

12 - Singleness Part 3 - Matthew 19:10-12 - 2018-01-21

Call to Worship: Psalm 100

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Sermon: "Marriage, Divorce, and Singleness Part 12"

Benediction: 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

INTRODUCTION

We have been studying through our Lord's beautiful teaching on marriage, divorce, and singleness.

Recall that His doctrine of singleness or celibacy or remaining unmarried started with a line that His disciples spoke. In the middle of saying something that was wrong, they accidentally said something that is right: "It is not better to marry." The Lord Jesus said that statement is not for all people or all Christians, but it is for those to whom it is given by God to be able to accept it.

Last time, we saw that those special people to whom it is given by God to be able to accept that it is not better to marry all have in common that they are specially fitted for remaining unmarried, for staying single. The Lord Jesus referred to such people as being "eunuchs." These eunuchs, the Lord Jesus described in three categories. The first two categories are those whose bodies are different from normal, rendering them unfit for marriage, but specially fit for remaining single.

Today we take up our Lord Jesus' doctrine of singleness regarding eunuchs of the third kind, or in the third category: those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake (NOT MEANING PHYSICALLY).

At this point in the Lord's doctrine, where we need the most help understanding what He meant by this, and applying it to ourselves in His church, we find that He has provided an exposition of His doctrine in one of His apostles' letters. This is one of the most delightful things in reading the bible: when we find that what our Lord Jesus said very briefly is explained more fully elsewhere in the scriptures. Sometimes our Lord Jesus said something that is a line from an Old Testament passage. When we go read that passage, we understand what He meant by quoting a line from it. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" is a line from Psalm 37. Reading Psalm 37, we understand what He meant by that. Other times our Lord Jesus said something very briefly, and perhaps in metaphor, but later by His Holy Spirit He inspired His apostles to write to the churches on that subject at more length and in plain language. That is the case here, regarding those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. We'll find that

The apostle Paul's doctrine of singleness in 1 Corinthians chapter 7 expounds our Lord's teaching of those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

TEXT

Matthew 19:10-12 His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is ~~better not~~ [not better] to marry." (11) But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: (12) For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

BODY

- I. It Is Not Better to Marry (Mt 19:10b)
 - A. The principle stated: 1 Cor 7:1b *It is good [G2570 kalos]* for a man not to touch a woman.
 - B. The principle applied to those unmarried because they have never married or because they have been widowed: 1 Cor 7:8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is **good [G2570 kalos]** for them if they abide even as I.

It is not better to marry, but

- II. All Cannot Accept This Saying (Mt 19:11a)
 - A. 1 Cor 7:2 Nevertheless, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.
 1. the normal Christian will have serious trouble resisting temptation to fornication, unless he has his own wife with whom to enjoy the marriage relationship
 - B. 1 Cor 7:9b let them marry: for it is **better [G2909 kreitton]** to marry than to burn.
 1. the normal Christian, if he does not marry, will have such severe trouble resisting temptation to fornication, that it will be like he's burning

It is not better to marry, but
all cannot accept this saying

- III. Only Those to Whom It Has Been Given (Mt 19:11b)
 - A. 1 Cor 7:7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper **gift [G5486 charisma]** of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

It is not better to marry, but
all cannot accept this saying,
only those to whom it has been given

- IV. There Are Eunuchs Who Have Made Themselves Eunuchs (Mt 19:12b)
- A. NOT PHYSICALLY - NO CUTTING OF THE BODY - DO NOT DO ANYTHING TO YOUR BODY
 - B. There are some unusual Christians, to whom God has given a wonderful measure and kind of self control, so they can have great success in resisting temptation to fornication, without needing to marry to do achieve that.
 - 1. 1 Cor 7:9 But if they cannot **contain [exercise self-control; abstain]**, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.
 - 2. they make themselves suited for remaining single

It is not better to marry, but
 all cannot accept this saying,
 only those to whom it has been given.
 There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs

- V. For the Kingdom of Heaven's Sake (Mt 19:12c)
- A. 1 Cor 7:32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:
 - B. 1 Cor 7:34 There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.
 - C. Example: Anna
 - 1. Luke 2:37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served [ESV: worshiping] *God* with fastings and prayers night and day.
 - D. Example: Paul
 - 1. how he lives
 - 2. note regarding the doctrine of support for pastors
 - 3. note regarding what should be expected of missionaries
 - E. Example: our Lord Jesus Himself
 - 1. Matthew 8:20 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."
 - 2. John 12:27 "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.
 - F. 1 Cor 7:35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

It is not better to marry, but
 all cannot accept this saying,
 only those to whom it has been given.
 There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs

for the kingdom of heaven's sake

VI. APPLICATION [Time permitting; this could be held until next week.]

- A. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it
- B. He who is not able to accept it, let him not accept it

CONCLUSION

Matthew 19:10-12 His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is ~~better not~~ [not better] to marry." (11) But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: (12) For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

The principle applied to men who have the charge over a virgin's marriage: 1 Cor 7:37
 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth **well [G2573 kalos adv]**. 1 Cor 7:38 So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth **well [G2573 kalos adv]**; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth **better [G2908 kreisson]**.

JRY:

There are two aspects to this, seemingly contradictory, actually complementary.

If it's not given by God, you don't have it.

The things stated by our Lord Jesus are expounded or explained or amplified by His apostle.

If it has been given to you by God, it is better not to marry.

If it has not been given to you by God, it is better to marry.

Consider that wherever our Lord's doctrine is addressed in one of the epistles, that is His explanation of what He meant by what He said.

The Lord Jesus	The Apostle Paul
Mt 19:10b it is not good [G4851 sumphero] to marry	1 Cor 7:1b <i>It is good [G2570 kalos]</i> for a man not to touch a woman. 1 Cor 7:8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good [G2570 kalos] for them if they abide even as I. 1 Cor 7:37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so

	<p>decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well [G2573 kalos adv]. 1 Cor 7:38 So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well [G2573 kalos adv]; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better [G2908 kreisson].</p>
<p>Mt 19:11a But he said unto them, All <i>men</i> cannot receive this saying</p>	<p>1 Cor 7:2 Nevertheless, <i>to avoid</i> fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 1 Cor 7:9b let them marry: for it is better [G2909 kreitton] to marry than to burn.</p>
<p>Mt 19:11b they to whom it is given [G1325 didomi].</p>	<p>1 Cor 7:7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift [G5486 charisma] of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 1 Cor 7:17a But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk.</p>
<p>Mt 19:12c and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs</p>	<p>1 Cor 7:9 But if they cannot contain [exercise self-control], let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.</p>
<p>Mt 19:12d for the kingdom of heaven's sake.</p>	<p>1 Cor 7:32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: 1 Cor 7:34 There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. 1 Cor 7:35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.</p>
<p>Mt 19:12e He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.</p>	

given - gift

Matthew 19:11b they to whom it is **given [G1325 *didomi*]**.

1 Corinthians 7:7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper **gift [G5486 *charisma*]** of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

made themselves

Matthew 19:12b

and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

1 Corinthians 7:9 But if they cannot **contain [exercise self-control]**, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

G1467 *egkrateuomai* to exercise self restraint

RWP: hold themselves in, control themselves

Bishops abstayne

Geneva abstain

RV have not continence

NKJV, ESV excercise self-control

1 Corinthians 7:37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.

ESV but having his desire under control

eunuchs

Ellicott:

only those who are in some sense "eunuchs" . . . can safely abstain from marriage

who are, i.e., without the impulses that lead men to marriage, either naturally, or by the mutilation which then, as now, was common in the East, or who have conquered those impulses by the power of self-consecration to a higher life

which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake

Trapp:

live single, that they may serve God with more freedom, fighting against fleshly lusts (that fight against the soul) with those spiritual weapons, meditation, prayer, abstinence, &c., which are mighty through God to the pulling down of Satan's strongholds set up in the heart.

Poole:

And there are some who have made themselves eunuchs, not castrating themselves, (that is wickedness), but abstaining from marriage, and yet living chastely, (having mortified their lusts, and brought under their body), that they might be less encumbered with the cares of the world, and be more free for the work of the ministry, or be able more to give up themselves to a holy life and spiritual conversation.

If there be any who can receive this saying, who can without marriage bridle his lust, and so live in a solute and single state as not to sin against God by any extravagance of lusts, and impure desires and affections, and desire, and shall do so, that he may be more spiritual, and serve God with less distraction, and be a more fit instrument to promote the kingdom of God in the world, let him do it.

Henry:

(2.) That which is a virtue by the grace of God; such is theirs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. This is meant of an unaptness for marriage, not in body (which some, through mistake of this scripture, have foolishly and wickedly brought upon themselves), but in mind. Those have thus made themselves eunuchs who have attained a holy indifference to all the delights of the married state, have a fixed resolution, in the strength of God's grace, wholly to abstain from them; and by fasting, and other instances of mortification, have subdued all desires toward them. These are they that can receive this saying; and yet these are not to bind themselves by a vow that they will never marry, only that, in the mind they are now in, they purpose not to marry.

Wesley:

Happy they! who have abstained from marriage (though without condemning or despising it) that they might walk more closely with God! He that is able to receive it, let him receive it - This gracious command (for such it is unquestionably, since to say, such a man may live single, is saying nothing. Who ever doubted this?) is not designed for all men: but only for those few who are able to receive it. O let these receive it joyfully!

JFB:

persons who, to do God's work better, deliberately choose this state. Such was Paul (1Co_7:7)

Spurgeon:

Some have but feeble desires concerning marriage, and they were so born. They will find it good to remain as they are. Others subdue the desires of nature, for holy and laudable reasons, for the kingdom of heaven's sake; but this is not for all, nor for many. It is optional with individuals to marry or not: if they marry, nature commends, but grace is silent; if they forbear for Christ's sake, grace commends, and nature does not forbid. Enforced celibacy is the seed-bed of sins. "Marriage is honourable in all." Violations of purity are abominable in the sight of the Lord. In this matter we need guidance and grace

if we follow the usual way; and if we elect the less frequented road, we shall need grace and guidance even more. As to a resolve to persevere in a single life: He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

the present distress

Carroll:

But another thing must be considered which is expressed in 1 Corinthians 7. Paul says, "I think therefore that this is good by reason of the distress that is upon us." There was a particular distress bearing upon the people at that time that modified the answers that he gave to some of their questions, and we can't understand this 1 Corinthians 7 and the other paragraphs in 1 Corinthians 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 without keeping in mind that broad statement – "the distress that is upon us." That refers to the condition of the church at that time when all Christians were persecuted. No Christian knew one day what would be his financial status the next, for everything of his might be confiscated. He could not know one day whether he would be out of prison the next; he couldn't know one day whether he would be banished the next. Day by day they were practically taking their lives in their own hands. If a man is living in a prosperous time 'it wouldn't be proper to answer him on the question of marriage as if he were living in unsettled conditions. In other words, what would be expedient in prosperous times, would be inexpedient in unprosperous times.

"If I contracted marriage before I was converted, was it dissolved when I became a new creature, and old things passed away? If I have not contracted a marriage, shall I avoid it?" The apostle answers it, first, from the viewpoint of the present distress that he refers to, i.e., in view of the present condition, when their property might be swept away in a day, when they must be silent or be in banishment. He takes the position that in this particular stress and under these conditions it was well not to marry. But we must not forget the old-time law that God instituted marriage as the only way to carry out the commandment of God to multiply and replenish the earth. Therefore, Paul says, "My advice to you is to let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband." It was impossible for him to take a position against the necessity of marriage, but he said that in view of that distress it might be best not to marry, but if they did marry notwithstanding the distress, they committed no sin, and if governed by the distress not to marry this was no sin, but as long as we are in this world and the sexual distinction exists, we cannot get away from that primeval law of God that marriage is honorable in all.

"If you take this present distress into consideration, it is not favorable for contracting marriage. If you want to marry, do so, but you will have trouble in view of this distress." But he says that it is lawful for a widow to marry again, and in the case of young widows, as in the letter to Timothy, he makes it a very urgent recommendation.

Prelude: Grace 99 “Jesus, Your Name”

Camille: flute

Noah: Trumpet - see attached in B

Anna: piano
Trinity 1 "Psalm 100"
Camille: piano
Noah: Trumpet - see attached "Doxology" in A
Anna: clarinet - see attached "Doxology" in A
Trinity 217 "Look, Ye Saints"
Camille: Piano
Noah: Trumpet - see attached in G
Anna: Clarinet - see attached in G
Trinity 580 "It Is Well with My Soul"
Camille: Piano - transpose down two half steps
Noah: Trumpet - play from hymnal in Db
Anna: sing
Grace 130 "O Spirit, Now We Thank You"
Camille: sing
Noah: sing
Anna: piano