

I. KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS AS A BRIDEGROOM WITH AFFECTIONS FOR US

- A. The Bridegroom God is a term Jesus used to describe Himself. Jesus likened Himself to a Bridegroom (*Mt. 9:15*), His Kingdom to a wedding (*Mt. 22:2*), described the ministry as those encountering Him as a Bridegroom (*Mt. 25:1*), and will return in answer to the intercessory prayer of His Church with a bridal identity (*Rev. 22:17*).
- B. The Bridegroom message is about Jesus' emotions for us, His commitments to us (to share His heart, home, throne, thoughts), and our response of wholehearted, obedient love (*Jn. 14:15*). The Spirit uses the message of the Bridegroom God as He is *establishing the first commandment in first place in the Church*.
- C. The Scripture supports the Lord as a Bridegroom King (*Isa. 54:4-12; 62:2-5; Jer. 2:2; 3:14; 31:32; Hos. 1:2; 2:7, 14-23; 3:1-5; Mt. 9:15; 22:1-14; 25:1-13; Jn. 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9; 22:17*).
- D. Jesus has **fiery affections**: He has deep longing for His people. The Church will be cleansed by the Word that points to the "cherishing heart" of Jesus.
Eph 5:26-29 that He might...cleanse her...²⁷present her...a glorious church...²⁹for no one ever hated his flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as the Lord does the Church.

Eph 3:18-19 that you may be able to comprehend...the width and length and depth and height—to know the love [affections or emotions] of Christ...
- E. Jesus is filled with **tender mercy**: He is gentle with our weakness. Some confuse spiritual immaturity with rebellion. God is angry at rebellion, but He is tender and merciful towards sincere yet weak believers, who seek to obey Him.
Ps 18:19,35 He delivered me because He delighted in me.³⁵Your gentleness made me great.
- F. Jesus has a **heart of gladness**: Jesus had more gladness than any man in history (*Heb. 1:9*). Many view God as mostly mad or mostly sad when He relates to His people. Jesus is mostly glad when He relates to His people, even in their weakness.
Heb 1:9 God has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.
- G. Jesus the Bridegroom is **zealous**: His judgments remove all that hinder love (*Zech. 8:2; Jn. 2:17*).

II. THE END-TIME CHURCH ENGAGED WITH JESUS AT THE HEART LEVEL (REV. 22:17)

- A. Revelation 22:17 tells us what will happen in the Church in the generation the Lord returns as we relate to Him as a Bridegroom God.
Rev 22:17 The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" Let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come...²⁰"Surely, I am coming quickly." Even so, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

- B. The Church will be engaged with the Holy Spirit, saying and doing what He is saying and doing.
1. ***What is the Spirit saying?*** He is speaking to believers about their identity as a Bride.
 2. ***What is the Spirit doing?*** He is *interceding* for Jesus to come in power and *calling* thirsty people to come to Jesus as the Bridegroom God.
- C. We engage with His heart now as we pray “Come, Lord Jesus!” in three different ways.
1. ***Come NEAR US in intimacy*** (individual breakthrough of our heart in God).
 2. ***Come TO US in revival*** (regional or national breakthrough of the Spirit in revival).
 3. ***Come FOR US in the sky*** (historical breakthrough of the second coming of Jesus).
- D. The Holy Spirit will emphasize the Church’s spiritual identity as Jesus’ Bride. Forever we will rejoice in the reality of our identity as God’s army, family, body, temple, priesthood, and kingdom; but at the end of the age, the way God feels and thinks about His Church will be known.
- E. As sons of God, we are in the position to experience ***God’s throne*** as heirs of His power (***Rev. 3:21; Rom. 8:17***). As the Bride, we are in position to experience ***God’s heart*** (emotions or affections).
- F. Just as women are sons of God, so also men are part of the Bride of Christ. Both describe a position of privilege before God. Some men struggle with being part of the Bride of Christ because they wrongly conclude that it is a call to become less masculine. This truth does not undermine one’s masculinity, but strengthens it. Some of the greatest men of God functioned in truths associated with the Church’s bridal identity.
- Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***
- G. We can’t be content with talking about the love of God and not pressing ***to actually experience its power***. In a spiritual culture of compromise and permissiveness, it’s easy to be falsely comforted by references to God’s love without understanding the reality of it.
- H. The genuine experience of God’s affection makes you and I hungry for more. We go hard after God’s heart to experience more of His affection. Diligence is not an attempt to earn us God’s love but positions us to experience more of it.
- Jn 15:9-11 As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide (live in) in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love...11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.***
- I. The most powerful weapon against Satan’s constant accusations is the fact of God’s affection.
- Rom 8:32-39 If God is for us, who can be against us?...35 Who shall separate us from the love (affection) of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution...or peril, or sword?...38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor***

things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love (affection) of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

III. JESUS FINAL MESSAGE- THE BRIDE AND THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

- A. Jesus' last public message to Israel defined the kingdom as a call to His wedding (*Mt. 22:1-4*). He called Israel to the first commandment in context to calling them to a wedding feast (*Mt. 22:37*).

"Mt 22:2-3,37 The kingdom of heaven is like a certain King [Father] who arranged a marriage for His son,³ and sent out His servants to call those who were invited to the wedding" ...³⁷"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."**

- B. The Father "arranged a marriage" for His Son (*Mt. 22:2*). His eternal purpose for creation includes providing a family for Himself and an eternal companion for His Son. He wants relationship with His people. He is raising up a prepared Bride for His worthy Son.
- C. God first *exhorted* Israel, through Moses, to love Him with all their heart (*Deut. 6:5*), and later Moses *prophesied* Israel would love God with all their heart in the end times (*Deut. 30:1-6*). Jesus' statement was both an *exhortation* and a *prophecy* that gives insight into God's zeal for our destiny.

"Deut. 30:6 The Lord...will circumcise your heart...to love the Lord...with all your heart."

- D. At the end of the age, the church in the earth will mirror the reality of those crying before the throne night and day in heaven (*Rev 5:8, 7:9, 8:4-5*)
1. The church will be united (partnership) with the Spirit of the Lord (*Rev 22:17*)
 2. The church will have a bridal identity (know the affections) (*Rev 22:17*)
 3. The church will have an abiding spirit of prayer (fully engaged) (*Rev 22:17*)
 4. The promise for speedy justice is contingent upon night and day prayer (requirement for fullness) (*Luke 18:7-8*)
- E. The church at the end of the age will walk without fear, being anointed in prayer and power to see the greatest harvest come in before Jesus returns. This will be rooted in the identity as a bride to Jesus and standing in the counsel of the Lord

Rev 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."