

## **Adultery**

Matthew 5:27-32

December 15, 2002

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A visitor to an insane asylum found one of the inmates rocking back and forth muttering, “Lulu, Lulu . . .”

“What’s this man’s problem?” he asked the doctor.

“Lulu . . . she was the woman who jilted him,” was the doctor’s reply.

As they proceeded on the tour, they came to a padded cell whose occupant was banging his head repeatedly against the wall and moaning, “Lulu, Lulu . . .”

“Is Lulu this man’s problem too?” asked the visitor.

“Yes,” said the doctor, “He is the one Lulu finally married.”

We are now going to talk about sex and lust and marriage and divorce. And I know that makes people uneasy. That’s because it taps into the deepest desire of our hearts . . . and deep in your heart there is a wound.

- Some are single, and they feel the wound in their singleness. They think, “If only I were married.”
- Some are married, and they feel the wound in their marriage. They think, “If only I were single.”

- Some deny the wound, but we all are wounded in the place of our deepest desire.

Genesis 1:27: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

The first thing we learn about the substance of the image of God is sexual. And God’s first commandment—first law—is, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.”

A church friend said to me, “We don’t want to hear any more sermons about infatuation with sex.” That’s also what the world says: “Church, do your religion thing, but don’t be talking about sex. That’s private.” Well, God sure seems to be infatuated with sex. It’s central to His image, and all through the Old Testament He strictly guards the sexuality of His people. Through the prophets He yearns for His Bride.

In Ephesians 5 Paul tells us we are the Bride, and Jesus is the Groom, and earthly marriage is a reference to that.

Marriage is a covenant;  
our faith is a covenant (the new covenant).

Sex is a sacrament in the sanctuary of the covenant of marriage;  
communion is a sacrament in the sanctuary of the new covenant of grace.

Fruit is born of the sacrament of the covenant of marriage through seed;  
fruit is born of the sacrament of the new covenant through seed—the Word of the Father.

Adultery is the enemy of the marriage covenant, for it desecrates the sanctuary and limits life.

In our faith adultery is called *idolatry*.

Sexuality in marriage is a parable of worship.

So Jesus got the Samaritan woman to tell Him about her sexual sins, and then He spoke about worship and the deep desires of her heart. Israel weeps because they don't sense God's blessing in worship, and Malachi prophesies about their sex lives. Then he prophesies, "The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight . . . . But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?"

Well, the Angel of Yahweh—the Messenger of the covenant—the Glory of God sits on a hillside in Matthew 5, speaking to His future sanctuary, temple, and Bride. He speaks to them about sex. Verse 27 . . .

*"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.*

*"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual*

*immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.”*

Unfortunately, Jesus has just said, “Whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven . . . .” So I don’t want to relax it! Even though this is why we often pay pastors and scholars, I’ll try not to relax it. And actually, the Gospel of Matthew is about as relaxed as it gets.

In Malachi God declares, “I hate divorce.” Divorce is always at least a wretched consequence of sin. Mark and Luke record similar statements to these here in Matthew, except there is no exception. “Every one who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery” (Luke 16:18).  
*Period.*

For Jesus, it’s not just divorce that’s the issue. God hates divorce, yet it’s with remarriage that it seems to produce adultery . . . as if people are divorced yet may still have a commitment to their old partner.

Did you know God was divorced? But He never committed adultery. In Jeremiah 3 God tells Jeremiah He has sent Israel away with a decree of divorce. But six verses later God calls to Israel saying, “Return, for I am married to you” (NKJV) or “I am your husband” (NIV) or “I am your master” (RSV). Whatever the case, God divorced Israel but remained faithful.

When I marry people I say, “I’ve read these vows, and there’s *no escape clause!*” So even if you get a divorce, perhaps God still expects you to fulfill your promise.

Well, the Gospel of Matthew contains this exception, most explicit in chapter 19: “Whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity—sexual immorality—and marries another, commits adultery . . . .” The Pharisees had said that Moses had commanded them to give a “certificate of divorce.” Actually, Moses never commanded that. In Deuteronomy 24 he simply says that if a man does divorce his wife, and she then marries another, he can’t take her back, because she’s polluted and defiled. Isaiah 28 tells us Israel had a “covenant with death and Sheol.” That is, she left God and bound herself to others . . . “polluted.” So how could God take her back? He would have to, like . . . cleanse her, kill her, and remake her.

Well, anyway, there is some kind of exception for sexual immorality in Matthew.

Paul also mentions an exception in I Corinthians 7. He suggests that if a spouse is an unbeliever and wants to divorce, a believer should let his spouse go, and he is not bound.

In Ezra 10 it appears the Israelites are told to divorce their unrepentant, pagan wives. But you’ll notice there’s no divorce for mistakes or incompatibility. I think you’re *supposed* to be incompatible. There’s no divorce for “no longer loving the person,” or even for abuse. (That doesn’t mean you shouldn’t call the police and have your husband arrested, but that’s not divorce.)

Perhaps you’re thinking, “Yikes! That’s harsh. Maybe I’m an adulterer. I just want to get out of here.” But if you stand up now, people will look at you. You *do* need to confess. I tell you what:

If you’ve been divorced and remarried . . .

*or* if you married a divorced person and you're not sure the divorce was entirely biblical and therefore you're an adulterer . . .

*or* if you've just committed adultery . . .

*or* if you've ever looked on a woman or man to lust after her or him . . .

*or* if you've ever fantasized about being married to someone else . . .

Would you raise you hand? Wow! That's a lot of adulterers!

Jesus said, "Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." We get worked up over divorce . . . and we really should . . . but *just lust* makes you an adulterer! I can't think of any worse place to be an adulterer than in my heart. God sees the heart, and everything flows from the heart.

The word "lust" is also translated "covet." When a man lusts after a woman, he takes a mystery of personhood and reduces her to a consumer item and covets her as a thing. So unwilling or unable to make a covenant to the *person*, he just covets her beauty and glory (that is, glamour). Men don't normally lust after an elderly woman, for her glamour is gone. Yet she is still there.

When a woman lusts after a man, she usually covets riches and power (the man's glory). Women *do* covet elderly men, but only if they're rich.

When we lust and covet we consume and take and desecrate. “Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” And Jesus just says “a woman.” My *wife* is a woman. Maybe there’s a way in which I can look even on my covenant partner and lust and covet in the spirit of adultery. That is, I may consume her beauty and glamour, and not commune with her heart.

Guys, when you make love to your wife and picture another woman, it’s adultery. Maybe even when you make love to your wife but only care for her glamour, it’s adultery. And you really haven’t made love to *her* but to her *attributes*.

But now don’t get me wrong. Desire for beauty and glamour isn’t a sin. It’s just that those things always come attached to a heart. In fact, God uses those desires to lure us into making covenants to hearts. And if it weren’t for sexual desire, there would be very few children. How could Adam “be fruitful and multiply” in obedience to God’s command?

But Jesus teaches . . .

“Don’t lust.”

“If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away.”

“If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off .”

The early church father Origen had himself castrated because of this text. Yet according to Jesus, it probably wasn’t Origen’s eye, hand, or genitals that caused him to sin. In Matthew 15:19 Jesus says, “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication . . .” Origen needed to rip out his own heart. Yet that’s death, suicide, and even *more* sin.

Now some of you are saying, “OK, Peter, I get what you’re saying . . .

1. “We’re all adulterers in some way, and we all deserve to die. In fact, we’re all dead zombies apart from grace.” *That’s right.*
2. “Jesus died for our sins, and if we only repent and confess, He forgives us all that sin.” *That’s right.*
3. “He not only forgives us but give us new hearts.” *That’s right.*

You say . . .

“I understand. But I still need to know: What is sin? I’m divorced, and I have this girlfriend. Am I free to marry her? Does that match the exceptions in Scripture?”

- or -

“I’m married and my husband’s an absolute jerk. Am I free to divorce him for someone else? *Surely* God doesn’t want me to be abused and belittled and dehumanized! He’s a God of love. How could *that* be love? His law is love. Explain the law and it’s exceptions.”

Well . . . perhaps it would be best if I used a case study . . .

I’ve been talking to a young man named Josh. For years now he’s been absolutely consumed with this woman. He rescued her from a poor, abusive family. She was absolutely enamored with his wealth and good looks, but also very intimidated and reserved. She had a hard time opening up.

Her heart began to wander. For a long time she kept up a façade, but it turns out she was sneaking out at night and having sex with other men. She denounced her faith. She even became a prostitute.

Josh would walk the streets and buy her back from pimps. She gave herself to vile men, but she was frigid to Josh. The counselor said she was caught in a cycle of shame. She was dying inside for intimacy but wouldn't surrender to her husband's advances.

At one point Josh gave her the divorce papers. He hoped she'd turn back to him, but she didn't. Still Josh wouldn't look at another woman. He thought of her; he dreamed of her; he would follow her and try to rescue her. She'd pay the pimps and johns to beat him. She even married a pimp, such that she was polluted like in Deuteronomy 24. She was an adulterer, a whore, and an unbeliever who wanted a divorce. And early one morning she tried to kill Josh.

If anyone ever had a valid reason for divorce, his name was Josh.

“Joshua” is Hebrew. In the Greek His name is “Jesus.” And we are His whoring Bride. And we did kill Him. The cross is how we did it. But through His cross, Joshua—Jesus—romances His Bride to Himself. And there He washes her and shapes her in His image.

Do you want to be made in His image or not?

Do you want to know Him, commune with Him, be like Him? Do you? Because all of our questions are going the wrong direction . . .

“How can I get out of my covenant when it hurts?”

“How can I get away from this cross?”

“How can I look as little as possible like Jesus?”

People say, “My marriage isn’t working. I want a divorce.” Well, if marriage is to shape you into the image of Jesus, your marriage is *most working* when your bride is ugly, cheats, lies, and spurns your love, and is now nailing you to a cross. And you hang there saying, “Father, forgive her, for she doesn’t know what she’s doing.”

Bride, your marriage is most working when your Groom is naked, beaten, and emptied of His power, glory, riches, and knowledge, covered in spit and shame. Yet you adore Him and see Him as He is in weakness. And you still worship Him from prison cells, gutters, and allies at the expense of your life.

In the movie Moonstruck Cher asks her mother, “Why do men sleep around?” Her mother says, “Because they’re afraid to die.”

The world says, “You only go around once, so get all the gusto you can get!” That is: riches, power, glory, and pleasure. Well, *it’s true*: You only go around once. But for all eternity you will have all the riches, power, glory, and pleasure you’re capable of wanting. Yet there will be some things you can no longer get:

There will be no mourning, crying, or pain.

. . . no opportunity to experience Christ’s sufferings for His covenant Bride.

So . . . “Go for the gusto” . . . pick up your cross and die for the sake of a love like His. “You only go around once.”

I’m not preaching what *I* would do, but what Jesus does. I have an easy marriage. But those I suspect I’ll see at the Lord’s right hand *do not*.

You may be married to an earthly bride, or you may be married to the people He dies for—the Church. Either one can crucify you. But as they do, you are made in His image. And He gives you His heart. He is removing your old heart and giving you His new heart. He’s killing the old you and birthing the new you.

Marriage is God’s sneaky way to get a person crucified.

You marry a young bride for her beauty and glamour. God gets you to form a covenant with *no escape clause!* That’s insane! And before you know it, you’re hanging on a cross for the sake of love, looking a lot like . . . *Jesus*.

And by the time you die, probably all the beauty and glamour will be gone. The groom’s strength, power, and vigor will be gone, and you will begin to love him, or love her, in spirit and truth.

Robertson McQuilkin resigned as the president of Columbia Bible College to care for his bride who had Alzheimer's disease. She no longer had her old glamour, beauty, and wit. He writes:

“Love is said to evaporate if the relationship is not mutual, if it's not physical, if the other person doesn't communicate, or if one party doesn't carry his or her share of the load . . . I count off what my beloved can no longer contribute, and then I contemplate how truly mysterious love is. What some people find so hard to understand is that loving Muriel isn't hard . . . I think my life is happier than the lives of 95 percent of the people on planet Earth.”

Jesus hides in people like Muriel and calls us deeper. He hides in our spouse and calls us to love deeper. “Love deeper, past the glamour, past the flesh, past the knowledge, and into the spirit.”

Perhaps you married Jesus when He was glamorous and beautiful, when He made sense of your world and showed you His power. But now He seems ugly, and you can’t see the glory, and the world doesn’t make sense. And God is *so weak* . . . it’s like He’s hanging on a cross.

Will you divorce Him?

Will you fantasize about another lover  
because it feels like He’s no longer  
giving you what you want?

Perhaps He’s giving you His heart—His greatest gift—and turning you from a consumer into a creator. Perhaps it’s more blessed to give than to receive. Or maybe in the kingdom giving *is* receiving; that is, loving is its own reward.

Perhaps worship isn’t *taking* but *giving*, and the giving is the greatest taking . . . a communion where you drink God and He drinks you . . . just as in the sacrament of marriage. The greatest sexual ecstasy is the pleasure of giving pleasure. Two become one. Then you’re no longer a consumer but a creator of life. It’s there that life is made in the form of babies . . . and new hearts.

Larry Crabb says that most marriages are like “two ticks and no dog” — two bugs trying to suck the life out of each other. And they die. But Jesus gives us His life. He gives the old zombies His blood. And we love because He first loved us. He fulfills the law in us. He fills the empty wound with Himself and fulfills the first command *through* us. *He* “is fruitful and multiplies and fills the earth.” (He “fills all in all.”)

Now, some of you have very difficult marriages and divorces. And you may live with a great longing all your years on this earth. Well, I believe Jesus didn't fully consummate His marriage on this earth. We are going to our wedding banquet, you know. So endure.

And some of you are single, and you think I'm not talking about you. But I am. Jesus was single, yet He was married. And so are you. Jesus is the King, and He's speaking to His Bride.

Soren Kierkegaard used to tell of a king who fell in love with a peasant. He wanted her for his bride, but he knew if he disclosed his identity . . . his riches, power, glory, and beauty . . . she wouldn't love *him* the *person*, but only his things. Yet if he *didn't* disclose his identity, he couldn't give her himself, for his life would be an act, and she wouldn't know him.

His only hope was to empty Himself of riches, power, glory, and beauty, and come to her in weakness. I think the king's name was something like *Josh*. And that's the story of Christmas.

“And being in the very form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. . . . He humbled himself even to the point of death on a cross.” He did it to win His Bride to Himself.

Now He sits on the hillside speaking to His Bride, and His words are deeply personal and passionate, for He knows that she will not see Him, will divorce Him, and will crucify Him. He knows, because she's already committing adultery in her heart.

Both in Matthew 12 and Matthew 16, the religious people come to Jesus saying, “Show us a sign,” and He says, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign.” As if to say . . .

“You talk of the days of old, of the pillar of fire by day and the pillar of cloud by night; you talk of the shechinah glory, the presence of God that filled the temple; you talk of the Angel of Yahweh, the Lord of Hosts, the power and the wisdom and the glory of God . . . and that is who *I AM!*”

“I’m standing right in front of you, and you don’t know me. You may even do ‘mighty works in my name,’ but you don’t know me. And so I am your judgment.

“You don’t know me, and that means you were using me all along, You married me for my things and not my person, your image of me and not me. An evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign.”

I think the religious leaders wanted signs of love but not His love; signs of His presence but not His presence. They wanted His things and not His heart; manifestations of His Spirit but not His Spirit.

Here’s the irony: There *were* signs that Jesus performed in the power of the Spirit . . . *great signs*. But the scribes and Pharisees refused to see. And if they saw, they refused to believe, for the signs happened . . .

- in those they judged unclean
- in places they were unwilling to go
- in places outside their control

- in lepers, Romans, Gerasenes, unforgivable paralytics, hemorrhaging women, demonized prostitutes
- on the Sabbath, at inconvenient times, in the midst of storms

And when they would happen, Jesus would tell people not to make a show. But when a group of religious people got together and demanded a show, this is what Jesus said: “No sign shall be given . . . except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

So Jesus . . .

The Word, The Presence, The Glory,  
The Power, The Beauty, The Wisdom,  
The Word of God

. . . stood in their presence.

But because they committed adultery in their hearts, because they coveted and lusted after His attributes, because they served their idol, they killed Him. And the world received far more than just a sign.

Jesus said in Matthew 24, “False Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders.” They’ll show signs and wonders, but they won’t love like Jesus; they won’t give you their body broken and their blood poured out.

Worship is an act of loving our Lord. The most ecstatic love-making happens . . .

1. When you give yourself, not to consume but to create joy in another.
2. When you give yourself to the other as they are, not as you *wish* them to be; as they are in naked weakness, like broken body and blood.

You know, there are people like me who actually leave the worship service and say “I wasn’t fed.” But they ate Jesus’ body and drank His blood.

There are people like me who leave thinking, “The glory wasn’t there. The Spirit just wasn’t there. The sermon was confusing. The songs were flat. There must be more . . . I want more . . . That wasn’t enough. Nobody got healed. Nobody fell down. There were no signs.”

Well, we may have done a terrible job leading, and perhaps there were no signs. It may be that all there was, was the broken body and the shed blood of Jesus: the life, the Word, the seed to be implanted in the womb of His humble Bride.

Perhaps you missed Him . . .  
 Perhaps you were lusting after an idol . . .  
 Perhaps you were coveting His riches, power, glory, and pleasures as He handed you His heart . . .  
 Perhaps you didn’t discern the body and the blood, in which case you drank judgment on yourself.

Don’t commit adultery in your heart at the table of the Lord. You thought this message was about your marriage . . . and it *is* . . . your marriage to Jesus. He is here to forgive you all your adulteries; to cleanse His Bride and fill her with His Spirit.

Well, I can't tell you who to marry. I can't tell you if your divorce was "valid" or not. I can't tell you exactly when you've committed adultery in your heart. But . . .

- Come to this table confessing your adultery, and I can tell you: You're entirely forgiven.
- Come to this table receiving His love, and I can tell you: You will begin to love and do whatever He's calling you to do.
- Come to this table, and your wound begins to heal, for the One you long for is here: the King. And you *are* His Bride. Worship Him.

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On the night that our Lord was betrayed, having given thanks He took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body." He said *is*. "This is my body given for you. Do this [this is what I want you to do!] in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper He took the cup and said, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of me."

"Father, I thank you that although you had all riches, power, glory, honor, and praise—and they all belong to you for ever and ever—you emptied yourself and came to get your Bride.

"Father, I thank you for all the incredible gifts that you give us. I thank you for flames of fire; I thank you for gifts like tongues, prophecy, visions, and miracles; I thank you for healings; I thank you for your wonders that know no end.

“Yet, Lord God, this is the greatest wonder: Body broken and blood shed, for a person like me. Open the eyes of our hearts, dear Lord, and help us to see you as you are. In Jesus the Christ, amen.”

If you want Him, if you desire Him as your Savior and Lord, come to the table.

[Song: “What Child Is This?”]

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And from the throne came a voice crying, “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.” Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints (Revelation 19:5-8).

You “only go around once in life” . . . and then it’s eternity. So while you’re here, “go for all the gusto you can get.” Pick up your cross. Very soon we will be at the dance, and the Lord will be clothed in power, glory, wonder, and beauty. We’ll see Him as He is in glory, yet we, of all creation and all the things in creation, will know His heart. I believe that He gives us His heart in this world of pain.

But you can start dancing right now . . . because you believe the Gospel. And don’t be surprised if every now and then people

get healed and amazing wonders happen. That's to be expected.  
In Jesus' name, amen.

Further Reading

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.”

Matthew 5:27-32

And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” He answered, “Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.” They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?” He said to them, “For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery.”

Matthew 19:3-9

And he said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

Mark 10:11-12

“Every one who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.”

Luke 16:18

To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord, that the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband)—and that the husband should not divorce his wife. To the rest I say, 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. For the unbelieving husband is consecrated through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is consecrated through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy. But if the unbelieving partner desires to separate, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. For God has called us to peace.

I Corinthians 7:10-15

“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 bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, and if she goes and becomes another man’s wife, and the latter husband dislikes her and writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies, who took her to be his wife, then her former 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 guilt upon the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance.”

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: “Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. And I said, after she had done all these things, ‘Return to Me.’ But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. . . . Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: ‘Return, backsliding Israel,’ says the LORD; I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,’ says the LORD; ‘I will not remain angry forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the LORD your God, and have scattered your charms to alien deities under every green tree, and you have not obeyed My voice,’ says the LORD. Return, O backsliding children,’ says the LORD; ‘for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.’”

Jeremiah 3:6-9, 12-14

And this again you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor at your hand. You ask, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness to the covenant between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Has not the one God made and sustained for us the spirit of life? And what does he desire? Godly offspring. So take heed to yourselves, and let none be faithless to the wife of his youth. "For I hate divorce, says the LORD the God of Israel, and covering one's garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So take heed to yourselves and do not be faithless."

Malachi 2:13-16

Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church; however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Ephesians 5:28-33

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Matthew 12:38-40

And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather; for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah." So he left them and departed. . . . From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

Matthew 16:1-4, 21

Who grasps the contradiction of this sorrow: not to disclose itself is the death of love; to disclose itself is the death of the beloved. It was God's longing to prevent this. The unity of love will have to be brought about in some other way. If not by way of elevation, of ascent, then by a descent of the lowest kind.

Soren Kierkegaard

Besides, what's so extraordinary about the fact that God's life had extraordinary results? To talk this way is sheer nonsense. No, God lived here on earth, in true lowliness, and that is what is infinitely extraordinary – extraordinary in itself. The fact that he lived among us is infinitely more important than all the extraordinary results ever recorded in history.

Soren Kierkegaard

“Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them.”

Matthew 5:17

In loving me, you made me lovable.

St. Augustine

*For a detailed study regarding the Bible's position on divorce and remarriage, I'd suggest the book Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible, by Jay E. Adams.*

*-Peter*

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