

I am honored again to be here this morning. It is an incredible privilege to open up God's word. This is God's direct revelation to us. Again this morning we will be talking about events in the future that we have full confidence will actually happen. Let that sink in for a second there is no guess work, no chance of them not happening, these events are assured to us. Please open again to Revelation 19. But first lets pray and ask God to teach us this morning.

Rev 19:5-9 ESV

- (5) And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great."
- (6) Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns."
- (7) Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;
- (8) it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.
- (9) And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

Last week we started in on this passage. We looked at the Marriage of the Lamb. To understand the significance of this language we had to look at how a Jewish Wedding took place. We looked at Jacob and Rachel. When Jacob wanted to pursue Rachel he made a marriage covenant (contract) with her father Laban. Then Jacob had to fulfill the contract, a price had to be paid. In this case it was 7 years of work. We also saw that normally the groom would leave during this time to go and prepare a place for his bride. During this time the couple was betrothed. Lastly, once the contract was fulfilled, and the groom had returned the couple was united.

With understanding of a Jewish wedding we saw how God the Father described Himself as being married to Israel. The Father fulfilled each step with Israel. Then Israel was unfaithful, and was described as an adulterous wife.

This serves as a background for this passage to fully understand what it means for us the Church to be apart of the marriage of the Lamb.

To clarify the Lamb is Jesus Christ and His bride is the Church.

The father married Israel. Christ is currently betrothed to the Church.

This is where the picture of Christ marrying the Church is incredible to look at. Just as the Father fulfilled every step of a Jewish wedding with Israel Christ is in the process of fulfilling every step with us the Church.

John the Baptist understood that Christ was the groom and was going through these steps. Listen to John 3:25-30 ESV

John 3:25-30 ESV

- (25) Now a discussion arose between some of John's disciples and a Jew over purification.
- (26) And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him."
- (27) John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.
- (28) You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.'
- (29) The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.
- (30) He must increase, but I must decrease."

Notice how John identifies himself in verse 29

- (29) The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.

John calls himself the best man. He is the friend of the bridegroom. He is making sure that his followers know that He is not the groom, he is not Christ. But also notice he is not a part of the bride. That is us the Church.

So let's walk through the steps again. The first step would be a marriage covenant would be made and then the groom would have to pay the price set for the bride. In this case the covenant was the blood of Christ. The price he had to pay for the Church was his own blood.

Acts 20:28 NIV

(28) Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, **which he bought with his own blood.**

Christ had purchase the Church by dying on the cross. It was his blood that bought us. Paul used the same language. He told the Corinthians

1Cor 6:19-20 ESV

- (19) Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,
- (20) for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

As believers in the Church we have been bought. We are not our own we are a part of the bride of Christ that has been paid for.

The next step is that the groom would go and prepare a place for His bride. This is what Jacob didn't get to do for Rachel. But we see Christ do this for us in John 14.

Christ had just finished telling the disciples that He was about to go somewhere and the couldn't follow Him. This worried the disciples so He explained more starting in John 14:1

John 14:1-3 ESV

- (1) "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.
- (2) In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?
- (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Christ would purchase the Church on the cross. Then He left to heaven to prepare a place for us. This is what He is promising here. You may think but this was a promise to the Apostles. Something I had never thought about until recently is that the Apostles are a part of the Church. I am so used to thinking about them as being so Jewish and apart of Israel. But they were baptized into the body of Christ and are a part of the bride.

Christ paid the price for His bride the Church. He is preparing a place for His Bride and He will come back to get His bride.

1Th 4:16-18 ESV

- (16) For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.
- (17) Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.
- (18) Therefore encourage one another with these words.

This should thrill us. Christ is coming to get His bride. He is coming to get us! Notice the command that Paul gives. This should encourage us and should be our encouragement to others.

Now after the groom went and got his bride the bride would have to be prepared and put on her wedding gown so that the two could be unified.

Notice this is what is taking place back in Rev 19:7 ESV

Rev 19:7 ESV

- (7) Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

The Bride, us the church has put on our wedding dress. This is where guys and girls are very different. When I taught this to the youth, the girls melted at this part. Thinking about putting on a wedding dress as the church and being adorned before Christ. Right there are entire shows dedicated just to the wedding dress. In contrast the youth and I are a little farther ahead in Revelation and we came up to the final battle and all of a sudden I had all of the guys attention. The guys wanted to know everything about the battle, where the girls wanted to know everything about the dress.

I know there are some girls that before they are even engaged they are already thinking about their future wedding dress, and some even buy it. I don't quite understand this as a guy but now being married I do understand how incredible it is when you see your bride in her wedding dress for the first time. It is a special movement.

The symbolism of the dress is white to show the brides purity for her groom. This is what Paul wants for the church.

2Co 11:1-3 ESV

- (1) I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me!
(2) For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.
 (3) But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

Paul wanted the Corinthian church to be pure. And ready for the day when it would marry its groom. Notice again our husband is Christ. We are going to be presented to Christ as His bride and Paul desperately wants us to be pure for that day. The dress is explained in verse 8 in Revelation 19

Rev 19:8 ESV

- (8) it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

This verse describes the Church putting on its wedding dress. But notice what it is made up of.

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds **of the saints**.

The first time I read this verse my mind wanted to complete the sentence like this:

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds **of the Lamb**.

That would make more sense at first look, that we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. That it is the righteous deeds of the Lamb that will cover us on that day. But that's not what this verse says. We as the church will be clothed in our own righteous deeds on that day. Which two weeks ago Scott Vachon taught that our righteous deeds were filthy in front of a holy God. Listen to Isaiah 64:6

Is 64:6 NASB

For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

So how does this fit together. Well first we must understand that the only way that we as the church are even in the position described here. In the heaven being married to Christ is because of Christ finished work on the cross. Paul makes it very clear that we are not saved by our works but by Christ Righteousness.

Philippians 3:8-9 ESV

- (8) Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ
- (9) and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—

We are saved by trusting In Christ alone. By having faith in Jesus Christ we receive His righteousness. His holiness, His perfectness. Last week I pointed out the 24 elders and mentioned that they represent the Church. Notice what they are wearing the first time we see them in the book of Revelation.

Rev 4:4 ESV

- (4) Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads.

They are clothed in White garments. This represents Christ Righteousness. It is the only way to be saved and be in heaven. Christ even points this out right after h makes the promise in John14 that He is preparing a place for them and will come back to get them. John 14:5-6
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John 14:5-6 ESV

- (5) Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"
- (6) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Thomas wanted to know how they could go where Jesus was going. Christ makes this clear. The only way into heaven, to be with the father is through Jesus Christ Himself.

So how does this fit with Revelation 19:8.

Rev 19:8 ESV

- (8) it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure" — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

The answer is the Bema seat. Let me read 1 Corinthians 3:10-16

1Co 3:10-15 ESV

- (10) According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it.
- (11) For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Notice that the foundation is Jesus Christ. He is our salvation.

- (12) Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—

Christ is the foundation for the Church. All believers have an opportunity to build on that foundation. Notice the two types of materials:

You have precious valuable resources, gold, silver, precious stones,

Or you can use the common and cheap , wood, hay, straw

- (13) each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

Every believer builds on the foundation that is Christ

These are our works. We all contribute to the Church. Notice what happens though, the entire structure is burned. Obviously when this happens the wood, hay and straw is burned up leaving only the Gold, silver and precious stones.

- (14) If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.
 (15) If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Our works that are eternal will be our rewards, they are what's left after the cleansing fire. If our works are earthly, they won't last.

This awaits all of us as believers

2Co 5:10 ESV

- (10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

This is where we get the title, the Bema seat; it's the word for Judgment in the verse. We use the word bema, because it is not the typical way we think of judgment. Also in this verse when it says good or evil.

The word for evil here is φαῦλος

Thayer Definition:

- 1) easy, slight, ordinary, mean, **worthless, of no account**

The judgment at the Bema seat is to separate the good and eternal works in a believers life from the worthless, and pointless earthly deeds.

So how do we know the difference?

Well it connects to what Scott talked about two weeks ago. When we as believers do things in the spirits power, through the spirits direction they have eternal rewards. When we as believers do things in our own power, through our own strength and in our own timing. They are earthly. It is those things that will be burned up.

Moses is the best example of this.

Act 7:23-25 ESV

- (23) "When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel.
 (24) And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian.
 (25) He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand.

Moses at 40 new God was going to use Him to deliver the Israelites. He had put together the pieces of how God had placed Him in the right place at the right time. So he acts, and kills one Egyptian. The outcome:

Exo 2:14-15 ESV

- (14) He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known."
 (15) When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

Moses got ahead of God. He tried to do something in his own timing and in his own strength. After 40 years being a Shepard God directed Moses to go back to Egypt and this time when He left, the Egyptian army was killed.

It was in God's timing and it was in His strength. This was an eternal reward.

This is what is happening in Revelation 19:8

Rev 19:8 ESV

- (8) it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

The church has already gone through the bema seat judgment. At this point. Again it is not a salvation judgment. It is a cleansing to separate the eternal rewards from our earthly works. On the church's wedding day, we are clothed with what's left after this cleansing by fire.

Often the Word talks about our rewards being a crown. Here our rewards are a beautiful wedding dress. Being adorned and pure for our groom. So the question is what will you be wearing on this day? What will you have left after the cleansing fire? What will you have to wear to present yourself to your groom?

Here's what's amazing to me. As challenging as that idea is, God has prepared Good, eternal works for you to do in His strength.

Eph 2:8-10 ESV

- (8) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,
 (9) not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

I can't repeat it enough we are only in this scenario by the Christ' work on the cross

(10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

So not only does He save us He prepared the eternal works for us to do!

Our job is to be faithful and walk in them through His power.

Again this is for believers only. As a non-believer you have a different judgment waiting for you. It is called the great White Throne Judgment

Rev 20:11-15 ESV

(11) Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

(12) And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

(13) And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

(14) Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

(15) And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

All non-believers will be judged weather there name is written in the book of life. We are only saved through Jesus Christ put your faith in Him. If not this is your destiny.

To any Believer today, the question must be are we living each day focused on the eternal. Focused on what we will have left after the cleansing fire. Our works of the flesh will be burned up and be pointless on that day.

Notice John's reaction to this:

Rev 19:9-10

(9) And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

(10) Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

John falls down and starts worshipping the angel that is revealing these things to him. The angel quickly stops him and says instead worship God. It is about Him. That must be our focus.

My concern with what rewards I will have to wear at the marriage of the Lamb is not for my glory but so that I can glorify Christ more!

The focus is not our glory

We live for that day so that we can glorify Him for what He has done for us.

The more rewards the more we will be able to worship Him.

Col 3:16-17 ESV

(16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

(17) And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Gal 5:22-23 ESV

(22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

(23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.