

The Blessed Mess: Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

Sermon Notes

To Marry or Not; and the Principle of Expediency (1 Corinthians 7:25-40)

The Principal Explained

Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy. I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.

But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none; and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess; and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away.

But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord. – 1 Cor. 7:25-35

The Principle Applied

But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin daughter, if she is past her youth, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry. But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin daughter, he will do well. So then both he who gives his own virgin daughter in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better.

A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. But in my opinion, she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God. – 1 Cor. 7:36-40

For Further Thought and Discussion

Getting Started

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?
2. Why is getting married a good idea? When is getting married a bad idea? When is staying single a good idea? When is staying single a bad idea?

Going Deeper

3. Please read 1 Cor. 7:25-36. Paul opens this passage by explaining that while he has no commands of Jesus to which he can refer to answering the Corinthian's question about whether singles should marry or remain single, he can give an opinion. Does this mean we should read vs. 25-40 merely as the fallible opinions of man? Why or why not?
4. How does Paul make it clear that he is not talking about good and evil in this section but instead what is most expedient?
5. How does the principle of expediency apply to all believers, single or married? Is Paul saying that only single Christians can be wholly devoted to the Lord? Why or why not?
6. Please read 1 Cor. 7:37-40. How does Paul apply the principle of expediency to whether a believer should marry or not? To what other decisions might we apply this principle?

Application

What is one thing you will apply from this discussion?