

## **04 | God's Dream for Man (Part 2)**

### THE LOVE OF GOD Series

Welcome to our fourth session on the Love of God. We're going to continue and go into God's Dream for Man, part two. If you remember from our last session, we saw this amazing pursuit of God all through the Old Testament with mankind. That He was looking for people who would walk with Him. He was looking for people who would allow Him to be their God and let them be His people. He talked to the children of Israel about how he wanted them to be his special treasure, and that He wanted to dwell with them, that He wanted to be right there in their midst. The creator of the universe wanted to dwell with them. And then we concluded and saw Jesus, kind of poke His head out in the Old Testament prophetically and say, "I'm coming, I'm coming, rejoice, get excited." And that's what we're going to look at today in God's Dream for man part two, is how Jesus came, and that He wasn't just coming as a presence in a tent in the wilderness, but He took on the tent of a body. He came and took on a human body, just like you and me, so that He could come and be one with us. And that's the language that we're going to see in the New Testament today, that yes, He came to redeem us, He came to rescue us, but He came to become one with us. And the Bible talks about how He came to even marry us.

So, let's begin by looking at Matthew, chapter 22. It says in verse one and two, "And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son."" So again, it's saying this is what God's kingdom is like, and I want you to hear this today. It's like a king, who's the Father, right? Father God, our King, who arranges a marriage for his son, for Jesus. Now, who is he arranging this marriage to? To us. We are the bride of Christ. And we see this even more in Ephesians chapter five. Let's take a look there. Ephesians 5:25. It says, "Husbands love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her." I want you to see here, it doesn't say that Jesus put up with the church, that He had to do this. No, it says that Jesus loved the church. And again, the church is you and me, and the love that He had for us, it compelled Him to give Himself for us. There's nothing better that He could have given than giving Himself. It continues in verse 26, and it says, "That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of the water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish." And again, I want you to see this in verse 27, I love it, that He said, "He wanted to present us to Himself," not to the angels, not even to heaven or the Father. He said, "No, I came, and I gave Myself to the church. I came, and I

sanctified, and I cleansed her because I want her for me." He wants us for Himself because He loves us, because we are His special treasure. We are His delight. It continues in verse 28 and it says, "So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes it and cherishes it just as the Lord does the church." I want you to hear this today, Jesus cherishes you. That word cherish is not one that we use often today, but it means that you have something that is so precious to you that you want to take extremely good care of it. You want to keep it close to you, you want to make sure that no harm comes to it, and Jesus cherishes us. Isn't it amazing? He says, "I cherish you. You are My treasure. You're My delight. I want to protect you. I want to keep you from harm. I want to build you up. I want to nourish you." Because He loves us.

Now, it continues in verse 30 and it says, "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. Now, this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Now we've heard this scripture often, whether it be at weddings or in counseling about marriage, but I want you to notice something. He says, "You know, a man leaves his father and mother to be joined to his wife." So, in essence, he leaves the primary relationship that he had in his home and he leaves that so

that he can now have a new primary relationship as he is joined to his wife. And then Paul says, "This is a great mystery." But he's not talking about a man and a woman coming together in covenant and becoming one. He says, "No, this is a great mystery." And he says, "But I speak concerning Christ and the church." He says, "This is a great mystery, that Jesus would leave the Father. He'd come out of heaven. He'd come down to earth so that He could now be joined to us." And Paul's saying, "This is a mystery. This is so amazing. This is the Master Craftsman over all of creation, everything being made through Him and for Him. And He's coming down, to be joined to us?" See, in this case, in this circumstance, the bride, she doesn't match up to the groom, in no way. Here we are, we are in sin, we are separated from God, and Jesus said, "No, but I'm going to come down. I'm going to redeem you. I'm going to rescue you. I'm going to cleanse you. I'm going to nourish you. And then I want to become one with you." And Paul's saying, "What a mystery. What Incredible love this is that is motivating Jesus to become one with us." And Scripture says that He's the head we're the body. That's one. You don't see someone walking down the street and you're like, "Oh, there's Bob's head, there's Bob's body." No, it's just Bob, right? It's one person. And that's the image that we're given of us with Jesus, that we become one with Him.

Now, in Matthew 13:44, again Jesus is giving a parable and He says this. He says,

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found and hid, and for the joy over, it goes and sells all that he has and buys that field." Now some people see this parable and they think, "Well, maybe that's us, you know, giving up everything to follow Jesus. But really what we're talking about here is that there was a field, and that field is the world, and there was a person, who was Jesus, who saw a treasure hidden in that field, or, a daily delight, hidden in that field. And for the joy over it, for the love that He had over that treasure, He goes, and He gives up everything so that He can buy that field." And that's exactly what Jesus has done for you and for me. Now, in second Corinthians 11, Paul being inspired by the Holy Spirit, he continues this imagery of marriage, and he says this in verse two. He says, "For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy, for I have betrothed you to one husband that I might present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Now, Paul was the one who brought the gospel message to the church in Corinth, and he uses this imager, "I have betrothed you to Jesus." And this betrothal, we have to understand, it's not like our engagements which are not very binding. No, betrothal back then, it was legally binding. If you remember, when Joseph found out that Mary was with Child, it says that he was looking to divorce her. But they were just betrothed, they weren't married. But it was that legally binding that he was going to have to go through procedures of divorce. And Paul is saying, "You are in this binding relationship

with Jesus. And you are headed towards marriage with Him." Now, we might ask the question, "Come on, when did this happen?" Right? Like when did Jesus propose? When did we come into this betrothal with Him? And I want to take you to Philippians chapter two so you can see it with me. In Philippians chapter two, verse eight, it says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God. But He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond servant and coming in the likeness of men and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." So, it says here in verse seven that Jesus "made himself of no reputation." It's the Greek word "Kenosis," and it means that He emptied Himself. He emptied Himself of where He was in heaven with the Father. He came down, He took on this limited, created form. The Creator taking on the form of the created. And He came down and it says that "He humbled Himself even to the point of death." Now, for most proposals, there's something that's common that happens, and that is that the man gets down on one knee, and then he asks the question, "Will you marry me?" You'll notice that he doesn't demand it, right? This isn't something that he can force on the woman, he asks. And why does he get down on one knee? Well, he does it as a sign of humility. Most of the time, men are a little bit taller than women. So, for him, he's coming down. He's lowering himself so that he can give her

value, give her honor and say, "Will you take me? Will you take the life that I can give you?" And he's asking her that question. Now in similar form, Jesus, when He came, He humbled Himself. He didn't get down on one knee, but I want you to notice what Scripture says. "He humbled Himself to the point of death, even death on the cross." So, although He didn't get down on one knee, He humbled Himself and He took on this posture, and He says, "Will you take Me? Will you take the life that I can give you?" He doesn't demand it. He doesn't force it on anyone, but He simply asks the question. And when someone preached that to you, when you found out about Jesus giving His life for you on the cross, it was as if you were being proposed to. And when you said, "Yes, I want Him as my Lord and Savior," that's when you came into this betrothal, this committed relationship with Him. So, the question is, well then how do we live? What do we do? What's happening now as we wait for this marriage to take place?

Now, in one of our previous sessions, I took you to John, chapter 14 and I want to go back there. In John Chapter 14, verse one, again, Jesus is speaking to His disciples the night before He's going to be crucified. And He says, "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many mansions, and if it were not so, I would have told you I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself. That where I am,

there you may be also." See, it was Jewish tradition at that time that after a man and woman became betrothed, the man would go and build a home. He would prepare a place for them to be able to come together as one and to start their family. And here Jesus is using the imagery of the day and He's saying, "I'm going away, but I'm not going away to abandon you. I'm going away to prepare a place for you, because I want to bring you to myself." You know, when I got married, I didn't want to live next door to my husband. I wanted to live with him. And that's what Jesus is saying, "I want you with Me for all of eternity. And I'm going away, and I am preparing a place for you." And, you know, there's preparation for us to do as well, and we're going to see that as we actually look at the marriage that happens in heaven that we're given a picture of in the Book of Revelation. In Revelation 19 verses six and eight, it says this, "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of a mighty thundering saying, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory for the marriage of the lamb has come."" I want you to notice that all of heaven is rejoicing, right? This is the culmination. This is what God has been waiting for the marriage of the lamb has come. Where we, His bride, are becoming one with Him. And it says. "And His wife," which is us, "has made herself ready. And to her, it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright. For the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."



And I want you to notice that it says that "And she (the bride) has made herself ready." You know, on most wedding days, it takes a while for the bride to make herself ready, because it is this pivotal moment when all of a sudden, she comes down the aisle to meet her groom. And she is usually dressed in her best and looking the best she ever has. And it says that we, as the bride of Christ, we are now living in a season preparing for our marriage to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And it says, this is how we prepare, listen, in verse eight it says that she was "arrayed in fine linen, but this fine linen," it says, "is the righteous acts of the saints." We actually bring to our marriage the life that we have lived for Jesus. We are arrayed. We get to clothe ourself in those good works that He prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them, it says in Ephesians 2:10. And when we live the life that He has called us to, when we surrender our own will and desires, and we live out His plan and purposes, it says, "we're preparing ourselves." We're preparing ourselves for that day that we're going to look down the aisle and we're going to meet His eyes and He's going to smile, and His heart is going to be filled with so much love, and we're going to come into this eternal oneness with Him. Now, what is it going to look like after that? What does God want to do for all of eternity after we've become one with Christ?

Listen to what it says in Ephesians chapter two. It says, "But God, who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which

He loves us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. And He raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." So, it says that God has raised us up, right? He's raised this up, we're beginning to become one with Christ. And then it says, "in the ages to come," well an age is not talking about a few years, we're talking about like thousands of years. And it says in the ages to come, you and I, we are going to be with Christ. We are going to be in heaven with Him. And I want you to see what it says that He wants to do for the ages to come. Again, in verse seven it says, "That He might show the exceeding riches." Listen to this language. "That He might show the exceeding riches of His grace." This is His undeserved love and favor for us, and His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. Do you know that for all of eternity, Jesus wants to show you how much He loves you? I remember as a kid I would get a little bit scared about eternity because I would think that it was just everyone worshiping God, and I didn't understand why we were all worshiping God, I just saw that for ages and ages we were going to be worshiping. For me that sounded really boring, I just didn't get it. But when my eyes got opened up to the love of God, and that we are going to be worshiping because we're not going to be able to help ourselves in light of His glory and His grace and His

love. That for all of eternity, we're going to be basking in the love of God, in the riches of His grace and His kindness towards us. You need to hear His heart today. That's what He wants to do for all of eternity, but that's what He wants you to experience right now as well. He wants you to know the riches of His grace towards you. He wants you to know His kindness towards you. He's not left you. He's not forsaken you. He is for you because He loves you. And the enemy tried so hard to keep us from the love of God. And yet He wants to birth in us a conviction just like Paul had, that says, "I'm convinced that nothing can separate me from this amazing love that is in Christ Jesus, my Lord."

Let me pray for you. Father, we thank You. We thank You for the love that You have in Your heart towards us. Lord, we thank You that right now You want to show us these riches of love and grace and kindness that You have. Father, I pray that all the baggage of how we've seen You in the past as being harsh, or mean, or judgmental, or distant, that it would all break off in Jesus' name. And that we would, for some of us for the very first time, receive the love, the pure love of God, that is so generous, that is so good, that's so tender. May we receive that right now. In Jesus' name, amen.