

## ***Session 1 The Bride of Christ: God’s Eternal Purpose***

### **I. JESUS’ INHERITANCE: AN ETERNAL COMPANION**

*This is session one in a series on the Bride of Christ.*

- A. God’s purpose for His creation is to provide a family for Himself and a Bride for His Son as His eternal companion to reign with Him forever.

*This is a big statement. It is easy to say, but it is huge: God’s ultimate purpose for creation and what was biggest in His mind, in my understanding, is that He wanted a family for Himself. He is not just a King and a Creator. Before there were humans, He was a Father in His heart and He had a Son. And the Father wanted a family, but more than that He wanted a bride for His Son. He wanted a Son to have an eternal companion that would love Him with all of her heart like He loves her; it would be a mutual giving of all. The Father planned that, and so He created humans. Adam and Eve back in Genesis 1 and 2, a brand-new race of beings. There are angels, billions of them, and there are demons, billions of them, and they were watching as God was creating this whole new race, but something very, very significant happened: He created them in His own image. The angels and the demons are not in His image. In other words He created a race that had capacity to interact with Him deeply at the heart level. This was a brand-new idea. I am imagining that the angels were perplexed and even shocked! “Made in the image of God, really?” Because the angels have been there for many, many, many years—I do not know how long—but when Adam was formed in the image of God with the capacity to interact with God deeply, I can just picture them saying “Where is this going? We have never seen such a race!” And again, the Father wanted an eternal companion for His Son.*

- B. Human history began in Eden with Adam and Eve joined as a bridegroom and bride (Gen. 2:24). Natural history ends with a prepared Bride being presented to God’s worthy Son (Rev. 19:7).

***<sup>7</sup>For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. (Rev. 19:7)***

*Human history began in Eden with Adam and Eve joined as bridegroom and bride. Later, in Ephesians 5:32, (we will get to this in the series) Paul gives a prophetic interpretation of Adam and Eve. He said, in effect, “Well, Adam and Eve are historical, and they really were bride and bridegroom, but let me tell you—I know from the Holy Spirit—it is a great mystery. It is really a prophetic picture of Christ and His bride forever. The Father was giving a prophetic foreshadowing of where history was going.”*

*And so history begins in a garden with a bride and a bridegroom, and natural history ends at a wedding feast. This time it is not in an earthly garden, but it is in a garden city called the New Jerusalem. Natural history ends in a wedding feast where a prepared bride is presented to a Worthy Son. I mean, it is the greatest celebratory event in history. No event like this in terms of multitudes of humans and angels, all in full celebration, as it is described in Revelation 19. It is the greatest celebratory event in history. We will get to Revelation 19 in one of our sessions; it is the great wedding feast that is unpacked.*

*Well, look at Revelation 19:7. Here it is God’s mission’s statement. It is why He created the earth and the human race, because He had something in His mind: the marriage of the Lamb, His Son. Here it is! It has finally come to pass, and it is going to come to pass in real time and space. And the greatest miracle, the greatest achievement of God in history, the greatest achievement of history in the human race, is that His wife has made herself ready. God has so moved and created the optimum environment in the end-time storyline that the church and the nations choose this as an act of their own will, and of course it is under the inspiration of the grace of God and it is by the optimum environment of what is happening in the earth that has a lot of negative*

and a lot of positive. However, there has not been a generation like that, and it is the environment where a billion believers choose to go deep in voluntary love. There has never been a generation like it and never a time in history where so many chose so deeply to freely and fully love God. I mean, it is the greatest advancement of the human family that day. There are so many implications to this statement, “and the bride made herself ready,” and we will look at this. Today I am giving just some headlines of what we are going to be looking at for the next eleven or more weeks.

There are many implications of “the bride made herself ready.” It validates the Father’s wisdom of His end-time plan, because when you look at His end-time plan—we have been looking at that a bit as a community and as a school—and there are some real negatives in the end time plan, it is like, “Father, did You overdo it on this one point?” However, there are a lot of positives, too. It is a generation that is completely unique. The validation of the Father’s wisdom is that there will be a billion-plus believers who chose freely to go deeply in love. The Father is so sure, He is so sure that this is going to work, that He declared it in the Word of God. You know that if even one word fails in the Word of God, then the whole Word of God is suspect. There would be corruption in the Word if the Father has one wrong prophecy, but way back two thousand years ago He said, as it were, “I am so positive that by the power of the Spirit and the optimum environment with the good and the bad, the pressure and the glory, a billion-plus will choose love. I am so sure I am going to put it in the book as a prophetic declaration.” That is bold. However, you look at six thousand-ish years since Adam, and there is not much chance that a billion-plus people are going to choose this. I mean, you look at history and there is always just a little group in the Body of Christ—and I do not mean in one place, but a little here and a little there—who are pressing in, but it is going to be a very different story at the end.

Now, this is no shotgun wedding. I mean, it is cute to say it that way, but it is real. Meaning, God leads the end-time storyline so well that the bride—people like us broken human beings under the grace of God—chooses voluntary love. I mean, this is amazing! I look at this, and I think it is a grand hour of history—I mean one grand hour is when Jesus became a man and then another grand hour is when He offered Himself at the cross and rose from the dead and ascended—but I am talking about in terms of the human family’s experience. A billion-plus—we do not know the real number, but it is a big number—Revelation 7:9 says “from every tribe and tongue” are there in the Presence. This is at the end. In front of all the pressures and temptations and persecution, there will be a group from every tribe and tongue. Now there are two hundred nations in the earth with twelve thousand people groups; tribes, twelve thousand people groups according to the guys that study that. And every single one of those will have a spirit of revival in their nation touching those twelve thousand people groups. This is like so exciting. Well, that is where human history is going.

- C. Jesus will return for a victorious Church who is empowered by understanding her bridal identity.

***<sup>17</sup>The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!” (Rev. 22:17)***

This is one of the most important and one of the most informative end time prophecies, yet so simple, “The Spirit and the Bride say come.” There are so many implications to that one sentence, and we will look at some of them. I remember one time, years ago, I gave fifteen different implications about this verse. It is one of the most informative, very simple and short, but very, very informative. This tells you the kind of worship songs that the Holy Spirit is going to anoint; they are going to have the theme of the bride and Bridegroom, not every one of them, but it is going to be predominant. This tells you what a lot of the preachers are going to be preaching. It tells you what the anointed media messengers are going to be capturing. This is going to be a global, Holy-Spirit, primary emphasis.

Now it never before has been a universal emphasis of the Holy Spirit: the revelation of Jesus the Bridegroom and the Body of Christ as the Bride of Christ. It has always been true, but it has never been universally emphasized by the Spirit. I have made a study of this for some years now, and there is always a little group over at the side somewhere far away that has studied it. I remember when the Lord first stirred me up, it was in July 1988 specifically, and He spoke about Song of Solomon and the Bride of Christ. He spoke audibly to me. I have had two audible voice directives from the Lord in forty years. One: do twenty-four-seven prayer with singers and musicians, and I said “What? How? When? Why? Where? What?” That was in 1983, and then five years later was the second one, and I have not had one since: do the prayer with singers and musicians through the grid of the Bride of Christ.

That was worse than the singer-musician mandate because when He said the singer and musician thing I did not say, “Wow!” I said, “Ugh!” You know, when I talk to young people, they say that it must have been amazing, and I say, “No, it was quite the opposite.” I am not a singer or a musician. Actually, I think I am, but the audition team will never let me on the stage. However, I did not know how to do this, and I was not excited in 1983 when He said that. I was mystified, and that is one reason why I tell people who want to hear the audible voice of God or God to send angel, He does it because He is going to give you an assignment that is going to require something of that level because you are going to be tempted to quit. And so you get a five-minute visitation from an angel, but a fifty-year assignment that has rigor and push-back and obstacles in it. So be careful what you wish for.

Well, He said in 1988 in essence—this is not His exact words but—“through the lens of the Bride of Christ.”

“What?” I remember it was like “No! I mean, yes, because you are the Boss, but what? I do not know anything about the Bride of Christ. Zero.”

And then it was worse! He said “Use the Song of Solomon.” In essence that was the implication.

I did not know anything about the Song of Solomon. I had only read the Song of Solomon as a youth pastor to make little snicker jokes to the Junior High group. I am ashamed of that, but I made little jokes. You know, they would snicker, “Hee, hee, hee!”

I did not know the Song of Solomon. I remember, when I looked at it, I said “Ugh! Singers and musicians, the Song of Solomon? Lord, what happened to the life of David and the Rambo guys and revival and Reinhardt Bonnke and Charles Finney? That is what I am into.”

And the Lord whispered in my heart, “This is where you are going to see power, in this context of night and day prayer and the Bride of Christ, such that you cannot imagine where this is going.”

I remember that in 1988—well, I have always had a research team and different guys and gals who have helped me get material and I have a bunch on it now as well, about five or ten folks who help me at different times—I got my research team then and asked them “to get everything on the Bride of Christ in the earth you can find.” They went to seminaries, bookstores, everywhere, and the amount of material they gave me—I am exaggerating a little bit—was about an inch, and that was it. I mean, when I research something I get like three feet of paper. I mean I get that much material! They said that there was almost nothing anywhere that they could find. And I would read the verses, and then it was like, “I do not even know what it means, Lord! I have a problem right now! I do not have anyone out there where I can get stuff from and the verses do not really move me or I do not get them.”

And I could just imagine, though it was not like I heard anything, but the Lord whispering, “Just stay with it little guy. Just stay with it.”

*That is why I encourage you all so often, whether it is the Bride of Christ, Song of Solomon, the First Commandment, or the end-time storyline, “Just stay with it!” I was the one guy—and this is true—that thought that I would never, ever like prayer. I did not like prayer meetings at all. I liked meetings; you go and have somebody give a Bible study, and then you talk afterwards, and then go out to the restaurant and tell stories and stuff. I loved meetings, and I loved biographies, but I did not like the Bible. I mean, I valued it, but I did not like reading it, and I did not like prayer meetings at all. Then when the Lord said, “Prayer, and Bible, and Bride, and First Commandment, Song of Solomon, and end times,” I said “You have totally the wrong guy!” One thing I can tell those of you who have been around a little, while you are just used to me being old and having done it for a lot of years, I remember that I was a deer in the headlights saying, “I don’t even like this or get it.” And I can tell you with authority, the fog will lift if you stay with it; it will come together. At first it was a big fog, all of the subjects, and then it lifts a bit, and all of a sudden it is like, “Wow!” Now I look back, and I tell the Lord “Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you!” Again I do not hear His voice in this, but I can imagine Him saying, “I knew you would like it if you just stayed with it. I knew you would be a satisfied customer.” And I am.*

*I gave a message once on fifteen implications of Revelation 22:17. Again, this is going to tell you what kind of songs and what kind of sermons, what kind of books, what kind of message media messengers are going to focus on. The Spirit is going to highlight the bridal identity; it has never been highlighted in history. The reason I told you that story from 1988 is for two reasons: because my research team went around and we could not find anything, but thirty years later this topic is exploding around the world which is remarkable to me. There are more conferences, books, and songs, and it is still not the majority of the Body of Christ. However, it used to be like “those four and no more,” but now it is in every country. People are rising up, and they are getting dreams, and the Lord is giving them stuff. There are new songs and books and seminars, all in the past thirty years, and it is completely emerging so clearly that it is like a sign of the times because there is only one generation where the Spirit emphasizes it globally. It is the generation that leads to Jesus answering when “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come! Come Lord Jesus!’” and He comes. You see, He does not want to come until the Body of Christ around the earth knows who they are and who they are asking for; they are not just asking to be delivered from a boring life. “Come, Lord Jesus. It is hard and boring down here!”*

*He might say, “No, that is not good enough. I want you to know who you are to Me and who I am. I am coming as a Bridegroom King to a prepared bride. And I want her to know who she is, globally, because I want her to cry with understanding, and then I am going to answer that.” Now it is exploding, and so that is one reason I wanted to tell you that story from 1988: it is exploding! I have watched it for thirty years and think, “This is really happening. This is really, really happening!” It is like the prayer movement that is exploding.*

*And the second reason I wanted to tell you that story is because I did not like this theme and could not connect with it at first. I am talking to men and women, but I am talking to men specifically. Besides, just because someone is a lady does not mean they love this topic. I remember I told the Lord that day when He spoke this audibly to me, because I read Song of Solomon that day as I had never read the Song of Solomon seriously before that day—it was early in the morning and I called my wife when the Lord spoke. I said “Sweetheart, you are not going to believe this! The Lord spoke to me audibly the Song of Solomon,” and she said “This is so good.” And so then I hung up the phone, and I was so excited! I felt so alive! I mean when God gives you something, “Oh my gosh!” So I thought, “Well, I might as well read it.” Roses, body parts, perfume, hugging, roses, body parts, perfume, and hugging, I thought, “Ugh!” and I said with my mouth—“Lord, give this to the ladies’ ministry!” I really did. I said, “They will like this.” In my own crazy thinking, I thought if you were a lady you would like this. No! If you are hungry for God, you will like it; it is not about being male or female.*

*Then I went home about nine o’clock that night, and I remember Diane said “This is the biggest thing!”*

*I said “No, no! Have you read it?”*

*She said, “Oh, it is amazing!”*

*I said “No, no! This is a prison! This is horrible. This is not good.”*

*Well, the end-time church is going to be victorious, and one of the major reasons—which is not the only reason—is there is going to be a dramatic emotional shift in the Body of Christ in terms of how they see God, how they see Jesus, and how they see themselves. And a spiritual identity that is dramatic—I mean it is going to be a tremendous shift, like a big earthquake. The Body of Christ is going to shift into a new emotional way with God; they are going to feel His presence and see themselves differently. It is going to be massive.*

***<sup>16</sup>It shall be, in that day...that you will call Me [Jesus] “My Husband” ... (Hos. 2:16)***

*Here is what it says in Hosea 2:16, talking about the generation the Lord returns. It says “In that day you will call Me ‘My Husband,’” and we will look at the whole passage, I hope, in this series. Surely, we will at the forerunner sessions on Wednesday nights because Hosea 2 is a major chapter. Though it says “You are not going to call Me ‘Master,’” it means you are not just going to say that He is your Lord. We will call Him Lord and Master, but that is not the limitation. “I am going to be more than Lord; I am going to be your Husband.” This will open the eyes of the redeemed community, and it will be a brand-new reality. Again, people are moving in that direction and have been in the last thirty years but I think the next ten, twenty, thirty years this thing is going to explode. This is a subject you really, really want to get ahold of.*

1. As sons of God, we are in the position to experience **God’s throne** as heirs of His power (Rom. 8:17). As the Bride, we are in the position to experience **God’s heart** (affections).

*By the way, women and men are sons of God, and women are good with that. You tell a woman, “Hey, the sons of God,” and she will say “Yes!” Being sons of God basically means that you are in a position to experience God’s throne and you have access to His power. Being the “sons of God” is not about being male; it is about having access to God’s throne and His power.*

*Being the Bride of Christ is not intrinsically about being female. It is about having a position of privilege: access to His heart and to His emotions.*

2. Even as women are the sons of God, so men are the Bride of Christ. Both describe positions of privilege before God, rather than pointing to something intrinsically male or female. Experiencing the reality of the Bride of Christ by walking in intimacy with God does not undermine one’s masculinity, but strengthens it—John the Baptist, the apostle John, etc.

*As women are sons of God, men are the Bride of Christ. It is a position of privilege. You are not intrinsically male if you are a son of God or intrinsically female if you are the Bride of Christ. The reason I say that to guys is because some guys think, “If I have to be the Bride, then I have got to do things like put a dress on, have candle dates with Jesus.” No, no, none of that! I have never worn a dress, and I have never been on a date with Jesus, with candles or without candles. This is about having access to His heart. It is about experiencing His emotions. I like to tell men, “Just settle it,” and that is why I want to say this first session that experiencing this reality does not undermine your masculinity at all. As a matter of fact, it establishes and strengthens it. You will never function better as a man than you will as a man in connection with God’s heart because that is how man was created to function in fullness—by being in connection with God’s heart.*

*So to the macho men—that is really a wrong term; I do not even know what it totally means, but you know, the tough-guy guys—John the Baptist, this fiery prophet in the wilderness said, “I am a friend of the Bridegroom. I*

have heard the voice of the Bridegroom. I have been moved by the Bridegroom God!” This fiery prophet said this.

Then for John the apostle, it was the same thing. He put his head on Jesus’ breast and said, “I am the one that God loves and I love God!” And he was the one that Jesus called the “Son of thunder” because he had that kind of personality. This was not some kind of confused guy. This was a strong, young fisherman who had this “son of thunder” personality, but he connected with God like David did. The warrior king was the lovesick worshipper. They connected with who they are in context to God and in connection with God’s heart. That dawned on them.

Men, this truth does not minimize your masculinity. It sets you in a position to walk in the fullness of who you are as a man. And I can say the same thing about women and the sons of God; it does not make you masculine at all. It makes you confident to move in the power of God.

3. The generation the Lord returns will be the first time in history that the Spirit will universally emphasize the Church’s spiritual identity as the Bride of Christ.

- D. The Bridegroom message is about Jesus’ emotions for us, His beauty, His commitments to us (to share His heart, home, throne, secrets, and beauty), and our response of wholehearted love and obedience to Him. This message starts with experiencing Jesus’ heart and affections for us.

*We will develop the Bridegroom message more as well. Well, what is it? It is about Jesus’ emotions, knowing His emotions. Not just His power, but how He feels, and there is a lot in the Bible about this subject. It is about His beauty and being fascinated by the beauty of the King. The Bridegroom message is also about understanding His commitment to us, not just His power and authority over us, but His commitment to us. That is part of the Bridegroom message. He is committed to share His heart, His home, and His throne. He wants us to reign with Him. So that there is no confusion: humans do not become God! It is nothing like that. He is the authority, but He delegates and says “I want to do it together with you.”*

*It is also about our response of wholeheartedness. The Bridegroom message is not just that He is tender. It is that He is wholehearted and we are wholehearted. If I had to pick one phrase, it would be “wholehearted mutual partnership.” He would say, “I am all in at the heart level with you, and I want you all in, too. I want partnership. I want wholehearted, mutual partnership.” If I had to say the “Bride of Christ” message in one phrase or sentence, it would be that. It is not just that He has power over us or releases His power through us; it is about a heart reality.*

*He is a Bridegroom King. He is a King with power, **and** He is a Bridegroom with desire. Somebody might ask, “Well, which is the most important?” You do not have to choose. You want both because He is one hundred percent both.*

*This message starts with experiencing His heart and His emotions, because, when we experience His emotions, it shifts our emotions. In one summary sentence again: it is the “Mary of Bethany” lifestyle and posture of heart. We have talked a bit about Mary of Bethany over the eighteen years of IHOPKC. In Luke 10, she sat at the feet of Jesus. Martha said “What is she doing? Tell her to get up and get to work!” But Jesus said, “Stop! She has chosen the right thing.” She was not only at the feet of Jesus, because Mary did many other things.*

*The Lord was not rebuking Martha for serving. He was rebuking her for the spirit in which she was serving. Serving is good. Jesus is the Servant. It is not like Mary is in the prayer room, but Martha is in the kitchen. You have heard that. No, Mary is in the kitchen, but with a different spirit than Martha has. It is the “Mary of Bethany” heart posture. I don’t only sit at His feet, but that is a top priority in my life. It is a posture of heart*

and a lifestyle which changes the spirit in which we serve. I know a lot of folks who serve, but they have a spirit of devotion on them and they are Marys. And so again, it is not Martha in the kitchen and Mary is in the prayer room. No, Martha was serving with a wrong spirit. That is why she gets burned out. We do not typically get burned out because we work hard. For some people that is the case, but most people get burned out because they serve with a wrong spirit and it burns them out.

- E. The inheritance that the Father promised Jesus is a people whom He fully possesses.

***<sup>8</sup>I [the Father] will give You [Jesus] the nations for Your inheritance... (Ps. 2:8)***

*This whole thing is the Father’s idea. The Father says, in effect, speaking in Psalm 2 to the Son, “I am going to give You an inheritance. I am going to give it to You. It is My plan, it is My idea, and it is My commitment. The devil is not going to stop it. Nobody is going to stop it. I, the Father, have ordained an inheritance for You, and I know what it is that You want most.” Do you know what He wants most? You! Jesus wants you the most, and the Father knew that! He said “I am going to give Jesus what He wants most.” It is you! And before the foundations of the earth He knows His own.*

*It is amazing! Like, “Me?” Like, “Jesus, do not be disappointed, please, that I am Your inheritance.”*

*He would say, “That is what I want!” However, it is the Father’s idea. When He says “the nations,” He means the people in the nations, not just the real estate. He already owns the earth. It is the people, His fully possessing the people.*

***<sup>9</sup>For the LORD’s portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance. (Deut. 32:9)***

*Look at Deuteronomy 32:9. “The Lord’s portion” or “His inheritance”—you can use them interchangeably—is “His people, Jacob.” That means the redeemed. The redeemed, that is His inheritance. It is people who love Him.*

- F. Paul prayed that the saints would understand the “riches of glory” of being God’s inheritance.

***<sup>18</sup>...may know...what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints... (Eph. 1:18)***

*We all pray this prayer so often at IHOPKC, and I encourage you: do not merely listen to some guy or gal pray it or sing it. This is one of the prayers I have prayed often. There are about three prayers I pray much more than all of the others. I am not saying that is the best way to do it. It is just how I have done it over the years. For me, Ephesians 1 is at the top of the list. I ask for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, but, look. I want to know the riches or the wealth of what it means that I am His inheritance. Here Paul said it is going to take the Holy Spirit to show it to you. However, He is not going to show it to you in a vacuum, you know, where you are just doing what you do and it just falls on you. Every now and then that happens, but mainly the Spirit gives it to the people who are hungry for it. Hungry as in the very fact that you are here tonight and saying “I want to grasp His inheritance in His bride. I want to get what that means. I want to know what the Bible says.”*

*I have learned over the years that it does not happen very often that I am just about my way and a big truth overtakes me. Typically the Lord tips me off to go after a truth, but then I plow, and I plow, and I stay with it, and little by little the truth overtakes my heart. It is not in one minute, and He typically gives it not a hundred percent; sometimes He just “boom” and there it is, but mostly He gives it to us according to our hunger. And so I study this subject, but I do not just study it in the Word—which I do—but I also pray and say “Lord, open the eyes of my heart. I want to see the wealth of who I am. I want to see the riches of this.”*

*Beloved, pray Ephesians 1 for yourself and your loved ones. Pray Ephesians 1 over and over and over and over again because when you see more you feel more. And when you feel more you respond more. A lot of folks just try hard, saying, “I want to obey and love and just grit my teeth,” but I tell them, “No, do not try harder. See more clearly. When you see more clearly, you will respond more.” I have told the Lord “If you would let me see like Paul saw I would respond like Paul responded” because you respond according to what you see.*

*In this verse Paul tells you a secret here. He says, “I pray that they will know the wealth”—either the riches or the wealth; I like to say wealth—the wealth of the glory of who you are as the one He wants, His inheritance; you are what He wants.*

*The devil is such a liar. He has told you that you are a loser, your life is wasted, you are going nowhere fast, and nothing matters. That is an absolute lie, and God wants to wash you with the water of the Word. You are what He wants! And I do not mean that you are going to have some big ministry. You might have a big ministry, but your heart response is “I love you! You love me! I am reading Your Word. I do not get it, but I am staying with it because I want You more and I want to be in a position where I get more!”*

*And the Lord would say, “Just stay with it, stay with it, stay with it!”*

*I tell you, in time the fog lifts on any subject in the Word that you study. And oh, I tell you how wise it is! You see more, you feel more, you respond more, and it is not that you have to wait until you feel. But if you feel, man! When I feel the love of God and when I feel love for God, I just feel like “Yes! Anything! Everything; I am all in!”*

- G. Our faithfulness or love for Jesus and people is the only thing that we will take from this age. The “currency” in eternity for the redeemed will be the love that we cultivated for Him in this age.

***<sup>10</sup>For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints... (Heb. 6:10)***

*Our faithfulness, or I will call it our loyal love, is the only thing that you will bring with you when you leave this earth. It is your history of faithfulness or love; they are the same thing. Love for Jesus always overflows to love for people, and so it is all one reality. When you leave, you are not going to bring your data base, your pictures, your wealth, your house, your boat, your CDs, your books, nothing. You will only bring your history of your faithfulness to God or your love for Him. This is what Hebrews 6:10 says: God will never forget. He will never be someone to forget anything you have done in showing love towards His name. He will never forget it, never!*

*Now, most of the way that you love God is in little incremental decisions to humble yourself, to seek Him, to give, and to serve. Little, small, little things that you do not even register that much, but He captures every one of them. That is what makes your life powerful. All that you will bring with you to the age to come is that history, and so while I want a ministry that affects more people, I am not going to sell out my heart to touch more people. I am not going to. I am not going to try to get a bigger sphere, if the net result is a smaller heart, because I am not going to bring my database or my conference pictures to the Lord. I am only going to bring my heart. I like to say that “The currency of the age to come, the money or the currency of the age to come, is the love you cultivated in this life.” In Revelation 3:18 He called it gold; He said “Go, get gold, and you will have it forever.” I want to get gold. I like reaching people, but again I am not going to sell out and spend all of my time networking and trying to make everybody happy, just to try to get just a little more people applauding me, but let my heart die. I am not going to do it, because I will only bring my heart with me. It’s the only thing I will bring with me—my heart and my history. Our soul, we will bring it with us, and that is it. It is the currency of the age to come.*

## **II. JESUS HAS DEEP DESIRE TO BE CLOSE TO HIS PEOPLE (JN. 17:24)**

*What I am really doing in this first session is showing you how grand this topic is and how important it is. It is really worth going deep on this subject. It is wise to study this subject. I love this topic. I love teaching it again and again because it always renews me, just studying it all day Friday, praying over it and sharing it, and then afterwards I go home and feel the afterglow, and I say “Oh God, I love You, I love You!” I love this topic going through my being.*

*You do not need a microphone and a crowd. You can be talking it with three people, and it still works. I was telling people today, “Hey, here’s what I’m going to share...” and they said, “Calm down, you are going to hurt your voice,” and I was saying “And then I am going to share ...” I was feeling it! You do not need a crowd. You just need some guy to listen to you and then you let it go, man, and you will feel it. Stay out of my path on Fridays or you will get it before Friday night.*

A. Jesus deeply desires that His people be with Him forever (Jn. 17:24)

***<sup>24</sup>Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am... (Jn. 17:24)***

*Look at this passage. Just look at this passage, John 17! On the evening before the cross, right before the garden. Some say He was in the garden when He prayed it or right before the garden. I mean, the trauma of the cross was coming. He was sweating drops of blood either a few minutes from this prayer or before this prayer. It is all in the same several hours. He cries out, “Father, I desire that she would be with Me!”*

*Like, “Jesus, no, You are about to have the most traumatic time of Your life in some hours!”*

*“I want her! I want her with Me! I desire her, Lord! I want her with Me where I am! Father, I desire!” I mean this cry!*

*And the Father says, “Yes, that is what this is about!”*

*I look at that prayer and I think “Oh my goodness!” I mean I would be thinking about nails in my hand, not who I am going to be with later. It’s like, “What?”*

***<sup>21</sup>To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne... (Rev. 3:21)***

*Then, when He visits John, in the Book of Revelation, sixty years later after the cross, and He visits him with the eyes of fire, etc., He says, “John, go tell them this. If they will overcome, if they will say no, if they will resist their depression, if they will resist selfishness and lust, if they will resist those things and press into Me, if they will do that and they overcome, because all of these things these pressures are mounting up, they will sit with Me on My throne.”*

*Though here is the phrase that I hear, “With Me,” some people hear the phrase “They will sit on a throne! Whoa!” Wait, the throne is cool, but **with Him**? And that does not mean that a million people are all going to snuggle up to Him and sit on His lap on one throne.*

*He means, “I am going to be in partnership with you in My government; you are going to be doing it with Me. I am not just going to give you authority and check in with you at the end of the Millennium. We are going to do it together. There is going to be interaction. There is going to be a partnership. I am going to be talking to you, and you are going to be talking to Me, and we are going to be doing this together.” I love that! I mean I love the word, throne, but I really like “with Him.” Resurrected body, we will have a resurrected body, yes, but I want to be in some staff meetings with Jesus.*

*I do not know where I will be. Everyone wants to be in Jerusalem, I do not know. I would like to be there, but “Hey, Lord, let me work on the House of Prayer in Grandview.” I like Grandview! I have prayed for years in Grandview.*

*“Okay, Mike, I will let you go hang out in Grandview.” Because, you know we live in the New Jerusalem, but our assignment will be on the millennial earth, and so the transportation will be nearly instantaneous. Like an angel can be here or there really quickly. And so hopefully I will get to help in Grandview some, you know? He will come back and say, “Okay, what is going on with the people with natural bodies in the Millennium? What are they doing?” because the resurrected saints will have the higher place of authority, and I will say, “Well, what we are thinking of is this, this, this, and this.” Now, some folks think we are going to be automated, like you are going to take some little tablet and then you are just going to do exactly what the automation says. No, the Lord will say “So you and people in the resurrection have been interacting with people in natural bodies and so you want to do this and this and this?” “Yes.” “Okay, that is good.” You see, your personality will be in it; it is not like there is one way and you take an automatic pill or you get a download and you are just robotic. He will say “Yes, yes, do it that way that will express what is in your heart, and I will work with that.” We are going to do it with Him. We are not just going to be robots taking orders. We are going to actually do it with Him. Ooh, I love this! It is worth overcoming.*

B. Jesus spoke of His second coming in context to “being with His people” (Jn. 14:3; 1 Thes. 4:17).

***<sup>3</sup>I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be. (Jn. 14:3)***

*When He talks about the second coming, He puts it in context to “with Me” in John 14:3 “When I come again”—second coming; here is what is on My heart—“I want to receive you to Myself that, where I am, there you will be with Me. You will be with Me.”*

*In Revelation 14, it says of the 144,000, wherever the Lamb goes, they go. Jesus is saying this, but He puts the second coming in, and says, in effect, “When that happens, we are going to be working together in spreading the Father’s glory on the millennial earth. When I come back, you will be doing it with Me.”*

*We will not only just be sitting in a worship service. We will love worship, but some people think they will be on a cloud playing a harp and that is all they will do forever, just floating in a cloud, playing a harp. And when they see their friends from this age, “Hey! Hey Ben! How are you doing?”*

*“Good, man! It is going well! See you on the next lap!” So for millions of years we play a harp on a floating cloud. That is **not** what is going on.*

*Some people say, “Well, you know I am a little bit embarrassed because I am not that excited about heaven. I mean, I love worship, but it is going to be a long time, a billion years on the same cloud with the same guitar, you know.” No, of course it will be with a harp. No, no! You will be involved in a vigorous, dynamic, robust way with Him, filling the earth with the Father’s glory.*

***<sup>16</sup>For the Lord Himself will descend...<sup>17</sup>We who are alive...shall be caught up [raptured]... to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thes. 4:16-17)***

*Look what Paul says here in 1 Thessalonians about the rapture. He says, “When He descends”—at the second coming—“you are caught up to meet the Lord in the air” and the point is that you will be with Him always. Always, that is the point, “you will be with Me!”*

*We think of the rapture sometimes as just the glory hitting the earth, but to Him it is about us being with Him. The Bridegroom heart comes out over and over and over and over again. Once you put the lens on, you can see*

*the Bridegroom all through the scriptures. That is why I refer to it sometimes as the Bridal Paradigm; paradigm just means a perspective, a lens. When you have the bridal paradigm, you start looking through the eyes of a bride; then you find the Bridegroom all through the scriptures. When I was not connected to this, I did not see any of those passages. Over the years I’ve said, “Lord, it is everywhere!” I needed that bridal perspective; I need to look through the eyes of a story that is rooted in mutual love, not just technical love where He stamps our passport, “Pass into heaven. Step to the right. Next...” It is not love like that. It is mutual, interactive love. When you look at the scripture through the lens of the bride’s eyes, it is like, “My goodness, this is everywhere! This is really worth it!”*

*Again, this is not about making a big impact in this age. I mean, I like a big impact, but for most people their sphere is small. Together we make a big impact, but individually mostly it is small. The Lord would say, “Do not be worried about that. You be faithful. I am watching. Maybe nobody else is, but I am, and I keep a record, and it moves Me. Just do what I tell you.”*

*“Yes, but I am serving over here, and nobody even knows, and there is no fanfare about it.”*

*The Lord could say, “Hey, you want the most popular guy watching you? He is. It is I, King of kings. I am watching you. The most popular guy is watching you right now.” See, when I connect with that “with you,” it just makes the whole journey different.*

- C. On Mt. Sinai, just before the Lord gave Moses the Ten Commandments, He instructed Moses and the 70 elders of Israel to eat a covenant meal with Him to experience fellowship with God—they were to see that He wanted a covenant relationship of love that obeyed His commands.

*<sup>9</sup>Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,*

*<sup>10</sup>and they saw the God of Israel... <sup>11</sup>So they saw God, and they ate and drank. (Ex. 24:9-11)*

*On Mt. Sinai, fifteen hundred years before Christ, here is Moses; they have just come out of Egypt, and he is going to go up on the mountain to get the Ten Commandments. He gets them right after this, but here God tells Moses, “Hey, get the seventy elders and come up here.” So they go up there, and He says “Let’s have a meal,” and it was like “What? We are going to have a meal? We are going to eat and drink together?” They saw the God of Israel with their eyes! I mean, no one knows exactly what to do with that unless it is a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ, before His incarnation when He was born in Mary’s womb. It is an Old Testament visitation. They see Him! And He has a meal with them! He was saying, in essence, “I am going to give you some commandments, and I want you to know I want you to obey, but this is about covenant love. This is about relationship. You are obeying Me because we have this friendship together. We have this connection.” That is what He was declaring in this event.*

### **III. JESUS’ INHERITANCE IS PEOPLE WHO FULLY LOVE HIM**

- A. Jesus’ inheritance is people who fully love Him. The saints will be equally yoked to Him in love.

*<sup>37</sup>“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup>This is the first and great commandment.” (Mt. 22:37-38)*

*Jesus’ inheritance is a people who love Him. I cannot think of any greater statement for our response than Matthew 22:27, “You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, strength and mind.” Verse 38, He says “This is the first. This is the highest priority to God.” When you meet Jesus, this is the number one thing that He will want to talk to you about. It is number one, it is first, and it is what makes you great in His*

eyes. You see, there are a number of passages where even the Lord says, “You can be great,” and He means that God calls your life choices great. It does not mean that you strut in front of somebody, but that He esteems your choices on this earth as great. I mean, this is big.

“You shall love the Lord your God.” Love is the most valuable. I want to say it again: it is loving Jesus with obedience though. It is followed with obedience, with seeking Him. It is the most valuable virtue or quality you can possess. In all of thy getting, cultivate love for Him. And that is the bride’s heart. She serves because she loves. She does not serve to get the attention of the people and the bigger applause. She might get attention. She might get applause. She might be killed. She may get persecuted. She says, “No matter, I am serving because I know what I am doing moves You. I am not trying to get a big applause from people.” It is the most valuable virtue you can invest your life in. It is great, and it is what makes you great. It is really worth it. And it is not just an emotion in a worship service! It is a lifestyle. It is love with a spirit of obedience. That is where the bride is at. She wants to be with Him, and she wants to agree with Him.

And it is not only the most valuable, it is the most powerful. I think the most powerful weapon in the whole created order is a believer who says, “I love You! I love You!” Do not underestimate the power, if you are in a temptation, or you are facing an obstacle, or in a downtime, a setback, things are not working right, and everything in you wants to say “Aghhh, forget it! I quit!” But we stop, and we say “No! I am going to move in the opposite spirit! I love You!” I tell you, that will break chains off your heart. The declaration, I do not mean the “raise your voice” declaration, though you could, but my point is the statement, “I love You,” breaks so many things. You get in the situation of lust, or a situation of offense, you get into the situation of anger and revenge, you get in a situation of wanting to manipulate, just stop and realign sincerely. I do not just mean to kind of say it. I mean you say, “I love You. I really love You,” and all of a sudden everything starts shifting. It is the most powerful thing. It is so simple. Do not underestimate this reality of “I love You,” cultivating it and even the whispers of it.

Now, when I get into a tough spot, I know how I can out of it. I just stop, and I realign, and I look at Him and just whisper that to Him, “You love me; I love You. You love me and I love You; therefore, I am successful. This is what it is all about,” and, all of a sudden, it is not like everything lifts, but that cloud starts lifting. Whatever that cloud is, it cannot stay there if you say, “I love You” to Him, and I do not mean just mindless repetition. It is the most powerful weapon in the created order in the mouth of a believer to say that in a voluntary way and to mean it.

Love is the most attacked lifestyle by the enemy. The devil does not mind if you serve hard as long as you serve disconnected from God’s heart. He will let you serve until you drop as long as you do not stay connected to God’s heart. He will attack and attack to get you focused on who is treating you badly, focused on how much money you have or do not have, how much power is in your life or not in your life, how long the promises are delayed, who is against you that should not be against you, who is ignoring you that should be embracing you, all of that stuff. The enemy wants you locked in, and so he will attack from every angle to get you not focused on love. When you get focused on love, and I do not mean that once you are focused that you are focused forever, but when I realign, he says “No! Do not realign! Stay offended! Stay distracted! Get worried! Get caught up over here! Go desire that or anything!” He will attack, attack, attack to move you off the bridal heart response.

**6The LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul... (Deut. 30:6)**

Look what it says in Deuteronomy 30:6, “The Lord will circumcise your heart” Deuteronomy 30 is, by the way, an end-time chapter; it is about the generation the Lord returns, and it is a promise that the people of God will love God. That is what it is: he was saying that God is going to touch your heart and you will love Him.

*Deuteronomy 30, God prophesied from Moses’ time clear to the end of the age, saying as it were, “It is going to work! You are going to love Me!”*

*So the Lord is going to be equally yoked to His bride. Now we know the passage that says “Do not be unequally yoked.” There are lots of applications of that, but I assure you that in marriage Jesus is not going to be unequally yoked. He will fully obey that! He will have a bride who loves with her all, and I mean in this age. Not just in the age to come, but in this age, and that is what the whole end-time scenario is about from God’s point of view.*

**<sup>14</sup>Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. (2 Cor. 6:14)**

B. The redeemed will love Jesus with mature love by the Spirit (Eph. 4:13).

**<sup>13</sup>...till we all come...to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ... (Eph. 4:13)**

*The love is going to come to maturity.*

C. A primary purpose of the New Covenant is to empower people to love God (Ezek. 36:26-27)

**<sup>26</sup>I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you...<sup>27</sup>I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes... (Ezek. 36:26-27)**

**<sup>5</sup>...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit... (Rom. 5:5)**

*One of the main purposes of the new covenant is to put love into the heart. It takes God to love God. Love is poured into the heart by the Holy Spirit. Now when I say that it takes God to love God, do not just wait in a vacuum and say “Well, here I am. You have my address. If it takes God to love God, well, I do not love You and I need Your help. And I am really busy.”*

*The Lord would say, “No, no, put yourself in the position.”*

*Because I believe it takes God to love God, I slow down, I turn away many things, and I turn off many things. Because I know it takes God to love God, I put myself in position to be inspired because I believe it takes His help. So I always think that if I take my cold heart—if you take the image of a ten-pound frozen package of hamburger, frozen hard, and you put it in front of that bonfire, in a little bit of time it is going to melt and get tender—if you put your cold heart in the Word, and you talk to Him, it will melt. It may not happen in a minute, but over time that frozen heart will get tender and soft.*

*And so when I say that it takes God to love God, I do not mean to run and do what you do and just hope God sovereignly downloads it on you. It means to turn things off, turn things away, and you have to do it because no one will do it for you. You have to take time to sit in front of Him and talk to Him. I do this because I believe I need that interaction, and then my cold heart gets tenderized.*

D. Jesus prayed that the Father’s love for Jesus be imparted to the redeemed (Jn. 17:26).

**<sup>26</sup>And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You [the Father] loved Me may be in them...” (Jn. 17:26)**

*In the garden—this is right after when Jesus said, “Father, I desire her, that she would be with Me”—a couple verses later here in John 17 where He prays this prayer, He ends this prayer in John 17 with this crescendo and there is nothing higher than this. If you are looking for a life prayer—you know you get like ten #1 verses, and*

*this has been my #1 verse for many, many years. John 17:26 and John 15:9, if I had to pick two, those are the two. Man, I just anchor myself in them. Here, look at this. Jesus says “Father, I have told them about Your name,” which is His personality, “I have told them about Your name and what You are like, and in the resurrection I am going to keep telling them about what You are like,” because He says, “I am going to continue to declare it,” and He meant, “in the resurrection by the Spirit I am going to tell them what you are like.” And look what happens: “so that, Father, the love with which You love Me will be in them! They will love Me like You love Me! Father, I am going to tell them what You are like, and that is going to awaken their heart so they are going to love Me like You do!”*

*Can you fathom loving Jesus like the Father does? Jesus is praying that you will, and He puts the how-to there as He says, “I am going to declare Your name.” That is, “I am going to put it in the Word, and I am going to move on their hearts, but they have to open the Word and hear what I am saying about You. And I will move on their hearts, and I will tenderize them. They will love Me with the love You love Me with.” My goodness!*

#### **IV. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF GOD’S LEADERSHIP**

- A. The guiding principle of God’s leadership over history has been to use His power and wisdom to select, train, and prepare a Bride to reign with Jesus—a prepared Bride for His worthy Son.

***<sup>10</sup>And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth. (Rev. 5:10)***

*The guiding principle of God’s leadership over history, the guiding principle—now He has many principles but this is the main one—He is using His power and His wisdom to select, train and prepare a Bride. What He is doing right now—in your life and in the nations—He is running the earth and allowing this optimum environment in order to select a Bride—they get saved—and to train the bride: to prepare her, get her ready in obedience in this age in the faith and confidence to reign. We reign somewhat in this age, but we reign in a far bigger way in the age to come; however, our reigning in this age does matter. By this I mean our victory over sin, our bringing the gospel to others, our bringing the Lord’s purpose into the marketplace. That is a dimension of reigning for sure, but it is going to really go to another level forever.*

1. Many cannot see where history is headed or what purpose it accomplishes. They see no lasting goals for humanity or purpose for enduring hardship. This leaves them in despair.

*I have written here that many people cannot see what purpose human history is accomplishing. Like if you talk to the general population, they cannot see where history is headed. They are like, “Hey, where is this thing going?” I always use the analogy that it looks like a train that is off the tracks. It is like nobody knows where this thing is going. They think it is not going toward any purpose with no lasting goals, no lasting purpose, just, you know, enduring hardship, but it is not unto anything. People do not see the purpose of the hardship.*

2. History is often interpreted through the lens of significant scientific breakthroughs, military crises, political developments, and economic trends. We interpret history through the lens of God preparing a Bride. In this we see a lasting purpose in our struggles.

*History is often interpreted through the lens of scientific breakthroughs. They measure history by the great technology—the industrial revolution, and all these different technologies—or through military crisis—WWI, WWII, the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, all the wars. People look at history that way, by political developments and economic trends, but, beloved, the way **we** interpret history through the lens of a bride and that God is preparing and training a bride to reign. That is what is going on. So when there is push-back and pressure, do not quit because of that pressure. We do not like the pressure, but we interact with God, and we get*

*confidence in God. As we believe Him and stay steady, our spiritual muscles and love grow stronger and stronger and stronger. And though the enemy is using and is involved in the pressure and attacking, we respond to God. It is going somewhere. He is training a Bride to reign with Him forever.*

B. God has orchestrated natural history so that people may seek, grope for, and find Jesus.

***<sup>26</sup>He has made from one blood every nation...and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, <sup>27</sup>so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him [to walk in wholeheartedness]... (Acts 17:26-27)***

1. ***Boundaries:*** God determines the boundaries of each nation.
2. ***Times:*** God determines the times in which each nation will rise and fall in power.
3. ***Grope:*** He sets the time when national boundaries shift to cause people to grope for God.
4. ***Find:*** God’s purpose is that people “find” Jesus and walk in wholeheartedness with Him.

*Acts 17:26 says—this is a really important passage—“God made every nation from one blood.” That is, from Adam and Eve all the nations came, and here is the point I want to touch, “He has determined the pre-appointed times and boundaries of their dwellings” and He did it, verse 27, “so that they would seek the Lord and grope for Him and find Him.” This is so significant! What he is saying is this: God moves the boundary lines of nations. He determines what season a nation is in and whether it has more power or less power—the pre-determined times it what he is talking about—and He moves the boundaries.*

*Do you know what happens when a boundary moves? Almost always a war is involved. A boundary of a nation moved just fifty miles typically means there is a huge war. You know the devil and evil men are involved in all of the wars, and their hands are in it, yet He says “I am moving boundary lines, allowing upheaval. I am moving the boundary line.” That is intense. Here is why: “I want the people to seek the Lord, because when I move a boundary line the pressure builds in society. When a boundary line moves, there is upheaval and the people start saying ‘Is there a God? What is going on? I am going to start seeking to find God!’”*

*Then the next thing they do is grope. They are trying to make sense of the crisis of the war because if the boundary line was moved it almost always means war. They are trying to interpret. “I am seeking God, but I cannot make sense of the trouble. Where is He at? And what is He doing? Is He real?” They are groping, and then they find Him, meaning they land on wholeheartedness, not just that they get born again. It is more than that they land, “I have found God,” but, “I am in it all the way!”*

*And so the Lord would say, “I am using these disturbances in the nations to wake up the church and the non-churched, believers and unbelievers. I am waking everybody up.”*

*There is groping when there is a crisis. There is the “Where is God at? What is happening? What about me? Am I safe?” There is the fear, offense, deception, groping, trying to connect. They stay with it, stay with it, and they find God.*

*And the Lord says, “I am going to have a billion-plus who love Me.” Well, I do not know the number.*

*Look at Romans 8:28, “We know all things work together for good,” even in the crisis of the nations of this Acts 17 that I just read. In the crisis, the end times, or even, apart from that, just your own life, God would say, “The devil is attacking you. Sinful people are treating you wrongly. Those are not good, but you can be assured of this: I am going to overrule it. I am going to help you respond, and your faith muscle, your love, is going to grow. In the pressure you are going to get mad, glad, and sad, and you are going to re-sign up, and you are*

going to grow in love. I am going to actually use it to bring you forward in glorious things. I am going to use it all.”

C. All things work for God’s ultimate purpose in preparing a Bride as Jesus’ inheritance.

***<sup>21</sup>For all things are yours: <sup>22</sup>whether...the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. <sup>23</sup>And you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. (1 Cor. 3:21-23)***

1. ***Life:*** The life of humans, angels, animals, and plants are all for the benefit of the Bride.
2. ***Death:*** The reality of death serves to develop the Bride in love.
3. ***Things present:*** Both blessing and challenges work together to train the Bride.
4. ***Things to come:*** The New Jerusalem and the end-of-the-age dynamics are for the Bride.
5. ***You are Christ’s:*** God gives all to the Bride because she belongs to Jesus.

*1 Corinthians 3:21, “All things are yours.” All things are for your benefit: the world is for you, the temptations, the attack of the devil and all that is in the world. God says He will use it and He will overrule it, and it will help you grow in love. Life—the life of humans, angels, plants, animals the whole story—He is going to use it in all kinds of ways to help you grow in love. Death, the pain of death, the reality of death, the shifting over to ponder eternity in the face of death, through it He is going to awaken the human heart to Him. He is going to use death. He is going to use things present, blessings—oh, I love that part—setbacks, mistreatment, things present, He is going to use them. They are all for your benefit even though the devil is running hard and people are misusing you. He is going to use it for your benefit. If you will just know the big story! Do not give up and give in, but look up!*

D. All things work together for good as God overrules all things for the highest good of the Bride.

***<sup>28</sup>We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose... (Rom. 8:28)***

*Paul said, “Things to come.” That is the whole end-time storyline, the end-of-the-age dynamics, the New Jerusalem. Paul says, “Let me tell you what I am talking about; everything is for your benefit! Everything is yours: the bad stuff and the good stuff. He is going to overrule it and help you align up as a bride.” Why? Verse 23: because you belong to Christ. God gives all to the bride because she is Jesus’ and the Bridegroom King is yours. You have got it made. We win. The devil loses. The devil is a liar, and it is all for our benefit. If we know the storyline, we respond in a far better way.*

*Amen and amen! Let’s stand before the Lord.*

*O Lord, we love You! We love You! We love You! We love You!*

*So, all things are yours; they are not easy, but they work for your benefit. The devil’s rage—God will turn it around for your good because if you will respond in the Lord instead of getting offended, the Lord says, “There you go! You are stronger than you ever were.” I would just rather the anointing come on me and me be happy and holy and just end it that simply, but He says “No, we are going to do it day by day, inch by inch.”*

*Father, here we are before You. Here we are before You.*

*I want to talk to the Mary of Bethanys, because it is a heart posture that says, “I am going to make it a priority to open my Bible and sit before the Lord.” You can do it in a prayer room, but you do not **have** to do it in a prayer room. Although that is a great place, you can do it anywhere. The heart posture that, “I am going to make it a priority to talk to God. I do not know the Bible that well”—I remember when I first started reading it that it was pretty confusing—“but I am going to do it. I am going to be a Mary of Bethany”—male or female—“I am going to do the heart of the bride.” That is the bride’s heart actually.*

*I want to call forth different ones in the room who want prayer. You are saying, “I want to lock in and say this before God”—and even as a statement to others—“this is where I want to go. I want to be a Mary of Bethany. I want to go after this bride’s heart. I want to know His heart and His emotions.” I want to invite you forward if you would like prayer.*