Smoke and Mirrors Righteousness

Long Beach Alliance Church • February 21, 2016 • Elder Ed Blatchford

It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let nore than this comes from evil. ndard Version)

what you say be simply 'res' of 'No'; anything h ~ Matthew 5:31-37 (English Sta
1) Rear View—How DID we get to this point, anyway?
A) Jesus and the Law
B) The Outward & Easy vs the Inner and Impossible
C) Do's and Don't Righteousness
2) Her-Fault Divorce, Matthew 5:31, 32
A) What does Deuteronomy 24 really say?
B) How was it used?
C) "But I say to you" What does Jesus say here about divorce?
D) The Tragedy of Heathcliff and Jezebel
3) Not-so-ironclad-agreements, Matthew 5:33-37
A) The Law
B) Man's twist on a seemingly straight-forward topic

C) Jesus rejects the fine print

GROWTH GROUP GUIDE • WEEK 7: MATTHEW 5:31-37

OPENER

Has there ever been a time that you made a vow or promise that you later regretted?

BIBLE STUDY

Read through Matthew 5:31-37

- 1. What shame does a man bring on his wife if he divorces her
- 2. What guilt is on a man who marries a divorced woman?
- 3. What does Jesus think of promises made to the Lord?
- 4. On what authority should we speak?

Read through Hebrews 12:14-15

- I. What are we to strive for?
- 2. What root are we warned against?

Read through Deuteronomy 23:21-23

- 1. Is it a sin if you make a hasty promise to do something for the Lord and you fail to do it?
- 2. If you don't make promises to God, is it a sin?
- 3. Why should you watch your words?

DISCUSSION

- I. What ways have you seen the church (not necessarily LBAC) deal with the issue of divorce? Has it been demonized? Overlooked? Encouraged? Prevented? Healed? How would you like it to be handled?
- 2. We are less likely to make vows to heaven when we speak, but we tend to exaggerate our words or use many superlatives to make a point and feel heard. What difference would it make to Jesus' reputation if Christians spoke simply and honestly?

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 SIDE TO THE TENED SECURITY
 - 3. Christians are held to a high standard in marriage, because it is a covenant relationship. They are also held to a high standard in relationships with other believers, because they are in a covenant relationship with them as well. When the "root of bitterness" springs up, what unhealthy things do we turn to? Where can we turn for the power to keep our vows, speak honestly, reconcile marriages, and avoid the "root of bitterness" in all of our relationships?

MAKING ROOM TO MAKE DISCIPLES

Find out what life is like for your unbelieving friend, while you spend life together, or in thoughtful prayer. Is life stressful? Is it enjoyable? Is that person a good friend to you? Are you a good friend? What makes a good friend?

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for fulfilling the Law for us. Thank You for Your grace on us when we fail You. Thank You for being more kind than we ever dreamed. Please empower us with Your Spirit to be honest people and to be faithful to our spouses and loving to everyone. Please help us to turn to You for these things. Please also make us be more focused on people who do not know You yet. Please help us to join You on Your mission to make disciples of all nations. Amen.