

Session 3 Understanding the Bridegroom Message

I. REVIEW FROM SESSION 2

- A. The wedding of the Lamb is coming, and Jesus is returning for a “prepared Bride” (Rev. 19:7).

⁷“For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” (Rev. 19:7)

We are on Session 3. What I want to do tonight is to give a synopsis, a summary, of what the Bridegroom message actually is. You can say the Bride message, but I like to focus on Jesus as the center and who we are is the result of who He is; we are only a Bride because He is a Bridegroom. If someone asks you “What is the Bridegroom message?” what would you say? I am hoping tonight with this handout to give you some talking points and even for your own heart to focus in on this subject.

Let’s do a quick review from last week. Human history is moving to the grandest corporate moment of all human history. It is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, the Wedding of the Lamb of God. It is not only that He is getting married, but that He is getting married to a prepared Bride. It worked! The people said yes, the Spirit moved, and the Father was right. He planned it, and it comes to fullness.

He is returning for a prepared Bride, and that is the urgency that I feel, because we are getting closer and closer to that day, which means the Holy Spirit is going to be really locking into this subject in a greater way.

- B. The cry to “come” (Rev. 22:17) has an upward and outward dimension to it. There is an *outward* cry to people to come to Jesus as the Bridegroom King and an *upward* cry in prayer to Jesus that is a 3-fold prayer that Jesus would come *near us* in intimacy, *to us* in revival, and *for us* in the sky. The final prayer and prophecy in the Word is related to encountering Jesus as Bridegroom King!

¹⁷The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!”...let him who thirsts come...²⁰He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! (Rev. 22:17, 20)

Remember, this is the final prayer in the Word of God, and it is the final prophecy in the Word of God as well. We looked at it last week, and we broke it down, phrase by phrase: that the Spirit and the Bride are crying, “Come!” This is the final prayer culminating the testimony of the Word of God for prayer and worship. There it is. It will be a Bridal cry. And it is the final prophecy where the Spirit is saying, “I am going to do this in the Church.”

It is an upward cry to Jesus, but it is not only a cry, “Come, Lord Jesus in, intimacy. Come near us,” it is a cry, “Come to us in revival,” and then ultimately it is a cry, “Come for us in the skies,” which is a vertical cry.

It is also a horizontal cry. We are calling to the people to come. “Come to the Bridegroom God!” It is more than come for forgiveness. Yes, we always want forgiveness, but it is a “Come to a Man who is a Bridegroom King who forgives!” And so you will see as you read it carefully the cry is “Come,” and people are responding according to their thirst.

- C. Seeing Jesus as the Bridegroom God enables us to see ourselves as His cherished Bride. He cleanses the Church, washing her with the Word, especially revealing how He cherishes her (Eph. 5:29). As the redeemed feel cherished, they are empowered to walk in obedience and resist compromise.

26...that He might...cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27that He might present her to Himself a glorious church...29For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. (Eph. 5:26-29)

The other point I would like to draw on from last week, and I do not think we can emphasize this point too much, is what Paul spoke of in Ephesians 5. This is one of the grand passages, prophecies, for the Church. If you love the Church, and you love the victorious Church, which you do of course, Ephesians 5 is one of the primary places in the whole of the Word of God where it says, crystal clear, verse 26: Jesus is going to cleanse the Church. He is going to wash her defilement, her unbelief, her dullness. He is going to wash it off her heart.

*However, He is going to wash it by the Word, by the spoken word, by the word that is sung, by the word of testimony one to another, by the written Word through reading it, by giving us the word in dreams and visions at night. He is going to take His Word and wash away defilement, heaviness, fear, boredom, dullness, confusion, and unbelief. He is going to wash it. He is not just going to wave His hand and our hearts become vibrant, but He is going to do it through the Word, through our singing it, speaking it, writing it, reading it, and all these different ways, dreaming it, etc. The net result is that it is a glorious Church—or I like to use the word, victorious—a Church walking in the glory of God, and this is **before** He returns. He is not talking about people in the resurrection with resurrected bodies walking purely. That is a given. This is a great work of the Spirit in the generation the Lord returns.*

Then he goes on, and you know the passage, he says, “Like a husband loves his wife.” He says in verse 29, “No man ever hated his own flesh, but he cherishes it; he nourishes and cherishes it,” and then Paul stops and says “Let me make a dynamic point: Jesus cherishes the Church this way.” The point I want to make is that when He washes us with the Word—I mean, the Bible, Genesis to Revelation, is valuable—but the particular part of the Word here is the Word that communicates His cherishing heart towards us. Now, we want the whole Word of God, but in the washing of defilement, boredom, sin, and compromise what washes us is the Word of God that unveils this cherishing nature of Jesus.

There are many, many passages and many facets of this. When we see the Bridegroom cherishing us and we feel cherished, beloved, we can walk in obedience. We can refuse sin, compromise, fear of man, anxiety, and all kinds of things, if we feel cherished. However, I have found over the years that many in the Church never study out what the scripture says about His heart cherishing His Bride. I have talked with people over the years who say, “Wow, I just never really got into that. You know, I was more into our task and what we were supposed to do,” which is good. I believe in teaching people ministry skills; ministry skills are great and very, very important, and they are part of the Word. However, a lot of folks have been raised in a spiritual environment where they never focused and locked into the cherishing heart, the emotions of God.

So what I am wanting you to identify in this twelve-week course is that studying the cherishing heart of Jesus is really a specific focus that you will want to take hold of. I told you, and I love this story—I have heard it many times and told it a few times—the Allen Hood story that I told last week, that when Allen was about twenty-two-years old and he first came here—you know he is forty-eight or nine now, so that was a long time ago—he was just a young guy, right out of college, and I had talked and challenged all the people there by saying “Take the emotions of God and study them.”

Now I did not even know Allen then. He was just brand new here, and he set his heart. He said, “I am going to take the next couple of years and identify every place,” because that is what I urged them to do—identify “everywhere in the word of God”—and I did not think somebody would actually do every one of them. I mean, the Bible is pretty thick. I was just making a big statement, but he actually went and studied every verse. He read the entire Bible and marked every verse where God’s emotions were revealed. I had never met anyone who

actually did this through the whole Bible. He gave the testimony that it took a couple of years to get through them all, but that it actually changed his life and shifted his entire view of the kingdom.

So I want you to walk away tonight with the Word that washes us from sin, compromise, dullness, boredom. This is the word about Him cherishing us, and there are many facets to that diamond, many, many, many facets. So not only do you want that for yourself, but as people who are wanting to disciple others or teach or train others you want to lock into this vein of truth in the word of God. It is so fantastic!

- D. Jesus will wash defilement, unbelief, dullness, heaviness, fear, boredom, dullness off the Bride by the water of the Word as it is spoken, sung, read, written, and received in dreams and visions, etc.

II. WHAT IS THE BRIDEGROOM MESSAGE? INTIMACY WITH GOD

- A. The Bridegroom message is a call to intimacy with God by encountering His heart and walking in partnership with Him in a spirit of abandonment. The Spirit reveals to us the deep things of God's heart—His emotions and commitments—and empowers us to respond in wholehearted love.

*What is the Bridal message? What is the Bridegroom message? You can say it either way, but again I like the term, the Bridegroom message, because we are only a Bride because He is the Bridegroom, so He is the centerpiece of it. If somebody asked me to say it in one sentence I would say: It is a call to intimacy encountering His emotions and His heart, walking in partnership, not working **for** Him but **together with** Him, dialoging with Him in a spirit of abandonment to that exclusive love.*

*The Bridegroom message is the call—I have four little facets here—it is a call to intimacy with God by encountering His heart. That is the cherishing thing I was talking about, studying out what His heart is like by encountering His heart. However, it is not just encountering His heart and walking in partnership with Him. He does not just want us to feel loved; He wants us to walk hand in hand with Him, so to speak. He wants to walk in deep partnership. It is about partnership. He does not just want us working for Him; He wants us working **with** Him, and He wants us doing it in a spirit of abandonment. Meaning, not just, “Okay, Jesus, I am going to have a little devotion time and then I am going to go do my thing.” He says, “No, I want you abandoned to Me. I want you to love Me with all of your heart because, and only for this reason, I love you with all of My heart.” There is a mutual abandonment that is at the core of the Bridegroom message. “What is Mine is yours, and what is yours is Mine, forever” is what He is saying. “I want all of you, and I have given all of Me.”*

Some people have really misapplied this message and think, “Bridegroom God: that means He is nice.” That is true. “Bridegroom God, He is tender.” Okay, cool. And then they have taken the message of the kind and tender heart of God and have concluded, “If He is that nice and that tender, I can be lazy and I can be careless in my obedience. I can do a little compromise here and there. He is nice.” The Bridegroom message is not supposed to produce the “Well, You are so nice I will just kind of chill and not really pay that much attention to my walk with You. And if I compromise a little bit, well, You are so nice. Hey, You are a Bridegroom.”

That is a misapplication, and I have seen that misapplication many times. And I have said, “No, you are missing it.” The Bridegroom message is in a spirit of abandonment.

He is not saying, “I stamped your passport to get you out of hell and to go to heaven.” I mean, He does get us out of hell and into heaven, but He says, “Actually, I want you with Me forever in total partnership! I am all in, and I want you all in!” That is the Bridegroom message. It is a spirit of abandonment: “What is Mine is yours,” the Lord says, “and what is yours is Mine, all the way to the end, together forever.”

And so that is how I would say the Bridegroom message in one sentence. It is a call to intimacy, encountering His emotions and His heart, walking in partnership, not working for Him but together with Him, dialoging with Him in a spirit of abandonment to that exclusive love. This exclusivity where “I am fully Yours,” that is core to the Bridegroom message and to the End Time Church being prepared.

¹⁰The Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God...¹²we have received...the Spirit...that we might know [experience] the things that have been freely given to us by God. (1 Cor. 2:10-12)

Well, I am going to say this whole sentence with a few different words, so here is the next sentence: The Holy Spirit is going to reveal to us the deep things of His heart. Now this verse in 1 Corinthians 2 is so extravagant. Look at 1 Corinthians 2:10, “The Spirit searches everything in created order, including the deep things of God.” He searches everything! I mean, the Holy Spirit is God, but what this is saying is that the Spirit discerns the deepest things of the heart of the Father and the Son. I mean, how extravagant is that! Even to speak of God and deep things of God is like, “Well, that is so out of our reach,” yet he goes on to say, “The Spirit has been given to us so that He can share these things with us.” Beloved, this is extravagance beyond anything I can imagine! And so as I talk about encountering His heart, I am talking about His emotions, or His affections which are really the same thing as is emotions. That is, affections are one dimension of His emotions, but it is a very important part of His emotions. The Holy Spirit wants to reveal His beauty.

Jesus does not want us in a bored relationship now or forever. He would say, “It is not a boring relationship. I am going to absolutely exhilarate your heart forever! Because I am a Bridegroom, this is not going to be a boring marriage-covenant relationship. You are going to be always leaning into something new and being filled with wonder, if you will really lean into the relationship.” He is going to tell us His secrets. The Holy Spirit reveals His commitments, and then the Holy Spirit empowers us to wholehearted love and partnership.

And so I am really saying what the Bridegroom message is. I basically restated it again. Now God created you—He created the human design—to be the Bride of Christ. Millions and billions have said no, but they were created for the same. They were created in the image of God to be the Father’s children and to be the Bridegroom’s eternal companion. We were built, we were designed, to long for intimacy, with full exposure yet with no shame in it. We were built to long for that. And the reason this matters is because it is who you are. And to try and live the Christian life less than wholeheartedly—which many do and I am not trying to get down on them—but they try to live the Christian life kind of half in and like, “Hey, love You, Jesus!” and blow Him a kiss on the way. Beloved, you were created for intimate encounter! You were created to be known and to feel no shame in being known in all of your weakness, but to actually have confidence because you know the One who knows you.

And so the idea of moving fast in the kingdom and not taking time for this is going against our entire created design. We cannot function without settling down and saying, “This is our future in this age and forever. I was created for intimacy. My heart will not be alive, my heart will not be restored, my heart will not be functioning rightly if I am not pursuing this. Simply, I was made in the image of God to connect with God this way.”

So I look at a lot of believers, and they love Jesus, but they are all busy, and I think, “Oh, it is not like He is mad at you, but you are missing the biggest opportunity! He is really here, and the Spirit has deep things to bring you into, and you were created for them.”

B. *His emotions for us:* It starts with experiencing Jesus’ heart—His emotions and affections for us.

Let’s look just a little bit at His emotions. We are going to elaborate just a bit on His emotions. The Holy Spirit is going to reveal the Son’s emotions, the Bridegroom’s emotions. Now when I talk about His heart, His emotions

are more than His affections, but His affections are a very exciting part of Him. He is not a God who just has power, but He has deep affections. He has deep desire.

For some folks, this is new to them. I mean they technically think that God has desire, but they do not think much about it. I was talking to someone just the other day who asked, “Where in the Bible does it say it clearly that God has desire?”

I could see their sincerity, and I said “Well, there are like a thousand places,” but I did not want to be like overwhelming. I asked, “You really want to know?”

They said, “Yes, because I have been challenged that this is not a biblical truth, that this is off, and it is kind of outside of the realm of truth.”

I said “No, no! This is in Genesis to Revelation times a hundred! It is everywhere! Do you know why you have desires? It is because you are made in His image. God does not have desires because you do; you have them because He does. You have affections and you have gladness because He does. We are made in His image.”

1. **Affections:** Jesus feels the intensity of love for us that the Father feels for Him (Jn. 15:9). He loves us with His all, and He wants this from us. We are empowered to walk in “fullness” by encountering Jesus’ love (Eph. 3:18-19). How could Someone as glorious as Jesus love someone as weak as I am? Why would someone like me not fully love Someone like Him?

“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.” (Jn. 15:9)

Number one, His affections, and we could go on and on in this subject. Jesus feels the intensity of love and the affections for us that the Father does for Him. John 15:9—those of you who have been around here for a few years know this is probably the verse I quote more than any other verse in the Bible. John 15:9—I cannot get over it. I have been quoting this verse for twenty-five years. I just cannot get over it. Jesus loves me like the Father loves Him? And my mind says, “Why? Why am I that interesting to You? This blows my mind!” I mean, I know why the Father loves the Son with intensity; the Son is so worthy and interesting. I look at this, and I think, “Really? I would not love me that much if I was You.”

And the answer would be, “Yes, but you do not know who I am. This is who I am. It is the only way I love—with all of My heart. I cannot love differently from who I am.”

¹⁸...you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹to know [experience] the love [affections] of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:18-19)

Paul mentions this in Ephesians 3. We looked at this a little bit last week, but it is such a big passage. He says in verse 18 that we want “to comprehend the width, the length, the depth, and the height,” these four dimensions. Those are big words and we will look at these in one of our sessions. We want to experience because to know His affections is to experience His affections. Why? Because that is the pathway to entering into the fullness of God’s purpose for your life. You will only reach the fullness of what God has ordained for whatever season of life you are in—because there is a fullness for this season; it is not the fullness in the absolute sense, but you will only enter into the fullness of what God has for you in each season—as you are growing in the revelation of His affections for you. Paul puts it together saying, “Not only do the affections of Jesus cherishing us wash us”—that is Ephesians 5—but here in Ephesians 3 he says, “The affections, they are our escort forward into the fullness of whatever the purpose of God is for you in whatever season.”

Right now I am entering into only a fraction of my eternal purpose and fullness, but I want to enter into all that I am supposed to enter into in this season of my life. Paul would say, “Know this: you will not enter into the fullness of that”—Ephesians 3:19—“without growing hand in hand in the understanding of affections.”

So Allen Hood was right. He said, “I did this for three years. I studied every passage.” You see, he did not just write it in his journal, but then he prayed it back to God and wrote little phrases here and there occasionally.

And so, number one, He has affections, and this is a giant subject.

2. **Gladness:** Jesus’ heart of gladness surpasses everyone in all of history (Heb. 1:9). But much of church history has viewed God as mostly mad or sad in His relationship with us.

Number two, He has gladness. The idea that I want to give you here in the next point or two, the big picture idea I would like you to see, is that Jesus has this very dynamic, generous, happy personality. He has a dynamic, generous, happy personality. He is joyful—and I do not mean silly or giddy joyful, but a profound sense of joy—when He relates to you. We have this idea, many do through church history, that God is mostly mad or mostly sad when He relates to us. Like He is mad, like, “Bickle, I said stop it! You keep doing it! I am going to forgive you again but...” That is the tone they think He speaks to them in; He is mad.

Or not mad, but He is sad. “Oh Mike! Poor little, weak, little, pathetic Mike. I love you, and I am going to forgive you again, but, oh! you break My heart every day.” No, no! A lot of people think that way.

That is what their view of what humility is. They can live under the weight of God mad at them, or in this vortex that He is “Argh!” and then they think, “Okay, okay, if I live there, that is humility.”

No, that means you do not understand who you are talking to. He is not casual or just flippant about our weakness, and He is not saying “Oh, boys will be boys! Who cares? I am God. Hey, I am nice.” No, He is saying, “My generosity is bigger than your weakness. And I see who you are these seventy years on the earth, but I see who you are for the next seventy billion years as well. I know the real you, forever. And in My generosity and My big understanding of you, I get what is going on and I want to help you get out of it.”

We do not want to take this revelation of God and be casual and cavalier about it, “Oh well, He is nice and will forgive us!” No, I want to say every time “Thank You!” but I am not going to get stuck in an identity of how weak I am. I am not going to get stuck in this identity.

It is like the question I used to ask, and I do still ask sometimes, “Are you a sinner who struggles to love God or are you a lover of God who still struggles with sin?” Beloved, there is a big difference! I am a lover of God; that is who I am, and that is what I do, and that is what I am about. However, I still struggle with sin. Sadly, a lot of believers think they are slaves of sin who are struggling to love. That is a very different point of view, but I look at His generosity.

He has this dynamic, positive, gracious personality. Psalm 16:11 says that “fullness of joy and pleasure are at His right hand.” The epicenter of joy and pleasure in the created order comes out of His heart and His throne, Psalm 16:11. And so, number two, He is glad.

⁹God has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions. (Heb. 1:9)

Hebrews 1:9 tells us that He has an anointing of gladness beyond any other human being that ever lived. Nobody has the gladness in their human experience that Jesus did when He walked on the earth. And so we are dealing with a Man who, again, is not flippant and giddy, but is not overwhelmed with negativity and judgment, saying, “Oh. It is you again,” as we hear the voice of the authority figure in our life who is exasperated with us when we come before God. That is not the Bridegroom God. I mean, we are so used to that voice, whether it is a father,

mother, coach, employer, boss or whatever. It is that voice we hear but I tell you He is anointed with gladness. It is a happy marriage forever because of His personality.

3. **Generosity:** The tone of Jesus' relational style is generosity, joy, delight, and pleasure. "I do not want to simply live the Christian life; I want to love living it" (Sam Storms).
¹¹**In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.** (Ps. 16:11)
⁸**And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures.** (Ps. 36:8)
⁴**The Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble...** (Ps. 149:4)
4. **Delight:** Jesus delights in relating to His people. The biblical vision of the Christian life is a lifestyle of enjoying God with confidence that He delights in relating to us (Ps. 18:19; 27:4; 36:8; 37:4; 149:4). The Bridegroom message highlights how our love moves Jesus' heart.
⁴**You [see your name here] shall be called Hephzibah...for the LORD delights in you...**
⁵**As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.** (Isa. 62:4-5)

Next, He delights, Psalm 62. I have told this encounter many times. It was back in November 1996 when I had this powerful, prophetic dream one night and heard the audible voice of God in the dream. I dreamed I was down at the Onething Conference, though this was years before we had the Onething Conference. However, I was down at the Kansas City Convention Center with thousands of young people. The audible voice of the Lord shouts when I am on the stage, "Call them 'Hephzibah!'" It was like thunder!

I thought, "Hephzibah what?"

I was looking and hearing the thunderous voice, "I delight in them! I delight in them! Declare this!" and the Lord spoke to me in the dream that He is going to change the emotional chemistry of people. They are going to shift, many of them, and I do not mean totally in one day, but radically in a day. They are going to get on a totally new trajectory with God when this declaration comes over the earth. Every year I always say this at least once, that it is more than a declaration; it is a paradigm, meaning a whole perspective. It is the Bridegroom message. Beloved, He delights in the relationship now, not just when you are more mature than Paul the apostle. He actually delights in the relationship. He likes relating with us.

Now one of the big reasons we struggle with this is that we do not like our self, and so we cannot imagine God delighting in us. Now, I know that some of you do and some of you do not like yourself, but He likes you way more than you like you. I promise you! You get the person with the strongest self-image who really is comfortable with themselves, and Jesus likes that person way more than they do. He is in all the way.

You know, David mentions, over and over, the pleasure that God has in the relationship, the delight. And over the years, as I have taught this, I have had leaders say, "Oh man! He delights in us? He has pleasure?"

I remember, too, that I have had lots of conversations, "Well, well, if you tell people that, they are going to get careless with sin. You cannot make them confident in this."

I say, "No, it is the opposite. If you get them confident in this, they will run to Him and not from Him. They are so desperate to be enjoyed that, if somebody enjoys them, they will be hanging on Him everywhere He goes, hanging on to His leg. You cannot get rid of them!" I say, "They are not going to go live in sin because they are longing for that place of peace where they feel delighted in, because we are created that way and He has the delight that matches us perfectly."

I mean there is that occasional person, as I mentioned when I first started this message, who gets presumptuous and lazy and says “Well, He is so nice, I might as well take it easy, and who cares?”

I say, “That is because you have not understood. That is why you respond that way.” He is so generous and kind. I just picture my grandchildren when they grab my leg, and I walk, and I cannot get rid of them, which is a game I played with some of them when they were little. And that is also me and Jesus! I say, “I am never letting go of You if You like me that much! Nobody likes me that much, including myself. You are my answer. I loved being loved! I love being loved!”

And He would say, “Well, you have come to the right place because I am the lover of your soul.”

And you know what? This is not just doctrinal rhetoric. This is real. But, this will touch your heart and bounce right off if you do not take a hold and do something with this outside of a teaching or worship session. Meaning, this needs to get into your language with God. These terms and ideas need to get into your conversation with Him when you drive, when you talk, when you sit, when you whisper prayers as you are going from one thing to another, just those little five-to-ten-second prayers. You want this in your language, because it is really not going to change you until it gets into your mouth. And so it is cool, but cool is not enough; it has to get into your language over time. And then it starts washing you.

¹⁹He delivered me because He delighted in me. (Ps. 18:19)

5. **Cherishing:** The Church is cleansed by experiencing Jesus’ cherishing heart (Eph. 5:26-29).

Next, He cherishes us – we already talked about, that but I just want to camp out there in my life. Really, I am saying the same thing with different terms.

6. **Jealousy:** Jesus is jealous that we enter into the fullness of our relationship with Him.

¹⁴“You shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” (Ex. 34:14)

⁴Whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God...⁵The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously? (Jas. 4:4-5)

Then, He is jealous. He is a jealous God, but He is jealous for our heart because He loves us so much and sees our greatness in a way that we cannot. He is jealous that we would enter into the fullness of love. So He is not the angry, jealous person in the culture who would say, “Oh, that is what God is like.”

No, no, He is saying, “I am jealous that you be filled with love. I am jealous that you enter into the fullness of the greatness that I have called you to. I am going to step in the way anytime something gets in the way, even if it is you! I want you to want this because it is your glory and it is My desire. And, it is really what you want; you just do not know it.”

And so He is jealous, and He will come after us. He will contend for our hearts jealously, fiercely, but it is because He cares. He is unrelenting. There are several verses here saying that He is a jealous God. We might ask, “Why would You want me to love You so much?”

“I am love. I love you. I want you to enter into that love. What we have together now and forever, you cannot imagine how beautiful it is! And, I will not let go of you. I am jealous that you enter into it.”

7. **Zealous:** Jesus, as the Bridegroom, is zealous for our safety, and honor, etc. (Zech. 1:14; 8:2). In His zeal, He will destroy all that hinders love. Jesus intervenes to fight against that which injures His Bride. He rescues, protects, and vindicates His Bride.

He is not only jealous for our hearts, but He is zealous. Now I think of zealous as different from jealous. He is zealous to remove our enemies. He is jealous that we would enter into all that He has called us to be in our walk with Him. He is zealous. He would say, “I will come against every one that comes against you,” and He is talking about the bigger picture. He is not talking about the guy who is bugging you in your office and the Lord is going to, like, destroy him. That is not what the Lord is talking about. However, He would say, “I am going to intervene.”

There are so many passages in the scripture where He shows His zeal, and typically these are end-of-the-age passages. Where He shows His zeal on an open, global level is in His zeal for His Bride. Particularly when He comes fully against the Antichrist and the kings of the earth, He is saying “I always was this zealous, but I have been silent. I have held back showing it openly on a global level.” However, the day is coming, and it is in His heart now, and He even releases it here and there. The day is coming where His zeal is going to be openly displayed on a global level.

¹“I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervor I am zealous for her.” (Zech. 8:1)

Look at this, Zechariah 8:1. This is Jesus. Look at these four phrases: I am zealous, phrase one; with great zeal, phrase two; great fervor, phrase three; I am zealous, phrase four. It is like you cannot get it more concentrated than that! He says, “I am in all the way. You can trust My leadership.”

- C. Jesus is a Bridegroom King—He is a King with power and a Bridegroom with desire. *Bridegroom* describes the essence of who He is and what His personality is like. By nature, He is a Bridegroom; by position and function, He is a King. Being King describes what He does. Being the Bridegroom describes His heart and being. He has the personality of a Bridegroom and the function of a King.

*I just want to put it all together in a different way; I am going to say it again, but from a little different angle. Again, what we are talking about tonight is the Bridegroom message so that you can grasp it and you can say it. However, there are so many facets to this diamond that I am saying it in three or four different ways, saying the same thing with a few different terms. You pick the terms that fit your heart, but I do not think any of us are going to capture the fullness of it because it is bigger than us. He is a Bridegroom King and, I love to say this phrase, He is a King with power but He is also a Bridegroom with desire. I just love that idea. He has all power, **and** He has deep desire, and the desire is for relationship, which is the idea.*

And so here I just put a few phrases. You could make a list of twenty of these little phrases. I just put three or four of them here.

- A king gives commands and mandates; a bridegroom desires conversation and dialogue.
- A king shows how great his power is; a bridegroom shares how deep his heart loves.
- A king wants obedience; a bridegroom wants partnership.
- A king wants diligent service; a bridegroom wants to be with his bride.

A king gives commandments, but a bridegroom desires conversation. A king says, “Do this,” and a bridegroom says, “Come here and let’s talk. I want dialogue.” A king shows how great his power is; a bridegroom shows how deep his heart is. A king wants obedience; a bridegroom wants partnership. A king wants service; a bridegroom wants to be with his bride and says, “I want time together. I want interaction.”

*So you could write twenty phrases to say the same things in different ways. The idea here is that a lot of folks are locked into “the King,” but a Bridegroom is what His **heart** is. A King is what His **role** is. He is a Bridegroom in His heart, and He is a King in His position and in His authority. And so the essence of who He is is a Bridegroom, and His essence is not His office. The essence of Jesus is His personality and His heart makeup. He is a*

Bridegroom who rules as a King, a Bridegroom King. Yes, He is a King, but at the core He is more than one who faithfully occupies and executes the most powerful office in the created order. He is more than a King.

I believe we are in the early days of that generation in which the Bible says a number of times that sin will reach its greatest heights, heights never known in history before, heights of the violence, the immorality, the anger, the envy, the hatred, the murder. On a scale of one to ten, if it reaches a five or a six at peak moments in history, it is going to reach a ten in that one generation. The negative is going to be horrible, with a deeper saturation of sin in the culture, but God would say, “I have a secret weapon and”—this is my terminology—“I am going to reveal the nature of My Son the King as a Bridegroom in His true nature.” We are going to be so cherished and our hearts are going to be so washed that we can be in the darkest, most defiled generation in history, but we will have power in our heart because we are interacting with this powerful King in the true nature of who He is as a Bridegroom.

D. **His beauty:** Jesus possesses indescribable beauty that fascinates our hearts. God created us with a longing to be fascinated and filled with wonder—this happens most in our relationship with God.

1. The Spirit will emphasize Jesus’ beauty in the generation of His return (Isa. 33:17). The Spirit escorts us on a divine treasure hunt into Jesus’ beauty. This is glorious, divine entertainment.

Well, He does not share just His heart and His affections. He shares His beauty. I mean, His beauty is indescribable, and His beauty fascinates us. We are not doomed to live in a boring relationship. He is a Bridegroom who would say, “This is not going to be a boring marriage with My eternal companion. I have all that is required to keep My people fascinated in this age and for the age to come, forever. You will never exhaust My ability to fascinate you in a new way.” I mean, this is an amazing part of His nature as a Bridegroom!

Now this is a tender statement, but millions and millions of people on the earth know what it means to be in a boring marriage. And, they know that being in a boring marriage is not the easiest context for love to grow. I mean, it can grow, but it is not the easiest context. Millions and millions and millions of people know that. Jesus is saying, as it were, “That is not going to be the issue with My people. I am going to have them in the most optimum environment. I am going to unveil Myself to them over and over.” Beloved, this is not just something that happens in the age to come; this is now. This is now, but it takes that Mary-of-Bethany posture. We all know Mary of Bethany, Luke 10—she sat before Jesus to hear His word.

One of the titles I have for the generation the Lord returns is the Bridegroom generation. I also call it a David generation, and I call it a Mary-of-Bethany generation. This place of sitting at His feet to interact with His Word, with our heart in that Mary-of-Bethany posture, to be captured with His heart, will empower us in the face of persecution, in the face of defilement, in the face of temptation, in the face of mistreatment, and in the face of disappointments.

However, the problem in our community here is that we have talked about Mary of Bethany so many times for the last eighteen years that “Mary of Bethany” can become just a statement. It can become a phrase in a song, “Oh, I am Mary of Bethany!” But, it is not a statement and a phrase; it is actually something that should affect our schedule and our heart conversations. It takes time. I do not do it perfectly. I know the challenge to turn things off and turn away from opportunities, because if I do not turn things off and turn opportunities away I cannot sit at His feet. And when I look back over the years, I wish I would have done it better, but I do know the challenge of turning off and turning away. You see, a lot of folks have the Mary-of-Bethany phrase, but they will not turn off and turn away. One year turns to ten, and ten years turns to twenty, and they look back to find it was just an idea that floated, which they got familiar with, but they never entered into it. The Mary-of-Bethany reality must affect our schedule and our conversation with our heart with God. If it does not change our schedule, turning

away and turning off, it is not going to move our heart. And so I say this as much for me as I say for you. I say it because I want you to say, “Yes, yes, that is right,” and the Holy Spirit is getting me saying, “Yes, that is right. That is really right!” So I cannot say this too many times.

¹⁷*Your eyes will see the King in His beauty. (Isa. 33:17)*

2. Without a sense of awe in our relationship with God we will live spiritually bored. A spiritually bored believer is weak and more vulnerable to Satan’s tactics. A fascinated believer who is preoccupied with God’s beauty is spiritually strong and equipped to stand.

Number 2: Without a sense of awe in our relationship with God we will live spiritually bored. If we do not have a sense of awe—I mean even a little bit; I do not mean that it has to be overwhelming, but a sense of wonder in our walk with God if we do not have that—then we will end up spiritually bored.

I know more sincere believers who are sincere, but are spiritually bored. They love Jesus but reading His word, talking to Him, and sitting before Him is boring. And again, I am not saying that like, “Bah-humbug! Aren’t you bad!” If that is you, I am saying that there is more.

There is more! He will not wave His hand and make you do it, but He says, “I can fascinate you.” If you do not have an element of fascination in your heart, you are going to end up spiritually bored. And I tell you, a spiritually bored believer is so vulnerable to Satan. For a spiritually bored believer there is so much temptation and not just the seduction in the culture, but also disappointment in the culture, anger in the culture, mistreatment in the culture. All of those things wound us and hurt us, seduce us and woo us!

All of these things are hitting, and if I do not have a little bit of awe in my heart I am going to be swept away by the disappointments, or swept away by the seduction or swept away just by the rigor, “I am just tired!”

That is why so many people are burned out spiritually and say “You know, I am just burned out.” And what I like to say often is that mostly people are not burned out because they work hard; they are burned out because they work with a wrong spirit. Some people do work too many hours, but most people work with a wrong spirit and so they get disappointed in the way people talk to them, or when they do not get the affirmation they thought, or they do not get the breakthrough of power they assumed would happen by now.

The Lord would say, “No, change your view, and let Me heal that burnout.” We do not need to live burned out because people are mad at us or because we have disappointments. We can still live with our heart alive. I determined that I am not giving up my heart because situations are hard or people are mad or somebody did not do what they said.

I am not giving up my heart for that. Like I say, “I wish they wouldn’t, but I only have one heart and I am taking it with me to eternity and I am going to stay in the grace of God.” I want to stay vibrant. However, I have to constantly reconnect, reconnect, reconnect, reconnect to this interesting Man because if I am not growing a little bit—I mean I do not want to over-exaggerate this but a little bit—in fascination with wonder, I am going to get swept into the anger, the disappointment, the mistreatment, the seduction, the deception. I am going to get swept away.

You get swept away, little by little. A few years go by, and you say “Oh my goodness! How did I get over here? I was on fire for the Lord five years ago. How did this happen?” You lived spiritually bored, and the forces in the culture, with demons behind it, just subtly took you to the right or to the left.

- E. **His secrets:** Jesus will share the secrets of His heart with His Bride (Ps. 25:14). We can know and be known by Jesus in a similar way to how He knows the Father (Jn. 10:15).

¹⁴The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him. (Ps. 25:14)

He not only tells us about His heart, and He not only tells us about His beauty, but He also tells us His secrets. This is one of the ways He fascinates us as well. This is kind of a little bit connected with His beauty because our hearts say, "Wow!" It produces a wow in our heart.

I do not mean secret doctrines that no one on the earth knows besides you and your home group. That is not what I mean. I do not mean some secret, esoteric information about the names of angels four levels up. I am talking about the Psalm 25 "The secrets of the Lord" things that are stirring on His heart in that hour. The things that are not known by everyone simply because they are not sitting before Him, though they could be known.

It is the Mary-of-Bethany posture again. It is the secret, again not some strange, exotic piece of information that no one has even heard of, but it is the things that are stirring in His heart right now which are not being celebrated or laid hold of by the nations or even the Body of Christ across the earth. They are just being ignored. He would say, "I want you to know those things. I want them to impact you." This is core to the Bridegroom message: that He has things to tell us about His heart. He has things to tell us about our hearts. He has things He wants to move on our hearts about. I call them the secrets of the Lord.

¹⁴"I know My own, and My own know Me, ¹⁵even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father." (Jn. 10:14-15, NASB)

*Now I am going to read this verse in John 10. This is one of the most remarkable verses. I mean this has to be one of those at the top of your list. John 10:14—watch this—He says "I know My own," the believers, "and My own they know Me." Okay, that's good. Verse 15 goes on, "Know. Even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father, **that** is how My own know Me and I know them."s*

Like, "Excuse me? You know me and I know You like You and the Father...Jesus, come on!"

"Actually, this is the trajectory we are going in. You have not entered into it all, but this is what is in My heart. I want you to know that I know you. You are not alone. I know your victories. I know your failures. I know your pains. I know your dreams. I know who did it! I know who did not do it! I know it all, and My heart is with you. You are not alone. I know you! You are known of God."

Like, "I do not feel like I am known of God...."

Not that this cures everything, but the Lord might say, "If you would stop, turns some things off, turn some opportunities away, and sit in front of Me, you would know more about what I know about you."

We do not get it. We do not go deep on the run. We can still survive spiritually on the run, but I do not want to survive; I want to go deep. You know I do not want to say "Whatever deep means for this age." In the age to come, we will think, "We thought that was deep? Are you kidding? That was nothing, but, hey, it was deep for then!" That is what I want now! In the age to come we will find out that it was not all that deep, but look at this, "I know My own, and My own know Me" I mean, it is like, "Oh my goodness! Even as the Father knows the Son!"

1. Intimacy with God involves His loving knowledge of us that has no fear of shame in it.

¹⁷Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment...¹⁸There is no fear [of shame] in love; but perfect love casts out fear.
(1 Jn. 4:17-18)

Intimacy with God involves Him knowing you, but here is the key. See, when you say, “God knows you,” to a lot of people, it is like, “Oh no!” If He is an angry coach, then, “Oh no!” is the right answer, but He is the most generous and self-replenishing in love, affection, and gladness. He never exhausts it. You do not need to say, “Oh no!”

They ask, “You mean He knows, like, everything?”

“Yes, everything”

“Oh no!”

“Wait, wait! Not just your failures. He knows how you cried on your bed last night because you said, ‘God, I want to love You more!’ He knows that too.”

“Oh, I thought He just knew the base stuff.”

“Oh no, no! When you are thinking, ‘God, I just really want to do this thing with all of my heart,’ He says ‘Oh, I got it! I see your heart, and I love that about you!’ You say, ‘Did you hear that, Lord? Did you really catch that?’ I mean, He knows that more than you know it. He knows that about your heart.”

*Look at 1 John 4:17. It says, “Love has been perfected (matured) in this way”—now he says one of the biggest statements—“that you will have boldness on the Judgment Day” to be in front of Him who sits upon the throne and to be bold and confident. It is like, “On that day? Maybe when I do **not** see Him I am bold, but in front of Him?” That is the most terrifying position in the created order if He is not generous. And then John says, “I have good news for you. You will be bold (confident) when you are face to face. You will be shocked at how confident and bold you will be.”*

Not because you are amazing in your dedication, but you will see His generosity and you will see love is perfected, meaning that love has matured, meaning your understanding of what He is like will be fully mature. And you will say, “I do not need to run from You. If I knew that this was how it was, I would have been on fire when I was in my twenties, thirties, forties, fifties, and sixties! I would have gone all the way. I would not have quit when I stumbled. I would have gotten up and run to you with my arms opened wide. I did not know You were this way! I know I heard it, I said it, I taught it, but I did not really believe it.”

However, John says, “When the knowledge of love is mature, when it is perfect, you will have no fear. You will have no fear that He is casting you away. You will have no fear when you see the truth about Him. You will have no fear.” Now he is talking to sincere believers. He is not talking to somebody who says, “Hey, I do not really care.” He is talking to the guy or the gal who says, “I am not doing great, but I am not happy about that. I love Him.” He is talking to the sincere believer.

2. We are known by God in the sense of God seeing and valuing what others do not see in us.

’But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements [of this world]...? (Gal. 4:9)

We are known by God in the sense of God seeing and evaluating what others cannot see and evaluate. We are known by God. God sees you and values what is in your heart in a way that you cannot and others cannot see and evaluate you. Others write you off and say, “Oh, you are just a hypocrite who always talks big, and you never follow through. I am just so tired of what you say and what you do.”

That is what we think is the story. And the Lord would say, “No, I actually know you. They do not know you, but I do.”

Paul says here in Galatians, “After you have known God, or rather have been known by God” because there is this reciprocal connectivity of knowing God. The more you know God, the more you know you are known by God.

And so the more I get to know Him, the more I think “Wait! You know those secret rumblings in my heart and You like me more than I do!” The more I know Him, the more I know that I am known by Him. I love this! This works for me! Why didn’t they tell me this earlier? This is fantastic! That is what Paul is saying here.

- F. **His commitments to us:** He will share His heart, home, throne, secrets, and beauty, and He works all things together for our good (Rom. 8:28), being committed to our eternal success and greatness.

Well, we also know His commitments to us, not just His secrets, not just His beauty, not just His emotions. The Bridegroom message, we know His commitments.

As a summary statement: He is going to share His heart—we have looked at that a little bit—He is going to share His home—New Jerusalem, that is a big subject which we have not looked at—He is going to share His throne—In Revelation 3:21, He says “I want you with Me on My throne,” meaning His government—He is going to share secrets; we talked about that—He is going to share His beauty. He says “I have made all of these commitments to you as a Bridegroom.” And do you know what? It is not just that, but He is committed to your eternal success and your greatness, though I know this is hard for some of you to accept.

7“You have crowned him with glory and honor.” (Heb. 2:7)

Hebrews 2:7 says that He has crowned you with glory and honor. We cannot fathom the honor and the glory on our life for billions of years; we cannot even fathom it. The angels are amazed at the stature of the saints, that they are the aristocracy of the eternal family. I mean you are in the ruling family of the kingdom. Hebrews 2:7 says you are crowned with glory and honor.

The Lord says, as it were, “I am committed. I am going to take your sin, I am going to take your enemies, I am going to take your disappointments, I am going to take your setbacks”—Romans 8:28—“and I am going to overrule all of it and cause it to work out for your eternal success. You may not see everything easy now, but I am going to keep moving your heart forward by all the pressures and all of the benefits, both the negative and the positive, and I am going to keep moving you forward. And then, when you see Me face to face, you will see how much has been worked in you that will be for your success forever and ever, and you will say, ‘Oh, I should have trusted Your leadership more!’ I am committed to you. I am your Bridegroom! I am not just your passport stamper. I am not just your king and you My workforce. You are My eternal companion. I fight for your greatness. I plan for it. I lead for it. I am using all of the negative things you do and they do against you and I am going to turn it for good by making your heart see more and respond more. And then forever you will live in the glory of it!”

- G. We refuse all sensual overtones to the Bride of Christ message. Jesus is not our lover or boyfriend. We do not go on “dates” with Jesus. Receiving the “kiss of God’s Word” (Song 1:2) is not kissing Jesus! The spiritual interpretation of the Song of Solomon must not be sexualized in any way.

Now when we talk about this deep commitment to the Lord and His commitment to us, ninety-nine percent of you know this, but it has to be said, so just bear with this because the one percent need to hear this. When we talk about the Bridegroom God, we must refuse all sensual overtones, one hundred percent of the sensual overtones. You need to say this to others as well.

Jesus is not your lover boyfriend. You know, I have talked with a few gals, and they would say, “I am going to have a date-night with Jesus,” and I reply, “No, no, no, you cannot do anything with Jesus that Allen Hood cannot

do with Jesus. And he is not going on a date with Jesus. No, that is the wrong idea.” I mean you can have time with Jesus and you can pull out your candles. Go ahead and put your candles up and have some roses and put a little oils and do what you want, but it is not a date. He is not your boyfriend. He is your God!

Song of Solomon says, “Kiss me with the kisses of Your mouth.” The Rabbi said, “Kiss me with the kisses of Your word, the Torah.” That is how they taught it for many generations. We do not kiss Jesus. I mean I have actually had people say, “Oh, I just want Him to kiss me! I want Him to just ravish me!” and I say ‘Just stop it! In the name of Jesus, wake up and stop!’ Anyway, 99.9% percent of you know that, but there is the one person who says “Really?”

- H. **Partnership:** Jesus wants us to be “with Him” and to work “with Him” in building the kingdom. Pray that you “see” what He sees and that you “feel” what He feels when He looks at you.

*It is not just that He wants us to know His heart. He would say, as it were, “I want to do this **with** you. I do not want you to just feel loved. I do, as feeling love is good, but that is not the end of what I am talking about. I want you to feel loved because I want you to have confidence because I want confident partnership. I want you and Me together forever.” This is just extravagant and outrageous kindness on His part.*

⁴**“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am.” (Jn. 17:24)**

He said, as we know because we have looked at the verse many times, John 17:24, prior to the cross He said, “Father, I desire!” He cried out. He was going to die in the most grueling suffering, and He said, “This is going to be very rough, but what is on My heart right now is not how rough it is going to be in a few hours. I desire that she is with Me! This is what I desire about her! I want her with Me forever!!” How could He be thinking that when He had the most grueling reality hours ahead of Him?

1. We work *with* Him, not just *for* Him. He wants to talk with us every step of the way.

²¹**“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me [Jesus] on My throne.” (Rev. 3:21)**

Revelation 2, when He talks about ruling the universe, He says, “You will sit”—not on a throne—“you will sit with Me!” It is not that a million people are going to squeeze on one chair, and we all kind of squeeze together. That is not what He is talking about. He is saying, “I will share My government over the entire created order with you. You will sit with Me, and I am not just giving you authority; we are going to do it together.” Oh my goodness!

*It says after He rose from the dead that the apostles went out and the Lord was working with them. Beloved, number one, we do not work **for** Him, we work **with** Him. I know that is a cool phrase, and everybody knows it, but what that means is that when we are working we are talking to Him. I do not mean every minute of every day. However, I am not just doing a task hoping you guys notice so I get promoted or I get applauded. I mean, I do not mind if you applaud and promote, but that is not what it is about, though. I am doing a task **with** Him, and I am **talking to** Him.*

*I love this prayer; it is probably the prayer I pray the most, “Lord, let me see what You see and feel what You feel about this person.” When I drive to the meeting here, Friday after Friday, I say, “Lord, let me see what You see and feel what You feel about tonight. I do not want to just give a sermon. I want You and me to do something together while they and You are doing something in the hearing and feeling. I do not want to just be applauded and get a promotion; I want to do it **with** You. I want to see what You see and feel what You feel.”*

That is how we do this thing together; that is how you stay out of burn out because you are in a conversation, and I do not mean that every minute of the day you are in the conversation. However, to me the task of running

IHOPKC is not about having a big ministry, getting a database, having a big conference. It is, “Lord, what do You feel about IHOPKC today? I want to feel what You feel, good, bad, this or that. I just do what You want to do! And I want You smiling when I do it. And if in some seasons it goes up and some seasons it goes down, as long as I stay in the conversation, I am happy. I do not mind what happens there so much, as long as we are connecting and I am in track with what You see and what You feel to the best I know by the grace of God.”

2. Jesus took Peter, James, and John to be “with Him” in His sorrow (Mt. 26:38).

³⁷And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee...³⁸Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful...Stay here and watch with Me.” (Mt. 26:37-38)

Jesus went to the garden, and He said to Peter, James and John—those are the two sons of Zebedee, James and John—He said, “I want you with Me in My sorrow. I do not just want you with Me on the throne. I do not just want you with Me in the New Jerusalem, I want you with Me in My sorrow, and I am going to be with you in your sorrow.”

I. Jesus engages in an intimate relationship with His people—He rejoices with us in celebrating our triumphs and weeps with us in the sense of sharing our pain in our failures, losses, troubles, etc. He has knowledge of our love, victories, passions, sacrifices, pains, struggles, and dreams.

¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice...weep with those who weep. (Rom. 12:15)

In Romans 12:15, the Bible says, “Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.” I have good news! Jesus rejoices with you when you rejoice and weeps with you more than any other person. He did not tell you to do this kingdom lifestyle but say, “No, I am not really into that.” He rejoices with you and with me in a way that we cannot grasp. And He feels our pain in a way that we cannot grasp. And so He rejoices, He celebrates with our triumphs, the small, little ones that no one else cares about.

He has knowledge of our love. He knows your love even when others do not see it and even when your love is weak and stumbling. He sees the cry. He knows your victories, the little ones. He knows the passion; He knows what you really want. He knows the sacrifices, how you obeyed this way, you did that and everything went bad and nothing turned out good and you said, “Aghhh! but I love You!”

He would say, “Oh, I saw all of that. You are not alone.” He knows your struggle and your dreams.

1. ***He rejoices with those who rejoice:*** He celebrates our victories—even small breakthroughs. He sees the full implications of our greatness, honor, and nobility in redemption (Heb. 2:7).

He rejoices with you in your victories, your small breakthroughs. You know, to celebrate with people in their small breakthroughs is so dear to them. I remember when our two sons were five, six, seven, eight. Every little thing they did, if they cleaned a dish, helped Mom with the dishes, they wanted to come in and say, “Hey, I did a dish!”

“Amazing!”

“Yes, thank you!”

They just wanted to know that Dad knew and said, “Wow, you did it!” It just made their hearts so alive. And I remember when I used to affirm them in little, small things, and I would just look up and say, “I’m getting this. I think I am getting this” and He would say, as it were, “Yes, you are the little guy, I am the Father, and the Son is the Bridegroom. All the little things you do, all the times you do not quit, all the times you show up and no one

else does, all the times you gave and no one else gave, I saw it, and it moved Me. You do not have to be mad at them. It moved Me. I saw it. It is in My book.” That is so beautiful.

2. **He weeps with those who weep:** He shares with us in our *pain*—our failures, setbacks, difficulties—and in our *struggles* with sin. He refuses to give up on us.

He weeps with those who weep. He sees the pain of our failures. He sees the pain of our setbacks. He sees the pain of our difficulties, our struggles, and it goes on and on. He covers us. I mean every now and then He lets one of our weaknesses be known to a group larger than we would like. You know, here and there, in the course of our lives, but I tell you that ninety-nine point nine percent of the time He covers all of us all of the time. I mean, not very much even gets out to the two or three or the here or there. It just does not, compared to what could. He would say, “That is who I am. I am with you. I am not rejoicing that you stumbled. That other guy is rejoicing that you stumbled. That other Christian is, but I am not. My heart is with you. My heart is with you.”

I remember when Jimmy Swaggart the famous preacher—some of you younger people do not even know of him. He was probably one of the most famous preachers in the world in the eighties in terms of TV, hundreds of millions—and he was sat down with sin, and a bunch of preachers said, “Yeah, we knew, we knew, we knew. Whatever, whatever.”

The Lord spoke to Bob Jones in a dream and said, “My heart is hurting over My beloved son, Jimmy Swaggart, and I want you to hurt with Me with him. This is not okay with Me that he is hurting.”

Bob Jones came to me and said, “Guys, a news bulletin from heaven: the Lord has a very different view than some of these guys going around.” I had had some funny little attitudes, but I had been just too scared to say them, and so I thought, “Praise God, I did not say stuff!” Then Bob corrected me and said “You just do not understand the Lord is the covering God, and He feels the pain of all of this. He has sympathy for us.”

¹⁵For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses. (Heb. 4:15)

3. **He sees all:** He sees our *costly sacrifices* as we seek to walk in faith and obedience to love Him. He knows our *sincere intentions* to love Him, our *heart passions*, and our *deepest dreams*. So much of our life is unknown, unnoticed, and misunderstood by others. To be fully known without shame and to be free of the fear of being left alone is exhilarating.

He sees our costly sacrifices. The little things that did not work out or we gave time, energy, money, love, service, and no one paid attention. So much of our life is unknown and unnoticed by the people around us, but He knows it all.

- J. **Our response to Him—abandonment:** Jesus desires exclusivity and abandonment in our love for Him. The Bride’s response is to give her wholehearted, obedient love to Him.

³⁷“You shall love the LORD...with all your heart...”³⁸This is the first and great commandment.” (Mt. 22:37-38)

Our response to Him – abandonment! Again, I love it, “What is Mine is yours and what is yours is Mine forever! I gave all; you give all. I love with all of My heart, so I want you to love with all your heart. We are in it together!”

Abandonment is what the Bridegroom message is. It is not that He is nice so therefore I can be disconnected and casual about my sin. No, it is, “He is nice and beautiful and all in, and so I just want to be all in! Because, wow, if someone like You is all in for someone like me, I want to be all in for You!”

- K. A bridegroom and his bride desire exclusive love, partnership, and mutual respect. They bring their “all” into the relationship. The King desired the beauty of His Bride’s commitment and love when she left her father’s house and left all that might get in the way of loving Him (Ps. 45:10-11).
**¹⁰Listen, O daughter...and incline your ear; forget your people and your father’s house;
¹¹then the King will desire your beauty. (Ps. 45:10-11, NASB)**
- L. Jesus boldly called His people to “take up their cross,” and “hate their father and mother.” He was speaking as the Bridegroom God, calling for loyal love. By taking up our cross, we begin the journey to become *equally yoked to Him in love*. When we deny ourselves because of our love for Him, it moves Him deeply, because this is the only way He loves us.
**²⁴“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross.” (Mt. 16:24)
²⁶“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother...and his own life, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷And whoever does not bear his cross...cannot be My disciple.” (Lk. 14:26-27)**
- M. **Wholeheartedness:** The highest reward of true love is found in possessing the ability to love more (Song 8:7). This response moves His heart and protects our heart. If we have nothing to die for, then we have nothing to live for. We are created to be wholehearted and to love without reservation.
⁶Set Me [Jesus] as a seal upon your heart...for [God’s] love is as strong as death...⁷If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised. (Song 8:6-7)

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

Lord, we say we are all in. Lord, we love You. We love that You love our weak love. Our love is weak, but we are in. This is real. It is real to You, and it is real to us. Holy Spirit, here we are. Here we are, Holy Spirit. Come and touch us.

The Lord is stirring some of you with two different responses. For some of you, the Lord wants to give you confidence that He is this generous personality and He feels this delight towards you. And you think, “Oh, I have so much condemnation and shame! If I could just break that off me! I would love to kind of get a new jumpstart if this was true.”

I have had people tell me over the years, “If this is true, I mean, I believe you! But if it is really true, then it is the greatest thing imaginable!” It is the greatest thing imaginable. And so some of you need to be washed by the cherishing, by the word that He cherishes you. You need confidence.

To others of you, He says, “I am all in. I gave everything, and I want you.” That is, “If I gave everything to someone like you, why wouldn’t you give everything to someone like Me,” says the Lord. “I want you all in. I do not want you on the edge. I want you all in the Bridegroom message.”

So some of you need confidence, and to the others the Lord says, “I want your whole heart.”

I would like anybody who would like prayer along those two lines to say, “I need to make a new stand in my heart tonight” and to come up.