

Sermon Notes: The Design of the Family Part 4

Text:

1 Corinthians 7:7 (NKJV) — *7 For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.*

Matthew 22:30 (NKJV) — *30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.*

Mark 3:31–35 (NKJV) — *31 Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” 33 But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” 34 And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! 35 For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”*

Take Away: Singleness needs to be defined clearly. We don't want to confuse our terms. There is the sinful singleness of our modern world. There is the gift of Kingdom celibacy. Finally there is the burden of singleness for those who want to be married but aren't. Very few are given the gift and most are given the burden. Yet, the burden of singleness is meant by God to bring blessing. It is a refining fire. But such a person is not alone in the family of God. For the marriage of Christ to His Church sweeps all his people up into a family that is more real and more eternal than what we have now.

I. Checking our Presuppositions: (References: *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* by Carl Trueman; *The Emile* by Rousseau; *The Magician's Nephew* by C. S. Lewis)

II. The Design and the Temptation: (References: *Matthew 19:11-12; Deuteronomy 23:1; Isaiah 56:3-5; Acts 8:36-38; Philippians 3:4-6; 1st Corinthians 7:1-9, 27-31; Luke 21:23-24; Romans 8:18*)

III. The Gospel and Singleness: (References:)

Review:

1. *We first needed to check our presuppositions* when it comes to the world's view of children. It is not hard at all to survey across the cultural landscape of the West and see that our sinful culture _____ children. Our secular culture is one which is dominated by the idolatry of the Self. The slogan of "my body, my choice" betrays the extreme nature of our culture's worship of the self. Choice is so important to the sinful West that is more valuable than the life of a baby in the womb. Our culture is certainly even far _____ than Israel sacrificing their children in the Valley of Tophet to Molech and Ba'al. Even if they wanted to, those wicked Israelites could not have killed as many children as the United States has—60 million and counting. But we should think Christianly about this. This is the tell-tale play of the Enemy. He is the author of the Culture of Death. He wants to _____ human fruitfulness by any way possible. For he is terrified of godly parents obeying God in being fruitful, multiplying, and filling the earth. It was by the Seed of the woman that Christ came. It is by the seed of the church that Satan will be crushed underfoot.

2. *Another aspect of this is making sure we have a clear view of the design* of covenant children. First, we need to see that gospel parenting requires gospel _____. No one can parent perfectly, and this makes forgiveness necessary within the household. It is by the practice of gospel forgiveness within the family, that children will grow up in an aroma of gospel love. The practice of real, thick, and rich forgiveness is part of the training of children such that they might rightly understand how God has loved them in Christ. Secondly, we looked at the design of children born to Christian parents as covenant children. If the family is an outpost of the New Creation, then children born into such a family are born within that outpost and not outside it. When a child is born to a household, they receive all the covenant benefits of that household. They are trained and matured within their covenant membership at the dinner table of the family. The same is true for the household of God. Covenant children receive rites of baptism and then the Lord's supper because they have been given a seat at God's dinner table. Christian parents are to train their children _____ the faith, and not _____ it. Thirdly, God commands Christian parents to train their children in obedience. Children should be trained to obey right away, all the way, cheerfully every day. Such training in obedience will require a child to learn that sacrificial love demands a denial of self for the greater joy of loving God and their neighbor. This training will come by _____. Suffering by godly loving discipline and suffering in growing in the denial of self. This is hard for parents and children, but Christian parents must not fall into the current temptation of gentle parenting. This method seeks to remove all suffering from the child by all means possible. It sacrifices long term joy for momentary happiness. Such parenting methods will not build strong, joyful, and robust young men and women.

3. *Finally, we saw how parents must place their hope and trust in the promises of God for their children.*

Parents are to lean into the promises of God for their children and not be _____ of them. They must confess over and over and over again that the covenant children given to them are not theirs, but _____ to God. They must remember that it was Christ who learned obedience to His Father by the things He suffered. Christian parents must fix their eyes on Christ who will never leave them nor forsake them in the _____ task of raising covenant children in the paideia of God.

Questions for the Table:

1. What is the difference between the world's definition of singleness and Scripture? What are the two categories of singleness that are sanctioned in Scripture?
2. Why does Paul call both marriage and celibacy a *gift*? How does one know if they have the gift of celibacy? How has the church struggled with this distinction throughout history?
3. Discuss why marriage is normative on the side of the Second Advent and singleness is normative on the other side of Christ's coming?
4. What is the difference between the *gift of celibacy* and the *burden of singleness*? What is Paul's principle that divides the two? How can one who is bearing the burden of singleness do it well? How can the church help?