

Undivided devotion to the Lord - 1 Cor. 7:25-40

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[0 : 00] a preamble, an introduction. So we're going to look now at 1 Corinthians chapter 7. So if you could turn towards that, please. I can give you a page number. It's 1148. 1148.

And that is very small font. I do apologize for the people at the back. And we're going to read 1 Corinthians 7 from verse 25 to the end of the chapter. So 1148 or 1149 for verse 25. This is the Apostle Paul writing under the influence and direction of the Holy Spirit.

So this is God's word. Now about virgins, I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for you to remain as you are. Are you married? Do not seek a divorce.

Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned. And if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life. And I want to spare you this. What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short.

From now on, those who have wives should live as if they had none. Those who mourn as if they did not. Those who are happy as if they were not. Those who buy something as if it were not theirs to keep. Those who use the things of the world as if not engrossed in them.

[1 : 33] For this world, in its present form, is passing away. I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs, how he can please the Lord. And a married man is concerned, but a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world, how he can please his wife. And his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs. Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world, how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way, in undivided devotion to the Lord. If anyone thinks he is acting improperly towards the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting on in years, and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning.

They should get married. But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion, but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin, this man also does the right thing. So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better. A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives, but if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.

In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is, and I think that I too have the spirit of God. May the Lord bless the reading of his word. Let's pray.

Our God and Father, we come with questions, we come with ideas, we come with our situation, whether we're married or unmarried this morning. And Father, we want to come to hear what you have to say, not that we sit in judgment over your words and pick and choose the bits that we want to hear, but that we listen, Father, honestly. I pray that you will help us to listen honestly this morning to what it is that you would have to say from the Bible, and that we would understand the great glory and picture that both marriage and being single gives us of our relationship with Christ. Bless us this morning, in Jesus' name, amen. Amen. So to marry or not to marry, that is the question. Many of us long to be in a committed, loving relationship.

[4 : 12] To find our soulmate, and being in a relationship, it seems like the ideal, isn't it, that we want, we want to be complete, we want to have that companionship. And if we've grown up in a Christian or a church culture, then that longing is directed towards marriage, isn't it, that we want to be married. We want to find the ideal partner that's going to meet our needs. And so we read verses like verse 9 and 1 Corinthians 7, and Paul says, but if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. And we identify with that as one who wants desperately to have that boyfriend or that girlfriend, to finally marry. And we have those ideals of romantic love, commitment, and life together. And those things are always before us and always

part of our thinking and our decision making. But likewise, there are some that are a little freaked out by the idea. Author Tanya Kindersley writes like this, I don't want to hand over my identity by taking someone else's name. I sometimes wake at night in a cold sweat at the idea of being Mrs. Someone. I look at married couples and I don't think it looks like much fun to me. They're the ones who walk into the parties and immediately head for opposite ends of the room. The wives complain that they never have sex anymore. The husbands complain that they are emasculated and misunderstood. I've heard women say that they never knew what it was like to be really lonely until they got married. Two different views on married life. And as a result, two different views on what it means to be unmarried or single. It's not easy. It's quite complex, isn't it, to answer that question, to marry or not to marry. As I said last week, we looked at the topic of marriage through this chapter and it's intermingled, isn't it, Paul's discussions on marriage and singleness. And that's why I said have a listen if you didn't hear it, the sermon last week on marriage. Just remember the scriptures, the Bible is very, very positive about marriage. It upholds marriage. The Bible, the story of the Bible begins with a marriage in a garden between Adam and Eve. And the Bible ends in Revelation with a marriage feast in a city between the church and Christ. Marriage is there from beginning to end within the Bible. Earthly marriage echoes that heavenly marriage, that picture of marriage between Christ and his church, Christ's love for the church. And Paul continues to uphold marriage. And we see that, don't we, at the start of chapter 7, if you look at verse 2, the end of verse 2. He says, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife and likewise the wife to her husband. [7 : 23] Paul isn't against marriage. And verse 10, he's very clear, isn't he, that he's not trying to break up marriages and say everyone should be single. To the married I give this command, not I but the Lord.

And I think Paul here is thinking back to what Jesus said in Matthew 19, a wife must not separate from her husband. So husbands and wives, marriage is a good thing. Husbands and wives should be devoted to each other. They should be intimate with each other. They should support one another. However, we have this issue that as we read through, excuse me, chapter 7, we see that there is almost an elevation of being unmarried, over being married. It feels like in some ways that it's almost better in some ways to be unmarried. So is it better to be married or to be single? Now maybe you all have different views on that. And if I stay unmarried, and the indication and clear teaching of scripture that means being celibate, how do I live that out? Well, we want to know what unmarried living is going to be like. And these are the questions that we want to look at this morning through chapter 7.

The first thing, verse 26, this present crisis. We want to consider our present situation in Ireland today what it's like to be married or unmarried. Christian sexual ethics and the biblical view of marriage and singleness, the ones that we find in the Bible are radically different at so many points from the society around us. It's been through my lifetime, and I'm sure many people have experienced it over the last 20 years, that Ireland has shifted away from a church-imposed morality to what were new and unimagined freedoms almost within society, of variety, of relationships and sexual ethics. Society's definition of marriage has even changed, and that's very recent. Same-sex marriage is now guaranteed in our constitution. Less and less people are valuing traditional marriage and in many ways see it as an outdated and irrelevant limitation on our freedom. I'm just going to pause. I'm going to readjust this. I went too far down. Sorry. Thank you. And see, so I was saying marriage is something that's outdated.

And our tendency sometimes within a church context is just to shake our head at what's happening out there in the world. But let's be honest and clear with ourselves that even though there was a greater respect for the marriage bond and the place of sex with inside marriage, during that period, there was a climate of moral legalism and superiority that in many ways was wrong and was destructive.

[10 : 27] the state and the mainstream church coerced behaviour and created many cases where there was an uncaring and overly harsh regime towards people and situations. And it's been very evident, as we've heard of, well-known and well-publicised abuse cases and cover-ups and difficulties within Irish society.

So even though we might look back and say in some ways it was better in terms of the elevation of marriage and sexual activity within marriage, there were many things that were also wrong. But now, in a very short time, that moral majority has been replaced by a new moral majority and it has totally flipped. The morals have flipped.

But Paul reminds us this morning that the setting that we find ourselves in as Bible-believing Christians is not new. It's not new. Paul faced his own crisis back in AD 55. It's nearly 2,000 years ago. Look at verse 25.

But now about virgins, I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for you to remain as you are.

See, Corinth was a massive city at the time. It was one of the biggest cities in the Roman Empire. It had about 600,000 people living in it. And it knew every form of sexual practice.

[12:02] It had a temple to the Greek goddess of love, Epaphrodite. At the temple, 1,000 priestess prostitutes. And their role was to serve the sexual needs of the city.

The Roman culture was one itself that had grown away from marriage, very much like our own. Marriage was something you only did when you needed to settle down, to become respectable. So you got married because you needed to have children for your inheritance. But like today, there was no need for marriage if you wanted sex.

Even when you were married, you could look for sex elsewhere. Slaves were there to fulfill your physical needs and wants. You see, in the Roman culture at the time, sex had been fully separated from marriage.

And it had been reduced to just a physical act that brings pleasure to yourself. Such attitudes, as we've seen, have even worked their way into the Corinthian church.

[13:06] I don't know if you remember a few weeks ago, chapter 5 and verse 1. This is Paul writing to the church, remember, not society out there, but the church in here. It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind does not occur even among pagans.

A man has his father's wife, and you are proud. Believers thought nothing of having sex with their stepmother and boasting about it.

Paul's response to the crisis in the church and in society of 2,000 years ago is relevant to us today in the situation that we find ourselves in.

We feel, don't we, at this time, the highly sexualized pressure of society to live together before marriage, to have sex outside of marriage, to view pornography and just make ourselves as a center of everything.

And we're ridiculed if we say that we're trying to follow what the Bible says. If we want to say that sex is a wonderful gift that is to be enjoyed in the context of a mutually giving, covenantal, promise relationship, because that's what marriage is.

[14:25] It provides that basis of commitment for sex to be enjoyed and to flourish. If we offer that out there, well, we're ridiculed. We're like the mosquito that's trying to fly through Niagara Falls.

We're just trying to go against the flow of this tidal wave of pressure and change and movement away from what the Scriptures say. For many of us, there is very, very little comfort when we're climbing the walls at night with frustration at not being in a sexual relationship.

So it's easy then, isn't it, in that situation, to excuse looking at internet porn to try and find some private and secret pleasure for ourselves. Well, on such nights, we need to come to understand verse 35.

Verse 35, I think, is a real promise and tell. Paul writes, I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

And Paul is saying today from the Scriptures that there is real hope this morning, hope for the unmarried to remain as they are, gifted in a way that allows devoted service to the Lord.

[15:52] That is the promise, the command and the promise of verse 35. Responding to the present crisis, I think what's going to help us respond to this?

If this is the situation, and in many ways it is very, very difficult, how do we respond? Well, I think we need to understand this present world, this time that we live in.

Paul wants those that are unmarried to know this, the end of verse 31, that the world in its current form is passing away. End of verse 31, the world in its present form is passing away.

These words should make us stop a little bit and think about the big picture of 2015 Ireland. So we've looked at some of the specifics, the recent referendum change, the kind of societal pressures that we have.

And Paul wants us, in a sense, to have a bigger picture, a God's eye perspective on history. He understands that we are living in what the Bible calls the last days.

[16:57] The last days. And I don't mean that, you know, the apocalypse is around the corner. What I mean is this, that Christ has come. Jesus has come. That happened 2,000 years ago.

And a new kingdom is now in place. It's not a political kingdom. It's not one that you can identify with politicians and the power of the state. It's not one that's established by force or by armies. Instead, the kingdom of heaven grows through the spread of the gospel. People are converted and rebirthed and brought into a spirit-filled life on earth.

And they have a promise of a renewed eternal life to come. Because we live in a new kingdom then, there are new rules for living. And that's what verses 29 to 30 are about.

Paul writes, What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on, those who have wives should live as if they had none. Those who mourn as if they did not. Those who are happy as if they were not.

[17:59] Those who buy something as if it were not theirs to keep. Those who use the things of the world as if not engrossing them. For this world, in its present form, is passing away.

What Paul is saying is that now that Jesus has come, now that the King has come, things have changed. The normal priorities of living for self are going to take a backseat.

Our experiences of life, of death, of joy, of mourning, of marriage, of our possessions. They are all fundamentally changed by the reality of Christ's coming.

His death, his resurrection, his ascension, his coming again should all make a powerful difference to how we live. And one of the biggest impacts, and one that we don't notice very often in this new age, is our attitude to being unmarried.

Our attitude to being single. Because the Bible presents a radical, and I would say an awe-inspiring place, for those that remain unmarried. In the past, the only real option for those who are part of God's people was to get married.

[19:13] The blessings of God to Israel, to the nation of Israel, was based really on three things. The people of Israel, they had a name, they had a land, and they had family.

You needed to get married, and to have children, so that your name and your land would stay in your family line. I'm sure anyone from a farming background would recognize this.

The desire there for land and name and family to continue. And Israel was an agricultural society, and God had given this blessing through name and land and family.

Blessing was in having family. That was seen as a blessing. Barrenness was seen as a curse. Barren women were seen as being under some kind of curse, or some kind of judgment from the Lord.

So what does this create? Well, that emphasis then on marriage meant that there were basically no single people in Israel. People got married. Some few did exist, such as eunuchs, who we read about in Isaiah and Matthew.

[20:21] Some were born that way, some were made that way by men. But there were men who couldn't experience sex, could not have a family. So eunuchs had no wife.

They had no family. And in all likelihood, they had no land. Why would you give your land to a eunuch? They were even banned from entering the temple.

They couldn't partake in the religious life of the society. And you see, to have family was everything. And to be a eunuch was nothing. Eunuchs, as a result, were often employed in the ancient Near Eastern cultures to serve in courts for a king.

Because they could do so in full devotion. Because, well, they had no worldly distraction. They had no land. They had no family. They had no name. They did nothing to continue. No future. Yet God gave promises through the prophets of a new age to come.

We read that in Isaiah 56. I'm just going to read some of those verses again. For this, and listen to the power of this. Imagine you are the eunuch. Imagine that is your lot in life. And how you're treated in that society.

[21:34] And this is what the Lord says. To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths. Who choose what pleases me. And hold fast to my covenant. To them I will give within my temple.

The place that they were banned from. And its walls a memorial. And a name better than sons and daughters. I will give them an everlasting name.

That will endure forever. The eunuch that was physically and previously cut off from the temple. He wasn't allowed in. And they were cut off from having their name continue through a family line. They're now told by the Lord. That he will establish their name in the temple.

And that they will have sons and daughters forever. There's some kind of eternal family that these eunuchs will have. That will outlast physical family. What a wonderful, wonderful promise.

[22 : 34] After the promise of Isaiah. 600 years. Christ arrives. And he ushers in this new age. Jesus says that it's now open for people to choose to be eunuchs.

Those that are willing to abstain from marriage and sex. For the sake of the kingdom. And we read that in Matthew chapter 19. See, the disciples were struggling with the requirements of marriage. Because marriage is tough according to Jesus. You have to stay faithful. Divorce essentially wasn't allowed by Christ. Except for marital unfaithfulness. The disciples said to him, If this is the situation between a husband and a wife, it is better not to marry.

They're kind of exaggerating. They're trying to push Jesus into making the requirements for marriage less. But Jesus said, Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given.

For some are eunuchs because they were born that way. Others were made that way by men. And others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.

[23 : 41] You see, the shame of being a eunuch or being single has been obliterated by Christ. Jesus said that there are those that are gifted to set aside the pressure and the problems of family and instead serve the king wholeheartedly.

And so Jesus, he's shifted the kingdom away from physical family and blessing through physical family. And he's changed it completely.

Yes, marriage is still a part of God's purposes in this age. But he has joined marriage with singleness on an equal footing. Both marriage and singleness express this age.

Express what it means to be part of God's kingdom. Both Paul, who was unmarried. He may have been married previously.

We don't know the circumstances, whether his wife died or whether he was married. But Paul was unmarried as he writes the New Testament. Jesus was unmarried. And they both practiced what they preached.

[24 : 48] Jesus was a single man. Jesus understood this present age and his need to be fully devoted to God's work. But when his mother and his brothers, his physical family, came looking for him, what did Jesus say to them?

When they looked to take him away from his mission, he said, Well, my mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice. You see, Jesus inaugurated an age where to be part of God's community is about spiritual ties, not physical ties.

Each one is part of the kingdom because of our direct relationship with Christ. It's not inherited by family lines. Our relationship to God's kingdom is because of our direct relationship to Christ.

You can be married or unmarried and be part of his kingdom. And you know, you won't find that option in a lot of structures in this world.

Judaism doesn't promote that. Islam does not promote that. Mormonism does not promote singleness. Traditional family-based cultures, of which there are many more in the world, do not promote or endorse or look at singleness in a positive light.

[26 : 03] Christianity does from its very beginning because of this teaching from Christ and Paul and this unfolding progress of the plan of salvation.

You see, your identity in Christ is what counts, not your identity in marriage. It is having spiritual children that will be of ultimate value, not in having physical children.

I was there for the birth of all three of our children. Our eldest, Christopher, is nine. I remember all three births very well.

But particularly with Christopher, you just think back to that time where, you know, your son is born, your child is born. And that's a transforming joy.

That's an amazing experience to be part of the birth of your children. But, you know, from that day, our greatest desire as parents has been for a second birth for our children.

[27 : 05] Yes, their first birth is absolutely crucial. But it's a second birth that we look for. Their first birth might gift them 70-plus years of life.

Their second birth will gift them eternal life. And this business of spiritual rebirth, do you know, it's not limited to Cherry and I as parents.

It's not limited to married couples. It's not limited to those that have physical children. To be involved in spiritual rebirth is open to us all. If you teach Sunday school, you can be involved in spiritual rebirth.

If you help out at a camp during your holidays or your time off, you can be involved in spiritual rebirth. As you witness to your friends, colleagues at work in the Christian Union, you can be involved in spiritual rebirth.

We are all able to be part of bringing about spiritual life. Verse 29, coming back to 1 Corinthians 7.

[28 : 11] We must remember, brothers and sisters, that the time is short. We don't want to live our lives squeezed and pummeled and shaped and bullied by the culture around us, defining who we are and our attitudes to sex and marriage and singleness.

We want to be shaped by the time frame of Christ. We want to be shaped by His time frame. We want to stop flying into that waterfall and being pummeled and beaten down by these messages all the time that have destroyed the meaning of sex and marriage and relationships.

We want to find a rock to stand on and take a view of singleness that's going to outlast this age and this world. I want to look at some practical things now for those that are single.

We've looked at the present crisis, the crisis in the culture that Paul had, the crisis that we have.

We've looked at the age that we live in, that we're between Christ's first coming and His second coming in those last days with a transformed view of marriage and singleness.

But what specifically are unmarried people called to? Firstly, I want us to see that it is a very high and valued calling. Verse 38.

[29 : 32] So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better. Does even better. So in what ways is it better to be unmarried?

Well, being unmarried puts on display a devotion to Christ and His message, the gospel, that you can't get with married people.

I don't know if you've thought about that. You can't get the same explanation, the visible picture of the gospel with married people that you can get with single people.

You see, the single person is free from the normal concerns of married life. Back to verse 32. Paul says, I would like you to be free from concern.

An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs, how he can please the Lord. But the married man is concerned about the affairs of this world, how he can please his wife. And likewise, Paul goes on to say the inverse for the wife.

[30 : 34] It is clear, and speak to anyone that's married, that being married carries extra responsibilities and concerns that a single person does not have.

Now remember what Christ said in Matthew 19, or what Paul says here, that being single like this, or being called to an unmarried life is a gift. So I'm not saying that this is for everyone, but for some, it is a call.

Being a eunuch for the kingdom, as Christ puts it, is a call to a type of fasting. It's a type of fasting. Fasting specifically from sexual activity.

It is not easy, but it allows a type of devoted service to the king that is not open to married people.

Barry Danielak, the author of the book, Redeeming Singleness, defines the gift of singleness like this.

He says, the charisma, and charisma is the Greek word for gift, the charisma of singleness is a spirit-enabled freedom to serve the king and the kingdom wholeheartedly without undue distraction for the longings of sexual intimacy, marriage, and family.

[31 : 50] The charisma of singleness is a spirit-enabled freedom to serve the king and the kingdom wholeheartedly without undue distraction for the longings of sexual intimacy, marriage, and family.

He's not saying that those things go away or those desires or feelings, but it's being freed from their undue distraction to serve the king. It is a different life to the life of marriage.

And I think helpfully, verse 35, which I think for me is the key verse in this section, helps us to see what that looks like.

And there are three basic ideas that come out here. The end of verse 35 in particular, I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

Let me explain that. Three things. To live in a right way means that for the unmarried life that we find sufficiency in Christ apart from sexual intimacy, marital companionship, and physical family.

[32 : 58] And to live in the right way for the single person is a call to be unmarried and to experience sexual purity by living without sexual intimacy.

So both married and unmarried have to live in a right way. For the married, sexual purity is sexual faithfulness within marriage. That's what sexual purity looks like.

For the unmarried, sexual purity is really sexual abstinence, so not having sexual intimacy. So to live in the right way is to live in a sexually pure way as unmarried.

Undivided. Well, that means that the unmarried life is freed from the stress of having a spouse and family. The need to care for a physical family, to worry about a physical family, to be responsible for a physical family, and their needs is not a burden that's going to divide your attention.

It's not going to divide your time. It's not going to divide your resources like that as a single person. And finally, devotion in the Lord or devotion to the Lord.

[34 : 04] We experience this undivided life in order to be devoted to the Lord, free to serve the King in a way, again, that married people cannot. So that is the call to be unmarried, to live in a right way, to be undivided, and to be devoted to the Lord.

Singleness, if we are called, is a wonderful gift, an opportunity to show loyalty and dependence to the living God that is different and in many ways better than if we were married.

Just some final thoughts in summary. I hope you've seen this morning that to be full partakers of the kingdom of God does not require you to be married or to have physical family.

Marriage displays one testimony. Marriage tells us of the faithful and unchanging covenant love between Christ and his people, the church, where we see that Christ gives himself for the church and marriage is a picture of that.

Being single or unmarried, well, it displays something different. It displays the complete sufficiency of Christ for this present age. And it also gives a visible witness to the future age, to the hope of an eternal inheritance that is to come.

[35 : 32] It points us wonderfully forward in a way that marriage cannot. Secondly, if you desire to be married, you can get married.

There is no restriction. Remaining unmarried and being celibate, it's a gift and a choice, not a command and a restriction.

I think that's important to hear as we look through chapter 7. There is no restriction. You are free to be married. However, I would say, remember that sexual abstinence is required if you are unmarried and sexual faithfulness if you are married.

Remember, sexual purity is for both married and unmarried. And just to encourage you, if you're a single, pretty young person and looking forward and thinking about marriage, practicing abstinence before marriage is the best preparation for observing faithfulness within marriage.

I'll say that again. Practicing abstinence before marriage is going to be your best preparation for observing faithfulness within marriage. And finally, being unmarried should not mean being single or alone.

[36 : 48] You see, in our individualistic culture, the idea of singleness can equate to selfishness or isolated living, selfish living or isolated living, where you're on your own and you just do your own thing.

That is not the case for the Christian. Again, remember examples of Jesus and Paul. They were single, yet they had many close friends and companions and relationships. and I want to speak now to married people, I include myself and to families.

As you know, marriage and family brings pressure and often that forces us to look inwards and to kind of just think about our own situation and our family and keeping things okay there.

But we shouldn't close down like that, should we? We shouldn't limit our experience of life and community to just our physical family, especially when it comes to those that are unmarried.

Are we consciously inviting those that are unmarried to be part of our life, to be part of our family?

Single people, students, divorced, widowed, are we thinking of all those people within the life of the church and of the community that need to be part of experiencing life together and not just hiding

away in our own married lives?

[38 : 10] You know, we need to model the church as a community that has radically altered the ideas of singleness away from individual isolation and towards daily community.

The church should demonstrate that. Maybe watch a show on the weekend, faithfully, on TV. Invite people around.

Invite single people around. Those that are without immediate family or on their own to come. If some of you do watch tell you, find opportunities. Maybe even think about inviting someone with you on your holidays.

Radical. I don't know. I don't know if I could do it, but you know, maybe you get free babysitting. Maybe it'll work. Or invite them away on a weekend away. Find opportunities to have that mixing and that give and take within the life of this church.

All of us, married or unmarried, need to remember, as Paul says, that this age is passing away. Marriage is not the final destiny. At verse 39, Paul says that when your husband dies, you're no longer married.

[39 : 17] Death is going to bring to an end all of our marriages. The promise of marriage is a passing glory for this age. something to enjoy, yes, but ultimately something that points us forward.

We as the church are the promised bride of Christ. We are a spiritual family with a heavenly destiny that is moving and will go beyond marriage.

You know, in that fully revealed kingdom, when Christ finally comes back and he brings this passing age to an end, husbands and wives, children, single people, widowed, divorced, separated, how will we stand?

How will we stand? We will stand as brothers and sisters because of a relationship in Christ. It will not count, it will not matter at that point whether our lives now are married or unmarried or single or what ways they have taken.

What counts is our relationship to Christ. That is our ultimate identity. Being unmarried paints one picture. Being married paints another. We are free to choose.

[40 : 31] To be single, to live as a eunuch for the kingdom is not second best below marriage but stands on the very edge of the new age to come where God's kingdom is about Christ and his bride, the church.

Let's pray. Here we go. Thank you. Thank you. Click the kingdom and take care. You can't fix it. I will be able to slide anyway. Here are three and two things will continue until tomorrow.

I will be able to run six months and when I will serve at a time we have all