

Something more important than marriage

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Preacher: Simon Dowdy

[0 : 0 0] The readings from Mark chapter 13 verses 24 to 37 and this is on page 1024.

But in those days after that tribulation the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light and the stars will be falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

And then they will see the son of man coming in clouds with great glory and power and then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

From the fig tree learn its lesson as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves you know that summer is near. So also when you see these things taking place you know that he is near at the very gates.

Truly I say to you this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away.

[1 : 0 9] But concerning that day or that hour no one knows not even the angels in heaven nor the sun but only the father. Be on guard keep awake.

For you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge each with his work and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake.

Therefore stay awake for you do not know when the master of the house will come in the evening or at midnight or when the cock crows or in the morning lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.

And what I say to you I say to all stay awake. 1 Corinthians chapter 7 beginning at verse 25. Now concerning the betrothed I have no command from the Lord but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.

I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free.

[2 : 1 6] Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. Do not seek a wife. But if you do marry you have not sinned. And if a betrothed woman marries she has not sinned.

Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles and I would spare you that. This is what I mean brothers. The appointed time has grown very short. From now on let those who have wives live as though they had none.

And those who mourn as though they were not mourning. And those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing. And those who buy as though they had no goods.

And those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away. I want you to be free from anxieties.

The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord. How to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things. How to please his wife.

[3 : 1 8] And his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord. How to be holy in body and spirit.

But the married woman is anxious about worldly things. How to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit. Not to lay any restraint upon you.

But to promote good order. And to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord. If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly towards his betrothed.

If his passions are strong and it has to be. Let him do as he wishes. Let them marry. It is no sin. But whoever is firmly established in his heart.

Being under no necessity. But having his desire under control. And has determined this in his heart. To keep her as his betrothed. He will do well. So then he who marries.

[4 : 14] His betrothed does well. And he who refrains from marriage. Will do even better. A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives.

But if her husband dies. She is free to be married to whom she wishes. Only in the Lord. Yet in my judgment she is happier. If she remains as she is.

And I think that I too. Have the spirit of God. Simon thanks very much for reading for us. Please do keep 1 Corinthians 7 open.

As we continue our series of talks in Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth. Now the big question I think which this passage addresses is.

Should you get married? And if so. Who should you marry? It's a question to which the world around us. Whether it's our friends.

[5 : 09] Or magazines. Or television programs. Or films. Whatever it is. Has no shortage of homespun answers. Here's an article from the Valentine's Day edition of the Times three weeks ago.

Providing some advice on whether couples might be compatible. Pets. Is one of you a dog person and the other a cat person? Because not to panic.

But that could definitely be a red flag. Party stamina. Are you likely to be found clinging to the DJ's ankle. Roaring just one more.

Or are you going to be sitting in the car. Your fingers drumming the dashboard. Timekeeping. You can get an ulcer from someone regularly making you a bit late.

Bathroom etiquette. I think this is my favorite one. Bathroom etiquette. Open door or not open door. Is the bottom line. Film etiquette.

[6 : 09] As in. Is it okay to comment during the film. Or only. Or only if you really don't understand what's going on. Perhaps one or two conversations over lunch might iron out some of these difficulties.

The world has plenty of answers to the issues we've been looking at in 1 Corinthians chapters 5 to 7 over these last few weeks. Whether it's homosexuality.

Or sex outside of marriage. Or sex within marriage. Or separation. Divorce. Whether to marry. And who to marry. And the choice each week. Has been the same choice really for us.

Hasn't it? Whose wisdom will we listen to? Will we listen to the world's wisdom? The wisdom of our culture. The wisdom of friends. The wisdom of our society. Or will we listen to God's wisdom.

As we have God speaking to us here in the Bible. And especially I guess when the answers we find. Which will have been the case for some of us over these last few weeks. When the answers we find.

[7 : 11] Are not the answers which we are hoping for. Whose wisdom will we listen to? Will we trust God's wisdom? And the basis. Let me just remind you.

The basis of God's wisdom throughout these chapters. Is who we are in Jesus Christ. If we have put our trust in Christ. So look back to chapter 6 verse 11.

Chapter 6 verse 11. And such were some of you. But you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And by the spirit of our God.

Or chapter 6 verse 19. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you. Whom you have from God. You are not your own. For you are bought with a price.

So glorify God with your body. You see if you're here this morning. And you are looking in on the Christian faith. We're delighted you're here. But please don't assume.

[8 : 14] Throughout this series of talks we've had. On the Bible. And sex and marriage and so on. Please don't return. Please don't assume that Christians want a return. To Victorian morality.

I think that's what our culture so often assumes. And thinks. Because of the assumption that Christianity is about rules and regulations. You know do this.

Do that. And if you try hard enough. Then you'll get into God's good books. But that is to fundamentally misunderstand the Christian faith. The heart of the Christian faith.

Is that Jesus Christ has died for our sins. On the cross. Such that those who trust in him are forgiven. They are declared right with God. Bought by God.

To serve him as his people. And empowered to do so by his Holy Spirit. Which is why I've called this morning's talk. Something more important.

[9 : 10] Than marriage. Because whether we are unmarried. Or married. The most important thing. If we are a disciple of Jesus Christ. Is to live out.

This new life. That we have been given. So you'll see an outline. On the back of the service sheet. And the first point. Is that marriage is temporary.

Marriage is temporary. 1 Corinthians 7 verse 25. Now concerning the betrothed. I have no command from the Lord. But I give my judgment.

As one who by the Lord's mercy. Is trustworthy. I think that in view of the present distress. It is good for a person. To remain as he is. Now immediately.

I think we need to clarify two things. First of all. You'll see from the footnotes. That the word betrothed. In the original Greek. Is actually the word virgin. So it may be.

[10 : 05] That Paul is simply talking about. Those who are unmarried. Or he could be talking about. Those who are betrothed. To be married. Which in the first century. Could have happened very young.

You could have been betrothed. At the age of three. Four or five. By your parents. To be married. To someone else. Later on. So he could be betrothed. For a very large number of years. Secondly.

We need to think about. What Paul means. In verse 26. When he says. In view of the present distress. Some suggest. That Paul has in mind here.

A particular. A period. Of persecution. Or famine. Or hardship. In Corinth. But I think it's striking. As we read through. One Corinthians. And indeed. Two Corinthians.

There's no hint. Of anything. Like that. More significantly. The language. In verse 29. The time. Has grown very short. And verse 31.

[11 : 00] The present form. Of this world. Is passing away. Is the language. Frequently used. To speak. Of the return of Jesus. At the end of time. Our theme. In our service. This morning. Indeed.

I think the paragraph. Emphasizes. That that is how we are. To understand. This present. Distress. You see. Why is it that Paul. Says everything he says. In verse 25 to 31.

Well the clue. Is in verse 31. It's that word. For. For. This is why. I'm saying. What I'm saying. For. The present form. Of this world. Is passing.

Away. In that reading. We had from. March. After 13. Jesus said. Didn't he. The date. Of his return. Is unknown. But the certainty. Of his return.

Is a fact. This world. Is temporary. And therefore. Marriage. Is temporary. You see.

[11 : 58] For those of us. Who are married. Or for those of us. Who think. We might like. To be married. One day. How long. Do you think. Your marriage. Will last. Well.

Not very long. In the context. Of. Eternity. Marriage. Every marriage. Will end. Either. At death.

Or at Jesus return. Jesus himself said. That marriage. Is only for. This. Age. Marriage. And therefore. You see. We should not live.

As if. Marriage. Or. Anything else. That belongs. To this world. Is all. There is. Because this world. Is not. The final.

Destination. Rather. Like. Those endlessly. Long. Car journeys. With the constant. Chorus. Of. Are we nearly. There yet. Now. When are we. Going to get there. And you've only.

[12 : 54] Been driving. For 20 minutes. Around the south. Circular. And of course. While that sort of. Comment. Well it's irritating. Isn't it. In a small child. And it simply.

Reveals. Their. Their immaturity. But actually. In a Christian. Believer. Are we nearly. There yet. Actually. Reveals. Their. Maturity.

It reveals. The fact. You see. That. They are living. For the future. Living. For the return. Of Jesus. On. The final day. Looking beyond.

This world. To the next. Marriage. Is temporary. It is not. The final. Destination. Hence. Verses. 29. To 31.

Have a look. At. Those verses. With me. Verses. 29. To 31. This is what I mean. Brothers. The appointed time. Has grown very short. From now on. Let those.

[13 : 48] Who have wives. Live. As though they had none. And those. Who mourn. As though they were not mourning. And those. Who rejoice. As though they were not rejoicing. And those.

Who buy. As though they had no goods. And those. Who deal with the world. As though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world. Is passing away. Now. It's rhetorical language.

Yes. Of course. Those who are married. Should remain married. Married. The whole point of the chapter. Has been to remain. As you are. Now. But while we are to value marriage.

We are not to. Overvalue. Marriage. Paul. You see. Who at the start of the chapter. If you remember. Commands those who are married. Not to deprive each other sexually.

Now says. At the end. Of the chapter. Verse 29. Let those who have wives. Live. As if those who had none. And we need to find.

[14 : 44] A healthy tension. In terms of obeying. Both those passages. Likewise. The other circumstances of life. Verse 30. There are times of sadness.

But we are not to live. As if this world. And the disappointments. Of this world. Are all there is. Just as. Again in verse 30. There will be times of rejoicing. But again.

Don't make those things. The thing which governs. Your life. Either. Paul says the same. About work. And commerce. Those who buy. As if they had no goods.

Our work. And our careers. You see. Are not to distract us. From the real business. Of serving. Jesus Christ. In the last days.

So. Make sure you're serving. Jesus. In your workplace. In the very best. Possible way. That you can. And of course. If that is our aim.

[15 : 42] Then when our work. Disappoints us. As ultimately. It will disappoint us. It won't feel. Like the end of the world. Marriage. Is temporary.

Whether we're married. Or unmarried. Do not make an idol. Out of it. It is not the ultimate goal. Of life. What's the application?

Well if you're unmarried. If you think that one day. You would like to be married. Then I guess this helps us. Doesn't it? To know the kind of person. We should be looking for. If we would like to be married one day.

Not someone who is desperate. To be married. For whom. The whole focus of their life. Is on finding that special person. But actually someone. Whose focus of love.

Is on serving Jesus. Until. Until he returns. The person whose. Whole focus is simply on. On finding. A marriage partner. Well that just shows.

[16 : 41] That they are. Immature. As a Christian. Though the mature Christian. Will be waiting for Jesus to return. Their life will be shaped. By that.

And therefore of course. Be that person yourself. Because that's what. Any spiritually mature Christian. Who is worth their salt. Will be looking for.

In a marriage partner. How can those who are married. Best serve. Those who aren't married. In the church family. We were reminded earlier.

Weren't we. Of our church family. Well how can those of us. Who are married. Best serve. Those who are not married. Well it's been. By living like this. It's by sitting lightly.

To the things. Of this world. And modeling. Gospel priorities. Priorities. I got married. Last 30. And I'm very grateful.

[17 : 34] For Christian friends. Who. Were married. A number of years. Before I was. But they didn't. Make an idol. Out of their. Marriage. They didn't become.

Inward looking. As if suddenly. The whole focus. Of their lives. Is on themselves. Rather. They kept their focus. On the return of Jesus. And serving him. And doing so.

Urgently. And of course. The fact that they were doing that. Helped me enormously. As a single person. Not to make an idol. Out of marriage. And to keep my focus. Likewise.

On serving the Lord Jesus. Until he. Returns. Marriage. Is temporary. Secondly. Marriage. Is. Complicated.

One of the most. Pernicious phrases. I guess. In the English language. Is. And they all lived. Happily. Ever after. From nursery. Onwards. We are brainwashed. Brainwashed.

[18 : 30] Aren't we? Into imagining. That. At some stage. You get to a stage of life. Usually. Followed. You know. Following on from marriage. When life will be complete. Bliss.

Happily. Ever after. Which means. That those who are single. Can easily. Idolize. Marriage. But God's aim for us.

This morning. Is that he wants us. To think seriously. If we are unmarried. About staying unmarried. He wants us. To value. Singleness. To desire it. And for all of us.

In the church family. To honor. Those. Who are single. Who are not married. For one simple reason. And that is. That a single person. Is far able.

To give themselves. In undivided. Devotion. To the Lord Jesus. Will you look at. Verses 32 to 35. With me. I want you to be free.

[19 : 24] From anxieties. The unmarried man. Is anxious about. The things of the Lord. How to please the Lord. But the married man. Is anxious about. Worldly things. How to please his wife.

And his interests. Are divided. And the unmarried. Or betrothed woman. Is anxious about. The things of the Lord. How to be holy. In body and spirit. But the married woman. Is anxious about.

Worldly things. How to please her husband. I say this. For your benefits. Not to lay. Any restraint. Upon you. But to promote. Good order. And to secure. Your undivided.

Devotion. To the Lord. Now. What do you imagine. That over coffee. In a few moments. You are browsing. The bookstore. You pick up. A new book.

And you begin. To read the blurb. On the back. And you see. What it promises. And it says. This book. Will cure. Many. Of your anxieties.

[20 : 17] In life. And you think to yourself. That sounds pretty good. And so you read on. It says. The principle. Of this book. Will enable you. To please the Lord. To be undivided.

To be single minded. In serving Jesus. It will help you. To be holy. It will bring great benefits. To your life. What do you say? What's the secret? And so you turn.

To the front of the cover. Of the book. And you see. It's a book. About singleness. And I guess. Most of us. Would put it down again. I guess. We wouldn't. Buy it.

But you see. Those are all ways. Aren't they? In verses 32 to 35. In which. The unmarried. Are described. Free from anxiety. Their interests.

Undivided. A way of life. That is helpful. For holiness. That is beneficial. That means. You are undivided. In your devotion.

[21 : 13] To the Lord Jesus. Whereas for the married person. Life is much more complicated. I guess. Many of us are aware of that. We're anxious about worldly things. As Paul puts it. As a husband.

I have a. A right. Duty to my wife. As spelt out. In my marriage vows. I am to love her. As Christ loved the church. That takes time. Takes energy. There are family pressures.

That's sleepless nights. Parents evenings. School runs. And so on. Financial concerns. Or perhaps ill health. Perhaps a spouse with depression. Or something else.

Now for the married person. These things are not wrong. They are all good. And right. And proper. Concerns. And it's significant. I think. That Paul does not say here. Does he? That married people should spend less time.

On these things. They should spend less time. With their wives. Less time. With their children. And so on. Nor does he say. Note. That being single. Is in some way.

[22 : 10] Spiritually superior. Simply that we are to value it. It's so easy. Isn't it? We said this last week. It's so easy. To be endlessly thinking.

The grass is greener. On the other side of the fence. You know. As if all our problems. Will disappear. Once we are married. But the fact is.

Issues such as loneliness. Sexual temptation. And insecurity. Can be just as much an issue. For those who are married. As they are for those. Who are single. Marriage will not solve.

All your problems. And it will create. A whole host of other anxieties. Which you do not have. If you are not married. We are to value. Singleness.

Singleness. Seems to me. That one of the temptations. For those who are unmarried. Is to kind of put life on hold. Until we are married.

[23 : 06] And to assume that until then. Our life is bound in some way. To be rather second best. To do so. To do so. Can we see.

focuses on the disadvantages. The disadvantages. The disadvantages. Of singleness. Of singleness. And of course. There are disadvantages. Of singleness. But it ignores. The enormous advantages.

Of singleness. The opportunities. Of singleness. That we are not. To waste. The whole point of this chapter. One Corinthians seven. We said this last week.

But it's true. Again here isn't it. It's where. God has put you now. In the situation you are now. That is where. God wants. You to serve him.

Today. Where you are. Now. And the point here. In verse 32 to 35. Is that there are enormous opportunities. Which you have if you are unmarried. Which you would not have.

[24 : 02] If you are married. So think long and hard. About the opportunities of singleness. Before you think about. And seek. To be married. We are to value singleness. We are to value singleness.

In others. I wonder whether. In your heart of hearts. You assume. Marriage is God's best. For everyone. It's so easy isn't it.

To either imply. Or think. That in some way. Someone is incomplete. If they are not married. So that those who are unmarried. Either feel that they have failed.

Or that in some way. Life has cheated them. For all. For all. And of course. We are to value singleness. For our children. Let me ask parents.

Do you believe this. About singleness. In regards to your children. Yes. It would mean no grandchildren. But it would secure. Says Paul. Their undivided devotion.

[25 : 00] To the Lord Jesus. Now personally. I'm enormously grateful. For single Christians. Who at various stages. Of my Christian life. Have actually had a really significant impact.

And done so. Because they were undivided. In their devotion to the Lord Jesus. They just had more time. Than others. So. A leader on a Christian camp.

For example. When I was a teenager. Someone else. Who read the Bible with me. Very patiently. When I was a student. The ministers of two churches. That I've been part of.

Why is Helen able to. Go off to Ireland. In the summer. Almost at the drop of a hat. Well. Because she has the flexibility. That comes with being unmarried. As Christians in this country.

We have benefited enormously. From single people. Just think of John Stott. At All Souls. Dick Lucas. At St. Helens. Bishop's Gates. Vaughan Roberts. At St. Ebbs. Oxford.

[25 : 57] And countless other. Men and women. Who we have benefited from. Be able to give themselves. In undivided devotion. To the Lord Jesus. Marriage is temporary.

Marriage is complicated. But then finally. Marriage is a matter of freedom. Verses 36 to 40. Now as I said earlier.

Betrothal in the first century. Was not the same. As engagement today. You might be betrothed. For many years. And you might have considered. Marriage or not.

At a number of different points. In that betrothal process. Paul's point in verse 36 to 40. Is that if you are single. You should continue to think about.

The possibility. Of not getting married. But actually. The decision you come to. Whether to marry or not. Is a matter. Of personal. Freedom. It's what we saw.

[26 : 57] In verses 27 to 28. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you do marry.

You haven't sinned. And if a betrothed woman marries. She has not sinned. And it's what we see now here. In verse 36 as well. Let him do as he wishes.

It's a matter of freedom. Or verse 37. But whoever is firmly established. In his heart. Being under no necessity. But having his desire under control.

And has determined this. In his heart. A matter of personal freedom. And Christian personal conviction. Independent of others.

I take it that means. There should be no compulsion. From friends or family. At marriage. We mustn't think single people. Are those rather odd people. With that strange gift. That we are glad.

[27 : 55] That we don't have. Don't assume. That everyone. Wants to be married. And if you have a dinner party. In your diary. With a purpose of matchmaking.

Then please cancel it. Immediately. It is not honoring to God. It is not honoring to the consciences. Of those who have been invited. In summary. Verse 38.

Those who marry. Do well. And those who don't marry. Have done even better. Not in the sense that. Being unmarried. Is in some way.

Spiritually superior. To being married. But even better. In the sense that. Paul has already outlined. In verses 32. To 35. But you say.

What about the gift. Of singleness. Back in. Verse 7. Of chapter 7. We didn't touch on this. A couple of weeks ago. But I just want to say. A couple of things. About it now.

[28 : 50] Let me read. Chapter 7. Verse 7. It is the only reference. To the gift of singleness. In the Bible. 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. Now let me tell you. How I think we. Easily misunderstand. What Paul is talking about here.

As he talks about. The gift of singleness. I think we imagine. There are basically. Two sorts of single people. The first. The first kind of person. Is the person.

Who feels good. About being single. And for whom. Sexual temptation. Is not much of an issue. And we think to themselves. They do have. The gift.

Of singleness. The second sort of. Single person. We think about. Is the kind of person. Who. For whom actually. Singleness. They find hard.

[29 : 46] They would love. To be married. And they struggle. With sexual temptation. And we think to ourselves. That person. Does not have. The gift. Of singleness.

And for them. The solution. Is marriage. But let me ask. What does that leave. That person. Thinking. What's it leave them thinking.

Well it leaves them thinking. It leaves them being resentful. Of God. Why am I single. Yet it seems.

Without the gift. And it leaves them. Constantly looking. Doesn't it. For the spouse. Just coming around the corner. Rather than making the most. Of the opportunities. They have. To serve Jesus.

Today. Besides. Nowhere. Does the Bible say. That the gift of singleness. Will make singleness. Easy. Nowhere. Does the Bible say. That having.

[30 : 42] Any gift. Will make the exercise. Of that particular gift. Easy. I have the gift. I'm told of teaching the Bible. But I don't always find. Exercising it easy. Much better.

I think. To understand. The gift of singleness. As a gift. That everyone has. Who is not. Married. In other words. Everyone. In this room.

Will either have. The gift of singleness. Now. Or will. At some stage. In the past. Have had. The gift of singleness. And half. The people. In this room. Who are married.

Now. Will. At some stage. In the future. Also. Have the gift. Of singleness. In other words. Once their husband. Or wife. Has died. I think. Much better. To understand. The gift of singleness. In those terms.

And you might like. To ask more about that. Later on. Finally. Verses 39. To 40. A wife. Is bound. To her husband.

[31 : 37] As long. As he lives. But if her husband dies. She is free. To be married. To whom she wishes. Only in the Lord. Yet in my judgment. She is happier. If she remains. As she is.

And I think. That I too. Have the spirit of God. Here is a different situation. A widow. Whose husband has died. Again. Notice. That she is free. To remarry. Or not.

It is a matter of freedom. What is she free to decide? Well. Verse 39. She is free to decide. Whether or not to marry. And she is free. To decide. Who to marry.

The only area. Where she is not free. End of verse 39. Is that she should marry. Another Christian believer. Someone who is. In the Lord. Now so many decisions.

In the Christian life. Are like this. Both. There are different elements. Of the decision. There are kind of. Right wrong elements. Of the decision. So in this case.

[32 : 34] It would be wrong. To marry someone. Who is not a Christian. It is right. To marry someone. Who is a Christian. But as well as. The right wrong elements. Of the decision. There are elements. Of the decision.

Which are a matter. Of freedom. Of personal. Conscience. If you like. Now I suspect. Many of us find this. Very difficult. Because we want God. To tell us what to do.

Don't we? You know. We want God to say. Marry that person there. But he doesn't do that. Well. He does in part. He says. They must be a believer. It follows.

I take it. That it would be unwise. To go out with someone. Who is not a Christian. Because if the relationship. Were to deepen. If the relationship. If the relationship. If the relationship. If the relationship. Were to deepen. Then either it's going to lead.

To the agony. Of a breakup. Or it's going to lead. To disobeying God. But beyond that. Verse 40. Who you marry. Is a matter of judgment.

[33 : 28] Of wisdom. In all likelihood. There is not just. One special person. I take it. That through the course. Of most people's lives.

We will meet. A number of people. Who. If we are single. We could marry. And who. If we. If we are married. Why. We could actually. Have married them.

If we weren't already married. If you see what I mean. In other words. There is not just. One special person. It's reflected here. Isn't it? Paul. It's a matter of freedom. As long as they are in.

The Lord. It means of course. We need to marry wisely. Because assuming you marry. A Christian. How you live out. Your married life. Actually is far more important.

Than whether you decide. To marry person A. Or person B. Far more important. That you. You marry someone. Who understands.

[34 : 24] That marriage is temporary. Rather than the final. Destination. Far more important. That you marry someone. Who is wanting to use. Marriage. To serve Jesus together.

In the very best. Possible way. Far more important. That decision. Marrying wisely. Far more important.

That we think about that. In terms of marriage. We must marry. Wisely. How we live. Is more important. Than whether we marry. Person A. Or person B.

Marriage is temporary. Marriage is complicated. Marriage is a matter. Of personal freedom. I think we've got time. For questions. So why don't. We'll have a few moments.

Quiet. And then I shall pray. And then if anyone. Wants to ask a question. Then we'll have time. For questions. Let's have a few moments. Of reflection first. For the present form of this world.

[35 : 25] Is passing away. I say this for your benefit. To secure undivided devotion. To the Lord.

Heavenly Father. We thank you very much. For that clear teaching. Of the Lord Jesus. We heard earlier. In Mark chapter 13. That his return is certain. The date unknown.

But nonetheless. His return is certain. The present world. In which we live in. Is passing away. And therefore.

We pray for all of us. Who are followers of Jesus Christ. Here this morning. Please would you. Help us. Whether. Married. Or unmarried. To live lives.

Serving him. And we ask it. In his name. Amen.