

Introduction:

- I heard a pastor recently share an uncomfortable experience at a wedding. Everything was going along as planned until it came time for the minister to ask that all-important question of the bride, "Do you take so-and-so to be your lawfully wedded husband?" Just then, for some unknown reason, there was an incredibly long and unbelievably awkward silence. No one, at the time, knew for sure if the bride had just zoned out for a moment, or if she was actually contemplating how she wanted to answer. I certainly hope it was the former, but not being a close friend, I never found out.

APPLICATION: No groom deserves to have a hesitant bride on his wedding day. This incident made me think of how the Church is the Bride of Christ, and how we can be reluctant in committing ourselves to Him. And just as it would crush a groom for his bride to have second thoughts about her commitment, it must be so disappointing to Jesus when we hesitate in our commitments to Him. The good news, however, is that He doesn't turn and walk away. He waits patiently--however long and awkward our pause might be--always remaining at the altar, always waiting for us to say, "I do." *"Let us be glad and rejoice, and let us give honor to him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself"* (Revelation 19:7, NLT).

- Are we in it for Him or in it for us?

I. The Father's Search

A. Pick a beauty.

1. *"Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be **like us...**"* (Genesis 1:26, NLT)
2. *"For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, ..."* (Romans 8:29, NLT)
3. *"... And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more **like him** as we are changed into his glorious image."* (2 Corinthians 3:18, NLT)
4. *"and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,"* (Colossians 3:10, NKJV)

B. Pick a winner.

1. God is not going to choose a 'loser' bride for His Son.
2. She must be beautiful, strong, gifted, and able to carry authority.

C. Pick to Advance Your son.

1. In the OT kings/fathers chose brides to advance the family as a whole.
2. Alliances were made between kings by the marriages of sons and daughters.
3. God wants a bride for His son that is compatible and able to reign with Him.

D. In the Garden of Eden was a winner! At the Marriage Feast is a winner!

II. The Son's Desire

A. That the Father chooses Well.

1. IE. "I hope dad was in a good mood." "I hope he was no rushed."
2. No the Father had a splendid plan to obtain a perfect bride for His Son.

3. Here is how the Son feels about Fathers work: *"You are altogether beautiful, my darling, beautiful in every way. ⁸ Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, come with me from Lebanon. Come down* from Mount Amana, from the peaks of Senir and Hermon, where the lions have their dens and leopards live among the hills. ⁹ You have captured my heart, my treasure,* my bride. You hold it hostage with one glance of your eyes, with a single jewel of your necklace. Your love delights me, my treasure, my bride. Your love is better than wine, your perfume more fragrant than spices."* SoS 4:7-10
- B. That The Bride Really Loves Him
1. Companion - *"Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.""* (Genesis 2:18, NLT)
 2. Honors Covenant - Mal. 2:14 declares that marriage is a covenantal relationship. It is a formal agreement between two people to be for a lifetime. When you walk in covenant you position yourself for blessing! Both receiving and in giving.
 3. One Flesh - bone of my bone flesh of my flesh. Get 2:23-23. Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. She was taken from Adams flesh, like church came from Christs side.
- C. That The Bride Will Rule with Him
1. Rev 3:21 To him who overcome I shall grant the right to sit with me on my throne.
 2. *"For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and **seated us with him** in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus."* (Ephesians 2:6-7, NLT)
 3. *"If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us."* (2 Timothy 2:12, NKJV)

III. The Brides Joyous Response

- A. She is ready for the marriage feast!
1. Feasts are made for *sěḥōq* (Eccl 10:19), laughter! Payne, J. B. (1999) R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 763). Chicago: Moody Press. You feast because there is joy and laughter!
 2. *"We were filled with laughter, and we sang for joy. And the other nations said, "What amazing things the Lord has done for them.""* (Psalm 126:2, NLT)
- B. She is prepared for His return. She is highly anticipating this day!
1. Because she is betrothed *"I hope you will put up with a little more of my foolishness. Please bear with me. For I am jealous for you with the jealousy of God himself. I promised you as a pure bride to one husband—Christ. But I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted, just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent."* (2 Corinthians 11:1-3, NLT)
 2. *"Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure."* (1 John 3:2-3, NLT)
 3. Rev 19:7 says she has prepared herself. Garments, hair, jewelry, shoes, cologne, etc.

- C. She is waiting.
1. She will not be caught off guard by her groom like a 'thief in the night.' She is prepared, she is watching, her bridal party is watching with her. MT 24:43; 1 Thes 5:2,4; 2 Pet 3:10.
 2. Mt 25 extra oil!
- D. She welcomes her new name. *"The nations will see your righteousness. World leaders will be blinded by your glory. And you will be given a new name by the Lord's own mouth."* (Isaiah 62:2, NLT) Rev 2:17.
1. 'Pet name' - Honey, pookie, babe, baby. Even God is into this stuff!
 2. God calls His Bride Hephzibah - which means...my desire is in her/My Desire!
 3. Your land will be called Beulah - which means married.
 4. This is God speaking to Israel! A shadow of the reality to come.
 5. Rev 3:12 "I will write on him/them my new name."
 6. In scripture people were given new names at significant historical markers in their lives. IE. Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel, Sarai to Sarah, Cephas to Peter
 7. A new name gives her a new identity. She now has His identity! His home is her home. His people are her people. His kingdom is her kingdom!
- E. She is crowned with His Glory Is 62:3
1. *"and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."* (Matthew 6:29, NKJV)
 2. *"And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:"* (John 17:22, NKJV) The glory she has is the glory He has because it was given by the Father!
 3. *"It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power."* (1 Corinthians 15:43, NKJV) 2Cor 3:18
 4. *"He gave up his life for her²⁶ to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word.²⁷ He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.* (Eph 5:25-27).NLT
- F. She is lovesick! Jesus comes to her. She welcomes Him. She is overcome by his love and grace. Basically saying, "Come take possession of my life! I am yours!" I want all of you and I want you to have all of me!
1. Lovesick means we want Him most! Nothing the world compares or enters the deal!
 2. Our love sick heart moves His heart!
 3. It is here that this lovesick one is asked two questions by the young women; that is of the Bride:
 - a) Why do you love Him so much? 5:9
 - (1) *"His mouth is sweetness itself; he is desirable in every way. Such, O women of Jerusalem, is my lover, my friend."* (Song of Solomon 5:16, NLT)
 - (2) He is dazzling! etc.
 - (3) *I am your husband. "For the mountains may move and the hills disappear, but even then my faithful love for you will remain. My covenant of blessing*

will never be broken,"says the Lord, who has mercy on you." (Isaiah 54:10, NLT)

- b) Where can we find Him? Where can we experience Him like you experience Him? 6:1
 - (1) the world wants to know the real Christ!
 - (2) the world wants: love, acceptance, significance! only Jesus can fully provide that.
 - c) Church, can you imagine this city when they realize we are lovesick for Jesus? and not just attending church.
4. The bride embraces the two greatest commands: love God and love people.
- G. Weaker vessel - humility

Conclusion:

- Are you in it for Him? Or, In it for you? It makes all the difference in how you follow.
- When you make a decision for Christ don't let it be like the bride at the altar who hesitates. Hesitation sends a wrong message. Jump in!