

The Blessed Mess: Paul's First Letter to the Church at Corinth

February 5th, 2023

Jeff Bruce, Lead Pastor

Taking Heart When Marriage Gets Hard (1 Corinthians 7:10-16)

1. God's Work in Reconciling Spouses (vv. 10-11)

2. God's Work in Renewing Spouses (vv. 12-16)

For Further Thought and Discussion:

Getting Started:

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?

Going Deeper

2. In verse 10, Paul qualifies his statement by saying, "*not I, but the Lord.*" In verse 12, he adds another qualification; "*I, not the Lord.*" Why does Paul make these qualifications? How shouldn't we interpret these statements?
3. In verses 10-11, Paul alludes to Jesus' teaching on divorce. What passages is he most likely referring to (see Matthew 5:31-32; 19:1-9)? How does Paul apply Jesus' teaching to the church in Corinth? Why is the issue of remarriage central in Paul's mind?
4. Read verses 12-16. It appears some members of this church were thinking about divorcing their spouses. Why might this have been the case? How does Paul respond? In what sense is a believer's family "*sanctified*" by his/her faith (compare Romans 3:1-4)? How would this have served as an encouragement to the Corinthians?
5. Paul says that a believer deserted by their unbelieving spouse is "*no longer enslaved*" (v. 15). How should we interpret this phrase (compare 1 Corinthians 7:39)?
6. Jeff mentioned two different ways of interpreting verses 15b-16, and their relationship to broader passage (vv. 12-16). Which reading is more likely? How does this impact our understanding of what Paul is saying?

Application:

7. Jeff mentioned four ways to work towards reconciliation in marriage. Which of these stood out to you? Why? How might you model in your own behavior what you long to see in your spouse?
8. Jeff mentioned some general principles for thinking about issues of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Which of these stood out to you? Which was helpful? Why?
9. What's one thing you can do this week to apply this passage?