

Series: Marriage

Title: The Procession and the Wedding Feast

Text: Matthew 25: 1-13

Date: June 25, 2017

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

The relationship of the bridegroom and his bride portray the marriage between Christ and his church throughout scripture. (Isa. 50:1; 54:1; 62:5; Jer. 2:32; Hosea 2:1; Matt. 9:15; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:32; Rev. 21:9).

God worked in the hearts of men of old to create a tradition in the eastern world which illustrates four parts, included in the marriage of Christ and his bride. We looked at the first two:

1. *The Betrothal or The Espousal.* This took place in eternity when Christ agreed to marry and pay the bride price for God's elect in covenant grace. As far as our experience of it, it takes place in time, in the interval.

2. *The Interval.* This is from the beginning to the end of time. Christ came and paid to the Father of the bride the bride price—what scripture calls the dowry—his precious blood—to justify her and make her righteous, fully provided for! Then Christ called us to himself and made us holy and righteous in the new man he created within. Now he is calling out each member of his bride, each one shall be called to him—Christ shall have his bride! The interval will not be over until each one is called to him.

THE PROCESSION

As the bride waited in the interval, she would prepare and adorn herself for the wedding, watching for her Husband! Then at an unexpected time, the announcement would be made that the groom was coming.

The groom would come in a long procession decked in his finest garments, accompanied by his friends, singing and rejoicing. The groom would come in this great procession to the home of his bride.

Once he received his bride, he would carry her in this grand procession to the wedding. (Matt. 25:1; John 3:29; Song. of Sol. 3:6-11)

This is what Christ illustrated by the parable of the five wise virgins (betrothed brides) and the five foolish virgins.

Matthew 25: 1: Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2: And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. 3: They that *were* foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5: While the bridegroom tarried, [in the interval in which we are now in] they all slumbered and slept. 6: And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7: Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8: And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9: But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10: And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11: Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12: But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

There is coming a day—which no one knows—when Christ our Husband shall come again for his bride, with his heavenly host, in the great procession!

Matthew 25: 31: When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Christ says, "*Watch ye therefore!*" Make yourself ready. Be not like the foolish brides. Be ready when the bridegroom comes.

Christ has finished all the work for his bride in honor to God the Father. He finished the transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, brought in everlasting righteousness, sealed up the vision and prophecy fulfilling all that was written and he has ascended and anointed the most Holy.

Sinner, while will you be so foolish as to slumber in sin. Why not rest with the wise bride with your lamp filled with oil? Ready for the great procession! And to you who are the wise—by the grace of God—watch ye! Always watch ye! Christ our Husband shall return at a time we least expect!

Song of Solomon 3: 6: Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant? 7: Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel. 8: They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night. 9: King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. 10: He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem. 11: Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

THE WEDDING FEAST

Then at last comes the wedding itself. This is the marriage of the Lamb, the marriage supper. This is the glorious day when the marriage of Christ and his chosen bride, the church, shall be fully consummated.

Those who sleep in Jesus shall be raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:51-58). Then, we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will be translated (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

In that day, there will be a great general judgment of all who have ever lived upon the earth (John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; Rev. 20:11-12).

He will cast down the harlot, Babylon, with the wicked and unbelieving, by the power of his wrath.

God's elect shall be gathered to the great marriage supper of the Lamb and shall be publicly united to Christ our Husband in perfection (Eph. 5:25-27).

Christ our Husband will be the honored one at this wedding—**Revelation 19: 7: Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.**

It is not called her wedding—but *the marriage of the Lamb!* Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He is the Lamb typified in all the old testament sacrifices. The one of whom Abraham testified when he said, "God shall provide himself a Lamb." Christ is the Lamb upon the cross. John said, "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of his people all over the world." He is the Lamb upon the throne—Christ our Husband—to whom we give all the glory!

How does his wife make herself ready—**Rev 19: 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.**

In the previous chapter, the harlot church is cast down in judgment. You will find the harlot dressed like the gaudy prostitute she is—"*arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.*"

But Christ grants to his bride—"*that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of [Christ granted freely to his] saints [through faith]*"

We were the poor, bankrupt, shameful harlot in our youth like Gomer who was on the slave block because no one wanted an old broke whore. But Christ still loved us and still gave himself for us.

Hosea 3: 1: Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of *her* friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine. 2 So I bought her to me for fifteen *pieces* of silver, and *for* an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: 3 And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for *another* man: so *will* I also *be* for thee.

Since, Christ paid all our debt and called us to himself and gave us his righteousness. He says to his bride,

Isaiah 54: 4: Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. 5: For thy Maker *is* thine husband; the LORD of hosts *is* his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. 6: For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.... 17: No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

If you have never cast your care on Christ then believe on Christ: put on his righteousness—this linen clean and white through faith in him—and confess that he alone is your Husband, your Provider!

In that day of the great wedding, when we finally are publicly married to Christ, there will be none at this wedding supper but our family—those Christ has made perfect and decked in the wedding garment he provided—**Revelation 19: 9: And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.**

Christ illustrated this wedding supper with a parable

Matthew 22: 1: And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, 2: The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, 3: And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4: Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage. 5: But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: 6: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*. 7: But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8: Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. 9: Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. 10: So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. 11: And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13: Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14: For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

Many—all—are bidden to the marriage by the preaching of the gospel. But there is no blessedness in that outward call. Therefore, sinners, by their own obstinate rebellion refuse to come—*they go their own way and make light of this call!* But to be bidden and refuse will only add to one's eternal condemnation (Luke 14:15-24).

Therefore, because we are all such sinners, it is necessary that God choose and call his people himself—those who are 'the chosen' are 'the called.' We are compelled by God's irresistible grace. Christ effectually called us by the sovereign power of the Holy Spirit to come to 'the marriage supper of the Lamb'

We are pronounced, 'Blessed' in Revelation 19. Blessed by grace, God chose us in Christ before the world was made. Blessed by grace, Christ redeemed us, justifying us freely by his blood. Blessed by grace, the Spirit made us willing to come who otherwise would never have come (Ps. 65:4; 110:3). Blessed by grace, he washed us and decked us in the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness. Oh we are truly blessed!

'And with His spotless garments on
We are as holy as God's own Son!'

The reason these steps before the wedding are necessary is because Christ is so Holy and Righteous and Faithful to God and his bride, and loves them both so perfectly, that he will only take a bride when he:

1) Has honored the will of God his Father in doing so—and how he glorified and honored the God our Father! It glorifies the Father for us to believe on Christ. Before we marry, we should seek to know Christ and be found in him!

2) Christ will only take a bride when he has done all the work to make all things ready for her—so that she is fully provided for, made righteous and holy and believing—for he will only marry such for how can light and darkness have any fellowship? We should make sure both bride and groom are believers. Then the groom should make certain that we can leave father and mother and be one with our bride and provide for her in all things.

3) Anything less would be unrighteous, self-love and utterly unfaithful lusts so much so that God would not even regard it as marriage nor the children as legitimate. But God has betrothed one man to one bride that he might have a godly seed!

Malachi 2: 15: And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

So here is the application to husbands and wives or to those thinking of becoming husbands and wives.

Ephesians 5: 22: Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23: For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24: Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. 25: Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27: That he might

present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28: So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29: For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31: For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32: This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33: Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Let me end with this: This wedding supper lasted at least 7 days—the number of perfection. When Christ has delivered us to the marriage supper of the Lamb—then we shall perfectly be one flesh as Husband and bride. Then we shall rejoice in honeymoon bliss with our Husband in perfection for all eternity!

Amen!