

1. First read all of I Cor. 7 carefully. Marriage is a serious matter. For its proper use spiritual resources are necessary. In vss. 1-7 Paul lays down the basic principles for marriage. One of the main reasons for marriage is to keep man and woman from living in sin, vs. 9. Vss. 10-16 tell us that we must keep our marriage vows even if the marriage does not suit us. Vss. 17-24 can be summarized in vs. 20: "Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called." Our text for today, vss. 29-31, falls in the last section, vss. 25-40, which vss. speak to the unmarried and widows. Everything we do in this life should be done in such a way that we constantly keep an eye on everlasting life. In this life we are only pilgrims and strangers. Marriage, the sorrows in life, the joys in life, our vocation, and everything temporal are not ends in themselves and must not impede us on our way to heaven.
2. Marriage is a life-long union which should not even be broken by a difference in religion, vss. 10-16. On the other hand, people should be content with their lot in life, no matter what it might be, vss. 17-24. Godliness with contentment is great gain. Thirdly, *a* → Christians should live with certain spiritual detachment toward their marriage, their profession and all circumstances in life. Such is the will of the Lord. Read Col. 1:9-11 on this point. To live a faithful, contented, detached married life is something which with mere men is impossible. Christian living and virtues come to us only by grace through faith in Jesus imparted to us in the means of grace. Therefore, pastors must diligently preach the Word, Law and Gospel, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.
3. Vs. 29: Cf. I Cor. 15:50: "What I mean is this, brothers." Paul is making an emphatic and solemn observation. He is saying: "Though I counsel no one to change his earthly state, I do counsel all to change their ATTITUDE toward all earthly things." He is reminding them of a grave fact which has to do with all of Christian living. Paul goes on to say: "The time is short and so, during this brief time, let the married be as though they were not married." The world clings to marriage and all things temporal as lasting things. Christians are faithful in every respect and treasure God's gifts but they do not become engrossed in their relationships and surroundings. It must be the Christian's constant aim and effort to be ready for Jesus' second coming. Lk. 12:35.36; Mk. 13:35.36. Read Rom. 13:11-14. The things of this life must be secondary to the things of the Kingdom of God. Nothing dare get in the way of everlasting life. The Kingdom of God begins here and ends there.
4. Vs. 30: In this vs. we have three illustrations: weeping, rejoicing, buying. Paul is not condemning weeping, rejoicing, buying. He is warning Christians not to become engrossed in these activities. Cf. Php. 3:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 13:14. Marriage has its joys and sorrows. Marriage involves one in buying and selling furniture, etc. Don't let the sorrows get you down. Don't let the joys divert you from heaven. Don't let the attachment to things temporal take your eyes off heaven. The parable of the rich man, Lk. 16:19-31, is a stern warning.
5. *solid* Vs. 31: Use the world as God wants you to but don't OVERUSE it. Don't abuse it. The form of the world is constantly changing. One commentator says: "There is nothing solid and lasting in the world system. It is its nature to pass away." Marriage, weeping, rejoicing, buying and selling are all temporary activities. They are only a part of the form and fashion of this world which is constantly passing away. Do not set your heart on any of these things. You can't take it with you when you die. Not even your clothing.

Sermon Outline on I Cor. 7:29-31, Trinity XXIII

Theme: USE THE WORLD BUT DO NOT MISUSE IT

Introduction: We have taken our theme from vs. 31. The word which we have translated as "misuse" might also be translated "abuse" or "overuse". There is a correct and also an incorrect way to use the gifts which God has loaned to us on this earth. We are only stewards of these things. We should use and enjoy them but not set our hearts on them. That's what our text is talking about.

I-The Areas In Life Which This Covers

A-It speaks of the activities of this life

1-Marriage. "Let those who are married be as those who are not married," vs. 29. What does he mean? Marriage brings added responsibilities with it. God requires that we meet those responsibilities. But these things should not blind us to the fact that we members of the Kingdom of God. Man and wife should not love each other more than their Lord. Their marriage should not keep them from using God's Word. Since marriage is only until death, married people should always be ready to let go of their marriage if the mate should die.

2-Possession of goods. "Let those who buy be as those who do not possess anything," vs. 30. Life does not consist in the abundance of things. Christians must be content with food and clothing. They brought nothing into the world nor can they take anything with them. People worry about what they will eat, drink and wear. This shows their tendency to make gods of the things of this life. Jesus, John the Baptist and Elijah are models for us. They had very little. They needed very little. God supplied their needs.

B-It speaks of the emotions of life

1-Grief. "Let those who weep be as those who do not weep," vs. 30. Paul is not saying that weeping is wrong. Even Jesus wept over Jerusalem and at the death of Lazarus. But His weeping did not blind Him in His relationship to God. Sometimes people are so overcome by grief that they tend to turn away from God. Perhaps they have lost a near relative in death or perhaps they have lost some property. As Job said: "The Lord has given. The Lord has taken. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job felt grief but he did not forget his Lord.

2-Joy. "Let those who rejoice be as those who do not rejoice," vs. 30. Paul is not saying that joy is wrong. The Bible often speaks about joy, especially about rejoicing in the Lord. The Bible does not even forbid joy in marriage, joy over children, joy at a good meal. He is not forbidding such things. He is talking about the kind of joy which drowns faith and the Christian life. He is speaking about the joy of the unbeliever who sees no need to repent of his sin and believe the Gospel.

II-Why Our Text Speaks As It Does

A-The time is short, vs. 29. This is always the case. Rom. 13:11-14 says: "It's time now for you to wake up from sleep because we are now nearer being rescued than when we first believed. The night is almost over, and the day is dawning. Then let us put away the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us live nobly as in the daytime, not carousing or getting drunk, not sinning sexually or living wild, not quarreling or being jealous."

B-The form of this world is passing away, vs. 31. Jesus says "Heaven and earth shall pass away but My Word shall not pass away." This world, as we know it, will pass away and there will be a new heaven and a new earth in which dwells righteousness. This life is only preparation for this new heaven and new earth. Use the World but do not misuse, abuse or overuse it.