

Singleness

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[0 : 00] All right, thank you for that, Lisa. So good to be with everybody today. Welcome to One Harbor Noon. My name is Elliot. I'm one of the pastors here. For everybody in the room and listening online, it's just a joy to be together.

Come in God's house, gather around His Word. And so we've actually momentarily pushed pause on our Mark series that we've been going through for many weeks to take a period of time to talk about what it looks like to be fruitful in various stages of life and various particular areas of life. So if you're new to One Harbor, one of the things you'll notice about us is kind of the main diet, kind of the staple that we do in terms of approaching God's Word is to simply go through books of the Bible because we really believe that should be the bulk of the substance that you get. But we do find that from time to time, it is helpful to kind of supplement that, right? To like take a moment to think about what the whole conscious of Scripture has to say about a particular topic. Kind of pull that together. And what we're doing through this series is, again, looking at some familiar spaces we find ourselves in, right? Like seasons of life, roles, responsibilities, things that have been given to us.

[1 : 17] How do we manage those well in the kingdom? And so last week, Donnie took us through what it looks like to be fruitful in our friendships. And that was really helpful. And this week, we're going to talk about how to make the most of a season of singleness.

Yay! All right, so just like last week, a little caution, right? So in every series like this where we're talking about particular areas of life, there's really easy temptation when we're on a week that doesn't seem like it's going to apply to you to just kind of check out, right?

And I think this week is particularly like that if you happen not to be in a season of singleness. Like if you're here and you're not single. So just I would offer you a little bit of encouragement as to why to stay checked in.

Partly because, I mean, God's Word is written and to be received by the whole church, right? So every word that comes from His mouth is something we want to receive. But also because just like Donnie said last week, we're a body.

And believe it or not, if you're a single adult in here, when we get to speaking about marriage or parenting, you actually have a stake in this church having healthy marriages and healthy children and people knowing how to move in that because you're part of that body.

[2 : 32] And just the same way, if you're here and you're not single, you have a stake in people who are single flourishing and living to the full what God has for them because we're a body.

And when one part of us hurts, all of us hurts. When one part rejoices, all of us rejoice. And so I would encourage you to stay checked in as we go through today. And we're going to start today on a bit of a personal note because this actually is quite personal for me.

So I didn't marry until I was 38 years old. And even though I've been married for a few years now, that means that I lived most of my life up to this point as a single adult.

And probably like many of you in the room, I was no different when I was younger. Like I assumed when I was 16, 17, 18, hey, you know, I'm probably going to meet my spouse in high school, right? Maybe a little naive. But yeah, I'm going to find her there or maybe not if there, it's going to happen in college, right? Somewhere early in life and we're going to start a family. And that didn't happen. But, you know, there's still kind of that early professional part of life.

[3 : 38] And I'm like, yeah, I'm going to meet someone. And as it happened right after college, I was in a dating relationship with someone that I thought was going to go to marriage. And then it didn't. And so I found myself in like a completely new place with no family or nobody I knew, nursing a bit of a heartache, and trying to navigate the fact that life to that point had not gone as I expected

it to go.

And so I found out what a lot of you, if you've been single in small town eastern North Carolina, found out. This is a really tough place to find a spouse, right?

Like, I mean, where are the single people even hanging out in this town, right? And this was back... There you go. And this was back at the, hard to say, turn of the century, right?

So back before, like, dating apps were even widely available or even there was kind of a stigma to it. Like, back then, if you were trying to do something online, it was like eHarmony, right?

I mean, that's where, like, the really weird or desperate people are, right? Like, I mean, who would actually use it? I mean, no harm in making a profile, right? So I wasn't going like I wanted.

[4 : 55] But, you know, I did what any follower of Jesus would try to do. I said, okay, well, I'm going to turn to the Lord and kind of beg Him to fix that whole spouse thing that's not going like I want it to and kind of immerse myself in doing things for His kingdom while I wait.

And I'd be lying if I told you in my young and immature faith there wasn't some bargaining going on there, right? Like, seek first His kingdom and everything will be added, right? So maybe if I seek a little harder, He'll add a little faster, right?

Like, some of that's going on. But it would also be fair to say that I really didn't want to waste whatever time I was single. Like, I didn't know how long that season would be, but I did know that me sitting around passively doing nothing was probably not what God wanted me to do.

And so I engaged with His people. I engaged with His church. I moved out to be a part of the body. However, I quickly found out that as a single adult in church, there's its own special set of issues that comes with it.

First of all, again, in small-town life, one of the realities is if you're in a church, particularly a smaller one, you could easily find yourself as one of the only single adults in that context.

[6 : 13] And that can feel isolating. The next thing I found out is that in church, being single felt a little bit like being stuck somewhere between the kids' table and the grown-ups' table.

Because most of the life and flow of the church goes around marriage, parenting, conferences, all the things that go with that. And so what seemed to be kind of the natural life flow of the church didn't apply to me in a lot of ways.

I wound up in a church that actually did have a pretty robust single adult, like young adult context and had a singles ministry dedicated to that. But one of the interesting things about if you do have a singles ministry is you quickly find out it has the dubious distinction of being the one ministry in the church where if you feel called to serve in singles ministry, you realize that 99% of the people in your ministry are praying to God to get out of your ministry as soon as is possible for them, right? So it's like, hey, let's have a plan for the next year. And they're like, the next year? I hope I'm not here next year, right? Like, all right, good times. And then because churches often don't know what to do with singleness, particularly because singleness doesn't come in one form, right?

Like single when you're 22 doesn't feel the same as single when you're 40. Being a single parent is different than that. Being someone who is widowed is different than that.

[7 : 44] There's all types of seasons and ways that you can be a single adult. And a lot of the churches that I were in didn't have a good feel for how to do that other than to put all of the singles together.

And when they did that, you know, it kind of created some unhealthy perceptions of what it is. And I think I can probably summarize it like this. On more than one occasion, I've been in a church context where I've heard someone say about the singles ministry that I was in and the people that I was there serving and loving in life with, that the singles ministry is the island of misfit toys.

That won't make you insecure, right? And then behind all of that, you've got just the stuff that's common to any single, right? Like if you're single, loneliness might be a part of your journey, right? It's something you're going to have to wrangle with. Your sex drive does not wake up when you get married. It starts long before that. And so you're trying to navigate having a very alive and active sex drive and having no legitimate outlet for it.

And all the time, it seems like the clock is ticking, right? Like, am I ever going to get married? Am I ever going to be a parent? And so to say that it could be challenging to navigate that with a heart full of faith is an understatement.

[9 : 09] There's a lot of challenges to it. But standing against the backdrop of all of that, I actually was becoming more a disciple of Jesus.

And when I went to God's word, what I saw was a very clear picture of people from all kinds of life circumstances fully living out the life that God had given them, not missing anything because of their marital status.

And at the center of all those stories was this one person who was the only person who was a perfect representative of what humanity was supposed to be.

And he lived all 33 years of his life on this planet without getting married and did everything his father sent him to do and accomplished everything that his father wanted him to do.

And so that's really my hope today is that if you are here and you're single, it just kind of offers you some encouragement that despite the challenges, there really are some ways that you can make the most of the time that you are single and to encourage you in that.

[10:17] So as we launch out, I think probably the first thing we need to do is start by giving some thought to how we even view singleness. Because culture is kind of the pool that we all swim in and whether you know it or not, it is affecting how you think about being single.

So as a first step, I would offer this. If we're going to make the most of our singleness, we start by coming to see singleness as God sees it and not as our culture sees it.

Now our culture actually has this kind of strange love-hate relationship with both marriage and singleness. So if you think about marriage, on the one hand, there's a place in culture that it has been and it still is really elevated, right?

Like happily ever after. That's where all the fairy tales go, right? Romantic comedies, finding your soulmate, you complete me, like that kind of whole thing, right?

The idea that one of the biggest and most important things in life is that your life moves towards that type of completing love. I mean, like, is the Hallmark Channel, even in business, if you can't bring home a fiance for Christmas, right?

[11:29] Like the whole point of romantic comedies is the tension around will they, won't they? And if they didn't, it's a terrible movie and you never watch it again, right? So there is this idea that marriage and romance is the pinnacle, but then on the other hand, there is this very strong stream that marriage is very restricting.

It's oppressive. It takes away some of the possibilities of what your life could be. Children in particular take away some of the possibilities of what your life could be.

That's sort of the message that comes. And then behind that, there's sort of this cynicism of, you know, so many marriages end in divorce, why would you even try? Like, it just seems like a bad idea to even give it a go.

And then on the mirror side of that, singleness has that same kind of love-hate dynamic. On the one hand, our culture loves the freedom and the possibilities of it.

Kind of living this life of, like, sophisticated and interesting things, right? Like, it's not hard. Go out there and look. It's not hard to find articles about, I don't know why I would be single.

[12:39] Like, you're up taking care of your kids and running around with that. Here's what I did. I slept in and I woke up and I had a great brunch and then I strolled through the park and I'm completely content with that.

Like, why would I? And I'm advancing in my career and why would I want to get in on that, right? There's a part of culture that loves that. But, on the other side of that, we hate any vision of singleness that looks restrictive to self-expression, particularly anything that looks like celibacy or restriction on sexual self-expression.

And so, it's really hard to even get a read what our culture feels on this and more to the point, as followers of Jesus, we look to his kingdom, to his scripture to be the guide for what we do, not our culture.

And so, what does scripture say about it? And the interesting thing is, both our culture and God's word are giving very good reasons to both get married and get single.

Or they're giving very strongly stated reasons to get married or stay single. But they are very different reasons. Like, the reasons that God's word give and the reasons that the world give are very different.

[13:55] And so, this morning, we're going to look a little bit at that. We're going to jump around a couple of verses. A lot of what we're going to take is out of 1 Corinthians 7. And because this is really a rich passage that talks a lot about these issues.

We don't have time to go through all of it today. But kind of a footnote as we go in. So, 1 Corinthians 7 is a passage where Paul is responding to another letter that this church has wrote to him. And we don't have that letter. So, we don't know exactly what they were asking. But based on the context, we can tell. He's really answering a lot of questions about what it means to be in a marriage context, what it means to be single, how to work that out.

And so, as we go into it, just be aware that we won't hit all of it. But in the midst of it, there are some very clear sections that I think offer some helpful insight. So, let's kind of dive into it here.

We're going to start with this from 1 Corinthians 7, 7 and 8. And this is at the end of kind of a discourse where he's responding to a question they've asked him in this other letter. And Paul says this.

[14 : 55] He says, One of the first things we see in this passage is that singleness is very clearly presented as a gift and not a curse.

And that is a simple and straightforward point. But I would argue it is crucial as a single adult. Like, we have to ingest that very early because if you have not been able to find a spouse, it is very easy to feel like something is broken or wrong with you.

Like, why can't I make that happen? And being single may indeed have a lot of challenges. And you might be sitting here thinking, You know what? This is not really a gift I want, to be quite frank.

And we're going to talk about that a little more in a minute. But it really is important to just start from a place of believing what Scripture has to say, which is simply this. To be single is not to be broken or incomplete.

That is not a biblical idea. Paul in this verse says he is single. It is a gift. And he actually wishes other people could experience it in the way he is experiencing it.

[16 : 21] And that's just a really important reality to start to let into your heart. Because if you can accept that, that there's not something broken or wrong with you just because you happen to be in a season of singleness, you can kind of open yourself up to other possibilities, start to hear other things in God's kingdom.

And one of those is simply this. You can actually make the most of your singleness by choosing to embrace the gifts of the season. So continuing in 1 Corinthians, Paul says this, skipping down to verse 25.

He says, Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord. But I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. I think that in view of the present distress, it's good for a person to remain as he is.

So are you bound to a wife? Then don't seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Don't seek a wife. But if you do marry, you've not sinned. And if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned.

Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you from that. This is what I mean, brothers. The appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with this world as they had no dealings with it, for the present form of this world is passing away.

[17 : 50] And I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided.

And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit, but the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

Wow. So there is certainly so much in that passage that we can't impact in one sermon, right? But I do think there are a few things relative to life as a single adult that clearly stick out.

The first one being that there is an opportunity, there are opportunities that you have in a season of singleness that you want when you're married.

Now, some of that is purely practical, right? So like in general, not always, but in general, when you're single, you simply have more free time and less obligations, right?

[19 : 01] There is a certain grind to married life and particularly to raising children and young children. It's just hard to know until you do it, right? Like no sick days, no weekends.

There's just a lot of your time is obligated. And when you're single, you don't have that and you should embrace that. Like you should take the time you have and not just waste it all on frivolous things.

That's a really important practical point. But I don't think the primary purpose of this verse is to give you practical advice in that sense as much as it is.

Paul says something here that's really intriguing and helpful. And that is that he wants you to be free from anxieties. And he thinks there's a way you can do that as a single adult that's more of a challenge than when you're married.

And I can actually testify a little bit personally to what he's talking about there. So let's kind of unpack this, right? So when I was single, there was a lot of things about that season that I did not like.

[20 : 02] Like a lot of challenges I didn't like. But one thing that I can honestly say that I did appreciate about it is when God asked me to do something, like when he led me into obedience, particularly if that obedience was something a little more radical than what I wanted it to be.

Usually the only hurdle to my obedience was whether I was gonna do it or not, right? Of course there are things in my life that would affect it. Like if God asked you to like move to another country and be involved in a ministry there, like uproot your life.

Or if God asked you to like give away a huge portion of your personal finances. Or if he asked you to move into a situation that's a little more uncertain or maybe even a little more dangerous than you're comfortable with.

When I was single, there was certainly other people that that would affect, right? Like it could affect my relationship with my family, my parents. It could affect my friends, the church body I was a part of.

But at the end of the day, the real hurdle to like, am I gonna obey the Lord or not is just me. Like am I going to trust Jesus with me or not? When you get married, one of the first things that you quickly realize is that everything you do has a very real and acute impact now on your spouse and your children, right?

[21 : 21] And so if you think about it in the context of what Paul says, so in this verse he even says, before he starts it, he says in view of the present distress. And he doesn't even really clarify if that's like a temporary distress for like this church, like just kind of the more broad-based, what the church is facing.

But it's not that hard to think about if God asks you to do something hard. Because when you get married, he's still gonna ask you to be obedient, right? Like you still have to follow him. But now I realize, before if my obedience was gonna get me thrown in jail, now it might get my wife thrown in jail.

It might get my children thrown in jail. And that is a level of anxiety that as a single adult you don't have to walk through. And again, he's not saying, like this isn't a verse that's saying it's less holy to get married.

Actually, in the next segment of 1 Corinthians, he's basically gonna say, even against the backdrop of the distresses and the anxieties, he's like, look, if you're engaged and moving close with someone and you feel a strong desire to get married and it's something you wanna do and they're following the Lord, then do it.

Get married. Like there's no sin in that. Even given the challenges, it's worth doing that. Both marriage and singleness are presented as gifts that are to be received. But it is fair to say that during the time of singleness, there is a way in which you can focus on your discipleship in which you can make some of those hard decisions without the anxieties that come when you have a family that's directly impacted.

[22 : 58] And if you're single, you should leverage that. One day, God willing, you get married, you'll walk through those anxieties and he'll be with you there too. But he's presented us this opportunity to embrace that gift and we should.

So, if you're single, there's one other thing I would say here is that I think there's another obvious tension in this verse which is even if you do embrace the idea that singleness is a gift, you obviously may still be really longing to have a spouse, right?

Like you still want that to happen. And at this point, you might be feeling a little guilty that you want it, right? Because like he's saying, hey, why have I a spouse when you could have Jesus? And you're like, I mean, I know, I know, but still kind of want it.

And there's a lot of that tension that comes with singleness. And the good news is God welcomes us to bring all of those burdens to him as well.

And in doing that, I think we learn something else important which is another way you can make the most of your singleness is by taking your grief to God. Proverbs chapter 13 verse 12 says this, Hope deferred makes the heart sick but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

[24 : 17] Now that is a verse that is so obviously true the first time you read it, right? Like if you've ever had a hope, a desire, a thing you want to see happen so bad, it doesn't even have to be a spouse, just anything in your life that you long to see fulfilled and it's constantly delayed and deferred and you don't see it come into fruition, that can very easily make your heart sick and when you receive the fruits of a season of waiting, that can be full of blessing, right?

But after reading that in Proverbs, the thing that always struck me was like, yeah, that's really true. What am I supposed to do? Right? Like I'm just in the place of the heart being sick and when you're single, as we talked about, there's a lot of challenges that are unique to that season, right?

And they range from the very heavy like loneliness and grief and sexual frustration to the very annoying, you know, like, hey, are you married yet?

When are you going to get married? You dating anybody? Is that happening? You know, all of those things come along. But I think harder than that is when you start to realize in singleness or in any like season of life, it might not, like the thing you've dreamed for might not ever actually be coming to be in the way you thought it was.

So when I worked with single adults a lot and I went to conferences for single adults and I sat and tried to minister to them, the questions that single adults would ask, and, you know, you might even think some of these are silly, some of them not, but they were questions like, do you think there'll be sex in heaven?

[25 : 55] Which may seem silly to you or weird, but it's a heart cry of this thing in life I'm not participating in and I'm trying to honor the Lord and I want to.

Or maybe more deeply something like, man, I just, I feel with all my being one of the things I'm made to be is a mother and I don't have any children and I don't understand that.

Like, I don't understand why God would put that desire in me and then just delay it and delay it. And the encouragement I would give you, again, is a very simple one.

Like, those things aren't things to feel guilty about and they are certainly things, sometimes there's things in your life you have to lament, right? There's things that like, you know, you have to, like anything in life you have to grieve the passings of seasons, but the good news for us is Jesus is always a safe place to take that grief and to keep you from becoming bitter.

He's not gonna get mad at the way you feel about that stuff. He is tender with the brokenhearted. But as we learned last week, God's given us another gift as well, the gift of others, like the gift of friendship.

[27 : 10] Like, there's things God has given us for those seasons, particularly in his body. And that leads us to another point, which is, man, you can make the most of your singleness simply by living it out in community.

Now, like the previous point, there's certainly a practical benefit to this. Proverbs 13, 20 says this, whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

Do not make the mistake of thinking the people you choose to spend your time with will not influence how your life goes. Like, that is, again, a very clear, practical thing.

And on the positive side of that, what does that mean? It means when you're single, if you long for a good marriage, this is a season where if you live it out in community, you can find others who have a good marriage.

Like, you can look to others in the body to say, that's what I'm longing for. You can engage with them. You can invite people into your life. And again, I know that can be scary at first to say, feels like I'm inviting someone into my life, right?

[28 : 14] But when you find trusted people that you know know you and know you love the Lord and they're committed to a marriage that honors Jesus, why wouldn't you want that person to speak into your life, to give them a little insight into like who you're dating and how you're dating.

Because that, again, that might feel a little uncomfortable, but it's a lot less uncomfortable than winding up in a bad marriage. And it's a golden opportunity to live it out in a community.

Again, very practical side to it. But I would say there's something even more consequential than the practical side in terms of finding a spouse. and it's this thing that we've been talking about a lot. Being single doesn't make you not part of the body of Christ. You are gifted and called right now today as you are to be a blessing to this church and to this world to reveal some of the grace of who God is to the world.

Seriously, that's not some tagline. You need the church and the church needs you. Like, the bride is diminished when you are not a part of it.

[29 : 28] We are better if you are a single adult because you are here. We live it out in community. Community not only helps us through it, it helps clarify where we're going.

And so, at this point, as we're kind of winding down here, you may be saying, okay, so, some of that is a little encouraging and it does feel good to be needed to know that I have a part in the body, in the church.

And I can see how there probably are some advantages to the time when I'm single that I might not have when I'm married. But, man, I still really want to be married.

yeah, okay, I feel you. I really do. And the good news is God also cares about the deep desires of our heart as well.

And I think that gives us one last place to look this morning, which is simply this. You can make the most of your singleness by trusting God with both your desires and your destiny.

[30 : 38] So, we've said many times this morning, in and of itself, there is nothing wrong with having a strong desire for marriage and a spouse.

It is a common, good, God-given desire. The trouble comes in with this desire, just like any desire, when we try to manage it in a way that is destructive.

You know, most of the time, sin in our lives is simply this. It's you have some very legitimate need, but you're gonna try to meet it in an illegitimate way.

That's really what sin is. It's like you have a legitimate need, but you're gonna try to meet it in an illegitimate way instead of trusting God with it. Particularly when it's something you really, really long for.

And that's why, as a single adult, the reality is if you want marriage, there's just always gonna be a danger to make that thing to ultimate. To turn it from a good desire into an idol, a God, that you bow and worship at.

[31 : 39] That's the only thing you think about. That's the only thing you're anxious about. That is the only thing that consumes your thoughts. Pursuit of any good thing can easily collapse into that kind of idolatry.

That's common to life. But as always, Jesus shows us there's a better way. So in the Mark series, we actually skipped over one passage in Mark chapter 12 and it was part of this series of gotcha questions, right?

Where there's like these different groups of people who are coming to try to trap Jesus with, for lack of a better term, like trick questions. Some of them are political, some of them are theological, right?

And one of the passages we skipped was a particular group who came to him with a theological question called the Sadducees, right? And now really their MO here is just they've got a theological position of they don't believe there's any such thing as resurrection life.

They think that's silly. They don't think the Jewish scriptures teach that. And they're really invested like you can get if you're just really into your theology of everybody else has to think that way, right?

[32 : 44] And so they come to Jesus and they see that people are following him and they want to trip him up in this. And so what they do is they kind of craft this question that's a far out thing that's unlikely to happen and it's based on how in that culture and due to Mosaic law, a brother has an obligation if a woman, if her husband dies and doesn't have any children, he has an obligation to take care of her and help for the family line to continue.

So you can have a scenario where multiple brothers might marry the same woman. And so they create this scenario of like one woman, seven brothers, each of them give it a go, each of them die, no children.

When she gets to heaven, Jesus, she had seven husbands. Like who's going to be her husband in heaven? And this is what Jesus says to him. He says, Is this not the reason you are wrong because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God?

For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven. He actually goes on to say, yeah, you're really quite wrong about this.

That's probably an ego shatterer if you're really invested in what you feel about something. Jesus says, yeah, you're really quite wrong about this. Now Jesus is mainly talking to the idea that they're wrong about God being the God of the dead and not of the living.

[34 : 06] But there's this verse in here where he clearly says, when they rise from the dead, they never marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven. And there's obviously a lot of mystery in that verse.

It's not, you know, it's a snapshot, a picture of what resurrection life fully looks like. But the one thing that is very clear from that is it is a bold statement that earthly marriage is not our ultimate hope. It's not an eternal thing. Our primary identity is and always will be in Jesus, not who we're married to.

Because like so many good things in life that we desire, if you make marriage the ultimate, when you finally get it, you're going to be really disappointed with what you find.

And not because there aren't good blessings in marriage, but because there is a place of you, there is an emptiness that only your creator can fill. Only he can get in there.

[35 : 04] And so when you do that, you're going to find that it doesn't satisfy all those places. What we need, what we've really always needed is something more and something that only our maker can offer.

And part of our discipleship, like if this whole idea still seems kind of weird, like being married to Jesus, like my ultimate destiny is him, like part of our discipleship is as we walk in him, as we go through life, as we engage, through his spirit, he just gives us ever better pictures of what that means, right?

Like part of your discipleship is him kind of giving you more and more, if I could say it like this, like holy imagination for like what he wants to do. And what he wants to do is to actually fill in you the place that nothing else can fill.

And marriage is really intended to be a picture of that. It's kind of this sneak preview of the mystery of what God wants to do in your life, like or what he wants to do throughout all of eternity, right?

Like we're destined to be with him and when that ultimate hope comes, whether you were married or not here is not going to be the thing that matters most because all earthly marriages eventually end.

[36 : 19] It is a covenant relationship, but at the end of it, we say till death do us part. There's an end to it, but the thing that it points to doesn't have any end.

And that's really the hope we always have is that like all of us, everyone sitting in this room, our ultimate destiny is not a spouse, it's not children, it's not a job, it's not any temporary thing.

It is to live a fully alive and filled life with our maker, ever enjoying him more and more in ways that our mind can't even really conceive right now.

Now the truth is, most people will eventually get married, right? And if you're here and you're longing for that, let me just say, like I really hope that does come your way.

Like, and we as a body will rejoice with you when it does, and I hope it's great, and I hope it's, you know, a blessing that God brings in your life, and we will celebrate that.

[37 : 23] But I also hope you see that part of our lives, whether we're single or married, wherever you're at, is simply learning to trust God with every day. Because not only does God nowhere promise us a spouse, he doesn't really even promise you another day.

And that can be a really hard thing to trust him with, right? But the good news is, there's things we wish God would promise us that he hasn't, but it's not like he's not left us with any promises.

And the things that he has left us with are more than sufficient. God promises to never leave us nor forsake us. That means whatever season you're in, no matter how much it hurts or is full of joy, he will be with you in the joy and the pain.

It says, God promises to be a good father who hears and meets our needs. That means he doesn't scoff when you pray for a spouse or anything else.

He doesn't say, that's such a base desire, why don't you, like he knows the things you're longing for, the good things of this world that he's made and the ultimate thing in him. He is a good father who will hear and meet your needs.

[38 : 33] And we also know that ultimately he's working everything together for our good. Everything about the life of a Christ father is going to restoration.

And so you can take comfort in the idea that your ultimate destiny, no matter what it looks like on this earth, is joy and completion and restoration. And when that comes, again, I have no idea exactly what it looks like, but I do know this, we won't lament any of the things that we didn't get on this planet because God will fill every heart, he'll wipe away every tear.

As the band comes up, a couple of things. So if you're here today and you're not a follower of Jesus, so whether you're single or married, I do believe a question that's worth asking yourself is simply this, is my heart full?

Like, am I really fulfilled? Like, inside, am I satisfied? I would submit to you part of, one of the ways that God shows us, like he reveals our need for him, is simply by putting us in this reality where whatever you pursue, whatever you pursue, when you get it, it's not gonna fully satisfy.

There's always gonna be a part of you that longs for more. And that's something that philosophers and kings and people across history have wondered at, but it's the truth.

[40 : 02] And the part of the message of the gospel is like, we wanna tap into that real life that's in him and our own sin, our own failures is a barrier, but Jesus has come to make that barrier move.

He has come to take the burden that removes that barrier of our sin and to meet those places in our heart that no one else can. And so I would just invite you, if that's something you feel, consider Jesus.

Consider that God might actually be showing you something through the part of you that's not content to come to him. If you're a believer, if you're single, man, I hope some of this has been encouraging today.

And if it is, man, celebrate that before the Lord. Maybe there's some places you have been challenged, though. Some places where you see you have made an idol of something that doesn't need to be it.

Or maybe you've just seen that you've been trying to go this whole thing alone and you really do need to work it out in community. It's just a good morning to take that to the Lord, to try to follow him in obedience.

[41 : 12] If you're married and you're a believer, maybe God has shown you a way to love a portion of this body that you've been overlooking. I wouldn't go maybe just bring them something you think they should hook up with like right after the service, but you can love them in ways that are meaningful, that draw them close.

And this is a moment we do that. Let's go ahead and stand together. Let's do this Amen.