

A scenic landscape featuring a dirt road that curves through a field of dry, golden-brown grass. In the background, a large, calm lake stretches across the middle ground, with distant mountains visible on the horizon. The sky is filled with soft, textured clouds in shades of blue and grey. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

# Sermon on the Mount

Apprenticing The Way Of Jesus

## Matthew 5:31-32

<sup>31</sup> “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ <sup>32</sup> 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.

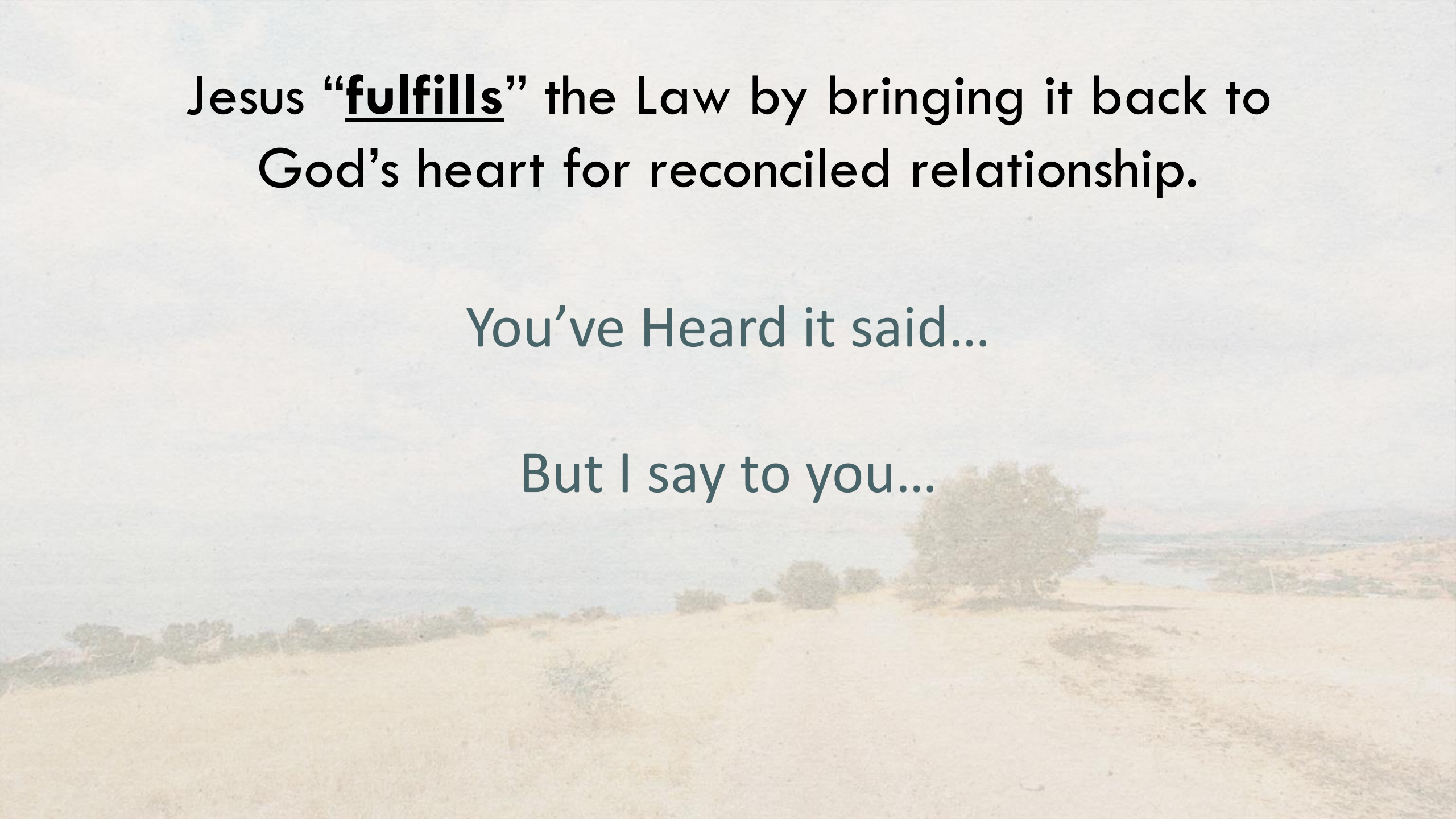
Key Idea:

**Jesus celebrates the permanence of marriage  
and divorce isn't to be taken lightly.**

Jesus “fulfills” the Law by bringing it back to  
God’s heart for reconciled relationship.

You’ve Heard it said...

But I say to you...



# 1) God's heart for the vulnerable

“It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’

Matthew 5:31

“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 indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house...”

Deuteronomy 24:1





“What is “indecenty?”

“When is divorce lawful?”

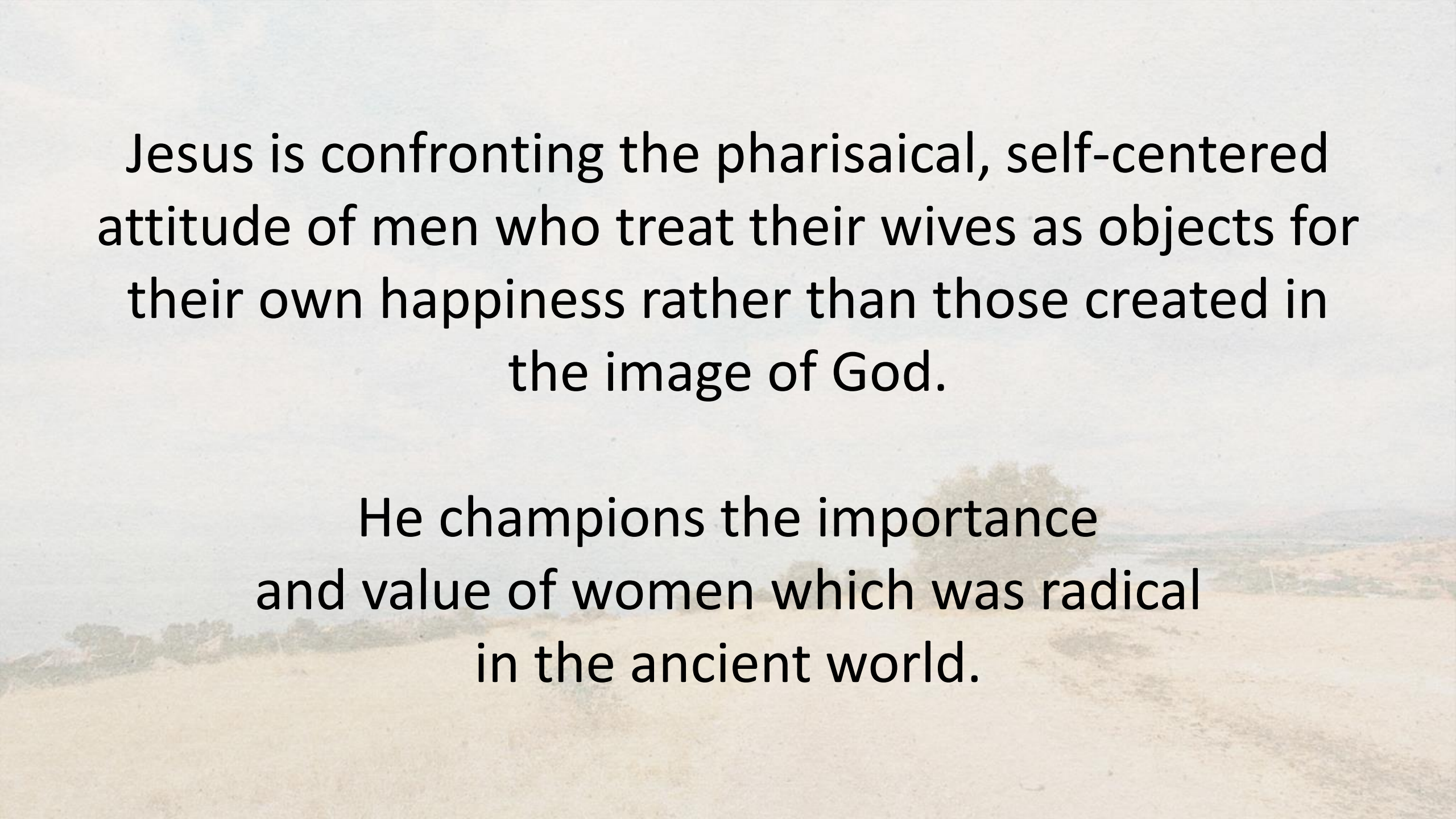
Hillel

“Indecency is anything that displeased the man”



Hillel

“Indecency is the act of having an affair and severing the marriage covenant”



Jesus is confronting the pharisaical, self-centered attitude of men who treat their wives as objects for their own happiness rather than those created in the image of God.

He champions the importance and value of women which was radical in the ancient world.

## 2) Jesus' perspective on divorce

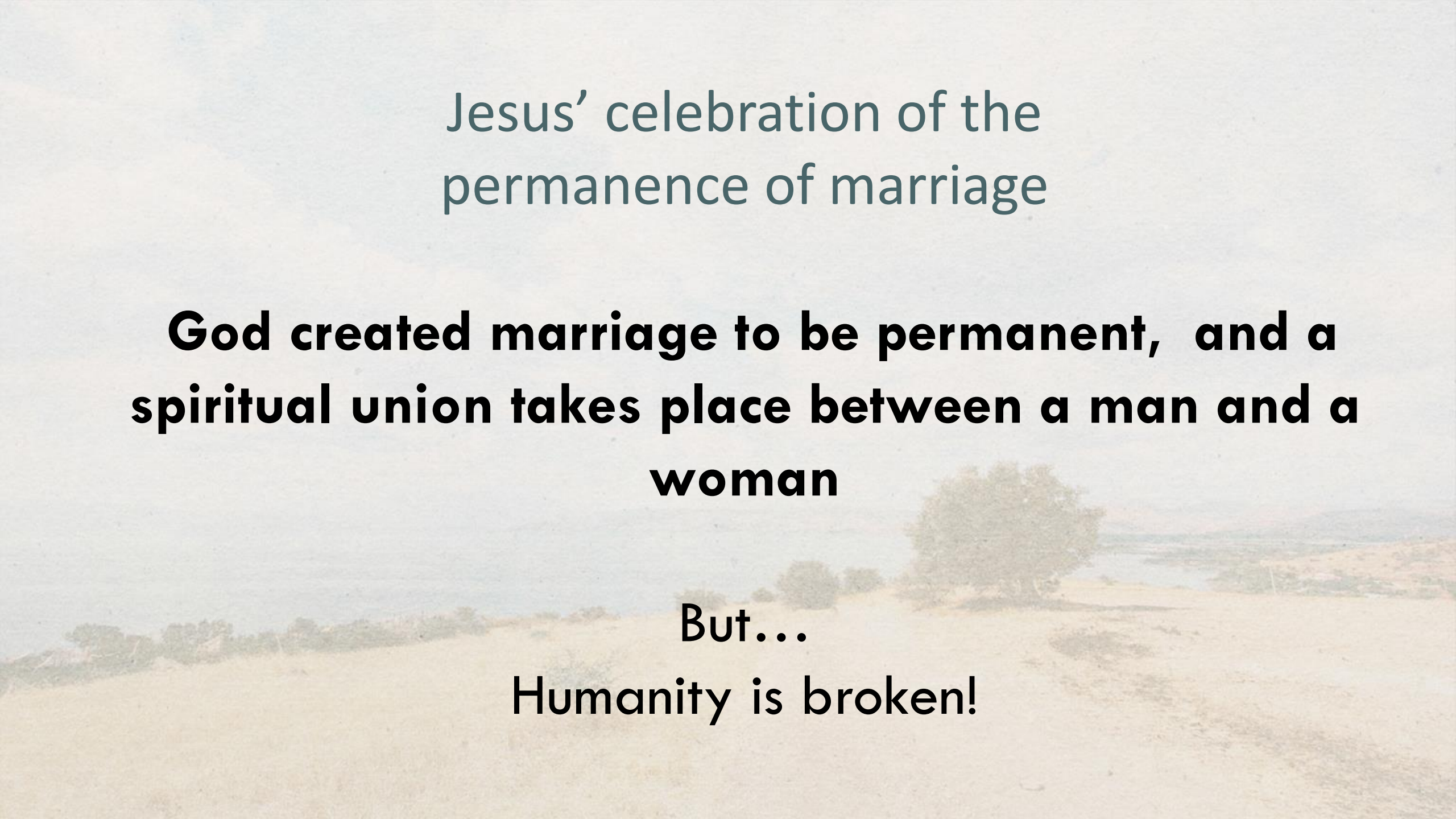
But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality...

Matthew 5:32

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 created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast 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 separate.”

They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” He said to them, “Because of 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 sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.

Matthew 19:3-9



Jesus' celebration of the  
permanence of marriage

**God created marriage to be permanent, and a  
spiritual union takes place between a man and a  
woman**

But...

**Humanity is broken!**

## Moses' concession

“Because of your **“hardness of heart”** Moses allowed you to divorce your wives...

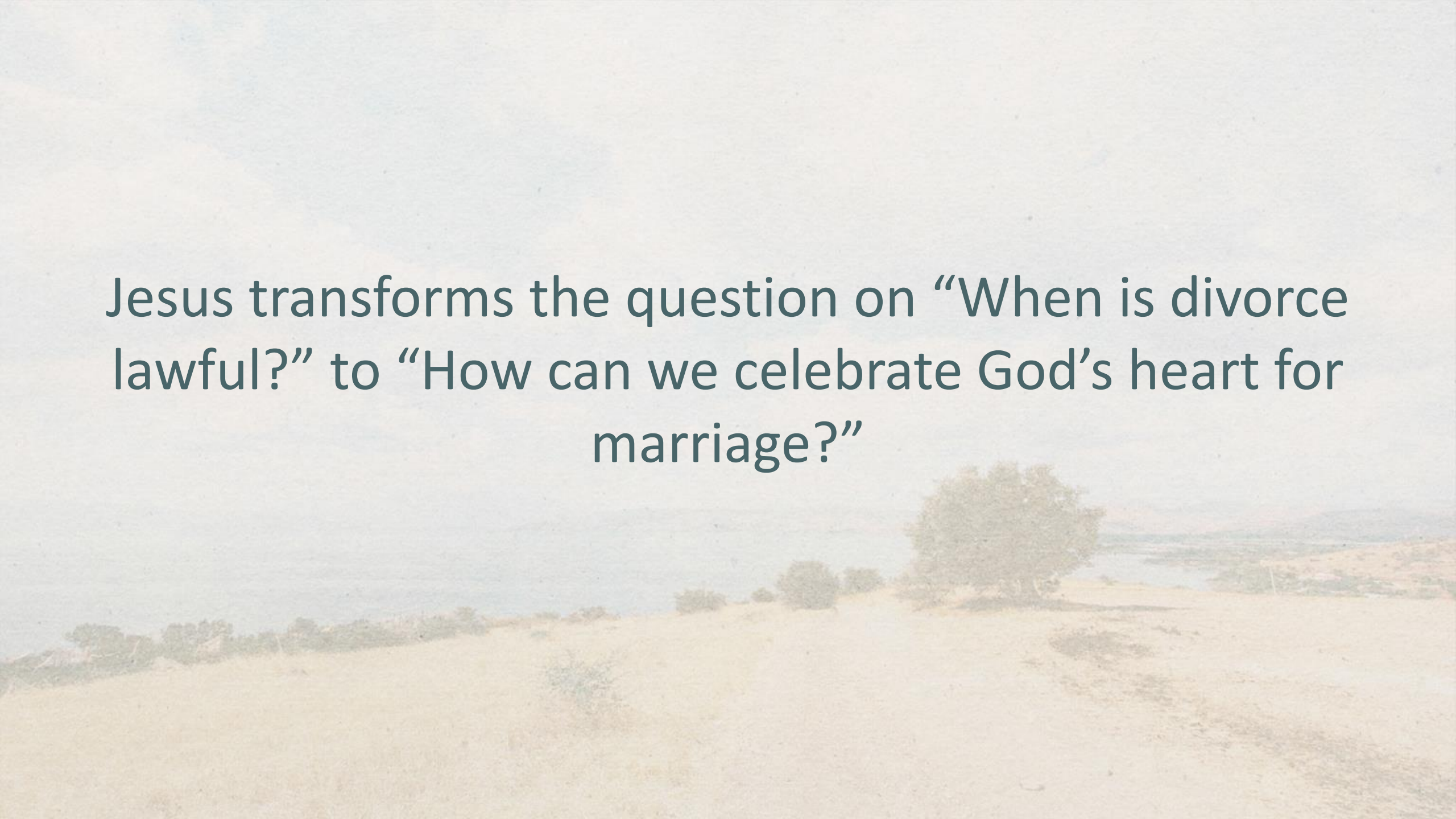
-Divorce was an accommodation to protect the vulnerable

- It was never God's plan “A” (Mal. 2:13-16)

# Biblical Grounds for Divorce

-Infidelity on the part of the other spouse spouse  
(Matthew 19:9)

-Abandonment by an “unbelieving” (1 Corinthians  
7:15)

A landscape photograph showing a body of water in the distance, a line of trees on the horizon, and a hazy, overcast sky. The foreground is a dry, grassy field.

Jesus transforms the question on “When is divorce lawful?” to “How can we celebrate God’s heart for marriage?”

### 3) Jesus' perspective on remarriage

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.

Matthew 5:32



Context:

Men were ungraciously abandoning wives making them economically and socially vulnerable.

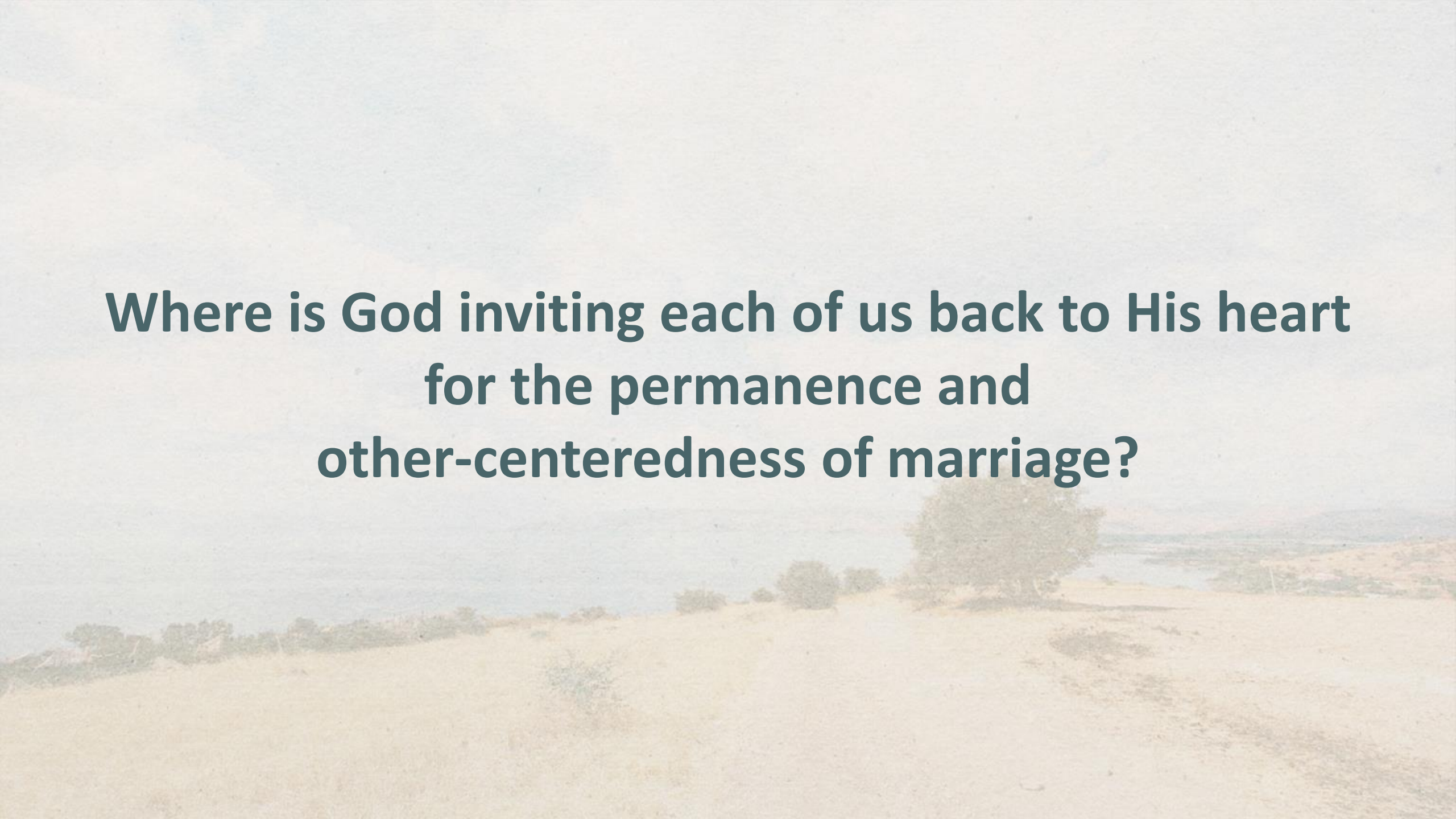
(Notice the emphasis on “...makes her.”)

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

-Ephesians 5:25-28

## What is Jesus saying?

- 1) Christ-centered marriages focus on building the other person up.
- 2) Honor the vulnerability and exposure of another and seek to build them up.

A landscape photograph showing a body of water in the distance, a large tree on the right, and a field of dry grass in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image.

**Where is God inviting each of us back to His heart  
for the permanence and  
other-centeredness of marriage?**

# Reflection Questions

Read Matthew 5:31-32 this week several times...

What do you hear Jesus saying to you as you read this passage?

What about Jesus' teaching this week challenged you? What questions do you still have?

How can we as a community champion marriage and yet honor those whose relationships look different?

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