

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 13TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

PRESENT DISTRESS (1 CORINTHIANS 7:25-28)

PAUL'S INSPIRED OPINION

Paul begins to answer a question from Corinth with a similar disclaimer to one he gave in verse 12. He states, "I have no command from the Lord."

- Paul is **exercising his apostolic authority** to offer his opinion on matters pertaining to the unmarried "virgins" in Corinth. **He speaks through the influence of the Holy Spirit on topics Jesus never addressed.**

"BECAUSE OF THE PRESENT DISTRESS..."

Paul states, "because of the **present distress**, it is good for a man to remain as he is." He is saying that in the current crisis facing Corinth the unmarried should remain unmarried.

- Most theologians and historians believe that the crisis that plagued the people of Corinth, that Paul was speaking of in this time, were the **famines taking place throughout Greece.**

CONTEXT MATTERS

When we look at Paul's recommendations through historical context, they begin to make more sense.

- It was in light of the current hardships the people of Corinth were facing, that **Paul recommended a temporary halt on weddings and was not advocating for perpetual singleness.**

SENSIBLE ADVICE FOR MARRIEDS

If you are married, Paul recommends that a man not seek to be released from his wife during the current hardships.

- This is a logical recommendation considering that the wife who was divorced would now be responsible for providing for herself during a famine when she had not done so in the past.

SENSIBLE ADVICE FOR SINGLES

In the same sense, Paul recommends that if a man was single, he should not seek a wife during the current hardships.

- Paul said this because the man would now be responsible for caring for his new wife, and eventually children, when the woman would have been taken care of by her family before marriage.

OPINIONS, NOT COMMANDS

Paul states that **if a person were to get married during this time, they had not committed any sin.**

- **Paul offers his influenced thoughts as recommendations to spare the people of Corinth from additional hardships and not as commands.**

"SUCH PEOPLE WILL HAVE TROUBLE IN THIS LIFE"

Paul is not degrading marriage by saying that marrieds will have have trouble in this life. The life he speaks of is not life in its entirety, but the temporary life lived during these situations.

- Though marriage is hard work and comes with challenges, **Paul is trying to spare the Corinthians of additional hardships that marriage presents during a famine.**

TIME IS LIMITED (1 CORINTHIANS 7:29-31)

A TEMPORAL VIEW VS. AN ETERNAL VIEW

Paul explains the heart and reasons behind his opinions on marriage by beginning and ending this section of his letter by acknowledging that this **life and the things in it are fleeting.**

- He starts by saying "**time is limited**" and ends by saying "**this world in its current form is passing away.**" Paul is attempting to shift focus from the temporal to the eternal.
- Paul is not encouraging the Corinthians to forsake their families and earthly duties.
- He is saying that those Christians who have wives, those who weep, those who rejoice, and those who buy and use things of this world should not live as if these things were all that matters. Instead, **they should live with an eye towards eternity.**
- **(2 Cor. 6:9-10)**

OUR ETERNAL HOPE

We must live in this world with all the responsibilities that come with it, with all the pleasures we will experience, as well as all the pain we will experience.

- The reality Paul is trying to communicate to us is that **this life is like a vapor, and we belong to an eternal kingdom that will replace this life forever.**

THIS WORLD IS PASSING AWAY (1 CORINTHIANS 7:32-35)

SERVE THE LORD WITHOUT DISTRACTION

Paul is simply explaining that **the unmarried have the opportunity to serve and to please God with less distraction.**

- **When a person does not have all the responsibilities that come with having a family, they are "free" to serve God.** This is why Paul considered singleness beneficial for himself.

DIVIDED INTEREST

Paul is not condemning the fact that a married person is concerned with the things of this world, and how they might please their spouse.

- The married should be mindful about caring, providing, and meeting their spouse's needs, but the reality is that **their interests are divided. They not only aim to please God but must also be concerned with pleasing a spouse.**

- Paul is making these recommendations not to confine people in their situation, but **for their benefit he wanted everyone to "consider the cost" of their decisions in all situations.**
- The end result is not focused on whether someone is married or single, but **the focus is on being devoted to the Lord without distraction.**

CONTENTMENT (1 CORINTHIANS 7:36-40)

"HE WHO STANDS FIRM IN HIS HEART"

Paul appealed to the Corinthians to take his words seriously. Yes, **he was offering his opinion, but it was an opinion shaped by the Spirit of God.**

- Ultimately, **he wanted the Corinthians to be "under no compulsion" and "to have control over their own will."** Though advice may be given, each person is responsible for making good decisions before God.
- If someone was convinced that marriage is right before God, then that person should marry and is not sinning. Likewise, the person who decides not marrying is right before God is also not sinning.
- Both options were acceptable, and **each individual must settle the decision personally on what is right before God.**

FINAL CONCESSION

To close out the section of the letter answering questions on marriage, Paul addresses one additional concern pertaining to widows.

- In 7:8, he said it was better to remain unmarried, but here offers a concession that **a widow is free to marry if that person was a believer as well.**

BE CONTENT

- True contentment comes from a relationship with Christ and having a living and active faith in Him. It's a trust that He is sufficient, and His promises are enough.
- Changing our situation should not be our "silver bullet" to fix problems. If we are discontent in our current situation, changing your situation **will not** guarantee contentment.

"TIME IS LIMITED..."

- The reality that time is limited and the earth and the things of it will pass away should be a sobering thought. **This one thought should warn us, suggest an urgency, inspire us, and alarm us.**
- Time is short! Weeping, rejoicing, and loving possessions must not get in the way of fervently following Jesus.

"PRESENT DISTRESS"

- There will always be a current crisis or present distress.
- We must honor God in any situation. If married, **are we honoring God by how we treat or spouse? If single, are we honoring God in our singleness?**
- **We must be content in whatever situation we are in!**