

Introduction: Pg. _____

**“Sure as the Dawn”
Matthew 5:31-37**

Sunsets... Sunrise...

Did anyone get up to see the sunrise this morning? (Yes, it rose at 6:29am)

Here's the good news: if you missed it, it will also rise tomorrow at 6:30am.

And if you're really a slacker, you'll have another opportunity on Tuesday morning at 6:31am

Do you see where we're going?

“Come, let us return to the Lord . . . *Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord; his going out is sure as the dawn.*” (Hosea 6:3)

God's love & God's faithfulness are that sure.

The Point: Reflect the faithfulness of God by making your word be as sure as the dawn.

Context:

- Connected to the previous section on adultery and lust.
- Sexual sin will lead to frustration, disappointment, and a massive breach of trust in marriage relationship.

1. Let unending faithfulness be the goal of your marriage.

SENSITIVITY!! Family

Historical/OT Background Divorce

- Highly debated and controversial topics in Jesus' day:
 - Hallel: a man can divorce his wife for any reason (even burnt toast)
 - Shammai: divorce is off limits except in the case of adultery.
- Jesus is referring back to Deuteronomy 24:1-4 where the law allowed a man to write his wife a certificate of divorce “because he found some indecency in her.”
- In the context of the law, this seems to refer to sexual infidelity. That's why Jesus says, “except in the case of adultery” (*porneia*)
- Let's be super clear: does God command divorce in cases of sexual unfaithfulness. NO! He allows it. Read Hosea... Some he may call to separate from but not divorce... to pray and pray and pray and pray and touch the ground and touch the ground... (seek reconciliation - pray for reconciliation).
- “God hates divorce. (Mal 2:16) Anyone who has been down that road or walked with someone would surely appreciate the fact that God hates it, because...
- Jesus shows us how serious divorce is by going on to say: “if, Jesus says — if divorce is given for cases where there is not adultery, then the man actually makes the woman commit adultery if she remarries. Why? Because the union was never broken in God's sight. And whoever marries a divorced woman, who was illegitimately divorced, makes her commit adultery.

Four Views on Divorce and Remarriage

- **No Divorce, No Remarriage. (Betrothal view)**
- **Divorce, but No Remarriage**
- **Divorce & Remarriage for Adultery and Abandonment (MY VIEW!)**
- **Divorce & Remarriage for a Variety of Circumstances**

Jesus & the NT on Divorce and Remarriage

- Adultery: sexual unfaithfulness
- Abandonment: (1 Cor. 7:12-16)
 - **“To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. . . . 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.”**
- Abuse?

What about remarriage? Is it permissible?

- **I believe the straightforward reading says it is permissible where the divorce was on legit biblical grounds.**
- However, I am sympathetic to those arguments that consider the whole of the Scripture and come to different conclusions .

God’s Heart

- Many believe that marriage is man’s idea. They treat the blessing of matrimony as if it is a human institution. If man dreams it, man defines it.
- But if marriage is God’s idea... if he dreamed it, he defines it! That makes it a divine institution, and it is given for one ultimate purpose: the glory of God. Marriage is to be a continual act of worship.

Matthew 19:3-9 (PPT)

- Stay together. Jesus teaches that Moses allowed for divorce but did not command it. Divorce should always be a last resort. A husband or wife could experience marital unfaithfulness and still seek restoration.
- When sin is rampant in a relationship, the natural consequences is for the heart to become hardened toward God and hardened toward others. Spiritual truths no longer stick.
- **Forgive (Matthew 19 follows Matthew 18)**
- Ashley Madison — “life is short. Have an affair.”
- Look at the strong language Jesus quotes from Genesis 2:24. “a man *leaves and holds fast*.”
- The ESV says, “leave & hold fast.” The NIV says, “leave and be united.” The King James, speaking of old school, says, “leave and cleave.”
- “Leave”—There is a break from the previous familial structure. The verb in the Greek can mean “abandon.” “Hold fast,” or “cleave,” is a strong word that can mean to glue, or cement together. These are no half-hearted actions.
- “‘One flesh’ is essential to the biblical view of marriage. It means, one mortal life fully shared. Two selfish me’s start learning to think like one unified us, sharing one everything: one life, one reputation, one bed, one suffering, one budget, one family, one mission, and so forth. No barriers. No hiding. No aloofness. Now total openness with total sharing and total solidarity, until death parts them.” - Ray Ortlund

Marriage as Covenant

What do we mean by covenant?

- **Covenant refers to a relationship bonded together by God through mutual promises.**
- Here’s the deal. Generally speaking, people approach marriage in one of two ways: as a covenant or as a consumer.
- *Consumer mentality* says, “What’s in it for ME?” I’ll take that. And that. And that. And so, fulfillment happens when I receive.
 - *PIC*: Has anyone been to Assembly Row? Consumers dream!

- BUT a *covenant mentality* says, “What’s in it for THEM?” They could use that and that and that. Paradoxically, my desire for love is fulfilled not when I receive, but when I give. B

Covenant love is unconditional love.

- The essence of wedding vows is the promise of future love.
- As Tim Keller says, “**A wedding should not be primarily a celebration of how loving you feel now—that can safely be assumed. Rather, in a wedding you stand up before God, your family, and all the main institutions of society, and you promise to *be* loving, faithful, and true to the other person in the future, regardless of undulating internal feelings or external circumstances.**”
- Pic: Our marriage covenant - Tanner & Marsha (A picture? - Reenactment)
- What’s more important? That day or today? PREECH.
- Tim Southwick & Laurie (27 yrs); My parents...
- Who’s been married for more than 10 yrs? 20? 30? 40? Raise your hand.. Stand...

{P} Do you see why is divorce so serious? Breaking of the covenant
Effects are more destructive and far-reaching than the eye can see.

Think about it: Do you know why there are so many kids in need of foster care because there was not a covenant commitment on the front end or a keeping of that covenant commitment.

When we care for the orphan, we went step into foster care, when we move to adopt, we run toward the tension, into the brokenness to bring the hope, and the love and the mercy of Christ. We make a FRESH commitment to provide for a season or for a lifetime!

2. Let faithfulness characterize all of our relationships (33-37)

Read 33-37

- Jesus summarizes several verses with his statement in verse 33 (“condensing... Ex 20:7, Lev. 19:12, Num. 30:2, and Deut 5:11, 6:3, 22:21-23”) that prohibited “irreverent oaths, light use of the Lord’s name, broken vows.”
- Verse 34...
 - Some translations say: “Do not swear at all”
 - Not swearing as in saying a curse word, but swearing or taking an oath refers to making a solemn declaration or statement with an appeal to God or a superhuman being, or to some sacred object, in confirmation of what was said.”
 - I swear on my grandmother’s grave.
 -
 - The Jews held that unless the name of God was specifically mentioned, then the oath was not binding.
 - Jewish religious leaders had created a complex system of oaths by which the closer you got to God’s name, the more serious the commitment. They created all kinds of non-biblical distinctions by which certain oaths would be binding, others not so much! :)
 - For example,
 - Swearing by heaven and earth, not binding
 - Swearing by Jerusalem, not binding
 - Swearing toward Jerusalem (for some reason), was binding.

- If you are confused, so am I and I'm sure, so were they!
 - Swearing by the head means that the person swearing was putting their life on the line. IF this is not true, you can take me out. But Jesus says, you have no authority over your life, you cannot make one hair white or black.
 - {P} I love this truth: whatever you swear by always comes back to God! Everything is under his command and sovereignty!!
- Here's the issue: these oaths gave ground for people to not keep their word. They gave people opportunity to lie and deceive others.
 - The law was always designed for people to be completely truthful.
 - So Jesus says: Don't swear at all. It's unnecessary.
 - The one who has to swear already shows their credibility is in question! (Quote from the Essenes: EBC....)
 - Let your word be enough!!

Verse 37

- You need nothing to strengthen your word if your word is true. A person's word should be so reliable, they need not add anything to it! Your word is enough.
- "But let your word be, 'Yes, yes; No, no.'"
- Anything more is evil or from the evil one. (Expound?)
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- Some have taken this passage to forbid an oath in court... but that seems to take Jesus' instruction too far. The point is that we need to speak honorable true words, nothing more or less. If in a formal setting (a court of law, taking an oath for service, we don't have to shrink back from making that kind of commitment to the very thing Jesus is stressing... faithfulness to what God is calling us to). Jesus himself testified under oath before the high priest, just before he was crucified.
- Old Fashioned times: handshake and your word. (My papaw - that's what we call grandparents in Kentucky)
 - Jesus says: You don't even need the shake. You don't need to pinky promise. Your word is enough!

Is your heart in your words? Do you mean it? Sincere?

App:

- Are you a man or woman of your word?
- A faithful man who can find? (Prov 18??)

3. Be faithful because of God's faithfulness in the gospel.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:15-20

Read Ephesians 5:31-33

Conclusion: App

- Love your spouse. Date your spouse. Be faithful to your spouse. Keep working. Keep praying. Keep persevering!
- Be a faithful person by speaking faithful words

Inclusio — Sure as the dawn...