

## Genesis 2:18 Your Singleness is God's Issue

IBS – the Observation, Interpretation, and Application aren't always in perfect balance – today is one of those times – our application is going to outweigh our observation. But when we get to the genealogy chapter 5 it will be the opposite.

Gen 2:18 - And the LORD God said "It is not good that man should be alone, I will make him a helper comparable to him."

From the very beginning of Creation, marriage between one man and one woman has been the norm of human relationships around the world and throughout history.

Even today, when marriage seems to be under attack from so many angles and seems to have fallen so far in value, 90% of all adults will get married at some point in their lives. If it doesn't work out the first time, most will try again - according to a study released in 2002 75% of all divorced women remarry within ten years.<sup>1</sup>

1 Tim 4 even says those who forbid marriage are teaching a doctrine of demons!

The Bible has a lot of instruction about marriage and how we should conduct ourselves in it, and we'll see more of that as we move along through Genesis.

But obviously, we all, like Adam, begin life single, so this morning I want to consider what that means and what the Bible says about being *unmarried*.

We're going to make a distinction between two groups:

1. Consecrated singles, those who are called by God to remain single for the rest of their lives – these people may or may not have ever been married before, but they won't marry again;
2. Premarital singles – everyone from teens to silver foxes; those who have never been married and widowers and divorcees who hope to remarry.

Now let me just say right up front – this is a touchy and difficult subject for some of you and for that reason, it is also very difficult for me. As your pastor I am torn between the need to comfort you on the one hand and the need to encourage and exhort you on the other. I want you to know I have prayed and prayed this week that I would not stand here and give you empty platitudes and comfortless words. I have asked God to comfort you and to work in your lives, especially those of you who long to be married. It is my hope that you will walk out of here this morning encouraged in God and His Word and anxious to see what He wants to do in your life.

I want all of you singles to know that the Bible does not teach, and I do not believe that singles are second-class citizens. In fact, it's quite the opposite. In the New Testament we see singleness described as a gift, especially for those who are consecrated singles.

---

<sup>1</sup> by the National Center for Health Statistics

**Matt 19:10** (Jesus is questioned on divorce and says that while it was permitted by the Jewish leaders, it really shouldn't occur as easily as they were granting it because God has made the two, one) See Message on Luke 16 – Money, Marriage, and Hades Pt2.

His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with *his* wife, it is better not 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*."

Here we see three categories: those born with physiological problems, those made that way by men, and those who have dedicated themselves to serving God.

Note that Jesus says there are **some** who have given themselves over to serving God alone, not everyone has, it is a special calling, a special decision, and they are **able to do it**, others **cannot**.

Jesus also taught that although marriage *is the norm here on earth*, it is **not** that way in Heaven (Luke 20:27-38) seven brothers with one wife.

Jesus Himself was never married, though you can see that being a good thing – for you ladies, can you imagine being married to Jesus? Oh yes, it has it's good points – He would take good care of you, could miraculously fix dinner, but every time you had a problem in the relationship, guess whose fault it would be?

Paul, the man most used by God in the New Testament was single and we have nothing more than speculation that he was ever married in the first place. God used this man to write a third of the books of the New Testament and to spread Christianity across the Mediterranean. He spoke in front of philosophers and kings, jailers and slaves – his entire life was poured out in service to God and His people. He was so content being single that he says in 1 Cor 7:7 "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."

If God has called you to singleness, rejoice in it. If you are one of those who Jesus says can accept it, accept it and use your freedom to glorify God. And if you have those moments where you desire the companionship of marriage, remember, the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence – there are plenty of married people, no matter how much they love their spouses and families, who occasionally wish they had your freedom and opportunities.

So, for one reason or the other, what Jesus said should be good news to everyone here – for some it is good news because they can accept it, they know they are called to it and they have embraced it. For the rest of you it is good news because you can't accept it and so you know that God hasn't called you to that, which means you must be premarital.

So, what should you do while you wait for the big day?

1. Pray –
  - a. ask God to clearly show you if He is calling you to a life of consecrated singleness and be ready to accept whatever answer He gives you.
  - b. Once you are truly at peace with Him, ask Him to provide a spouse; but now you're not just asking for someone who can help you, you're asking for someone you can serve God with, someone you can bless. It's not just about what you can receive from them, it's also about what you can do for them.
2. (This applies to everyone) Don't make an idol out of marriage.
  - a. Remember that only God can completely satisfy you – everything and everyone else has a flaw and can only meet SOME of your needs.
    - i. I am certain that if you are single, one of the primary steps you must go through in order to eventually have a good marriage is to come to the place where you smash your idol of relationships and can really, truly say “God, if it is nothing but you and me forever, I'm cool with that.”
    - ii. Once you are entirely delighted in Him, He can bring someone else into your life.
  - b. This keeps you from drowning your spouse in expectations and it applies to the married and the premarital. Don't look to your spouse to be your deliverer.
    - i. The premarital hopes in what will be
    - ii. The married is disappointed by what is not
3. Prepare yourself to be a good spouse
  - a. Learn what the Bible has to say about marriage and about the roles of husbands and wives so you can measure yourself up and be a good judge of potential mates.
    - i. I tell people all the time I'd be perfectly fine getting rid of pre-marital counseling if I could just do mate-selection counseling. Pre-marital is too late – you need to put all your time and effort into finding a good fit. And we'll cover some more of that next week.
  - b. Square away your life – get your finances in order, hammer away at any debt you have and don't get anymore. Guys start saving for a ring and a honeymoon, even before you know who she is. Dig into Proverbs and start figuring out how to live a life packed with wisdom.
  - c. Grow – today you are becoming the man or woman that God wants to use tomorrow, and, the more you grow, typically, the more mature your spouse will be too, and two mature Christians have the best chance at a thriving marriage.

- d. Guard your purity – it’s a fragile glass that is easily broken.
4. What if you find yourself feeling like you’re in it for the long haul? You have two things you particularly need to watch out for:
- a. Increased self-focus. You get to do whatever you want to do, whenever you want to do it, and you probably have a pretty decent job so you can afford to get and do stuff. All of that liberty can be a good thing, but it can also destroy you.
    - i. There are three ways you can spend your time: on God, on others, and on yourself. You need to ration it out so that you are putting a portion of time into each category, and you need to keep an eye on what your ratios are.
  - b. Getting crusty while you wait – marriage is a sanctifying experience – God uses your spouse to help you see sin in your life that you either totally avoided or ignored before, and He helps you see things in *them* that *you* need to bring into your life. Living in close quarters exposes more of who you are.

All of us, married or single, need to remain flexible and changeable. As soon as you start getting ‘set in your ways,’ unless they are ways of imitating Christ, you are going to start having problems. So watch out for these things while you wait.

5. **Some thoughts on looking** (more on this next week):
- a. Sometimes we see God provide in our lives by making something show up suddenly, other times we have to go out looking. For example, God provided Adam with fruit to eat from every tree in the garden, except one, but He didn’t pick it for Adam and bring it to him on a platter by the riverbank.
    - i. Sometimes God brings a spouse to you, sometimes you need to put yourself in their path like Ruth did.
    - ii. Sometimes you find a spouse at home, sometimes you find them far away from home like Jacob found Rebecca.
    - iii. Regardless of *how* God works in your life, you need to recognize THAT He is at work and is your ultimate provider – there’s only so much you can take into your hands – if God hadn’t made Eve, there’s no way Adam could have found her on his own.
  - b. **Proverbs 15:22** says “Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established.” Keep an open ear to friends and family *who love the Lord*. Yes, they want to play match maker, and yes, at times they pry a little too deep, but it’s usually because they love you and want to see something good happen for you. Listen to what they have to say about you and what they have to say about potential mates.

- c. Don't compromise – God saw the need in Adam's life and He met it (BIG FOOTSTOMPING POINT). He knows the number of hairs on your head, He formed you in your mother's womb. He knows what is going on in your life – He cares about you and He really is looking out for your best interest.

Let me remind you of what He is like:

**Is 40:25** "To whom then will you liken Me,  
Or to whom shall I be equal?" says the Holy One.

**26** Lift up your eyes on high,  
And see who has created these *things*,  
Who brings out their host by number;  
He calls them all by name,  
By the greatness of His might  
And the strength of *His* power;  
Not one is missing.

**27** Why do you say, O Jacob,  
And speak, O Israel:  
"My way is hidden from the Lord,  
And my just claim is passed over by my God"?

**28** Have you not known?  
Have you not heard?  
The everlasting God, the Lord,  
The Creator of the ends of the earth,  
Neither faints nor is weary.  
His understanding is unsearchable.

**29** He gives power to the weak,  
And to those who have no might He increases strength.

**30** Even the youths shall faint and be weary,  
And the young men shall utterly fall,

**31** But those who wait on the Lord  
Shall renew *their* strength;  
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
They shall run and not be weary,  
They shall walk and not faint.

I can't tell you why you have waited so long, or how much longer you will have to wait, but I can remind you of the God who is working it all together for good.

This is the God you worship – a God who knows your needs and who is capable of meeting them. So no matter how great your need or you desire seems at one moment in time, don't lose sight of how much greater your God is. Whether you are consecrated to Him as a single for His service, or you're waiting for Him to deliver your mate, or even if He has already provided that mate – remember, your greatest purpose in life is to know and delight yourself in Him trusting that He sees your needs and is able to meet them in His time and in His ways.