

## Sunday Morning Message

September 1, 2019

Amplifications of the Law

Text – Matthew 5:17 - 30

Congregational Reading – Matthew 5:27 - 30

### Introduction

Read Matthew 5:17 – 20

This morning, we are continuing our examination of the famous message that Jesus preached called *The Sermon on the Mount*. This message contains quite a few of the very familiar teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this sermon, Jesus speaks about the **Kingdom**, which Christ will set up some day here on the earth. Sometimes, we refer to the Kingdom as the Millennial reign of Christ, or the Millennium, because it will last for 1000 years. Christ will literally rule and reign on the earth during this period of time, and Jerusalem will be the Capitol of the World.

The principles found in the Sermon on the Mount and in other similar messages in the gospels will be the **rule of law** during the Millennium. However, these principles also should apply today to those of us who are the children of God; to those who have been saved. We who are saved have the Holy Spirit of God dwelling inside of us, and the Spirit of God within us is working, transforming us and re-creating us into the very image of Christ.

You will notice as we study this message that the **principles** contained in it **go far beyond** the Old Testament Law. Here in this section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus **amplifies** the Law. He explains that His expectations are not that the Law be followed just according to specific external applications, but that Christians should seek to understand and exemplify the spirit of the Law. This section will cause us to look within ourselves at a much deeper level. We will be forced to peer into our own hearts in order to see where the conflict between God's standard and human behavior begins. It's a heart problem. What Jesus is teaching in this section of the Sermon on the Mount is that Christians should have an internal conformity to the spirit of the Law rather than just an external observance of the letter of the Law.

In the remaining portion of this fifth chapter of Matthew, Jesus will deal with how the Old Testament Law relates to the Spirit-filled Christian. What are we supposed to do with the Law? Many Christians today are completely forsaking the moral aspects of the Law, claiming that they are free to do whatever they please because they are under grace. Thank God for God's mercy that forgives us and keeps us from receiving the judgement that we deserve. Thank God for His grace, which will eventually bring us into Heaven, which we certainly do not deserve. But God's grace is not a license to do whatever we please. Quite the contrary:

*"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and*

*our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:11-14)*

In these remaining verses of chapter five, there are six amplifications (or magnifications, or expansions) of Old Testament commandments given. Before we get started, I am warning you: you have probably already blown it many times in many of these areas, if not all of them. God is not trying to heap guilt upon for what was done yesterday. He is trying to cause us to see the depth (the root) of our sin problem, and help us, through His power, better live out His principles in front of a fallen world.

We have already covered the first two:

- I. Amplification # 1 Anger – Matthew 5:21 – 26
- II. Amplification #2 Adultery – Matthew 5:27 – 30
- III. **Amplification #3 Divorce – Matthew 5:31 – 32**
- IV. **Amplification #4 Oaths – Matthew 5:33 – 37**
- V. **Amplification #5 Judgment – Matthew 5:38 – 42**
- VI. **Amplification #6 Love – Matthew 5:44 – 48**

This morning, we are going to examine the third amplifications - Divorce.

### **Amplification # 3 – Divorce (vs. 31 – 32)**

Divorce is a very sensitive subject to talk about for a preacher because so many families have been affected and even devastated because of bitter marriage break-ups.

No two preachers, and no two churches are in complete agreement as to what is a good enough reason for divorce, or when a person who was divorced can biblically remarry. There is also the question as to what can a divorced person do as far as service within the church is concerned. Can he pastor? Can he be a deacon? Can he or she teach? Every church has a different policy as to divorce and remarriage.

For the purpose of this morning's message, I will not go into exhaustive detail about the subject of divorce, or the related topic of remarriage after divorce, but rather, I want to demonstrate the importance God places on marriage. I want to show you Jesus' heart on the subject.

Divorce has always been a huge problem. In America, the rate of divorces hovers around 50%. In some countries in Europe, the rate is up to 65 %. Unfortunately, divorce numbers within the evangelical and fundamental church world are not much better than out in the lost world.

We stated last week that one of the leading causes of divorce is infidelity within the marriage.

Jesus seems to state here that "fornication" is a justifiable reason for the termination of a marriage. However, I am not so sure that was what He was teaching. I find it very interesting that He did not specifically use the term, "adultery," which by definition is fornication specifically involving at least one married person. While I cannot be positive about this, it is likely that Jesus was referring here to fornication that occurred prior to the actual consummation of the marriage

during the betrothal (engagement) period. Remember, marriages were often arranged by the parents many years prior to the actual wedding day, so if during that engagement or betrothal period, one of the two was found to have had committed fornication, Jesus may be teaching here that that is an acceptable reason for terminating the engagement.

Illustrate – When Joseph first found out that Mary was pregnant with Jesus, he was going to divorce her (Matthew 1:19).

It could also be that Jesus is stating here that unfaithfulness within the marriage because it can be such a devastating blow to the innocent partner, is an acceptable reason for splitting up.

Other Scriptures:

Matthew 19:1 – 12 – “put her away” = divorce. Here the Pharisees want to clarify Jesus’ position on divorce. Notice that Jesus states plainly that divorce was permitted by the Old Testament Law because the people’s hearts were hard.

Mark’s gospel elaborates on this same theme:

*"And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." (Mark 10:11-12)*

Reminder, the Sermon on the Mount was not written to hard-hearted people who were kept in their place by external rules. It is written for saved people who are filled with the Spirit of God who should want to please the Lord and love people, especially their own families.

The fact of the matter is that God hates divorce. In Malachi 2, He says that He hates “putting away.”

Why? Because a Biblical marriage paints a beautiful picture of Christ and His Bride, the Church.

See Ephesians 5:17 – 33 – Notice this section begins with understanding “the will of the Lord,” and being filled with the Spirit.

When divorce takes place, it ruins God’s picture of Christ’s unconditional covenant with the Church. He says, He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5), no matter how we fail Him.

Reminder – The purpose of this message is not to beat anybody up about the mistakes and tragedies of the past. The purpose is to cause us to see that Jesus places a great deal of importance on the marriage covenant. Remember, when you said, “I do,” or “I will,” you made a covenant to your spouse and to our God that you were going to remain faithful and devoted until you were parted by death.

See 1 Corinthians 7:1 – 16

Paul gives principles here regarding what a person who gets saved should do if their spouse is not saved. He says that you should stay married as long as the unbelieving spouse wants to stay married, but he also says that if the unbelieving spouse leaves, that the believing spouse is not under bondage in that case.

## Conclusion

1. If you are single here, be extremely careful that the person you marry is, in fact, God's will for your life.
  - a. Principle – What does God say about marriage? Does the person meet God's criteria for a spouse?
  - b. Prayer - about it
  - c. Parents and Pastor – What do the people that love you have to say about the person you want to marry.

It is better to want what you don't have, than to have what you don't want.

2. If you are married and doing well, do everything in your power to maintain a healthy marriage. Continue to love your spouse in your actions as you did when you were first married.
3. If you are married and struggling, do everything in your power to salvage your marriage. Next to your relationship with God, your relationship with your spouse is priority one. Get counsel; Get away if you need to. Don't be the cause of your divorce. If your spouse throws in the towel and bails out, that is on them, but you do everything within your power to make it work.
4. If you are separated or even divorced and there is still the slightest chance of reconciliation to your spouse, don't give up. Pray for her. Pray for him. If they are not saved, pray for their salvation. If they are saved and away from God, pray that God will do whatever it takes to get their attention.
5. If you are divorced and there is absolutely no chance for reconciliation with your former spouse, than be extremely careful about getting into a new relationship. Make sure that you are seeking the will of God first and foremost.

*"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* (Matthew 6:33)

6. If you are divorced and remarried, work very hard at your new marriage. Don't bring any of the baggage of the old relationship into the new. Make this marriage work for the glory of God.

Again, this is certainly not an exhaustive study, and it does not cover every situation.

Here is the important thing to remember. Your life on earth as a Christian is not about you; it is about fulfilling the will of God. If you faithfully fulfill the will of God, you will have a happy and abundant life, but if you selfishly seek only your own happiness at the expense of pleasing the Lord, you will eventually end up miserable.