

Introduction:

- *"As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one."* (Ephesians 5:31-32, NLT)
- When a 5 year old is dying of cancer, what can be done to make up for all that she will miss? This was the challenge facing Ryan and Heidi, whose daughter, Lila May Schow, was diagnosed with stage four neuroblastoma and is not expected to make it to this Thanksgiving. Springing into action, her parents decided they would not allow the cancer to rob their daughter of the important celebrations of life. So they planned a fairy tale ball, which included every major celebration a girl has to look forward to -- a prom, a birthday bash and a wedding! To this end, a large facility was secured and transformed into a princess' castle for the day. Lila arrived on a horse-drawn carriage, wearing a custom-made princess gown and tiara. She was received by a large crowd of family and friends. In a celebration full of meaningful moments, the most important came when her father "proposed" to her ... get this ... so that she would know what a proposal felt like! **APPLICATION** *"My beloved spoke and said to me, 'Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me'"* (Song of Solomon 2:10). With these words, the bride of Solomon was swept away by her bridegroom. As she drank in the significance of each moment of her betrothal, she felt completely covered in the love of her soon-to-be husband. It was a beautiful moment. She exulted, *"My beloved is mine and I am his ... He has brought me to his banquet hall, and his banner over me is love"* (Song of Solomon 2:4, NASB). That's what Ryan and Heidi wanted for their daughter. They wanted her to know what it's like to be the object of absolute devotion. They wanted her to know what it's like to be promised unending love. They wanted her to know what it's like to belong to the love of another. And so her father proposed to her in a beautiful banquet hall. They didn't want their daughter to depart from this world without knowing what a proposal felt like. What a blessed little girl, to have parents that love her and know how to communicate that love. As we reflect on the purpose of Christ's coming and of His sacrifice, we are likewise blessed to know that we have a God Who loves us and knows how to communicate that love. Jesus went to the cross because He wanted you to know what it's like to be the object of absolute devotion. He rose from the grave because He wanted you to know what it's like to be promised unending love. He did all of this so that no matter what circumstances you might face, you could still know what it's like to belong to the love of another. Jesus doesn't want you to depart from this world without knowing what a proposal feels like. Will you accept His proposal of love?
 - We are all dying of that cancer called sin. It rots the soul, destroys this body and condemn us to a Christ-less eternity. Like Lila in my illustration, God wants us to experience what betrothal is like!
 - So in God's wisdom he called us to be the Bride of Christ. A picture that reflects that devotion, love, acceptance and significance. There is Jesus, the Bridegroom God!

I. Our Bridegrooms Choice, It Speaks For Itself

- A. Love stories: Our lives are filled with love stories. Movies, books, TV series about love. About love found, love lost, love hidden, love withheld and love given. IE Titanic, Pride and Prejudice, etc
1. The classic is love that is separated for some reason. On one side the handsome prince on the other poor Cinderella. Separated by social status, finances, and fashion. Never to be brought together.

2. We are living that story. On one side is God the Father, His Son and on the other side of the tracks...is us. Separated by social status, poverty, and fashion. We never qualify for the Bridegroom God, the Son of God. We are poor, pitiful, and naked. We are unclean, broken, and battered. Not a chance of being saved from our eternal destiny!
 3. The Bible is the greatest love story of all times! The richest, most powerful, most beautiful, most majestic man of all—Jesus. Has his eye set on that poor, pitiful, naked, unclean, broken and battered woman to be His bride!
 4. We are looking at Jesus this morning and if you can see Him as he is and know what knowing Him does to the human heart you will be forever changed!
- B. We are called to experience God's emotions, secrets, and commitments to us as our Bridegroom God and respond with whole hearted love and obedience to Him.
1. It's this experience of God's love on our hearts that brings about healing of some much of our broken lives.
 2. His emotions for us ran so deep, His love so strong for us, that He willing laid down His life for us that we might live. And he did this while we were still His enemies! He was reaching we were resisting.
- C. Our Bridegroom Died
1. Because we are dead in our trespasses and sin, bound up and held captive by hell we are consider in the scriptures as dead. (Ro 5:15)
 2. Jesus wanted us! We were beautiful to Him. He wanted us. He desired us, as broken and defeated and worthless as we might seem to be. He saw something good and came to get us.
 - a) Hell said "NO, you cant have her she is mine."
 - b) Heaven said, "No, no unclean thing can enter in."
 - c) Humanity said, "No, we are not worth saving, not acceptable for anyone!"
 3. Jesus said, "Yes! Father I love your plan, I understand your plan. I will implement your plan! I will have my eternal companion, my bride!"
 4. With that, Jesus committed himself to the cross. He had to die to enter death. He had to become sin to enter where sin's captives are held. He had to enter into the curse to find its roots. Jesus entered death, hell and the curse to destroy it from the INSIDE OUT!!!
 - a) That is a real love story! "I will take her punishment!" The Lover goes all the way to the place of death because He loves His bride. Ie. The Passion of the Christ Movie brings tears to me each time I see it because I am reminded of the depth of His love.
 - b) He was willing to implement the plan even it meant His own death so that we could live. How many of you want a spouse like that? That is a love story!

II. Our Bridegroom's Love, There is None Like It

- A. When our Bridegroom God died the lies that held us captive died too. They were shattered by truth! Can I get real for a few moments? Remember that ugly, rejected throw away woman (called sinful humanity). Jesus loved her and went to where she was to get her. **Here is why this message of the Bridegroom God becomes very important to us.**
- B. I asked my self and some of my staff a question: "What do brides (men we are the bride in this love story) look for in their choice of bridegroom?"

1. They look for acceptance, approval and significance. The opposite of acceptance is rejection. The opposite of approval is resistance/opposition. The opposite of significance is meaningless or unimportant.
 - a) Acceptance, approval and significance is what we all are looking for in life.
 - b) It is also what we all fear not receiving in relationships.
 2. Jesus is the only person I know who does all of those perfectly. When I am at my worse He is at His best and accepts me. He is interested in me not my failures and shortcoming. He makes me feel like the most important person in the world when I am with Him!
- C. I also asked this question: "What do brides fear?" Remember, we are talking about the Bridegroom God! And we are asking "What do brides fear?"
1. They fear not being good enough. Performance, based on doing. Trying to earn worth! Acceptance.
 2. They fear not being pretty enough. Self worth, based on low self esteem/perception. Approval
 3. They fear "will I really be loved?" Loneliness. If you can't receive love, you will live lonely, even if the one who loves you is loving you well! Significance
 4. They fear he wont be faithful. Issue of trust. If you struggle with the first three, this one is a by product of them.
 5. They fear gaining weight, growing old, getting wrinkles. How will I be judged?
 6. An Awesome Majestic Bridegroom will deal with all of these issues! NOT BY FIXING THEM but by revealing Himself. That is why Jesus deserves all the glory. His death dealt with the lies. He went all the way to the grave to save us to the uttermost. Delivering us from all of these things! He came to where we were. He came to save us!
- D. What about the "what if's?" These are questions of fear and of doubt.
1. What if the parents don't like me?
 2. What if his friends don't like me?
 3. What if I don't fit into his work?
 4. What if I cant cook like his mom?
 5. Jesus the Bridegroom God answers all of these! If you are born again His Father will like you. If you are saved, so are all His friends. If heaven is your home you will have a job there. And if you can't cook there is always angel food! *"For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault."* (Ephesians 5:25-27, NLT)
- E. Here is another thought that makes this betrothal, this marriage so exquisite and exceptional, You will not be allowed to bring any baggage into your marriage with the Lamb of God. Remember, you are from the wrong side of the tracks! The good news is He will help you put on garments of royalty and character like a bride worthy of the Son of God. *"Let us be glad and rejoice, and let us give honor to him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself."* (Revelation 19:7, NLT)

III. The Lamb Wins, Our Bridegroom Lives

- A. The Hero always draws a crowd! *"After this, I heard what sounded like a vast crowd in heaven shouting, "Praise the Lord! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God."* (Revelation 19:1, NLT)
1. Vast crowd in heaven making noise. Losers go home quiet. Winners are happily making noise!
 2. There is a lot of praise Going up to Lamb of God!
 - a) His judgments are true!
 - b) He has punished the great prostitute and Babylon has fallen.
 - c) He has avenged the murder of his servants!
 3. The Elders fall down and worship the One found worthy!
 4. Then the crowd takes off praising once again! And, *"Let us be glad and rejoice, and let us give honor to him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself."* (Revelation 19:7, NLT) The announcement is made. It is almost time.
- B. **Our Bridegroom Reigns! He wins for us! He wins all of us! He is ours!**
1. We get the One who was found worthy. Revelation 5:9
 2. We get the Rider on the White Horse 19:11-ff. He destroys the beast. He destroys the kings of the earth. He defeats Satan. He judges from the great white throne.
 3. And the New Jerusalem descends! Rev 21:2 Like a bride. vs 9,10 the city is the wife of the bride. The city is the room prepared for all the Saints whose name are in the Lambs book of life. The Lamb is the temple 21:22. The Lamb is the Light 21:23.
- C. Church He is a Lion to His enemies but to His people He is a lamb! Therefore He gives us security, approval, acceptance, significance...there is no more sorrow, no more tears of pain. It is the best marriage that you will ever have. The Marriage of the Lamb and the Bride, the church

Conclusion:

- You can trust your bridegroom God! He is gentle, He is tender, He is caring.
- Your intimacy with Him will rid you of much of what torments the human soul. But you must know Him.
- You must betroth yourself to him