

"A Freedom and A Gift"

1 Cor 7:25–31

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Background

This week, we begin a special summer series. Over the course of four weeks, we will explore what discipleship of the next generation looks like at different stages and situations of life. This Sunday, we begin with our spouse-free and child-free brothers and sisters. How does the New Testament re-define the concept of family? In what ways have we been enculturated in our thinking about marriage, fertility, and singleness? As we listen to Scripture's wisdom, we will discover a whole new way to respond to the call to "be fruitful and increase in number." Join us this Sunday for our first installment of our new series, "Church as Family".

Sermon Text 1 Cor 7:25–31

²⁵ 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. ²⁶ Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. ²⁷ Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a

wife. ²⁸ 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.

²⁹ What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; ³⁰ 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; ³¹ those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?
- What is the best thing you heard on Sunday?

2. Sunday Questions:

1. Cultural Norms vs. Kingdom Identity

- The sermon points out that the nuclear family is often assumed to be the default arrangement in both society and the church, which can unintentionally cause single people, childless couples, widows, or those experiencing loss to feel excluded.
- **Discussion Question:** How have you observed or experienced the church prioritizing traditional nuclear family structures over the broader "household of God" (Galatians 3:26–28, Ephesians 2:19)? In what ways can we re-examine our personal assumptions so that every person's identity rests in Christ alone rather than their marital or parental status?

2. Redefining "Fruitfulness": From Physical to Spiritual

- In Genesis 1:28, God commands humanity to "be fruitful and increase in number," but the sermon highlights how Jesus redefines this mandate in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20) from biological reproduction to spiritual reproduction through making disciples.
- **Discussion Question:** How does shifting our understanding of "fruitfulness" from biological children to spiritual discipleship change the value and purpose we assign to single or child-free believers? What unique

opportunities does this open up for everyone in the church to participate fully in God's mission?

3. Embracing Singleness as Freedom in Light of Eternity

- In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul argues that singleness offers a unique freedom from worldly concerns, enabling undivided devotion to the Lord, especially when viewed through an eternal perspective (1 Cor 7:29–35).
- **Discussion Question:** Why is Paul's view of singleness as a "gift and a freedom" so countercultural both in ancient times and today? How can single or child-free individuals lean into this freedom without feeling second-class, and how can married believers support and honor that calling?

4. Jesus as the Model of Perfect Humanity

- Pastor Hae-Rin reminds us that Jesus—the fullest expression of perfect humanity—was himself a single, childless adult.
- **Discussion Question:** How does meditating on the fact that Jesus was spouse-free and child-free dismantle societal stigmas around singleness and childlessness? How does Jesus' life affirm that completeness as a human being is found entirely in relationship with God rather than in marriage or parenting?

5. Cultivating True Belonging and Equal Honor

- Drawing from 1 Corinthians 12 and a reflection by Tanya Martinez, the sermon urges the church to broaden its vision of family and give special honor and concern to members who do not fit prevailing cultural paradigms.
- **Discussion Question:** What practical, intentional steps can our small group or church community take to move past "awkward assumptions" and truly carry one another's burdens (e.g., loneliness, infertility, grief)? How can we actively create spaces where non-traditional family members are deeply known, valued, and integrated as essential parts of the body?