

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Theme: *Christ the King*

Outline:

Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)

Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King's baptism.

Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)

Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)

Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)

Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.

Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.

Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.

Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.

Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.

Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.

Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.

Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

A MAJOR theme in the Bible is about the coming KINGDOM. Everything in redemptive history is about moving towards the kingdom. The kingdom is coming.

But the kingdom needs a KING. And Biblically the God-ordained King of the Kingdom must meet certain prophetic qualifications. As we have noted these are all fulfilled perfectly in Jesus Christ.

He was born King of the Jews – the promised Messianic deliverer. He came saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Mt. 4:17). The basis for entry into the kingdom is REPENTANCE.

And for His kingdom people who repent, whose ultimate destiny is the kingdom, Christ then presented how they should then live as “kingdom citizens”. In effect, Christ on the Sermon on the Mount presented His “kingdom ethics” which is to be characteristic of His kingdom people.

Christ came to fulfill the Law in the sense that He came to empower His people to live out the spirit of the moral Law as found in the Law of Moses. The key principle that governs the entire Sermon on the Mount is found in Matt. 5:20 where Christ says that unless a person's righteousness exceeds that of the legalistic religious leaders, they will by no means enter the kingdom. Kingdom living is all about living according to this righteousness standard presented by Christ. This is what defines His kingdom people.

The point is that true repentance results in a changed heart that then demonstrates itself in righteousness in the life. In essence the righteousness of kingdom living corresponds to Spirit-filled living.

Slide # 2

Matthew 5:17 (NKJV)

17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but **to fulfill**.

Matthew 5:20 (NKJV)

20 For I say to you, that unless your **righteousness** exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

We are in that section of the sermon in Matt. 5:21-48 often called "The Six Antitheses" because all six sections begin with some variation of Christ saying, "***But I say to you...***". (cf. Mt. 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43). Here Christ explains that what they had been taught about the mere EXTERNAL emphasis of law is to have a DEEPER corresponding INTERNAL reality.

Slide # 3

Six Sections – Six Topics

- 1) Murder/Anger – Mt. 5:21-26
- 2) Adultery – Mt. 5:27-30**
- 3) Divorce – Mt. 5:31-32**
- 4) Oaths – Mt. 5:33-37
- 5) Vengeance – Mt. 5:38-42
- 6) Love for Enemies – Mt. 5:43-48

In the first bracket we saw that Christ dealt with was the issue of murder showing it involves deeper heart issues as revealed in anger, contempt, and cursing. These at root are heart issues related to the issue of murder.

Today, in our study Christ shows us the deeper heart issues related to adultery and divorce. And He shows us that these issues potentially relate to every one of us no matter our station in life.

Matthew 5:27–32 (NKJV)

27 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’

This was an accurate accounting of the 7th commandment as found in Ex. 20:14 and Duet. 5:18 which simply said, **“*You shall not commit adultery.*”**

Adultery is a specific sexual sin regarding marital unfaithfulness. It is to be sexually unfaithful to your marriage partner. God ordained marriage to be between one man and one woman till death do them part. As ordained by God marriage is to be FOR LIFE (cf. Rom. 7:2-3).

The sexual union denotes the two “shall become one flesh”. But marriage is more than just a sexual union. Just because people have sex does not mean they are married. In the eyes of God when people get married God performs a spiritual union in which He joins them together. In Matt. 19:6 Jesus said, **“*what God has joined together, let not man separate.*”** This is God’s doing and it is not to be separated by man. Thus, marriage is AN ACT OF GOD! God is involved! And that makes it serious!

What makes marriage to be marriage (biblically speaking) is that it is a covenant relationship between a man and a woman. Contracts are made between people, but a COVENANT relationship brings God into the equation. A covenant relationship is one in which one makes a binding commitment before God and is thereafter accountable to God for it.

Slide # 4

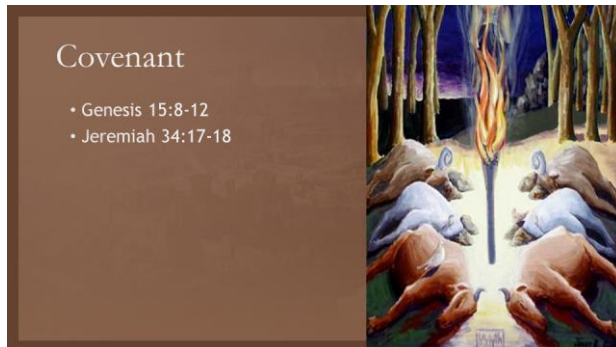
Malachi 2:14 (NKJV)

14 Yet you say, “For what reason?” Because the LORD has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife **by covenant.**

To MAKE a covenant in the Old Testament literally meant "TO CUT" a covenant (cf. Gen. 15:18). The people would cut animals up and make an “aisle” formed by the dead animal parts. The parties to the covenant would then walk together between the bloody pieces signifying, ‘If I don’t keep my part, may God cause this to happen to me’ (cf. Jer. 34:18).

Slide # 5

This is the language of Genesis 15 when God made a covenant with Abraham. In that case God was symbolized by a burning torch as He alone made His way through the bloodied animal pieces signifying a unilateral covenant commitment on the part of God. It is also the language in Jeremiah 34.

Slide # 6

In the Jer. 34 context the Jews had been living in sin in that they had wrongfully been using their fellow Jews as slaves. They supposedly then repented and made a covenant commitment that they would not do this anymore. But then they reneged on the covenant commitment and reverted back to their old ways. Here is what God said about this:

Slide # 7**Jeremiah 34:18–20 (NKJV)**

18 And I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between the parts of it—

19 the princes of Judah, the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf—

20 I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. Their dead bodies shall be for meat for the birds of the heaven and the beasts of the earth.

A COVENANT was a sacred binding commitment which one was responsible to keep before God on pain of death for violation. It is for this reason that under the Mosaic Law in the OT the penalty for adultery was DEATH (cf. Lev. 20:10).

Slide # 8

Leviticus 20:10 (NKJV)

10 'The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, **the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death.**

Relatively few seem to take marriage very serious today! It is seen more as a CONTRACT before men rather than a COVENANT before God. The problem is that there is so little FEAR of God. Having "**no fear of God**" describes the unbelieving world (cf. Rom. 3:18). To fear God is to reverence Him. It is to take accountability to Him seriously!

If one truly "fears" God that will be reflected in the life – especially in the matter of a sacred binding covenant commitment. Having a fear of God sees marriage in reference to God.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 describes "last days" apostasy in which people will be full of themselves and yet have "a form of godliness". They will still "profess" but live lives that deny God's authority (power) in their lives. The KJV says in 2 Tim. 3:3 that they will be "**trucebreakers**". Others translate this as "**unforgiving**", "**irreconcilable**" or "**unappeasable**" (cf. HCSB, ESV, NASB, NKJV).

People will be "**covenant breakers**" who refuse to be reconciled. In practical reality they have no regard for God and therefore refuse to forgive or get right. Having no fear of God, they break covenant and have a spirit of being "**irreconcilable**". Verse 4 says people will be "**traitors**". They will think nothing of betraying a trust. Yet, in spite of it all they will still claim to be "Christian" having an outward form of "godliness". Such is consistent with last days apostasy – last days perilous times.

Adultery is serious because of how it violates the innocent party, but even more important, it is deadly serious because it violates a covenant commitment made before God. Remember in context Jesus is addressing disciples who have a relationship with God.

The Jews had respect for the 7th commandment on a physical level. But they had figured out ways to get around the legislation against adultery. You could lust all day – just as long as you never actually committed physical adultery you were considered okay.

But Jesus had something to say about this. He said...

28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

How is that for a higher standard? Jesus said it is not enough to merely refrain from the actual physical act of adultery, one must also abstain from even LUSTING after a woman in the heart! Jesus takes it deeper into the realm of the heart! True, one is commanded not to commit physical adultery, but beyond that Jesus says to even lust for a woman who is not your wife is to commit adultery with her in the heart!

Before God one is guilty of adultery long before the actual act. Even the desire to have sex with a woman not your wife is to be guilty of adultery in the heart. The real deeper issue is that of the HEART!

Many years ago, I worked with a married guy who was flirtatious with a gal who worked in the office. I wasn't even saved yet at that time. During break time this gal would often come to our lunchroom and they would flirt back and forth. He had a form of religion, but he said to me one time: "***I would really like to have sex with her just one time.***" According to Jesus he was already guilty of adultery in his heart even though they hadn't done the actual deed (cf. 2 Pet. 2:14).

The Jesus standard is a HEART standard! "***The law forbade the act of adultery; Jesus forbids the desire.***" (William MacDonald)

A major problem for the whole of society is that pornography is everywhere. The Bible says "the lust of the eyes" defines what the world is about.

Slide # 9

Proverbs 27:20 (NKJV)

20 Hell and Destruction are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied.

It has well been said, “***You can’t help the first look, but you are accountable for the second one***”. True, but the problem today is that society more and more holds this right in our face. It is a constant thing. That is not an excuse, but it is a reality. If you use social media at all you are going to have to deal with this. So how can we live a life pleasing to God in the context of a pornified society?

1. Fill the heart with God’s Word.

Slide # 10

Psalm 119:9–11 (NKJV)

9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.

10 With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!

11 **Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.**

God’s Word must be so strongly fixed in our minds that it becomes the dominant influence in our thoughts, our attitudes, and our actions.

– ***Jerry Bridges***

If you are not filling your heart with God’s Word I don’t see how you are going to withstand the onslaught of sexual temptation on constant parade.

2. Stay close to the throne of grace.

Slide # 11

Hebrews 4:15–16 (NKJV)

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our **weaknesses**, but was in all points **tempted** as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore **come boldly** to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to **help in time of need**.

3. Be intimately involved in the fellowship of accountability with God’s people.

Slide # 12

Hebrews 10:24–25 (NKJV)

24 And let us **consider one another** in order to stir up love and good works,

25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but **exhorting one another**, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

4. Make no provision for the flesh.

Slide # 13

Romans 13:13–14 (NKJV)

13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in **lewdness and lust**, not in strife and envy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**

The Bible calls us to holy living (cf. 1 Pet. 1:15-16). Pure religion before God is to “***keep oneself unspotted from the world.***” (Ja. 1:27). Our very sanctification is to live lives of sexual purity (cf. 1 Thess. 4:3-8). Let us not be conformed to the world, rather let us constantly be renewing our mind (cf. Rom. 12:2). Sanctification not only has to do with deeds but also with our thoughts (cf. 2 Cor. 7:1, 1 Pet. 2:11).

As the culture becomes coarser and coarser let us get CLOSER and CLOSER to God and His children!

Warren Wiersbe shares the following story.

When we visited Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, I was impressed with the maze of tunnels and dense darkness when the lights were turned off. When we got to the “Pulpit Rock,” the man in charge of the tour gave a five-word sermon from it: “***Stay close to your guide.***”

For these dark times that is good counsel indeed. Don’t wander off into the dark by yourself – stay close to your guide – the GOOD SHEPHERD. It’s the only safe place to be.

29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Immediately on the heels of saying “***whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart***”, Jesus then immediately makes this exceedingly strong statement about the EYE.

He says, ***“If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you”***. This is clearly a RADICAL statement requiring RADICAL action. You can’t be passive when it comes to the lust of the eyes.

It requires drastic action! This is the only way one can have victory over it. Essentially, all commentators believe that Jesus was here speaking in hyperbole or exaggerated terms to make a point. Sometimes the Bible does use this kind of language to make a point. For example in **Proverbs 23:2** it says, ***“And put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite.”*** This is not saying he should commit suicide, but rather figuratively saying he should take drastic measures to ensure he cuts back on how much he eats.

If lust is truly a HEART problem, which Jesus has just indicated it is, then the answer is not found in a physical solution such as gouging out the eye. And even if you do gouge out the right eye, you still have the other eye to contend with. And as someone said then you are just left with being a “left-eyed luster”. And if you gouge out both eyes, you still have the thoughts in the heart. And right there is the fundamental PROBLEM! (cf. Mt. 15:19)

Jesus is using figurative language to emphasize that a problem with lust must be dealt with in a decisive and drastic manner.

In terms of application for believers what Jesus is saying here is very close to the emphasis Paul made in Col. 3:5.

Slide # 14

Colossians 3:5 (NKJV)

5 Therefore **put to death your members** which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

The verb translated ***“put to death”*** is strong. It means to kill decisively or resolutely (cf. Rom. 4:19, Heb. 11:12). It means to ***“slay utterly”***. There is to be no negotiation or dilly dallying here. This means to kill outright. Go for the jugular! Severe measures are required.

Paul speaks of your members which are on the earth in a metaphorical way. Really, he is speaking of the sins committed in conjunction with the various members of the physical body. We are to stop the body dead in its tracks when it comes to these particular sins. In effect we are to kill sin at the root in terms of our practice (cf. Rom. 6:11, 8:13). These sins are not to have any place in our members. This is comparable to what Christ said here in Matt. 5:29-30 when He said to “pluck out” and “cut off”.

The essential idea is to radically deal with sin that wants to work its way into our life through our body. By our will, with God's help, we must respond resolutely to the lusts of the flesh that would seek to use our physical body for illicit purposes.

I heard of a dog trainer who teaches dogs to be absolutely obedient to their master. His method goes like this. When he begins training a dog, he will command it not to eat a piece of meat and then throw it down in front of the dog and course the dog immediately gobbles it up. He will then beat the dog (not cruelly or abusively, but sufficient for training). As he repeats the process the dog learns to associate pain with eating the meat contrary to the orders of the master and so the dog will come to realize it cannot LOOK at the meat or it will capitulate with resulting pain. The dog learns the secret of obedience is to NOT LOOK!

What a great illustration! We cannot LOOK or we will fail! When it comes to sexual temptation the Bible commands us to FLEE (cf. 1 Cor. 6:18). DON'T LOOK! If one flirts with the enticement of LOOKING, they will most likely suffer the painful consequences of failure. Joseph RAN from sexual temptation and thus kept his purity (cf. Gen. 39:12). Samson did not run and therefore stumbled (cf. Judges 14:1). The allurements of sexual sin is so powerful that we must FLEE from it if we are to be victorious. There can be no negotiation. The flesh craves to LOOK, but just like a well-trained dog we must realize we cannot even LOOK or we will fall! The warning of Jesus is severe to make this point! This certainly applies in terms of a strong application to the life of a believer (cf. Job 31:1).

However, in light of what Christ goes on to say, ***“for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell”*** I think He may be saying something even more basic than merely giving a principle of sanctification.

He is talking about HELL (Gehenna) which ultimately has in view the lake of fire which is where the lost will suffer for all eternity.

Since a lustful heart would ultimately lead to adultery, one's heart must be changed. Only by such a change of heart can one escape hell (“Gehenna”; cf. v. 22). – ***The Bible Knowledge Commentary***

This holy restraint is true Christian asceticism. Of course what really has to happen is a change of one's heart or his inner self, a regeneration or new birth, if he would escape being “thrown into hell” (NASB). – ***Howard Vos***

This is what I think Jesus is ultimately saying here. Unless one comes to true repentance, which is really a RADICAL response to sin that alters the course of one's life, then they are headed for hell fire.

Remember the New Covenant that Christ came to make possible is all about being changed from the inside out.

Slide # 15

Jeremiah 31:33 (NKJV)

33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: **I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts**; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

In a figurative way Christ is emphasizing the necessity of a radical repentance that fundamentally alters a person. This type of thing happens in conversion. It is the experience of every true believer. Paul talks about "the circumcision made without hands" which is radical spiritual surgery brought about in the heart by God (Col. 2:11).

Slide # 16

Galatians 5:24 (NKJV)

24 And those who are Christ's **have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**

This relates to the response of repentance in saving faith that results in the execution of the flesh. There must be a death to the flesh. This death happens in conjunction with repentance. This is why John the Baptist told the wicked religious leaders to go and "***bear fruits worthy of repentance***" (cf. Mt. 3:8). The idea is that genuine repentance will bring forth the fruit of a changed life. In the case of the NT believer, it is the fruit of the Spirit. Repentance marks a line that we cross over, which denotes a radical break from sin and the flesh, in terms of its ruling power. I think this is principally what Jesus has in view here in Matt. 5:29-30.

Slide # 17

1 Corinthians 6:9–11 (NKJV)

9 Do you not know that the **unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom** of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, **10** nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And **such were some of you**. But you were **washed**, but you were **sanctified**, but you were **justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Slide # 18

Revelation 21:8 (NKJV)

8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, **sexually immoral**, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

Revelation 22:14–15 (ESV)

14 Blessed are those who **wash their robes**, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the **sexually immoral** and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

Remember that Christ said in verse 20 that unless your righteousness exceeds the external righteous standard of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by not means enter the kingdom of heaven. Unless, we know a fundamental change of heart (called repentance) that affects the whole of our life we will not see the kingdom. This is really RADICAL stuff which so much of Christendom today no longer takes very seriously.

So much of it is about various forms of “***Easy Believism***” that completely leaves repentance out of the equation. That is a grave mistake that has hellish implications as taught by Christ.

30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

The eye is presented as the medium through which temptation comes, and the hand as presented as the medium through which sin is committed.

What is required is a radical repentance that affects the heart and the life. And of course, if it really affects the heart it will affect the life. Heart and life go together which is the overall point here in context.

Note Christ did not say “taper off” but rather “cut off”.

Remember how Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, “go and sin no more” (Jn. 8:11). He didn’t say, “I know you have a long term addiction to sexual sin – this is going to take a while.” NO! He immediately, said, “sin no more”. “Pluck out” and “cut off” involves a decisive life changing response indicative of true repentance. This is what is being illustrated. As John the Baptist would say, true repentance brings forth the fruit of repentance – and it does so immediately.

Of course, even true believers continue to struggle with sin, and can fall back into sin – even gross sin, but there is a decisive change of mind in conversion that forever changes a person. A true Christian is a new creation who now has a new nature and the Holy Spirit. They now have a heavenly Father that disciplines them. Being born again does not result in practical perfection, but it does alter the direction.

The eye generates the desire, and the hand generates the deed, so Jesus said in effect, “Don’t look and don’t touch.” The Lord was not telling us to cripple ourselves, but to control ourselves.

– *John Phillips*

And as we have noted only by way of repentance and regeneration can this happen in a person’s life in a way that generates a “righteousness” that effects the HEART and thus exceeds that of the Pharisees.

The Truth is Now to be Known by Al Martin

Oh the madness! You are a vile, filthy, helpless, hell deserving, wretched, son or daughter of Adam. You know nothing of true repentance and therefore of true and saving faith. Oh yes, once in a while you will take a dull parry knife and scratch your hand and occasionally you scratch around your eye balls, but you haven’t begun to CUT OFF AND PLUCK OUT!

You better listen to the words of Jesus! “Not everyone who says ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter but he who does the will of my Father in

heaven.” If you by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live. If you live after the flesh YOU’LL DIE!

The cross does not give us a minor shift or two with regard to a few of our ethical and moral and religious values. The cross radically disrupts the very center and citadel of your life from self, to Christ. And if the cross has not done that you are not a Christian! My friend FACE IT! Young rouge your not a Christian until the cross has radically disrupted the very center and citadel of your life and brought you from a life of commitment to serve self; whether it’s religious self, moral self, proud self, covetous self, lustful self, prideful self, unforgiving self, lazy self. IT DOESN’T MATTER!

What are the focal points of the reign of your self? **If you’ve gone to the cross in union with Christ its been SHATTERED!!!**

I want you in that day when you stand with me before the Judge of the world to have Him say, “Come you blessed,” “Come you blessed”. I don’t want to look at you standing there saying “Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord! I named you in earth, I named you before the elders, I named you before the church! I named you in prayer meeting, I named you in witness. And Lord, now Lord, Lord did I not this and did I not that . I don’t want to hear Him say: “Depart from Me I never knew you, you worker of iniquity. You never were made a doer of the will of God.”

You learned enough, and you learned what to say properly enough to be accepted for what you professed yourself to be on earth, but now the Day of Judgment has come, and the TRUTH is now to be known.

Jesus is saying that adultery is not just a physical issue but also a spiritual issue of the heart. True believers come to true repentance involving a radical response to sin that forever changes their life.

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

It sounds strange to us but in the Jewish system in the OT it was the men who did the divorcing. As we move into the NT we find that either the man or the woman might initiate a divorce as seen in 1 Cor. 7. But in the OT it was the men that initiated the divorce. And when they did so they did it on the basis of Deut. 24:1-4.

Slide # 19**Deuteronomy 24:1–4 (NKJV)**

1 “When a man takes a 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,

2 when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man’s wife,

3 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,

4 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 the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

In the days of Christ there were two schools of thought regarding the grounds for divorce and remarriage based on Deut. 24. The “***uncleanness***” (sometimes translated as “***something indecent***”) in view had to be something short of full-blown adultery because that required the death penalty as seen in Deut. 22:22. Perhaps the husband accused her of being flirtatious or immodest or something like that which stopped short of actual adultery. It remains a mystery as to exactly what this was as it is not specifically clarified.

Footnote: Interestingly Jesus referred to the certificate of divorce in Matt. 19 and said Moses because of the hardness of their hearts permitted it. So clearly what they demanded as “grounds for divorce” was not in keeping with God’s intention (see Matt. 19:7-9).

And note this: While it is true that looking with lust on a woman is the equivalent of adultery in the heart as seen in verse 28; yet that is still distinct from the actual act which alone is grounds for divorce as brought out by Jesus in verse 32. “Uncleanness” which comes short of actual adultery is not grounds for divorce as Jesus goes on to emphasize both here in verse 32 and also in chapter 19.

Jesus is not saying that lustful desires are identical to lustful deeds, and therefore a person might just as well go ahead and commit adultery [or that on that basis they have grounds for divorce]. The desire and the deed are not identical, but spiritually speaking, they are equivalent. – ***Warren Wiersbe***

God ALONE is the Judge of the heart – what we hold people accountable for are actual actions. We are not the “thought patrol”. That is God’s domain. Jesus here clarifies that divorce before God is justified on the basis of actual sexual immorality alone.

The liberal school of thought which followed Rabbi Hillel held that a man could divorce his wife for almost any reason. For example, if she burned his food, or if she was not as pretty as she use to be – she could be divorced. If the man wanted out of the marriage all he had to do is write up a “**certificate of divorce**” for some level of “**indecentcy**” and move on.

The other school of thought was more conservative, and it followed Rabbi Shammai which said that the only grounds for divorce was adultery. Both schools of thought were based on their respective interpretations of Deut. 24 but Jesus in this case agreed with the conservative school of thought. **32 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.**

Understand what Jesus was saying. He was saying that before God there are no grounds for divorce other than the grounds of sexual immorality. That’s it! We know from 1 Cor. 7:10-11 that the Lord gave instruction regarding the marriage of two believers. He didn’t address a mixed marriage in which one is a believer, and one is an unbeliever – which Paul then went on to address. Jesus was addressing the marriage of two believers and said that there is no out. There is no biblical grounds for divorce other than immorality (cf. Matt. 19:1-9; Mk. 10:2-12; Lk. 16:18). Paul affirmed this in 1 Cor. 7:10-11.

Slide # 20

1 Corinthians 7:10–11 (NKJV)

10 Now to the married I command, yet not I but **the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband.**

11 But even if she does depart, let her **remain unmarried or be reconciled** to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.

God does not allow two believers to get divorced and even if they do divorce (which is not God’s ideal will) then they can either live single or be reconciled. Biblically, they have no other options. Before God, for two believer’s marriage is “till death do us part”. You are locked in.

Now Paul does go on in 1 Cor. 7:12-15 to address a mixed marriage of a believer and an unbeliever and says if the unbeliever leaves the marriage then the believer is not under bondage. And I would agree with the view that says when the Bible allows for divorce biblically then it also allows for remarriage.

One other thing. You can't change the past. When you get saved you go from there. If anyone is in Christ "old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Cor. 5:17). You go from where you are as Paul indicates in 1 Cor. 7:7-9.

But again, Christ in the gospels is addressing the marriage of two believers in the covenant community. He says divorce for any reason other than sexual immorality is not permitted.

The Greek word translated here as "**sexual immorality**" is the word "**porneia**" from which we get our English word "**pornography**". This is a broad word which can refer to any form of sexual immorality that is a violation of the marriage covenant.

In the case of sexual immorality divorce and remarriage is permitted, but not commanded. The best-case scenario is that there would be repentance and forgiveness and that the marriage could be saved. But still, sexual immorality is grounds divorce as so stated by Christ.

But if a man would divorce his wife anyway without the grounds of sexual immorality then he would be accountable for causing her to commit adultery. Note that up to this point she is not guilty of adultery – that only happens after she is forced out by the husband and becomes sexually involved with another man.

The thought is that the woman is forced out - and remember in this culture she really had little or no recourse. Even to survive she would be pressured to find a man to take care of her which inevitably would probably result in adultery. That seems to be the sense of what Jesus is saying.

In this case the man is liable for putting her into this position that results in her committing adultery. Note God still saw them as married in His eyes and therefore this is called adultery. But because of the action of the man in divorcing his wife without biblical cause he is shown to be the one essentially accountable. He forced this issue. He is the cause for her committing adultery.

And in this case Jesus says, “***and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.***” Again, this is a situation where an unbiblical divorce took place. There was no biblical grounds. In God’s eyes they are still married and to marry this woman is to commit adultery.

This points out that [a] certificate of divorce does not necessarily end the marriage, but improper sexual conduct does justify the dissolution of the union. – ***Ed Glasscock***

Christ made it very strong. For two believers there is no way out of the marriage – other than the grounds of immorality. Kingdom ethics sets a very high standard and the marriage bond in God’s eyes is unbreakable for two believers apart from sexual unfaithfulness.

Some time ago a “Christian” writer [Glennon Doyle Melton] best known for her #1 New York Times bestsellers divorced from her husband and announced that she was dating again, only this time, it was a WOMAN whom she proceeded to then marry. She is known as the “*ultimate confessional writer*”. She writes about the “messiness” of life and how people “feel”. She is thought to be “real”, “raw” and “authentic”. Thus her “*confessional style*” serves to NORMALIZE sin.

Here is the pattern. Sexual sin is first MINIMIZED, then it is NORMALIZED, and finally it is “CHRISTIANIZED”. To go SOFT on IMMORALITY, is to go down the path of APOSTASY!

If we are truly Christ’s disciples and kingdom citizens, the expectation is that we will maintain a high view - a biblical view of sexual purity and covenant marriage as ordained by God.

The Bible still says...

Hebrews 13:4 (NKJV)

4 Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

God help us as His people to live for and stand for what is honorable before Him.