

Prepared as a Bride Adorned for Her Husband

Old Union Baptist Ministers' School
Thirty Eighth Annual Session

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Scripture Lesson: Revelation 21: 1 – 8.

Introduction: The title that God placed upon my heart for this lesson is, "Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband". There is a great deal of preparation that goes into adorning a bride for husband, when a wedding is to take place. The question I am pondering in my soul is: "**How prepared is the Church (adorned Bride) for her Husband (Jesus Christ)?**" The lyrics to a popular song utilized in our revival (or effort meeting) services are:

Prepare To Meet Thy God by J. H. Stanley

- I. Careless soul, why will you linger, Wand'ring from the fold of God?
Hear you not the invitation? Oh, prepare to meet thy God.
- II. Why so thoughtless are you standing, While the fleeting years go by,
And your life is spent in folly? Oh, prepare to meet thy God.
- III. Hear you not the earnest pleadings Of your friends that wish you well?
And perhaps before tomorrow You'll be called to meet your God.
- IV. If you spurn the invitation Till the Spirit shall depart,
Then you'll see your sad condition, Unprepared to meet thy God.

Refrain:

Careless soul, oh, heed the warning, For your life will soon be gone;
Oh, how sad to face the judgment, Unprepared to meet thy God.

We often sing this song to warn lost souls to be prepared to meet God, but how convincing are we as a Church Body when we appear NOT TO BE SPIRITULLY READY to meet God!

The Goal of this lesson is to help educate our True Churches (God Called ministers, Deacons & Lay members), on being prepared for the Final Wedding. John says, "...Behold (GK: idou – lo!, see!) [**see** what I've been telling you about for the past several thousand years] the tabernacle (dwelling place of God) is with men (after Adam's likeness, human race)..." (Revelations 21:3).

The TRUE Church is to be a prepared Church.

Define church: On page seven of CHURCH MANUAL, by J.M. Pendleton, the Church is defined:

“A church is a congregation of Christ’s baptized disciples, acknowledging him as their Head, relying on his atoning sacrifice for justification before God, and depending on the Holy Spirit for sanctification, united in the belief of the gospel, agreeing to maintain its ordinances and obey its precepts, meeting together for worship, and cooperating for the extension of Christ’s kingdom in the world.” In shorter terms, *“A church is a congregation of Christ’s baptized disciples, united in the belief of what He has said, and covenanting to do what he has commanded.”*

- I. Two Prepared Objects: An Adorned Bride (Church) & Her Husband (Christ, The Bridegroom)
- a. An Adorned Bride (Church): *“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ”* (II Corinthians 11:2). *“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, **and his wife hath made herself ready**”* (Revelations 19:7).
 - b. Her Husband (Christ, The Bridegroom): John the Baptist makes a Proclamation within (John 3:22 - 36) *“He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all”* (John 3:29 – 31).
 - c. Prepared: John the Revelator states that she has been *“prepared”* (GK: *hetoimazo* – *To make ready, provide*). The same Greek word *“prepared”* is used in John 14:3 – A prepared Mansion. Also, II Timothy 2:21: *“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and **prepared** unto every good work.”* & Hebrews 11:16, *“But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath **prepared** for them a city”*.
 - d. How: The scriptures state in Revelations 21:3, *“...John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down **from God** out of heaven...”* Brothers, **God has prepared** for His Son a beautified and **adorned** (GK: *kosmeo* – *garnished, trimmed, polished*) Bride.
 - **What is our Part (The Church of Today) in the preparation of the BRIDE (True church), or do we even have a part?**

II. The Scriptural Role of the True Church

- a. **Present the True Gospel of Jesus Christ by prayerfully occupying the pulpit with Holy Spirit directed Men of God (God Called Preachers). Jesus admonishes the church to:** “Go ye therefore, and teach (GK: *didasko* – teach, or make disciples) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19 – 20). **The theme of the churches message, PREACH THE CROSS of Jesus Christ!** “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (I Corinthians 1:18).
- b. Pastors Role – Deliver messages that God provides without sugar coating the message. The message must be with love and compassion for the sheep in which God has provided for you to under-shepherd. Jesus said to Peter (John 21:15 – 17), “...Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?” The master repeated the question three times, and followed up with, “...**Feed my lambs...Feed my sheep...Feed my sheep...**”, then He said, “...**Follow me...**”
- c. The Congregation (Church GK: *ekklesia* – a called out assembly of God) Role – Pray and seek a unified Holy Spirit direction, without quenching the Holy Spirit of Promise. When Herod Agrippa killed James the brother of John with a sword, and saw how it made the Jews happy, he had Peter thrown in prison. Acts 12:5, “...but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. And God heard and answered the prayers of the church! God released Peter and when he came to the house of Mary the mother of John Mark, what were they doing? Acts 12:12, “...where many were gathered together praying...” It did not say the entire church was praying, but many of them still were there praying and seeking the will of God! We don't know where some of them had gone, but we know that Sister Rhoda was still there! How many of us have a Sister Rhoda? She didn't even open the gate for gladness, but she ran and told the others at the church! Peter continued knocking and when they came to the door they were astonished! The infant church was experiencing growing pains. Our local churches today appear to be experiencing pain, but it does not appear to be growing as a whole. **Could it be that we are not as prepared as The Lord would have us to be?**

III. The Relationship between The Espoused Church & Her Husband

Unconditional Love & Unconditional Reverence/Respect: (Note: Recently Rhonda & I taught lessons at Fairview Church on Love & Respect by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs) In order for a church to be properly prepared for her husband, she needs to practice unconditional reverence/respect toward her husband, because the husband unconditionally LOVES His Bride. Ephesians 5:32 – 33 states, *“This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband”*.

In developing a marriage relationship, a man and woman will experience cycles that must be dealt with. The church relationship between Christ and His Bride appears to have experienced similar cycles.

- a. The Crazy Cycle (the church hamster in the wheel). A young church (although established many years) and still feeding on milk, not strong meat, is like a hamster on a wheel spinning and going nowhere in a crazy cycle of non-existence. The ultimate goal of the church should be to, *“...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..”* II Peter 3:18 (Read II Peter 3:10 – 18).
- b. Energizing cycle – When the church allows the omnipotent God to lead by The Holy Spirit, she will be energized to advance into ALL the world with the Gospel!
- c. Rewarded Cycle – Stay tuned for the trumpet and comfort each other with these words: *“For 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 together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (I Thessalonians 4: 16 – 18).*

The 7 churches of Asia: Which one(s) were a part of the prepared Bride for Her Husband?

- a. Church of Ephesus: The active church sound in doctrine, but deficient in Love.

Recommendation from Jesus, *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works...”* (Revelation 2:5).

- b. Church in Smyrna: The poor, but rich church. Recommendation from Jesus, "*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, **and I will give thee a crown of life***" (Revelation 2:10).
- c. Church in Pergamos: The church full of heresies. In other words, they practiced doctrines contrary to what Jesus and the Apostles had taught them. Recommendation from Jesus, Revelation 2:16: "*Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them **with the sword of my mouth***" [see Ephesians 6:17, ... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:...] Revelation 2:17, Jesus continues to advise, "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what **the Spirit saith unto the churches**; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it*".
- Note: "{A white stone...a new name written}" "Stone" is the Greek word *psaphos*, pebble, from *psao*, to rub. Though with many uses, in context the white stone may mean an amulet or charm, referring as a figure of speech to the Christian person. The name written upon this "white stone" is not the person's own name, **but that of Christ**. The person then may be the "white stone" on which the new name is written" (Word Pictures in the New Testament by A. T. Robertson).
- d. Church in Thyatira: The church of false prophetess. Recommendation from Jesus to those of the church who refrain from the false doctrine and keep working for Him to the end, "*...I will give power over the nations:... And I will give him the morning star*" (Revelation 2:26 & 28). Christ is the bright and morning star. The victor will have Christ himself!
- e. Church in Sardis: The church with a name, but is dead! Jesus said there were a few in the number (a few names) that had not defiled their garments. He said, "*... and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels*" (Revelation 3:4 & 5). Note: I detect a great deal of our churches in the same condition as Sardis, still not prepared as a whole, but by the Grace of God there a few names holding on to the "Old Paths"!

- f. Church in Philadelphia: The loyal church of brotherly LOVE. If there is a True Church that has met the requirements of "A Bride Adorned for Her Husband", The Church of Philadelphia has endured the gold tried in the fire. **Read Revelation 3: 7 – 12.**
- g. Church of the Laodiceans: The lukewarm, self-satisfied church that felt like they had everything they needed, but in reality they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. The church that may appear to the world as a church that has it all, yet lacks the very omnipotence of God's presence. Is the church you are a member of suffering from this type of (not hot, not cold) mentality? If the church is to be prepared when He returns, we must take heed to the commandment of Jesus, "*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent*" (Revelation 3:19).

Conclusion:

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready (GK: hetoimos – prepared): for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:42 – 44).

- Love and Respect - The Love She Most Desires ~ The Respect He Desperately Needs, by Emerson Eggerichs, 2004 ~ Thomas Nelson.