

(Psalm 45:1) **My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.** This **ready writer** from the **sons of Korah** continues to overflow with love and joy in the second half of this wedding song. The Royal Bridegroom is the Messiah, Jesus. The Royal Bride is His Church. At Psalm 45:10, there's a change in focus from the Bridegroom to the Bride. Well, it is not exactly a change in focus, for the "camera" doesn't really move from Jesus to the Church, but it widens to add the Bride to the focus as she is standing at the King's right hand (see v. 9). Strictly speaking, the 2nd half of this psalm is not about the Bride, but about the Bride *in relationship to her Husband, Jesus*.

This is very important instruction for us, dear congregation of Jesus. As Christians individually, and as church together, we may never, ever view ourselves outside of Christ! Faith unites us to Christ, and this is our life. Our life is found in Him. We have no life outside of Him. Using another image, the image of the vine and the branches, Jesus said: **He who abides in Me, and I in Him, bears much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.** (John 15:5b) In our whole life – body and soul, in health and sickness, in worship or at work – we must always view ourselves in Christ, as belonging to our Saviour-Husband.

Charles Spurgeon described it this way: *I believe that whenever our religion is most vital 最重要 it is most full of Christ. . . . When-ever I am in deeps of sorrow, nothing will do for me but "Jesus only." . . . I retreat to the innermost citadel 堡垒 of our holy faith, namely, to the very heart of Christ, when my spirit is assailed by temptation... Whenever I have high spiritual enjoyments, they are always connected with Jesus only. . . I find if I want to labor much, I must live on Jesus only; if I desire to suffer patiently, I must feed on Jesus only; if I wish to wrestle with God successfully, I must plead Jesus only; if I aspire to conquer sin, I must use the blood of Jesus only; if I want to learn the mysteries of heaven, I must seek the teachings of Jesus only. I believe that anything which we add to Christ lowers our position, and that the more elevated our soul becomes, the more nearly like what it is to be when it shall enter into the region of the perfect, the more completely every thing else will sink, die out, and Jesus, Jesus, Jesus only, will be the first and the last. . . .* (Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon of London, Vol. 9, pp. 433-434).

In Psalm 45:10-12, we hear the Bride's call to a life of blessed submission to the King:

(Psalm 45:10-11) **Listen, O daughter, consider and incline your ear; forget your own people also, and your father's house; so the king will greatly desire your beauty; because He is your Lord, worship Him.**

Who is this daughter? She is the beautiful lady just introduced in the previous verse: **At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir.** (9) It is the day of the Royal Wedding, and the Father is giving some admonitions 告诫 to his **daughter** as he prepares her for her marriage to the King.

- This is the law of marriage: when a daughter is given in marriage, she leaves her father's authority and parental home and comes under new headship, the headship of her husband.
- This law is especially true in the way of salvation, in God's covenant of grace: just as God called Abram out of his home of idols and sin, and brought him into His covenant, so also He has rescued us out of the "home" of this world of rebellion against God – where we were "married" to believing our own lies and walking in our own ways – and gives us to His Son in marriage to be His Wife. This marriage is our salvation! **God found us in our sin and gave us to His Son!** He sets us free from the Cruel Tyrant 暴君 and gives us to His Son whose Name is **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace** (Isaiah 9:6).
- For everyone is someone's slave. We were created to *serve*. When we chose sin in Adam, we chose to become Satan's servants, the most cruel and abusive husband there is! But God took pity on us and betrothed us to a new husband – His Son!

Now that she is being given away to her Bridegroom, the Lord places before her her special calling as Christ's Bride: **Forget your own people and your father's house.** Forget that old life, don't go back to it, don't submit any longer to that Sin Master. You have been placed under a new Head – God's King – so **worship Him now, because He is your Lord!** To forget here does not mean to erase from your memory but not to give attention to. Don't desire and dwell on that former life you lived in sin.

- This is not a call to *disrespect* family and friends from the non-Christian world. Even when people become our enemies because we left the world and came to Christ, Jesus tells us we must still love them. This is a call no longer to be governed and controlled by the things and people of this world. When God saves you and gives you to your new Master/Husband, your soccer coach still wants the game to rule your life, your earthly family still wants to dictate how you should live, and your employer still wants you to put your work first. But God says: *No! You have a new Lord! Worship Him and follow whatever He says.*
- This call to forget is necessary because our old nature and former way of life with its customs and enjoyments are hard to give up. They pull at us, tempting us to forget how much we really have in Christ. But instead of forgetting how good our salvation is, we are called to forget our old ways which lead to destruction.

This is not bad submission, this is blessed submission. Why? Remember what kind of Husband Jesus is! (verses 1-9). And see how much He loves you: **So the King will greatly desire your beauty** (11).

- He desires our beauty so much that already long before we were born, and before the world was created, Jesus was thinking about us, and planning this royal wedding! Scripture says: **God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.** (Eph. 1:4) In His great love for us, God the Father said to His Son: *In the fullness of time, I want you to enter the haunts of Satan, that evil Lord, and rescue My people from His cruel captivity, at all costs!* And, in His great love, that's what Jesus promised to do already in eternity past! And that's what Jesus did do when He came to earth. He entered this world where Satan reigned. He entered the damnation we deserved. It killed Him to go and get us, but He did! And then He rose again to gather us to Himself and make us His Bride.
- And He desires our beauty by sending out His Spirit and Gospel into all the world to go and gather us. He brought the Gospel to us, pierced 刺透 us with his sword and arrows, and gave us faith to believe in Him. And when we believed He added us to His Church. He made us His Bride.
- And now that we are His Bride He still **greatly desires our beauty**. The word for greatly desire is the same word as *to crave, to have deep longings for*. And that gives you an idea of what Jesus thinks of us. This is shocking! Even with our *background* as spiritual prostitutes 妓女 and all the terrible *baggage* of our sin-filled history, even with all our present quirks and weaknesses and flaws and sins as the Body of Christ, Jesus finds us completely *ravishing* 令人陶醉 captivated with us, *enthralled* 着迷 with our beauty (NIV), craving after our beauty! Not because He needs us, and not because we're naturally so adorable, but just because **God is love**. It is His nature to love, and to love fully and deeply. He is so good and perfect at love! The picture here is of a Bridegroom so eager to meet and marry His Bride that *He can't wait for the wedding!*

Is it hard to submit to such a Bridegroom as this?? To submit to Someone so *excellent* in character, so *mighty* in power, and so *full* of love is a life filled with blessing. It is in every way a blessed submission. This is the Church's chief vocation 天职 This is our #1 calling as husbands, wives, children, students, and whatever other callings we might have. This is our first calling.

The Messiah places His Bride at His right hand – a place of great privilege, power and honour. Indeed, we are highly exalted because of His grace. It makes the nations jealous: (12) **And the daughter of Tyre will come with a gift; the rich among the people will seek your favour.** Tyre was the business capital – the New York – of that culture. Wealth galore! But even Tyre would see that the Church has a kind of heavenly wealth that earthly wealth can't even touch. We belong to a heavenly Husband who owns Paradise and promises us the world, a whole new creation, where Christ is all in all! There is no one and no kingdom on earth that has it as good as the Bride of Christ. Why would you ever forsake the Bride whose Husband is and has everything, and opt for the world whose wealth is temporary, fleeting, and destined to perish?

No other Husband is like Him! He is fairer than the sons of men. The most godly earthly husband is but a pale reflection of this ultimate Husband, Lord, Provider, and Protector.

Then, in Psalm 45:13-15, we learn about the Bride's Captivating Beauty in relationship to Christ

(Psalm 45:13-15) **The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace; her clothing is woven with gold. She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colours; the virgins, the companions who follow her, shall be brought to You. With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought; they shall enter the King's palace.**

This describes the walk down the aisle at the Royal wedding, like a father leading his daughter out of her bridal chamber, and walking her down the aisle to meet and marry the Bridegroom. This is how God brought Eve to Adam; now He brings the *daughter of Eve* (the Church) to the one whom Scripture calls the *Last Adam*, Jesus Christ.

- The bride has made herself ready. She looks amazing: golden thread woven all throughout her garment (dressed in gold of Ophir).
- **With gladness and rejoicing** she and her bridal party are brought to the King: the aisle into the King's palace is carpeted with **gladness and rejoicing**. This is the perfect wedding and the perfect wedding day. Because Jesus is there – the excellent King who is **anointed with the oil of gladness above His companions** (7)!

This passage raises a few questions we should try to answer:

First, when is the wedding? This is not easy to answer because, on the one hand, the Bible says that Christ and His Church are already married and are husband and wife (see Ephesians 5:22-33). On the other hand, the Bible says that the wedding is still in the future. It will be held on the last day, the Day of Judgement, when Christ comes back as Bridegroom to the marriage supper of the Lamb to take us with him into our new home: the new heavens and the new earth. (Revelation 19:7-9, 21:1-4) So we have to say that the wedding is both already and not yet. The marriage occurred when Christ came the first time when He gave His life for us and purchased us with His blood. But right now our Bridegroom is away for a time while He continues to build and beautify her while He is in heaven and we are on earth, so there is a certain distance. But one day He will come back and we enter in to the full experience of our communion with Him!

Second, how did she get this beautiful, expensive wedding dress? We know from Scripture that she did not buy it or make it herself. Isaiah says in 61:10 **I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult 快乐 in my God, for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.** Revelation 19:8 says of the Bride of

Christ: to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright (see also 21:2). In Ephesians 2:25-27 we are told: **Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.** The Bride's wedding dress is the free gift of righteousness and holiness given to her by Christ through faith. When we believe in Jesus, our dirty garments of sin (our own self-righteousness) are taken off; and we are robed in Christ's righteousness. (see Philippians 3:9, Zechariah 3:1-5).

Third, why then does the Bible also say: **The Bride has made herself ready...it was granted to her to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.** (Revelation 19:7-8) On the one hand, the robes are given as a free gift of God's grace; they don't come from ourselves. On the other hand, she makes herself ready and dresses herself in her own good works. And very often we read commands like this in Scripture: **Therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering 忍耐** (Colossians 3:12 NIV), and (Romans 13:14 NIV) **Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ?**

- When we are saved, we become part of God's Bride and receive from Jesus Christ the free garment of His righteousness, apart from any of our own works.
- And then, as God's saved people, we are called to put on that robe that Christ has given us to "make ourselves look good" for the one who loves us so much, and the one whom we have come to love so much. It is not that we can make Christ love us by our good works; but it is because Christ graciously loves us that we want to do all we can to make ourselves beautiful for Him. No wife desires to make herself beautiful for a husband who does not love her; but when she knows her husband loves her, she is motivated to make herself beautiful for Him. (see also II Peter 3:11-14)

And what does it mean to make ourselves beautiful? It means **to clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ**. We want to look more and more like Him. The more we study Him and get to know Him from Scripture, the more our contact with him will transform us, the more we will become like Him. Isn't this what Paul prayed for, for the Church? (Ephesians 3:18-19) **I pray...that you may have strength (by the Spirit) to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

In Psalm 45:16-17, we learn of the royal offspring that will spring from the marriage of the Bride to this Bridegroom. (Psalm 45:16-17) **Instead of Your fathers shall be Your sons, Whom You shall make princes in all the earth. I will make Your name remembered in all generations; there the people shall praise You forever and ever.**

At least three promises are given here of the fruitfulness of this Royal Couple – Jesus and His Church – and these are already being fulfilled in the earth. This is indeed a fruitful, "successful," marriage because of the Husband's Powerful Love.

First, the promise of posterity 后裔. There shall be **sons** born to them, and the **Bridegroom** will make these sons princes in all the earth. I believe Calvin interprets this correctly when he calls these **princes** ministers of the new covenant who take the message of Jesus Christ over all the earth to build the Bride, to increase the number and strength of those married to Christ. Though Satan and the world want to destroy Christ's Bride, He will prosper her. He will see to her success. The gates of hell will not prevail 不能胜过 against her.

Second, there is the promise of a world wide Christian Church. **In all the earth** the sons of this Royal Couple will serve Him and represent His kingdom. Isaiah also prophesied this. Through Him the Lord God promises a day when the barren 荒芜 Church of the Old Testament will meet the Messiah and become the Mother of many children from all over the world. Isaiah 54:2-3 **"Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities 荒废了的城镇"**

Third, there is the promise of Christ's everlasting fame and praise. The psalmist says to the Bridegroom: **I will make Your name remembered in all generations; there the people shall praise You forever and ever.** By writing this psalm about Christ, He is committing Himself to proclaiming the name of Christ to be remembered forever. And the Messiah will continue to raise up by His Powerful Love a people to praise His Name and cause it to be known across all space and time. This too is being fulfilled by all true Christians as they proclaim His praises: (1 Peter 2:9) **But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.** Psalm 72:17-18 says: **"May His name endure forever; May His name increase as long as the sun shines; And let men bless themselves by Him; Let all nations call Him blessed.**

Do you see, beloved, that to be part of the Church, the Bride of Christ, is to belong to a Husband who is fruitful, not spiritually infertile 不是属灵的贫瘠. This should give us great confidence, in spite of the many weaknesses and frustrations that we find in the Church today. Our Husband will see to it that our work is not in vain. Already in the 1500s when the Church was in a very, very weak condition, John Calvin was optimistic for the Church because Christ has attached His Name to her: *The furious efforts of Satan and the whole world have not been able to extinguish the name of Christ, which, being transmitted from one generation to another, still retains 保留 its glory in every age, even as at this day we see it celebrated in every language.*