

11 - Singleness Part 2 - Matthew 19:10-12 - 2018-01-14

Call to Worship: Isaiah 55:1-2

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 55:3-56:5

Sermon: "Marriage, Divorce, and Singleness Part 11" Matthew 19:10-12

Benediction: Isaiah 56:6-7

INTRODUCTION

Recall from last time what we began to learn from our Lord Jesus about singleness, remaining unmarried.

Three things about our Lord's doctrine of singleness

1. The main truth is: "It is not better to marry."
2. All cannot receive that statement
 - a. the bible does not teach that to mankind in general
 - b. nor does the bible teach that to Christians in general, or to the whole church
3. Instead, the statement, "it is not better to marry," applies only to those to whom it has been given by God to be able to accept it, to receive it, to contain it, to live by it

Those to whom it is given by God to be able to accept that it is not better to marry all have in common a condition that makes them able to accept it. But they fall into one of three categories according to the different reasons for being in that condition.

TEXT

Matthew 19:10-12 His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is ~~better not~~ [not better] to marry." (11) But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: (12) For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

BODY

Those to whom it is given by God to be able to accept that it is not better to marry all have in common a condition that makes them able to accept it. But they fall into one of three categories according to the different reasons for being in that condition.

- I. The Lord Jesus Refers to People Who Can Receive This Saying as "Eunuchs"
 - A. "Eunuchs"

1. is a term with which all of the first-century hearers and readers would have been familiar; it is a word which the Lord Jesus could use and be discreet, not talking in any detail at all about what makes a person a eunuch, since everyone knew
 2. now we don't have eunuchs, *per se*, in our society, and perhaps not in the whole world; historically this is due to the influence of the bible and the Christian religion around the world, condemning the practice of making men eunuchs
 3. the result is that now when the bible mentions "eunuchs," we have the uncomfortable need to explain what eunuchs are
 4. of course it is a thousand times more preferable to have the need to explain what eunuchs are because men are not being made eunuchs, than to have no need to explain because men are being made eunuchs
- B. G2135 *eunouchos*
1. there is no controversy whatsoever in how this should be translated into English; the Greek word is the Latin word is the English word
 2. so today it will be a welcome relief that I will not so much as mention Wycliffe or Tyndale or the Bishop's Bible or the Geneva Bible or even the King James Version
- C. Definition of actual, literal eunuchs
1. in general use, the term "eunuch" is used to describe those whose fitness is for singleness instead of marriage, for one certain reason: the parts of the body that are characteristically male had been cut off; some of the parts (in some cases) or all of the parts (in other cases) had been cut off
 2. that cutting off made such people fit to remain single rather than fit to marry; such people are not suited to marriage, but to singleness; they are not apt to the one flesh union, but to celibacy
- D. Our Lord's use of the term here
1. in this doctrine, our Lord Jesus uses the term "eunuch" to describe those whose fitness is for singleness instead of marriage, but for whatever reason it may be; which reasons He summarizes in three
 2. those who are fit to remain single rather than being fit to marry; those who are not suited to marriage, but to singleness; those who are not apt to the one flesh union, but to celibacy

The Lord Jesus Refers to People Who Can Receive This Saying as "Eunuchs"

II. The Lord Jesus Describes Three Kinds of Eunuchs

- A. Some to whom it was given by God to be so born from *their* mother's womb; or to whom it was given by God, by birth defect
 1. by birth defect specific to the reproductive organs
 2. by birth defect more general, affecting other parts of the body, such as the brain; or the whole body

3. by implication also those to whom it was given by God to be so by means of illness that developed later
- B. Some to whom it was given by God to be made eunuchs by men; or to whom it was given by God, by violence committed against them by men
 1. typically violence committed against them by other men for this purpose against their will
 2. also many times violence committed against them by other men, or even by themselves for this purpose according to their own choice
 3. by implication sometimes violence committed against them by other men, or by themselves, not intending this purpose; violence that left them unable to do what a person normally would do in marriage, either because of harm only to those certain parts of the body, or because of harm to the body more generally
 - a) war
 - b) assault
 - c) brawling
 - d) accident
- C. Some to whom it was given by God to make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake
 1. NOT physically!!!
 2. more about this next time, God willing

The Lord Jesus Refers to People Who Can Receive This Saying as “Eunuchs”
 The Lord Jesus Describes Three Kinds of Eunuchs

III. The Bible Teaches Us Why It Is Not Better for Eunuchs to Marry

- A. What they have been cut off from as to marriage they have not been cut off from as to Jesus Christ (Is 56:3-5)
 1. they have been cut off from entering the tabernacle with the men of Israel who are suited to marriage
 - a) Deuteronomy 23:1 "He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation shall not enter the assembly of the LORD.
 - b) but see Is 56:5 “unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place”
 - c) in Jesus Christ they do not have to be married, or even fit for marriage, to have a place in the house of God
 2. they have been cut off from having children, by whom their name would be remembered
 - a) but see Is 56:5 “unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls . . . a name better than of sons and of daughters”
 - (1) I will give them an everlasting name
 - (2) that shall not be cut off !!!

- B. What hindered them from being united to a wife and to Israel does not hinder them from being united to Christ
1. see Acts 8:26-27
 2. this man being a eunuch had hindered him
 - a) from being united to a wife
 - b) from being united with the congregation of Israel in the temple
 - c) from having children of his own
 3. but look at the scripture he was reading in Isaiah, referring to Christ
 - a) Acts 8:33 who shall declare his generation?
 - b) the Savior described in the prophecy was Himself hindered from having children!
 4. Philip preached unto him Jesus
 5. The eunuch believed, and asked this pitiful question, "What hinders me to be baptized?"
 - a) The blessed answer? Nothing!!!
 - b) if you are in Christ by faith, nothing hinders you!
 - (1) not the fact you are a foreigner
 - (2) not the fact you are a eunuch
 - (3) not the fact you are a sinner
- C. It is not better for eunuchs to marry because what they are cut off from in marriage, they are not cut off from in Christ; and what hinders them from marrying does not hinder them from being in Christ.
1. by remaining unmarried, they are not missing the blessings of God on His people in Jesus Christ and by His Holy Spirit

IV. APPLICATION: Take Care Not to Have an Inflated View of the Importance of Marriage

- A. Marriage is for this life only, which is very short; all of God's people will be unmarried in heaven and for eternity
1. Matthew 22:29-30 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. (30) For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.
- B. Marriage is for this life only, and not necessarily for all of that
1. Luke 2:36-37 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; (37) And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.
 2. Romans 7:2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.
- C. Whether we are eunuchs or not in this life, our eternal marriage is to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

1. Romans 7:4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

CONCLUSION

There is still the matter of that third category of eunuchs: those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. We'll look forward to considering that together next time, Lord willing.

Poole:

All men, without sinning against God, cannot abstain from marriage. An ability to live chastely without the use of marriage is a peculiar gift of God, and your saying hath no place in persons to whom God hath not given that gift, for it is better to marry than to burn.

There are some whom God by nature hath made unfit for marriage.

Broadus:

'Receive' does not here mean to accept as true, but the peculiar Greek word signifies to have space in one's nature for something—like a vessel holding so much, compare Joh_21:25—sometimes in the sense of capacity to know (Lid. and Scott), here in the sense of capacity to act out. 'Not all men have room (capacity) for this saying.' The capacity depends on physiological constitution and general temperament, making it practicable to be happy and useful without marriage.

eunuchs

Ellicott:

only those who are in some sense “eunuchs” . . . can safely abstain from marriage

who are, i.e., without the impulses that lead men to marriage, either naturally, or by the mutilation which then, as now, was common in the East, or who have conquered those impulses by the power of self-consecration to a higher life

from *their* mother’s womb

Geneva:

A man can become a eunuch in one of two ways: the first is by castration or emasculation, and the other by natural causes, such as a rupture.

Calvin:

Those who are so by nature, or who have been castrated by men, are debarred from marriage by this defect, for they are not men.

Trapp:

Of a frigid constitution of body, and unapt for generation. This is not continence, but impotence, effeminacy, a defect in nature.

Poole:

There are some whom God by nature hath made unfit for marriage
There are others whom men (wickedly) make unfit for it, that they may gratify their own jealousy.

Henry:

Christ speaks here of a twofold unaptness to marriage.

(1.) That which is a calamity by the providence of God; such as those labour under who are born eunuchs, or made so by men, who, being incapable of answering one great end of marriage, ought not to marry. But to that calamity let them oppose the opportunity that there is in the single state of serving God better, to balance it.

Gill:

such who had such defects in nature that they were impotent, unfit for, and unable to perform the duties of a marriage state; who, as some are born without hands or feet, these were born without proper and perfect organs of generation

Clarke:

Such as are naturally incapable of marriage, and consequently should not contract any.

JFB:

persons constitutionally either incapable of or indisposed to marriage.

Carroll:

This would include physical and mental cases

which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake

Trapp:

live single, that they may serve God with more freedom, fighting against fleshly lusts (that fight against the soul) with those spiritual weapons, meditation, prayer, abstinence, &c., which are mighty through God to the pulling down of Satan's strongholds set up in the heart.

Poole:

And there are some who have made themselves eunuchs, not castrating themselves, (that is wickedness), but abstaining from marriage, and yet living chastely, (having mortified their lusts, and brought under their body), that they might be less encumbered with the cares of the world, and be more free for the work of the ministry, or be able more to give up themselves to a holy life and spiritual conversation.

If there be any who can receive this saying, who can without marriage bridle his lust, and so live in a solute and single state as not to sin against God by any extravagance of lusts, and impure desires and affections, and desire, and shall do so, that he may be more spiritual, and serve God with less distraction, and be a more fit instrument to promote the kingdom of God in the world, let him do it.

Henry:

(2.) That which is a virtue by the grace of God; such is theirs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. This is meant of an unaptness for marriage, not in body (which some, through mistake of this scripture, have foolishly and wickedly brought upon themselves), but in mind. Those have thus made themselves eunuchs who have attained a holy indifference to all the delights of the married state, have a fixed resolution, in the strength of God's grace, wholly to abstain from them; and by fasting, and other instances of mortification, have subdued all desires toward them. These are they that can receive this saying; and yet these are not to bind themselves by a vow that they will never marry, only that, in the mind they are now in, they purpose not to marry.

Wesley:

Happy they! who have abstained from marriage (though without condemning or despising it) that they might walk more closely with God! He that is able to receive it, let him receive it - This gracious command (for such it is unquestionably, since to say, such a man may live single, is saying nothing. Who ever doubted this?) is not designed for all men: but only for those few who are able to receive it. O let these receive it joyfully!

JFB:

persons who, to do God's work better, deliberately choose this state. Such was Paul (1Co_7:7)

Spurgeon:

Some have but feeble desires concerning marriage, and they were so born. They will find it good to remain as they are. Others subdue the desires of nature, for holy and laudable

reasons, for the kingdom of heaven's sake; but this is not for all, nor for many. It is optional with individuals to marry or not: if they marry, nature commends, but grace is silent; if they forbear for Christ's sake, grace commends, and nature does not forbid. Enforced celibacy is the seed-bed of sins. "Marriage is honourable in all." Violations of purity are abominable in the sight of the Lord. In this matter we need guidance and grace if we follow the usual way; and if we elect the less frequented road, we shall need grace and guidance even more. As to a resolve to persevere in a single life: He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

Prelude: Trinity 217 "Look, Ye Saints"

Camille: Piano

Noah: Trumpet - see attached in G

Anna: Clarinet - see attached in G

Trinity 712 "I Know Whom I Have Believed" - transpose

Camille: Piano - transpose down two half steps

Noah: Trumpet

Anna: Clarinet

Grace 105 "Lord, We Come to Hear Your Word"

Camille: Sing

Noah: Trumpet - play from Grace hymnal in G

Anna: Piano - see attached in F ("Take My Life")

Grace 101 "Let the Earth Resound"

Camille: Flute

Noah: Trumpet - see attached in D

Anna: Piano

Hymn 609 "A Few More Years Shall Roll"

Camille: Piano

Noah: Sing

Anna: Sing