

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Gospel Fluency

TITLE: Singleness

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 7

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The word *gospel* means “good news.” When we read the word *gospel* in the Bible and in most other places, we know that it is referring to the good news about Jesus. The idea of fluency is used most often in relation to being able to speak two or more languages. Yet the word *fluent* means to be able to express oneself easily and articulately, not necessarily just in foreign languages. So, when we talk about *gospel fluency* this summer, we are talking about being able to express and communicate the good news about Jesus easily and articulately to yourself and others.

The modern American church often does a poor job with single adults. Either they build the entire church around them in attempts to be relevant, or they don’t know what to do with them because they gear everything towards families. This is a sad oversight.

But what does the Bible actually say about singleness? Some Christians singles want to be left alone, and others want to be set up yesterday. Some are at peace with where they are, and some are angry at God because they don’t have a spouse yet. Does Scripture offer any insight as to how we should consider this idea of singleness within the life of the church? Whether younger or older, never married or divorced, dating or not dating...

How does the gospel help us think about singleness?

Paul addresses this issue directly in 1 Corinthians 7. In verse 7, he writes, “I wish that all were as I myself am, but each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.” Paul is referring here to marital status. He calls both *marriage* and *singleness* gifts. But that’s not how singles think about singleness, as a gift. It’s usually considered a burden. But not in Paul’s mind somehow. Paul wants his friends in Corinth to...

Learn to receive all of life as a gift.

He says in 7:17, “Live the life God has assigned to you, that he has called you to.” These ideas are about understanding all of life as a gift, but also one’s marriage or singleness. In the words of John Newton, “Everything is needful that he sends. Nothing is needful that he withholds.” If this is true of the God we serve, then it should push us to faith, regardless of our season of life.

But Paul's not done in 1 Corinthians 7. He goes on to say that it's not wrong to marry, but that perhaps more could be done for the kingdom of God if some remained unmarried. Or to put it differently, he wants his friends in Corinth to...

Recognize that the relationships of life should be more about obedience to God than intimacy with others.

Meaning, no one's ultimate goal should be to marry. That's not the point. Obeying God is the point. And in the wise web of his providence, he has called some to marriage and some to singleness. But the apostle paints singleness as the more enviable option! Why? Because those who are married have added responsibilities like a spouse and/or children. But those who are unmarried are free to give more liberally of themselves to love God, obey God, and pursue God. Or as Paul says in 7:35, "to have undivided devotion to the Lord."

Therefore, in the New Testament, believers in Jesus who are single seem to have a kind of advantage. They have a unique kind of freedom before them, in which they can more fully expend themselves for the sake of the gospel.

We see this most clearly in the life and death of our Lord Jesus. He was single. He never married. And he didn't complain about what his Father had called him to. He felt the weight of the cross, but was never angry at the Father for what was assigned to him. And Jesus' giving of himself fully for the sake of others not only brings us into right relationship with God, but also gives us the perfect example to follow as we daily seek God.

For Discussion —

1. In what ways do you think the church has done a poor job in caring for singles?
2. In what ways are you tempted to not view and understand life as a gift?
3. What was the big idea of the message?
4. Who is someone you know who lives everyday as though life is truly a gift from God?
5. When is it hard to think about your relationships as obedience to God over intimacy with others?
6. How should you rethink your existing devotion and pursuit of God in light of what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7?