REL110 RS - Module 6 AVP

Slide 1
Title slide

Slide content:
REL 110RS Module 6

Slide 2
Slide title:
Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians

Slide content:
[Picture of Bible opened to the beginning of 1 Corinthians]

Narrator:
There are a couple of important chapters in first Corinthians that we did not include in the discussion of self-sacrifice for the sake of others that you can read in the book Portraits of Jesus, the chapter on Paul.

Slide 3
Slide title:
Celibacy

Slide content:
- Preference for celibacy (7:8-9)
- Reasons for celibacy (7:29-31)

Narrator:
If you open to first Corinthians Chapter 7:8 and 9, you will notice Paul prefers celibacy. He does not give his reasons for preferring celibacy until later in the chapter. Skip ahead to verses 29 and 31: “the time is short.” This means Paul still believes the end history is near. If one believes the end of the world or of history is near, it is no time to be starting a family. Paul further elaborates on his preference for celibacy by talking about undivided attention to the Lord. In verses 32 and following, he speaks of being free from worldly care versus dedication to the Lord. Paul in 1 Corinthians does not express the possibility that devotion to one’s spouse would be service of the Lord.

Slide 4
Slide title:
Celibacy, continued

Slide content:
- Not mandatory
- “Each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him.” (7:17)

Narrator:
It is important to see that Paul does not make celibacy mandatory. He says in v. 7 that despite his preference for celibacy, he says each person has his own gift from God. He reemphasizes the general principle in v. 17: “Each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him.” In other words, one does not need to change lifestyle, married or celibate, to be a disciple. Paul respects the diversity of gifts while maintaining his preferences.
Slide 5
Slide title: Divorce

Slide content:
- Prohibition against divorce (7:10-11)
- Exceptions to this prohibition (7:12-15)

Narrator:
His comment about marriage in v. 9 as a remedy for lust is hardly a complete statement about Christian marriage. Paul is dealing with particular people with particular problems. He is not writing a complete treatise about Christian marriage.

Also in Chapter 7 is Paul’s teaching on divorce. In verses 10 and 11, he says the Lord says no divorce. This is compatible with the Jesus traditions in Mark and Matthew. Mark 10 has Jesus not permitting divorce. Matthew’s Gospel adds an exception on grounds of unchastity or infidelity that is in Chapter 19 verse 9. Open to chapter 7 of 1 Corinthians and see Paul's own exception in verses 12-15. There you see Paul is trying to stay faithful to the prohibition of divorce which is consistent with the Jesus tradition in the Synoptic Gospels, while recognizing in the case of people who have different faiths and different conceptions of marriage. Both Paul and Matthew’s Gospel attempt to maintain the ideal of the indissolubility of marriage yet acknowledge exceptions.

Slide 6
Slide title: Appearance of Men and Women

Slide content:
- Appearance in worship (11:3-15)
- Paul was a man of his times

Narrator:
Let’s turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Read through verses 3-15 of Chapter 11, and think about what is the issue at hand for Paul. Think about what the subheading would be if you could give a subheading to this passage. It appears that Paul is addressing the appearance of men and women at worship. For men, he wants them to have short hair. For women, he wants them to have long hair with their heads veiled. Remember, Paul has a short view of history and does not want to change social customs in the short amount of time left for history. Unfortunately, Paul uses the Hebrew Bible to support his advice about appearance. He says God is the head of Christ and Christ is the head of man and man is the head of woman. This puts woman at the bottom of the ladder. Had Paul simply stuck to giving advice on appearance, he would not have generated controversy in later centuries concerning the role of woman. Paul goes further in Chapter 14 by saying if women want to know anything they should ask their husbands at home. Paul was a man of his times. He tolerated slavery and reflected ancient attitudes toward women. He worked side by side with women but was not free from first century Mediterranean attitudes.

No apart from what we’ve just discussed in 1 Corinthians, I want you to be sure to focus on the theme of self-sacrifice for the sake of others that is treated in the chapter in Portraits of Jesus on Paul. That’s really the heart of that letter.