

It is important to ensure fellowship with God before the study of the Word.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (**1 John 1:9**).

Standing on the Promises of God - -

Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹ for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Matthew 5:23-30 (reviewed from last class)

The Lord contrasts the righteousness promoted by the Pharisees and the perfect righteousness demanded by God.

Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit. . ." - *the spiritual beggar*

As the beggar in the streets is dependent upon others to provide what he needs to be sustained physically, so the "poor in spirit" turn to the One who can sustain them spiritually.

Remember the context of the Sermon on the Mount -

1. It was designed for the disciples' education and training prior to being sent out to preach the kingdom message to the nation Israel.
2. The Sermon serves as the King's inaugural address to the nation and establishes the principles of His Messianic kingdom.
3. The sermon rejects the Pharisees' religious righteousness and corrects their interpretation of the Mosaic Law.

This sermon communicates that no one is right before the Lord – a person has to be made right by God to be right before the Lord. The only time that occurs is at faith alone in Christ alone.

Justification – the doctrine in which God declares an individual *righteous* based upon the righteousness (+R) that He imputes to the one who trusts alone in Jesus Christ as personal Savior

- **Training for the disciples**
- **Inaugural address establishing the principles on which His righteous kingdom will be governed**
- **Rejects the Pharisees' religious righteousness**

In **Matthew 5:21-48**, the Lord takes six subjects from the Mosaic Law and raises the standard of righteousness for the subjects of His kingdom.

1st Kingdom standard regarding Murder (vv. 21-26)

2nd Kingdom standard regarding Adultery (vv. 27-30)

3rd Kingdom standard regarding Divorce (vv. 31-32)

4th Kingdom standard regarding Vows (vv. 33-37)

5th Kingdom standard regarding Vengeance or Retaliation (vv. 38-42)

3rd subject - Kingdom standard regarding Divorce (vv. 31-32)

3¹ “It was said, ‘WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE;’

- ✓ Moses said this in **Deuteronomy 24:1**
- ✓ We need to understand what the Pharisees were teaching about this at the time.

Deuteronomy 24:1 “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 indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts *it* in her hand and sends her out from his house,”

- ✓ In this case - -
 - The man must go to the trouble of having a certificate of divorce drawn up.
 - This was an irksome process because he had to prove “*some indecency in her.*”
 - In the ancient world, the wife could not initiate the divorce.
 - The indecency is not specifically defined other than the fact that “*she finds no favor in his eyes*” because of it.
- ✓ The Pharisees took this passage and ran wild with it. For them, divorce could be initiated for - -
 - Burning bread
 - Bad cooking
 - Physical illness
 - Speaking ill of his parents

If the husband found another woman more attractive, all he had to do was find something he didn't like about his wife and he was permitted to divorce her.

Matthew 5:31 - “It was said, ‘WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE’; **3²** but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for *the reason of unchastity*. . .

“**Unchastity**” – πορνεία – PORNEIA – “*sexual unfaithfulness*”

. . . makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”

- These are God's righteous standards being taught!
- God does not view the marriage as being dissolved, even with a certificate of divorce.
- That is why God's righteous standard for the kingdom subject is that “*everyone who divorces his wife, except for **sexual unfaithfulness**; makes her commit adultery.*”

➤ **How is she made to commit adultery?**

She marries another man while in God's eyes the first marriage has not been dissolved.

“. . . and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”
[in God's eyes]

Divine viewpoint says the two are still married.

POD - The righteous standard of the kingdom regarding the right to terminate a marriage is reserved for adultery alone.

God's righteous standard - **Matthew 5:20** “For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that of the scribes and Pharisees*, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

What did the Pharisees teach?

- One could divorce his wife for just about any reason as long as he issued her a certificate of divorce.

What did the Lord teach?

- The Lord raised the bar for the kingdom subject indicating that divorce was only permitted in the case of sexual unfaithfulness alone.
 - ✓ People in the kingdom will evidently desire to terminate their marriages for a number of reasons, but they will only be able to do so if their spouse has committed **πορνεία** – “sexual unfaithfulness.”
 - ✓ In that case, the one who was unfaithful will face the death penalty if found guilty.
 - ✓ Death dissolves the marriage relationship from God’s viewpoint.

Matthew 5:48 “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

If you are going to enter the kingdom “**your righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees**” – you must be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.

Once again the Sermon on the Mount convicts all men that they do not meet **God’s righteous standards.**

All must turn to the One who did meet those righteous standards - **Jesus Christ** – the One who made provision for our sins on the cross.

We enter the kingdom based on the righteousness that is imputed to us when we trust alone in Jesus Christ as our Savior.

4th subject - Kingdom standard regarding Vows

Matthew 5:33 “Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.’ ”

- ✓ This principle came from **Deuteronomy 23:23 and Numbers 30:2.**
- ✓ The Pharisees taught that unless a sacrifice accompanied the vow, it was not binding.
- ✓ It did not matter what one swore by, it was not binding.
 - This was righteous before the Pharisees but not righteous before God.
 - This is deceptive and the kingdom subject is to be free from deception.

Examples of how rampant the problem was in that day - -

vs. 34 “But I say to you [raising the standard of righteousness], make no oath at all, either by **heaven**, for it is the throne of God,

vs. 35 or by the **earth**, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by **Jerusalem**, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.

vs. 36 “Nor shall you make an oath by your **head**, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

vs. 37 “But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of evil.”

- **Vow** is the binding of one’s word with an oath.
 - ✓ Why would someone do that?
 - ✓ To insure the integrity of one’s word
- The Lord is saying that if you are going to enter the kingdom you must be free from deception and the Pharisees are far from it.

POD - The kingdom subject will have such integrity that his word does not require an oath.

Some points noted on Divorce - -

- ⇒ God hates divorce and the man who divorces his wife breaks the original design of marriage (**Malachi 2:13-16**).
- ⇒ Divorce is a result of sin, and since sin was not originally present in Adam or Eve, no provisions for divorce were made by God in the garden (**Genesis 1:26-27; 2:22-25**).
- ⇒ Divorce is considered an act of violence against one's spouse (**Malachi 2:16**).
- ⇒ The husband is not to deal treacherously with his wife (**Malachi 3:14**).
- ⇒ Dealing treacherously with a wife is tantamount to divorcing your wife to marry another (**Malachi 2:11-12**).
- ⇒ The Mosaic Law forbids a man who divorces his wife to remarry her if she has been divorced from a subsequent husband or the subsequent husband has died (**Deuteronomy 24:1-4**).
 - ✓ The Lord views this as an abomination.
 - ✓ She is considered to be defiled (**Jeremiah 3:1**).
- ⇒ This is why God permits divorce for the case of adultery – that spouse has been defiled.

All Scriptures quoted are from New American Standard unless otherwise noted.