

Session #20 Engaging in Ministry as a Friend of the Bridegroom

“The friend of the Bridegroom...rejoices greatly because of the Bridegroom’s voice.” (Jn. 3:29)

I. THE NT PARADIGM OF MINISTRY

- A. The Holy Spirit is establishing messengers with a “friends of the Bridegroom ministry paradigm” thus, those who see their ministry as being focused on preparing people to understand and partner with Jesus as the Bridegroom King and Judge in context to many events associated with His return.
- B. The word “paradigm” speaks of a perspective or a point of view. We are to see the kingdom through the eyes of a wholehearted Bride whose love is loyal to Jesus. Foundational to this preparation is the beauty of Jesus and the first commandment being established in first place in their lives.
- C. Forerunners seek to live in the beauty realm of God including His delight and desire. That will be the strength of the end time church Isa. 33:6, 17 . The forerunner ministry will operate in the stunning beauty of Jesus who fascinates His people to motivate them to holiness.

II. SEVEN EXAMPLES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT OF THE BRIDEGROOM MESSAGE

- A. **Example#1** John the Baptist was the first person in the New Testament to reveal Jesus as the Bridegroom God (Jn. 3:29). John was the first to testified of himself as a “friend of the bridegroom” (Jn. 3:25-36), he did this at Aenon (4 miles north of Jerusalem) in the Spring of AD 27.

29He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom...rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. (Jn. 3:29)

- B. **Example#2** Jesus spoke of friends of the Bridegroom in the spring of AD 28. (This was about one year after John the Baptist proclaimed that he was a friend of the Bridegroom). This was the first time that Jesus revealed Himself as the Bridegroom and the apostles as “friends of the Bridegroom” (Mt. 9:15). The word “friends” is plural whereas, in John the Baptist’s case, “friend” is singular. Tradition suggests that most of the apostles were younger than 25 years old.

14The disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do... Your disciples do not fast?”

15Jesus said..., “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away...then they will fast.” (Mt. 9:14-15)

- 1. He fulfills prophecies of a Bridegroom Messiah (Isa. 54:5; 62:5; Jer. 3:14; 31:32; Hos. 2:16).
- 2. **Taken away:** Jesus’ first mention of His death was when revealing Himself as Bridegroom.
- C. **Example#3** Jesus’ final public message described His kingdom as a marriage (Mt. 22:1-14).

2“The kingdom...is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.

4Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See...all things are ready.

Come to the wedding.”⁵***But they made light of it and went their ways...***⁷***But when the king heard about it, he was furious...***⁸***Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready...***⁹***Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ (Mt. 22:2-9)***

- D. ***Example#4*** Jesus’ final private message to the apostles exhorted them to have oil as fuel for their ministry lamps in context to the coming of the Bridegroom (Mt. 25:1-9). Jesus urged His disciples not to neglect to cultivate a heart connection with Him as the Bridegroom (Mt. 25:1-13). He highlighted the need of His people to “get oil” or to stay connected to His heart as the Bridegroom (Mt. 25:3-4). Note the prophetic voice crying out at midnight a “Bridegroom message” (25:6).

¹“Then the kingdom... shall be likened to ten virgins who...went out to meet the bridegroom.
²Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish....⁵But while the bridegroom was delayed...
⁶“At midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’...
⁸And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’
⁹But the wise answered, saying, ‘No...but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’
¹⁰And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. (Mt. 25:1-10)

- E. ***Example# 5*** Paul’s paradigm of ministry was to bring people into a betrothed relationship with one husband, Jesus Christ and to live as chaste virgin (2 Cor. 11:2). In other words, Paul also viewed himself as a “friend of the bridegroom.” His goal was to present them to Jesus on the wedding day. The consummation of the marriage begins in the age to come when we see Him face to face.

²For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. (2 Cor. 11:2)

- F. Paul proclaimed that part of the mystery is a Bride “joined to Jesus” forever. He interpreted Moses’ words in Genesis 2:24 as God speaking about Jesus and the Church (Eph. 5:31-32).

³¹A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. ³²This is a great mystery...I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Eph. 5:31-32)

- G. ***Example# 6*** Jesus’ last message to the Church recorded in Scripture continues over two chapters of messages given to seven different churches. He starts with a call to wholehearted love (Rev. 2:4), saying, “You left your first love,” and it ends with the same message (Rev. 3:20-21): to “be with Him”—dining and ruling. This is the heart cry of a Bridegroom His people

⁴Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. (Rev. 2:4)

²⁰If anyone...opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

²¹To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne... (Rev. 3:20-21)

- H. ***Example# 7*** John recorded the joy of the saints at the marriage supper (Rev. 19:7-9) and the angel’s final revelation to him of New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9). The New Jerusalem is called the bride because it is the city was designed for the bride. The beauty, the fragrance, the songs, the food, the water and more—it all energizes them with love bridal love.

⁷Let us be glad... the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready...

⁹He said...“Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!” (Rev. 19:7-9)

⁹...one of the seven angels...saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”
(Rev. 21:9)

¹⁷And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” (Rev. 22:17)