

THE WEDDING OF THE LAMB REVELATION 19:6-9

- I. Marriage of the Lamb
 - a. Revelation 19:6 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.”
 - b. Today, I want to try to encourage us, and give us some perspective to just help us persevere with joy – because we are on the way to something. And it’s an immovable date. I just really believe, when you are having a really hard day at work, if you know that you’re going to go to your favorite restaurant with your favorite people, you’re going to be able to endure your day at work; even experience it with joy. If you know that tomorrow you’re going to be with your best friend, no matter how dark today is, there can be joy because of what is coming.
- II. The Bible context for this feast.
 - a. Feasts and weddings:
 - i. Weddings are great. And weddings are not new.
 - ii. Weddings are also a big deal for their culture and for folks today of course:
 - 1. They were a big deal with a great deal of cultural practices that wouldn’t make a whole lot of sense to us now – but ours probably wouldn’t make sense to them either.
 - 2. I want to highlight a couple of them to set some context for the passage.
 - 3. The Bridegroom would actually sign a contract with the parents of the bride and pay a dowry for the bride. Then, somewhere around a year later, the bridegroom, accompanied by his groomsmen who would then go to the house of the bride and create a sort of torchlight parade. Then they would the bride and her friends would join the parade and party at the bridegroom’s house. The third phase was the marriage supper itself which might go on for days!
 - 4. It’s into this world that the Bible is being written.
 - b. But before we talk about the feast itself, we have to go back further, to talk about how the Bible gets us there. Because, this is revelation, the end of the story, and just like pretty much everything else in revelation, it’s drawing from stuff in the Old Testament and the life of Jesus.
 - i. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The end of Genesis 1 tells us that God made humans in His image and actually creates them to be His representatives on the earth. AND He makes them married. One of the first acts of God for these people is to make them one flesh. Adam and Eve are man and wife. His representatives on the earth.
 - ii. But they sin, they break the law of God, and God banishes them. But He does not give up on them.
 - iii. Through the family of Abraham God pursues people from every tribe and tongue and nation.
 - iv. But Abraham’s family fails time and time again. And God reveals Himself to them repeatedly, in love and faithfulness. What I want to focus in on is one way that God reveals Himself to the people.
 - 1. Isaiah 54:5, “For your maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is His name.”

2. Hosea 2:19, “I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice.”
 3. But sadly, the people rejected God and were unfaithful to Him. He says in Jeremiah 2, “I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness. Israel was holy to the Lord. What wrong did your fathers find in me that they went far from me?” And He goes on to use really intense language to talk about their unfaithfulness to Him. And Jeremiah also writes,
 4. Jeremiah 31:32, “They rejected the covenant, though I was a husband to them.”
 - c. It is into this imagery that Jesus teaches two of His parables and a couple of comments He makes to His disciples. He describes Himself has a bridegroom preparing for His wedding.
 - i. Matthew 22:1-14 – parable of the wedding feast.
 1. In the first parable, the bridegrooms father invites people to the wedding, and the people reject him and his messengers, so the king in his anger destroys them, and goes out to invite random folks from the streets to be guests at this wedding. They are all given wedding garments and asked to join in the festivities.
 - ii. Matthew 25:1-10 – parable of the 10 virgins.
 1. Jesus, in the parable of the 10 virgins warns against being unprepared for when the bridegroom arrives, but the truth behind that parable is that Jesus is indeed our bridegroom and He is coming.
 - iii. He says in John 14 – I go to prepare a place for you, and I will bring you again to myself.
 - iv. Matthew 26:29 – I will not drink of this vine again until that day when I drink it new with you in my father’s kingdom.
 1. Jesus is telling them that someday in the future, He will drink with them, not on earth as they understand it, but in His Father’s kingdom. And we, not just me but actual smart people – believe that Jesus is referencing the marriage feast of the lamb.
 - v. The details of these parables are not what we’re talking about today. But I wanted to share them because Jesus is tapping into a prophetic line, a prophetic image, that God has used to describe Himself and His people, and it is eventually what John will tap into in the Revelation of the Lamb.
 - d. So Jesus is the Groom, who is the bride?
 - i. We are. Paul says that Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church in Ephesians 5:25. In 2 Corinthians 11, Paul says that he believes that he has, through his ministry attached the church in Corinth their bridegroom. But the clearest picture of the Church as the bride is actually here, in Revelation 19 and 21.
 - e. So those are the characters, the setting – the bride and the groom. And now – the wedding.
- III. Let’s look at this passage:
- a. The first thing that we see is worship. Worship is happening for several reasons, the destruction of Babylon, salvation for His people, God’s reign. All of these are given in little poems of worship in Revelation 19. Worship is happening, the people of God have come together to worship and celebration and this is when the wedding takes place.
 - b. The wedding feast itself, the party itself, takes place right after John has a vision of the destruction of Babylon. Babylon is personified by a terrible prostitute who deceives the world and is destroyed because she leads the world astray and into terrible sin.

- i. This is in direct contrast to how the bride of the lamb is portrayed: humble, yet beautiful and adorned in contrast to the prostitute, with beauty and righteousness and purity. That's Jesus' bride. Revelation is full of all of these corrupt and broken and defiled and sinful and wicked and evil nations, beasts, images, out of all of this, the Lord has saved His bride. And she is beautiful, and she is pure.
- c. That's how the Bride is revealed:
 - 1. The purity of the bride is what Revelation focuses on first. John writes, "For the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure." The Bride is ready, and all of those things you read about before this? All those beasts and dragons and sinful, defiled creatures – they are punished. The bride is pure and humble and loved. Not primarily because of a battle won by the bride, but because of suffering endured by the bride.
 - ii. Pure and clothed in righteousness. And here's something amazing and true about the Bible story. The clothes and the righteousness and the covering for the bride? That's purchased by Jesus. That's how you become a part of the bride! Those deeds, those righteous, pure coverings for the bride. Purchased for us, lived for us, by the groom! He won them on our behalf. The Bride just had to wait for the coming of the groom.
 - iii. Also, when it says that the bride is ready, it's not saying that the bride did enough good things, what it's referencing is the fullness of the body being gathered! And we will talk about that more in a second, but it says, "it was *granted* to her." Not *earned* by her. But granted to her. Robed in the righteousness purchased for them, ready to meet the bridegroom face to face. The bride is now ready.
- d. And the groom is coming to get her:
 - i. "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," And they're praising because the Lord reigns and the bride is ready. Think of this like the marriage processional, like the people coming down the road to come meet the bride with the groom. They're getting ready for this feast. They're ready to party. It looks like a great multitude, John says, the multitude sounds like roaring waters and peals of thunder. This is a celebration. A huge celebration. This is *the* celebration. This is *the* wedding. The bride is ready, and the groom and the wedding party are on their way.
 - ii. So that's the bride and bridal party, but what about the groom?
- e. How is Jesus revealed:
 - i. Jesus is revealed as the Lamb. This has always been a struggle for me when I come to revelation. Why is it that Jesus has to bear in His body the marks of the punishment for our sins for eternity? We are getting clothed in righteousness and glory, and this just doesn't seem fitting. Why isn't this the marriage supper of the Lion or the marriage supper of the King? Jesus gets called a lot of things in the Bible. Not just the Lamb, but that is how He is revealed here.
 - ii. All throughout the book of revelation, this is how we see Jesus. In the midst of all of these terrible beasts and dragons and military powers and economic powers and evil kings and weird mutant seeming creatures, there is a lamb. Why is that?
 - iii. Three reasons that I think are helpful – the first one is this – God does not fight our way. "He uses the foolish things of the world to shame the wise." Who wins a fight between a dragon and a lamb? How could it be the lamb? And yet, that's what God says. Reigning

- over all and receiving worship? Is it the beasts? Is it the four living creatures of Revelation 4? No, it's the lamb. God does not do things our way. He does not fight our way. Which is a lesson worth remembering these days... How does the lamb win? By dying, by innocently suffering, and by swallowing up death. By absorbing all of the power of His enemies. Taking the full measure of their attacks. And rising again. I think there is a great deal for us to learn here between the revealing of the purity and righteousness of the bride in contrast with the sin of Babylon and the meekness of the lamb in contrast with the warring powers of the world. Who is left at the end? The Lamb and the pure bride. Not the powerful looking, dominating, destructive powers of this world. But the Lamb and the pure bride. Jesus says blessed are the poor and the meek and the merciful and the persecuted. And here, that is revealed. Here that is seen in full measure. The upside-down kingdom of Matthew is fully revealed in Christ and His bride.
- iv. The second one is for us: we are being given a reminder of how we got there. If we think we don't need reminders of the gospel – whether the preaching of the word or communion or whatever. We do need it. We will have it forever. If we come up to Easter and think: “you know, I've heard this before. I don't need to take communion again. I don't need to come to the table again...” you're probably wrong. We need reminders. We need constant reminders of the grace of God. We need to touch it and smell it and taste it in communion and let it come over us in baptism. We need reminders. Constant reminders of His grace and love and sacrifice and mercy. We need it all. And we will have it for all eternity. How did you get here? The Lamb. How did you enter the family of God, how did you receive those wedding clothes? How did this happen? The Lamb. The life and death of the Lamb. So for eternity we are in the presence of the Lamb.
 - v. Furthermore, for us, if it is as the Lamb that He appears, it must be as the lamb that we receive Him. We must recognize the inability of our stuff and the sufficiency of His sacrifice if we are to enjoy this meal. There will be no marriage feast for your soul and Christ if you will not have Him as the Lamb. If you only have Him as a teacher, if you only have Him as a prophet, if you only have Him as a rule giver or a moral example. If you will only let Him be the judge or only let Him be the things that make you happy, feel good about yourself, or confirm your biases about Him and the world, you won't have Him. You must take Him as the Lamb.
 - vi. Third reason is this, Jesus as the Lamb is the way that the most love is shown to His bride. John and Jesus link the memory of Jesus' grief with the fullest manifestation of His glory; and as He was a Lamb to redeem His Church, His bride, so does He appear as a Lamb in the marriage supper of His glory. Spurgeon so beautifully describes this, “Brethren, I think that it is very appropriate for Christ to appear in glory as a Lamb, because it is as the Lamb that He has most fully displayed His love to His Church, to which He is espoused, and to which He is to be married at that last great day. Beloved, the marriage supper is a feast of love; there, love is at home. So Jesus, that He may reveal Himself in His love best of all, appears as a bleeding sacrifice on the day of His love's triumph. I do not know how to talk about this great theme; but this truth rests in my heart and makes me feel gladder than I can tell. It lies like a cake of sweet perfume upon the altar of my soul and burns there with the soft lambent flame of love; and I rejoice to know that, in the day when Jesus takes His Church by the hand, and leads her home to His Father's house, He will appear in that character in which He most of all has shown His love to His beloved. You see most of His love when you see most of His griefs, and

most of His condescension; and therefore in that character does He appear at His marriage supper.”

- vii. Jesus is the Lamb because that is the greatest expression of His love for His bride.
- f. What about the feast itself?
 - i. That feast will be, like most other marriage suppers, the fulfilment of long expectation. Our Lord has waited long for His perfected Church. He promised Himself to her before the earth ever was, but there was much to be done before she was prepared for the marriage. The Bridegroom, too, had to leave His Father, and become one with His bride by taking upon Himself our humanity. For our sake, He did actually give up the thrones and royalties of heaven that He might be bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; just like Adam says of eve; and here was He born, and here He lived, and here He died. But still the Bride was not ready; and it is not till you come to this chapter, these three chapters from the end of the Bible that you read, “The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready.”
 - ii. What does that mean though? How can that be? Souls have to be saved, missions have to happen, every tribe and tongue and nation has to hear and be included in the feast. new-created, blood-washed, sanctified, perfected, and all of them must be gathered to make up the body of Christ’s Spouse; and when that is done, and she is all complete, the expectations of the Christ will be fulfilled at that marriage supper. This is why we have to go. Because the bride is not yet ready. We have to go and bring people with us. We have to go to unreached people groups, to nations that need to hear that there is an open invitation to the greatest party ever thrown. We have a mission, friends. And in the power of the Spirit, we are going to accomplish it! Covid Is not going to stop this mission. Elected officials are not going to stop this. Wild fires and ice storms are not going to stop this mission. Persecution is not going to stop the mission. And the gates of hell aren’t going to stop this mission. But it is not until the full measure of the people of God have been won for Christ that He will say, “The bride is ready.”
- g. You guys, we, the beloved bride of the King, we don’t know the longings of the heart of Christ for that day of glory! For this He lived; for this He died; for this He continually pleads that all for whom He shed His precious blood might be His in that day. That day is fast coming, and when it arrives, then will be the wedding feast above. But first, we have to take up our cross, follow him, and go to the lost. Jesus has been saying to me all year - Do not despair, do not give in to frustration, do not quit, this is for me. This is about me. This is going to end in my glory and our union.

IV. Union of Christ and His church

- a. The climax of the biblical story. All the sin and death and destruction and sadness and all of the love and pursuit and passion of God – the end of all of this, is the union of God with His beloved bride. The father, presenting to His son, the bride whom He has purchased through the death that He has died and the battle that He has won. To Jesus, our perfect bridegroom, we are united forever. To Jesus, the lover of our souls, we are set to enjoy forever. And here’s an amazing thing, God enjoys us forever. Spurgeon said that He knows of no better idea of heaven than this: to be eternally content with Christ, and Christ to be eternally content with me. I remember our wedding day. I remember how I felt when I saw Valerie for the first time. I remember feeling both the excitement and the weight of the commitment that we were about to make. I saw her, and I knew that she was who I wanted to be with. That’s my bride. That’s the only person I need now. That’s the fullness of what I desired, walking towards me.

- b. You are who Jesus died to have in heaven with Him. He has chosen you to be His bride, to live in perfect peace and love and intimacy forever. It is right to say that humans are unworthy. It is right to say that we WERE sinners. It is right to admit that you struggle. But don't let false humility get in the way of this truth: God is satisfied that His bride is you. He is satisfied. He actually, really, totally, completely *loves* you. In a love and a connection so deep that it will make human relationships taste like cardboard. Do you love Him like this? You were created for this too, you were created to enjoy God forever. This is what you were made for. To be fully known and fully loved forever while we fully know and fully love God forever. Shameless, intimate relationship forever.
- c. And at the marriage supper of the lamb, we see this new way of being inaugurated. We see this new world brought into being through a feast. Jesus, coming to be united to His bride. His bride readying herself to be with her husband forever. A perfect, whole union between God and His people. You image bearers, restored to perfect union with your maker and the one who loved you and gave Himself for you so that you could be His eternal bride.
- d. Is this practical? Yes.
 - i. First, focus on Jesus and the future. Keep your vision ahead, ask yourself – am I doing this because this serves the vision and the mission? Am I living in a way that recognizes ultimate things? Am I acting from fear and self-preservation or am I acting from faith and focus on the future and the mission?
 - ii. Second, enjoy the love of God! Just enjoy that He *loves* you. That the things that are happening are *love motivated* things. The events in our lives are *love motivated*. Jesus loves us. Just enjoy that He loves us.
 - iii. Third, go get people. Don't let the circumstances in the world make you think that Jesus is losing. That's the wisdom of the world. The wisdom of God is going to look foolish at times to the wisdom of the world. But I'd rather be with the wisdom of God... trust that He is going to bring this to happen. Trust that He's not going to be stopped. And take part in the mission. God in the power of the Spirit. It's possible that you're going to think too much about your own future glory. Lewis says, it's probably not possible to think too much about your neighbor's future glory.

V. Conclusion

- a. This year has been hard. Hard good and hard bad. Just hard. There has been little peace, there has been little unity at times, there has been tragedy and hardship and frustration and *confusion*.
- b. But I want to encourage our hearts with this – to think about this if you are lonely, pained, struggling, hurting... If you knew that tomorrow night you would have dinner with your favorite person, your best friend, it would help you endure today, wouldn't it? Once there, once at this feast, every pain and tear and fear will have gone forever, that will be a glorious wedding feast. Consider this as a promise of eternal joy and fulfillment and peace. So we celebrate this feast.
- c. When I was a child, a week seemed to be a very long time. You who are a little older know that a year seems to come and go before you are aware of it. We will soon be enjoying this feast. We will soon be with Him.