

## *Where Are They?*

### *1 Corinthians 7:1-14*

We have been looking the last several weeks at Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and that His teachings there in Capernaum have been a basic "How to Live a Godly Life" technical manual for the Jews. This morning, we will look at the Apostle Paul doing basically the same thing for the Gentile. I read all 14 verses to form the proper context (why) of the message, but we are going to look primarily at verses 12-14 for content (what) in our message this morning on Mother's Day. I want to give you a quote that was made by a Scottish-born Pastor who migrated to the United States and became the Pastor of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC, and the Chaplain of the United States Senate. His name was Peter Marshall and in 1950 he stood before the Senate and offered this challenge to American mothers. *"The modern challenge to motherhood is the eternal challenge – that of being a godly woman. The very phrase sounds strange in our ears. We never hear it now. We hear about every other kind of women – beautiful women, smart women, sophisticated women, career woman, talented women, divorced women, but so seldom do we hear of a godly woman... I believe women come nearer fulfilling their God-given function in the home than anywhere else. It is a much nobler thing to be a good wife than to be Miss America. It is a greater achievement to establish a Christian home than it is to produce a second-rate novel filled with filth. It is a far, far better thing in the realm of morals to be old-fashioned than to be ultramodern. The world has enough women who know how to hold their cocktails, who have lost all their illusions and their faith. The world has enough women who know how to be smart. It needs women who are willing to be simple. The world has enough women who know how to be brilliant. It needs some who will be brave. The world has enough women who are popular. It needs more who are pure. We need women...who would rather be morally right than socially correct."* It has been 70 years since he stood before the Senate and spoke those words, yet, they ring just as true today. There is no more brave or courageous woman that walks upon the face of the Earth than the woman/mother that chooses to be a godly example in the face of a populace more enthralled with social correctness/justice than godly morality. My question for you today is this, "Where Are They?"

## I. SOMETIMES IT'S TEMPORARY

Vss. 1-11

(a) **It Doesn't Always Work Out**: I'm not going to spend much time here in these first 11 verses because we covered divorce back in Matthew 5 just a few weeks ago. But again, for proper context, Paul reminds us that for some reason a marriage may not always work out.

1. In Matthew 5, Jesus reminded the Jews that divorce was not something to use to break up the home because the wife/mother didn't cook good or maybe she didn't clean good or, God forbid, she had a mind of her own. The Jew had begun to trivialize marriage due to the 'hardness of their own hearts.' This is Jesus speaking to a people of faith.

2. Paul is speaking to pagan people who are coming to faith and they are finding that Christianity and paganism were not 'gee-hawing' well at all. Some of the Corinthian wives were coming to faith. Some of the Corinthian husbands were coming to faith. Their spouses were still engrossed in paganism and Greek mythology and its practices. Inside the home is warfare.

a. I want to stay...he/she wants to leave. What do I do?

b. He/she wants me to leave and I want to stay. What do I do?

c. Paul very carefully tries to explain to a people who are anything but Jewish about what God wants them to do without being so rigid as was the Mosaic Law to Israel. They ain't Israel!

Illustration: Both the world and the home can be extremely hard places to be when you are trying to live out your faith. In Matthew 10, Jesus sends His disciples out to minister with "the household of Israel". Then in verse 16 Jesus said, "*Behold (understand), I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*" Jesus did not send His men into a safe space but into a pack of wolves. In Matthew 28 Jesus sends the Church out into the paganistic world where things will be very different from Israel...no safe space there either. Moms/ladies, Jesus does NOT promise you a safe space in your home. But I do want you to listen to this promise, "***lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.***" In the hard places of life when things can seem so temporary, Jesus promises that He will be with us always, even when things don't work out like we had planned.

## II. SOMETIMES WE GOTTA WING IT

Vss. 12-13

(a) **Very Interesting:** In the 1960's, there was a comedy show called "Laugh In" and a comedian named Artie Johnson made that little phrase a famous part of his comedy routine, "Very interesting". Vs. 12a

1. "*But to the rest speak I, not the Lord.*" Look, in that day there was no handbook called "Marriage for Dummies" or "Motherhood for Dummies" so Paul is just open and honest when he says, "Right here, we're gonna be as smart as we can but we're gonna be wingin' it from here on out."

a. We have some exceptionally good examples in the Scriptures about women who came from 'sullied' pasts and became pretty good wives and moms after they came to faith.

- Rahab the prostitute from Jericho (Joshua)
- Ruth the Moabitess (Ruth)
- Both are in the lineage of King David and thus the lineage of Jesus Christ

(b) **Very Sobering:** "What if?" Paul now addresses both believing spouses with a scenario that we will all face at some point and time in life, "What if?" Vss. 12b-13

- "What if I believe but he doesn't?"
- "What if I believe and she doesn't?"
- "What do you do in those very sobering times of 'What if?'"

1. Number 1, don't leave. You're married. You may have been pagans when you got married and now, in Christ Jesus, you are a different person, but you are still married. Don't leave. It's hard, but don't leave.

The Christian calling did not dissolve the marriage covenant, but bind it the faster, **by bringing it back to the original institution**, limiting it to two persons, and binding them together for life. The believer is not by faith in Christ loosed from matrimonial bonds to an unbeliever, but is at once bound and made apt to be a better relative.

Matthew Henry

### III. SOMETIMES WE GOTTA CLEAN IT UP

Vs. 14

(a) **A Cleaner House**: The 14<sup>th</sup> verse begins to take on a bit of a more maternal flavor now that the children are being introduced. Also notice the difference that Paul now makes speaking about the children being either unclean or holy. Plus, Paul mentions the new nature of Jesus Christ in the ‘sanctified’ (purified, holy) wife and mother first here in verse 14.

1. Remember what I just read from Matthew Henry when he said that this ideal literally brings marriage back to its original institution of one man and one woman, binding them together for life?

*Malachi 2:15-16 Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. “For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the Lord, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless”. (ESV)*

a. Paul is challenging both parents, but especially the moms, to break the cycle of the broken home and begin a new tradition of the Christian home within the framework of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: Look down at verse 16 and think about what Paul is saying could be the eternal reward for that mom who gives her marriage, her home, her husband, and her children into the trusted arms of a Redeemer?

- Only God knows how many husbands have been saved because of a wife that believed and fought for her family!
- Only God knows how many wives have been saved because the husband that believed didn’t take the easy way out and throw in the towel and quit!
- Only God knows how many children were brought to the cross because they witnessed the testimony of godliness in just ONE parent!