

FLIPPED.

DEVOTIONAL

The Flipside of Unfaithfulness | Matthew 5:31-37

By David Daniels, Senior Pastor

Yesterday, we continued our summer series in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount [Matthew 5-7]. Like the previous week's text, this sermon's topic was especially difficult for some. By the time our worship service ended, some of you were in tears and a few have since written, expressing personal pain over divorce in your life. During times like this, I'm grateful to be not only your teacher, but your pastor as well.

As you wrestle with the message, let me offer a few truths to encourage your heart:

God hates divorce, but loves you. In Malachi 2:14-16, God states, "I hate divorce" and encourages His people not to break faith with the wife of their youth. God understands the awful truth of what destruction divorce brings upon individuals, families and communities. He despises anything that destroys what He has designed.

But God is deeply concerned about people—sinful people. It's for cheaters and drug pushers and prostitutes and abusers and betrayers and liars and divorcees that Christ came. In fact, Paul writes, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" [Romans 5:8]. Did you catch that? While you were signing your divorce papers and dividing the assets, God loved you so much that He sent His son to die for you. And me.

Divorce isn't the unpardonable sin. In some church circles, divorcees might be marginalized like social lepers. But the Bible teaches us that no sin trumps another [see James 2:8-11]. Some sins have greater *consequences*. But those who have experienced divorce have equal need of Christ and enjoy equal grace, forgiveness and freedom.

Tomorrow is a new day. While in the middle of the trauma and pain of life, we may feel our grief may never end. But, as an outpouring of His compassion for us, God offers new beginnings every day. Jeremiah learned this in Lamentations 3:19-23. Hold fast to this promise:

I remember my affliction and my wandering; the bitterness and the gall.

I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.

Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:

Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

God makes great lemonade. Sometimes, it's hard to know what to do with the lemons life throws at you. But, God can redeem the pain, loneliness, hurt, mistrust and abuse that divorce brings. As you remain sensitive to His Spirit and open to His leading, He can move you beyond where you are and use you to minister even better to others. He can break your heart to give you greater compassion. He can expose character flaws to bring about life change. He can deepen your relationship with Him as you depend on Him. What God *can* do doesn't legitimize divorce, but proves that He has the ability to work in all things for the good of people.

David Daniels is PBC's 5th Senior Pastor. Prior to his call here in 2005, he served churches in Minnesota and Austin, Texas. He earned his BFA in graphic design from UT Austin, a MDiv from Denver Seminary and a DMin from Dallas Theological Seminary. David's commitment to global missions has taken him around the world on short-term trips. He was a contributing writer for *Discipleship Journal* and, more recently, an article contributor for the 2011 *Quest Study Bible*. He is co-founder of Beta Upsilon Chi (Brothers Under Christ), a national Christian fraternity and has served on its executive board. David and Tiffany love discipling their three children: Grant, Pearson and Jenna.