

The Wedding Vow

Intreat me not to leave thee. Wither thou goest I will go. Where thou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people will be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest I will die and there also will I be buried. I read these words, and my heart soared as I realized that these were the words that Jesus wanted to hear from His bride. But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let me start from the beginning.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. Gen. 2:24

In November of 2007 I had the privilege of traveling to Australia. It was there that the idea of the bride really began to intrigue me. I had several conversations with people over there. Then what usually happens to me happened, I got distracted with other things.

When I got home in December we were really busy just trying to keep up with the work load and I didn't have much time to reflect right away. Then about a month later I heard two sermons that gave me much food for thought. The first one had an analogy of the Romans 7:2-4 by Donovan Kack. The sermon was titled "**Victory over temptation**".

"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. "

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

The analogy went something like this; We go along in life and we are married to the old man. One day the old man says "I'm going to kill you", We then began to look around for something better, and eventually we see Jesus. We go to Jesus and ask if we can be married to Him? But He can't break his own law so he tells us that one of us would have to die for our marriage to the old man to be annulled. So we get all excited and we go home to the old man and tell him that he is going to have to die. He says "Fat Chance" So we go back to Jesus and ask what we can do and he gives us a cross and says "I'll crucify you and then resurrect you, and you will belong to me forever in a new life."

The other sermon was by Bruce Hayward "**When total surrender equals total victory.**" The part that really caught my attention was **Mark 10:27.**

"And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible." Even the total surrender can't be done without God. Each of us needs this key ingredient in the relationship.

At this point the Lord chose to guide me to the Canticles (Song of Solomon) where I got a better sense of how much the bride and groom mean to each other. The whole book is about how the bride and groom long to be together and become one for eternity.

The day after reading Song of Solomon God directed me to Hebrews. "*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*" **Heb. 12:2** The joy is and was His bride. You and me.

Then He said to take a look at Ruth. And Ruth said, *“Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.”* **Ruth 1:16, 17**

Where did Christ die? What do we have to have if we want to follow Him? A cross.

This is what Jesus is longing to hear from His bride. He is looking for a people that will forever follow him wherever He goes. They are willing to stay with Jesus even when He has *“no place to lay his head”*, and His Father and His God are theirs. **Rev. 14:4, Luk. 9:58, John 20:17**

As I continued to look at the book of Ruth I realized that it could be called the Gospel of Ruth. The complete gospel story is replicated there. First we come to Jesus and after we see what he has done for us, we make a commitment. Then He sends us to work in His harvest.

“And Ruth the Moabite said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.” **Ruth 2:2**

As he continues to provide for us we can't believe how good he is to us and we have to ask why he continues to give us exactly what we need.

“Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?” **Ruth 2:10**

At that point we want to spend even more time with Him. When we realize that it is through his righteousness alone that we are saved, then we ask for his robe.

“And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.” **Ruth 3:9** He redeems us, as witnessed by the universe, and we can be with Him for eternity.

Boaz said, *“Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day. And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses...”* **Ruth 4:10-11**

From that day on the two are one and they grow closer and closer until you can't tell, where one begins and the other ends.

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” **John 17:23-24**

The thing that hit me the hardest was how much Jesus longs to hear his bride finally say those words, *intreat me not to leave thee, don't make me go. I want to stay with you forever, where ever You go. Your God, I want for my God. And I will be happy to follow you all the way to my death, because I know that you will bring me a new and different life, where I can have your name and character in my heart and in my mind.*

I want to be one of those who can *“Follow the Lamb”*.

All the way to the cross and throughout eternity. God Bless you.

Eric

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