**The Church at Corinth**

**A Church Facing Inner Problems – #23**

**On Celibacy, Virginity, and Marriage**

**1 Corinthians 7:25-40**

**What is the advantage of celibacy/virginity?**

***1 Corinthians 7:25-35*** *Now concerning virgins, I do not have a command from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy.* ***26*** *I think, therefore, that, in view of the impending crisis, it is good for a person to remain as he is.* ***27*** *Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek release. Are you without a wife? Do not look for one.* ***28*** *But if indeed you do marry, you would not sin; and if a virgin marries, she would not sin. Yet such people will face troubles in earthly life, and I would spare you that.*

 ***29*** *What I mean, brothers, is that time is running out. From now on, let even those who have wives live as though they had none;* ***30*** *Those who mourn as though they did not; those who are happy as though they were not; those who buy as though they had no possessions;* ***31*** *And those who deal with the world, as though they had no use of it. For the shape of this world is passing away.*

***32*** *I want you to be free of concern. The unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs, how he may please the Lord.* ***33*** *But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world, how he may please his wife;* ***34*** *and he is divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord’s affairs, that she may be holy in both body and spirit; but the married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world, how she may please her husband.* ***35*** *I am saying this for your own good, not to lay a restriction on you, but for the sake of good order and devotion to the Lord without distraction.*

**What is the Correct Reading of the Greek Word *Parthenos*?**

1. What is the place of “the unmarried” in this community those who were in classical Greek ***parthenoi***, which means “virgins,” that is those who have not yet been married. In (verse 11) Paul used ***agamos*** to denote a married woman who had been divorced: she was to remain unmarried, i.e., was not to seek another spouse.

 Although ***parthenos*** is understood from verses 28 and 34 to mean a girl of marriageable age, not yet engaged or joined in a marital union, in the old Commentaries of the church fathers this word as it was used in vv 25-35 is applicable also to celibate males. So, Paul’s advice in this part of chapter 7 includes the use of ***parthenos*** in this broader sense, males and females.

2. What Corinthian Christians had inquired about the role of sex in their lives (7:1–2), Paul may well be answering now a related question the place of the “unmarried” in Christian life.

**A Trustworthy Opinion**

Paul has no divine commandment delivered by our Lord and here Paul gives only his counsel about virginity as a “trustworthy” opinion, for three reasons.

1. First, Paul’s view of “the shape of this world” that is the temporary life (7:31), which involves an “impending crisis” (7:26), because “time is running out” (7:29). He may have been thinking of the end of time and the Return of Lord. Thus to the state of marriage and virginity in general: “*It is good for a person to remain as he is*” (7:26). This application he further explains in vv 27-28.

2. Freedom is recommended, “*I want you to be free of concern*” (7:32; cf. 7:28). This reason leads him to advise not to put so much weight on marriage, mourning, happiness, possessions, and even of “this world” (7:30-31). These matters could preoccupy one, and divert the attention for service of the Lord.

3. Paul’s persuasion for celibate life is his concern “for the Lord’s affairs,” how one may “please the Lord” (7:32), i.e., a “devotion to the Lord without distraction” (7:35).

**Paul’s Background**

1. The whole discussion of marriage in this chapter is influenced by Paul’s expectation of the immediate return of the Lord. But Paul is careful to say that virginity is not only “good” (7:8, 26) but also is “a gift from God” (7:7), and also something that he prefers (7:7, 28f, 32, 38).
2. Paul’s attitude stands in contrast to the view of virginity expressed in the OT, especially that of Jephthah’s daughter who mourned her passing from this life as a mere virgin (Judg 11:37-40), or that bewails of the fallen virgin Israel (Amos 5:2; Joel 1:8), and the virgin daughter Judah (Lam 1:15). Although Paul cites no saying of Jesus in favor of virginity, the saying of Jesus recorded in Matthew 19:12, about those who have made themselves “eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven”, was very new to the Jewish Milieu, and it may have begun already to be put into practice among Christians prior to Paul. Recall also what was said by the eunuch in Isaiah 56:3-5, about his being “a dry tree,” but to whom God promises “an everlasting name.” In any case, Paul clearly sees the unmarried man or woman differently from the married, when it is a question of dedication to “*the affairs of the Lord*” (7:32–34): of the latter he says, “*he is divided*” (7:34).
3. What Paul says about marriage should guard against interpreting Paul’s words in this passage as aimed toward giving advice and counsel to a group of ascetic virgins in Corinth, who were exercising some sort of spiritual leadership in the Corinthian church or for the later Monastic Life. Here it is the life of a local community that needed the counsel of its founder.

**Text Study**

**VERSE 7:25 –** *Now concerning virgins,…*

The noun ***parthenos*** in antiquity meant a girl “without experience of a man,, “who has not been given to a man’ (LXX Lev 21:3; cf. LXX Judg 21:12). In the NT it was used 14 times for a chaste girl (except Rev 14:4, where it is figurative: where “parthenoi” the virgins are those who have not defiled themselves with idolatry). It is used for the feminine gender in verses 34, 36-38. Here, however, ***parthenoi*** has to be understood as masculine as well as feminine, because verse 26 extends its connotation to “human being” and verse 32 applies it to masculine. For this reason, the RSV and REB rendered it “*the unmarried*.” The translation “*betrothed*” in ESV is opinionated and wrong; and ***parthenoi***, as “widow(er)s married only once” is inexplicable. The noun occurs elsewhere in the Pauline letters only in 2 Corinthians 11:2 in a figurative sense.

**VERSE 7:25 (cont.) –** *I do not have a command from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy.*

Literally, “pitied enough to be trustworthy.” Paul knows that his ministry is his call from God and also is grace and divine mercy (see 2 Cor 4:1), and so he claims that he can be trusted; (cf. 1 Thess 2:4). Greek ***gnome*** actually means more than the modern English “trust” or “opinion,” for the Greek bears even the nuance of “judgment,” as in 1 Corinthians 7:40 where it means “purpose,” “decision,” “counsel,” and even a “proverb,” as in the rhetorical tradition of ethical teaching among ancient Greeks and Romans, so it is “More than an Opinion.” Paul used it as a way to convince Corinthian Christians of his trustworthy view of the matter. Paul was giving an apostolic judgment that could not be that of the Lord himself.

**VERSE 7:26 –** *I think, therefore, that, in view of the impending crisis, it is good for a person to remain as he is.*

Literally, “I think therefore this is good because of the impending need, that it is good for a human being to be in this way.” The Greek of this verse is bulky. Paul gives a reason for repeating the principle expressed in verses 17, 20, and 24, with “*in view of the impending crisis*.” The Greek ***ananke*** can signify “necessity, pressure” of any kind (Matt 18:7; Rom 13:5), but at times in apocalyptic writings it refers to a coming crisis or distress (e.g., the final days of a siege or persecution as in Luke 21:23; 2 Cor 6:4).

What is the “impending crisis”? Is it classified as the “troubles in earthly life” (as in 7:28) but this meaning hardly suits the present context. Or is it “the shape of this world that is passing away” (7:31)? It does not seem to be the former, because the climax of verse 25-31, expressed in verse 31, implies that “impending crisis” has an eschatological nuance the end of time. This motivation for celibacy finds a parallel in the life of the prophet Jeremiah, who was warned by Yahweh “not to take a wife” in view of the doom coming upon the land in the Babylonian Captivity (Jer 16:2-4).

**Note from Philemon**

“Paul the great witness to the teaching of our Lord said that he has no commandment about celibacy or marriage. This has been on my mind for a while, but when I grew up and my love matured, I was able to see that the Lord gave us freedom to choose what we can take and can commit [to in] our life, because love does not mature in the heart of a slave but matures only in the heart of the free child of God our Father.”

**VERSE 7:27 –** *Are you bound to a wife?*

This implies “not divorced,” but now it is because of the “impending crisis” (***ananke***). Paul recommends that such a union should continue.

**VERSE 7:27 (cont.) –** *Are you without a wife? Do not look for one.*

The NEB understands it to refer to one whose marriage has “been dissolved.” But in view of the preceding question, it must mean, “Have you been free of any bond to a wife?” So Paul’s words would be directed to bachelors as well as widowers, because they are simply echoing his fundamental principle stated above.

**VERSE 7:28 –** *But if you marry, you would not sin;*

Since Paul states only his opinion and gives advice, the person concerned must use his or her freedom and take responsibility and decide.

**VERSE 7:28 (cont.) –** *And if a virgin marries, she would not sin.*

Another example singles out the use of ***parthenos***, “the virgin,” with the feminine article, which relates this instance to the topic begun in verse 25.

**VERSE 7:28 (cont.) –** *Yet such people will face troubles in earthly life,*

Literally “trouble in the flesh,” only an outward circumstance, persecution or the “shape of this world” will cause this “trouble”.

**VERSE 7:28 (cont.) –** *and I would spare you that.*

Literally “and I am sparing you that.” Paul prefers to spare Corinthian Christians the agony of deciding what is better for themselves, their spouses, and their children.

**VERSE 7:29 –** *What I mean, brothers, is that time is running out*.

Literally, “this I declare” (***phemi***, used also 1 Cor 15:50).

Paul is emphasizing that one should not regard the present age, in which the Corinthian Christian community is living, as everlasting. “The day of our Lord Jesus Christ” is not far away (1:8). The Greek word for “time” is not “chromos”, which time measured by passing of hours and days, but “kairos”, “ time used for God’s work, it is significant time,” the same as what Paul calls in (Rom 3:26), “the present time,” i.e., the eschatological now, the time of God’s revelation marked by God’s intervention and guidance through the saving work of Christ. Paul adds a different aspect to this “time,” that it is short.

**VERSE 7:29 (cont.) –** *From now on let even those who have wives live as though they had none*.

Paul does not judge marriage but recognizes that the married can become absorbed in family affairs and problems; he is not recommending that they abandon their marriage or their spouses and children, but rather wants them to learn to live knowing that what they have is not eternal. For the thrust of his argument is: because of the impending crisis it is not good to marry; for if one were to marry, one would be assuming obligations that the crisis will make it impossible to fulfill. This should be compared with the saying of Lucan Jesus (Luke 14:26), about a disciple who is expected to hate father, mother, wife, children, and even his own life. Here, hate is not the sin of hate but hate in its real form as not the opposite of love or the negation of love but the love that does not allow extra relationship and excludes all other relationships.

Paul uses “as though not” five times depending on the tradition inspired by the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 6:19-34), who urged his followers not to store up treasures on earth, but in heaven. To such a tradition, Paul puts this teaching into practice. Paul calls them to consider a lifestyle that is not subjected to the style and the values of the world but to live a life devoted to the Lord.

**VERSE 7:30 –** *Those who mourn as though they did not; those who are happy as though they were not; those who buy as though they had no possessions.*

These examples of ordinary and daily life, where people are warned about the looming crisis: the mourners, those who rejoice, and those who buy. In each case, these must know that nothing they have or do will last. In other words, Christians should live in this world that has been subjected to Christ.

1. The world suffers changes and alterations and is subjected to constant decay. All that we call life is not everlasting but our life in Christ is everlasting.

2. Our systems and values are not eternal and can satisfy only our temporary needs.

3. Christ stands in total opposition to the power of the world. Jesus defeated the world by not using its methods or values in redeeming us. These last words require a pause.

**VERSE 7:31 (end) –** *For the shape of this world is passing away*.

The present tense of “passing away” in the Greek is a form used in LXX (Ps 144:4), “*The days of a human being are like a passing shadow*.” So our hope is not in the transient but is rooted in the eternal.

**VERSE 7:32 –** *I want you to be free of concern*.

This statement could refer to what Paul has already written in (verse 28), but it more directly refers to what is coming in the following verses, because “free of concern,” is Paul’s pastoral care for those who are living in the world and here he is providing guidance to the community.

**VERSE 7:32 (cont.) –** *The unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs, how he may please the Lord*.

Paul is concerned about an unmarried man in the context of an exhortation in favor of virginity. What he thus asserts is intended as a recommendation to consider the suitability of “pleasing the Lord” in a celibate way of life. “*To please the Lord*” is Paul’s intention found elsewhere in Pauline writings, when the Apostle seeks to encourage human behavior (1 Thess 4:1; 2:4, 15; Rom 8:8; 2 Cor 5:9).

What are the Lord’s affairs? This could be devotion to prayer, presence in church assemblies, charitable works, even preaching. But are such commitments sufficient motivation for an unmarried life? Perhaps what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 about his own dedication gives a clue about what is meant here by “the Lord’s affairs.” It is being and working “full time” as a Christian. Or the affairs of the Lord are to “the spread of the Gospel on foreign soil or even simply the founding of Churches.” It is a life fully dedicated to one single purpose.

**VERSE 7:33-34 –** *But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world, how he may please his wife (****34)*** *and he is divided.*
Literally “and he has been divided.” As the text stands, Paul is saying that the attention of a married man is divided as he seeks to please both his wife and the Lord.

**VERSE 7:34 (cont.) –** *An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord’s affairs, that she may be holy in both body and spirit*.

Literally, “and the unmarried woman and the virgin.” Paul treats the virgin equally with the unmarried man. The second part of the sentence adds a new consideration, “that she may be holy in both body and spirit,” i.e., that her dedication to the Lord is total in a sense of wholeness. The unmarried woman’s entire person; such a woman is holy not only in her inward being, but also in her physical “virginal” body that has no engagement with any other than Christ himself.

**VERSE 7:34 (cont.) –** *But the married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world, how she may please her husband.*

This is the exact counterpart of the married man in (verse 33).

**VERSE 7:35 –** *I am saying this for your own good*.

Literally “for what is advantageous to you (plural).” Paul’s whole discussion about virginity has been building up to the good, which attracts us all. “The human soul seeks what is good and on that foundation we can preach the Good News”

**Dialogue with Abba Philemon**

**George:** NT scholars say that Paul was expecting an immediate return of our Lord, which did not take place and it is now about 2,000 years and the Lord has not come in his glory. How do you understand this?

**Philemon:** To my very simple mind, those who have received the gift of prophecy, they see the future as if it is about to happen and when they speak about it, they have no sense of the length of time. It is hard to see what will happen and not to be given the exact time. Time was never part of what was revealed in any prophecy. When Isaiah spoke of the birth of Emmanuel, he was not told about the time but was told about the sign of the birth.

**George:** Why God did not tell the prophets about the time when prophecies were given?

**Philemon:** This is a hard question. But my feeble answer is that giving the exact time will control the freedom of choice of those who hear it and those who are looking for the fulfillment. Prophecy is about expectation and expectation is what gives any prophecy its flavor. Prophecies are gifts that are given to enhance freedom, for if we knew in advance the future we will certainly loose out freedom of choice. If I tell you that you will die next year on such a day, you will not enjoy life and live waiting for this day and thus never mature or discover what life is all about.

**Can a Virgin Marry?**

**1 Corinthians 7:36-38**

***36*** *If someone thinks that he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, and if she (or he) is at a critical stage, and so it has to be, let him do as he wishes. He is com- mitting no sin; let them get married.* ***37*** *But the one who stands firm in his mind, who is under no compulsion and has control of his own will, and has made up his mind to keep his virgin (unmarried) will be doing well.*

***38*** *So then both the one who marries his virgin does well, and the one who does not marry her will do better.*

**What was the problem?**

Although these three verses are related to the previous passage (verses 25-35), they are more concerned with marriage than with virginity. In verse 34, Paul spoke of “an unmarried woman or virgin,” but now he takes up two special instances of marriage, one the marriage of a virgin in a special situation (verses 36–38), and the other that of a widow (verses 39-40). In both cases it is a question of a possible change in marital status, and Paul’s advice is diverse.

For the first case, Paul is concerned about ***parthenos***, and three main interpretations of this passage have been proposed. Each one of them has its own problem.

**Virgin Daughter**

First, the difficulty begins with, “someone,” who is clearly a man because of the masculine “his virgin,” but what is meant by ***parthenos***? A long-standing meaning has been “virgin daughter,” as the word is used at times in some Greek writers (Diodorus Siculus, Bibl. Hist. 16.55.3; 20.84.3; Josephus, Ant. 1.11) so also the Latin the Vulgate: ***super virgine sua***. This would then refer to a father who has a “virgin daughter”, who in ancient society had the authority as the head of family in the Roman society to exercise his duty of giving his daughter away in marriage to a suitor. Verse 36 says of this virgin “past the bloom of youth,” so this interpretation is often supported by reference to the book of Wisdom of Sirach (42:9), where a father worries about his daughter, whether she be married, or unmarried past her prime, or unfaithful in marriage. At first sight, this meaning of this seems to be called for by the verb “give in marriage” (verse 38). However, ***parthenos***, meaning “daughter,” encounters serious difficulty with the verb, “let them get married” (v. 36). Who are these that called “let them” plural? It is absurd to read it, “Let the father and his daughter marry.” Further objections exist.

Why would Paul use “his virgin” to refer to a father and his daughter, when he could have used the specific words, father and daughter? Nothing in the preceding ten verses prepares for such a relationship.

The crucial verses, then, are translated:

*“If someone thinks that he is behaving improperly toward his virgin (daughter/ ward/slave), if she is past the bloom of youth, and so it has to be, let him do as he wishes. He is committing no sin; let them get married. So then both the one who gives his virgin in marriage does right, and the one who does not give her in marriage will do better.”*

This interpretation has been proposed by many commentators in the Ancient Church: John Chrysostom (On Virginity 78), Theodoret of Cyrus (Commentary of First Corinthians 7.36), so also Epiphanius, Ambrose, Augustine and Luther , modern J. B. Lightfoot, Morris, Robertson-Plummer, Sickenberger, Spicq; also the KJV, JB.

**Betrothed Virgin**

Second, ***parthenos*** is understood rather of a “betrothed virgin,” one to whom this virgin has been engaged, or his fiancée. This is explained sometimes by recalling the difference in Jewish marriage between betrothal and actual taking in marriage and imagining some reason to postpone the latter. The betrothal was a formal engagement to marry, which made the woman committed to the prospective husband so much so that any intercourse with another man would have made her an adulteress. A similar engagement was known also in the Roman world. Such an understanding of ***parthenos*** makes the verb, “let them marry” (v. 36), easier to understand, but it creates a problem in making Paul’s comment on such a man’s decision to marry his fiancée seem strange, “He is committing no sin” (v. 36), because Paul has already addressed this issue (verse 9). The crucial verses, then, are translated:

*“If someone thinks that he is behaving improperly toward his (betrothed) virgin, if he is at his sexual peak, and so it has to be, let him do as he wishes. He is committing no sin; let them get married. So then both the one who marries his betrothed does right, and the one who does not marry her will do better.”*

This interpretation was first proposed in 1874 by W. C. van Manen and is used (with varying nuances) by Barrett, Bruce, Chadwick, Collins, Deming, Fee, Garland, Horsley, Hurley, Thiselton, and others; see also RSV, NAB, NRSV, ESV, REB, NIV, NJB.

**A Christian Virgin**

Third, a different situation has been envisaged: that of a Christian “virgin” committed to preserving her virginity who has taken up ascetic cohabitation with an unmarried man who would respect her resolve. This has been called a “spiritual marriage,” in which intercourse was not practiced by the ascetic partners. This was unknown in Judaism, and this would be the earliest attestation of it among Christian men and women. It may be hinted at also in the Shepherd of Hermas, similitudes 9.11.1–9. ([Christian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian) [literary work](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literature) of the 1st or 2nd century, considered a valuable book by many Christians, and considered [canonical scripture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_canon) by some of the early [Church fathers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_fathers) such as [Irenaeus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irenaeus). The Shepherd had great authority in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. It was bound with the [New Testament](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament) in the [Codex Sinaiticus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Sinaiticus), and it was listed between the [Acts of the Apostles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acts_of_the_Apostles). The work comprises five visions, twelve mandates, and ten parables. It relies on allegory and pays special attention to the Church, calling the faithful to repent of the sins that have harmed it. The book was originally written in [Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome), in the [Greek language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language), but a Latin translation was made very shortly afterwards. Only the Latin version has been preserved in full (of the Greek, the last fifth or so is missing). If this possible then the improper behavior would in this case be the man’s inability to control his sexual desire to consummate the marriage union. Paul’s counsel advises such individuals about further conduct in such a union. The crucial verses, then, are translated:

*“If someone thinks that he is behaving improperly toward his (spiritual) virgin, if he is at his sexual peak, and so it has to be, let him do as he wishes. He is committing no sin; let them get married … So then both the one who marries his virgin does right, and the one who does not marry her will do better”.*

This interpretation is sometimes has been accepted comparing the verse with the third-century practice of ***virgines subintroductae*** (inducted virgins) in some forms of monastic life. Lietzmann, Moffatt, Murphy, O’Connor and others seems to be satisfied with it. This interpretation, rests on the use of the verb, “let them get married.” But such interpretation lacks historical support because evidence that this was actually was known in Roman Corinth, and such ascetic virgins were part of the Christian community. How would the idea of a spiritual marriage be reconciled with what Paul has written about the physical relationship of Christian marriage in verse 1-5 of this chapter which says it is good for a man not to touch a woman?

Paul is a pastor; he recommends marriage, when “it has to be” (verse 36)

**Text Study**

**VERSE 36 –** *If someone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his virgin, …*

The impropriety is not specified, but would have to be judged from the context, which could be social, legal, or moral. It will vary here depending on the sense given to “his virgin,” as explained above.

**VERSE 36 (cont.) –** *He is committing no sin* …

Or possibly, “she is committing no sin.” Paul repeats what he has already said in verse 28, that marriage in itself, and even in such a situation, is not sinful.

**VERSE 36 (cont.) –** *Let them get married*.

The use of the third-person plural *them* has created difficulty for the traditional interpretation: father or guardian of a virgin daughter (see comment above). The Greek text does not supply even a hint on what was called the spiritual-marriage. The Greek can mean “let them consummate the marriage.”

**VERSE 37 –** *But the one who stands firm in his mind, who is under no compulsion and has control of his own will* …”

Paul insists on freedom of decision, which better suits all relationships as the fruit of love of a man to a woman rather than a Law that compels. We must say that compulsion is totally alien to Christian life.

**VERSE 38 –** *So then both the one who marries his virgin does well, and the one who does not marry her will do better*.

Some commentators maintain that Paul is speaking about a father (or guardian) and his daughter (Robertson, Plummer and Lietzmann).

Paul may be expressing his preference for the preservation of celibacy among Corinthian Christians, or may be advising engaged couples.

**Can a Widow Marry?**

**1 Corinthians 7:39-40**

***39*** *A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whomever she wishes, but only in the Lord.* ***40*** *In my judgment, she is more blessed if she remains as she is – and I think that I too have God’s Spirit.*

**Study Text**

**Paul now turns to the position of the Christian widow**

**VERSE 39 –** *A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives …*

In Romans 7:2, Paul speaks of “a married woman,” but here discusses if her husband dies (literally “is put to sleep,” see, LXX Gen 47:30; Deut 31:16; 1 Kgs 11:43, and it is used elsewhere by Paul 11:30; 15:6, 18, 20, 51; 1 Thess 4:14–15). Paul asserts the freedom of the widow which is in agreement with the Jewish tradition (Deut 21:14). But Paul adds, “she is free” only in the Lord. This distinction is new, in that Paul prefers that she marry a Christian, which is a counsel against entering into a mixed marriage. Paul is undoubtedly extending a Jewish notion, expressed in such OT regulations (as Deut 7:3; Ezra 9:2). The law is clear, “from his father’s house and from his family.” Now this is extended to the Christians of Corinth.

Paul returns to the preference expressed in verse 8, that is, “opinion, or way of thinking,” and recalls what he said in verse 25. Please note that in 2 Corinthians 8:10, Paul speaks similarly of his “opinion”; and also the advice about young widows in 1 Tim 5:14. The widow will be “blessed”, the same word as in the beatitudes (cf. Rom 14:22); hence “more blessed,” in the sight of God, and not merely in her own eyes or those of other human beings.

**VERSE 40 –** *And I think that I too have God’s Spirit*.

I.e., what it takes to make Paul able to speak in such away, “as a minister of the new covenant and preacher of God’s gospel is that he has received the Holy Spirit (see 2 Cor 3:5-6). Paul supports his teaching by referring to the work of the Spirit and to silence those who in the Corinthian community were claiming apparently the Spirit’s inspiration for their own views (see 1 Cor 2:4). Old Greek Mss *[manuscripts]* such as the P15 and P 33 give us another reading, “*Christ’s Spirit*.” This is an insignificant variation and supports early faith that Christ the Anointed of God supplies the Holy Spirit as God Incarnate.

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