

Sermon- Preparing for the Comeback, The Role of the Holy Spirit

Preached at Cloverdale on 10/6/2024

Background: In the previous chapter, Jesus has just told his disciples during his last supper, that he will be leaving them. In this chapter he comforts them by explaining that he will return again.

John 14:1-6

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

⁵ Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

ChatGPT

Yes, there is a fascinating comparison often made between the ancient Jewish betrothal (or marriage) process and the Christian understanding of the Second Coming of Jesus. This analogy is particularly meaningful in some Christian traditions, where the relationship between Jesus and the Church is often compared to that of a bridegroom and a bride. Here's a breakdown of how the two are compared:

1. The Betrothal (Kiddushin)

- **Jewish Tradition:** The betrothal process in ancient Jewish culture was much more formal and binding than modern engagements. It involved a legal agreement and the payment of a "bride price" (mohar) by the groom to the bride's family. Once betrothed, the couple was considered legally married, although they would not live together until later.
- **Christian Analogy:** This is likened to the first coming of Christ, where Jesus, through His sacrifice, established a covenant with the Church, often viewed as His bride. The “bride price” is seen as Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, redeeming humanity.

2. The Preparation Period

- **Jewish Tradition:** After the betrothal, the groom would leave to prepare a place for his bride, usually at his father’s house. This period could last up to a year, during which the bride would prepare herself and remain faithful, awaiting the groom's return.

- **Christian Analogy:** This period represents the current age, where Jesus has ascended to heaven ("going to prepare a place" as mentioned in John 14:2-3) and the Church is in a time of preparation, living in expectation and readiness for His return.

3. The Return of the Groom

- **Jewish Tradition:** The groom would return for his bride at an unexpected time, often with a shout or a trumpet blast, and take her to the place he had prepared. The wedding ceremony would then take place, followed by a celebratory feast.
- **Christian Analogy:** This is compared to the Second Coming of Christ, where Jesus will return unexpectedly ("like a thief in the night") to take His Church to be with Him. The "shout" and "trumpet blast" are often seen as symbols for the events described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. The wedding feast of the Lamb mentioned in Revelation 19:7-9 symbolizes the final union of Christ and the Church.

4. The Wedding Feast

- **Jewish Tradition:** After the marriage ceremony, there would be a great feast, often lasting several days, celebrating the union of the bride and groom.
- **Christian Analogy:** This is likened to the eschatological celebration in heaven, often referred to as the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, where the Church (the Bride) will be united with Christ (the Bridegroom) for eternity.

This analogy serves to illustrate the intimate and covenantal relationship between Jesus and His followers, drawing deeply from the cultural context of ancient Jewish marriage practices.

Another key step in the betrothal process was the giving of a gift by the groom to the bride. The gift was originally a coin but traditions later changed to giving a ring. This valuable gift was left with the bride. When Jesus left, he gave gifts to men just as the groom did during the ancient Jewish betrothal ceremony. The gifts Jesus leaves us are in the form of the Holy Spirit and other spiritual gifts.

An interesting point during the departure of the groom. After the bride is secured, the groom leaves the bride to return to his father's house to build and prepare an additional room where the wedding chamber will be. According to tradition, the groom makes a statement which mirrors the words of Jesus in John 14:1-3. The statement the groom makes is "I go to prepare a place for you; if I go, I will return again unto you." Jesus also uses these same betrothal terms which the disciples should have understood to explain his first coming to betroth us, and His coming to Rapture us in the clouds to receive his bride and hide them away for a week in the wedding chamber.

So, Jesus is using traditional terms that Thomas and the disciples should have understood. It is important that we understand the application for us today.

The Father Revealed

⁷ "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." ⁸ Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹ Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. ¹² Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. ¹³ And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Observations:

- When we see Jesus, we see the Father.
- Phillip doesn’t understand. He wants Jesus to show them who the Father is. It is possible to know Jesus and follow him and not truly understand him.
- Jesus’ response is if you know me and see me, then you see the Father.
- Jesus asks them if they believe that the Father is in him and that they are one.
- Jesus says the Father lives in him and produces the good works.
- Jesus asks that they believe that the Father and the Son dwell together and if not, believe what he is saying because of the works. The works alone should be enough for them to believe.
- Truly Jesus says that if we believe and trust on him, the works he does, we can do also and even greater works because he will be with the Father.

Questions:

- How can we do the works of Christ if he is not with us to show us, encourage us, and teach us?
- How does going to the Father cause us to be able to do greater works? Greater in magnitude.

The answer is the Holy Spirit.

¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

- Another Helper is promised to arrive on the scene with specific roles and responsibilities:
 - The Helper is to stay with us and abide inside of us forever.
 - He is the Spirit of Truth, so he reveals the truth from Heaven to us .
 - The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit because until you receive Jesus you cannot receive the comfort of the Holy Spirit. There is a divine and spiritual order.
 - The disciples will receive the Holy Spirit because they have known, seen, and believed in Jesus so he prays that they will receive the next step in this process which is receiving the Holy Spirit.

Application:

- What Jesus tells the disciples also applies to us today. Just as he is coming back for those disciples, he will come back to his disciples today. We are awaiting his return.
- We become his disciples when we believe in his death, burial and resurrection. This is the process in effect.
- Just as with the first disciples, Jesus gives us the promise that we also will receive the Comforter who will dwell inside of us.
- While we wait for Christ to return, there is work to be done. Greater work.
- The Spirit of truth confirms to us the promises of Christ and guides us.
- It is the Spirit that provides the power for us to obey his commandments and do the greater works. He is our Helper. This is what He helps us to do:
 - Believe and stand on the promises of Jesus Christ.
 - Helps us while we wait.
 - Helps us to obey and bring God glory.
 - Prepares and helps us to do the Kingdom work and following in the work of Christ.
- What work was Christ sent to do? See Isaiah 61 and Luke 4:16-21.

“The Spirit of the Lord God *is* upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound; ²To proclaim
the acceptable year of the Lord,

- Again, what is the work Christ is expecting from us as his disciples? See Matthew 25.

³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? ³⁸ When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? ³⁹ Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ ⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.’

The Helper (Holy Spirit) helps us to do this work. How do we know this for sure? Because Jesus said it.

When we see Jesus, we see the Father because they dwell together. When people see us, they should see Jesus in us, because we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. The Spirit gives us this power and is our helper, the same helper that Jesus has.



How do we prepare for the comeback of Jesus? Be led by the Spirit daily. Follow the steps to let the Spirit control. To put in the work. Let people see Jesus in us, by seeing the works and bring Him glory.

John 20: 21 ²¹So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." ²²And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.