

The Righteous Bride Will Not Quench the Spirit, Intro



October 25, 2014

We live in very exciting times and I don't think anyone doubts that the Lord is coming for His Bride very quickly. What He has called us to share with you is the preparations that He is waiting for us to make so that we will be without spot, wrinkle, or blemish. On that note He has given me a five part teaching that He wants me to share with you. It's a slightly different perspective and it has to do with the things in the church that are really killing the anointing. It's the

things that we need to do to have a wedding garment that has no wrinkles, no spots, and no blemishes at all.

Before I begin I want to share with you a dream that I had when I first became a Christian. I was swimming in a lake and all of a sudden this black panther came up out of the water and grabbed me and pulled me down. What ensued after that was a life and death struggle to get free from this creature. This was a very powerful animal and it had the ability to bring me down to the point where I could drown. I struggled so hard to get out of that place. It really was a life and death struggle. Sometimes I would win and I would be able to push the panther down and keep him under water. Other times he would win and keep me under water. This went on for a very long time. When I woke up I was just bathed in perspiration.

By the time this dream ended I had him under the water and he was no longer visible, but that had happened so many times before. He would then shoot back up out of the water and grab me again. I had no assurance that this time he was really dead. I didn't know what this dream meant for a very long time, and then the Lord had mercy on me and revealed it to me. It was a warning dream and has to do with my involvement with the world and it's distractions with little things. I used to be a nature photographer and I was engrossed with nature and things having to do with beauty. He quickened to me the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, "Some of the seeds sown fell among the thorns and the thorns came up and choke them out. Later Jesus explains this parable, the seeds fallen among the thorns refers to someone who hears the Word but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the Word making it unfruitful." This definitely appears to the side of me I call Martha, Martha.

A lot of what these teachings will be about are preoccupations. When I say preoccupations, I mean distractions: things that have our attention, our minds, and resources bound up in these preoccupations that are staining our wedding garment and getting in the way of a newer relationship with Jesus, so that when He comes, we are really ready for Him.

One of the things I'd like to mention is the demons are far more subtle than we give them credit for. When we think of demons, we think of monsters hiding in the corner getting ready to wrestle us to the ground. These demons really linger. They cause us to have desires that are inordinate things we don't need, like superfluties. A lot of these things pull our attention off of God. They are things that we dwell on to increase our social standing, our appeal, our popularity, and acceptance our income.

I want to expose these socially acceptable behavior patterns for the worldly habits that they are. These things that we get caught up in are accepted. We talk about our shopping sprees, our vacations that have to do with entertainment and pleasure and don't have a thing to do with the Lord - and it's accepted. It's normal. Our lives are not all about enjoying these things. The Lord said, "I have come to give you life and life more abundantly (John 10:10)." And later He goes on to talk about that life, "The Kingdom of God is not food or drink but righteousness, peace, and joy."

So, let's take a look at how we can increase those things in our lives and look at some of the venues that Satan uses to get us distracted into these things.

The first one is the love of money; entertainment, travel, beauties, clothing, health, food, the pride of life and the good life, mismanagement of time and money, and focus on frivolous things. We've known when we've blown it. It's what they call "retail therapy," right? When we've spent too much time in a place our conscious grieves and feel that the Holy Spirit is grieved. A lot of people and myself included just chalk it off to "Well, that's just living. After all, we do have to have a little pleasure and enjoy ourselves." Well, there is a time for that.

The second one is social status: Keeping appearances up, being accepted by the church community, keeping our ties and relationships on a level that is acceptable to the status that we're seeking, not seeking a relationship to those we see on a level below us, having them over for dinner. We keep relationships that we see worthy on a higher level according to what our status is. We involve the kind of people according to where we want to be in our lives and network with them. It also has to do with approval and getting involved in programs and activities that will increase our social status.

I'm going to go into each one of these in great depth, but let's look at that one, for instance. There are so many things we can offer to do in the church and it always feels good to be helping. But if the Lord wants you at home studying the Scriptures, or teaching your children, or taking care of your husband, and you're pursuing with great enthusiasm the programs at church but neglecting what's going on at home - then you're not doing His will. This is something to look at.

The third one is living a results and goal oriented life. I'm guilty of all of these and especially this one. That's the reason I'm sharing these with you, because my life is so happy now and so rich, because the Lord has unchained me from my preoccupation with these amusements. It took the Lord years to set me free from these entanglements, because I was very stubborn. No soldier who serves goes out into the world and goes and gets entangled in the world. He stays free of those entanglements. For those who are really serious about the Lord and His Kingdom and being a part of bringing His Kingdom to Earth, we need to take a razor edge look at exactly what are we doing in our lives with this time. Are we wasting our time? Are we spending it on frivolous things, things that will go up in the fire? These are things that are not God's will.

Back to living a goal oriented life. I used to be a nature photographer. I got very intense about my work. Everything I've done since that time I get very intense about. So, before I do a painting, record music, or sing I try to make sure this is what the Lord wants me to be doing now and that I'm not neglecting my husband, my family, or the poor that come to our door for food. I have had to learn to stop and put down something I considered needing a high level of technical concentration. I stop it in midstream and go to the door to make sure the family we take care of has food for the night or to take care of some little detail that is frustrating my husband.

Let's say one of my children show up at the door and it totally revamps my night and I must have hospitality to them whom I love very much. Being goal oriented is not a healthy thing. You see a lot of Hollywood movies about how some are highly successful in business but tragically unsuccessful in their marriages. Those are goal oriented people. These are people who are really serious about what they're doing to the inclusion to all other facets of their lives. The Lord has not called us to that. He has called us to love our brother as we love ourselves and to love Him with all of our hearts (Mark 12:31). Sometimes people laugh about these qualities and say, "Oh that person is a compulsive addictive worker." We chide each other about these things, but it really is quite serious. It wrinkles the garment that the Lord is wanting us to make pure and white for His coming. We must cooperate with the Holy Spirit.

The fourth one is fear of encountering the Lord. What I want to say here is that conferences are good. Bible studies are good. But these things are a ladder to help us to reach that beautiful intimacy with the Lord. If we get caught up in constantly going to conferences and hearing the latest speaker who comes into town, basically, running, running, running - is that the Lord's will for me to be doing that? Here's the thing: we become so busy with these conferences and activities at church that we don't have the time to dedicate to the Lord in absolute purity, worship time, listening for His voice, studying the Scriptures. It's that intimacy where you can hear His voice, He holds you in His arms, He comforts you, He warns you of busy work and busy studies; running here and there to be taught.

If you have an intimate relationship with the Lord He will teach you directly through the Scriptures, life lessons that happen during the day, nature, so many different ways He communicates with us. He will teach you if you take the time to cultivate Him. He says, "Seek Me, find Me, (Jeremiah 29:13)". If you dedicate 2 or 3 hours to the Lord each day the intimacy grows and grows and we're more sensitive to His voice. The time you would have taken to go to a conference and learned maybe one or two things could have been infused in your heart and imparted to you from the Lord without all that travel and all the things involved with planning for it.

This fear of encountering God also has to do with the fear of who we are before the Lord. We have nothing to be afraid of, because He loves us so tenderly. When He shows us our faults it just melts my heart. Yes, it's hard to deal with your faults, but He is so tender and gentle about it. He prepares you with the antiseptic of love so thoroughly that you begin to lose that fear and become eager and ask Him, "Lord show me the things that get in the way of our relationship." I'm really looking forward to this teaching, because I was one to run to every conference and meeting, wearing myself out. One day my life changed rather drastically and I started getting really intimate with the Lord and realized, 'wow this has been here all the time and I've been out there looking for it.'

The fifth teaching covers worries, security, fear of the future, fear of getting old, health issues, fear of poverty, the need for us to do things ourselves, the need to get involved and trying to do things only God can do. For instance, some of us really long to help the children who are not saved and those within our families, but prayer is really where it's at. Because God's arm is so long and anything you try to do pushes them away. Worry, fear, and insecurity are huge. Again, the fruit of being in His presence and encountering Him in an intimate way will produce the fruit of NOT worrying about the future. You will lose the fear of that, because you can totally trust Him and He proves Himself to over and over again.

Are we willing to look through the eyes of the Holy Spirit at those spots, wrinkles, and blemishes? I thought about that for awhile and realized wrinkles take time and pressure to build up in the fabric. They

are deeply engrained patterns. They look not so bad from the outside but they mark the regal flow of the garment of the Bride. Wrinkles mess up a dress and break the lines up. Habitually sleeping in your wedding garment or if you're sitting in your dress when you should be standing and serving, will produce a lot of wrinkles. So, when the Lord said He is coming for a Bride without spot, wrinkle, or blemish, I think it's worth taking a look at the wrinkles.

Spots occur with our interactions with the world. When I lived in New York City there was a cabbie that went flying through a mud puddle and there were mud spots all over what we were wearing. The southern saying is, "If you play with dung long enough you'll get some on you." Well, that's what playing with the world is like. If you play around in the world long enough you'll have the soil of that interaction on your soul. It gets in the way of your purity of heart, because you're thinking of things involved in the world instead of thinking about the Lord and what's important to Him. Blemishes are another story and they are deep. A blemish in a piece of fabric would be threads missing and will cause it to unravel. In our body blemishes have to do with impurities in our blood. We must be without interior pollution or structural weakness. These things may be hidden but are highly important.

As you know in a temple sacrifice the Jewish people never offered a blemished lamb. It had to be an unblemished lamb. The offering had to be unblemished in order before the Lord to accept it and that's what He is telling us about our wedding dresses. He is so into preparing us and preparing this wedding garment for us, purifying our hearts, our minds and making this garment without spot, wrinkle, or blemish but we have to be willing to look at what we might be doing to stain it.

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