

NOON BIBLE STUDY: MATTHEW 5 (PART 5)

REMINDER: THIS SECTION OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT INCLUDES A NUMBER OF INSTANCES WHERE JESUS IS GIVING HIS INTERPRETATION OF THE MOSAIC LAW AS WELL AS ADDRESSING INSTANCES WHERE TRADITION HAD REPLACED GOD'S TRUTH. JESUS IS ALSO GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER RATHER THAN THE EXTERNAL BEHAVIOR ALONE. **DISCLAIMER:** IN THIS STUDY WE WILL BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND SOME FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS AS IT RELATES TO THE TOPIC OF MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE (IT ISN'T AN EXHAUSTIVE STUDY COVERING EVERY ANGLE OR INSTANCE)

MATTHEW 5:31 - IT WAS SAID...

GENESIS 2:20-25 - FIRST BIBLICAL RECORD ON MARRIAGE

DEUTERONOMY 24:1-5 - MOSAIC LAW TEACHING ON DIVORCE (WHERE JESUS IS QUOTING)

MATTHEW 19:1-9 - WINDOW INTO THE MINDSET OF JESUS' DAY

THERE WERE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF "INDECENCY" (DEUT. 24:1)

ESV STUDY BIBLE: "THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT DEBATE BETWEEN PHARISAICAL PARTIES ON THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF MOSES' DIVORCE REGULATIONS (DEUT. 24:1), AS NOTED IN THIS EXCERPT FROM THE MISHNAH, GITTIN 9.10: "THE SCHOOL OF SHAMMAI SAYS: A MAN MAY NOT DIVORCE HIS WIFE UNLESS HE HAS FOUND UNCHASTITY IN HER. . . . AND THE SCHOOL OF HILLEL SAYS: [HE MAY DIVORCE HER] EVEN IF SHE SPOILED A DISH FOR HIM. . . . RABBI AKIBA SAYS, [HE MAY DIVORCE HER] EVEN IF HE FOUND ANOTHER FAIRER THAN SHE"....

MATTHEW 5:32 - "BUT I SAY TO YOU..."

JESUS IS NOT IN FAVOR OF "EASY DIVORCE". (IN FACT, EVEN THE USA DID NOT HAVE "NO FAULT DIVORCE" UNTIL 1969).

THE PERMITTED REASON FOR DIVORCE ACCORDING TO JESUS: "UNCHASTITY". THE ENGLISH WORD "CHASTE" IS DEFINED AS "INNOCENT OF UNLAWFUL SEXUAL INTERCOURSE" (MERRIAM WEBSTER). THIS IS THE GREEK WORD "πορνεία (*PORNEIA*) AND IT IS OFTEN TRANSLATED "SEXUAL IMMORALITY" (ESV, CSB, NIV, NRSV) OR "FORNICATION" (KJV). HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF SOME OTHER USES OF THIS WORD:

JOHN 8:41 "YOU ARE DOING THE DEEDS OF YOUR FATHER." THEY SAID TO HIM, "WE WERE NOT BORN OF FORNICATION; WE HAVE ONE FATHER: GOD."

ACTS 15:19-20 - "THEREFORE IT IS MY JUDGMENT THAT WE DO NOT TROUBLE THOSE WHO ARE TURNING TO GOD FROM AMONG THE GENTILES, 20 BUT THAT WE WRITE TO THEM THAT THEY ABSTAIN FROM THINGS CONTAMINATED BY IDOLS AND FROM FORNICATION AND FROM WHAT IS STRANGLED AND FROM BLOOD.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:1 - IT IS ACTUALLY REPORTED THAT THERE IS IMMORALITY AMONG YOU, AND IMMORALITY OF SUCH A KIND AS DOES NOT EXIST EVEN AMONG THE GENTILES, THAT SOMEONE HAS HIS FATHER'S WIFE.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:16-18 - OR DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT THE ONE WHO JOINS HIMSELF TO A PROSTITUTE IS ONE BODY WITH HER? FOR HE SAYS, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." 17 BUT THE ONE WHO JOINS HIMSELF TO THE LORD IS ONE SPIRIT WITH HIM. 18 FLEE IMMORALITY. EVERY OTHER SIN THAT A MAN COMMITS IS OUTSIDE THE BODY, BUT THE IMMORAL MAN SINS AGAINST HIS OWN BODY.

GALATIANS 5:19 - NOW THE DEEDS OF THE FLESH ARE EVIDENT, WHICH ARE: IMMORALITY, IMPURITY, SENSUALITY,...

1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-5 - FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD, YOUR SANCTIFICATION; THAT IS, THAT YOU ABSTAIN FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY; 4 THAT EACH OF YOU KNOW HOW TO POSSESS HIS OWN VESSEL IN SANCTIFICATION AND HONOR, 5 NOT IN LUSTFUL PASSION, LIKE THE GENTILES WHO DO NOT KNOW GOD;

SEX IS A BEAUTIFUL THING CREATED AND COMMANDED BY GOD WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF BIBLICAL MARRIAGE COVENANT. SEXUAL IMMORALITY THEN IS ANY INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL PRACTICE WHICH WOULD INCLUDE SEXUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN UNMARRIED PEOPLE OF THE OPPOSITE SEX OR SAME SEX AS WELL AS SEXUAL RELATIONS OF SOMEONE WHO IS MARRIED WITH SOMEONE (OF EITHER SEX) OTHER THAN THEIR SPOUSE.

IF A MARRIED PERSON COMMITS "UNCHASTITY" (SEXUAL IMMORALITY), THEY ARE BREAKING THE MARRIAGE COVENANT AND COMMITTING A SIN WHICH JESUS THEN PERMITS THE MARRIAGE TO END. THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT MUST, FOR THERE ARE MANY EXAMPLES OF FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION IN SUCH DIFFICULT MOMENTS. BUT IF YOU MARRY SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN DIVORCED FOR A REASON OTHER THAN SEXUAL IMMORALITY, ADULTERY IS BEING COMMITTED.

ESV STUDY BIBLE: "EXCEPT ON THE GROUND OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY. THIS IMPLIES THAT WHEN A DIVORCE IS OBTAINED (BY THE INJURED PARTY) BECAUSE OF THE SEXUAL IMMORALITY OF ONE'S SPOUSE, THEN SUCH A DIVORCE IS NOT MORALLY WRONG. BUT WHEN A MAN DIVORCES HIS WIFE WRONGLY (I.E., WHEN HIS WIFE HAS NOT BEEN SEXUALLY IMMORAL), THE HUSBAND THUS **MAKES HER COMMIT ADULTERY.**"

TAKEAWAYS: A FEW THINGS TO REMEMBER AS WE CONSIDER THESE THINGS AND DIGEST THIS PASSAGE. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THESE THINGS BECAUSE IF WE LEAD WITH "WELL WHAT ABOUT X, Y AND Z", WE MISS THE FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH THAT IS BEING TAUGHT HERE.

REGARDING MARRIAGE:

- MARRIAGE IS A SERIOUS COMMITMENT
- MARRIAGE IS INTENDED TO BE FOR LIFE
- MARRIAGE IS AN INSTITUTION THAT IS NOT UNIQUELY CHRISTIAN OR JEWISH, BUT HUMAN AND AS SUCH, GOD HONORS AND RECOGNIZES A MARRIED COUPLE UPON "CONSUMMATION".

REGARDING DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE:

- IF A MARRIAGE ENDS BECAUSE OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY, REMARRIAGE IS POSSIBLE.
- IF A MARRIAGE ENDS FOR A REASON OTHER THAN SEXUAL IMMORALITY, REMARRIAGE IS NOT NECESSARILY A POSSIBILITY AND THE PARTIES SHOULD SERIOUSLY SEEK THE LORD ON THEIR QUALIFICATION TO REMARRY.
- THERE MAY BE REASONS TO SEPARATE FROM A SPOUSE OTHER THAN SEXUAL IMMORALITY.
- THERE MAY BE REASONS DIVORCE OCCURS OTHER THAN SEXUAL IMMORALITY.
- THERE ARE SOME INSTANCES WHERE REMARRIAGE MAY BE PERMISSIBLE EVEN IN INSTANCES WHERE SEXUAL IMMORALITY WAS NOT PRESENT.
- ONE'S CURRENT SITUATION SHOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE CHANGED IF COMING TO THIS INFO AFTER MARRIAGE, DIVORCE OR REMARRIAGE.
- DIVORCE OR UNBIBLICAL REMARRIAGE IS NOT AN UNFORGIVABLE SIN BUT IT IS NOT SOMETHING TO APPROACH WITHOUT THE BIBLICAL TEACHING IN MIND.

JUST AS JESUS WAS ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF EASY DIVORCE AND THE TRIVIALIZATION OF THE MARRIAGE COVENANT IN HIS DAY, WE TOO MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THE DECISION TO GET MARRIED SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, AS SHOULD THE DECISION TO DIVORCE - AND, RELATING TO A TOPIC THAT IS NOT OFTEN CONSIDERED, REMARRIAGE MUST ALSO NOT BE CASUALLY APPROACHED.