

# Jesus: Let me clarify this 'divorce' thing. . .

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 21 August 2016

Preacher: Mike Salvati

[ 0 : 00 ] If you would turn in your Bibles to Matthew 5, we're in the Sermon on the Mount, which remember is the inaugural address of King Jesus.

And he tackles the very controversial subject of divorce this morning. So would you open to Matthew 5, 31 and 32, and let me read.

It was also said, whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce. 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. If this morning you've come into this building wondering if you should divorce your spouse, I'm glad that you're here.

You need to hear what Jesus has to say this morning. If you've come into this building this morning, and when you hear the word divorce for only the grounds of sexual immorality, and you realize that you've divorced for something other than that, and then remarried, you may be coming here, and you've got this huge lump in your throat.

[ 1 : 34 ] Your heart's dropping. You need to hear what Jesus is saying here. If you're single, and you're thinking about getting married, hoping to get married, you need to hear what Jesus is saying here.

Because Jesus is talking about marriage in a way that we don't hear in our culture. He's got something to say about marriage, and He's got something to say about divorce.

And so this morning, Jesus is speaking to us, and He's saying, let me clarify this divorce thing. What we're going to see this morning is that marriage is an exclusive, lifelong, one-flesh union between one man and one woman joined together by God Himself.

Marriage is sacred. Marriage is sacred.

The way I want to help you see this this morning is by introducing you to a debate that was taking place in first century Palestine.

[ 2 : 54 ] It gives some backdrop to the situation historically that Jesus was speaking into. And so, I want to help you to understand the debate.

We're going to go way back to Deuteronomy 24 to help you see that. And then, I want to help you see where the Pharisees came down, these teachers of the law in Jesus' day, where they came down on this very debate.

And so, in order to help you see that, we're going to go to Matthew 19, 3-9. And then, we're going to bring it all together back in Matthew 5.

And we're going to learn what Jesus has to say about all things. We're going to spend a lot of time in Matthew 19 this morning. I'll explain why in a little bit. But Jesus puts on a clinic.

He has something to say about marriage, and He's got something to say about divorce. You know, just let me pray one more time as we turn to what Jesus says here.

[ 4 : 01 ] Lord Jesus, we're here to listen to what You say. And as Your followers, we are coming not to weigh what You say, decide whether we should obey, but we're coming to obey.

We're listening so that we can obey. Lord, this is part of the teaching with which we are to instruct all the disciples when we make nations, disciples of the nations, instructing them in all that You have commanded, and this is part of that.

And so, Lord, would You help us to not only hear, but to hear with hearts eager to obey, eager to understand. And it's Your name I pray once again.

Amen. Alright, you guys ready to go back to first century Palestine? Here we go. If you'd open up your Bibles all the way back to Deuteronomy 24.

Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Old Testament. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Why are we going there? In Matthew 5.31, Jesus says this, It was said, whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.

[ 5 : 18 ] He's not talking about something in the Ten Commandments. He's raising something that was an issue out of Deuteronomy 24, 1-4. And so, I want to bring you there so that you can see what the debate in the first century was over among Jewish religious leaders.

And so, let's go there now. Deuteronomy 24. Deuteronomy 24. And we read this.

When a man takes a wife and marries her, if, then, she finds no favor in his eyes because he's found some indecency.

Those two words are going to be the center of the debate. If, then, if, then, if she goes and becomes another man's wife, 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, 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.

There's a lot there. A lot of ifs. Did you notice the ifs? A lot of ifs. And then the word then shows up in verse 4.

[ 6 : 52 ] This passage is there really to establish the point of verse 4. And the specific situation it's addressing is if a guy divorces a woman, that woman remarries, and for whatever reason that second marriage dissolves, the first husband can't take the wife again.

That's why this is here. It doesn't say whether divorce is right or wrong. What it's getting at is what if this happens? It's known as case law. And so it's addressing a specific situation.

That's kind of the background on Deuteronomy 24, the passage itself. Now let's look at the issue of the debate. The debate wasn't about verse 4. The debate was over something in verse 1.

And it was those two words, some indecency in the ESV. And so here's what was going on. There were two camps, two schools of rabbinical thought, of the teachers of the law of the day.

And the first school was the school of Shammai. And Shammai would interpret those two words, some indecency, very narrowly, very rigidly. And they would say the some indecency is adultery.

[ 8 : 10 ] It's some grave, marital, physical, sexual event. That is the some indecency that allows for divorce. And so that's the school of Shammai over here. The other school is the school of Hillel.

And the school of Hillel interpreted some indecency not narrowly, not rigidly, but very broadly, very generally. So what that meant was some rabbis would say some indecency would include divorcing a wife because she spoiled her husband's dinner.

It's there. Or because a husband has found someone fairer than his wife. Those would become grounds for divorcing her and handing her a certificate of divorce.

Now, if you're a woman in the room and you're like thinking, I could not believe living underneath something like that. You know what? I just might spoil this guy's dinner so he would hand me a certificate of divorce.

But whether you believe we're part of the school of Shammai, the rigid approach, or part of the school of Hillel, the loose approach, both would say you have to give a certificate of divorce.

[ 9 : 22 ] And what a certificate of divorce was at that time was a way to protect a wife from a husband who was just very capricious, just like whatever, on a whim, get out of my face, you spoiled my dinner, or without having to give her some kind of legal protection.

And so a certificate of divorce set out the right for a wife to remarry. And so the background of what's happening in Matthew 5 is this debate.

And the question's going to become, where does Jesus come down? Is he school of Shammai or is he school of Hillel? Where does he fall down? Where does he come to? Before we get there, we've got to see where the Pharisees come down, because this is setting the whole thing up.

And so if you would, knowing that the debate is over some indecency, and knowing the sides of the debate, would you now flip your Bibles to Matthew 19?

Matthew 19. And we're going to be looking at 3 through 9. And just to give you a little help in understanding, this passage.

[ 10 : 32 ] In Matthew 19, 3 through 9, Jesus takes up the issue of divorce again. But there's a difference. It's in who he's talking to. In Matthew 5, it's his inaugural address. He's speaking to his disciples.

In Matthew 19, he's speaking to Pharisees. They've asked him, what do you think about Deuteronomy 24.1?

And so in Matthew 19, 3 through 9, we're going to spend most of our time there, because it reveals Jesus' mind on the matter more.

It's more expansive. He explains more in Matthew 19, 3 through 9, on marriage and divorce, than he does in Matthew 5. So what we're going to do is we're going to use Matthew 19 to help us understand Matthew 5.

And so what we see is what Jesus thinks about marriage and divorce. And we also learn where the Pharisees come down on Deuteronomy 24. Look at verse 3 of chapter 19 in Matthew.

[ 11 : 34 ] And Pharisees came up to him and tested him, which I always think is pretty funny, because they're testing the incarnate God of the universe. And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?

Do you know why they're asking him the question? So what's the background of that question? Deuteronomy 24, 1 through 4. And so they want to know where Jesus is coming down on this whole divorce thing.

Is it biblical? Is it okay that a husband divorces his wife for pretty much any cause? Jesus, where are you coming down on this debate? Now, what this kind of shows is the Pharisees' hand, where they actually are.

And so what we'll see is that the Pharisees actually adhere to the school of Hillel. That they are holding to a position on divorce that is broad and loose.

And so this should be somewhat of a surprise, because so far, on the issue of murder, and on the issue of adultery, they've been rather tight. Because it suited their purpose.

[ 12 : 50 ] And now when we get to this issue of when can you divorce, they go loose, because it served their purpose. And so Jesus is going to speak right into that.

And all week long, I've been like, Jesus, you are so awesome. To speak like this. So Matthew 19, 3 through 9, what I'd like you to do, just to walk through each verse to help us understand what's being said, so that we can see what Jesus means.

What Jesus is saying. So that we can hear our Savior and King speak. So we can walk after His ways. We can live in the light of His teaching. So, 19, 3, is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?

The any cause is back to 24-1. This any kind of sense, any kind of reason, any kind of spoiling your dinner, anything like that.

They're asking for a no-fault divorce. Some indecency. Jesus, do you agree with us?

[ 14 : 08 ] Would you just quickly flip back to 531? I want to help you understand what's being said in 531. Jesus says it was also said, and what you need to hear there is, it was also said by the Pharisees who've been teaching on this in our culture, that whoever divorces his wife for any cause, let him give her a certificate of divorce.

And so Jesus is addressing the present teaching and understanding of this issue of divorce of the day. And so these dovetail very nicely.

What, just for a little background, what had happened at this point is, the Pharisees were more concerned about getting the legal writing correct on the certificate of divorce.

They wanted to make sure it was accurate, rather than asking, is the grounds right? And so what they were doing is they're asking, they want justification for no-fault divorce, a divorce that they can declare for any reason they want, but the wife really has no say in the matter.

What we're looking here at is a sad situation. Heartbreaking. Difficult for a woman. It'd be a very difficult place to live and feel like you have a voice.

[ 15 : 40 ] So the Pharisees were adherents to the school of Hillel, the sum and decency that they thought about when they were interpreting loose and broad. And so they're asking Jesus in verse 3, hey, are you for us or against us?

And this is where I want to turn to Jesus now, and I want to occupy our time with what does Jesus say? The first thing I want you to notice is in verse 4, 4 through 6, is where Jesus begins.

Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause? Our Savior King says, have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh?

So they're no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. Did you notice where Jesus starts?

He doesn't start in Deuteronomy 24. He starts in Genesis 1 and 2. In the beginning. Jesus goes back to the very start when God established marriage.

[16:58] That's where Jesus goes. And so in 19.4 when He says, have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female? He's talking about Genesis 1.26 and 27.

God created man in His image. Male and female He created them. They are of the same value, but they're distinct in who they are physically in their roles, but the same value.

God created them male and female. And then in verse 19.5 we read this. Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and thou shalt become one flesh. He's talking about Genesis 2.24.

The divine institution of marriage where God gives Eve to Adam and declares them, you're one flesh. It was the divine institution of marriage.

Did you notice the one flesh language? Jesus is emphasizing that for a reason. Verse 6. So they are no longer two, but one flesh.

[17:59] What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. Jesus is making explicit what's implied in Genesis 2.24 in that it is God who is joining the first husband and the first wife.

That's God at work. And so essentially what Jesus is saying here is, hey, divorce wasn't part of the original design. Wasn't part of the original design.

In the beginning, God created, then joined one man and one woman in an exclusive, lifelong, one flesh union. And so the case that Jesus is making here is that marriage is sacred.

And what the Pharisees were doing were they were trivializing marriage. That's the culture we live in today. You remove God from the equation and everything trivializes.

You've got a lot more options. Jesus is returning God to marriage. And what He's saying is, what is normal and binding from the beginning is an exclusive, lifelong, one flesh union joined by God.

[19:19] Here's what Jesus is doing. It's very helpful. He's saying, let's not start with the exception. Deuteronomy 24. Let's start with the norm.

Let's understand the norm so that we can understand the exception. And what He's making out to be the norm is Genesis 1 and 2. That marriage is sacred.

It's a joining of one man and one woman by God Himself. He is fulfilling the intent of the law here. He's saying this is what it really means.

The Pharisees had trivialized marriage, but Jesus is returning God's design and intent to marriage. He's returning the sacredness, the divine design of marriage.

I know I've said it a lot, but marriage is God joining one man and one woman together exclusively for life. And so He answers the question by saying, you're not starting in the right place.

[20:26] You're not starting. Divorce is never part of the design to begin with. And then look at verse 7. They, the Pharisees, said to Him, why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?

It's kind of like, but, but, but, but, but, but, but, but, but what about this? What about this? What about Deuteronomy 24, Jesus?

The Pharisees were seeking to trap Jesus by pitting one part of the law against another. And Jesus just totally dismantles them.

He says, you guys are misguided. You're misguided. You've got misguided notions of Deuteronomy 24. And so let's turn to verse 8. There's, there's some things in it that are really important to see.

Let me read it. 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. So, he starts with this phrase, hardness of heart.

[21:35] Jesus is, is essentially saying this. Deuteronomy 24, 1 through 4, wasn't written to the humble of heart. That was written for the calloused of heart. And so, this was a problem that was rising because husbands with callous hearts were divorcing their wives any way they saw fit.

And so this was, this is there to slow it down, to protect wives. And so, what the Pharisees were doing and what Jesus is exposing is, you're basing your whole system of divorce on a passage that assumes hardness of heart.

You'd think that they would be suspect that this passage was being used to address a sin problem. But they were using it to justify what they wanted.

And so, it was written not to soft hearts, but to calloused hearts. Those with a hardened heart. And Jesus is going after the Pharisees.

Because of your hardness of heart, Moses allowed. That's the second thing in verse 8 I want you to notice. Moses allowed divorce.

[ 22 : 55 ] He never commanded it. Look back in verse 7. The Pharisees said to Him, why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?

Jesus, because of your hardness of heart, Moses allowed you to divorce your wives. What Jesus is saying is, Deuteronomy 24 is there because of hardness on heart.

And it's not a command. It's a concession. And so, these Pharisees were building a whole misguided view of divorce on this vague concession pertaining to a specific situation that was actually about a husband's hardness of heart.

Do you follow what's going on here? And then Jesus, the last thing, He says, it's not so in the beginning. He returns us to creation.

He returns us to Genesis 1 and 2. You shouldn't be building your view of divorce off a concession, but on God's clear and obvious, normal and binding word on marriage.

[ 24 : 05 ] It's exclusive and it's for life. It's a union that God joins. Marriage is sacred. You see Jesus? He's dismantling them.

Isn't it so helpful to see Him doing it? Verse 9, we read, And I say to you, and I say to you, whoever divorces his wife except for sexual immorality and marries another commits adultery, and I say to you.

It's emphatic. Jesus is saying, this is what the Word says, and I say to you, Pharisees, let's get this thing right. Now, that, and I say to you, should ring a little bit of a bell.

If you flip back to Matthew 5.32, we read, And it was also said, whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce, but I say to you, disciples, 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.

Jesus is saying the same thing in chapter 5 and chapter 19. In chapter 19, He just simply expands. That's why it's so helpful to see 19 explaining chapter 5.

[ 25 : 30 ] That little phrase in 5.32, if you would just turn there now, chapter 5.32, But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife except on the ground of sexual immorality makes her commit adultery.

Did you see that? Here's what you need to realize in the first century. It was assumed that a divorced woman, in order to survive, would have to do one of two things.

She would either have to go back to her father's house in shame, or she would have to find someone else to marry regardless of why she was divorced. Neither was a good option. And so what Jesus is saying is if you divorce your wife for any other reason besides sexual immorality, and I'll get to that in a second, but if you do that, you make her commit adultery.

This was a time when a single woman, a single mom, was not a viable economic unit. She didn't have many choices.

And so what Jesus is getting at is you've got to slow down if you're thinking about divorce. You've got to realize there's a lot at stake. The sacredness of marriage.

[ 26 : 50 ] God has joined two together as one. And if you do this step, you're going to cause your former wife to commit adultery.

Which is incredibly ironic because the Pharisees were trying to get around it. And so what Jesus is doing here is given the sanctity of marriage, it's exclusive, lifelong, one flesh, joined by God.

If you divorce your wife for a reason other than sexual immorality, you make her commit adultery by marrying another. And so what is behind this is what God is thinking about a marriage.

Remember this language of one flesh? If there's a divorce without grounds of sexual immorality, that remarriage takes place and God is still thinking about that first marriage as a one flesh union.

That's why the second marriage becomes an act of adultery. And the weight of what Jesus is saying here is not on the wife who's being made to commit adultery.

[ 28 : 12 ] It's on the husband who's causing her to do that. Jesus is saying, don't make this about her.

This is about your hardness of heart. Let's look at this exception clause.

The exception clause is the clause that begins with the word accept. In 532, accept on the ground of sexual immorality.

In 19.9, accept for sexual immorality. So for us, what this means is this. There's other passages, 1 Corinthians 7, that raise other possibilities of separation and possibly remarriage.

But what I want to do this morning is focus in on what Jesus is saying here so that we're all clear on what Jesus is saying. So we're not covering the whole waterfront of what the Bible says, but let's just get what Jesus is saying here.

[ 29 : 15 ] And so what Jesus is saying is the only exception He allows for, for divorce, is in the case of sexual immorality. So the question we need to ask is, what does that mean?

What is sexual immorality and what is a cover? And so the Greek word behind sexual immorality is the word porneia. And it's a word that includes all kinds of physical, sexual irregularity.

Things that would grieve God. And so, in the case of a husband being unfaithful to a wife, whether that husband is sexually, physically unfaithful with someone else who is married or unmarried, it's still porneia.

Whether it is someone who is of the opposite sex or same sex, it's porneia. So whether it's another adult or a minor, it's porneia.

So whether it's another human or an animal, it's porneia. And so what Jesus is doing is saying sexual immorality covers the gamut, porneia, of sexual, physical wrongdoing in God's eyes.

[ 30 : 28 ] And Jesus is saying that becomes grounds for divorce. and it's the sole exception that Jesus allows here in the book of Matthew.

I have been weighing whether or not I should raise this point, but I think it would be helpful.

Because I'm guessing some of you are in your pew asking, well, why just sexual immorality?

Why not physical or verbal abuse? Surely that was a horrific event in the first century Palestine as it is in 21st century Kenosha. Well, I just want to humbly say here's my best understanding of why Jesus limits the grounds for divorce to just sexual immorality.

Physical and verbal abuse are horrific in a marriage. But there seems to be a difference in our Savior's mind between that kind of wrongdoing and the kind of breach that is wrought upon a marriage through porneia.

And so, all are wrong. But Jesus seems to say that there is something to this physical sexual act that has a unique devastating effect on a marriage.

[ 32 : 04 ] Sexual immorality disjoins the one flesh union God has joined together.

What God has joined together. Let not man separate. Jesus is being very specific.

If sexual immorality takes place, a marriage has suffered a kind of physical unjoining that can actually end a marriage in God's eyes.

That's how serious Jesus sees sexual immorality. It's not to diminish the sinfulness of physical and verbal abuse, but it's heightening this issue of sexual fidelity in a marriage.

So if there is sexual immorality, God allows for the one sinned against to remarry without being an adulterer.

[ 33 : 20 ] Without committing adulterer. The sinning spouse has already committed adultery because of their sexual immorality. So what we see in chapter 5 verse 32 in 19.9 is a kind of warning that divorcing without biblical grounds, the grounds of sexual immorality, causes the remarriage of the divorcing husband and wife to start as an adulterous act because that marriage in God's eyes is still one flesh.

So let me try to summarize what Jesus is saying here. And it's really instructive for us. Jesus starts in the beginning.

Jesus starts with what's normal. God's design and creation. Genesis chapter 1 and 2. Much of our lives depend on Genesis chapter 1 and 2.

It is vital scripture to our everyday living. What's normal is to see a marriage as an exclusive, lifelong, one flesh union joined together by God.

It's normal and binding and it's where we must start in our everyday conversations in the 21st century. Jesus starts with the norm, not the exception.

[ 34 : 54 ] John Stott, his pastoral practice, when a couple who was considering divorce would come to him, he insisted that before they talk about divorce, they first talk about the nature of marriage and the nature of reconciliation.

Good practice. The second thing I want to help you see here is that nowhere does God require divorce.

Nowhere does He command divorce. Divorce, both in Deuteronomy 24 and even here in Matthew 5 and 19 it's a concession, it's provisional.

It's not a requirement. It's not a command. And what we saw in 19 is that Jesus totally dismantles the Pharisees' false understanding of it being a command.

God allowed for it, not required it. Do you know what's baked into Genesis 1 and 2? This is what I love about my Bible.

[ 36 : 01 ] God took that example of one man and one woman and He ran it through your Bible. From the beginning God had an idea. He says, I'm going to use this to communicate my relationship to my people.

And so all throughout the Old Testament, you see it in Ezekiel 16, you see it in the book of Hosea, God takes on the role of a husband groom. And His people take on the role of the bride, the wife. And then when we turn to the New Testament, what we see is Jesus takes the role of the groom. And the church takes the role of the bride.

And what we see over and over again used in this picture throughout the whole Bible is a faithful husband who lovingly forgives and reconciles with his wayward wife over and over and over again. Our God is a faithful husband. And it informs how we are to approach this issue of divorce even when the requirements are met.

[ 37 : 20 ] You see, above all, we're peacemakers. Blessed are the peacemakers. And so if I were to be approached by a person who was considering divorce and that person had biblical grounds, do you know what I would say?

have you considered making peace? Have you considered forgiving the sin? This is good news for struggling marriages.

What this essentially does is it removes divorce from the equation. It says we're going to work things out regardless how hard it gets. So if there's no grounds, there's no grounds.

God has joined you together. There's work to be done. Another thing I want you to see in just kind of summary is that sexual immorality is the only grounds here that Jesus makes as an exception for divorce.

So a spouse who has been sinned against sexually through this physical act of immorality, Jesus would allow you to end the marriage. It is provision.

[ 38 : 34 ] It is real. But once you choose to stay, if you choose to stay, the way forward is to forgive and to reconcile. And so you're no longer choosing to hold that sin over your spouse.

You can't reclaim it in five years. You've forgiven him. Forgiven her. Now, if your spouse, that spouse, was to be sexually unfaithful again, you would need to weigh the same provision again. But it's a real provision. And we would love to help you. We'd love to help you navigate these hard waters. Back to this issue of physical abuse and verbal abuse.

If it's not grounds for divorce, according to what Jesus is saying here, then how do we think about it? We've got to take it seriously. We've got to take steps of separation if need be.

We've got to involve the authorities if required. But we're going to pursue reconciliation. We're going to seek to be peacemakers despite how hard and heart aching it becomes.

[ 39 : 52 ] We've got to be wise. We've got to live in what God allows and does not allow. And I would only humbly recommend that if you find yourself in a situation where you don't have grounds but it is hard, seek help.

Ask for help. The elders of our church would love to help. We have people that can help as well. Seek help.

If you are in the room and you have been divorced and you got a divorce without the grounds Jesus allows for here and then you got remarried, what Jesus is saying is that that was an act of adultery because in God's eyes this first marriage, your first marriage marriage was still a one flesh union. But you've got to see, Jesus chooses his words very carefully. In both chapter 5, 32 and 19, 9, Jesus talks about whoever marries someone who's been divorced without grounds.

It's a real marriage. marriage. The second marriage. Your second marriage is a real marriage. And Jesus doesn't call the one who does that an adulteress or an adulterer.

[ 41 : 20 ] He says they commit adultery. And so though the second marriage started on illegitimate grounds, it's still a real marriage in God's eyes and it's not the unforgivable sin.

God has grace even for that. And I would just suggest this. If you find yourself in that situation, just simply go to Jesus, call it what he calls it, and then call it forgiven.

Because your faithful husband died for it. Jesus did. And then what you want to do is move forward in your present marriage for his name's sake.

You don't need to divorce the person you're presently married to. Stay as you are, but faithfully live out your vows before God and your spouse. What God has brought together, let not man separate. If you're thinking about getting a divorce, you need to slow down. You need to ask some really important questions.

[ 42 : 39 ] What does Jesus say? Do you have grounds? Do you need help? If you need help, help is available. I'd be glad to help you.

Rick, other elders, other godly people of this church will be glad to help you. I'd only suggest this. You go to someone who's going to tell you what you need to hear instead of what you want to hear. Go to someone who's going to direct you to the scriptures and all of what they say, not what you just want them to say. There's a last group of people that I want to address this morning.

Single people thinking about marriage. Please realize the sacredness of what you desire.

That this is a union joined together by God. It's not to be entered into lightly. So if you've never been married, do you understand marriage as Jesus understands it?

[ 43 : 51 ] Exclusive, lifelong, one-flesh union that God unites, that God joins. Marriage is sacred. Let me end by saying this.

We live in a culture that has trivialized marriage and made divorce very easy. When we live out our lives in marriages as Jesus called us to, do you know what we're going to be in this culture? we're going to be salt and light. We're going to stand out. And our marriages are going to reflect that relationship between God and His people.

God be praised. This is what marriage is that Jesus calls an exceeding righteousness. A righteousness that fulfills the law and the prophets.

Let's pray. ■■ going