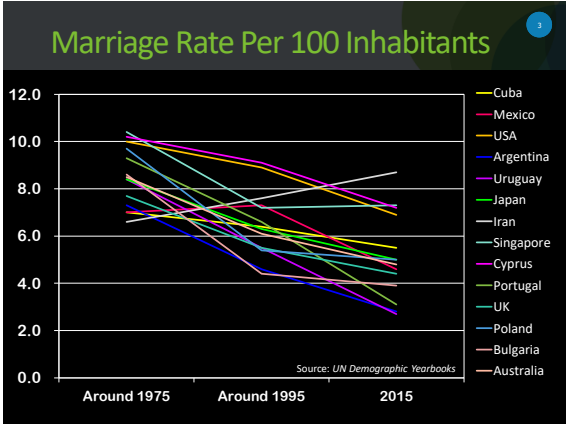


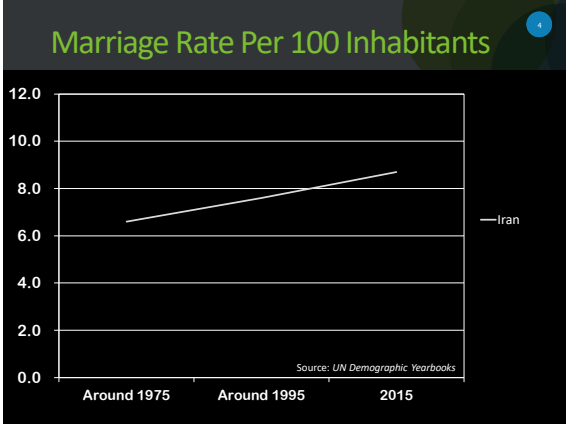
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4

Poll Question:
 In this season of COVID-19, who do you think struggles more with isolation?


- A. Married Persons
- B. Singles
- C. About the same



5

A Question:
 In this season of COVID-19, who do you think struggles more with isolation?

- Marrieds may "isolate" but with their spouses and children
- Family life may have opportunity to strengthen when people stay at home
- Many singles live alone or semi-alone
- Isolation precludes the physical touch of others outside the home




6

The Reality

Facts → Messaging → Feelings

What are the messages?

- You are single because of poor choices
- God’s intent is for us to be married with children
- You are less blessed if you don’t have a spouse
- You are less blessed if you don’t have children
- You made your bed, so now you must lie in it!
- Don’t blame it on the church or your mission or anyone else!



7

Begin by Getting Back to the Facts!


- Of the major Judeo-Christian traditions only Christianity affirms singleness as something good!
- Whereas singleness is encouraged in the New Testament it is often seen as an unblessed state in the Old Testament
- The reason for this can be understood through two biblical concepts:
 - God is blessing the world through reproducing his image in humankind
 - God relates to humankind by way of covenants



8

Blessing through Offspring

- The Creation Mandate
“Be fruitful and multiply . . .” (Gen 1:27 ESV)
- The First Messianic Prophecy
“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring, he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” (Gen 3:15 ESV)
- The Abrahamic Covenant
“I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore.” (Gen 22:17 ESV)
- The Sinai Covenant




9

10

The Sinai Covenant

Because you listen to these rules and keep and do them, the LORD your God will . . . love you, bless you, and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock, . . .

There shall not be male or female barren among you or among your livestock. (Deut. 7:12-14 ESV)




10

11

The Implications of the Sinai Covenant

- Every individual was accountable
 - Obedience → Blessing → Children
 - No Obedience → No Blessing → No Children
- Everybody in Ancient Israel Married
 - Because marriage and children were of marks of God's covenantal blessing resulting from their obedience
 - To not have children meant your name would be "blotted out" – a fate that was a kind of second death.
- But Israel Failed
 - Israel shows that even if you put sinful human beings in ideal circumstances and give them every advantage—in their own strength they will fail!




11

12

Isaiah's Suffering Servant


By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Isa 53:8-10 (ESV)



12

The Aftermath of the Suffering Servant 13

<p>The Barren Woman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isa 54:1-5 • A Female image • Restoration of lost relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The Lord of Hosts is her husband ◦ She bears spiritual children on his behalf • The curse is reversed 	<p>The Eunuch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isa 56:2-5 • A Male image • Restoration of lost significance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ A permanent place ◦ A name better than sons and daughters • The curse is reversed
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13

The Stories of Five Prophets 14


- Isaiah (8:3,18) – **married** a prophetess and has 2 sons who are “signs and portents” from the Lord.
- Jeremiah (16:1-4) – commanded not to marry and remains **single** as a sign of God’s judgment on the people
- Ezekiel (24:15-24) – Becomes a **widower**; God takes his wife (“the delight of his eyes”) but he is commanded not to mourn as a prophetic sign of the loss of temple.
- Daniel (1:3-20) – Most likely a **eunuch** brought in to serve the king under the chief of eunuchs. But he shows himself in primary service to the Lord rather than the king.
- Hosea (1:2, 2:2) – Commanded by God to marry an unfaithful whore whom he **divorces** and receives back as a prophetic picture of the relationship between the Lord and Israel.



14

The New Covenant 15

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, ⁶ according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has **blessed us in the Beloved**. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace. . . .¹¹In him we have obtained an inheritance, . . .¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, . . . were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:3-14 ESV)




15

16

Paul's Proclamation:

We proclaim Him
admonishing every person
and teaching every person
with all wisdom that
we may present every person
complete in Christ

COLOSSIANS 1:28 (BND)




16

17

Conclusions and Takeaways:

- Regardless of the messaging we hear from others or tell ourselves, the **fact** is: Scripture affirms singles and the single state
- In the New Covenant we are all fully blessed and complete in Christ: married, single, single again
- Scripture embodies inclusiveness in the ministry of the prophets—the prophet's marital status testifies to his message
- Both Singleness and Marriage testify to Gospel:
 - Husbands & Wives
 - The Barren Woman & The Eunuch




17

18

Questions to Consider:

1. In a season of isolation, should singles feel more isolated than marrieds?
2. What messages are you hearing, feeling, believing?
3. How does your soul respond to this truth that you are complete in Christ?



18

19

Shoulder to Shoulder Exists to

empower, equip, and encourage single mission workers, their teams and their agencies as they serve in cross-cultural ministry.

Solid biblical theology leads to sound practical theology in living out the reality of who we are in Christ, as we serve on teams in mission together. This involves effectively leveraging all individuals, be they single or married, with or without children, as fully complete in Christ, and uniquely equipped members of our mission teams. It also entails understanding the unique challenges singles and marrieds each face working together as teams in the body of Christ.



19



20


21

Our Purpose for Gathering Today:

1. The invitation came from Missio Nexus.
2. God has created us for community, so I believe we can learn from each other. I am eager to hear your questions, your answers and your thoughts.

"Sometimes the questions we ask are more important than the answers we think we know."
-- Ruth Haley Barton

You're worth it!




21

22

Mark 8:36 paraphrased....

“What does it profit a man or woman if they gained the entire world but failed to celebrate **their uniqueness in Christ?** Is there anyone else just like you? anywhere? Who else could fulfill **your purpose?**”




22

23

Self-care and Soul Care

- **Self-care** and **Soul Care** are stewardship issues.
- The soul is not an “**it**”; it’s the real you!
- What **is** more important than the real you?
- How is the real you doing today?



23

24

One Another Ministries has served 7,300 missionaries and international Christian workers serving in 150 countries

The top 3 presenting problems:

- **Isolation:** Lack of connection
- **Spiritual Drought:** Lack of vitality
- **Fatigue:** Lack of balance

* Christian Workers Risk Assessment




24

25

Cultivating Soul Care

- So how do we cultivate **Self Care** or **"Soul Care"** in a season of isolation and social distancing?
- What thoughts and feelings does the word **isolation** bring to mind?
- The difference between **isolation** and **solitude**
 - **Isolation** is a situation or circumstance; it draws us away from people.
 - **Solitude** is a choice and a spiritual discipline; it draws us closer to God.
- "In quietness and trust shall be your strength."
--Isaiah 30:15b (NRSV)




25

26

How Many of You . . .

- thought or expected this period would be one of real **rest**?
"Rest is more than a reward for faithfulness; but rather a pre-requisite for fruitfulness."
-- Dr. Alicia Britt Chole
- thought you'd do those deep cleaning jobs at home?
- had a stack of books you wanted to read? Or music you wanted to listen to?

How many of you had a **"to do list"** that kept growing rather than decreasing? *Tip: make a "finished list"



26

27

The Truth:

We have been faced with a crisis that disrupted our lives, our schedules, our travel and our ministries.

Our expectations weren't met because we have never experienced this before.

How many found these disruptions to be costly? How many found them to be a relief?



27

28

Everything Has Changed

- Technology has never been so appreciated.
- Some are thrilled to be able to be connected via media and internet, others have been impacted differently.
- April 24, 2020 *Wall Street Journal* talks about "Zoom Fatigue." It's about how people are overloaded with relationships gone online.
- Medical research and personnel, advancements and supplies have never been needed so urgently
- **Everything has changed** -- yet many things have helped us gain new skills and routines.



28

29

Our New Reality....

Things we *cannot* change:

- Pandemic
- Government regulations

Things we *can* change:

- We can change our perspective
- We can change our expectations
- We can choose to shelter under God
- We can choose to take care of ourselves



29


30

Six Daily Questions

Six daily questions to ask yourself during the Covid-19 virus pandemic:

1. What am I grateful for today?
2. Who am I checking in on or connecting with today?
3. What expectations of normal am I letting go of today?
4. How am I getting outside today?
5. How am I moving my body today?
6. What beauty am I either creating, cultivating, or inviting in today?

From Wellspring Counseling Center in Miami, FL



30


31

Take Time for You

Solomon admonished us through these words:

"So I recommend having **fun**, because there is **nothing better** for people in this world than to eat, drink, and enjoy life. That way they will experience some **happiness** along with all the **hard work** God gives them under the sun."

Ecclesiastes 8:15 (NLT)




31

32

Things to Consider:

- As best as you can, stay **"Unencumbered"**; get rid of anything that weighs you down, hinders you, or takes you away from joy.
- Serving as a missionary means coming alongside others with needs.
Who is coming alongside you now?
[Refer to the *SUPPORT CHECK LIST]

"Go in peace and pay attention to each other."
You're worth it!




32

33

Questions to Consider:

1. What aspects have you found most challenging in this season of isolation?
2. How have you been creative in meeting the physical, emotional, spiritual needs of those around you?
3. How has your relationship with the Lord changed during this time? Are there favorite Scriptures that have helped?



33



34



35



36

www.S2S.Global

"...That all may serve the Lord shoulder to shoulder".
Zephaniah 3:9



 Shoulder to Shoulder

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