

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #230

Jesus' Final Journey to Jerusalem Jesus Teaches About Being Single (#230) MT 19.10-12

10 The disciples said to him, "Since this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."

11 Jesus replied, *"Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been permanently given."*

12 *"For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others--and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."*

"I command the person who can accept this calling to accept it."

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

| | CONTEXT DIGEST |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Location | Somewhere on the Road to Jerusalem |
| Timeline | March (Month 38) |
| Jesus' Life Context | Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea |
| | C. Jesus' Final Journey to Jerusalem |
| Title | 8. Jesus Teaches About Being Single |

COMMENT:

The teaching of Jesus on divorce in the previous reading had scared his disciples. Their knee-jerk statement that "it is better not to marry" showed this.

They were accustomed to having the safety net of easy divorce at their disposal. Jesus' perspective called for a deeper commitment and more sacrificial love than they had begun their marriages with. They were challenged to the core.

Jesus took their comment seriously. The single life is an important issue in the kingdom of God. Jesus gave crucial guidance to us regarding singleness as a lifestyle in this text.

The first thing Jesus said was that the single life is not for everybody. Marriage is God's plan for most people. Before creating Eve, and the institution of marriage, God said: **"It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."** (Gen. 2.18) Marriage is a gift from God, and central to his plans for the human race in this age.

However, Jesus made it clear that singleness is also a gift from God. Every one is not capable of remaining single. It requires special grace to remain alone. Jesus used the perfect tense to underscore the permanent nature of a God-given life of singleness.

Jesus mentioned three kinds of singleness. Some people are born single--without the physical capacity to reproduce and carry on a sexual relationship within marriage. Others are made incapable of marrying through the

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actions of other people. In Jesus' day, for example, some royal officials were castrated as a matter of course, and became permanently single as a result. Finally, Jesus said that some people become permanently single **"for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."** What did this mean?

A single person is able to devote 100% of their time and energy to the ministry of the gospel and prayer in a way that a married person cannot do. This is a calling from God, and with the call comes the grace to remain single in God's service. Jesus himself was an example of a person who was single for the sake of the kingdom of God. Single people who devote themselves to God's service are a great resource in Jesus' mission to all the nations with his gospel.

The gift to live permanently as a single person for the sake of the gospel is different from being single while hoping to marry. In that case a person's desire is to live as a married person, and they will pursue that option if it presents itself. The gift of singleness involves a commitment to live permanently as a single person in service to God. Such people will never pursue a marriage relationship.

APPLICATION:

There are advantages to the married life, and the single life. Each of us need to devote ourselves to following Jesus, whether single or married. Either way, we have a calling from God to fulfill by his grace. We must make the most of our circumstances to further the cause of Christ in every way we can.

What can you do to further serve God as a married person?

What can you do to further serve God as a single person who hope to marry?

What can you do further serve God as a person committed to remaining single in God's service?