

The title of this morning's sermon is, *"What Does the Bible Say About Divorce and Remarriage?"*

On Sunday mornings we're working our way through Luke's gospel verse by verse and we find ourselves at Luke 16:18, but we will look at some other places in Scripture before turning to this verse.

I'm going to begin a little differently this morning in that I would like to introduce a few things and then pray.

By my calculations I have preached about 550 sermons at Woodland Christian Church. I can honestly say that this is the first time I have ever dreaded preaching a sermon. I knew that this was coming, and I vainly hoped that there would be some way to avoid it, but I don't want to shrink back from faithfully teaching the whole counsel of God's Word.

As we begin, I think it is very important that you understand what my heart is and is not. We have people in this church who are divorced and remarried and married to divorced people. My heart is not to condemn them.

Instead, my desire is to condemn divorce. The statistics I found state that the divorce rate among evangelical Christians is 26%, compared to 33% for the rest of the population.¹

I would like to see these numbers go down:

- I want to discourage divorce among those who are married
- I want to discourage divorce among those who will be married in the future. If you are single, you should pay special attention to this sermon, because if more people got married knowing what God's Word says about divorce and remarriage, I think we would see less divorces.

Just this past week I received two messages from people I don't know who wanted to divorce their spouse. One email was from a woman who claimed to be abused by her husband, and another email was from a man who claimed to be abused by his wife. I also received two comments on my blog this week. One from a man who wanted to divorce his wife and another from a woman who wanted to divorce her husband.

I would like to think that if these people knew what God's Word says about divorce and remarriage, they would not be thinking about divorcing their spouse.

Second, please know that I personally do not think I am any better than anyone who is divorced or has married a divorced person. If I married one of the girls I dated, or I became a Christian after I was married, I'm sure I easily could have been divorced.

Third, if you sit here listening to this sermon wondering how people who are divorced or married to divorced people are feeling, I can tell you that many of the people I have spoken with who have been divorced will be the first to tell you that they wish the church preached on divorce more often and more boldly.

Fourth, I'm sharing a view this morning that I did not hold at the beginning of my Christian life. The church I was saved in and then the church I started ministry in, held a different view.

I came to this view, which is the view of this church, after studying the scriptures for myself and deciding that I wanted to believe what the Bible said, versus what I had been taught.

Fifth, most of you probably know that if you want to believe or disagree with something, you will not have any trouble finding support for your position by simply searching the Internet.

Making this even more difficult, I know that some of the people who disagree with me are not ungodly people who support homosexuality or abortion. They are godly people whom I greatly respect.

But the standard has never been what I think, or what anyone else thinks. The standard is what God's Word says.

So, as we begin, as your pastor, I would like to ask you to do your best to receive what God's Word says even if it disagrees with something you have previously heard or believed...or could find on the Internet.

With that, let's pray.

Hopefully you're still in **1 Corinthians 7**. Look at **verse 10**.

1 Corinthians 7:10 To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord [Paul said this because Jesus talked about this as we'll see]): the wife should not separate from her husband 11 (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

This verse discusses separation. Let me briefly comment on this...

I told you that I received two emails this week from people claiming to be abused by their spouse. Responding to emails like this is always difficult, because Scripture says we are not supposed to come to a conclusion on a matter without hearing the other side.

I told both people that there can be situations warranting separation. To be completely clear, the elders and I definitely don't think people should remain in abusive situations.

Verse 10 even says a wife should not separate from her husband, but then discusses the conditions if she chooses to do so. This shows separation is discouraged, but permissible.ⁱⁱ

But divorce itself is not permissible. God says if people separate they should remain unmarried or reconcile. Please keep this in mind.

Let me share part of a response from one of the woman after I told her that even if she separated from her husband, she could not divorce him...

"Thank you for your reply. I will consider this carefully. He isn't a Christian, and so I might go through the divorce because he has symptoms of being disordered."

First, I don't know what she meant about him being disordered. Second, I'm guessing all of us are disordered to some extent.

She said she thought she could divorce him because he is not a Christian. If she does, she will disobey Scripture, because believers are commanded to remain married to unbelieving spouses...and this brings us to lesson one...

Lesson One: Believers should remain married to unbelievers.

Look at **verse 12**...

1 Corinthians 7:12 To the rest I say (I, not the Lord [Paul said this because Jesus never talked about this]): that if any brother (this means a man who is a believer) has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. 13 If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.

These verses are perfectly clear that believers must remain with unbelieving spouses, and here's why...

1 Corinthians 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

The part about being **made holy** by a spouse has caused lots of confusion. But it shouldn't if we understand what holy does and doesn't mean:

- Holy does not mean saved. We have talked about this before that inanimate or nonliving objects can be holy...yet they can't be saved.
- Instead, holy means set apart. Unbelievers who are married to believers are set apart for a special work.

We know that one of the best ways for unbelievers to come to salvation is through relationships with believers. And unbelievers could not have a more intimate relationship with a believer than through marriage. A believer staying in the marriage can provide the influence necessary to bring an unbelieving spouse to faith...as **verse 16** says...ⁱⁱⁱ

1 Corinthians 7:16 For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

Again, this doesn't mean that a husband could save his wife, or a wife could save her husband, but it does mean that as the unbelieving spouse is exposed to the believing spouse's faith it can lead to the unbelieving spouse's salvation.

How tragic is it when believers divorce an unbeliever when that believer might be the unbeliever's greatest chance to come to Christ?

I have heard Christians talk about wanting a divorce because of how terrible their unbelieving spouse is. In my mind I think, *"If your spouse is half as bad as you're saying, he or she obviously needs Christ. And that person needs to be exposed to Christ through you!"*

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The other matter Paul addressed was that of an unbelieving spouse separating from a believing spouse. Look at **verse 15**...

1 Corinthians 7:15 But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace.

While believers are instructed to stay in the marriage and be an influence to win the unbelieving spouse, they can't force the unbelieving spouse to remain. If the unbelieving spouse separates, God says the believer is **not enslaved**:

- **NKJV** and **NASB** say **not under bondage**
- **NIV** says **not bound**

This is one of the most commonly quoted verses to support divorce. People will say, *"My spouse separated from me, so I am no longer bound to them and am free to remarry."*

That is not what the verse is saying, and this brings us to lesson two...

Lesson Two: "Not bound" means you don't have to force a spouse to stay, but it doesn't mean free to remarry.

The context is separation. God is saying that Christians are not **bound** to make the unbelieving spouse stay, and He gives the reason for this...^{iv}

God has called you to peace.

Fighting with a spouse to get them to stay is opposed to God's call on our lives as Christians to be at peace. The believing spouse is "free" to let the person depart so the conflict ends. Plus, people are not won to Christ through heated arguments, force, and conflict.

If you have made reasonable efforts to remain with your spouse, but they leave, you can't stop them. It's almost like...

Romans 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

If we changed this to apply to marriage it could read...

If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with your unbelieving spouse, but if they are determined to leave, you are not bound to make them stay.

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But it doesn't mean you're not bound to the person in marriage any longer.

We know this because of what Paul just said in **verses 10 and 11**...

1 Corinthians 7:10 To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband 11 (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

If the unbelieving spouse departs, the believing spouse should remain unmarried or reconcile:

- God is not going to contradict himself by saying this in **verses 10 and 11** and then say the opposite in **verse 15**.
- In other words, God isn't going to say, "If your spouse departs you should remain unmarried or be reconciled" and then say, "If your spouse departs you are no longer bound to that person and can remarry."

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Even if an unbelieving spouse departs from a believing spouse, the believing spouse may still have a gospel influence on the unbelieving spouse by remaining faithful.

And look at **verse 39**...

1 Corinthians 7:39 A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

Verse 39 makes the same point that spouses are bound to each other as long as they live, and then identifies when a person is free to remarry – if the spouse dies – as long as the person is **in the Lord**, or is a believer.

And this brings us to lesson three...

Lesson Three: Remarriage is permissible if a spouse dies.

God clearly identifies the condition for remarriage: the death of a spouse.

And this is not the only place in Scripture making this point. Please turn one book to the left to **Romans 7**.

Romans 7:2 For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. 3 Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

God is always repetitive for a reason, and two times – in verses two and three – He says that remarriage can take place when a spouse dies. This is the same thing God said in **1 Corinthians 7**.

Let me briefly address vows so you can understand why this is the case...

In the Bible, a vow is a promise made to God. The seriousness of vows is repeatedly emphasized in scripture. When we make vows, we are entering a debtor's relationship. The debt continues until the vow is paid. This is why Scripture talks about paying our vows (NKJV):

- **Psalm 50:14 Pay your vows to the Most High.^v**
- **Psalm 116:14 I will pay my vows to the Lord**
- **Ecclesiastes 5:4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed**
- **Jonah 2:9 I will pay what I have vowed.**

Whatever the motive behind a vow, God holds us to it...

Numbers 30:2 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.

We are told to keep our vows even to our own detriment...

Psalm 15:4 [God] honors those who...swears to his own hurt and does not change.

All of this should sober us to the idea of making vows to God and then not keeping them.

Hopefully you see what this has to do with marriage. Here are three associated points:

1. First, whenever I officiate weddings, before the vows are made, I remind the bride and groom that they are making these vows to each other, but more importantly to God Himself.
2. Second, we covenant with God to keep our vows "...till death do us part." In the vows themselves we promise that only death will dissolve the marriage.
3. Third, vows aren't conditional on the other person keeping them. We are not alleviated of our vow simply because our spouse is unfaithful.^{vi}

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Young people, please give me your attention...

I have prayed that today's sermon would minister to each of you, and help you be soberminded regarding who you marry. Remember, you are committing to, "Till death do us part."

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Let's turn further to the left to **Luke 16:18**. This is the verse we reached in our verse-by-verse study through Luke's gospel that necessitated this sermon.

Luke 16:18 "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery."

Jesus makes two points with this verse:

1. First, He says that a man who divorces his wife and marries someone else commits adultery.
2. Second, He adds that even if a man is not divorced, but he marries a woman who is divorced he commits adultery.

Next please turn to the left to **Mark 10:11**.

Mark 10:11 And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, 12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

This is similar to **Luke 16:18**. Again, Jesus says that if a man divorces his wife and marries someone else he commits adultery, and He adds something for wives: if a wife divorces her husband and marries someone else she also commits adultery.

Before we move on from these verses, notice the word **adultery** is used in Luke and Mark because Jesus is talking about married people. The significance of this will be clear in a moment.

Now let me share something important...

Recognize the verses we read in Luke, Mark, Romans, and 1 Corinthians all harmonize. There are no difficulties or inconsistencies with any of them. They all fit together perfectly to make the same three points:

1. If you marry someone while you have a living spouse you commit adultery
2. If you marry someone who has a living spouse you commit adultery
3. If your spouse dies you are free to remarry

Now turn to **Matthew 1**.

It is important to understand Matthew is the gospel written to Jews...just like Luke, who was the only Gentile author of Scripture, wrote to a Gentile audience:

- Matthew repeatedly refers to Christ as the Son of David showing His Jewish ancestry.
- All Matthew's major themes focus on the Jews' messianic expectations, which is why Matthew quotes the Old Testament more than any other gospel writer.
- Gospel writers refer to the **Kingdom of God**, but Jews would be offended by the word God being written, so Matthew says **kingdom of heaven** 32 times...even though it occurs nowhere else in Scripture.

Because Matthew was written to Jews, it cites Jewish customs without explaining them...in contrast to the other Gospels, which explain Jewish customs. For example...

Mark 7:3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders.

When Mark talks about the Jews washing their hands, he says they do it out of tradition.

John 19:40 They took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

When John talks about Jesus's body being bound with cloths and spices, he says it is their custom.

But Matthew talks about Jewish customs without any explanation. This is important to understand because there is a Jewish betrothal and **divorce** which must be understood if Matthew's words on divorce are to be understood.

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been BETROTHED to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

Joseph and Mary are betrothed, which means they are not yet married. Joseph finds out Mary is pregnant and knows the baby is not his, so look what happens...

Matthew 1:19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to DIVORCE her quietly.

Joseph was going to divorce Mary even though they weren't married. This would not seem strange to Matthew's Jewish readers, but it seems strange to us because we commonly associate betrothal with our engagements...which we shouldn't...because they are different:

- A betrothal was almost as binding as our marriages.
- Betrothed couples were regarded as husband and wife even before the wedding. Notice Joseph was called **her husband**...even though they weren't married yet.
- And stoning was the punishment under the law if there was unfaithfulness during the betrothal period (**Deuteronomy 22:23-24**).

Most importantly for this sermon: betrothals were so serious a divorce was needed to terminate them.

With that in mind let's turn to the famous **divorce** verses in **Matthew 5**.

Matthew 5:31 "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' **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.**^{vii}

I'm not going to have you turn to **Matthew 19**, but it says the same thing as **Matthew 5**.

I do not believe Jesus is permitting a divorce when two people are married. Instead, I am convinced He is permitting a divorce during the betrothal period...like Joseph and Mary...and this brings us to the next lesson...

Lesson Four: Jesus only permitted divorce during betrothals.

Here are the four reasons I'm convinced Jesus is permitting divorce when people are betrothed versus married:

1. First, we the example of a divorce with Joseph and Mary during the betrothal period.
2. Second, no other Gospels or epistles support divorce when two people are married.
3. Third, we want the Bible to interpret the Bible, and this is the only interpretation that harmonizes Matthew's divorce verses with the verses in Mark, Luke, Romans and 1 Corinthians. If Jesus permitted divorce in Matthew when two people are married, He would contradict His own words in Mark and Luke and with Paul's words in Romans and 1 Corinthians.

Fourth, take your minds back to Jesus' words in Mark and Luke. I told you to notice that He used the word **adultery**, because He was talking about unfaithfulness in marriage.

But in these verses when Jesus talks about unfaithfulness, He uses the words **sexual immorality**, because He is not talking about married people. He is talking about people who are betrothed. If Jesus was talking about married people, He would have used the word **adultery** instead.^{viii}

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If you look at **verse 32** it is almost identical to **Luke 16:18** and **Mark 10:11**. In fact, if you take out the phrase **except on the ground of sexual immorality**, it reads almost identically to Mark and Luke...

Matthew 5:32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife...makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

The only difference is the phrase **except on the ground of sexual immorality**.

Why did Jesus add that here, but not in the other Gospels?

Again, because He is talking to a Jewish audience that engaged in betrothals and He was letting them know how a betrothal could be broken off...like Joseph was going to do with Mary.

And if a betrothal was broken off for any reason other than **sexual immorality**, the couple were still considered betrothed and their future relationships would result in **adultery**.

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Now understandably, one of the questions you probably have is, “*What should people do if they remarried with a living spouse, or married someone with a living spouse?*”

First, I understand that this teaching might be new to many of you. If you divorced your spouse and remarried someone else, or married someone with a living spouse, you might have done so in ignorance.

But when we learn we have sinned, even in ignorance, the proper response is confession. Confess that you sinned in divorcing your spouse or in marrying someone with a living spouse, and be thankful for the forgiveness offered through Christ...

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Then, do your best in your current marriage to honor the Lord.

And this brings us to the next lesson...

Lesson Five: Remain with your current spouse even if you have another living spouse.

Please turn to **John 4**. The context is Jesus is speaking to the woman at the well.

John 4:16 Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” 17 The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”

Two things to notice about Jesus’s words to this woman:

1. First, He seemed to recognize each of her subsequent husbands as husbands...versus adulterous relationships. In other words, He said, “**You have had five husbands,**” versus, “**You have had one husband and multiple adulterous relationships.**”
2. Second, He even recognized that the man she was presently living with was not her husband. In other words, just because she was living with a man did not make him her husband.

Next, please turn to **Deuteronomy 24**. Fifth book of the Bible.

Deuteronomy 24:1 “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, 2 and if she goes and becomes another man's wife,

So, a man divorces a woman, and she marries someone else.

Notice the phrase **becomes another man’s wife**. This is similar to **John 4** in that God seems to recognize the second husband as a husband...versus only being an adulterous relationship.

Deuteronomy 24:3 and the latter man (the second husband) 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,

In other words, the marriage to the second husband ends through divorce or death.

Deuteronomy 24:4 then her former husband (the first 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.

If the first marriage was still in existence and the second marriage was an adulterous relationship, then the woman should go back to her first husband...but instead that is exactly what is forbidden and called an abomination.

I assume God made this prohibition, because He foresaw people using divorce and remarriage to practice legally sanctioned adultery: marry someone, divorce that person, marry someone else, divorce that person and then go back to the first spouse.

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Let me conclude with two pieces of marriage encouragement...

Encouragement One: Church involvement is a major factor lowering divorce rates.

Christians who attend church regularly have much lower divorce rates. Professor Bradley Wright, a sociologist at the University of Connecticut, provided these statistics:

- People who identify as Christians but rarely attend church have a 60% divorce rate.
- People who identify as Christians but attend church regularly have a 38% divorce rate.^{ix}

Professor Scott Stanley from the University of Denver, who worked with leading sociologists on the Oklahoma Marriage Study, found something similar...

“Whether young or old, male or female, low-income or not, those who said that they were more religious reported higher average levels of commitment to their partners, higher levels of marital satisfaction, less thinking and talking about divorce and lower levels of negative interaction. These [statistics are true regardless of such] variables as income, education, and age [when married].”^x

What do I think is behind these statistics?

Church attendance provides accountability, fellowship, Bible teaching, prayer, worship, examples in other couples...all things that help strengthen marriages.

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Now listen to this...

W. Bradford Wilcox, a leading sociologist at the University of Virginia and director of the National Marriage Project, found these statistics:

- People who identify as Christians and regularly attend church are 35% less likely to divorce than those who don't attend church.
- Now listen this: people who identify as Christians and rarely attend church are 20% MORE likely to divorce than people who don't identify as Christians and don't attend church at all.^{xi}

Why would the divorce rate be higher among people who call themselves Christians but rarely attend church, versus people who don't attend church at all?

Church and marriage are both areas of life involving commitment. To be a person of poor commitment in one area would probably mean lacking commitment in other areas as well.

Encouragement Two: Let Christ's faithfulness to you fuel your faithfulness to your spouse.

I understand this is a difficult sermon to hear if you are divorced and single, or find yourself in a difficult marriage. I am sorry.

You're probably saying:

- *"You want me to remain single for the rest of my life or be reconciled to my spouse?"*
- *"You want me to remain married to this difficult person?"*

First, it's not an issue of what I want. I believe that's what God wants.

I understand a life of singleness can be difficult, but that doesn't mean it's wrong. Difficult is something everyone experiences in one form or another because we live in a fallen world and suffering is part of it. For some people the cross they have to bear is:

- A cancer diagnosis
- The loss of a child
- A miserable job
- Regular depression or anxiety
- Or remaining single if they have a living spouse.

For others, the cross they have to bear, which is one that greatly honors the Lord, is remaining faithful to an unfaithful spouse.

The main concern for all of us should be, "How can we honor the Lord with the cross we're given?"

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Let me give you the greatest encouragement I can regarding being faithful to a spouse, and it is thinking about Christ's faithfulness to us.

Keep your eyes on Christ when there are times you don't want to treat your spouse the way God commands:

- If you're a husband, there are times you don't want to love and cherish your wife like Christ does the church
- If you're a wife there are times you don't want to submit your husband and respect him like the church is to do to Christ

At those times, you can't think about your spouse, because you are upset with him or her. Thinking about your spouse only makes the situation worse. Instead, you must draw on another relationship, and that is your relationship with Christ:

- Don't think about what your spouse has done to you.
- Think about what Christ has done for you.
- Don't think about your spouse's unfaithfulness.
- Think about Christ's faithfulness.

Romans 8:38 I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I would never try to convince a husband that his wife is worthy of his love, or try to convince a wife that her husband is worthy of her submission. The fact is, no spouse is worthy. But Christ is worthy of a husband's love and a wife's submission.

Let His perfect faithfulness to us fuel our faithfulness in our marriages.

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I know this was a challenging sermon today. If you have any questions, or I can pray for you in any way, please don't leave without seeing me. I will be up front after service and will be sure to stay as long as anyone wants to talk.

Let's pray.

ⁱ [Do Christians Have Lower Divorce Rates? Reviewing Statistics \(beworldview.org\)](http://beworldview.org)

ⁱⁱ For example, think about a wife who is being abused by her husband. I have received numerous emails like this and I tell the wife to reach out to the elders of the church for support. This does three things:

1. It allows the elders to find a safe place for the wife and possibly her children.
2. It allows the elders to contact the authorities if needed if the wife hasn't already.
3. It allows the elders to counsel the husband and share the gospel with him, because it is hard to believe that a husband abusing his wife is a Christian.

ⁱⁱⁱ Likewise, the children in that family are far more likely to be exposed to the gospel when the believing spouse remains in the home and creates a Christian environment. The alternative breaks up the home, possibly leaving the children in the custody of the unbelieving parent.

^{iv} This is especially pertinent when a wife or husband comes to Christ after getting married—an unbelieving spouse may end up rejecting a spouse who becomes a Christian. Notice what Paul's instruction is based on: "God has called us to peace." If the conversion of one spouse to Christianity has become the source of continued conflict, then the believing spouse should not quarrel over the unbelieving spouse's departure. This would be antithetical to the Christian's calling to peace. In addition, unbelievers are never won to Christ through heated arguments. It is more important to be true to the Christian testimony of peace than to attempt to keep an unbeliever in a marriage by force or argumentation. This elevates the Christian faith above even an unstable marriage. It's better to let the unbeliever depart than to sully Christ's reputation.

^v See also Psalm 66:13 I will pay You my vows and Proverbs 20:25 It is a snare to say rashly, "It is holy," and to reflect only after making vows.

^{vi} Speaking of vows, one of my main hopes for the sermon is that the young people would recognize how serious wedding vows are. It's another reason why we discourage dating around. Dating around is really just practice for divorce. "I like this person this week and now I don't like that person anymore and I like this other person so I'm going to be with this person and then eventually I'll leave that person and go be with someone else." In a culture that says "if it's hard then quit" we have to make sure that the youth are committed to staying with whoever they marry. In a culture that is constantly telling our young people to just do what they feel like doing, we have to make sure we are regularly communicating to them that the word of God says to do what the word of God says regardless of how we are feeling. Any culture that says vows and promises me nothing. We need to make sure we are communicating that the word of God says vows and promises mean a lot and are significant and are meant to be kept to our own detriment. A culture that says you can say yes to this today and know to it tomorrow. We need to make sure we are teaching our young people that they're yes needs to be yes and they're no needs to be no.

^{vii} Matthew 19:3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 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'? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." 7 They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" 8 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. 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." [a] 10 The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

^{viii} If adultery was grounds for divorce and remarriage, then based on Matthew 5:28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Most everyone would have grounds for divorce, because most everyone has lusted, but Jesus is not permitting married people to divorce.

^{ix} Bradley R.E. Wright, *Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites ...and Other Lies You've Been Told*, (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2010), p. 133.

^x C.A. Johnson, S. M. Stanley, N.D. Glenn, P.A. Amato, S.L. Nock, H.J. Markman and M .R. Dion *Marriage in Oklahoma: 2001 Baseline Statewide Survey on Marriage and Divorce* (Oklahoma City, OK: Oklahoma Department of Human Services 2002) p. 25, 26.

^{xi} W. Bradford Wilcox and Elizabeth Williamson, “The Cultural Contradictions of Mainline Family Ideology and Practice,” in *American Religions and the Family*, edited by Don S. Browning and David A. Clairmont (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) p. 50.