

October 12, 2014

Series Title: Living As the Cross-Centered Community

Message Title: Challenging the Culture's Impact on Us (Part 4)

Passage: 1 Cor. 7:6-40

Overview: In 1 Cor. 7:1-5 Paul describes God's ideal for the gift of sex in marriage, speaking against those in the Corinthian church who were arguing that believers should abstain from all sexual activity, even in marriage. In the rest of the chapter, Paul discusses a series of unique situations around marriage that the Corinthians were concerned about. We must remember that these issues came out of a unique set of circumstances that do not exactly mirror the kinds of issues we encounter today, but the principles here and the overarching value of a kingdom mindset give us clues to how we can navigate the culture's impact on us.

Engaging with each other

1. Finish this sentence. "Life would be better if only I..."

Engaging with the Bible

1. The first issue has to do with those who are now widows and widowers (widowers is the most likely understanding of the term "unmarried" in verse 8). It is also possible that Paul himself was a widower. What is Paul's instruction to them? What do you think Paul means by the word "gift" in verse 7?
2. In verses 11-16 Paul speaks about divorce. What are his instructions for the following:  
Believers who are married to believers  
Believers married to unbelievers  
What do you think Paul means when he says the believing spouse makes the unbelieving spouse "sanctified" and their children "holy"?
3. The passage found in verses 17-24 diverges from strictly talking about marriage into several other categories describing certain stations in life a believer might find himself or herself in. What do these verses indicate is more important, calling or life situation?
4. In verses 25-35 there is a sense of urgency about Paul's words. What is the source of that sense of urgency? How does he apply it to one's marital status?
5. Verses 36 -38 extend the message of the preceding paragraph to a specific issue. It seems that the strong influence of those arguing for an ascetic form of obedience to the gospel has left some engaged couples in a difficult position. Should they marry or not? What is Paul's advice here?
6. The chapter ends with a reference again to a woman whose husband has died. How does Paul describe her status? What are her freedoms and considerations?

## Engaging with our lives

1. How does the gospel frame the way we look at relationships in general and marriage in particular?
2. How should your sense of calling affect your attitude toward your life situations?
3. If you were to live your life out of a profound sense of God's calling, what differences might it make in your life?