



Sermon Notes from 29 September

What if I am single all my life? (1 Corinthians 7:25-35)

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A Christian marital union between one man and one woman is a reflection of the union between Christ and the church, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us the distinctively Christian perspective towards singleness and answers the question: *'what if I am single all my life?'*

1) The answer without Jesus

A person that asks the question (what if I am single all my life?) sees singleness as undesirable and bleak. The disappointment may not just be with life but also with God Himself. The stigma and sorrow felt by single people is also seen in the Old Testament. Fruitfulness and multiplication as God commanded are meant to come through marriages throughout generations (Ge. 1:28). In light of that, childbearing was a clear sign of God's blessings (De 7:12,14), and barrenness a sign of a curse (De 28:15,18) resulting from disobedience. God's plan for His people was to marry and multiply. Exceptions like Jeremiah (Jer 16:1-2) served the purpose of being a sign of Israel's impending doom (Jer 16:1-4). Singleness in those days was bleaker than bleak but, everything changed when Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, took on human flesh and entered this world. He redeemed the single life to be a blessed life!

2) The answer with Jesus

Jesus introduces and commends a category of single people and redeems them so they can celebrate (Mt 19:12). 4 truths to encourage the single who believes in Jesus Christ

#1 Jesus, the most fully human person who ever lived, was not married.

This shows that marriage, romantic fulfilment and sexual experiences are not essential to being a full human being. Jesus' perfect life shows that it is perfectly fine to go through life without marriage. Christ's crucifixion was the center of Paul's ministry to the Corinthians (1 Co 1:23, 2:2). Christ's

loneliness on the Cross had nothing to do with His singleness; it was a direct result of our sins. To feel lonely is human, but it is self-pity that often exacerbates the feeling and makes it unbearable. Choose Jesus over self-pity!

#2 Your future goes beyond this present, temporal world into eternity.

Paul teaches that the present form of this world is passing away and Christians need to look further ahead into eternity. He writes specifically to the betrothed (1 Co 7:25) to reconsider marriage (1 Co 7:26-28); not to make what people own and experience as ultimate things (1 Co 7:29-31). Earthly marriage is temporal. It is the marriage of the church with Christ that is ultimate. Live with an eternity mindset!

#3 Singleness, like marriage, is a gift from God (1 Co. 7:7).

Singleness is a gift from God (1 Co. 7:7). This gift is not a spiritual one, but something good from God that has been given by His favour and grace. It is the freedom to concentrate on ministry in ways that married people cannot. Furthermore, God grants intimacy to the single who chooses to use his/her gift to build up the church. *"While I might not know the unique depth of intimacy a married friend enjoys, there is a unique breadth of intimacy available to singles that married friends would not be as able to experience."* – Sam Allberry.

#4 Singleness allows for single-minded devotion to Christ.

1 Co 7:32-35 – Because of Jesus, singleness has become so esteemed; Paul teaches it to be beneficial and practically better (1 Co 7:38). Yearn for single minded devotion and undivided attention to Christ!

Only when you don't need marriage for happiness anymore can you properly enjoy marriage, if and when it comes. Don't remain single needing marriage; remain single needing Christ! Don't enter into marriage needing marriage; enter into marriage needing Christ!