

Flipped: The Upside Down Kingdom (Breaking & Keeping Vows)

Andy Deane · 10/01/2023 · Matthew 5:31-37

Today Jesus will instruct us on vows, how we should aim to keep them in the majority of our circumstances.

BREAKING VOWS (DIVORCE)

Matthew 5:31-32, 31 *"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'* 32 *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.*

The FOUNDATION: God's Design

- Genesis 2: Lifelong monogamous marriage between a man and a woman.
- Ephesians 5 reveals to us that marriage is a picture of God's sacrificial relationship to us.
- Visit www.go2cornerstone.com/marriage for resources to strengthen your marriage.

The PROBLEM: People's Corruption

- Sin overtook people and we began to see rampant adultery, polygamy and easy divorce.
- The Law was given to to slow people down and let anger cool off: Deuteronomy 24:1, *If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house...*
- An illegitimate divorce leads to adultery because God doesn't recognize the divorce and sees them as married.

The CLARIFICATION: God's Permission

- The modern conception of "no fault divorce" or "irreconcilable differences" does not exist in the Bible.
- In God's kingdom, a marriage can only be ended when there is an allowed reason preventing reconciliation:
 1. Adultery (Deuteronomy 24:1; Matthew 5:32)
 2. Abandonment (1 Corinthians 7:10-16)
 3. Abuse (1 Corinthians 7:10-16, as a subset of abandonment)
 - For physical abuse report this illegal crime to authorities, separate for safety if needed, & involve the church.
 - Extreme, prolonged, verbal and relational cruelty is also abuse.
 - Credible threats of physical harm toward a spouse or their children.
 - Incurable drug or alcohol addiction accompanied by: regular lies, deceptions, thefts, and/ or violence.
- Cornerstone offers a support group called Divorce Care that you'll find on the groups page of our website.

The HOPE: Marriage Reconciliation

- Because marriage is to be held in highest esteem, divorce should not be our first impulse, even when allowable.
- Matthew 19:3-11, 3 *Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"* 4 *"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'* 5 *and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?* 6 *So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.* 7 *"Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"* 8 *Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.* 9 *I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."* 10 *The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.* 11 *Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given.*
- "I just don't think it's possible" = Joel 2:25, *I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten.*
- The context of Joel is one where drought & famine had so destroyed things it looked irreparable, but God...

KEEPING VOWS (OATHS)

Matthew 5:33-37, *“Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ 34 But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37 All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.*

OATHS: At times, imply that your word isn’t trustworthy

- Be such a trustworthy person you don’t need to swear or make an oath.
- The need for making an oath betrays our character.
- Look for ways this week to take your own words and commitments seriously.

OATHS: At times, are permitted in certain circumstances

- (1) God swears oaths (2) Jesus spoke under oath in a court (3) Paul made oaths (Heb. 6; Matt. 26; Ro. 1).
- Because of deceit in society swearing an oath in a court room, or signing an affidavit is probably necessary & ok.

OATHS: Always, are followed through on by God!

- We are all guilty of failing to fulfill all of our promises. The Law crushes us once again to point us to Jesus.
- Thank God that He never lies, and his promises are to bless us!
- Numbers 23:19, *God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?*
- 2 Corinthians 1:20, *For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.*