

# Prepare for the Marriage Supper

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Let's begin by looking at one part or one aspect of our destiny. Let's go to 2 Corinthians 11:2. Paul talks about a very important part of our future, our destiny, really, once God calls us. Paul is speaking and it's interesting what he says.

**2 Corinthians 11:2** *I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband [Who might that be? Paul gives us the answer], that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. (KJV)*

That's interesting. Now let me read it out of the New Living Translation.

2) [Paul says], *I am jealous for you with the jealousy of God Himself. For I promised you as a pure bride to one husband, Christ. (NLT)*

As I was reading these, the lightbulb finally went on. Do you realize we're the fiancé of Jesus Christ right now? I never thought of it in those terms, but we've been betrothed to Jesus Christ, Paul is telling us. Now let's look at the next step in Revelation 19:6. John is having a vision and he can hear and see things in this vision. Can you imagine? Put yourself in his position:

**Revelation 19:6** *"I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters [like a roaring of an ocean], and as the voice of mighty thunderings, [loud, powerful] saying [and this is what he heard], 'Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!'" (KJV)*

The Greek word for *omnipotent* is Strong's #3841 and it means "all-ruling, that is, God as absolute and universal sovereign; The Almighty". The New Living Translation says, for that last phrase, "For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns." And the Lord God omnipotent can only be the Father, the all-ruling one, the Almighty one. This is important to know as we go through this. Let's go on in verse 7 now.

7) *Let us be glad and rejoice. [He's hearing these multitudes of voices singing this, or saying this.] Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him [to the Almighty], for the marriage of the lamb is come and his wife has made herself ready. (KJV)*

We've read that many times. Now it doesn't say she was made ready by some outside force, or people; we are told she has made *herself* ready. In the time of Ancient Israel, as an example, before a marriage to a king—and you can go back and read this in history—before a bride married a king, she would go through a period of purification; training, lavish baths, perfumes and oils, and all of this kind of preparation before she

actually married the king. In that sense, she was made ready for the king. But that's not so here, because we're told the bride makes herself ready. In verse 8:

8) *And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen ...*

This was granted her because of her making herself ready. This fine linen was clean and white.

8 continued) *... for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.*

So putting this together, it's very clear that she made herself ready to be the bride of the Lamb, because of her righteousness, the bride's righteousness.

9) *"And he [the angel—in verse 10 John tried worship him and was told don't do that, so we know the angel is speaking here] saith unto me, 'Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he saith unto me, 'These are the true sayings of God.'* (KJV)

So blessed indeed are those, all of us, who have been called to marry God's Son; we have been given an invitation. The marriage hasn't occurred, but we have the invitation. Christ gave us a parable of that calling, comparing it to a marriage. He uses it as a generic marriage, but we can see, if we read the scriptures, that it is applying to the marriage of His Son. Let's go to Matthew 22. We're going to start in verse 1, and if you have a marker, you're going to want to place it here, because we will be coming back and we'll be referencing a few other scriptures.

**Matthew 22:1** *And Jesus answered and spake unto them ...*

If you go back in the previous verses, He was speaking to the priests, He was speaking to the Pharisees, and He was also speaking to His own disciples.

1 continued) *... [He] answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, (2) The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son ...* (KJV)

So the king was actively organizing and making this marriage for his son. Now who could that king be? Keep your marker here; let's go to Zechariah 14 and we'll begin in verse 16. Now this is about a time yet future, but it has everything to do with what we just read in Matthew chapter 22.

**Zechariah 14:16** *[This is a time yet to come] And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.*

17) *And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship [here we go again] the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. (KJV)*

We've already talked about it, we have written material on it, we have sermon archives on it—we've already shown that the LORD of Hosts is, indeed, God the Father. It says here *the King, the LORD of hosts*, so that can be only God the Father, who is the King.

Now let's jump to the Book of Revelation, chapter 1, verse 4; we'll see what the Book of Revelation has to say about this subject. Zechariah is talking about a time yet future. I'm going to read this out of the New King James Version.

**Revelation 1:4** *John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,  
5) and from Jesus Christ ... (NKJV)*

We see there are two Beings referred to here. Him who is and who was and who is to come (with the Spirits who are before His throne), and, from the beginning of verse 5, Jesus Christ, who is,

5 continued) *the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,  
6) and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him [referring to God, His God and Father] be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (NKJV)*

So it tells us that we have the opportunity to become kings and priests unto God the Father, Christ's God. So if that's the case, and the Father is Christ's God, and we're going to be kings, it's obvious that God must be the King, the ultimate King, because He is all powerful, He is almighty, He is omnipotent. Now let's go to Chapter 11 in Revelation. We'll begin in verse 15. This is, again, a time yet future. It's down the road from Revelation 1, obviously.

**Revelation 11:15** *“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ ... (KJV)*

Again, two Beings, but we're told the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of our Lord (that obviously has to refer to God the Father) and of His Christ, which refers to His Son.

15 continued) *and He [God as being the King] shall reign forever and ever!” [We know that to be true, and Christ will too.]  
16) *And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,**

17) *Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.*  
(KJV)

We've already shown that God Almighty is God the Father, so we see here that God Almighty is reigning, and it's not a leap at all to say that God is the King who reigns. So God's word clearly tells us that the king in Matthew 22 is the Father. Now think about this; if Christ was the God of the Old Testament here in Matthew 22, Christ would not only have to be the king who is arranging the marriage for His Son, but He would also have to be the Son, simultaneously, who is being married. Now go figure that out.

You see, in past writings and sermons about the marriage supper, in my memory at least, most of the commentaries in sermons or various booklets and magazine articles have ignored God. It's the marriage of Jesus Christ, and God, somehow, is not around—it's like He's off doing something else—while His only Son gets married. Now think about that. Would a human father take a vacation while his only son is being married? Obviously not.

In Ancient Israel and in ancient times, and even today, in certain areas of the world, it is the father of the groom who makes all the arrangements. He is one who is arranging the marriage for his son. He is doing all the planning, he is paying for everything that needs to be paid for because he cares about his son and wants a proper marriage for his son. Humanly, we can see that. Now of course, today, people do all kinds of stuff; they go here, there, and to courthouses and all of that. That's the modern world we live in. But in Ancient Israel, the father of the groom was the one who orchestrated everything. So the point I'm making is, God will not only be present during the marriage of His Son, He will be officiating. Think about that. Who else would be qualified to officiate the marriage of His Son, other than God Almighty? Would He just kind of skip out and let Christ orchestrate His own marriage? And the Father is not there to honor His Son and to think about His Son, and to watch His Son get married? That's just inconceivable.

Let's look at God's involvement. We're here in Matthew 22, a parable about a king providing a marriage for his son. Matthew 22, we'll begin in verse 3. I'm going to read this now out of the New King James.

**Matthew 22:3** [For the king] *sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding;* (NKJV)

Here again, let's consider who this is really referring to, who does the calling. Keep your marker here. Let's go to John 6:44. These words we're going to read are out of Christ's own mouth. We know this scripture, but let's apply it to the marriage supper. We usually apply it to people being called, we can apply it to our calling, but let's apply it to the marriage supper.

**John 6:44** [Christ says] *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.* [Jumping to verse 65]

65) *“And he [this is Christ] said, ‘Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.’”* (KJV)

Back in Matthew 22:3, the king said to his servants, hey, go out and call those who were invited to the wedding. Now, going on in the parable, a problem arises. There were some who were invited to the wedding who did not want to come. In the latter part of Matthew 22:3, the calling went out to those who were invited,

**Matthew 22:3** *... and they were not willing to come.*

4) *“Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, ‘See, I have prepared my dinner [look at the involvement of the king]; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.’”* (NKJV)

The king obviously orchestrated all of this; it’s planned, it’s there, it’s ready, and yet these people would not come.

5) *But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business.* (NKJV)

Now if you remember when Christ first called the disciples—we won’t turn there (Matthew 8:21), but you can use it as a reference—He called a fellow who replied, no, I can’t follow you, because I’ve got to go bury my father. This was mentioned in the sermon last week, I believe. The point is, this isn’t the first time it’s happened, but here the king has issued invitations, everything is in readiness, and people just didn’t want to be there—they had other things to do. Verse 6 of Matthew 22; now it gets worse.

**Matthew 22:6** *And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them.* (NKJV)

Wow. Keep your marker here. Let’s go to Matthew 23:31. We know in Matthew 23, Christ is railing on the Pharisees, and notice what He says. It’s a direct reference to what we’re talking about in Matthew 22, the previous chapter.

**Matthew 23:31** *Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.* (KJV)

The prophets are God’s servants. In Matthew 22, He’s sending them out, saying come to the wedding. It’s off in the future, but your invitation is there. And what did the Pharisees do, the sons of those who killed the prophets because of what they had to say? Guess what’s happening today? Let’s go to John 16:2. It will happen in the future, it has happened in the past, and this is going to happen to the servants of God.

**John 16:2** *They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.* (KJV)

That's happened in the past, it happened to Jesus Christ, and it's going to continue to happen until Christ returns. So let's go back now to Matthew 22 and let's pick it up in verse 7. When the king heard that people just didn't want to go—everything is in readiness—they just didn't want to be there ...

**Matthew 22:7** *But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.*

8) [God is not happy about this] *"Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. (NKJV)*

Christ is saying here, you were not worthy, because you didn't want to be there. How can you be worthy if you don't want to be there? You would rather be somewhere else—watching football, paying attention to some hobby, or this, that, or the other thing, as far as spending time to establish a relationship with God and Jesus Christ—you don't want to be there; by your conduct you're telling me that, Christ says.

9) *Therefore [the king says] go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.'*

10) *So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. (NKJV)*

As we know (some of us are among them), God calls people from all different backgrounds, all different experiences. Some have had a good upbringing and some have had a not so good upbringing, and God calls them. Here at the end of verse 10, another problem arises. The first is there were people who didn't want to be there. Now another problem arises in which some who are there are not prepared.

11) *But when the king came in to see the guests, [his son is not yet married, but see how involved he is?] he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. (NKJV)*

What is a proper wedding garment? We already read in Revelation 19:8 that it's the righteousness of the saints, clean and white. Notice the king's reaction:

12) *So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless [because what are you going to say?] ...*

13) [Notice the king's reaction] *Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'* [Why?]

14) *"For many are called, but few are chosen."* (NKJV)

This parable tells us, look, the wedding invitations went out. People could have responded to the wedding invitation. They could have been there, number one, and number two, they could have had, should have had, a proper garment on. And so many

were called, but at the end of day, few were chosen, because they didn't show up or they didn't have on the proper garments, the righteousness of the saints.

So let's now summarize Matthew 22 and the ones we've read ancillary to that. What do these scriptures tell us? They tell us that just receiving the invitation to the marriage supper doesn't guarantee we will be there. It's those who are clothed with righteousness and who show up, who will be there for the marriage.

The Greek word for "righteous" is Strong's #1345. And the root word means *holy* or *innocent*. We want to be holy before God and innocent before God. When someone is holy or innocent, that means they're in a right standing with God. That's what righteous means. When the wedding supper comes we want to be holy, innocent, and in right standing with God. And whether or not we are righteous in God's eyes, determines whether we will be at the marriage of His Son, meaning we will be married to His Son. The determiner is whether or not we are righteous, clean, pure, and in a right standing with God the Father. If we are, then we will be allowed to marry His Son. Therefore (now we get to the subject of the sermon) we must prepare for the marriage supper. We are going to talk about four things. We have to prepare now, for the marriage supper.

### **1. We must forsake all for God and Christ.**

That's the first thing we have to do. We have to be willing to give up everything for God and Christ. There were those who said, no, I can't give up everything right now, because I have to go do this, or I have to bury my parents or whatever it might be, and that's not what we're told. We have to be willing to give up everything. Let's go to Matthew 10 and read verse 34. Christ is speaking here, and this verse contradicts fairly directly what I was taught when I first came in the Church, back in the sixties.

**Matthew 10:34** [Christ is speaking, and He says] *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: (KJV)*

We're getting into the time of year of peace on earth, goodwill to men, and all of that, and if we just let Christ in our heart, then everything's going to be fine. Well, that's not what Christ says.

34) *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

In the early days I was taught that as long as we obey God, we would have a greased slide right into the Kingdom, and only bad things happen to bad people. Bad things don't happen to good people? That's not what Christ just said. He says, when you take on Me, when you follow Me, there is going to be trouble and tribulation—that's a whole sermon in itself. Continuing in verse 35,

35) *For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.*

36) *And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. (KJV)*

Again, when I first came into the Church, I was taught that persecution would always come from the outside. I can remember the first home I stayed in, coming down from the air force base 250 miles away and on a Friday night. We'd listen to the Church's radio program, and I remember the phone rang, and the husband told the wife, go turn the volume down, and then he answered the phone. I asked later, why did you turn the volume down? He replied, well, we don't want anybody out there knowing that we're part of this group, and the thought behind that was that persecution was going to come from the outside. However, here in verse 36, a man's foes shall be those of his own household. Who persecuted Jesus Christ? His own people, and it's going to happen to us. We're being persecuted by our own people. I gave a sermon a while back on cannibalism. You know, cannibals eat their own. And the vast majority of the persecution I have ever felt has been from people inside God's Church, not outside God's Church. Verse 37, Christ goes on to say,

37) *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

38) *And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. (KJV)*

So this kind of flies in the face of just opening our hearts, in the Protestant manner, to the Lord, and everything's going to be fine. It was in many cases a religion of prosperity, physical prosperity, but that's not what Christ says.

Let's look at it further in Luke 14, and we will begin in verse 33. I believe the last speaker pointed out that the context is counting the cost, and we should have had Luke 14 drummed into our head before we were baptized. So we're breaking in to the context here in verse 33, and Christ is talking.

**Luke 14:33** *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

That's a pretty all-encompassing statement. The Greek word for "forsake" is interesting. I'm reading from Strong's. It says *to say adieu, by departing or dismissing*. To say goodbye. Forsaking all, He says, you've got to be willing to depart from it, dismiss it, say goodbye to it, or figuratively to renounce or leave. We had a sermon at the Feast saying, hey, it's just stuff, and that's right; it's just stuff. So we must indeed come to the point that we will forsake everything for God and Christ. Now let's see that the apostles did exactly that. Let's go back to Matthew 19 and we'll begin in verse 27. Peter mentioned to Christ, look, we've given up everything. We're going to look at Christ's response to that. Remember, they walked away from families, they walked away from jobs, they left their fishing nets sitting in the sand, their boats beached, and they just walked away.



**Matthew 19:27** *Then answered Peter and said unto him [to Christ], Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; [so he has a logical question] what shall we have therefore? (KJV)*

He's saying, okay, what do I get out of this, giving up everything for You? Verse 28, Christ answered, and He said, oh, you'll get something, all right.

28) *Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration [in the New King James, the Greek means spiritual renovation; we would say today, a spiritual makeover] when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, [He's talking to His disciples now, the soon-to-be apostles] ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

29) [Now He broadens it to everybody and He says] *And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, [not just the apostles] shall receive an hundredfold, [and here's the key] and shall inherit everlasting life. (KJV)*

That is the reward for forsaking everything for God and Christ. Verse 30, going on.

30) [Christ says] *But many that are first ...*

Here He's referring to the Jews, because we're told in John 4:22, salvation is of the Jews, and salvation was first offered to the Jews, to those who would listen to Christ. And we know the vast majority did not. He says,

30) *But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first. (KJV)*

Now another parable:

**Matthew 20:1** *For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard [to harvest the crop].*

2) *And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.*

3) *And he went out about the third hour [that's about 9 a.m.], and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,*

4) *And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.*

5) *Again he went out about the sixth [which is noon] and ninth hour [which is three in the afternoon], and did likewise.*

6) *And about the eleventh hour [this was about an hour before quitting time, about 5 o'clock in the afternoon; all the rest had been working all day] he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?*

7) *They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. (KJV)*

You see, they were ready to work, they wanted to work, but nobody would offer them a job. And so,

7 continued) *He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.*

8) *So when even was come [the twelfth hour had passed], the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.*

9) *And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour [they'd only been working about an hour], they received every man a penny.*

10) *But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.*

11) *And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,*

12) *Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day [they worked all day long, they worked twelve hours, and yet these people that worked just one hour got the same pay].*

13) *But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?*

14) *Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.*

15) *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? ... (KJV)*

You see, God is not bound by what we want, and God is not bound by what people think is fair. God says, I will do what I will do.

16) *So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.*

A familiar saying. It could be that when the end of the day comes, when conditions really get nasty, that people start coming in to the Church, maybe in part to save their own skin, but maybe they remember something in the past; maybe they had read a booklet or a magazine about conditions coming to pass, and all of a sudden people flock into the Church—maybe they want to follow God. This is speculation; I'm just throwing it out there. But here we've been in the Church thirty, forty, fifty, sixty years, and all of a sudden somebody comes in, and they've been in the Church six months or a year, and they get the same reward. And we may say to God just what the workers said, the ones who were hired at six in the morning, God, I've been following you for decades, and you're giving eternal life to these folks that come in at the last minute—how is that fair? Well, God is God. God is going to do what God is going to do, and who are we to question God? Like all before us, we have to be willing to forsake everything.

Those coming in at the last minute are going to have to forsake everything; they are going to have to do the same thing that we have done—forsake everything for God and Christ, and it's up to God how long we're given to work at it. Some will have less time, some will have more; that's God's prerogative, that's God's decision. He has use for people long term, short term, and that is entirely up to Him. So the fact is, the first point

is, we have to be willing to forsake all, for God and Christ, for the time that we're on this earth. We don't know how long that's going to be; it's up to God.

## **2. To be at the marriage supper, we must become like God and Christ.**

You see, God is not going to allow somebody to marry His Son who does not have the same values as His Son. We can relate to that as human beings. Let's say you have a sweet daughter, and all of a sudden, somebody wants to marry her who's a reprobate, who's evil. You wouldn't allow it. Now people today, it's a different story, but back then the father controlled it all, so he would not allow his daughter to marry someone who was not like or didn't have the same values as the family, as the father, or as the daughter.

Christ isn't going to marry somebody who's incompatible with Him. Why would He do that? Why would you marry somebody who's not compatible with you? Therefore, before the marriage occurs, we have to make ourselves ready by putting on the righteousness of God and the righteousness of Christ. We have to be willing to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, to think like Him, to act like Him, to treat people like Him, and to follow God's commandments. Let's go to Matthew 5:1. This is so basic, and this is Christ's first recorded sermon, but He gets right to the heart of it in His very first recorded sermon.

**Matthew 5:1** *And seeing the multitudes, he [referring to Christ] went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him [so He's talking to his disciples] :*

2) *And he opened his mouth, and taught them [the disciples, and by extension, His disciples today, those He's calling today] saying,*

3) *Blessed are the poor in spirit: (KJV)*

Now the New Living Translation translates *poor in spirit* as those who realize their need for Him. And what is the Laodicean spirit? I don't need anything, I'm just fine; I don't need God, I don't need Christ, I'm doing just fine. Compare that to verse 3, blessed are those who realize their need for God and Christ. It goes on to say,

3 continued) ... *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

And then He goes on to say, in verse 4,

4) *Blessed are they that mourn:*

The Greek word for *mourn* can also mean "grieve". We have people grieving today, for lost mates, grieving because of sickness or illness, or the conditions of the world. Blessed are they that mourn,

4 continued) ... *for they shall be comforted.*

5) *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.* [These are all characteristics that Christ wants us to have.]

6) *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:* (KJV)

Who hunger and thirst after that linen garment, white and clean, which is the righteousness of the saints. Is Christ saying you can get around to it when you have time? He's saying no, you must hunger and thirst for it.

6 continued) ... *for they shall be filled.*

7) *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*

8) *Blessed are the pure in heart:* [again, getting back to the righteousness of the saints—clean, pure, white linen] *for they shall see God.*

9) *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God* [not wanting to fight, but to have peace, make peace].

10) *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake:* (KJV)

Christ is saying blessed are those who are persecuted because of the white linen garment they wear—their righteousness. They are persecuted for their righteousness. If that is the case, He says, you are blessed.

10 continued) ... *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* (KJV)

What a way to start off a sermon. Then He goes on to give examples of what righteousness is all about, and I'm just going to summarize—I won't even give verses—but if you go through the next couple of chapters, all of us are told, let your light shine; keep the law; don't judge your brother; attempt to reconcile with your brother (what a concept, reconcile with your brother); don't sin, especially in your mind; don't swear an oath in God's name; love your enemies, do good to them; don't seek a claim because of your religious practices; don't blow your own horn; pray to the Father, and don't use repetitions in your prayers. All of this shows what God expects as far as righteousness. Seek heavenly treasures, not treasures on earth. And remember what Christ said? You can't serve God and the world; choose one, pick one. Don't worry, God will provide. How many times have we learned that? Don't condemn others or you will be condemned. And do unto others as you would have them do unto you. As you see, just looking at these first couple of chapters—Matthew 5, 6, 7—Christ gave us a lot of things to pay attention to, and, obviously, we have a lot of changing to do. But we can take heart because of what we find in Matthew 19:26. Let's go there. Jesus is talking, and He's giving us the ultimate encouragement.

**Matthew 19:26** *But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.* (KJV)

All good things, all righteous things are possible. So you see, through the Holy Spirit, we're being told that we can change to be like God and Christ, and therefore be at the marriage supper. Now that leads us to the third point.

### 3. To be at the marriage supper we must be growing right up until the end of our physical life.

We must be continually growing—no coasting, no putting the transmission in neutral, no idling, but continually going forward. I can remember an evangelist said this probably thirty years ago. I was shocked; he said, you know, I don't study much anymore. I thought, what? (I didn't dare say anything). He said, I don't study much anymore; I've already proved all of the basics, so I don't really need to study much anymore. Well, I think we all know that's a very dangerous situation to put oneself in, saying, okay, I don't want to come to the marriage supper, I've got other things to do; I don't need to learn anymore, I don't need to grow, I'm just treading water here, coasting. That's very dangerous. What does John 17:3 say? Let's go there. We've been there dozens and dozens of times, but this is in regard to preparing ourselves for the marriage supper. Notice what John 17:3 says. To be at the marriage supper, we've been given life eternal.

**John 17:3** *And this is life eternal, [so to be at the marriage supper, this tells us] that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. (KJV)*

Can we say, given this scripture, I know enough already?—I don't need to grow anymore, I don't need to know anymore about God and Christ? I don't need to delve in and retrieve any more lessons from the Bible and learning from God's Word? The fact is, I think we've all seen, especially in the last two to three years, that the more we study, the more we learn—isn't that the truth?

Last night in the update, I sent out this quote from Michelangelo, who puts us all to shame as far as human talent and ability. He was a sculptor, a painter, an architect, a poet. You can see to this very day the sculptures he made, the paintings he made. He lived in the late 1400s to the mid-1500s, and when he was in his nineties, he had a studio, and he put over the door of the studio, the phrase, *ancora imparo*, which means "I still learn." Ninety years old, he was still learning—we should have the same attitude. I've been in the Church fifty, sixty years, but I am still learning. I'm ashamed of what I haven't learned already and I'm ashamed I read over stuff that I didn't see, and I'm ashamed I haven't grown as fast as I should, but we're here and we're learning. That's the important thing.

Let's go to 2 Peter 3:9. Peter is closing out the second epistle, and notice the emphasis that he has in finishing off this second epistle to God's people. We'll read from verse 9 to the closing of the letter. This is the admonition:

**2 Peter 3:9** [Peter says] *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish [He wants us to be there at the marriage of His Son], but that all should come to repentance.*

10) *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night [not much warning]; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall*

*melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

11) *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be [what manner of person should you be with all of this coming upon the earth?] in all holy conversation and godliness ...*

And then in verse 17, he gives us the answer.

17) *Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before [all this is going to happen], beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.*

This is how to avoid that:

18) *But grow in grace [the Greek word can also mean “kindness”; God’s grace to us expresses His kindness to us], and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. (KJV)*

In closing this letter, Peter leaves us with something very important. Put it together with John 17:3; we must grow right up until the end, until our earthly days are over. Grow in knowledge of God and Christ, grow in deeds, grown in our words, grow to the point, and I pray for this often, that when people see us and when we see each other, we want to see Christ in each other. We want to say that’s how Christ would do it, that’s what Christ would say. We need to keep in mind that we have to be growing right to the end.

Okay, the fourth and last point, and this is going to be a little unusual for me:

#### **4. Let’s look at a vision of what the marriage supper might be like.**

I’m saying in advance, this is totally my speculation, and I’m not saying this has to be this way at all. I’m giving us some things to think about and things that I think about. And whatever my speculation is, it will not be the half of the reality. Remember when the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon? She said, I have heard of your glory, and I’ve heard about all you’ve done, all your buildings and your wealth and your possessions, and she said, now that I’m here and I see it, it wasn’t the half of what I heard. So we can speculate all we want in this physical life, but it’s not going to be the half of the reality.

Regarding the marriage supper, we have to remember that God is orchestrating the whole thing, as we read in Matthew 22. It’s His Son, His only Son who is getting married. Why would He go off and do something else—take a vacation, pay attention somewhere else—when His only Son is getting married to people the Father has called? And He’s not going to be involved in that? How does that work? This is one of the most memorable occasions in all eternity, and God is not going to orchestrate it and make sure it is absolutely perfect for the marriage of His Son?

Let me just ask a question regarding the setting—granted, we're all going to be spirit, but God has a temple, and we're given a hint of what the spiritual temple is like by the physical temple and tabernacle. Could it be God would construct a spiritual, special-purpose banquet hall for the marriage supper? Is that out of the question? I don't think so. And in this spiritual hall that God made—bearing in mind that the tabernacle had on its inside covering, through the latticework, tapestries of the cherubim—what if God pictured, on the inside walls of this unique hall, major events in His plan? What if He did that, as was done on the innermost covering of the tabernacle? And could there a special-purpose banquet table built for all to sit around? I don't think God would be using folding chairs and tables, I think they would be gorgeous.

I'm going pick a number of 144,000, because it's there and it's something we can focus on. If you figure the normal width (and let's say, as spirit beings, for the sake of this discussion, we're the same size as we are today), you might have three feet of wiggle room between spirit beings here. If there are 144,000, do you know how long that table is going to be? It's over forty miles [nearly 65 kilometers]. And if God wanted a little more room, it could be eighty miles between people. God is at the head, of course, with Christ at His right hand, and of course all of us are spirit by that time. Again, I am wildly speculating, but I'm just trying to get a vision in our heads of what this could be, so we can look forward to it.

God, if He's orchestrating this marriage, would have a seating plan, wouldn't He? He wouldn't let people just wander about and sit wherever they want, spirit beings that we would be. God would have a seating plan at this marriage, around this banquet table, this supper. What if He had it by date? In other words, God and Christ are at one end, and then near Him would be righteous Abel, and Enoch, sitting nearby. Then, next to them would be Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, then Moses and Joshua, then Rahab, sitting close to God and Christ. Then Samuel and David and Jonathan. And then all the prophets—Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and the list goes on and on.

Then we come to the New Testament times and all the apostles are sitting there, getting reacquainted, so to speak; what did you do when I went over here?—people are talking about that. And then all the members of the early New Testament Church that were known to the apostles, so they're talking. Then you come to all of the martyrs in the very dark times of the Middle Ages; they were chased everywhere, they were persecuted, they were thrown in jail, they were tortured, and they were martyred. They are going to be there. Then hopefully, down in the modern times, us. We are sitting here, like we are today, looking around, and what an auspicious company we're part of, when you think about it! All of these we read about are going to be there.

Do you think God is just going to let this be some kind of free-form thing in which people say whatever they want, and there's no service and no ceremony? Of course not. In my mind, I can see God addressing everyone He's called, by name, and then possibly showing us, since we're spirit beings now, how He created the universe. He could do it in our minds, or He could do it some other way; He might say, let Me show you how all of this began, and all of a sudden, here it is, the building of creation. Then He would

say, let Me show you about Genesis 1, what really happened there, and here's what We did, here's what We talked about. Now let's look at the history of mankind, let's start with Adam and Eve, and let's run it through, a history of mankind. Then at the end of that, He honors His Son for what His Son did. He said, do you know what it was like to become a human? Do you know what He went through? Do you really know what He went through? And then he replays that in our minds.

Then I could see God personally introducing each one of us to everyone else, starting with Abel, putting in our minds what Abel went through and what his life was like. Then He goes on to Enoch and Moses, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so that we get to know each other and what each individual went through. And while that was going on, what if Christ got up as God was talking about Ezekiel, and Christ walked over and stood behind Ezekiel, and put His hands on his shoulders as his life was being described. Christ would pat him on the shoulders and say, well done, good and faithful servant, and then He would go around to all of the people at that marriage supper. Can you imagine what that would be like? We are spirit then, so we're not tired, there's no time limit, we're not getting sleepy, we're not getting weary, we're all there, focused on what is going on. There's no need for sleep and there are no time limits. Spirit is not restrained or constrained by time.

So think of this; this marriage supper is going to be something awesome. And then you have the marriage ceremony. I don't know what that's going to be like. I have a hunch there are going to be angels singing in ways that we haven't heard before, songs we've never dreamed about, and praise and honor and all of that. I can't even speculate how grand that would be. Then after the wedding, there is a supper. The Bible says there is a supper. We have to believe what the Bible says. Do you think God is going to serve turnips at His supper? I don't think so. I think God is going to serve spiritual food. How can physical food be the best, when there is spiritual food, and God can create spiritual food? I think this is a whole new area that we're going to be exposed to at that time.

I remember when our little granddaughter turned one; she had been breastfed milk for the first year. Her mom said, I'm going to give her her first bite of solid food. And I said I have to see this. So we sat down and my granddaughter was expecting and got some milk. Then her mom got a little baby spoon and stuck it into some pureed pumpkin or squash, which she had never had before. So she opened up her mouth and her mom stuck it in real quick, and all of a sudden, she just froze, and her eyes became big as saucers. You could tell this was sinking in, this new taste was sinking in. Then all of a sudden, her body started trembling, and she was just so excited; she reached her hand out and said, muh, muh, muh, which means more, more, more. Maybe that will happen to us, you know? We need to broaden our minds a little bit. God has plans for us we cannot even imagine.

At that time we might meet our angels. Go to Matthew 18:10. Sometimes we diminish the love of God, or diminish God's concern for us or His care for us, because God has assigned angels to each one of us. When we need help, they are here. When God wants something done on our behalf, they are with us.



**Matthew 18:10** [Christ is speaking] *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels [it's not singular, it says their angels] do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.* (KJV)

Now could it be we would meet those angels that have been assigned to us? And maybe, even, they would be serving the meal—we don't know. But I bet you we meet them. You see, all that I've just described could happen in a blink of an eye in physical time. God is not constrained by physical time, spirit beings aren't constrained. Sometimes I think, closing out this last point, that we don't appreciate the immensity of this one-time event, and we don't appreciate God's involvement in this one-time event, because He is going to marry His Son to those whom He has personally called and to those who have on a garment of righteousness. Is God going to just disappear when that happens? Of course not, He's going to be leading it.

So the marriage supper is a big deal; it's a once-an-eternity event. What an experience it's going to be! The real question for us is, how bad do I want to be there? How bad do I want to be there? Have I got other things I'd rather do? I can't imagine anything greater to do than what we just talked about. Am I willing to forsake all to be there? Am I willing to go right up until the very end, getting to know God and Christ better and trying to be more like Them, right up to the very end? Think about this, in a physical marriage—I'm not talking about "shotgun" weddings or anything like that—but in a physical marriage, what is it that prospective mates do? Before the marriage, they spend time together, don't they? They get to know one another to see if they're compatible, if they are like-minded, if they have some bond in a relationship, but it takes time. They spend time together. That's exactly what God is doing for us right now.

God and Christ are getting to know us, and They allow difficult situations to come our way; They allow trials to come our way—good things, bad things—to see what we do, how we react. Are we going to curse God or are we going to praise God? It's easy to praise God when things are going well. When things are going badly, do we really trust Him? Do we really look to Him? God is giving us time, so that our character comes out in what we are really like, and we're being judged now whether or not we are compatible enough to marry His very Son. That is what we're being judged on right now. That is why we have the time right now. God is not going to marry His Son to somebody who will be a pain in His Son's neck for eternity—not going to happen! So how do we assure that we're compatible? The answer is very simple. All of the answers in God's Word, the core, foundational things, are very simple. How can we be assured that we will be compatible and be able to be at that marriage supper, that marriage ceremony? Philippians 2:1 gives us the answer. I'm going to read it out of the New King James:

**Philippians 2:1** [Paul says] *Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2) fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.* [We have to stop and ask the question: Whose mind is Paul talking about?]

- 3) *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit [that has to be swept away], but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*
- 4) *Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*
- 5) *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, (NKJV)*

And we've just seen what that mind is, as far as lowliness, esteeming others better than the self, humility, love, and then he goes on in verse 6. I'm going to read this out of the New Living Translation [an older, online version]:

- 6) *Though he [referring to Christ] was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God.*
- 7) *Instead, he made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form,*
- 8) *he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross.*
- 9) *Because of this, God raised him up [God did the raising] to the heights of heaven and gave him a name that is above every other name,*
- 10) *so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*
- 11) *and every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (NLT)*

So if you look at Philippians 2, the key here is humility. Christ came and humbled Himself and died. He gave up being God to be a human being and to be treated horribly for our sake. So the key for us is humility, and to have love for God and Christ, and one for another. If we have the mind of Christ, then God is going to honor us by allowing us to marry His Son. So you have two like-minded people: those who have the mind of Christ and Christ Himself. They will be very compatible that way. We can only imagine what that's going to be like. Let's make sure, because the times are difficult; there's persecution all about, there's the world we have to deal with. What we need to do is make sure that we work hard and we work diligently to have the mind of Christ, so that we can be at the marriage supper that God has orchestrated and ordained for us to marry His only Son.