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Singleness for the Sake of the Kingdom; Matt 19:10-12  
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Introduction – Single adulthood can often be a challenging time in life, especially spiritually. Along with navigating educational choices and vocational careers, there is often a natural longing for marriage, particularly if you attend the weddings of a number of friends and still find yourself single. There's the third wheel syndrome and the little hints from grandparents and others that of course are never helpful. Loneliness inside and pressure outside can rob you of the joy that God has reserved especially for singleness. There can be an overwhelming temptation to loosen your purity commitments. Singles feel a reluctant pressure to lower their standards for dating and marriage. The idea of marriage suddenly becomes the epitome of life and the pursuit of marriage at all costs replaces the pursuit of God at all costs.

Sadly, singleness can even feel a little out of place in the church. Churches tend to move straight from student ministry to young couples ministry and not really have a focus or opportunity or practice of singles being included in the life of the church body. Society pressures singles to marry or at least cohabitate. Often in the church when couples are engaged, it becomes their excuse for sin. The church, rightly emphasizing marriage, often neglects God purpose for singles.

So you put all this together and singleness can often feel like a no man's land. But that couldn't be farther from the truth. It couldn't be farther from God's purpose for your phase of single life or for a life of singleness. Jesus addresses singleness here in Matt 19 and so does Paul and so does Isaiah, and we'll look at those passages too today. So for all our singles today, this sermon is specifically for you. No doubt you have often felt that the sermon was for others in the church. Well today you have the spotlight!

- I. The Disciples Stumble into Jesus' Teaching on Singleness (v10)
  - a. The disciples, sadly, have been so accustomed to the world's view of marriage, when Jesus addresses it, they are overwhelmed. As we have said often during our study of marriage in Matt 19, there really is nothing new under the sun. The sad truth is that those in the

church often view and practice marriage more like the world rather than following God's good design and purpose for it.

- b. The disciples must have reasoned, if adultery is the only grounds for divorce and divorcing for any other reason leads to an adulterous marriage, then it is better not to marry. At least you won't have to get stuck in a miserable marriage or have to face adultery.
  - c. The tragedy of the disciples' reasoning here is twofold: First, they've totally overlooked the possibility that if husband and wife view marriage God's way, pursue a lifelong two are now one love, and hold fast to one another, marriage can be all the joy and fulfillment and love that God intended when He created it the way He created it! They have focused on what can go wrong in marriage and forgotten that putting God first results in everything that can be right about marriage. Their focus is on approaching marriage their way instead of God's way, and if they can't have their way, they just won't marry at all.
  - d. Second, the tragedy here is not only considering marriage to be a risk not worth taking, but also failing to understand that singleness is not a secondary status of living. God has a good design and purpose for marriage, and God has a good design and purpose for singleness. One is not better or more superior or more fulfilling than the other if both are viewed and embraced from God's perspective.
  - e. That's exactly where Jesus takes the disciples. They have brought up singleness as an escape from marriage or a slight on God's standard for marriage. Jesus shows them not only do they need a Godward view of marriage, they need a Godward view of singleness as well.
- II. The Single Life Can Be a Gift from God (vv11-12)
- a. V11 - Not every one can embrace the single life, but God has gifted some to do just that. And when that occurs, when someone senses that God has a plan for his/her life beyond marriage, that is a special calling, a gift, a grace from God. A life so uniquely fit for kingdom work that it excludes marriage. Something is to be done for the kingdom that a single is better suited to accomplish. God means for some of His children to be totally His and without the restraints and obligations of marriage. When the single believer feels compelled to spend every ounce of their life for the kingdom, to give their heart's

full attention to God and not another, God is up to something special in that life because God is up to something special in the kingdom.

- b. V12 – Jesus identifies three categories of singles using the term eunuchs. A eunuch is one who is unable to have children, so marriage then becomes unlikely. The first group are those with some type of birth defect that prevents them from having children. The second group were usually men who were forcibly castrated in order to serve a king's harem. The third group, however, are not true eunuchs. Jesus is not using this term in a figurative sense. These people freely and willingly choose a life of singleness that they may give their all for the kingdom of God. Singleness for the sake of the kingdom. That was the gift Jesus referred to in v11.
  - c. In other words, a select few find in God a treasure so fulfilling, they can't imagine a life tied down to marital obligation and responsibility.
  - d. In our day, some choose to stay single for career sake and put off marriage and having children as long as possible only to find marriage is not that easy and bearing children might not be so either. When our careers are our god, we miss God's best for our singleness and/or our marriage.
  - e. Some choose to remain single as long as possible in order to have as many immoral relations as they can before they decide to attach the ball and chain. That view of sexuality and marriage never makes a good, godly, joy-filled marriage.
  - f. But then there are some who understand that singleness is actually a gift from God that frees you to pursue Him and all the joy of reckless abandon and risk-taking for the kingdom. Maybe it's just for a period of time, maybe it's for a lifetime, maybe it's after a marriage ends through death or even divorce. But you know God has grabbed your heart and you have grabbed His, and nothing could replace or compare, not even marriage.
- III. The Singular Devotion of the Single Life (v12)
- a. The single person has the opportunity to invest more in the kingdom of God, to pursue God without restraint, to follow God wherever He leads, to enjoy God's companionship far more than the married adult.

- b. 1 Cor 7.6-7, 32-36. The single life can be a fulfilling, thrilling, joyful life when it is lived in singular devotion to the Lord. Rather than live in despondency for not being married, it can be lived in thrilling devotion to Christ!
  - i. Jesus was single.
  - ii. Paul was single.
  - iii. Lottie Moon was single.
  - iv. Corrie Ten Boon was single.
  - v. Those singles who have a singular devotion to Christ are like that man Jesus spoke of in Matt 13:44. They have found a treasure and it is worth everything! They are like those disciples who leave everything to follow Christ because nothing compares to what they have in Christ!
- c. Don't waste your singleness. You have more freedom and opportunity now than you ever will. Don't waste it. Whether God has you single for a time or for a lifetime. Don't let it slip away without knowing the joy of living for eternal treasure that never fades rather than earthly treasure that never lasts.
  - i. Three ways you can waste your singleness.
    1. You can settle for temporary fun and miss eternal joy. If you spend every moment of free time and every free dollar on going and doing and getting, the years of your most fruitful service to God will waste away. Be rich toward God. Ill. Luke 12
    2. You can settle for finding satisfaction in what you do and what you have rather than in your Creator and Savior and Lord. Don't squeeze out every part of your single life only seeking to advance your life. Give it to God. Spend it for God. Jesus said, if you save your life, you will lose it, but if you lose your life for my sake you will find it!
    3. Don't waste your singleness in sin, planning to straighten up and live right once you marry.
- d. In your single days or in your single life, you have a gift from God. That gift is that you can give yourself and your life completely to Him and the advance of the gospel and the things of eternity. And you can do that more than anyone else can.

Conclusion – will it be worth it though? If I give my singleness 100% to God and not waste it away like all my friends are doing, they seem to really be living it up, is it really worth it?

Isaiah 56:4-5

III. Rich young ruler “If you let all that go, I’ve got something better!”

For all our singles here today – your singleness for a little while or for a lifetime is not a no man’s land, it’s a gift. Don’t waste it. Invest it with everything you’ve got for the sake of the kingdom. You simply can’t imagine what God may do with a life totally devoted to Him!