

Sermon Outline
8.23.26

7vv25 Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. 26 I think that, in view of the impending crisis, it is good for you to remain as you are. 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 But if you marry, you do not sin, and if a virgin marries, she does not sin. Yet those who marry will experience distress in the flesh, and I would spare you that.

Crisis= eschatology, dawning of new age in Christ
v. 31- the present form of the world is passing away

29 I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, 30 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 possessions, 31 and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it.

The goal of all of Paul's counsel in 1 Cor. 7= "unhindered devotion to the Lord" (7v35)

The Tension of Allegiance in Married Life

32 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord, 33 but the married man is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the affairs of the Lord, so that they may be holy in body and spirit, but the married woman is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please her husband. 35 I say this for your own benefit, not to put any restraint upon you but to promote good order and unhindered devotion to the Lord.

Anxieties in v. 32 is perhaps better conceived of in terms of competing allegiances. The lack of integrity that we feel when multiple responsibilities compete for attention and our limited resources of time, energy.

Question I (Ian) am pondering:

-Why are these two considered at odds with one another? Is loving one's spouse not simply an opportunity to "love one's neighbor as one's self?"(Mark 10vv30-31).

For Those Who Are Engaged To Be Married

36 If anyone thinks that he is behaving indecently toward his fiancée, if his passions are strong and so it has to be, let him marry as he wishes; it is no sin. Let them marry. 37 But if someone stands firm in his resolve, being under no necessity but having his own desire under control, and has determined in his own mind to keep her as his fiancée, he will do well. 38 So then, he who marries his fiancée does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do better.

Paul speaks of his "gift" in v. 7. This gift is the gift of celibacy marked by an absence of sexual distraction. From this vantage, celibacy and singleness are not the same thing. Though from the scripture's vision for sexual faithfulness, singleness demands celibacy, and sexual fidelity is only found within the marriage covenant. Paul here seems to envision some who are engaged to be married who share his gift of celibacy.

On Possibility of Remarriage for Those Who Are Widowed

39 A wife is bound as long as her husband lives. But if the husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, only in the Lord. 40 But in my opinion she is more blessed if she remains as she is. And I think that I, too, have the Spirit of God.

Main instruction is “remain as you are” but permission is given to seek remarriage as death dissolves covenant obligations.

Eschatology

The lectionary is an attempt to set texts from various parts of scripture alongside one another to display the polyphonic music of the story. Portions of our text for today are read in the season of Epiphany (Epiphany 3: Series B) alongside Jesus’ radical announcement of the coming kingdom in Mark 1:

14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God
15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.

The word for “time” here is the Greek word “kairos.” “Kairos” does not denote the linear succession of time (that’s the Greek word “chronos.”) “Kairos” rather describes the significance of time, the meaning, purpose, potentiality of time. Jesus from the very outset of his ministry is declaring that the old age (the age of Adam- Romans 5, the age of darkness- Col. 1) is drawn to a close by revealing of the son of God and the nearness of his kingdom.

Now/Not Yet

We live in light of the coming future of God. That future that God has promised is sure and certain and is breaking into the present by the power of the Spirit of God. But “the last enemy to be defeated is death” (1 Cor. 15v26). There is still the vestiges of the old world, though subdued that remain. The image of Juneteenth is a powerful one here. The emancipation proclamation was issued on January 1, 1863. But for the enslaved peoples of Galveston, Texas, that news did not reach them until June 19th, 1865. By law, the people were free, but in their lived experience, the people were still brutally enslaved. Until the news reached them.

Revelation 21vv2-4:

“See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them and be their God;
4
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.”

Stanley Hauerwas: Under the influence of Constantinianism the church no longer understood herself to live simultaneously in two times. Eschatology had now become an ideal relegated to the future rather than a reality that transforms the character of time. As a result the church no longer thinks she is standing in the obedient line of the true prophets, witnessing to the reality of God’s kingdom. Rather, the church now has a vested interest in the present order, tempting her to use cultic means to legitimize that order.

Brian Blount: “the beauty and perfection of the human, the human telos, is revealed in Jesus Christ, and is brought to life in individual human beings as they are redeemed in this life, a redemption to be completed in the eschaton. Both Christology and eschatology are not primarily doctrines about physical bodies, nor about the end of time (though they are also these). Christology and eschatology are doctrines explicating the dynamic working of the Trinitarian God to wondrously form human beings capable of interrelating as they were created to do.”

Do check out his book *Wondrously Wounded: Theology, Disability, and the Body of Christ*

Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon: ““believe in the power of God to create a people through witness and conversion rather than through natural regeneration.””

Intrinsic vs Instrumental

Hammer vs. guitar

Devotion

John 15vv4-5; 8-11:

4 Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. 11 I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.