

## INTRODUCTION

The Lord Jesus our Savior is the husband of one wife, His beloved church. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her when He died on the cross. Not that He found the church a desirable bride. No, we, His church were filthy in our sins, unattractive as a bride. But while we were still sinners, Christ died for us, that we could be cleansed from our sins. The Bible says that when a man preaches the gospel to sinners, and those sinners repent and trust in Christ, that preacher has betrothed them or espoused them to one husband, Christ! The Lord Jesus Christ now works by the Holy Spirit, using His word to sanctify and cleanse His bride, that on the great day when He comes back, He may present us to Himself a perfect bride, a glorious church, holy and without any blemish. Jesus Christ is an utterly blameless husband, being perfectly faithful to one wife, His church.

No man in any church is the equal to Jesus Christ in such amazing love for his bride. Therefore it is Jesus Christ we worship, not any other.

Yet, in the church, during this life, Christ has ordained that mere men care for His churches on His behalf until He comes. And what man can a church set into the office of bishop to watch over the church until the Lord Jesus comes? a man who is blameless in that he is the faithful husband of one wife.

## TEXT

1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

## BODY

- I. A Man Who Is the Faithful Husband of One Wife Can Rightly Be Considered Blameless
  - A. One man faithfully married to one woman until one of them dies
  - B. This is what God instituted for man at the beginning in the Garden of Eden
  - C. Our Lord Jesus firmly upheld this
    1. Matthew 19:4-6 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, (5) And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? (6) Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
  - D. If a man lives like that, he is blameless in that area of life

A man who is the faithful husband of one wife can rightly be considered blameless

## II. A Man Content Not to Have a Wife Can Rightly Be Considered Blameless

- A. The condition of most men is that they long to have the intimacy that can be rightly enjoyed only in marriage
- B. But God gives a special gift to some men: the ability to be content, with their desires under control, without being married
  1. the Lord Jesus must have had this gift during His life here on earth, as He never married, but also never sinned in lusting after a woman
  2. our Lord's apostle Paul said that He had this gift 1 Corinthians 7:7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.
- C. If an unmarried person has that gift from God, it is good for that person to remain unmarried, so he can serve the Lord Jesus with a liberty that a married person does not have; the apostle Paul is the prime example of this
  1. he travelled all over his part of the world, enduring all kinds of deprivation, including lack of food, lack of clothing, and lack of sleep
  2. he exposed himself to all kinds of dangers from persecutors, robbers, and from the sea
  3. he pursued a missions policy that required him to work night and day
    - a) his policy as a missionary was to preach, but to refuse all payment from the people he was preaching to
      - (1) so no one could think that his message was just something he was peddling, like so many other traveling philosophers
      - (2) so the new Christians would see his example of someone working hard with his hands to provide for his own needs
    - b) Paul did accept and appreciate money that was sent from the places he had already preached; but that support came only rarely
    - c) Paul's policy meant that he had to work night and day in order both to earn his living with his hands, and to preach the gospel
  4. this kind of deprivation, of exposure to danger, and of double labor, cannot rightly be expected of someone who is married, especially if he and his wife also have children
  5. but an unmarried man, as Paul showed, may rightly undertake such a way of living, enjoying a liberty in the Lord's service that a normal, married man does not have

D. The Bible does not expressly say that an unmarried man, content to remain unmarried, may be considered blameless, and so be qualified to be a church bishop

1. but since our Lord Jesus Himself was unmarried; and
2. since the apostle Paul was unmarried; then
3. we should consider a similarly unmarried man blameless in the sense meant here
4. I alert you that this is not the universal opinion of the churches all over the world and throughout the centuries;
  - a) because the text here does not mention the state of content singleness, but only mentions the state of faithful marriage, there are many other Christians and churches that insist a man must be married to be made a pastor
  - b) if you are firmly of that opinion, that is nothing radical or strange
  - c) I advise all who might hold that opinion to consider what I have pointed out about the apostle Paul and our Lord Jesus, and consider changing your mind on this
  - d) but I'm sure that point will remain unsettled among the churches until the Lord Jesus comes back

A man who is the faithful husband of one wife can rightly be considered blameless

A man content not to have a wife can rightly be considered blameless

- III. A Man Who Has More Than One Wife Cannot Be Considered Blameless
- A. A man with more than one wife cannot set the example for the church
  - B. A man with more than one wife should be expected to have trouble in his home that will be disruptive to the church;
    - 1. see the many examples of this in the Old Testament history
      - a) Abraham
      - b) Jacob
      - c) Elkanah
      - d) David
      - e) Solomon
    - 2. notice what kinds of trouble
      - a) bitter conflict between two wives
      - b) bitter, sometimes violent, even deadly conflict among children of different mothers
      - c) rebellion of the children against the father as they grow up
  - C. A man with more than one wife should be expected to provide the church's enemies opportunity to bring reproach on the church
  - D. Certainly a man married to more than one wife at the same time could not be considered blameless in the sense required for a man to be a church bishop
    - 1. a polygamist would be the man most clearly not "the husband of one wife"
  - E. By implication, a man whose way of life is to marry and divorce could not be considered blameless in this sense
    - 1. e.g. case I observed
  - F. By implication, a man judged to have some clear immaturity in the area of faithfulness to his wife could not be considered blameless in this sense
    - 1. e.g. my friends mooning over the tennis players
    - 2. men flirtatious
  - G. Possibly, a man who ever has married, divorced, and remarried could be judged not blameless
    - 1. there certainly are many Christians and churches who think this
    - 2. when this church or any other if faced with an actual case like that, I recommend very careful consideration of this question
    - 3. my present thinking on this is that a man's bad record from years ago, especially before he was converted, is not what the apostle would be talking about regarding blamelessness; but I'm not going to be dogmatic about that, because I'm not myself certain what I think about that!
  - H. None of this is said to imply in any way that there is not forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ!

A man who is the faithful husband of one wife can rightly be considered blameless  
A man content not to have a wife can rightly be considered blameless  
A man who has more than one wife cannot rightly be considered blameless

- IV. A Religious Group That Requires Its Officers Not to Be the Husband of One Wife Cannot Be Considered Blameless
- A. We believe that the pope in Rome is antichrist 1689.26.4
  - B. Here is proof: he prohibits what Christ requires
  - C. Let every church and every other organization that claims to serve Jesus Christ take care not to play the part of antichrist
  - D. Let all the faithful beware of anyone who is going the way of the pope in this or any other doctrine or practice

## CONCLUSION

A man who is the faithful husband of one wife can rightly be considered blameless

A man content not to have a wife can rightly be considered blameless

A man who has more than one wife cannot rightly be considered blameless

Let us be strengthened in our commitment to following this instruction from our Lord Jesus about choosing pastors for His church.

Let us all strive to be blameless in this area.

Recall that the standard for a widow being added to the church's list of those to be supported is that she have been faithful to one husband.

Let us work to raise up our children to be blameless in this area.

Let us pray to the Lord Jesus that He will so work in this church, and the others, that His churches will be well supplied with blameless men to serve as bishops and deacons in the future, until the Lord comes back!

Call to Worship:

Thad - Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 1:1-28

Chris Roel - Congregational Prayer

Benediction:

Anna - Prelude (please pick something)

Anna - Trinity 672 "He Lifted Me"

Rita - Trinity 736 "Jehovah Hear Thee"

Rita - Trinity 441 "Thy Works, Not Mine, O Christ"

“the husband of one wife” is the wording in all three places and all our translations

When the Bible recounts a man having more than one wife, it also recounts the trouble that it caused.

Calvin:

-in a bishop he expressly condemns polygamy, which at that time the Jews almost reckoned to be lawful...polygamy was exceedingly prevalent among them; and therefore with great propriety does Paul enjoin that a bishop should be free from this stain...Since, therefore, the deed was done, and could not be undone, he left it untouched, but with this exception, that no bishop should be blemished by such a stain.  
-Paul forbids polygamy in all who hold the office of a bishop, because it is a mark of an unchaste man, and of one who does not observe conjugal fidelity.  
-the words of the apostle are, “Who is,” and not “Who hath been;”

[on Titus 1:6]

they who had involved themselves by marrying more than one wife at a time, even though they had been prepared to testify their repentance by retaining but one wife, had, nevertheless, given a sign of their incontinence, which might have been a brand on their good name. The meaning is the same as if Paul had enjoined them to elect those who had lived chastely in marriage — had been satisfied with having a single wife, and had forbidden those who had manifested the power of lust by marrying many wives.

the apostle does not say, that they shall choose him who has been, but him who is, “the husband of one wife.”

Trapp:

At once. The Egyptian priests were forbidden also polygamy.

Poole:

none who at the same time hath more wives than one, as many of the Jews had; nor was polygamy only common amongst the Jews, but amongst the other Eastern nations; but this was contrary to the institution of marriage. Some interpret this of successive marriage, as if it were a scandalous thing for a minister to marry a second time; but for this they have no pretence from holy writ, or reason, or the practice and custom of nations. Many persons lose their first wives so soon after marriage, that, were not second marriages lawful, all the ends of marriage must be frustrate as to them. The apostle commanding ministers to be the husbands but of one wife, doth not oblige them to marry, if God hath given them the gift of continency

Wesley:

This neither means that a bishop must be married, nor that he may not marry a second wife; which it is just as lawful for him to do as to marry a first, and may in some cases be his bounden duty. But whereas polygamy and divorce on slight occasions were common both among the Jews and heathens, it teaches

us that ministers, of all others, ought to stand clear of those sins.

Gill:

but one wife at a time. . . this rule excludes all such persons from being elders . . . that were polygamists . . . or had divorced their wives, and not for adultery, and had married others

this rule does not make it necessary that he should have a wife; or that he should not marry, or not have married a second wife, after the death of the first; only if he marries or is married, that he should have but one wife at a time; so that this rule excludes all such persons from being elders, or pastors, or overseers of churches, that were "polygamists"; who had more wives than one at a time, or had divorced their wives, and not for adultery, and had married others. Now polygamy and divorces had very much obtained among the Jews; nor could the believing Jews be easily and at once brought off of them. And though they were not lawful nor to be allowed of in any; yet they were especially unbecoming and scandalous in officers of churches.

Clarke:

that he should not be a man who has divorced his wife and married another; nor one that has two wives at a time

Barnes:

-This need not be understood as requiring that a bishop "should be" a married man

-a minister should not have more than one wife at the same time" "[Polygamy] It is known that it was extensively practiced, and was not regarded as unlawful.

Ellicott:

St. Paul, fully conscious of this low and debased moral tone which then pervaded all society in the empire, in these few words condemned all illicit relations between the sexes, and directed that in choosing persons to fill holy offices in the congregations of Christians, those should be selected who had married and remained faithful to the wife of their choice, whose life and practice would thus serve as an example to the flock, and to whose homes men might point as the pattern which Jesus loved, while the heathen world around them would see that the hated and despised Christians not only loved and honoured, but lived that pure home life their own great moralists pressed so earnestly upon them, but in vain. This direction, which requires that those to be selected to fill holy offices should be known for their purity in their family relations, of course does not exclude—should any such offer themselves—those men who, while contracting no marriage ties, still were known to lead upright, moral lives.

Spurgeon:

[on Titus 1:6] For there were many converts there who had two or three wives. Whatever position they might be permitted to occupy in the church, they could not become officers, they must keep in the rear rank.

RWP:

"One at a time, clearly."

Griswold:

ministers may be married; polygamy is forbidden; cults, sects seem to go from one extreme to the other, either forbidding marriage or allowing polygamy or free sex; this is rooted in hatred for women in general;

If a man does not rule his own household, he cannot be expected to take care of the church.

This is a very interesting point of doctrine.

We would more naturally understand the apostle if he wrote:

If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he rule the church?

If a man does not know how to rule the organization he is over, he cannot do the job he should do of taking care of that organization.

It is the parents' responsibility to make the children be in submission to their authority, and to other authorities.

It is the father's responsibility to make the children be in submission to his authority and to other authorities.

Cases:

A child is doing what he should not; or he is not doing what he should, and the child's father does not command him.

-because he is paying insufficient attention to the child

-because he does not understand his duty as a father

- because he does not understand the child's duty
- because the mother or someone else does not want him to

A child is doing what he should not; or he is not doing what he should, and the child's father commands him, but does not make him obey.

A child makes demands of the father, and the father obeys the child.

G4291 *proistemi* before + stand

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (12) And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and **are over [G4291]** you in the Lord, and admonish you; (13) And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

1 Timothy 5:17-18 Let the elders that **rule [G4291]** well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. (18) For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

G1959 *epimeleomai* to take care of

Luke 10:33-35 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, (34) And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and **took care [G1959 epimeleomai]** of him. (35) And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, **Take care [G1959 epimeleomai]** of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

## from Titus Bible study in 2010

"having faithful children"

NOT that he must have children

-We have already established that he might not even be married

-Not being able to have children is not sinful

(I was absent 8-11-2010, the week Ava was born!)

---started here 8-18-2010---

"faithful" used both to mean "trusting" and "trustworthy"

NIV, ESV, others: "believe" or "believing"

KJV, NKJV, HCSB, others: "faithful"

Biblical Argument:

Paul:

1 Timothy 6:2 shows this used to mean a believer (there are other verses where the word is used the same way)

Eph 6:21; Col 1:7; 4:7 "faithful minister"

1 Timothy 3:11 "wives . . . faithful in all things"

2 Timothy 2:2 "faithful men"

Many verses God is described as faithful

Others:

Matthew 25:21 "faithful servant"

Hebrews 2:17 "faithful high priest"

1 Peter 5:12 "faithful brother"

Rev 1:5 "faithful witness"

Practical Argument

"not accused" or "not open to the charge"

NOT that someone might not falsely accuse, but that they are not rightfully charged with these things

"dissipation" "wandering from object to object in pursuit of pleasure; a course of life usually attended with careless and exorbitant expenditure of money, and indulgence in vices, which impair or ruin both health and fortune"

KJV: riot "revel; to run to excess in feasting, drinking or other sensual indulgences."

NIV: wild

ESV: debauchery "unlawful indulgence of lust"

Luke 15:13 the son's lifestyle is described with this word

"insubordination"

KJV: unruly

ESV, NKJV: insubordination

NIV: disobedient

-remember Romans 13:1 "submit" hypotasso

-tasso to arrange

-hypo under

-this is that same word with the "a" prefix

Griswold: referencing Calvin and Gill---not that the children must be believers, but that the father must teach them, govern them; the father is the cause of the child's depravity, so he must take the primary responsibility to teach them at home, bring them to the assembly, and see they have a godly education

LV: We understand that some, when they reach young adulthood, may reject Christianity.

Pollard: Greek can mean "faithful" or "believing"; which one is it?; several of the modern translations translate with some variation on "children who are believers" so we must take that theory seriously; so in effect the blamelessness of the father depends on his children being believers; this may be a paedobaptist distinctive, because they presume their children are believers until proven otherwise; God's children have rebelled!

Pistos:

1. trusty, faithful

- a. of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties

one who kept his plighted faith, worthy of trust

that can be relied on

2. easily persuaded

- a. believing, confiding, trusting

in the NT one who trusts in God's promises

- a. one who is convinced that Jesus has been raised from the dead

- b. one who has become convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and author of salvation

Paul:

1 Timothy 6:2 shows this used to mean a believer (there are other verses where the word is used the same way)

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1 Peter 5:12 "faithful brother"

Rev 1:5 "faithful witness"

"not accused of dissipation or insubordination"

Griswold: they must be under law, not lawless; they must not be like untamed animals; "every animal will kick up at times";

