

Becoming One - The Wedding Day (SOS 3:6-11)

The Joy Of the Lord Is Your Strength!

Hardly anything beats a "radiant face"

1. We are in week three of a series we're calling **Becoming One**.
2. For the first two weeks, we've looked at two individuals.
 - a. A man.
 - b. A woman.
3. Two people learning how to become the kind of people who can love another person well.
4. But today something changes.
5. Up until this point, there have been two separate lives.
6. His life - Her life.
7. His family - Her family.
8. His plans- Her plans.
9. Two separate **me's** standing beside one another.
10. Today those two people walk into a wedding, and when they walk out, God calls them something different: **One**.
11. That's marriage.
12. I've been giving you a simple phrase throughout this series:
13. **Marriage is me becoming we.**
14. That sounds simple... *Living it is not.*
15. I mean this in the best way possible - but nothing revealed how selfish I am like becoming one with someone else.
 - a. MY tee time, MY money, MY schedule, the place I set MY dirty clothes...
16. And God says: *"The two shall become one flesh."*
17. Marriage is the lifelong process of God taking two individual people and teaching them how to build one shared life.
18. *But there is a moment when that process officially starts!*
19. **The wedding day.**
20. AND TODAY - WE SEE TWO PEOPLE GET MARRIED!
21. Now - let me put in front of us - the problem I see..
22. Our culture has gotten very good at weddings while becoming increasingly confused about marriage.
23. We know venues, flowers, photography, music, food... We know how to plan the DAY - however a wedding is in primarily a party... *A wedding is a COVENANT..*
- 24.
25. Here's the best definition of the covenant of Marriage:

26. Covenant says: **I am committed to you, before God, in all the ways that you are going to change.**
27. Contract says: I am committed to you, until something changes, then this contract is void.
- 28.
29. Now, it's so important to have this language of covenant because - here's what happens at EVERY SINGLE WEDDING - I PROMISE...
 - a. Everyone goes home, nobody knows what to do with the flowers and leftovers...
 - b. And eventually it's Tuesday.
30. But listen closely: Tuesday is where marriage *happens*.
31. Bills, work, laundry, family, conflict, fatigue, or you get a call from your wife that there are bats in your attic..
32. And what carries you through Tuesday isn't the party you had on Saturday.
33. *It's the covenant you made.*
34. So here's our question:
35. **When two people stand at an altar and say "I do," what is actually happening in the eyes of God?**
 1. Verse 6 says:
 2. *"What is that coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the fragrant powders of a merchant?"*
 3. And then in verse 11:
 4. *"Go out, O daughters of Zion, and look upon King Solomon."*
 5. There are two things in this passage that show up in almost every wedding ceremony.
 6. In fact, I don't know that I've ever officiated a wedding without saying these words:
 7. **"We have gathered here in the presence of God and these witnesses."**
 8. And I want you to understand - that's not filler.
 9. That's not just something the preacher says because it sounds formal.
 10. Those words tell us something about the seriousness of what is happening.
 11. In this picture from Song of Solomon, you see two things surrounding the wedding:
 - a. **The presence of God...**
 - b. **... and the presence of witnesses.**
 12. The columns of smoke remind us of the biblical imagery of God's presence.
 13. And then she calls the daughters of Zion - her community - to come and see.
 14. She's saying - Come and witness what is taking place.
 15. And here's why that matters:
 16. When you stood at your wedding and took those vows, you were not simply making promises to each other.
 17. *You were making those promises **before God and in the presence of witnesses.***
 18. That is what gives covenant its *weight*.
 19. Marriage is not merely two people saying, "We really love each other, and we hope this works."
 20. It is two people standing before God and declaring:
 21. **"I give myself to you."**

22. Genesis 2 says: *"A man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."*
23. Marriage is two people becoming one- positionally, covenantally - before God.
24. And that means a covenant should be entered into sober-mindedly.
25. Why?
26. Because a marriage covenant is a **lifelong commitment made before God and others.**
27. I once heard about a Methodist minister who had a brilliant approach to weddings.
28. About ten minutes before the ceremony, he would take the groom aside and physically show him the exit.
29. He'd say, "You're free to go. If you want to leave, leave now. I'll tell everybody. We'll still have the reception. Nobody is going to chase you down."
30. "But if you walk out there and take those vows, this is the last exit I'm going to show you."
31. Why?
32. Because **you do not drift into a covenant—you declare it.**
33. And it is in those vows that you publicly declare the covenant you are entering before God.
34. Sometimes married couples need to remember what they declared.
35. Because there will be seasons when you don't feel particularly close.
36. There will be days when the emotions are strong—and days when they aren't.
37. But your marriage is not held together by how married you happen to feel on a particular Tuesday.
- 38. Covenant says, "When the feelings are weak, the promise remains."**
39. Sometimes love feels effortless.
40. And sometimes love looks like obedience.
41. It looks like staying at the table.
42. Having the hard conversation.
43. Going to counseling.
44. Making the apology.
45. Extending forgiveness.
46. Choosing faithfulness.
47. Choosing not to quit.
48. Because the vows were never simply a beautiful part of your wedding ceremony.
- 49. The vows were the declaration of your covenant.**
50. You said them to one another.
51. You said them before witnesses.
52. And most importantly, **you said them before God.**

Verses 7 and 8 say:

Behold, it is the litter^[a] of Solomon! Around it are sixty mighty men, some of the mighty men of Israel, all of them wearing swords and expert in war, each with his sword at his thigh, against terror by night.

1. In context, this is a royal procession. And it's exactly like the procession you see
2. And here's how I know this wedding was probably in Texas - it's open carry...
3. They have their swords on their hip!!
4. But notice the seriousness of the scene.
5. There is preparation, there is protection, there is intentionality.

6. Nobody stumbled into this day.
7. *And one of the biggest mistakes people make is confusing being in love with being ready for marriage.*
8. Those aren't always the same thing.
9. You can have incredible chemistry and terrible communication.
10. You can be deeply attracted to someone and disagree about money, children, church, family, sex, and priorities.
11. You can love someone and still have no idea how to handle conflict.
12. That's why preparation (PEOPLE BEING A PART OF THIS) matters....
13. *Pre Marital Counseling is a non negotiable...*
14. CHURCH IN AUSTIN - I LOVE THIS...
15. Before marriage, you need to talk about real things.
 - a. How do we handle money?
 - b. How do we fight?
 - c. What did our families teach us about marriage?
 - d. What are our expectations about children?
16. Faith, Work, Extended family... What wounds are we carrying? What patterns need to change?
17. I've noticed that most recurring marriage fights aren't actually new fights.
18. They're the same few fights wearing different clothes.
19. One couple argues about vacations, spending, and cars.
20. Underneath it is **security**.
21. Another argues about work, hobbies, and phones.
22. Underneath it is: **"Do I matter to you?"**
23. Another argues about parents and holidays.
24. Underneath it is: **"Who gets priority?"**
25. Healthy couples learn to stop fighting only about the surface issue and ask: **"What is this really about for us?"**
26. Every marriage eventually receives something it didn't put on the registry.
27. Job loss.
28. Illness.
29. Infertility.
30. Grief.
31. A struggling child.
32. Life comes.
33. And when it does, you discover what you've built.
34. **Feelings may start a relationship; a covenant carries a marriage.**

Verses 9 and 10 describe an ride that Solomon is in:

King Solomon made himself a carriage^[b] from the wood of Lebanon. ¹⁰ He made its posts of silver, its back of gold, its seat of purple; its interior was inlaid with love by the daughters of Jerusalem.

1. Guys, this is the equivalent of Solomon pulling up in a F-205 - with the Tremor Package...
2. Nothing about it says: "What's the CHEAPEST model I can get?"
3. Listen closely: Solomon is giving us a picture of the NATURE of covenantal love...

4. A love that gives extravagantly.

5. My favorite definition of Love: it is allegiance, action, affection... and it goes in that order...

6. Allegiance -> Action -> Affection (feelings)

7. Today most believe: Affection (feeling) leads to -> Action, which brings -> Allegiance...

8. Real love costs time, energy, money, convenience, pride, preference, sometimes your plans.

9. You cannot build a healthy marriage while your primary question is: **"What's in this for me?"**

10. Paul says:

11. *"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."*

12. Christ loved sacrificially.

13. He gave Himself.

14. Men, biblical leadership is not primarily:

15. "I get the final word."

16. It's: **"I go first in sacrifice."**

17. Jesus' leadership took Him to a cross.

18. Sometimes leadership looks like:

a. "I'm sorry."

b. "I was wrong."

c. "You've carried too much."

d. "My career opportunity is not automatically best for our family."

19. Or one of the hardest questions a husband can ask:

20. "What is it like to be married to me right now?"

21. or even admitting... "I know it could be difficult being married to me"...

22. And then listen.

23. Sacrificial love applies to both spouses.

24. Marriage breaks down quickly when *we start keeping score.*

a. "I apologized last time."

b. "I initiated the last date."

c. "I did this, so now you owe me."

25. I read someone say this week: *Scorekeeping turns marriage into accounting, and somehow both spouses always think they're underpaid.*

26. But if have BECOME one, *your burden is our burden.*

27. Your exhaustion affects us.

28. Your joy benefits us.

29. Your pain matters to us.

30. That's **me becoming we.**

31. And often the sacrifices that build the strongest marriages are ordinary.

32. Showing up.

33. Coming home.

34. Keeping your word.

35. Turning down something good because your family needs you.

36. Forgiving.

37. Serving when nobody notices.

38. Real love spends itself.

Verse 11:

Go out, O daughters of Zion, and look upon King Solomon, with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, on the day of the gladness of his heart.

1. The day of the gladness of his heart.
2. God invented that.
3. He invented joy. Attraction. Romance. Marriage itself.
4. When Jesus performs His very first miraculous sign, where is He? At a wedding.
5. God isn't anti-joy — **sin is anti-joy.**
6. Sin promises you gladness and only provides regret.
7. God gives boundaries because He knows exactly where joy actually flourishes.
8. **So marriage is *meant* to include delight.**
9. But here's what I've watched happen. Couples become excellent business partners.
 - a. The bills get paid. The kids get transported. The house runs. And somewhere along the way, they stopped enjoying each other.
10. The marriage becomes a corporation. He's logistics. She's operations. The kids are management. Everybody's competent. ***Nobody's having fun.***
11. So let me ask you: When did you last laugh together?
 - a. Do something just because you both enjoy it?
 - b. Spend time together without solving a problem?
12. Because one of the easiest things to lose in a marriage isn't love. ***It's delight.***
13. Now here's where I could tell you to try harder.
 - a. Schedule the date.
 - b. Take the walk.
 - c. Get the coffee.
 - d. And that's not wrong — delight does require intentionality.
14. But we can't white knuckle our way into delight...
15. ***You remember it.***
16. First, you remember how much God loves you - in spite of the fact that we rebel all the time.
17. Second, you go back and remember the beginning of when you first made your commitment with each other...
18. There is a power in remembering
19. **Now, here's the reality... Every wedding and marriage preach a real life sermon.**
20. Verse 11 gives us a king.
21. It talks about a crown, a wedding, and a bride...
22. But Solomon isn't Scripture's greatest King - He points to another King.
23. Ephesians 5 says marriage ultimately points to: ***Christ and the church.***
24. That means marriage is designed to preach.
25. A husband who sacrificially loves his wife tells the truth about Jesus.
26. A marriage where repentance and forgiveness happen tells the truth about grace.
27. A couple that remains faithful through suffering tells the world: **Covenant means something.**
28. **That doesn't mean your marriage has to look impressive.**

29. There are no perfect marriages.
30. The question isn't: **"Do we have a perfect marriage?"**
31. The question is: **"Does grace live here?"**
32. Can we repent, forgive, tell the truth, ask for help, repent and change....
33. Some of the strongest marriages I've known have scars.
34. They've been through hard years of loss, disappointment, failure...
35. But Jesus met them there.
36. *That's part of what makes covenant beautiful.*
37. That's why Meredith's wedding ring is so beautiful. (I've lost mine so I don't get to be a part of this illustration...)
38. When Meredith is wearing that ring when we're 80 years old - it would be able to tell some stories...
 - a. It has held babies.
 - b. Sat in hospital rooms.
 - c. Signed mortgages.
 - d. Wiped tears.
 - e. Survived arguments.
 - f. Held my aging hand.
39. The wedding day makes you one positionally.
40. And life seems to find a way to teach you what that actually means...

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS?

1. Let me give married couples one assignment this week.
2. Find your wedding vows.
3. Sit down together and read them again.
4. But don't hear them the way you heard them on your wedding day.
5. Hear them with everything you know now.
6. **For better.** You've seen some.
7. **For worse.** You've seen that too.
8. **In sickness and in health.**
 - a. Those words sound different after a hospital room.
9. Then ask one another: **"What does keeping this promise look like in the season we're in right now?"**
 - a. Maybe it means shutting the laptop down earlier or charging your phone at night in the kitchen rather than by the bed...
 - b. Getting counseling.
 - c. Making a budget together.
 - d. Creating a boundary with extended family.
 - e. Forgiving.
 - f. Having fun again.
10. Or simply saying:
11. *"I haven't been loving you well. I'm sorry."*
12. The wedding day declared something positionally: **We are one.**

13. Every ordinary day asks: **Will we live like it?**
14. Will we make decisions like we're one? Handle money like we're one, protect our covenant like we're one, follow Jesus like we're one?
15. Nobody stays married for fifty years because they had one great day fifty years ago.
16. They stay married because after that great day came thousands of ordinary days when they kept choosing covenant.
 - a. Some days love looked like passion.
 - b. Some days it looked like patience.
17. Some days: **"I forgive you."**
18. Some days: **"Forgive me."**
19. And some days it simply looked like: **"I'm still here."**
20. That's what the wedding day begins.
21. It's not the finish line. It's the starting line.
22. Two totally different people walk in.
23. And before God and witnesses they say: "I give myself to you."
24. And God says: **One.**
25. Then, by His grace, we spend the rest of our lives learning how to live out what He declared.
- 26. Me becoming we.**
27. And when we fail, we return to the Groom who never fails His bride.
28. Our faithfulness may be weak. His isn't.
29. Our love may be inconsistent. His isn't.
30. The ultimate hope for your marriage isn't that you're a great husband or a great wife.
31. **It's that you have a great Savior.**
32. And the more we become like Him, the more our marriages begin to tell His story.
33. So church:
- 34. You do not drift into covenant - you declare it.**
- 35. Feelings may start a marriage; a fortified covenant carries it.**
- 36. Real love spends itself.**
- 37. God is the author of gladness - and it is supposed to be reflective in our marriages.**
- 38. Every earthly wedding is pointing toward a heavenly one.**
39. And until that wedding comes, may God keep teaching us how: **Me becomes we.**

THE GOSPEL: Jesus Christ is the ultimate hope for every person. Though we are all sinful and our sin separates us from God, God made a way for us to be in right relationship with him again. That way is Jesus. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. God promises that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ will be saved. This is the good news of the Bible.

1. PRAYER TEAM!! This a great time to pray with someone!

COMMUNION: 1 Corinthians 11

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said, ^[b] "This is my body, which is ^[c] for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

"May the Lord bless you and protect you;
may the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
may the Lord look with favor on you ^[b]