

Bill of Divorcement

Dec. 21, 2002

Don Roth

For this afternoon, for the Bible Study, we are going to go to the book of Matthew. We are going to look at something that has been looked at quite a few times, but, maybe, we can read through and come to a better understanding of what is being said here and how it affects us.

Let's turn to chapter 5 and start reading in verse 13. Christ is speaking, and in order to understand and get the feel of what is being talked about here, we have to have the understanding, because Christ is talking to His disciples, to His believers, to people in general. He is talking to them because they are there to hear His words, to hear what He has to say. If we see that, we realize that the audience probably is not composed of what we would call the accepted religious leaders of the day. I am not saying that there were absolutely no Pharisees or Sadducees present there, because, of course, we don't really know that, but we do know for sure that the people that are here, in general, are, more or less, the common people. The disciples were not of the rich and powerful, so, if they are representative of the audience, then we know what the audience was like. When we see what He is going to tell them, starting in verse 13, that is going to be an astonishing thing for them to hear.

13 "You are the salt of the earth... That is a basic, important statement because everyone understands how important salt is. It is a very important ingredient. If you have a meal without salt on it, it is bland. Salt is what puts life and flavor into the meal, so He is saying, "Look. You are very important. Without you, this earth would be a very bland place." That is just the opposite, in a way, if you think about how things are done today and how people look at things. For instance, we had this big "to-do" with the Catholic church (in the news). The priests, and bishops, and so on were all there, dressed up in their fancy garb. They are looked at as something really

special, but Christ is telling these regular people that **they** are special.

In effect, what He is saying is that **we** are special. This is something to take to heart, because *...if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?* If the salt no longer has its effect, if it no longer makes a meal flavorful, if it doesn't bring out the flavor of what we are partaking of, then it is useless. It is of no value. So He is telling them, "Wait a minute. There is a possibility here that you won't be of any value." *It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.* If it is not the case that you are an important ingredient, then you are to be thrown out, trampled underfoot. You have become worthless.

14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Wow! He is telling them that **they** are the light of the world. In effect, this is coming down to us. He is saying the same thing about **us**. Let's turn to John 8:12. We will see how it fits in.

12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

Do you see how this is connected? He is talking, back in Matthew, to these people, and how is this that they are going to have this light? How is it that they are going to be the light? It is through Christ and He is talking to them right now.

Continuing in Matthew, chapter 5:

15 "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. If you turn a light on, you don't cover it up. You use it.

16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Here we see what Christ is getting at. He is saying, "Look. The things that you do with your life should be such that they

shine for other people to see. It is a reflection on your Father in heaven." Doesn't this fit in with what we are teaching, and talking about, and going over - becoming like the Father? So then our actions are a reflection of the Father. That is what He is saying.

I have mentioned this in the past and this is really true what Christ said here. Things have happened and maybe things have happened in your life, but I know that in my life, things have taken place that, when they happened at the time, it was a little bit startling for me because of the people involved.

For example, the Vice President of Manufacturing of Chrysler, in a private meeting that I had with him, on another, completely different subject which had nothing to do with any religious aspect, out of the clear blue said, "You know... I never hear you swear!" And I thought, "Whoa. Is there something wrong?" I had never really thought about it. I have to admit that I have worked at it to try to eliminate that defect. It took me by surprise.

Another time, an owner of another company said the same thing. Further, he and his partner were quite close and I knew them quite well because it was a fairly good-sized company in Hartford. I received a call from the other owner of that company who said, "You know...I have to check on something. I know that you keep the Sabbath. You keep Saturday. I have an employee (talking about employees again as in Mr. Liebold's sermonette) who keeps the Sabbath and he claims that he has to be off on Friday night. Is that really the case? Is that the way it works?" I said, "Well, yes. Absolutely. Sundown Friday to sundown on Saturday. That is the time that we observe."

So, you see that you never know how what we are saying and what we are doing is going to affect others. In doing business with this particular company, we told them, "We don't work on Saturday. We close the doors. That's it." They were using that example to check up on this employee. They said, "This employee is a good worker, but I really want to know that this is the way the Sabbath works."

You may say, "Well. So what? These men never showed any interest in God's Word or taking it any further, so what difference does it really make?" We don't **know** the difference, do we?

Look at the difference it made for the young man who was working there. Look at the **real** difference that it is going to make, I am positive of this, in the Resurrection. When they are resurrected as physical human beings, they will see me there and they will see you there and whoever else you have dealt with. They are going to know how we believe and what we put forth, regardless of the opinions of the rest of the world. So this thing about being a light shining is a very important piece of information for us to be aware of.

Continuing on in verse 17 (Matthew 5) **17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.**

That word for "do not think," #3361 and 3543, is a word that means, in effect, "you contemplated, I think that you are thinking, this is what I am thinking that you are thinking." That is what He says, "Do not think..." In other words, He is telling them, "Look. Don't think this way, that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets." He says, "I did not come to destroy but to fulfill." That word "not" is #3756 and it is an **absolute**. There is no question. It is an absolute. No, no! So He is making this very important statement here about this. If you look at the world, they say that the Law is done away with. We don't understand it in those terms. We understand that the Law is active. Man cannot do away with the Law. The Law is in effect as long as there are human beings alive and walking this earth. In fact, it is automatically alive, period.

Continuing in verse 18,
"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

What He is comparing this to is the destruction of heaven and earth. He says nothing is going to be changed as long as there is heaven and earth. This is the way it is. Not one little tittle is going to be changed. Nothing. Nothing is going to be changed. He continues,

19 "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Who is it that is teaching them? Right here we see and we understand that Christ is doing the teaching. When it says that they will be **called** "the least" doesn't mean that they are going to **be** in heaven. It really doesn't. All it says is that those who are going to be there are the ones who are going to **say** this about the person, or people, or whoever it is, that teaches against the Law, one who breaks the Commandment and teaches the same thing saying, "It's OK. It's all right to break the Sabbath. If you are, say, a nurse, well you are doing some good, so, therefore it is OK for you to work on the Sabbath. Or you are a fireman, or you are a policeman, or your job is in danger, therefore it is OK." Well, we have gone down that path, haven't we? Christ says this is what really will happen.

20 "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Can you imagine what those people thought! Didn't I see that bishop on television in all his fancy garb? Didn't I see the Pharisees walking down the street in their flowing robes and all the markings and their special little boxes and accouterments? It is the same thing, isn't it? They have a **form** of righteousness, but when it comes down to the actual carrying out of the Law, they aren't there. They don't **live** by God's Law. Naturally, if they did, it is done away with, so they don't really care, do they? You can see the effect that it had on these people

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'

22 "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause... That word "without" a cause means that there isn't a fundamental reason based on God's Law to have a cause to be angry with your brother. ...shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. "Raca means "empty head." The council is the Sanhedrin. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. That word "fool" is #3474 and it means scorne of heart and character, so you can see that there is a difference here and Christ is bringing this point out, because if you go too far in this, then you are in danger of losing your salvation. If it carries on and you let something that your brother has done get the better of you and you let it eat at your heart, then Christ says, "Look. You are going to be in danger of not making it into the Kingdom."

23 "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

I wonder. Do we actually practice this? If we really would practice this, then we couldn't let a problem simmer, could we? We would take care of the problem. We would go back to our brother and say, "Well now, wait a minute, if I have done something to offend you, let's get this worked out. Let's see what we can say about it. Let's get it straightened out." This is a very important principle that Christ is bringing out.

25 "Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

26 "Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

What He is saying here is that you are better off, if you have a problem with someone and it looks to me, it is obvious, that He is talking about money being paid

here, if you owe a debt, you are better off to go to the person and say, "Look. I am having a difficult time. I can do this and this," and see if you can't arrange to take care of the debt.

This is a great principle. Rather than just waiting and hoping that the person isn't going to do anything, until he drags you into court and gets a judgment against you, etc. Then you really have a problem, because when that happens, like He said, you have to pay everything, including the interest, etc., etc., all of the things that are involved in the debt. You can work this out. Generally people, if you go back and talk to them, are agreeable. I know when we first started in business, we had money flow problem and instead of ignoring, say, the fuel company, we called them up and said, "Look. This is what we can do. We can send you some money here and we have more money coming in at this point." The person was more than happy to work with us. Eventually we got all our bills caught up and we got on top of it and we had a very good relationship with that company. They didn't cut us off from their supply of fuel so we were able to produce and continue to work.

This is a very important principle that Christ is bringing out here.

27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.'

A normal statement. We all know about adultery.

28 "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

So, you see, going back to His statement about not changing the Law, in verse 17, this is very true. We have brought out, in the first verses that we read, 21 through 26, some important principles that go beyond sticking a knife in the heart of a person. It goes beyond actually killing him. He says that even becoming angry is not the way we must learn to control our anger, our temper. Bring yourself under control and understand some principles along the way.

Here He is discussing adultery and He says, "Look. What's the difference? If you have thought it through, that is the first step." That is the first step in committing any crime, if you think about it. Almost always, if you are going to

steal something, you don't just instantly walk up and steal something. You think about it, "How am I going to steal this? How am I going to get away with it?" In this particular case He is saying, "Look. We are all guilty." What He is saying is that everyone is really guilty of adultery, any married person, because of what you have allowed to come into your mind. He is pointing this out here and it is a very important thing. Understand what He is really saying here is that we have to control our mind, don't we? We have to control our mind. We can't let our mind do whatever it wants to do.

The mind is a funny thing, isn't it? It drifts here and there. Sometimes it starts thinking about things that we can control.

29 "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.

In other words, eternal death. He says, "Look. If you have a problem with looking at women, you are better off not to have an eye, if that will help you. Just tear it out." He is very graphic, isn't He? He isn't coming through with the full force without a very graphic statement. If you think about tearing your own eye out! That is pretty drastic.

30 "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.

What is the principle here that He is saying? He is saying that this physical body that we have, if we remove part of it, or, say, we are not just as happy with our surroundings as we should be... This isn't the important thing. The important thing is making it into eternal life in the family of God. This is what is really the important thing. He goes so far as to say, "Well, if you lose part of your body, so what? But if you make it into eternal life, then you have really done something. **That** is life forever. **This** is a very short life.

I understand this because very shortly I am going to be 70 years old. Technically, you might say, it all over. Three score and ten. That is what I am allotted. I really have no idea how long I am going to live. Maybe tomorrow is the end. We

don't know, so it is all important that we understand how important it is in what we are doing and what we are thinking and putting a great importance on not only what we do physically but what we **think**.

31 "Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'

32 "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.

We are going to cover a couple of things, but let's go over to Matthew 19 and read what Matthew says, because I think that it is important and it will shine some light of understanding on this particular verse.

3 The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

What you have to understand here is, first of all, that the Pharisees were not unaware of Christ's teachings about the Law. They knew that He was very much in favor of teaching about the Law, so they thought that here they had something.

You will remember what I read back in the early verses where He said, "Look. I haven't come to change the Law. I won't change one bit of the Law." He couldn't change the Law. It is His Father's Law. If we see that, and then we understand where the Pharisees are coming from, they are saying, "Now wait a minute. Moses wrote this here about this bill of divorcement. Isn't it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" That is exactly what they believed - any reason. They thought, "Well, we really have Him here.

4 And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'

5 "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'?"

That is a rather interesting statement. You can't have three being one flesh, can you? You can't have three being one flesh. What does that mean? Could that

mean that you can't have polygamy? I guess that you can't, if this is true what Christ is saying. You see, you can only be one flesh with one person, because there is one flesh. Think about that. There is only one - uno for the Spanish speakers if Mr. Mortensen is translating. That means one, only one, not one-and-a-half, or three, but just one.

6 "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Then here is where they came in. They said, 'Well, now we have got Him. We have got Him where we want Him.'

7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so."

Then He repeats what He said in the earlier chapter.

9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery;..."

That "sexual immorality" in the New King James, in the Interlinear is translated "fornication."

There is a big controversy about what that means, etc. We have gone through this pretty much, but I just wanted to bring that out to you.

9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

10 His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

They were really astonished at this. But now, let's go back to Deuteronomy 24 where Moses gives this law and let's take a look at it because it is important to understand about this bill of divorcement. I think it is quite important for us to understand what is really going on here in Deuteronomy 24, so let's read about this bill of divorcement. After all, it was pretty important to the Pharisees, to the people who were living at that time. They had an understanding about this.

Deuteronomy 24, verse 11

"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 uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house,

2 "when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife,

3 "if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife,

4 "then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance."

Does this mean that these people were getting married and they were living together and things were happening and he found some uncleanness there? You read that and you think, "Well. Uncleanness! What does that mean? Maybe this woman was out committing adultery. That would be uncleanness, wouldn't it? Or maybe she was having an affair with another woman. That would be uncleanness. Or maybe she was having something to do with an animal. That would be uncleanness." All of these things.....some are rather strange...Then in this example that Moses gives, he talks about her becoming the wife of another man. The point here is that the first guy who gave her the bill of divorcement couldn't take her back. She has this uncleanness. What is this uncleanness that she has? What is the problem here?

Let's look at the laws. Remember what Christ said - "Look. I haven't come to take away any part of the Law. I am not changing these laws, not one bit!" So maybe we should look at the laws and see what could be affecting this decision by this man. What is his reason for giving her a bill of divorcement? The first place to go would be Deuteronomy, chapter 22. We will start reading in verse 13.

"If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her,..." This is an important understanding here, because it says, **"If any man takes a wife."** According to this, some person could take a wife, but he has not necessarily had sexual contact, so there is

a definite difference here. He takes a wife and then **"he goes in to her"**, meaning that he has sexual intercourse. ...**and detests her,**

14 "and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings a bad name on her, and says, 'I took this woman, and when I came to her I found she was not a virgin,'"

We see here that this is something that takes place right away. The first night of intercourse, he finds that she is not a virgin, at least this is what he says - "I found some uncleanness here."

15 "then the father and mother of the young woman shall take and bring out the evidence of the young woman's virginity to the elders of the city at the gate."

16 "And the young woman's father shall say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man as wife, and he detests her."

It is rather interesting here that the father is doing all the talking, isn't it? It isn't the woman that has to do the talking, it is the father that is doing the talking for his daughter.

17 'Now he has charged her with shameful conduct, saying, "I found your daughter was not a virgin," and yet these are the evidences of my daughter's virginity.' And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.

The woman on the bridal night had a cloth and she put it down on the bed so that when intercourse took place, if she was a virgin, the evidence was there. So, they brought the evidence out.

18 "Then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him;

19... and they shall fine him one hundred shekels of silver and give them to the father of the young woman, because he has brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel. And she shall be his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days."

No provision is made to give a bill of divorcement. Therefore, this man had to keep the same wife for his whole life, even if they were **unhappy.**

20 "But if the thing is true, and evidences of virginity are not found for the young woman,

21 "then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house,

and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel, to play the harlot in her father's house. So you shall put away the evil from among you.

Well, this certainly can't apply to Deuteronomy 24, can it? The uncleanness couldn't be that the woman wasn't a virgin, because if she wasn't a virgin, this guy would have had no problem. This woman would be stoned to death, but that isn't what it says. It says that she could go in and pick another husband.

That is a strange situation going on here in Deuteronomy 24. The uncleanness that we are looking at couldn't have been about the virginity, could it? Right? It couldn't have been that. That wasn't what was really going here. Maybe there was some other uncleanness. Let's look at some more laws that God has in Leviticus, chapter 19, and maybe we can see what the problem is.

1 And the LORD spoke to Moses,...

Now we are seeing that this is the direct communication from the LORD. He spoke to Moses saying,

2 "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

3 'Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.

He goes on and talks about idols and about conduct on different things. Let's go now to verse 29. I wanted to establish who it is who was doing the speaking.

29 'Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry, and the land become full of wickedness.

Here we see that harlotry is not something that was acceptable. Let's go to Leviticus, chapter 18, and look at some other laws involving the possibility that maybe there was some other problem that caused the statement about the man's wife - "finding no favor in his eyes", his finding some uncleanness there. Let's take a look at verse 1,

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God.

3 'According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land

of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances.

4 'You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the LORD your God.

5 'You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.

Now here is where we get into what could possibly be affecting Deuteronomy 24. Let's just see if this is really true.

6 'None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I am the LORD. “

Uncover,” 1540 and 6172, is not looking at the nakedness of one of your relatives, seeing them naked. It almost seems that when you go to the beach today, you see everybody naked, but that's an aside.

Anyway, he says to uncover his nakedness really is involving the sex act. In other words, he is going to tell us about this.

7 'The nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover. She is your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness.

8 'The nakedness of your father's wife you shall not uncover; it is your father's nakedness.

9 'The nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, whether born at home or elsewhere, their nakedness you shall not uncover.

You are not to have any kind of special relationship with these people.

10 'The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for theirs is your own nakedness.

11 'The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father--she is your sister--you shall not uncover her nakedness.

12 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is near of kin to your father.

13 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is near of kin to your mother.

14 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother. You shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt.

15 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law--she is your son's wife--you shall not uncover her nakedness.

16 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness.

17 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness. They are near of kin to her. It is wickedness.

We are covering almost everybody there is, I think. He works in two directions. First of all, you become one flesh with only one person. That is your wife. That is the way He set it up. Now, this should make it very, very plain. He goes on and tells you not only what I just got through telling you is true, but He said, “Just so you get it right and you understand it, intercourse with anyone else is not allowed.” We are going to find out what the consequences are for these actions.

18 'Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive.

19 ¶ Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her customary impurity.

In other words, as long as she has her period, as we call it today, no intercourse.

20 'Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her.

Now wait a minute. We covered all of the relatives, right? Near kin, far kin, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, daughters-in-law. Now He covered the neighbor. What does that mean. I guess that pretty much means everybody, doesn't it? It's pretty clear. He makes it quite plain.

21 'And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

22 'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.

Wait a minute. Now He is covering bestiality.

23 'Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion.

24 'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations

are defiled, which I am casting out before you.

25 *For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants.*

26 *You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you*

27 *(for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled),*

28 *lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you.*

29 *For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people.*

There is a number 1 there at that word “cut off” in my King James, and when you look in the center column, it says “put to death.” When you hear that terminology “cut off,” that means “put to death.” So all of these things that we have just been discussing require the death penalty, don’t they?

Let’s go on the Leviticus, chapter 20, and we are going to see these same laws repeated. **1** *Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,*

2 *Again, you shall say to the children of Israel: Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives any of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones.*

He continues on talking about different things until we get to where He talks about cursing your father and your mother in verse 9.

10 *The man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death.*

Now there it is pretty plain. He spells it right out.

11 *The man who lies with his father’s wife has uncovered his father’s nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them.*

12 *If a man lies with his daughter-in-law,...*

And so on. He goes through all of these same things and He talks again about a woman involved in...

15 *If a man mates with an animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal.*

16 *If a woman approaches any animal and mates with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood is upon them.*

If a man takes his sister, ... and so on, we go through the same thing. It also covers a man with a man. It doesn’t specifically cover woman with woman, but in all of these cases, any of these sexual things required the death penalty. I really have to disagree with the Commentaries about this. The Commentaries indicate that these people, the Israelites, had a tremendous problem with this all the way through. They never did conform to any of these laws.

I say that that is not really true, because I believe initially that they had a problem, but we know that all of those men and women that were involved in what went on shortly after they came out of Egypt were killed, before they left (for) the Promised Land. And we can see that God was working with them. Now, if they were doing all of these things and not carrying out these punishments, God said, “I am going to vomit you out.” Right? “The land is going to vomit you out.” He made it very plain to these people, very plain, what they had to do, how they had to conduct their lives. As a result of this, they, as far as I can see, must have been following these laws. They must have been living their lives in such a way that everything was working out OK. They were sticking with their own wife. It doesn’t mean that they didn’t have thoughts because obviously all they had to do is apply the letter of the law.

So what does this mean? Let’s go back to chapter 24 of Deuteronomy and see what **really** is involved here. We have gone through **every** possible sexual uncleanness that could take place. We have looked at it and every one of those requires the death penalty. But Moses here, and it was Moses, if we go back, we can see that...Actually, if you go back to

Deuteronomy 10, you can see that Moses is re-iterating to the people all of these laws and what to do under these circumstances before leaving them. He is getting them to see the importance of doing these things the right way. All of a sudden we come to this little inset here in chapter 24. What is the problem? That is the question. What is the problem with chapter 24, the first verse?

Let’s take a look this again and see. It says **When a man takes a wife...** Where did we just read about when a man takes a wife? Wasn’t that back in Deuteronomy 22? Yes, it was. So, **When a man takes a wife and marries her...**, he hasn’t necessarily had intercourse. You notice that it doesn’t say, here, that he had intercourse. It just says that he took a wife. That is all. We are looking at a situation of the first night, the first encounter, before there is any intercourse involved. **...and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes...** Well, what do you do with your eyes? Don’t you look with your eyes? That is what you do; you look. You see the surface of things, don’t you?

He looked with his eyes and. **...because he has found some uncleanness...** That word, if you look over in the center column, you will find that it says “literally nakedness of the thing.” Well, that is exactly what happened. He looks at his wife, this woman that he has just married. He hasn’t had intercourse with her. He looks her over and he says, “Now that I see you without any clothes, I see that you have bow legs, and I can’t really abide bow legs.” Maybe she is flat-chested. “I can’t abide flat-chested.” Or maybe she is not flat-chested, but she goes the other way. “I don’t like that.” He didn’t like what he saw. That is why there was nothing further beyond that point. He wrote her up a bill of divorcement at that point and sent her on her way, because he didn’t like what she looked like.

This was a problem for Moses and it was a problem for the nation. As he said, this was a disgusting thing that was going on here, because these men would take these wives. They would check them over. “Well, I kind of like this one.” Then they would go through two or three and then they would say, “Well, yes. I guess Jane was the best one of the lot. I’ll take her.

She looked the best, so I'll take her." So Moses said, "Boys, it's not going to work this way anymore. If you reject her, you have rejected her permanently. You don't have another choice."

It doesn't really matter what happened. That wife goes out and she can marry some other man. She can become the wife of **another** man. No problem, because there wasn't any intercourse, **but** he doesn't have another opportunity to take her back, even if he finds out after she has been married to this other guy that she makes a great wife. She has really prospered this guy, and it is really a great thing, and the man waits until the other man dies and she now becomes available. Moses says, "Uh Uh, guys. You had your choice. You had your opportunity to take her. You didn't because you were looking at the physical."

Wait a minute! Doesn't that sound like what Christ said? He said "hardness of heart." "Because of the hardness of your heart Moses gave you that." The hardness of the heart - that is exactly it. They were looking at the physical

attributes of the woman instead of looking at her in total. What we see here is that on all of these occasions that we have looked at, there are a lot of laws that are involved in the marriage relationship, in the family relationship, all of them protecting the family. So, if we come to understand this and we realize what we looked at here, and then we realize what Christ said...He said, "I haven't changed anything on these laws. They are all in effect. I haven't changed one thing." We can see how **important** this marriage relationship really and truly is to God.

Let's turn back now to Matthew, chapter 5. In the beginning, what did I read? I started in verse 13. He said "**You are the salt of the earth**;...but if you lose the flavor, you are worthless. If you lose the flavor, you are worthless. If we lose the example that we are supposed to be setting, we are worthless. It doesn't matter... Fundamentally, what we have to say is that this example that we are setting is a reflection of the Father. It is a reflection of the **Father**. How important is it? How important is it for us to set the right example for every young person in

this church? When we teach that when you get married, you are **married**, but, wait a minute, there was so-and-so over here and they got a divorce, and the ministry re-married them! Is that the example that we want to set for the young people? Do you think that they are not going to be able to understand the **hypocrisy**. You don't think so? You had better think again, because they will see right through that mess.

Going back to verse 13 "**You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.**
14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.
15 "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.
16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

That will conclude the Bible Study for today.