

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

by F.J. Huegel

The sermon emphasizes the importance of union with Christ, representing a radical break from the old life and a new life in Christ, where believers are dead to sin and alive to God.

Duration: 40:27

Scripture: Mark 16:20, 2 Corinthians 11:2-3, Galatians 6:17, Ephesians 2:4-5, Revelation 19:7-9, Revelation 19:11, Revelation 19:14

Topics: "Eternal Marriage", "Gospel Outreach"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the symbolism of the union between the heavenly bridegroom (Jesus) and the bride (the church). The miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana sets the tone for the series of miracles performed by Jesus during his time on earth. These miracles, such as healing the blind, raising the dead, and delivering the demon-possessed, represent Jesus turning the bitter waters of life into the wine of a heavenly experience. The preacher emphasizes the significance of this symbolism for Christians and highlights the responsibility that comes with being part of the bride of Christ, including sharing in the task of spreading the gospel to the world.

Transcript

We're at Thy feet, blessed Redeemer, deeply conscious of our utter insufficiency. Remembering Thy word, without a say, without me, you can do nothing. Lord, we're just glad it's like that.

For then we can, in our weakness, our utter insufficiency, cast ourselves upon Thy mercy. Remembering that beneath are the everlasting arms. Oh, we do so want that Thy name shall be glorified in these gatherings, in every moment, in every word.

Thy name shall be glorified, and the saints shall be edified. Oh, may that river of water of life, clear as crystal, which proceeded from the throne and from the Lamb, may that river of life invade our hearts here tonight. And in these days of communion, one with another around Thy word, we ask it, Father, in the blessed name that's above every name, in the name of Jesus our Lord.

Amen. I tremble a bit over the message that's upon my heart tonight, and yet I'm trusting the Lord will guide and that you will be praying that he might open to us the door, the door of utterance and the door of understanding, the marriage supper of the Lamb. My Bible here I have open in the 11th chapter of the 2nd epistle to the Corinthians, where we read in verses 2 and 3, 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.

But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your mind should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. And then here in the book of Revelation, the 19th chapter, where we read of the marriage supper of the Lamb. Let us be glad, beginning with the 7th verse, and rejoice and give honor to him, the Lord God omnipotent, as it is in the 6th verse.

For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready, and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. For the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

And he saith unto me, These are the true saints of God. We heard read this evening a portion of the 2nd chapter of the gospel according to St. John, where we have the story of the marriage in Cana of Galilee, where the Savior wrought his first miracle, turning water into wine. This miracle has been cause for great misgivings, controversies.

There are a great variety of opinions and of interpretations regarding this sign. On the one hand, there are those who are shocked, unable to understand why the Savior should have wrought as he did, turning the water into wine. Then on the other, there are those who would soften the word.

They assure us that it just could not have been wine. It must have been simply the fruit of the vine, as we are wont to say, the juice of the grape. But I think, friends, there is no need on the one hand of being surprised, if not shocked, nor on the other of somewhat twisting the word.

That is, if we take this in the light of the scriptures as a whole, and in the light of the customs of that day, the biblical ideal really is not absolute abstinence, but temperance. We, as evangelical Christians, have concluded that it is best to be teetotalers in view of abuses which have come down through the centuries. We will have nothing to do with wine.

When I was there as a chaplain in World War I, I asked for water at a hotel, and the hotelkeeper was shocked. What do you want with water? Well, I want to wash. Well, we don't use water.

I want water to drink. He said, we only use water to wash with. We drink wine.

And I saw no abuses, nothing contrary to right order. We read that Mary, becoming aware of the embarrassment of the host, turned to Jesus, saying, They have no wine. The Savior replies, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.

Here we have, friends, the key which unlocks the treasures that are found here in the Word. This is the key. Mine hour is not yet come.

Marcus Dodds, that great Bible commentator, tells us that with these words, the Savior marked his steps on the way to the cross. They reverberate through the pages of the gospel according to St. John. And when at last the shadow of the cross falls upon the Savior's pathway, and he finds himself in the upper room with his disciples, he says, The hour is come.

Father, glorify thy Son with the glory which he had with thee before the foundations of the world. The hour is come. We see from the manner in which the Savior expressed himself that that scene so lovely, on the one hand, the handsome lad so proud, and on the other, the damsel so beautiful with her crown, her head

crowned with flowers, a crown of flowers.

Looking upon the scene, the Savior's thoughts go far, far away to the cross. What relation could there be between this joyous scene, so very lovely, a marriage feast, and the cross? Ah, it was that the Savior, looking upon this young man and this young lady, about to be united in the bond of, holy bond of wedlock, could not but think of how he had come from heaven, leaving the throne, in search of a bride. And full well he knew that this bride could not be found until he had gone to the cross.

That she would be taken from his wounded side, even as in the case of the first Adam, the bride Eve was taken from Adam's. And so the Savior's thoughts turned to the cross. Fine hour has not yet come.

This is the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. You will recall Isaiah's words, even before the Savior's coming, thinking of Israel and her maker. Isaiah uses these terms, her maker, Israel's husband, Israel the bride.

We find it in that great psalm, Messianic Psalm 45, that appears, you will recall, in the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, where we have the Father speaking to the Son, saying, Thy throne, O God, forever. And here in the 45th Psalm, we read of the Queen, the bride, at the King's right hand, clad, clothed in the gold of Ophir. Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.

The scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity and wickedness. Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy pillows.

All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes in Cassia, out of the ivory palaces whereby they have made thee glad. King's daughters were among thy honorable women, upon thy right hand did stand the Queen, in gold of Ophir. The Song of Songs has been taken through the centuries by the Church as a figure of the union that exists between the Lord Jesus Christ and his own, his Church, Solomon, the type of Christ saying, Thou art fair, my dove.

There is no spot in thee, my friend, my spouse, my bride, replying to the bride and saying, I am my beloved. And my beloved is mine. The Savior, you will recall in his parables, was wont to speak in these terms.

A king held a marriage feast for his son and sent out invitations that friends might come to the feast. And Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, which is the great epistle of the Church where the Church is defined, speaks of the head as the bridegroom, and the body the bride. You will recall his words in the 5th chapter, how he speaks of marriage and the exhortations there regarding the husband, his manner of dealing with the wife.

And he goes on through the chapter saying, Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. And so he goes on. And then suddenly he cries out and says, No! He says, This is a great mystery.

I speak concerning Christ and the Church. And then when we come to the closing book of the Bible, you will recall the Savior's word to the Church in Ephesus. I have against thee, somewhat against thee, for thou hast left thy first love.

And finally, in chapter 19, this great event toward which the Church moves, this great consummation of the ages, the marriage supper of the Lamb. Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him, the Lord God Omnipotent. For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. For the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Lesser are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And so it was very natural for the Savior, in that hour there, at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, greatly moved. You know, I can't go to a wedding without reaching for my handkerchief.

The mystery of it. And there is something about it that always seems to take you to that which, according to the word that we have just read in Ephesians, is symbolized. The union between the heavenly bridegroom and the bride.

And so Jesus is greatly moved as he looks upon this lovely scene. The Savior's humiliation. What was he doing? Opening the eyes of the blind, healing lepers, lifting up the lame, raising the dead, delivering from satanic oppression the demon-possessed.

What was he doing? Ah, friends, he was turning the bitter waters of life into the wine of a heavenly experience. I think perhaps we evangelicals, it's not true of all the evangelical bodies, who use grape juice in the communion service have perhaps lost something of its significance. You know there are those, our Episcopalian brethren, our brethren of the Lutheran communion, the Plymouth brethren, there are many groups that look astounded, shocked over the fact that there are those who do not use wine.

It's a symbol of the new life in Christ. Now with this background, let us turn to at least three of the practical implications of this lovely symbol, which is really the deepest in all Holy Writ regarding the union between the Church and her Head, Christ Jesus the Lord. In the first place, the fact that we have what Paul brings out in his epistles, that there is for the believer who enters by faith into union with his Lord and Savior, a break so radical, so complete, so utter, so absolute, well, Paul speaks of it as death.

We are commanded to consider ourselves dead, to sin dead to the world. Dead we are, dead in the body of Christ, Paul tells us, to the law that we might be married to another. I'm so glad that in the English version it reads in this fashion, in the Spanish it reads, muertos a la ley en el cuerpo de Cristo para que seamos de otro.

We are dead to the law that we might be to another, that we might be united. Here in this King James version it reads that we might be married to another. Think for a moment what it meant to the Shulamite of the Song of Songs, this shepherdess, this humble maid of the country, in her simple life, taken to the palace.

Solomon falls in love with her and she is wedded and taken to the palace. Think of the utter change that came into the life of this maid. Well, it was really death to her world that she might enter into the world of her royal spouse.

So it is in the Christian life, he that is in Christ, is a new creature. Old things have passed away, all things have become new. Friends, we should think of the Christian life in these terms, especially in the days in which we live.

Ah, they are indeed drab days. They are indeed tremendous days of satanic oppression in all the world. Days when men's hearts are filling them for fear of the things that are to come.

We ought to go back to this deepest symbol of the Scriptures and think of our Christian walk in terms of union with the heavenly bridegroom. A king, the Savior said in one of his parables, sent forth the word, he was to hold a feast, a marriage feast for his son. We are at a feast! You will recall how the Pharisees came to Jesus complaining because his disciples did not fast.

Walk around with long faces like the disciples of John. They couldn't understand. And the Savior's reply was, can the children of the bride chamber fast while the bridegroom is gone? And then in the second place, and this changes the picture a bit, does it not? It's not all a feast.

This union between the heavenly bridegroom and his church represents for his church great responsibility. It can't be otherwise. This maid, shepherdess, taken to the palace, Solomon's bride, need not say, must enter in to a sharing of the king's responsibilities.

And this brings us to the Christian's walk and life and testimony. Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. And, Lord, I am with you.

This is our mutual responsibility. This is our task. I share with you now my passion.

Go ye into all the world and, Lord, I am with you. And you will recall how Mark closes his gospel by saying that the disciples went, yes, everywhere, and the Lord working with them. We cannot evade this without greatly weakening the ties between ourselves and our Lord.

We see it in Paul. This explains those strange utterances that we find in Paul's epistles regarding his experiences. I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

I fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake. I am crucified together with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

And then, finally, and this brings us again to the joyous aspect of the feast. Could the bride possibly lack anything with such a head, such a husband, such a bridegroom? Could she lack anything? Does this not shame us? It should humble us into the very dust for our anxieties and our frettings and our worries and our cares and our fears and our doubts. Regarding the future and regarding our needs, my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

It really should be the end of all of our fears and doubts and anxieties. And here we have the secret of victorious Christian living. The Christian finds himself, it couldn't be otherwise, the Christian finds himself seated in heavenly places with his Lord.

In Colossians chapter 3 we read, If ye have been raised up, if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth, for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Yes, the change is just that radical.

Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall he also appear with him in glory. Now wine is the most fitting symbol.

Fill the waterpots that save your bed the servants with water. And they fill them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast, that they bear it.

When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the servants which drew the water knew, the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now. We have a lovely custom in Mexico of celebrating marriage anniversaries in the church.

I was invited to give the message only a few weeks ago, three, four months ago, it may have been that long, at a fiftieth anniversary, wedding anniversary, a dear friend, a pastor and his wife. And I wondered, well now, what can I say? Well I finally settled down on the second chapter of the gospel according to John. And I assured a vast audience, my friends, that wine had never been lacking in the home of this dear pastor.

The wine of our heavenly life. And so let us be much in prayer that in these days, friends, we may feast as never before. For it is our privilege, the church is the king's bride, to sit at his side in heavenly places.

O gracious Father, we thank thee for this, the first miracle the Savior wrought there at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee. How very, very significant it was in the light of all that took place, the Savior going to the cross that he might find his bride, taken as she was from his wounded side. And Father, we thank thee, without us tell us in such clear tones, that together with Christ we've been raised up, that we might sit with him in heavenly places.

May it be so in these days, and in the coming days, until we are called, or until it could be, Father, the Savior should come for the bride. For we humbly ask it in his blessed name. Amen.

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