were believers. They're not half consecrated because their dad doesn't believe, they're not half members because their mom doesn't believe. But the unbelieving spouse is Sanctified or set apart to God with regard to the children. So that the the children remain.

Holy one of the Understood in context correctly, one of the clearest passages in the New Testament. On the the fact that the Covenant membership of Believers children continues in the administration under Christ, that it was not canceled or lost and the transition from Moses. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart a brother or a sister is not in bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.

And so here verse 15 again, the Christian does not seek divorce. But divorce does happen to them sometimes. And they are to be at peace with that. If a spouse has committed adultery. You don't have to put them away, but if they don't want Uh, to reforge the marriage bond, there's nothing you can do do about it.

It's a, it's a lawful divorce. They have abandoned by adultery. But there's also abandonment abandonment uh geographically and relationally, as we see here. Uh, there's peace there. For

the believer. It is as if their spouse has died. Obviously. If their spouse. Believes again, they As they have as it were been brought back to life and the marriage Bond may be reformed.

But, If the unbelieving spouse marries another, they commit adultery. And you may not even in the case of a subsequent divorce remarry there, I hope. That's clear enough, but praise God for this. Continued. Exposition from Jesus about this, God has called us to peace. Under the Providence of God.

Uh, we do not have to be marked forever as a divorcee. If we have been abandoned, Uh, weather by adultery or rejection or Geography. They just you know skip down and are never heard from again. Uh, we may we may have peace and but then an encouragement verse 16, Because it is such a difficult thing and reminding us to be married, not for self.

But for the Lord, and for the spouse, and for the children, and for the church, Note the motivation that he that the Apostle sets before a Believer who's in, one of the most difficult life situations there are as, as A marriage between a Believer and an unbeliever or any.

A marriage that is so strained. That one is giving in to the desire. To depart. For how do you know a wife, whether you will save your husband or how do you know, husband? Whether you will save your wife, so be married. For Christ to be married for your spouse.

Be married for your children. Be married. Uh, for the church. Now, one thing Uh, one thing that we must say here about abuse, Uh, historically and correctly. The the the church has understood. Abuse as a form of Abandonment. But it was not using a modern day contemporary interpretation of the word of abuse there.

Uh, this is not reviling as a form of Abandonment, or Psychological torture. Uh, it is a form of Abandonment. This is In order physically to preserve one's life. Uh, that If if a spouse must leave in order to keep the sixth commandment for his, or her self, or his or her children, that is an abandonment.

Because the, the home is not a safe place for there. Refusal to permit, a spouse to live as a Christian is a form of Abandonment. This can even happen in professing households. One of the reasons for this is because when a husband or a wife is Uh, so wicked.

Uh, as To do that. Which A modern day, contemporary person would call. Psychological torture. One of those things, one of the things that the suffering spouse needs most of all is help. From her sisters. Or him from his brothers or either of them from their Elders because that is an opportunity to find Christ Alone valuable.

To say psychological to experience. That resting upon the Lord Jesus and rejoicing in the Lord Jesus and seeing being abused as an opportunity, not only to find him strong enough and not only to find him valuable enough, but as an opportunity to obey a bunch of commands, That you can't obey.

If you are not being reviled, if you are not being cursed, if you are not being done many evil things, against if you are not being treated as an enemy then you don't yet have opportunity to bless those who curse you and to return kindness for reviling and to do good to those who persecute you and to love your enemy by giving them something to eat and something to drink.

It can be a marvelous thing. For a woman, whose husband is verbally and emotionally abusive, we're not saying that those things don't exist. Right, it is verbally or emotionally abusive in

those cases, but it is not the sort of physical abuse. That means you must leave to preserve life.

But it can be a wonderful thing for her. When now, every time she serves a meal, she's not just obeying submit to your husband. She's not just obeying be a helper. Who's exactly corresponding to him. She's not just obeying all those other things, she's obeying. If your enemy is hungry, feed him.

Fact, she gets to obey that command, and if your enemy is thirsty, give him something to drink. And she gets to obey that command almost more than any other Christian. And yet it is extremely difficult. Isn't it to have that perspective? When you're in the midst of the trouble?

When you're under the fire? And that's why she must be permitted. To have her Sisterhood in the church, especially The Godly older woman women, who are an example to her. Who have come through it, all, and God has sustained them and especially her under Shepherds Who can speak to her the sympathy of Christ that is throughout the Psalms and give her things to pray and things to sing with her heart.

But also give her the instruction of Christ that is for her good that is her specifically appointed opportunity to serve him. And so, yes, it is abandonment. If she is being cut off from, Christ's means. For enabling her to work walk. According to Christ's commands because she's not being She's not being permitted to live as a Christian.

Is the same as if she wasn't permitted to attend the public worship. Or to receive the Lord's supper. She must be permitted to have visits with her Shepherds. Her under Shepherds who are under obligation before God to withhold, nothing helpful, but Proclaim it not only publicly But from house to house.

And so there also is in, you know, the tiny little, you know, reformed niche of those who have a proper understanding of biblical teaching on marriage and divorce that as husbands who take advantage. And their wives do have all of this opportunity for sanctification because he's an unconverted brute who is going to hell as a professing Christian And there are many professing.

Christians, who are going to hell? Because they're gospel Hypocrites. But there are many husbands who take advantage, because this understanding of, she must be permitted to obey Jesus, according to her church membership, and the life that he has appointed for her within her church within his church. Well, her congregation too.

So, I hope I hope that is clear or helpful enough at least for preaching. I understand that there are particular situations invite you. To come get pastoral counsel. If you, if you still Have questions. But notice That both in the adultery case. And in the abandonment case, The Christian does not have to divorce.

Even in that case. The Christian may keep his adulterous wife or keep her adulterous husband. And reforge, the Covenant bond that has been broken. And, In in First Corinthians 7. If the Christian is permitted at all to stay, The Apostles says stay. Right. So there is the the loss, you know.

It's it's a deep profound loss. Uh, perhaps no burden greater to bear. Well, maybe the parent of a unconverted adult child is up there. Um, But the wife or the husband of an unconverted spouse where more and more Christ is everything to you. And yet your spouse does not have him.

One of the greatest burdens one can bear. And even though a Christian doesn't have to divorce, Um, If, if he decides to Under one of these two cases. Uh he or she must continue to do. So, with a view to the honor of the other one's name, You may not divorce as someone who is indulging bitterness or enmity.

Uh, how devastating it must have been to Joseph. Uh, when he found out Mary was pregnant. And yet, what did chapter 1 verse 19 says? Because he was a just because he is an upright, man. He was determined to do it quietly. He still cared for and cared for the name of Uh, has betrothed.

Who had committed at least? As far as he thought this adultery against him. Again, there's so much in resting upon the Lord. Jesus and rejoicing in the Lord Jesus, that is necessary for us to Go through a situation like this and not come away with bitterness or hostility on our part.

Well, All of this is about divorced Christians. Uh, the the bad news is there because it is in conflict with the good news. And I praise God. There are many things, the Lord hates, but the Lord does not hate. God does not hate he, hates many things. Why isn't God hate?

Because he himself, is the God who is from all eternity. There is only God. There's nothing to hate. So God is love. But when they're come into existence, things that are opposed to him, God hates those things out of proper, love to himself. Yeah, the wrath of God is not one of his inherent Perfections.

Why? Because from all eternity, there is nothing upon which to pour out wrath. And so the Holiness of God, the intensity of his Divine commitment to himself is an inherent perfection in God. And wrath is an expression of that Perfection because he must have wrath. On whatever is wicked.

As a function of his Holiness of the intensity of his own commitment to himself and therefore it is much more uh enriching to consider God as he is in himself to consider God's love to consider God's holiness. Even though the other things. And so it is helpful for us also to hear and focus on the positive.

If that that's the way divorce is, well, then what about marriage? And this is something I think that the Lord Jesus is getting at, uh, in the immediate. Did we read verse 11 Well, if I can't remember, Uh, at least indulge. Um, precocious anility. And we'll read it again.

The disciples in verse 10. Say if such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better. Not to marry. In other words, we're still thinking of those who are married, as those who are married for ourselves. But he said to them, this is verse 11, but he said to them, all cannot accept this saying But only those to whom it has been Given, and he goes on to talk about those who do things for the kingdoms.

Sake, the Lord Jesus saying, yeah, it is impossible for everybody else. But I'm giving you the kingdom. The Lord Jesus says, for those who have him. Uh, we we may receive that those who are married for Christ then Married for Christ's Ministry to each other. Uh, very briefly Genesis chapter 2.

The. Knows that he has a Ministry to the woman. She's made in Uh she's made in God's image just like he is, but he is the one who is given the terms of the Covenant before she is made. And so he's a teacher, not just a teacher, you know, that's tree's bad wife, but a teacher of the Covenant of Life.

Dear wife, we have been bound to God in a way that none of the other creatures have been bound to God. And as the primary great term of the Covenant of are being made in His Image and bound to him, we are not to eat of that tree. So there's this great part of our life, a great part of the Fulfillment of our being made and the image of God that comes in the not eating of the tree.

Of the knowledge of, of Good and Evil. And so, We are to be married for Christ's Ministry to each other. He was, it was not good for him to be alone. Uh, the woman is created, I keep trying not to call her Eve. She doesn't get that name until after the fall and the promise of the Gospel that touches her.

And that's where the name comes from. But the woman is created, and what's the first thing God does with her, when he creates her Brings her to the man here you are. And you know you've got all these other duties you're going to hear about in a moment because the rest of the portion in Genesis 1 has to take place, right?

Be fruitful, multiply fill the Earth. Take dominion over the creatures. You know, all of those things but the first thing that she that she learns about herself before any of those other things. The first things she learns is that she was made to be a helper to him. Wife.

When God in his Providence, brings you to your man. Uh, your first duty and all of the creation, Is to be a helper to him for him to be enabled to glorify and enjoy God just as his first duty, as your head is to lead you your first duty each husband when God in his Providence has brought to you the woman that is yours.

Your first duty is to lead her in Covenant with God and glorifying God and enjoying him together. So, being married for Christ means being married for Christ's Ministry to each other being married. For Christ means being married as As a as a couple. Now, husband and wife. Now, whose aim is to multiply and mature Godly seed, Now, at first that was the only kind of seed there was.

Because it wasn't the fall. And so he says, be be fruitful multiply, and fill the Earth after the fall. It actually takes more in order to produce Godly seed, doesn't it? Because not only do Mom and Dad need to bring them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord, but we're actually depending upon the Lord to bless marriage and to bless childbearing, and to bless the use of his word in our hearts, on our tongues.

When we go out, when we come in, when we rise up, when we lay down, to bless all of those things, to the knowledge of God and bring them to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. And yet it is another Folly to say, well, I might do all of those things and God might not do his part.

What an arrogant? Horrible wicked thing for any of us to say. No, we do those things. Trusting that not only will God do his part but God is going to overrule all of the Mind. Not doing my part that is going to happen because I am imperfect and I am sinful.

But God desires, these Godly seed, not just in Genesis 1 but

We'll take the time. Seek from the Lord's strength. Just read to you. Malachi 2 is very similar to First Peter 3, when the husband is, is taught to deal with his wife, in an understanding way, or according to knowledge, uh, so that his prayers might not be hindered. God literally telling husbands that if they do not listen to their wives, God will not listen to them.

Okay. Uh, same thing is happening in Malachi chapter 2. It'll start in verse 13 in order to catch that. The second thing you do you cover the altar of Yahweh with tears with weeping and crying? You see, he does not regard the offering anymore nor receive it with Good.

Will from your hands you say, for what reason? Answer. Because Yahweh has been witness between you and the wife of your youth now that cuts both ways. He is a witness of the Covenant but he's also a continual witness of how you have kept that Covenant, isn't he? With whom you have dealt treacherously yet.

She is your companion and your wife by Covenant. Did he not make them one? Having a remnant of the spirit. In other words, there's this Reference back to being made in the image of God. And why one? He seeks Godly seed, Godly Offspring, therefore, take heed to your spirit, so he's not just saying, don't get divorced.

He's seeing he's saying, be married in the right way, for the right reasons. Be married for the glory of God in whose image and the remnant of whose spirit is in. You be married for the good of your wife with whom he has brought you into Covenant, be married for the purpose of producing these uh these Godly seed and pursue all these things not just in outward actions perfunctory forming uh performance of that, which is required pursue, all these things from your heart.

Have these things as the purpose from your heart, have these things that you Delight to do in your marriage from your heart. To your spirit and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth for Yahweh. God of Israel says that he hates divorce. For it covers one's garment with violence.

And the violence here is at least two ways, isn't it? In the wake of verse 15. It means divorce is a way that hypothetical Godly offspring and godly Generations. Get murdered. That there are these Godly Generations that are supposed to come out of a marriage. But when people are married for themselves, Instead of for God, and for their spouse, and for their children, and the word Offspring, doesn't mean just your children.

The word seed is a, is a word that can span Generations. When you're married for yourself instead of for the Lord, you you are virtually murdering. Following Generations.

And it's also violence against the marriage because the marriage makes one person out of the two. And if the two are one flesh and then you destroy that, Covenant, That one flesh Union has been. Violently destroyed. Therefore, take heed to your spirit. That you do not deal treacherously. He repeats it again.

And so, we are to be married for Christ's Ministry to one another. We are to be married for Christ's, employing us to multiply Godly seed, and to mature them. Believing parents are Gods, appointed means in this world of multiplying Believers. Now, there are those who come in unnaturally. Those who are Outsiders and hear the gospel, even though they were not members of the church, they were not Godly Offspring.

They didn't come into this world with a right to the assembly with a right to hear the preaching. Those, that's the ordinary way. But there are those whom God also brings in from the outside but his primary appointed means for multiplying. And maturing Godly seed, is the Christian household, the Christian marriage, the Christian children, the Christian Generations, He brings by their Covenant right under the word that he uses to give them Life by his Spirit.

They do not have that life necessarily to begin with. But he gives them that life by his word. Marriage is a hedge against impurity, we are not going to take the extra time now to To go

through First Corinthians 7 verses 2 through 9, except to say this does not give you the right to say, I have an addiction to lust.

So you have to marry me to protect me from my impurity. Uh, no. This This. For those who are Courting or betrothed in the particular context there and I can tell you more about it later. We won't take extra time now, but especially in the last married for Christ's glory.

In the picture of him. And of his bride. Um, Again. Maybe we should have made it. Um, but uh, song of songs is not. Uh, primarily about our Earthly marriages. It is about that by implication. Uh, but the song of songs is about the love of loves. In which the King of Kings gathers to himself, the bride of brights.

Uh, and it's about Christ and the church. And then not only do you have the song of songs, which Solomon, probably wrote. Um, definitely not about Solomon. Uh if you know how can anyone read what the Bible says about Solomon and his marriages and then read the song of songs and think that was written about him.

You just there's no hope for someone with that kind of hermeneutic. Um, there's hope they can be converted but not as long as they keep that hermeneutic. But after Solomon has written that the sons of Kora come and by the Holy Spirit, they give us this kind of cliff notes concise Edition, in Psalm 45, part of which Lord willing will sing in a moment.

But this wonderful opportunity in marriage. A husband to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, as he's commanded in ver in Genesis 2. But also for the wife imitating, the bride coming to Christ in Psalm 45 and being told forget your father's house. You know, the vast, you know, maybe not the majority but a huge number Of the marriage problems that arise could have been avoided.

If the husband and the wife would have made the clean cut. With their former household and considered one another, the only household they were ever determined to have again, in this world unless Providence kills, one of them and changes it. That they are determined that they are the only household that they have now.

You know, I have this overlapping household idea. And then, of course, being married for Christ's glory as a picture of him and his bride, Ephesians 5, 22-33 The many of you who have, Uh, read either or both of The first two volumes of gouge. See the glory of Christ there.

And then how wonderful marriage is. And as an opportunity And so, in conclusion, View your marriages for Christ's children. View your future marriages for Christ. It's not for you. It's for him. Commit to Commit to it, not temporarily. But as long as you both shall live, Commit to it first for his sake, then for your spouse's sake, then for your children's sick, and your children's children and so forth.

And then for your Church's sake and the church generally sake, Christ is for you. In his design for marriage. It's not like you're crucifying yourself to do others. Good Christ is for you in all of this. But the last thing that you must do is marry out of selfish.

Self-Interest. Let your self-interest come in subjection to Christ seeking his goodness in all of these other ways. Amen, let's pray.