

"THE BRIDEGROOM & THE BRIDE"

I. SOME OF THE THINGS ILLUSTRATED IN THIS METAPHOR OF THE CHURCH

- A. This metaphor illustrates first of all the kind of love that the Lord Jesus has for His Church.
1. The kind of love that the Lord Jesus has for His bride, the Church, sets forth a standard for love between a man and his wife and should serve as a pattern for every husband(Eph. 5:22,23). Christ loved His Church with such an unselfish and sacrificial love that He even gave Himself for her in death that her needs might be met.
 2. The kind of love that the Lord Jesus has for His bride, the Church, looked beyond our faults and saw our needs and even when we were unlovable He loved us in order that we might be lovable (Ro. 5:8-10). Someone has said that "love is blind". This no doubt means when you love someone you don't see any imperfections or faults in them that would repel you desires for them or alter the way you are attracted to them.
 3. The kind of love that the Lord Jesus has goes beyond anything we can comprehend or understand (Eph. 3:29). As far as human relationships we seldom show any love to those who show no love to us. And usually the more others show love to us, the more we love them. But this is not so with the love of Christ. For this reason we could well say - He loves us more than we could ever know in this life!
 4. The kind of love that the Lord Jesus has for His bride, the Church, is something demonstrated daily in providing for her needs (Eph.5:29). Just like the husband who loves his wife is concerned for her welfare and provides for her needs, so Christ nourishes and cherishes everyone who is a part of His bride the Church.
- B. This metaphor illustrates secondly the way that believers, who make up the bride of Christ, ought to respond to His love.
1. The bride or Church ought to respond to the love of Christ, first of all, with love to Him (I Jn. 4:19). This love ought to be demonstrated in subjection to His will and obedience to "His commands (Eph.5:24).Just like the proper response

of a wife to a loving husband is subjection and obedience to him, so should we respond to our loving Lord

2. The bride or Church ought to respond to Christ's love in a way that brings glory to Him. Just like a woman is the glory (or shame) of man (I Cor.11:7)and should be a bestower of honor upon him, so every believer as a part of the Bride of Christ should bestow honor upon Him in the way they conduct themselves.
- 3.The bride of Christ or believers, who make up the Church, ought to respond to Christ's love with spiritual fidelity (II Cor.11:2).The word "simplicity" here means *spread out and without folds or wrinkles*. This means just like a loving wife is to be absolutely faithful to her husband in demonstrating her love so believers should be wholeheartedly devoted to Christ allowing no doubling or room for secret loves.

C. This metaphor illustrates a future time of festivities and a life of endless joy.

1. In order to see this we must understand the three stages of marriage that was practiced in an oriental marriage.
 - a. The first stage or betrothal actually initiated the marriage. From this time a bride was considered legally married. In this disposition she went through a 9 months period to prove her faithfulness and could be punished for unfaithfulness or given a bill of divorcement. She could also become a widow during this time.
 - b. The second stage involved the Bridegroom coming for His bride and taking her to their future home. This then involved their togetherness and actual marriage relationship. Arriving at their future home, the bride was presented to the groom.
 - c. Finally the third stage involved a marriage supper or feast which could last for several days and afterwards the couple went to the bridal chamber.

2. Now as we look at the relationship of the bride of Christ within this context we may discern the following things:

- a. First of all we as believers, who make up the bride of Christ, are betrothed to Christ (II Cor.11:2). Here and now then is the time to prove our faithfulness to Him.
- b. Secondly we see that the Bridegroom will come for His bride and this will involve the rapture of the Church and carrying her to their future home in heaven (I Thess.4:13-18).
- c. Thirdly Christ will present His bride to Himself and the Marriage supper will take place just prior to the Second Coming of Christ back to the earth (Eph. 5:26,27; Rev. 19:7). The Millennial festivities will then follow which promise a life of endless Joy and happiness for every believer.

II. SOME OF THE THINGS INVOLVED IN THIS RELATIONSHIP AS BELIEVERS

- A. Some of what is involved in this relationship as believers who make up the bride of Christ can be seen in the O.T, type of Eve.
 1. Notice Eve was formed out of the side of Adam while he was involved in a miraculous sleep (Gen. 2:21-22). So it is with the bride of Christ - she was formed as a result of the blood which flowed from His side.
 2. We see in Eve's relationship to Adam that he recognized her being a living part of Himself (Gen. 2:23). And so believers who make up the bride of Christ are a living part of Him (Eph. 5:30-32).
- B. More of what is involved in this relationship can be seen in the O.T. type of Rebekah.
 1. Rebekah was a bride sought out for Isaac by Abraham his father (Gen. 24). So the bride of Christ is called out by the father for His Son (Matt. 22:2).
 2. Rebekah was approached by Abraham's servant who did not "speak of himself" but of the bridegroom and gave his things to her.

He then typifies the Holy Spirit who spoke to us of Christ and imparted the things of Him to us (Jn. 16:13-15).

3. Rebekah exercised faith and followed the servant's leadership to bring her to the bridegroom whom she had never seen. This then is what believers have done and look forward to (I. Pet. 1:8).

4. Rebekah received a foretaste of the riches to come and this is what the bride of Christ has received (Gen. 24:22,30,47).

5. Rebekah's journey involved more and more details and more description about the bridegroom whom she was to meet; so it is with us as the Holy Spirit reveals thing to us (I. Cor. 2:9-13).

6. Finally, Rebekah heard the servant say it is my master and she was met by Isaac and joined to him. And so one day we who make up the bride of Christ will hear the Spirit's testimony of Christ and we will go to meet Him (I Thess. 4:13-18).

C. Some other things involved in this relationship as part of the bride of Christ can be seen in the allegory of the Song of Solomon.

1. Here we see some expressions of the Bridegroom's love for His Bride (1:9,10; 2:2; 6:4-9; 7:6-9).

2. Here we see the responsive expressions of the bride's love (1:4,16; 2:4,16).

3. Another thing we see here is the longing of the Bride for the Bridegroom and her anxious anticipation for his coming (2:17).

III. SOME OF THE THINGS IMPLIED FOR US TO DO BASED UPON THIS RELATIONSHIP

A. We who make up the bride of Christ, which is the church, first of all respond to His love with a life of subjection to His will and obedience to His commands.

- B. Secondly, we should use this time between being betrothed to Christ and meeting Him to prove our fidelity to Him as His Bride.
- C. And finally, we should be steadfast in our waiting for His return.