

Pictures of the People of God

Seeing ourselves through God's Eyes.

The Bride of Christ (Pt. 2)

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Feb. 13th

REFLECTION: The world is full of Distractions (Mk 4:19) and Deceptions (2 Cor. 4:4). Their purpose is to keep us from seeing God, others, and even ourselves, clearly. Thankfully God provides us His truth and understanding (1 Jn 5:19-20) to enable us to be Transformed. (2 Cor 3:18; Rev. 3:18,19; Jn 8:32) Over the past few weeks we've learned that God sees us as: A Buried Treasure (Mt 13:44); A Precious Pearl (Mt 13:45,46); Clay in the hands of a master Potter. (Jer. 18:1-6; Is. 64:8); and a "bride" engaged to Jesus; symbolizing the intimacy and permanence of our Relationship. (2 Cor. 11:2)

Like a "Bride" our relationship with Jesus develops through stages.

1. Dating: A time to gather Information. Mt 11:29
2. Engagement: A time of Preparation and Anticipation 1 Jn 2:28-3:3
(This is the current stage of our relationship! 2 Cor 11:2)

DIRECTION: This morning we'll continue to examine the metaphoric reference to us as the "Bride of Christ". Eventually the engagement period gives way:

3. The Wedding: A time for *Celebration!* (Rev. 19:1-9)

A. When will this "Wedding" occur?

- 1) The Groom's Father sets the date. Mt 24:3; 36; 44 "*What shall be the sign of thy coming... 36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, ... but my Father only....44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.*"
 - 2) He sends out "invitations" Mt 22:2-5 "*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. I have prepared my dinner: ... all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: "* (See also Luke 14:16-24)
- Mt 24:3; "*What shall be the sign of thy coming...14 this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*"
- Rev. 19:1,7 "*After these things... the marriage of the lamb is come...*"

B. How will the Wedding occur?

- 1) He sends His Son to claim his bride. Jn 14:2,3 "*In my Father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you. If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also!*"
- Mt. 25:1-13 1*"The Kingdom of heaven is like 10 virgins... that went forth to meet the bridegroom... 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered...6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.... 13 "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."*
- a) This is commonly known as "The Rapture of the Church" 1 Thes 4:16-17 "*the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up (haire' omai: to take to/for oneself) together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: so shall we ever be with the Lord.*"
 - b) English word "Rapture" means "caught up in a feeling of intense pleasure or joy"

The Wedding initiates the actual Marriage!

4. The Marriage is a time for experiencing:

A. Intimacy. 1 Jn 3:2 *"We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is!"*

1) The degree of our intimacy is related to the degree of our faithfulness.

Jn 14:21; Mt. 25:21; Luke 16:10-13; 1 Cor 13:12

B. Extasy (Pleasure) Ps. 16:11 *"In thy presence is fulness (soba': satisfaction of joy; (śimhâ: pleasure) at thy right hand are pleasures (nā'îm: delights) for evermore."* (nēṣ'aḥ: splendor continuously; "the bright object at a distance travelled towards!")

1) God intended this! Gen. 2:8 *"God planted a garden in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed".*

Eden (ēden) means: pleasure 2x; delights 1x, delicacies 1x

2) The first time the word "Pleasure" is found in the Bible is in the context of marriage intimacy!

After God told Abraham Sarah would conceive (vs 10) Gen 18:12 *"Sarah laughed within herself, saying,*

After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, (eden) my lord being old also?"

3) Solomon's love story takes place in a garden!

a) Song of Solomon is a journal of the development of their romance, cumulating in their marriage! S.S 4:12; *"A garden enclosed is my spouse...16 Let my beloved come into his garden,*

and eat his pleasant fruits." (Meged: precious, pleasant, valuable)

C. Discovery! 1 Cor. 2:9,10 *"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God's revealed them unto us by His Spirit"*

1) The Pleasures of Eden will be restored in heaven! Rev. 21:9-22:6

21:9 *"Come, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."*

1 Jn 3:1-3 *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:... Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."*

D. Committed Company 1 Thes. 5:17,18 *"The Lord himself will descend ... with a shout... so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."* (see Heb. 13:5)

Parakaleo: to call near, invite, desire From para: beside & kaleho: to call or invite.

Rev 19:7-9 *"Let us rejoice and be glad, for the marriage of the lamb is come and His wife hath made herself ready.,*

And he saith ... Write, Blessed (Makarios: supremely fortunate) are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. ... These are the true sayings of God."

Conclusion: God's final invitation is revealed in Rev. 22:7

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life"

Eventually there'll be no more time to respond!

Are you Preparing for that wedding day? Are you inviting others?

Some Day will be your Last day! 2 Cor 6:1-2 *"We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured (helped, enabled) thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."*

You are invited to dine with me, Throughout all of eternity.

Believe in the Father, Son, Holy Ghost; To Dine with Jesus as your Host.

To live with Him Eternally, All you must do is RSVP!