

The Royal Bridegroom -- Psalm 45

by A.B. Simpson

The sermon is about the love story of the Heavenly Bridegroom and His Bride, the Church, and the qualities that make them suitable for each other.

Scripture: Psalm 45:10

Topics: "Divine Love", "The Church as the Bride of Christ"

Description

A.B. Simpson explores the profound love between Christ, the Royal Bridegroom, and His Church, the Bride, as depicted in Psalm 45. He emphasizes that human love serves as a mere reflection of divine love, culminating in the ultimate union at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Simpson highlights the attributes of the Bridegroom, including His righteousness, faithfulness, beauty, and joy, while also calling the Bride to respond with attentiveness, separation from worldly ties, and total consecration. The sermon culminates in the promise of spiritual offspring born from this sacred union, urging believers to embrace their identity as the Bride of Christ and to live in the fullness of His love and grace.

Transcript

A little bit of broken glass is sufficient to reflect the full glory of the sun; so human love, a poor fragment at best, helps us to rise to that love divine of which it is the feeble type, the earthly foretaste of the Marriage of the Lamb.

The Bible is a love story, and the great objective point to which it moves forward is the rapture of the Bride and the Marriage Supper before the throne. In the beautiful story of Adam and Eve, the wooing and wedding of Rebekah, the sacred idyll of Ruth and Boaz, the exquisite poem of the Canticles, the parable of the Virgins, the Marriage of the King's Son, and the beautiful vision of the Apocalypse, we find it running like a golden thread. The earthly figure is only the shadow. The reality is the union of the whole Church with her glorious Lord and Head.

This is the theme of the forty-fifth Psalm. It is the story of the Heavenly Bridegroom and His Bride, the Church. There are three points in the prophetic picture on which we shall dwell: the Bridegroom, the Bride, and the offspring.

I. THE BRIDEGROOM

This is a picture combining the elements of strength and sweetness, so seldom found together in any human character. Some people are strong without being gentle; others are sweet without being stable. This picture combines both elements in perfect harmony, like the solid mountains with their ribs of adamant and their covering of moss, verdure and bloom.

1. The stronger qualities.

The first of these is righteousness. "You love righteousness, and hate wickedness." There can be no permanent love for one unless it is founded on esteem, and that esteem based on the sterling qualities of uprightness and moral worth. We cannot permanently love an unrighteous person. This glorious Bridegroom comes to us in all the attractions of perfect purity, uprightness, and infinite holiness. We can rest with implicit confidence upon His infallible integrity, and know that He is always right.

Truth is also essential to the confidence of love. We must be able to rest on the word of the one we love; not only upon his word, but upon his absolute sincerity, honesty, frankness, and faithfulness. We must know that he is thoroughly consistent and unchangeable in his love. Our Bridegroom is the embodiment of faithfulness. Written upon His vesture and upon His thigh are the words True and Faithful. His lightest word shall be fulfilled. His very thought is absolute fidelity. He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Even "if we believe not, yet he abides faithful: he cannot deny himself." Has He given us a promise? We can rest upon it forever. Has He given us a right to trust Him anywhere? He will never change. Has He encouraged us to lean upon Him? We may lay our whole weight upon His faithful breast and know that He will never fail us. Others may change, but He is changeless, our truehearted and everlasting Friend.

Victorious power is another quality. He rides forth as a Conqueror amid His enemies and ours. There is none that can stay His hand from working. There is none that can resist His will. Other friends may want to help us, but they are not able. There is nothing that He cannot do for His Bride. He could speak worlds into existence for her if necessary, and His lightest command would banish in a moment all her adversaries. He is her Vindicator and Defender, and none can dispute His will. His friendship means eternal safety, eternal victory. All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. Those that are the objects of His love can never have cause to fear. Who would not have such a Friend? And, oh, who would refuse to be His Bride?

He has kingly and sovereign power. He has supreme authority. He has the right to exercise His power without resistance. The eternal Father has invested Him with all authority and dominion. His will is supreme above all this vast creation, and all shall yet crown Him "King of kings and Lord of all." This is the Bridegroom that offers you His love.

2. His gentler qualities.

The first of these is His beauty. "You are fairer than the children of men." There are fair faces and noble forms among the sons and daughters of men, but He is fairer than them all, in the loveliness of His spirit, and even in the beauty of His person.

If His very name can thrill the heart with such delight, what must His person be? All the beauty of human loveliness came originally from His hand and must, somehow, be in His person. All that is beautiful in the sunshine and the stars, the loveliness of nature and the beauty of art, is but the reproduction of something which was originally in Him. A photograph can combine in one face the beauty of twenty, so that the single

picture expresses the charm of each different face combined in one. Ancient art sometimes gathered up in one single form the loveliness of man or woman in its Venus or Apollo; but, oh, what must that beautiful face be that can combine all the beautiful faces of earth lighted up by the glory of Deity!

Sometimes we catch a glimpse of the radiance that streams from it, but that face itself we have not seen except through the revelation of the Spirit as He brings the full conception of its loveliness to the heart. Then, language is too poor to describe the view of Jesus which the heart sometimes catches even here. A poor dying idiot caught a glimpse of its glory, and for weeks he could only cry amid his wandering thoughts as his face every few minutes would light up, "Yon lovely Man; I want to go to yon lovely Man." The great and good Dr. Anderson, of Boston, Secretary of the American Board of Foreign Missions, often said for weeks before he died, "I have such a longing to see the face of Jesus." Some day we shall see it, and it will be ages before we shall want to look away to any other.

His gracious words. "Grace is poured into your lips." What a singular beauty there is in the words of Jesus, even if there were no deeper reality behind them! When did poetry frame such sentences as some of the promises that fell from the Master's lips? "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Let not your heart be troubled." There is music in their very sound, and their sweetness can never die. But how much sweeter when they are spoken to the heart by the Holy Spirit! Oh, how the memory lingers on some of these gracious promises whispered to us in some hour of sorrow, turning all our darkness into day and lifting us up into praise and victory!

"In your majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness." This is more than beauty. This is grandeur, sublimity, loftiness, glory. But, notwithstanding, there is nothing in it that overawes or repels, for it is all so blended with meekness and gentleness that it attracts and rests us. How often we see these elements combined in the character of God: "Our Father," the gentleness; "who is in heaven," the majesty; "The Lamb," the meekness; "in the midst of the throne," the almightiness. He is a glorious King. He is a mighty Conqueror. He is the majestic God. But He is our Beloved, our Husband, and our Friend.

Sometimes we look at some distinguished man, or meet with some lofty personage, and yet we wonder at the freedom and simplicity with which we can think of him, because we know him as a friend is known. A little child can lie in the bosom of a queen and forget the monarch in the mother. And so the Bride can rest upon the heart of the King, and know that to her He is only her beloved. And so Christ will let us come as near, and even amid His transcendent majesty, see only the Savior who died for us and the Friend who loves us.

Gladness. "God, Your God has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows." There are some natures that are so joyous and radiant that we love to be with them. Their very presence sheds gladness all around them. Jesus, our royal Bridegroom, is full of gladness, and to be in His presence is to have fullness of joy. They who dwell in His presence are ever happy and triumphant.

In our darkest hours, could we but see His face, it would be lighted up with victory and rest, and we would wonder at our own fears and cares. There is nothing more beautiful in the picture of His life than the radiant gladness that ever shone upon His face, and lighted up His spirit even in the most trying hours. When all around seemed dark and threatening, He could rejoice in spirit, and, forgetting all His sorrows, could say, "Let not your heart be troubled." Even on the cross His joy triumphed over pain and death, and for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame."

Sweetness. "All Your garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia." Fragrance is the most exquisite and delicate of material things. It is the very soul of the flower. It expresses, better than any other earthly things, the idea of sweetness; that blending of joy and love which no other word could so well express; that quality which draws us to persons because of their loveliness, and sheds upon us such delight and comfort from their spirit. It is like the atmosphere of spices that filled the Holy of Holies; burning spices and clouds of incense.

It is that which makes the hour of prayer so sacred and sweet, and surrounds us in our closet with such a deep, delightful sense of the divine presence as nothing else on earth affords -- more delightful and more sacred than the closest intimacy of human friendship, and the most perfect fellowship of kindred hearts. This is the spirit of Jesus; and if we are clothed in His garments, it will be our spirit, too, and, like His, all our robes will smell of myrrh and aloes.

These spices are significant. The myrrh was used for the dead, and the aloe is a bitter plant. The myrrh tells of the sweetness that comes from self-crucifixion, and the aloes, of the bittersweet that comes out of sanctified sorrow, while the cassia speaks of the other qualities of loveliness which fill the Savior's heart and hold us to His bosom. Such is the royal Bridegroom, "the chiefest among ten thousand," "yes, the one altogether lovely." Well might the tongue flow as the pen of a ready writer; well might the heart glow with love and joy as he drew the picture of his glorious King and sweetest Friend. Many another heart has felt the same indwelling of the Savior's love, and often has sung or felt:

"Jesus, the very thought of Thee

With sweetness fills my breast;

But sweeter far Thy face to see,

And in Thy presence rest."

II. THE BRIDE

We have her call. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget also your own people, and your father's house."

1. She is to hearken. Why is this call so expressed? It is because the voice is so soft and low that if she does not hearken diligently she will not hear it. Jesus calls with a still, small voice; and if we are immersed in worldly thoughts and cares, we shall miss His call. The voice which calls the Bride is not a loud voice. The lover whispers his suit, and she must listen with open ear or she will lose the whispered words of love. How often have we missed the Master's sweetest voice because we have not hearkened!

2. She must not only hearken but consider. This word literally means "to sit down together." She must sit down with Him and let Him talk to her. She must let His message sink deep into her heart. She must think. Ah, how little we meditate and let the Lord's message sink deep into our spirit! True consecration and deep spiritual life must begin in contemplation and deep communion in the secret place of the heart. "Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still," is the Psalmist's appropriate word.

But she must also incline her ear. This means a willingness to hear; this means a direction of the heart to the call. Sometimes we refuse the call; we would rather not hear. We are afraid we shall be called away

from the world and sin, or from some choice of our own self-will; but if we will incline our ear, if we will be willing to listen and catch the voice of God, we shall receive His messages and be led into the closer place of His love and fellowship.

3. There must be a separation. "Forget also your own people, and your father's house." There is something that must be given up before she can know His love and come into the fullness of His blessing. Every high spring rises from a corresponding depth. God loves the place of sacrifice. The place the temple rose was the spot where Abraham had given up his child and his all to God; therefore God immortalized it forever. The place where redemption was founded was the cross of Calvary. So in each of our lives, the everlasting memorial which God is preparing for us will spring out of some experience of separation and sacrifice.

We cannot have both the earthly and the heavenly. How much are we to give up? All, and then God will give back in Him whatever He chooses to give, no longer as it was before, but from henceforth as linked with Him. Abraham received back Isaac, but not to be the same; he was no longer his Isaac, but God's.

It is not merely giving up, but a glad giving up, a turning of the heart and affections from every other direction because, of the greater attraction which draws us to Him, even as the bride no longer desires even the joys of home and the companionship of father and mother in comparison with the transcendent delight of her husband's society.

4. We have her consecration. "He is your Lord, and worship you him." She gives herself entirely to Him; she recognizes Him as divine; she worships Him. It is the dedication of all her being to One who is not only her Lover but her Lord.

5. Her garments. Much is said about her wardrobe.

First, her robes are all glorious within. It is her inner adorning that is emphasized. Outwardly and in the sight of men, she may seem common and unattractive, but her inner adorning is all glorious. Her heart is pure, her love is heavenly and divine, her spirit is as beautiful as His own.

"Her clothing is of wrought gold." Gold is the symbol of the divine. This tells of the holiness and the loveliness that are not mere human virtue, but the very nature of God Himself, and the work of the blessed Holy Ghost; the imperishable qualities that come not from human effort, but from the indwelling life of Christ Himself within the heart.

Not only is her clothing of gold, but it is of "wrought gold." Every garment is made for her especially. It is not ready-made clothing, but it is made expressly for her. It tells us of the grace which provides for each of us a heavenly robe exactly adapted to our own life. We are not all dressed alike, but God has given each of us a special provision of grace which He has for none besides. He adapts Himself to us with special care, and meets our every need with infinite provisions of His grace. He is ever working for us. His own loving hands provide for each emergency, and meet each new situation. As the actors upon the stage have different robes for each new act, which they have simply to put on and wear, so the grace of Jesus Christ has provided for each of us all things that pertain to life and godliness for every occurrence that meets us.

Again, we read of the raiment of needlework. This suggests to us the thousand little stitches which enter into our daily life, and the provisions of God's grace are as minute as the threads in your garments. There

is nothing too small for God's mercy to provide, not by hours even, but by moments. We may live on Him and take Him for each new moment as it comes.

6. We have her intimacy with Him and His delight in her. "She shall be brought unto the King." "So shall the king greatly desire your beauty." This is the best of it. What are her garments, her companions, her other joys, compared with the joy of His presence, fellowship, and love? We read of the virgins, her companions. We may be virgins, or we may be the Bride. She has companions.

"The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift." This tells of the business of the world. Tyre was the type of earthly commerce. It means prophetically that a day is coming when the wealth of the world shall be at the feet of the Bride of the Lamb, and we who have given up all for Christ shall control and possess what others now prize so highly and risk their all to gain.

Next, we have the entering into the palace of the King. "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace." Oh, how the vision rises before us: The bridal procession, the joyful songs, the glorious Bride, the welcome of the Savior, the happy meeting to part no more, the joyful greetings on that eternal shore, the entering never to go out again. Oh, will you, shall I be there?

There is another question: How are we answering the call now? "Hearken, O daughter, and consider." "Will you go with this man?" God help us to answer as did Rebekah of old, "I will go."

III. THE OFFSPRING

There is a glorious offspring from this marriage. "Instead of your fathers shall be your children, whom you may make princes in all the earth." We do not enter upon the meaning of this glorious prophecy, the generations in the ages to come that shall be born of the Bride of the Lamb; but it is enough for the present to know that all we can be as Christians, and all that we can do to bring others to Christ, is the fruit of our own union with the Lord Jesus. "That you should be married . . . to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Every soul that we bring to Christ ought to be begotten of our love, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and be the real offspring of our union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Not until we know Him in His deepest intimacy, as the Bridegroom of our heart, can we know all the fullness of His power, and can we be to others all that He would have us be.

Beloved, what place are you taking? The place of the virgins or the place of the Bride? The virgin may be pure, but the Bride is something more. She has the marriage love, the bridal robes, and the nearness which no others can know. This is the high calling which we may accept and which we may miss. May the Lord Himself enable us to understand the kingdom to which we are called, and not to come short of the highest place to which mortals have ever been raised, and to which angels dare not aspire! "Hearken, O daughter, and consider," a still, small voice is whispering to you. "Forget also your own people, and your father's house; So shall the king greatly desire your beauty: for he is your Lord; and worship you him."

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