

SERIES: THE TRUTH ABOUT HEAVEN
SERMON: THE HEAVENLY WEDDING FEAST
8-13-23

OPENER:

Revelation 19:7-8 Let us be glad and rejoice, and let us give honor to him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and His bride has prepared herself. ⁸ She has been given the finest of pure white linen to wear.” For the fine linen represents the good deeds of God’s holy people.

Many weddings at the church. The excitement. The preparation. The engagements and the photos. The beautiful weddings and the wedding receptions celebrating the bride and groom’s union!

.....I picture the wedding reception in heaven, celebrating the union of Christ and us - His church, when we finally get to see him face to face ...lavish, gorgeous decor, tables spread out with indescribable food.

STORY:

The craziest wedding proposal....

Imagine spending a quiet day at home, and your boyfriend on a motorcycle pulls up and a police man has a gun to his head after the duo engaged in a high-speed police chase down your street.

You're hysterical, of course. Then, your boyfriend asks you to reach into his pocket to pull out his license to show the policeman. Instead, you find a diamond engagement ring.

This scenario happened in real life and is one of the 10 craziest proposals you can find on [YouTube](#).

1. THE GREAT MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Ephesians 5:31-32 (NIV) For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

Paul says, “*This is a great mystery.*” And since he has been talking about the relationship between a man and a woman, we at first think that Paul is talking about the mystery of marriage. But he is talking about the mystery of the relationship that Christ has with the church.

THERE ARE A COUPLE OF MYSTERIES ABOUT MARRIAGE:

> First of all, there is a mystery about the mathematics involved. Did you notice that $1 + 1 = 1$? God takes one man and one woman, and joins them together so that they are no longer two, but one. It’s a mystery how that happens. Whatever Paul has been saying about marriage, he now says also applies to Christ and the church!

> Second, There is a crazy mystery about the connection between a husband and wife that goes far beyond just a physical connection. You can see this in marriages that last a long time. Have you ever noticed that in some marriages, after forty or fifty years of marriage, the husband and wife almost look like twins?

This indicates something far beyond just a physical connection. There is more here than just two people living together or cohabiting. There is something deeper. Something more wonderful. Something indescribable. There is a sacred connection between a husband and a wife.

Have you ever known a faithful man or woman who has been a Christian for forty or fifty years? Just as a husband and wife married that long start to look alike and act alike, so also a faithful Christian often has a joy and a sparkle in their eyes that makes you think of Christ.

2. MARRIAGE WAS DESIGNED BY GOD FROM THE BEGINNING TO BE A PICTURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JESUS AND THE CHURCH

When God created Eve, He was planning to use her as a symbol of the church. I don't think it is accidental even that God formed her from a rib in Adam's side. This could possibly be tied to how Christ's side was pierced, and water and blood flowed out of it.

We could also point to the fact that Eve was the one who was deceived.....

1 Timothy 2:14 And it was not Adam who was deceived by Satan. The woman was deceived, and sin was the result.

Have you ever thought about this? If Adam was not deceived, then did He sin intentionally? He absolutely knew that what He was doing was sinful. And, since He was not deceived, He knew it would not make him like God. He knew that death would be the result. So why did he do it? Why did he eat the fruit?

Some scholars suggest that when Adam saw what Eve had done, he was confronted with a choice. He could have said, "Woman, are you in a lot of trouble. Stay away from me. You are about to receive divine judgement!" Or he could have done exactly what He did. Fully knowing that what he was doing was wrong, and fully knowing what the consequences would be, he chose to share in her destiny! Some scholars say that out of love for her, he decided not to let her go into God's judgement alone.

Now, on one hand, I don't really like this because it makes Adam's sin seem somewhat noble. It makes us think, "Oh, what a great guy that Adam was when he rebelled against God." But on the other hand, I like it, because that is exactly what Jesus did for us.....

1 John 3:16 We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us.....

**JESUS FULLY KNEW THE CONSEQUENCES OF COMING TO EARTH AS A MAN
AND DYING ON THE CROSS IN
OUR PLACE FOR OUR SIN.
BUT HE LOVES US SO MUCH THAT LIKE ADAM, HE DIDN'T WAS US TO FACE
GOD'S WRATH ALONE.**

But where Adam failed, Jesus Christ succeeded. We deserved death, but He died for us. This is why Jesus is called the last Adam.....

1 Corinthians 15:45 The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven.

Jesus corrected what went wrong with the first Adam. And all we have to do to receive this blessing is believe in Jesus for eternal life. And all of this is a picture of marriage. Adam and Eve's relationship before the fall and after the fall is a picture of Christ's relationship with the church

A successful marriage built on these God-given principles is a picture, and a reminder and a testimony of Christ's relationship to the church. Which explains why the marriage relationship is under attack by our adversary the Devil. Just as Adam and Eve had the perfect marriage before they sinned, and Satan came in and ruined all of that, Satan also wants to ruin you from having the perfect marriage. He knows it is a picture of Christ's relationship to the church, and he wants to mar that picture as much as possible. He marred it in Genesis 3 with the first couple, and now he wants to mar it in your life as well.

**GOD GAVE MARRIAGE AS A PICTURE TO THE WORLD OF
WHAT HE WANTED TO DO FOR THE WHOLE WORLD
THROUGH CHRIST.**

But when marriages are destroyed, so also is the picture. Keeping and maintaining your marriage should be one of your highest priorities. Through a Godly marriage, unsaved men and women can learn about Christ's love for them.

God's love language to us.....

Hosea 2:16 When that day comes," says the Lord, "you will call me 'my husband' instead of 'my master.

.....Vs. 19-20 I will make you my wife forever, showing you righteousness and justice, unfailing love and compassion.

²⁰ I will be faithful to you and make you mine, and you will finally know me as the Lord.

Isaiah 62:5 Your children will commit themselves to you, O Jerusalem, just as a young man commits himself to his bride. Then God will rejoice over you as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride.

***Matthew 9:14-15 One day the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked him, "Why don't your disciples fast like we do and the Pharisees do?"
15 Jesus replied, "Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.***

**CHRIST'S CHURCH IS HIS BRIDE!
MALE OR FEMALE - OLD OR YOUNG.
WE ARE THE ONES THAT THE LORD HAS CHOSEN.
WE ARE THE ONES THAT HE LOVES AND HAS LAID HIS LIFE DOWN FOR US.**

JEWISH WEDDING CULTURE:

For us to understand this relationship that we have with Christ. We have to understand Jewish wedding culture. Because the references of us being his bride in the Bible will come to life if we have an understanding Jewish wedding culture.

Jewish weddings are in 3 parts:

- 1) THE ARRANGEMENT**
- 2) THE ENGAGEMENT**
- 3) THE WEDDING CELEBRATION**

1) THE ARRANGEMENT:

In Jewish culture a servant, or friends of the groom or even a matchmaker would approach a father of a potential bride to make an arrangement for a marriage of their son to the other family's daughter.

Examples of this in the Bible:

Abraham sent Eliazar, his servant, to find Rebekah for Issac.
John the Baptist made preparations for Jesus.

Today, the Holy Spirit is our matchmaker. The Holy Spirit draws us and goes ahead of the Lord, so that we are ready for His proposal to us.....

John 6:44 ⁴⁴ For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up.

2) THE ENGAGEMENT

In Jewish culture, once the families made an arrangement, the groom left for the bride's house to make the engagement proposal and he took with him the following things:

- a payment for the bride (usually year's wages) Christ gave His life for us. No payment greater.

- a marriage contract (This was a contract that declared the groom's promises to the girl - The Bible - the covenant contract that declares God's promises to us)
- a skin of wine (The groom offered a cup of wine to his bride but If the bride refused to drink the cup it meant she refused the proposal. This represents the blood of Christ. We have the choice to refuse Christ.

John 6:53-54 So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. ⁵⁴ But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day.

Side Note: The bride would drink the whole cup all the way to the bottom. (To the dregs). This represented the sweetness and the bitterness; or for better or for worse the commitment that she was making to Him.

OUR SALVATION IS A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE TO JESUS - A PROPOSAL OF BECOMING ONE WITH HIM.

- gifts

Since the groom was going to be away for an unprecedented amount of time, the groom brought gifts to remind His bride of His promise to come and get her. The Holy Spirit is the Lord's gift to us that marks us as His own.

2 Corinthians 1:22 and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us.

Most of the time the young couple did not see each other until the wedding. Once the bride accepted the grooms proposal, he went back to his father's house and he would say these words.....

"I am going to prepare a place for you and when my Father says it is ready I will come back and take you there with me."

In Jewish culture, the groom would return to build an addition to His father's house for he and His bride to live. His father would oversee the building of the addition. Only when His father said that it was ready would he return to get her.

While the groom was away the bride was making preparations of her own. She was preparing her wedding dress with the help of the other women in the community.....

Vs. ⁸ She has been given the finest of pure white linen to wear." For the fine linen represents the good deeds of God's holy people.

3)THE WEDDING CELEBRATION

Much later, when the father of the groom said everything was ready, the bridegroom, accompanied by his friends, went to the house of the bride. Most often he came in the night, he and his companions would create a torchlight parade through the streets. The bride would know that this was going to take place, but she did not know when, and so she would be ready at a moments notice, to hear his call to come out to join him, and join the parade and end up at the bridegroom's home.

This custom is the basis of the parable of the ten virgins

Matthew 25:1-13 (NLT) Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³ The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps, ⁴ but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil. ⁵ When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶ "At midnight they were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!'

⁷ "All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. ⁸ Then the five foolish ones asked the others, 'Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.'

⁹ "But the others replied, 'We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.'

¹⁰ "But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked.

¹¹ Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!'

¹² "But he called back, 'Believe me, I don't know you!'

¹³ "So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.

This symbolizes the rapture of the Church, when Christ comes to claim His bride and take her to the Father's house. Because the bride didn't know the day or the hour of his return she had to be ready at all times.

1 Thessalonians 5: 1-6 Now concerning how and when all this will happen, dear brothers and sisters, we don't really need to write you. ² For you know quite well that the day of the Lord's return will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. ³ When people are saying, "Everything is peaceful and secure," then disaster will fall on them as suddenly as a pregnant woman's labor pains begin. And there will be no escape.

⁴ But you aren't in the dark about these things, dear brothers and sisters, and you won't be surprised when the day of the Lord comes like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of the light and of the day; we don't belong to darkness and night.

⁶ So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded.