

### Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 5:31-37 Bellevue Church of Christ – Fall 2015

These 6 antitheses (21-48) provide the application of what Jesus said in v. 20 - **"unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees..."**

Jesus is pointing back to God's original intent for marriage...  
\*Gen 2:18-25 / Eph 5:22-33

### 3. Divorce

All 6 of these antitheses begin with a saying similar to this. The word "also" connects this to the previous discussion on Lust.

31" **It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'**

Deut 24:1-4 ->

Moses originally said "because he found some indecency," but by the time of Jesus almost anything was allowed as long as there was a "certificate" to support it.

Also See...  
7<sup>th</sup> Commandment  
Ex 20:14; Deu 5:18

This saying is emphatic in each of the 6 antitheses ->

Compare To...  
\*Mt 19:3-12  
\*Mk 10:11-12  
\*Lk 16:18

### 4. Oaths

See 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment...  
Ex 20:7; Lev 19:12; Num 30:2;  
Deu 5:11; 6:3; 23:21-23 ->

Was Jesus Completely Forbidding the Taking of Oaths? Consider...  
\*Mt 26:63-64  
\*Heb 6:13

Jesus insists that whatever a man swears by is related to God in some way, and therefore every oath is implicitly in God's name.

32 **But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.**

This arises out of the assumption that in first-century Palestine a divorced woman will remarry in most circumstances.

33" **Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.'**

34 **But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,**

Is 66:1

**or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.**

Ps 48:2

36 **And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.**

37 **Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No';** <- Jam 5:12  
anything more than this comes from evil.

#### Except on the ground of...

- \*πορνεία (porneia): **fornication**, sexual immorality, sexual sin of a general kind, that includes many different behaviors.
- \*KJV - "fornication"
- \*NASB - "unchastity"
- \*NIV84 - "marital unfaithfulness"
- \*NIV - "sexual immorality"

Sexual Immorality is the only thing that can break the fleshly bond of marriage (Gen 2:18-25)

#### Perform to the Lord...

A sophisticated and clever system developed that judged how binding an oath really was by examining how closely it was related to Yahweh's name.

Swearing by heaven and earth was not binding, nor was swearing by Jerusalem, though swearing toward Jerusalem was binding.

"Verbal Finger Crossing"  
-Dr. Marlin Connelly

Matthew returns to the topic with marvelous examples in 23:16-22.

True righteousness will always deliver thorough and consistent truthfulness.

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**Certificate of Divorce**

**Deuteronomy 24:1–4 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> “When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then 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 of his house, and she departs out of his house, <sup>2</sup> and if she goes and becomes another man’s wife, <sup>3</sup> and the latter man hates 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 man dies, who took her to be his wife, <sup>4</sup> then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the Lord. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance.

**Exodus 20:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> “You shall not commit adultery.

**Deuteronomy 5:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> “ ‘And you shall not commit adultery.

**Except on the ground of...**

NIV - But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. <sup>1</sup>

NIV84 - But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery. <sup>2</sup>

NASB95 - but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for *the* reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. <sup>3</sup>

KJV - But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The New International Version*. (2011). (Mt 5:32). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. (1984). (Mt 5:32). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>3</sup> *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*. (1995). (Mt 5:32). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

<sup>4</sup> *The Holy Bible: King James Version*. (2009). (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Mt 5:32). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

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**Fornication**

**FORNICATION**—in every form of it was sternly condemned by the Mosaic law (Lev. 21:9; 19:29; Deut. 22:20, 21, 23–29; 23:18; Ex. 22:16). (See ADULTERY.)

But this word is more frequently used in a symbolical than in its ordinary sense. It frequently means a forsaking of God or a following after idols (Isa. 1:2; Jer. 2:20; Ezek. 16; Hos. 1:2; 2:1–5; Jer. 3:8, 9).<sup>5</sup>

**ADULTERY**—conjugal infidelity. An adulterer was a man who had illicit intercourse with a married or a betrothed woman, and such a woman was an adulteress. Intercourse between a married man and an unmarried woman was fornication. Adultery was regarded as a great social wrong, as well as a great sin.

The Mosaic law (Num. 5:11–31) prescribed that the suspected wife should be tried by the ordeal of the “water of jealousy.” There is, however, no recorded instance of the application of this law. In subsequent times the Rabbis made various regulations with the view of discovering the guilty party, and of bringing about a divorce. It has been inferred from John 8:1–11 that this sin became very common during the age preceding the destruction of Jerusalem.

Idolatry, covetousness, and apostasy are spoken of as adultery spiritually (Jer. 3:6, 8, 9; Ezek. 16:32; Hos. 1:2–3; Rev. 2:22). An apostate church is an adulteress (Isa. 1:21; Ezek. 23:4, 7, 37), and the Jews are styled “an adulterous generation” (Matt. 12:39). (Comp. Rev. 12.)<sup>6</sup>

**4518** πορνεία (*porneia*), ας (*as*), ἡ (*hē*): n.fem.; ≡ DBLHebr 2388, 2393, 2394, 9373; Str 4202; TDNT 6.579—LN 88.271 **fornication**, sexual immorality, sexual sin of a general kind, that includes many different behaviors (Mt 5:32; 15:19; 19:9; Mk 7:21; Jn 8:41; Ac 15:20; 1Co 6:18; 7:2; 2Co 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 5:3; 1Th 4:3)<sup>7</sup>

**4202. πορνεία porneia**; from 4203; *fornication*:—fornication(4), fornications(2), immoralities(1), immorality(16), sexual immorality(1), unchastity(1)<sup>8</sup>

**Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement**—a legal check upon reckless and tyrannical separation. The one legitimate ground of divorce allowed by the enactment just quoted was “some uncleanness”—in other words, conjugal infidelity. But while one school of interpreters (that of Shammai) explained this quite correctly, as prohibiting divorce in every case save that of adultery, another school (that of HILLEL) stretched the expression so far as to include everything in the wife offensive or disagreeable to the husband—a view of the law too well fitted to minister to caprice and depraved inclination not to find extensive favor. And, indeed, to this day the Jews allow divorces on the most frivolous pretexts. It was to meet this that our Lord uttered what follows:<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Easton, M. G. (1893). In *Easton's Bible dictionary*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

<sup>6</sup> Easton, M. G. (1893). In *Easton's Bible dictionary*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

<sup>7</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

<sup>9</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 23). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

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A sophisticated and clever system judged how binding an oath really was by examining how closely it was related to Yahweh's name. Incredible distinctions proliferate under such an approach. Swearing by heaven and earth was not binding, nor was swearing by Jerusalem, though swearing *toward* Jerusalem was. That an entire mishnaic tract (M *Shebuoth*) is given over to the subject (cf. also M *Sanhedrin* 3.2, *Tosephta Nedarim* 1; SBK, 1:321–36) shows that such distinctions became important and were widely discussed. Matthew returns to the topic with marvelous examples in the polemical setting of 23:16–22. The context is not overtly polemical here but simply explains how Jesus relates the kingdom and its righteousness to the OT.<sup>10</sup>

**God's Original Intent for Marriage**

**Genesis 2:18–25 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." <sup>19</sup> Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called Woman,  
because she was taken out of Man."

<sup>24</sup> Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

**Ephesians 5:22–33 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup> In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." <sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

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<sup>10</sup> Carson, D. A. (1984). Matthew. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 8, p. 153). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

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**Jesus' Teaching on Divorce**

**Matthew 19:3–12 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" <sup>4</sup> He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, <sup>5</sup> and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? <sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." <sup>7</sup> They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" <sup>8</sup> He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. <sup>9</sup> And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

<sup>10</sup> The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." <sup>11</sup> But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. <sup>12</sup> For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."

**Mark 10:11–12 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, <sup>12</sup> and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

**Luke 16:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery."

**Swear Falsely**

**Exodus 20:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain."

**Leviticus 19:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord."

**Numbers 30:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> If a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth."

**Deuteronomy 5:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain."

**Deuteronomy 6:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey."

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**Deuteronomy 23:21–23 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> “If you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay fulfilling it, for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin. <sup>22</sup> But if you refrain from vowing, you will not be guilty of sin. <sup>23</sup> You shall be careful to do what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth.

**Taking Oaths**

**Matthew 26:63–64 (ESV)**

<sup>63</sup> But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” <sup>64</sup> Jesus said to him, “**You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.**”

**Hebrews 6:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself,

**Heaven, Earth, Jerusalem**

**Isaiah 66:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Thus says the Lord: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?”

**Psalms 48:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King.

**Matthew 23:16–22 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ <sup>17</sup> You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? <sup>18</sup> And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ <sup>19</sup> You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? <sup>20</sup> So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. <sup>21</sup> And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. <sup>22</sup> And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

**Yes and No**

**James 5:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.