



Sunday Nov 10, 2013
Pictures of The Church (Part-2) : The Bride
Ps Ashish Raichur

Review:

The Lord Jesus is building HIS Church.

Pictures of the Church, used in Scripture :

- The Body
- The Household of God (Family of God)
- The Pillar of Truth
- The Temple of God
- A House of Prayer
- Zion - The Assembly of God's People
- The Bride
- The Vine and the branches (John 15)
- The Lampstand (Revelation 1:20)
- The Army of God (Matthew 16:16-19)

Key Points :

Key Point #1 : Church is primarily who we are in relation to Him.
Without our relation to Him, there is no Church. A body without the head can no longer live and function.

Key Point #2: We then relate to one another and to the world out of our relation to Him.

Today, we take a close look at The Church as The Bride of Christ.

Pictures of The Church : The Bride

Perhaps one of the most wonderful pictures of the Church is that of His Bride.

The Lord's dealings with His people Israel under the Old Covenant, in many ways, is a parallel (or is an example, illustration, etc.) of His dealings with the Church in the New Covenant. There are some differences, but many similarities.

Differences, for instance would be:

- Under the Old Covenant He dealt with them based on the Law. However, under the New Covenant, He deals with us based on grace.



- Under the Old Covenant, not everyone experienced the working of Holy Spirit in their lives personally. However, under the New Covenant, every believer enjoys the personal presence and work of the Spirit.
- ...etc...

There are many similarities, though:

- Under both covenants, God has chosen a people through whom He could bless the nations of this world.
- Under both covenants, God's people are a royal priesthood, called to minister unto God.
- ...etc....

One interesting similarity is that under both covenants, God pictures His relationship with His people, as that of a Groom to His Bride. He is the Bridegroom God, and we His people, are His Bride.

So we begin with the Old Testament and go into the New Testament, and draw insights in the role of the Church (us God's people) as His Bride.

Three Old Testament Prophets spoke of God's relationship with His people, in terms of a Groom married to His Bride: Jeremiah, Hosea, Isaiah.

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah 2:2,3

2 "Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "I remember you, The kindness of your youth, The love of your betrothal, When you went after Me in the wilderness, In a land not sown.

3 Israel was holiness to the LORD, The firstfruits of His increase. All that devour him will offend; Disaster will come upon them," says the LORD.' "

God talks about the day when Israel was "betrothed" ("engaged") to Him - the kindness, the love, the pursuit they demonstrated. A nation that was holy unto Him. His firstfruits. Israel was betrothed to Him on Mt. Sinai in the wilderness, after He has brought them out of Egypt, while journeying to their land of promise.

Jeremiah 3:14 "Return, O backsliding children," says the LORD; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.

God calls a wayward people back to Himself, declaring that He is "married" to them.

Jeremiah 31:3,4



3 The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.

4 Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! You shall again be adorned with your tambourines, And shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice.

Jeremiah 31:32

32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.

God assures a wayward people of His everlasting love. He woos them back with His lovingkindness. He assures them that they will be restored and rebuilt.

He speaks of the Covenant He established with His people, in terms of being a "husband" - a covenant He will not break.

HOSEA

The entire book of Hosea is around the theme of God, the Husband, wooing back His wayward wife.

We look at a few verses:

Hosea 2:16,17

16 "And it shall be, in that day," Says the LORD, "That you will call Me 'My Husband,' And no longer call Me 'My Master,'

17 For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, And they shall be remembered by their name no more.

As a devoted "wife" God expects faithfulness - no going after other gods.

Hosea 2:19,20

19 "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me In righteousness and justice, In lovingkindness and mercy;

20 I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, And you shall know the LORD.

These verses provide amazing insight on how God relates to the one He is married to:

- mine forever - we are His forever
- righteousness - He draws us to Himself in holiness, purity
- justice - God delivers us from every form of oppression and injustice
- lovingkindness - God extends His love and kindness
- mercy - God receives us just as we are in spite of all failures
- faithfulness - His is a faithful love
- intimacy (you shall know the LORD) - He brings us into a place of intimacy with Himself



ISAIAH

Isaiah 54:4-6

4 Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; For you will forget the shame of your youth, And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.

5 For your Maker is your husband, The LORD of hosts is His name; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.

6 For the LORD has called you Like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, Like a youthful wife when you were refused," Says your God.

7 "For a mere moment I have forsaken you, But with great mercies I will gather you.

8 With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you," Says the LORD, your Redeemer.

Isaiah prophesies hope for Israel - assuring Israel of God's unending love as a "husband".

Isaiah 62:4-7

4 You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, Nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; For the LORD delights in you, And your land shall be married.

5 For as a young man marries a virgin, So shall your sons marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So shall your God rejoice over you.

6 I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent,

7 And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Hephzibah = My Delight

Beulah = Married

As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so God shall rejoice over you.

Notice also how the ministry of intercession for God's people flows out of knowing that God's people are His delight, are His Bride and that God rejoices over His people.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Matthew 25:1-13

The Lord Jesus uses the Jewish wedding as an illustration, to convey to us the importance of being prepared and ready, with expectation and endurance, for His coming.



In those days a typical Jewish wedding was celebrated over the course of several nights, typically seven nights. Those who were closest to the couple were invited on the first night and enjoyed the celebration for the nights that followed.

The Church is to await His coming in a state of preparedness, readiness, expectation and endurance.

A Chaste Virgin

2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

The apostle Paul, pictured his ministry by the Spirit, as that of presenting the Church as a pure virgin to Christ, the Bridegroom God.

All ministry we do, must be coupled with the understanding that we are preparing a Bride for the Lord Jesus, the Bridegroom God. He is wooing His Bride unto Himself with tender love and affection, drawing Her to a place of intimacy.

A Glorious Church

Ephesians 5:22-32

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

31 "FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH."

32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Christ's relationship with the Church is compared to a husband to his wife.

Jesus paid a great price to possess His bride.

The Bride Has Made Herself Ready

Revelation 19:6-9

6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!



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."

8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

Looking up ahead into what is yet to come the apostle John see the great marriage supper, the wedding supper of the Lamb. When the Bridegroom God will be "married" forever with His redeemed saints, who have been prepared for Him. These are a people who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, clothed with His garments of righteousness and are walking in righteous acts (expressing His righteousness).

The Spirit and The Bride

Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"

The Holy Spirit has been entrusted with the work of preparing the Bride for the Groom (Jesus).

As the Bride, we must be in alignment and unity with the Spirit - hearing, saying, doing - what He desires, as He works in us, among us, through us, to prepare us for the Bridegroom God, Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

Our relationship with our Lord is in many ways defined by the relationship of a bride to a groom. Let's summarize what we observe from both the Old and New Testaments:

1, The Bride is lost in her love, admiration, commitment to her Groom

She's totally in love - deep desperate love. She sings her love songs to the Groom-in-waiting. **This is worship. Love songs of the Bride to the Groom.** Songs that describe how great, how majestic, how wonderful, how awesome, the Groom is to the Bride. We sing the love songs of God's heart back to Him. Love songs inspired by the Spirit.

The Bridegroom God desires this as we saw in Jeremiah 2:2,3

SIDE COMMENT

There are two things we need to address here:

a, Women are not to interpret this understanding in a fleshly way of "romancing" Jesus, as though He were their "natural" lover, boyfriend, husband, etc.



b, For men, it is not that we lose our natural masculinity as we embrace this truth, rather we understand it meaning and application in our spiritual relationship with Jesus.

2, The Bride adorns herself in what would please her Groom so that she can present herself in her best for the Groom.

Church is therefore not about us and what pleases us. Church is about what pleases Him. Church is not about what I like, but about what He likes to see in us and among us. Church is not about us impressing and looking good before one another. Church is about being pleasing in His eyes.

3, The Bride is the recipient of the Grooms unconditional love

We see repeatedly the Bridegroom God assuring His Bride of His unconditional love.

Jesus, the Bridegroom God, is filled with tender love, affection, gentleness, mercy, faithfulness, justice, enduring love, for His Bride - the Church.

We must give ourselves to this truth and experience His emotions, His heart of unconditional love for us.

4, The Bride has access to the Groom's heart - a place of intimacy

The Bridegroom God longs for this. He calls us to a place where we will know Him (Hosea 2:20).

5, The Bride keeps herself for the Groom. She does not settle for any other man.

Christ is coming back for a bride who will be without spot or wrinkle - who has been washed with the Word, kept Herself pure and made herself ready.

When we see how He loves us, as His cherished Bride - we give ourselves completely and totally to Him.

We are cleansed ("sanctified") because of His love.

A correct understanding of the heart of the Bridegroom God will lead us into a place of purity and devotion birthed out of pure love.

6, We are called to be like a Bride getting ready for her marriage to the Groom. She waits expectantly.



A sense of expectation with endurance, readiness with preparedness must grip our hearts.

7, When we serve the Body of Christ, we are serving the Bride of Christ - a people whom God loves unconditionally, a people in whom He delights as His Bride, a people whom He is married to. All ministry, including intercession, must flow out of this understanding.

Ministry and intercession is birthed out of this understanding of the Bridegroom God and His love for His bride. When we encounter Jesus the Bridegroom God, and understand His passionate heart for His Bride, our ministry and intercession takes on new meaning. We see all we do as a way to prepare a Bride and to present Her spotless to the Bridegroom God. We don't approach God's people with 'anger', 'criticism', etc. We base it on His love for His Bride.

Closing Song: Oh how He loves us.



USEFUL RESOURCES



Watch our online Sunday Church service live stream every Sunday at 10:30am (Indian Time, GMT+5:30). Spirit filled, anointed worship, Word and ministry for healing, miracles, and deliverance.

YOUTUBE: <https://youtube.com/allpeopleschurchbangalore>

WEBSITE: <https://apcwo.org/live>

Our other websites and free resources:

CHURCH: <https://apcwo.org>

FREE SERMONS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/sermons>

FREE BOOKS: <https://apcwo.org/books/english>

DAILY DEVOTIONALS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

JESUS CHRIST: <https://examiningjesus.com>

BIBLE COLLEGE: <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

E-LEARNING: <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

WEEKEND SCHOOLS: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/weekend-schools>

COUNSELING: <https://chrysalislife.org>

MUSIC: <https://apcmusic.org>

MINISTERS FELLOWSHIP: <https://pamfi.org>

CHURCH APP: <https://apcwo.org/app>

CHURCHES: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/churches>

WORLD MISSIONS: <https://apcworldmissions.org>