

A Bride for Christ

by B.H. Clendennen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prioritizing God in our lives and being committed to His will, just like the servant in the story of Abraham and Isaac.

Duration: 58:28

Scripture: Genesis 24:1

Topics: "Bride Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his own experiences and the challenges he has faced in life. He talks about the importance of perseverance and relying on God's strength to overcome obstacles. The speaker emphasizes the need to trust in God's plan and not get caught up in arguments or distractions. He also highlights the significance of being attracted to the bridegroom, which represents the church's connection to God. Overall, the sermon encourages listeners to stay focused on their faith and trust in God's guidance.

Transcript

In his Discourse on Prayer, he said, If what you pray for isn't a serious desire of your heart, then praying is an illusion. You know, sometimes we bring prayer requests before the church, sick, lost, difficulties, and we don't sometimes enter into that as we should our hearts. That isn't the real desire.

I've thought of that so many times. I read that a long time ago. But if our heart does it, I never realized the church that I pastored for 35 years was a great missionary church.

The last year I was there, they gave over a half a million dollars that year in commissions, and it had quite an obligation financially, but we never spent a lot of time with money. We just believed God. But always in receiving that offering, it's a form of worship.

You know, to give to God, there's nothing more worshipful than your giving. So I would exhort the people, but I always said to the people, we're going to receive this offering now. I want you to lift your hands and agree with me that God will meet this need.

But I always said, if you're not going to give nothing, don't lift your hands. Don't pray on me what you're not going to do. Don't pray your burdens on somebody else.

In other words, if it's not your desire to do what we're praying, then it's best to be mute. That heart has to be into that, into everything. It's a wonderful thing when you learn that God doesn't deal with the head.

He deals with the heart. A lot of people have it in their head, but if Christ really come, they wouldn't know Him. They've got it all figured out how it ought to be.

Oh, how wonderful to know this Christ in the heart. You know, you have the old line churches, they know Him historically. Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, and a lot of them, they know Him.

Their only thought of Him is historically. They still got Him as a baby in His mother's arms on a cross. But that's not Christ.

We don't know that Christ anymore, said the Apostle Paul. The seminarian knows Him doctrinally. They know Him.

They know about the virgin birth. They know about the blood. But it's the heart, Jesus, that counts.

When you know Him with the heart, when you meet Him, and personally you do know Him, you've got nowhere until that happens. There's a lot of people know about Him. Theologically, they can discuss Him.

But personally, you must know Him. I'm going to read from the book of Genesis 24. Right here in this book of beginnings.

Everything is set forth here. The history of the human race. All is here in the first chapters of this great book.

But in this 24th chapter of the book of Genesis, our message this morning, a bride for Christ. A bride for Christ. I'm going to read first of all, I could read this whole, but it's a very long chapter.

So I'm going to read verses 1-6. Then we're going to move down the way. Father, we thank You now for this wonderful time, the prayer meeting this morning.

How rich! How wonderful to be in Your presence. The songs, the breakfast, the fellowship together. Thank You for those ladies that worked so hard.

Those that helped for the fellowship, the wonderful hospitality that has been shown us here. Bless them. Strengthen them.

God, we thank You. But bless now the reading of Your Word of God. Help us to speak and to hear.

In the name of Jesus. Genesis 24, verses 1-6. And Abraham was old and well stricken in age, and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things.

And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that roved over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and I'll make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell. But thou go into my country, to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure, the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land.

Must thou need bring thy son again unto that land from which thou camest? And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou, that thou bring not my son hither again. Now we move down to verse 10 and read through

24. And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed.

For all the goods of his master were in his hand. And he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down about the city by a well of water at the time of evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.

And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water. Let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink.

And she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also. Let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac. Thereby shall I know that thou hast shown kindness unto my master.

And it came to pass before he had done speaking that, behold, Rebekah came out who was born to Bethuel, the son of Melchah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her. And she went down to the well and filled her pitcher and came up.

And the servant ran to meet her and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my Lord. And she hastened and let down her pitcher upon her hand and gave him drink.

And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also until they have done drinking. And she hastened and emptied her pitcher into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water for all the camels. And the man wondering at her held his peace to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not.

And it came to pass as the camels had done drinking that the man took a golden earring of a half a shekel weight and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold and said, Whose daughter art thou? Tell me, I pray thee. Is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in? And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. Now finally we turn to verse 59.

Verse 59. And we're going to read down through verse 67. Verse 59.

And they went away Rebekah, their sister, her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. And they blessed Rebekah and said unto her, Thou art a sister. Be thou the mother of thousands of millions.

Let thy seed possess the gates of those which hate them. And Rebekah rose and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels and followed the man. And the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

And Isaac came from the way of the well at Lahora, for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at evening time. And he lifted up his eyes and saw and behold the camels were coming.

And Rebekah lifted up her eyes and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. And she said unto the servants, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master. Therefore she took a veil and covered herself.

And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent and took Rebekah. She became his wife.

And he loved her. And Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. What a wonderful story.

You know, Paul's prayer was that he might be a part of that bridal company. He spoke of it as a high calling of God in Christ. That is the ultimate end of redemption.

To be a part of that bridal company. To be there that day as a part of those that will sit on the throne of this universe with Christ. This was a prayer.

He said, not that I've already attained. You see, talking about the rapture, the first resurrection, the rapture of that church. He knew he'd be gone, but he knew his prayer was to be a part of that first resurrection.

To be a part of that bride of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, not that I've already attained, but oppressed toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ. And his constant fear was of being careless that he himself might be a castaway.

The Bible said there are many called to this wedding. Every born again believer has been called to be a part of that bridal company. But the Bible said, out of those many that are called, few there are that are chosen.

And it is the very test of life that makes us. Because all that will be a part of that have to prove themselves faithful in time. God is not going to allow that son to be married to a harlot.

There will be faithful people. No rebels will be there. Those that will be a part of that company will have demonstrated their faithfulness to Him in time.

They will in time have come to give themselves totally and absolutely. We are now betrothed to Him. And it is in this period of time that we demonstrate whether we are worthy to be a part of that great company of believers.

What a story this is! The Bible, the Old Testament is the school teacher that leads us to Christ. It is here. The greatest commentary of the New Testament is the Old.

Not Strong's, not anybody else. It is the Old Testament is the greatest commentary of the New. Great spiritual revelations are hid in those Old Testament stories.

Word pictures of earth there in the Old Testament are a revelation of heaven. And as we come to know that, everything is Christ in this Bible. Everything in that Old Testament.

When you come into the New Testament and Simeon now, perhaps a hundred and maybe ten years old, is in that temple waiting for the consolation of Israel and the salvation of God. Many children have come and gone in those years of Simeon. But when that child Jesus is brought for the dedication, Simeon went straight to it.

And as he stood there holding that child in his hands, the old man represented everything that had been. But that child was everything looked for. As they stood there, the transition from the old to the new.

One of the most beautiful stories of the Bible was there. God has never left Himself without a witness. As he and Hannah were there, and Hannah spoke of a company, a group, a handful of people had survived 400 years of darkness and are now there to witness the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Great spiritual revelations are hid in those stories of the Old Testament. The story just read is one of the richest revelations of the Old Testament. The whole of that 24th chapter of the book of Genesis has to do with the church of the living God, that birth of Christ.

In Genesis 24, we have the entire picture of the church from her birth to her rapture. Every single detail is set forth there in the story that I read. Abraham, who was a type of the Father, sends his servant to get a bride for his son.

They are a picture of the Holy Spirit. But you notice when he came and found Rebecca, he never said that God would prosper his way, but he would bless his master. He never one time thought of himself as a servant.

Everything he had to do was to deal with that master. You know, in our convention this year in Beaumont, I preached on Paul as a model citizen of that kingdom. Everything about him, when the Bible talks about him being death often, it wasn't that somebody is always trying to kill him with a sword.

But sickness, malaria, all kinds of things attack him. Near death. But his prayer was, I'd rather go to heaven, but if I'm needed here.

That was the only grounds he wanted God to heal him. It wasn't for any selfish reason. He just wanted to please and to be.

If in death I can father the cause of this master, then I want to die. But if to live fathers this cause, this is what you have here with the Holy Spirit in this great story. Every detail of the finding, securing, and the taking home of the bride is found here in this 24th chapter of the book of Genesis.

Since all things are written of poor time, and of our learning and admonition of you and I on whom the ends of this world is come, there's much to be learned here today. Much in this story of Abraham's sending to find a bride for Isaac. The first lesson is, the servant is totally committed to the Father.

There's absolutely no thought of himself. Ours becomes mixed. We begin to worry about things here.

Christ taught us implicitly, seek first the kingdom and His righteousness, and the rest of it is to be had. When our time becomes involved in ourselves, then somehow the loyalty has been divided. That's a very serious matter, folks, if we plan to be a part of that raptured church.

If we plan to be... Paul talked about a man, that a married woman could become more concerned with her husband than she was with God. And the married man could become more concerned with the wife than he was with God. And he spoke of it as being a very dangerous thing.

Because if you love houses, lands, wives and children more than me, God said, you're not worthy of Me. There comes that where everything... But I've learned, if I love God more than I love my wife, I can love my wife more than I could ever have possibly loved her. If I give to God what belongs to God, then what God lets me keep will always be more than it would have been.

90% is much more than 100%. If I give to God whatever belongs to God, then everything else that God allows me to use will be of much, much greater value. I could never have loved my wife as much as I love her had I not somewhere along the line made God first.

You know, my father let me know very early in life that your mother was here before you got here. She will be here when you're gone and you're just a visitor. He made me know that all along.

A man when I was about 14, he wouldn't know if I'm going to live off of him the rest of my life. He wouldn't know what you're going to do about your life. But I'm just saying, she was the queen of that house.

I've never in my life seen a man love a woman like he loved her. I've come in many a time when I'm 14 years old and she's sitting in his lap. Amen? Just sitting there.

He loved that woman. He died 30 years before she died. I took her out to dinner at 90.

And I said, why didn't a beautiful woman like you ever marry again? She said, I've never met a man like your dad. I've said a heap for my dad. Amen? But this Christ, this bride for Christ, that must be.

You see, there was nothing. He loved us children. There were seven of us.

But that was the queen of that house. I made the mistake one time. I didn't know it was in the house.

And I spoke in the wrong way to her. He called me in. And I'm standing over here.

No, no, come over here. Right here. He said, I heard you, what you said.

He said, that's your mother. Yes, sir, I know. I know.

No, you don't know the rest of it though. That's my wife. You don't talk to her that way.

I never did again. I never did anyway. I mean, she was the love of my life too.

But always that was first. And that's what God is saying to us. I must be first.

This must be the goal of your life. Nothing must be as important to you as being what He wants you to be. You know, the great lady of the Egyptian orphanage, I heard that wonderful lady when she was 85 years old.

And she told a very young lady, she was engaged to be married and her fiancé were sitting on the front seat of the church. And God spoke to her about Egypt and told her, I want you to go as a missionary. In that awe to pray, and He spoke to her.

And she'd come back and sit down by the young man. They were to be married. Her dream was to have children.

It was always her dream was to have children. And she'd come back and said, God has called me to Egypt. And He said to her, you'll go by yourself.

And that night, she had to make a choice. She made it for God. And she said, God, give me thousands of children.

Oh, you can never give to God without it coming back in abundance. If you give to God first in everything, above all, nothing must be. Whatever is greater to you than God is, is your God.

No matter what it is. If there's anything in your life that is more important to you than God, then that is your God. And you'll suffer the consequences of such a God.

Amen. Now, Abraham is the father, the servant. He was totally committed to the Father.

He knows exactly what the Father wants for a bride, for His son. Now, verses 3 and 4, He's given the instruction, don't take them except in this family. They have to be born again to be a bride.

Don't try to make something that's not in the family a part of the bride. He said, you make sure you get it from the proper place. He knew exactly.

He will not compromise a single detail. There's nothing about it. He will not trim it for anything.

If she's going to be a bride to that son, she's going to measure up in every single detail. There's nothing going to be compromised. He will not accept anything less than what the Father demands.

Now, the servant asked in verse 5, he said, peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me into this land. I'll find the right woman, amen, and I'll tell her what I want, and she will not follow me. Abraham's answer in verse 8 was, and if the woman be not willing to follow, then, then, then only, only then, shalt I be clear of thine oath.

Is she not willing? He asked the question, will I take your son there? Under no circumstance will my son ever return to that earth without a bride. He will not go back to that land without a bride. Doesn't matter, men, make it post-millennial, tri-millennial, whatever you want it.

I'm telling you, he's going to come back with a bride. If his feet touch this earth again, I'll be with him, folks. He said, under no circumstance, under none, will you take him back.

But he said, peradventure, if that woman won't come, then you're free of your oath. See, the Holy Ghost in us is searching for that bride. He finds those that would be, but if they won't come, I am free of the charge.

They of themselves have to be. Amen. We must invite, but we cannot force.

We deal, the Holy Ghost to us, deals with hearts, deals with the lives, but we cannot force men and women to come to Christ. That's a decision that you have to make. I met my wife after the war, little 18 year old girl, farm girl.

Amen. The first I ever met. I want to take home and keep.

And so I asked her to marry me. She said she would. And she said to me, it was about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, well, what day do you think would be proper? I said, don't believe we can get a license today.

We'll have to wait until tomorrow. You know, of course, she didn't agree with all that, but she wanted to take a little more time than I did, but I said, we just may as well wait until tomorrow because we'll never be able to get a license today. But when we deal with them, when the Holy Ghost through us talks to people, see, He's in search for a bride.

That's why He's here, to gather that bride. I've told you the story how many, many years ago in prayer, I just, seeking God, when you get serious, always a rapture. The coming of the Lord will become a very wonderful thing to that heart as you seek God.

That'll become very rich to you. I said to Him, how are you going to call all the names, all them people, in that moment, in the twinkle of an eye? He said, I'll call no name. I'll just call the Holy Ghost on them.

He's the one. Everybody He's in, He'll bring to the wedding. Don't ever forget that.

It is Him. If your heart is hungry, He may have to fill you 10 seconds before He comes, but He will fill you if you won't lose that hunger. Just don't lose that desire.

Never become discouraged. Always know, when seeking the Holy Ghost, that every trip to this altar, something wonderful happens. Don't let nobody sell you a cheap patent medicine on that.

You don't need a prayer language. You need the Holy Ghost. He'll bring the prayer language.

He'll bring everything that comes with it. But don't accept anything less than the reality. This, this, this is what keeps us, this is the going.

Without any fear of a contradiction, I tell you, that church will take place before the tribulation begins. That church will get out of here. Christ will not come back to this earth without a bride.

Verse 5, And the servant said, Peradventure, the woman will not be willing to follow me into thy land. Must thou needs bring thy son again to the land from which it come. Abraham said unto him, Beware.

That means you listen to me. Don't you hesitate. Don't you.

No stuttering. You look at my lips now. You read them.

Beware that thou bring my son there again. Two things are said. All that will be done to turn men to God has been done.

Nothing else. Christ died. Christ rose.

Christ lives. Nothing else will be done. Whatever else.

Men must make their decision now. Nothing else will be done. The second thing, Jesus will not return to this earth until He has a bride.

I'm going to meet Him in the air, but He will not come back to this earth until there's a bride. Every person born of a woman is invited to be a part of this bride. Christ died for all.

Amen. Only those who look for Him though are qualified. That is a diligent.

He's not after the careless. I said He's not after the careless. Only those.

This speaks of a diligence, folks. Not a careless life. You see so much carelessness in the church today.

They're up and down. In and out. You stir them up in a revival.

They commit themselves to prayer. Three each time. That's over with.

We fall back into that same rut. Those foolish virgins, the five wise, five foolish, when the bridegroom came, the first thing the foolish noticed, they had no oil. See, that's the Holy Ghost.

That meant they had been filled, but they become careless. They knew exactly what they were missing in that moment. The moment that that sounded.

They knew they're trying to borrow oil or buy it or somehow or another. Get it off of those that have the oil. But they knew what was lacking in that life.

They were pure. They were virgins. They still carried on with the form of holiness, but there was no life there.

And they were left behind. They had become careless in their lives. What he's saying is, those that see me, not those that look for me, that diligence.

It's like when Elijah is about to be taken up and the young man had followed him for eight long years, according to the historians. He had followed him for eight years. He just ignored him.

You stay here. I'm not staying nowhere. Amen.

You stay here. I'm going with you. Finally, on the other side of Jordan, the old man says to him, what do you want out of me? A double portion of what I felt in that cotton patch.

Amen. When you put that mantle over me, I want a double portion. There was a reality about his experience.

He wanted to press it all the way. He said, I want what I felt. A double portion.

He said, you've asked a hard thing, but the requirement, you must see me when I go. He never let a tree get between him and that old man. I don't know.

He may have come that day. He may have left that day. I don't know.

It may have been a week on the other side. I can tell you, never a tree got between them. They lay down to sleep at night.

He held on to that old man's shoe. If he rolled over, where are you going? What are you doing here? Amen. There was a diligence about that life, folks.

They never got caught up. No matter what comes in life, they're always aware that I'm looking for somebody, and if I'm not looking for him, I'm not going to see him when he gets here. I remember I heard this story that in St. Louis, one of the great zoos of the world, people come from all over the world.

They had everything there, but they had a great bald eagle in it that had his wings clipped. You'd go look at him. He'd be hanging up on the top of that cage looking out because they weren't made for a cage, folks.

Eagles were born to fly. They're not chicken. That's not a barnyard deal there.

They're made for the heavens. But one day, somebody left that door open, and that eagle got out. But it had been a long time.

And he flew for 35 miles and just completely exhausted. He fell out, and they captured him on a farm. Farmer took him and drove a stake in his cow pen.

In that pen, drove a stake and tied about a 15-foot rope on that bird, had him staked. He read in the paper that night that the zoo had lost its eagle. If anybody's seen him, let him know.

He called him, and he said, I think I've got your bird. Well, they come out the next morning, and when they went out, that eagle was walking, had his head up. He had walked.

He had hit the end of that rope and turned around and go the other way. When he hit the end, he turned. He never looked.

And the man come, and he said, that's the eagle. And he told his fellows, get him. And the farmer said, not until you answer some questions.

He said, I brought that eagle here. I tied him last night before night. And said, all of this time, he's never ceased to walk.

He said, I've got an old walker hound here, a hunting dog. He never saw anything like him. He's bristled up, barking.

He never looked at that dog. Never looked one time. He said, my little boy, I caught him throwing clubs at him.

Made him stop. He said, all these chickens, they're clucking. Turkeys are gobbling.

They never saw anything like him. But he never saw a chicken, never saw a dog, never saw my boy. What's wrong with him? He said, nothing wrong with him, sir.

But he wasn't made for this barnyard. He wasn't made to march in this manure. That isn't where he's supposed to live.

He flies in the top of the heavens. And he knows that one day, there's another eagle going to come through these Illinois skies. And said, he's going to squeal at him.

You'll see him, he'll squeal. And said, he'll either set him free or kill him. He will not let you keep him in this barnyard.

Because he wasn't made. Let me tell you something, folks. If you listen to all the murmur, the complaining of dead fish in the church, if you listen to all the rattle that's going around you, you'll never hear the shout when it comes.

You have got to keep an attention. I said, it's a diligence, folks. If you get caught up with the commerce of this world, and the rattling, the complaining of a bunch of dead people in the church, you'll never hear it.

All you'll hear is them dogs barking. I read a story when I was in Russia, how in the 30's, the best communication was the Morse Code. That's the fastest they were.

And they had an opening. Seven young men. It'd come down to seven of them.

They had them in a room. They'd question them. They'd question them over.

Some of them had experience. Others great studies. They had them.

Finally, the general said to them, you sit here. We're going to go in there. I'll call you in a little bit.

But you sit here while we'll tell you which one has become. Well, they sat there with soft music in that room. One of them got over by himself.

The other six over here argued. I believe I ought to get this. I've got more education.

The other said, yeah, but I've got the experience. I've worked this Morse Code. They're arguing, bickering, arguing, bickering.

The man over there by himself got up and went into the other room. And a few minutes later, the general come out and said, we made our decision. You fellows are dismissed.

And they said to him, sir, you said you was going to talk to me. I did. Threw the music.

Became the Morse Code. And said if you understand this, come in here. But you're too busy arguing.

You're too busy messing around with your theological discussion. You never heard what had happened. The man's already got the job.

Listen, folks. You can sit and argue with folks that are going nowhere, but you better watch for him. He's going to come.

In an hour you think not, Christ is going to come for that bride. Lookin' speaks of diligence. That means everything else is secondary.

The Holy Ghost calls all men, but only a few are chosen. Again, that's a generic term. It's male.

It's female. He calls all, but only a few. Abraham sent the servant out with ten camels laid with gifts, for all the goods of his master was in the hands of that Holy Ghost.

That just says if you've got Him, if you are full of Him, all the treasures of Heaven are within you. Everything is there. That is the kingdom of God.

A man, woman controlled by the Holy Ghost. Just stay full of Him. Everything is there.

All that pertains to life and godliness, according to the Apostle Peter, is in a man or woman by the Holy Ghost. This is a testimony of God. Amen.

Abraham, the Holy Ghost, has every treasure of the Father, all gifts, all graces, all power. The gifts were never shown or given until Rebecca submitted. Nothing.

He never gave her that bracelet until she submitted to what He had to say. Never was anything. God never bribes you is what I'm telling you.

Oh no. He never bribes. The world is always offering some kind of a reward.

But God offers you nothing until you submit. Once you have submitted, once that's a total commitment, then the windows open up to you. But never.

He doesn't give it to the half-hearted because God is particular not only about giving, but what you do with it after He gives. Oh, He does not waste. We toy, we play, but He does not.

Amen. The Holy Ghost, watch it. The gifts were never given.

After the camels were watered, He gave some of the gifts. He began to give her some of the gifts. The only attraction to follow Jesus is Jesus Himself.

He is that pearl of great price. There's no other attraction. Paul never attempted to dazzle sinners with gifts.

We've used those gifts as some kind of a drawing card to the ungodly or to the different. We was in a great revival on one occasion many years ago. And people come to the door.

The ushers watch the doors. And a couple of them come and said, Oh, the gifts function in here. You know, they come looking for gifts.

They said, Oh, the gifts function here? Well, He said, If you want a gift to preach in, the man's right in the middle of it right now. Oh no, that's not the gift they're looking for. And they said to Him, Well, it may.

I don't know what will happen here. We don't force that. But you see, you've got people running everywhere looking for a gift.

God never gives those gifts to pagans. You see, He never, listen, He never used them to dazzle with miracles. I will know nothing among them save Christ and Him crucified.

He never attempted to bring them in by any sleight of hand or any gift of prophecy or His ability to do anything. He lifted Christ. And if that don't draw you, it's better you're outside.

I said, It's better you never come in here if you're not drawn by that cross. So He never. The cross is the drawing power of the Holy Spirit.

If any man would be My disciple, let him take up that cross. Jesus had saved your life. You're going to lose this life.

The cross, you'll lose it. That's a hot world out there. I said, That's a hot world out there.

Camels drink a lot of water. I said, Camels drink a lot of water. That frail little girl said, I'll draw water for every camel you got.

Amen. It is something else. It is a hot world, that desert.

It's a long way across where they're going to where Isaac. But she drew the water. And they drink a lot of it.

Amen. And the attraction must be the bridegroom. Oh, if we could just come back to reality.

The attraction to the church today, we've gone so far to have rock and roll music in here. Amen. We'll get the devil beat in there trying to get somebody in.

I've been in churches with thousands of dollars spent to put those same things you see in malls, those violent game deals in there, trying to attract kids to what? I said, what are you attracting them to? This is not the church for heaven's sake. Whenever anything becomes the attraction, other than that bridegroom, the journey is long. It's hard from the call to the rapture.

There's a lot of desert between that call. Amen. Unless God takes you out instantly.

It's a long, long trek across that desert. Listen, nothing rougher than a camel. I said, there's nothing rougher than a camel.

I just see that young lady, she rode that camel all day. Finally, that night, got off of it. The next morning, she's so sore she can't get up.

I got off one time. I need you. I said to God, if you let me get off, I won't ever be up here again.

I won't ever be on top of this thing again. Somebody told me, and I believed it after I was up there, that the camel, a camel is a horse designed by a committee. And I think that's right.

Amen. But I promised God, I wouldn't be back up there no more if you let me down. It's a very rough animal.

Amen. She'd get up in the morning, she's so sore, she said, I just don't believe I can go any further. I just got more than I can handle.

I'm so sore now. Maybe we ought to stay here a couple of days. But oh, that servant, he'd pull out one of them gifts.

I mean, there was that earring with a four carat diamond in it. He said to her, he said, let me tell you something, daughter. This is nothing.

This is nothing what the daddy of that boy you're going to marry has. I'm going to tell you, every bit of that is going to be his. That's the only boy he's got.

All the rest of them are going to give a little offering and they'll be sent out of here. But he's got it all. Now, you get up and get on that camel.

I can tell you, you may be sore, it may be rough. Your feet may be blistered from yesterday, but I can tell you, tomorrow we're going to get there. He never, those gifts you see, they come.

They're not drawing cards to sinners. They're to encourage. We're here.

We're laboring. It's a difficult time. There's heat of the desert.

The enemy has attacked. We don't know, but then God breaks in. Oh, the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Somebody, we're lifted up. If it's really God, amen, a message comes. Faith is lifted up.

We're encouraged to face tomorrow. It's difficult. Don't believe I can go any further.

I've fought so long. You know, I said on Peleliu, I never had a flashback from that war. Never.

I come home, forgot it. Till two years ago, I was in Panama City for the first time. I've been there with him before, but for the camp meeting.

And a friend of mine gave me a book, Peleliu, The Forgotten Corner of Hell. And I began to read that. I could smell the blood, brother.

I could hear the, oh, I threw that thing down. Amen. I didn't read that no more.

But it brought, you know, it brought everything, everything. It brought everything back. Amen.

This, we fight long. The sword, we can't lay it down. You come to a point, I can't go any further.

There on that island of Peleliu, there were 1,100 in a battalion. Only 82 of us able to walk. That's all that's left.

Amen. I was able, the captain said to us, I'm sitting down, leaning up against an old tree. And the captain said, there's not enough of us now.

We've got to join another company. I never, nothing come out of this mouth. But I've been out there nearly three years.

I was shot once. I've lived in foxhole. I've lived some time off what we took away from the enemy.

I said, I just can't go. How much can you expect? I'm a human. How far can a man go? I got here when I'm 19.

I'm 100 now. And only three years have gone by. There's no way.

But you know, I looked. And I don't know whether it's destiny or what, but on a bush, there's an old Japanese flag. That old rising sun.

I saw that. And it hit me. If I don't get up and go, that flag may fly over my village.

I got this strength. You understand? God pulls that gift out. In that time, you feel like I can't go any further.

Then you'll let your boy get saved. Yes, sir. I can keep going.

Yes, sir. I can get up. I can move on.

I can do anything God wants me to do. I said, I can go. I can fight on.

I'd rather be dead than the ultimate end of what that is. Amen. I knew nothing about God, but that nation was bigger to me than my own life.

And if God isn't that away with you, you're going nowhere. No, no. He's not going to deposit anything with you until that becomes the whole goal.

Those who are totally taken up with the bridegroom, a man continues on in the desert as well as in the green pastures. And in those times when you're fighting hard, you don't know whether you're getting anywhere or not, whether anybody's hearing anything, but then they'll come. Out there may be some little lady.

They'll come and echo. God will let one of those gifts come. Amen.

You get that diamond ring on there, you say, I can go on. That's just a token of that treasure. That's a token of heaven.

This is what heaven's going to be. All of a sudden, it's a reality. I can fight on.

I can believe on. Why are the gifts all along that hard, hot journey? The servant told Rebecca, the wonders of our Master's household. You just don't know, girl, what you come into.

This man, Abraham, he's got a ranch, five or six hundred miles long. I'm telling you, girl, from river to river, it's His. You're coming into a heritage here that's unbelievable.

Get back on that donkey. Get back on that camel. We're getting on down the road here.

Now, don't you get discouraged on me. Amen. The gifts encourage by demonstrating the truth of the message, a true manifestation of the gifts of God, are a demonstration of the presence of the Bridegroom.

Any time that gift is a reality, Christ has showed up in a living way in that house. I said He showed up. When things are difficult and the camel is rough, just know at the end of that journey is God.

Hallelujah. At the end of that journey is God. I must walk on.

I cannot sit down here. There's no place to stop. My feet are blistered.

This sand is hot. But I must go on. Paul said, All Asia has forsaken me.

Demas has left me. He rattled off. It's enough to kill any man.

I said it's enough to kill any man. But he said, I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith.

You know what that meant? I'm still a Christian. They've beat me. They've hounded me.

They've left me. The people I helped hated me. But I've kept the faith.

I've finished my course. He said, There's a crown laid up for me. He always saw.

He never lost sight of where he was going and what there was at the end of that journey. Amen. It's not only dangerous, it's fatal to become more interested in the things of God than you are in God Himself.

It's a fatal thing. You see the Ephesian church. There you have the record of the whole history of the church of God from Ephesus all the way to Laodicea.

The greatest church maybe was Ephesus. I read Edgar Bethany, the historian said, at one time it had 100,000 active members and 100 associate pastors. I don't know how he got the record.

I'll just tell you what I read. I do know it was some more kind of a church. But there came a time when that great church was more in love with the work than it was with the Christ.

And he said, I'm going to take the candlestick out. You'll have to get back. I appreciate you know, a man says he's an apostle and you found him to be a liar.

I appreciate all of that. You give a lot of money to missions. But I didn't worship any money to missions.

It's me that's the object. And I'm no longer the center of your life. And I am going to remove the candlestick unless you come back around and get this thing in line.

I must be first. I'm the object of it all. And if I ever cease to be, it's over with.

And I'm not going to marry somebody who's got their eye on somebody else. You know, I see women. Man with his wife.

She's walking down the street dressed in less clothes than I'd let my wife nearly go to bed with. I said, my, if you want everybody else to see who you are, marry one of them. I can tell you, Christ, He isn't going to have that kind of a bride.

There are going to be those for His eyes only. My daughter said to me, you know, Dad, she said, you go on. Of course, her and her mama, they like this.

She said, I'll call Mom. We go somewhere shopping. I see a beautiful dress.

I said, oh, I think this will look good. She says, I don't know what your dad did think about it. See, she don't care what you think about it, sir.

She cares what I think about it. That's what Jesus said. I don't care what they think.

You don't be like them. It's me you're to please. In everything you do, I am the one.

You're mine. See, I married her 58 years ago. She's my girl now.

Not somebody else's. Amen. And her life, whatever she said, Mom said, she won't buy nothing till you look at it.

I said, well, of course. I'm the only one she cares for. If you don't like it, she don't care.

It doesn't bother her. Amen. Whether you like it or not.

If I like it, she likes it. That's the way it ought to be. If Christ likes it, that's the way I want to be.

I'm going to marry up with Him. I want this thing to be right. Now, it's not only David.

Isaac, the bridegroom, was walking in the field, looking, longing for that bride. Amen. She's come.

He's out there in the evening time. He has a heart. He's looking.

He knows that servant's going to come back. When Rebecca saw him, the Bible said she lighted off that camel, had her interest been the golden earrings she had rode by him, never saw him. She said, who's that man in the field? That's the man you're going to marry.

She lighted off that camel. See, if she had been more interested in golden earrings and bracelets, she would have rode straight by him. That's what most people are going to do.

They're more interested in what He does for them than He Himself. Amen. They're more interested.

Time He don't do anything for them, they'll leave Him. I said they'll leave Him. But when the interest is Him, the other things are incidental to it all.

I said they're incidental to it all. Amen. Jesus is waiting.

He walks, I believe, the fields of heaven longing for that bride. Much of the so-called church will not see Him because they're only interested in what Christ has. They're only interested in what He does for them.

They're not interested in He Himself. The love of things is fickle. When things are gone, the love goes with them.

Amen. That's a fickle thing. The love of person will be able to withstand the long, long camel ride.

It's the love of a person. You know, when my wife and our son was born, I've run the drilling ring. It was one of the worst winters I ever saw in Alex, Texas.

It dropped down to sub-zero. There were icicles on that trailer house all the way to the ground. And I had to work midnight.

I had to work barracks at that point in time. And I'm going to be up 90 foot off the ground that night. I knew a wise would be pulling that pipe out of a hole.

I remember coming out and didn't know nothing about God at that point. Found Him four months later. But I went outside and when I locked that trailer, I said, Bert, that's me.

I said, I don't like you this much. If it wasn't for two people inside there, they'd look for them in other dirt can tonight. I just wouldn't be out here.

I've been a lot of places, folks. I said to myself, if it wasn't for Him, I wouldn't be here. Oh, no.

I wouldn't eat this if it wasn't for Him. Yes, sir. I wouldn't sleep in this bed if it wasn't for Him.

I wouldn't be here. But see, it's that love for that person. Pastored that church 35 years.

Some of its greatest times were its weddings. I would never have married Sam. I just married people in the church.

Right. People come. Me wanting to marry them, I said, oh, go down to Chester.

There's a piece, you know, somewhere. I'm not in the marrying business, but I sure married these children in this church. Oh, I'll meet a girl in there.

Oh, some of the wonderful times. You've been in that church. It's got a high vaulted ceiling, red carpets, red windows.

It's a nice place. Never was good enough. Come time for that wedding, oh, never.

Mama come in there, had to dust everything off, put a candle on a pew, bouquet on every window. I mean, everything had to be perfected. Come in there one time, they had trees ten foot high on the platform.

You know, just well decorated. Had a bird over chirping one corner. I said, why don't we have it outside? You know, just everything.

Nothing, never was right. Everybody else walked down that carpet. When that girl's going to walk, he rolled that white deal down.

I remember, you know, it would come the night of that wedding. She'd have, she'd have that hairdresser to repack that hair, everything. Me and that boy come out of that side room.

We always come out, come out, his best man, him. I said, now when we get up, I'm going up on the platform, I'll be standing, I said, middle aisle, you know, so we stand there. I said, son, you stand right there.

You, your best man, you just come back over there, over here. I said, don't pay any attention. I don't know why all this is here.

There's going to be a lot of traffic. I don't know how this got in. Going to be a lot of traffic.

Going to be seven or eight girls, seven or eight boys, probably a little boy or girl come down, fringing for hours around. I said, I said, I don't know how that all got in. Don't let that distract you.

Just sit there. It'll get by after a while. But I said, that organ's going to be playing one tune.

But I said, when you hear that organ stop, when it stops, I said, now you send me your attention. Because I said, in a minute, it's going to start playing. Here comes that bride.

I said, that father's going to come around that corner, that girl of yours. You know, folks, all the weddings. That bride had made herself ready for that moment.

There's a line in your Bible that said that bride had made herself ready. All of it. All the weddings I've performed.

Never saw one come out there in tennis shoes in my life, brother. Mm-hmm. Not a pair of blue jeans.

No, sir. When she rounded that corner, whatever they had to work with, I promised, that's the best you'll ever see it, son. Oh, I said to her, you watch, son.

You'll never see her more beautiful when she makes it. they're not supposed to see her for 24 hours. You know, that's tradition.

But I said, you'll never see her more beautiful than when she makes it around that corner. Everything has been done. Have to remove everything.

She is going to be perfected when she comes around that dad, come around that corner. Well, I want to tell you this morning, I believe if heaven need any decorating, it's already been done. I believe there's a thousand million angels tear upon tear, and God's Son waits at that altar, waiting for that Father to make the turn for that bride on His heart.

There won't be a rebel in it, folks. No, no. When it makes that turn, there won't be a rebel.

Whoever's there wanted to be there more than they wanted life itself. Whoever is in that bridal company will have wanted to be there more than they wanted life themselves. Every aspect of life was watched.

Is this what he wants? Is this what he wants? That woman, if she loves that man, and he loves that, then life is geared not to what other people think, but what does she think? What does he think? He's my life. She's my life. And when Christ becomes that, then every thought, every thought, when they make that round, there will not be a rebel in that crowd.

We used to sing an old song, Lord, don't let me fail. I want to make that bride. When my way is drear, keep me by Thy side.

When my way is dark, always let me see something in my life that Thou hast done for me. Do you want to be a part of that company? Then stand with me. Let the lifting of these hands be as an evening sacrifice and a total surrender to this Christ tonight.

Hallelujah. Just lift those hands to God. Holy.

Holy and righteous Father. Mercy, mercy, mercy. Thank you.

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