



July 6, 2025
Kevin Sneed
Matthew 5:31-37

Introduction

The sermon focuses on Jesus' teachings about divorce and marriage from Matthew 5:31-32 and Matthew 19. Kevin explains how Jesus was responding to a cultural debate of his time between two rabbinical schools of thought regarding divorce. Jesus grounds his teaching in creation, presenting marriage as a covenant of self-giving love rather than a contract based on mutual benefit. The sermon emphasizes that while Jesus never condones divorce, he permits it in cases of hardness of heart after all attempts at reconciliation are exhausted. The sermon also challenges us to consider what it means to fulfill our oaths and honor our commitments as people of integrity.

Key Texts: Matthew 5:31-37, Matthew 19:3-9, Genesis 2:22-25

Icebreaker: Describe a time where someone made a commitment to you that was challenging and they followed through on it. What made that so significant to you?

Discussion Questions

1. **Re-read Matthew 5:31-32 together as a group.** What makes Jesus' call in this passage so startling and significant?
2. Spend some time exploring the word "covenant" as a group. Do a brief search of the word "covenant" in the dictionary, as briefly explore where we see covenant throughout scripture. How does a contract differ from a covenant?
3. Kevin said that we have a hard time understanding divorce because we have a hard time understanding marriage – and what love is. Kevin reminded us of God's foundation and intent of marriage and what it means to be human from Genesis 1 and 2. What stood out to you from the sermon about this? How does the communion between the trinity and God's covenantal love for us inform

what it means to be human, as well as what covenantal love in marriage looks like? How does this comfort, convict, or challenge you?

4. Compare and contrast the Christian view of self with the modern, secular view of self (see key takeaways below). How would the playing out of each of these views impact our flourishing and the flourishing of our relationships?
5. Kevin said that the constraint of marriage is actually a gift. How and why might this be? What are ways that constraint brings about growth and reflects the love of God?
6. Kevin talked about a “hardness of heart” and the damaging effects of this on marriage and relationships. What are some practical, daily ways we can guard against a hardness of heart in our relationships with others?
7. **Re-read Matthew 5:33-37.** In this passage we are invited to consider what it looks like to fulfill our oaths and stay in our commitments. How does this passage challenge you to live a life of integrity - to be consistent in your character, actions, and interactions across every sphere and setting in your life? What would it look like for you to better consider and follow through on the commitments you make?
8. What might it look like for you, personally, to rest in the grace of God this week? Where might you need to turn to Him for healing, pursue reconciliation, or receive His forgiveness

Key Takeaways

- Marriage is a covenant, not a contract. The call to marriage is a call to give your life away for the sake of the other.
- Jesus never condones divorce or commands divorce. He permits divorce in circumstances of hardness of heart after all attempts at reconciliation have been exhausted. Divorce was never God’s intent, it was His concession to the brokenness of the world.
- The **Christian view of the self** is that we were created to be formed into people of self-giving agape love, that both receive and give the love of God.
- The **Modern secular view of the self** is that we are meant to live individualist lives of personal fulfillment and happiness.
- We are called, as people of integrity, to stay in our commitments.

Notes