

The love of God reciprocated by the church

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- [0 : 00] We will speak again from the 22nd chapter in the book of the Revelation and verse 17.
- The 22nd chapter in the book of the Revelation, verse 17. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.
- And let him that hear it say, Come. And let him that is a third come. And whosoever will, let him take the walk of my freedom.
- We spoke particularly this morning of the first part, the Spirit and the bride. This wonderful union that is revealed in the Word of God between the Church of God, quite clearly the bride, and the Holy Spirit.
- Of his gracious work as revealed throughout the Scriptures, the Old and New Testament. And also of the gracious work he has to do in conviction.
- [1 : 21] He shall convince and convict. And of his being in charitot.
- He shall take of the things of the mind and show them unto you. All very glorious, comforting and profitable school for the Church of God, the bride.
- The Lord's help will speak of the bride after a little while. What a remarkable figure this is. You can't get closer relationship as regards those who have never known each other, so to speak.
- fan of the Lord. You should be in your servant. You can't count as bone, come of aerae. You can't Venom. You can't ask how many other products come. You can't offer, Minneapolis, through the Church of God's Eden. You can't see...
- It says, in fact, they want a better course with God's sake, leaders who have never known, and Sanders, 7 to is launched away with God's sake. in a political union between himself and his people, unbreakable, and passed on to man that what God has joined together, let not man put his own man.
- [2 : 36] So that we have this, not only as the great essential with regard to the church of God, but with regard to ourselves, the spirit of the bride say, come.
- There are one man, who is to come? Who is this that is invited? The time is now ready, work is done, the last vessel of mercy is done at home.
- This is how we must feel this scripture. There is not one on whose forehead, which you read in this book, is the mark who is not gathered in.
- For all we know, many of them yet unborn. Their prayers and desires are that even the children hear. Now this mark upon their forehead, known to the bull, it was on your forehead, wasn't it?
- When you were born and before you were born. That sacred mark, the most prominent place it could be, but only seen by God.
- [3 : 57] The final re-gathering of the saints, the glorious joy, that most magnificent work, words fail us to describe it.

Out of every nation, as we read in the fifth chapter, and it occurs in others too, worldwide, the glorious beauty of it.

Think how shrunken it would be if it was just our own country. that we couldn't look outside our own coasts.

We couldn't go beyond our own shores and hope to meet a vessel of mercy. The glorious width, length, breadth, height of the gospel is to joy the Church of God.

And she is therefore gathered from all nations. Even the four points of the compass are quoted.

[5 : 08] Thou will bring thy sons from far and thy daughters from near. He's done it. And you may be one of the daughters or one of the sons.

And if so, what will you say? That you were from far. It is this that stands as the sure foundation.

The Lord knows that it is. So that this bride, under this symbol, is a most beautiful character. because, as in the first verse, or she is spoken of in the previous chapter, prepared as a bride, adorned for a husband.

Now, in our wedding, the chief object of attraction is the bride. This is as it should be.

This is fully accepted everywhere. Jesus quoted this, when they charged him of old, he said, the bridegroom rejoices.

[6 : 29] He that standeth with him, said John Baptist, rejoices also. But this my joy, therefore, says John Baptist, of Jesus, is fulfilled.

So that this bride is adorned to prepare her. in that meaning, she is absolutely ready for that happy moment.

She is regarded as being the centre of all the treasure. not so in heaven, not so in this day, but how, how beautiful the scene and the thought that she is in this great sense prepared.

And now she's prepared. She has asked to be prepared through grace, the teaching of the Spirit, she has a, perhaps I will prepare me, gracious God, to stand before thy place.

Thy Spirit must the work performed which is all of grace. She's realized I need of a preparation.

[8 : 00] What kind of a preparation? What kind of a dress? How is she to be adorned acceptable to the eyes of omnipotence that search through and through?

The question is not difficult to answer. We know the effect of covering the righteousness of Christ, the finished work of Christ, that is, her garment.

There's no question of it. it isn't an if or a but. We're proclaimed with gospel certainty. Everywhere, both in Old and New Testaments.

Look at the previous verse of 16. I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the church. this angel, I, Jesus, you don't often come across these two words together, I, Jesus, but he has sent his angel, his prophet, to testify unto you these things in the church.

This angel, if it's in the singular, speaks to John as being in verse 9 thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the saints of this book, worship God.

[9 : 32] There is this glorious preparation. The robe of righteousness is revealed to her. It's her spotless nature.

Something beautiful in a spotless wedding dress, which the bride is with the bride angel. She's full of consolation, if anything should go around with it.

I once knew a prospective bride whose wedding dress was being ironed the night before, and they've finished a hole in her.

And, uh, three, you can imagine. Why? It could be covered up. It was covered up. Covered up in the fold.

No one saw it. No one would have known had she not told us that, oh, she knew it was there. She knew it was there.

[10 : 37] And lest the shadow on the spot should on thy soul be found, he took the robe the Savior route and wrapped it all around.

No spot. And you can have a very tiny spot and be aware of it, can't you? No wrinkle.

That martyr, too, doesn't it, if it's in the wrong place? And as the scripture descends to talk to us about wrinkles, is that?

And in order to be conclusive, Paul says, nor any such thing. If you can think of something else, he says, which I haven't thought of, well, it won't be there.

It's one of those extensive scriptures which has nothing to finish it, no adjective to describe it. it's just the same as the Isaiah prophecy and text, whiter than snow.

[11 : 49] You can't get the umbrella. Whiter than snow again. I once married a young couple and there was snow, deep snow, and her wedding dress posed with white, looked quite fallowed against the snow.

Whiter than snow. We have these descriptions in the world of God which take us to the top, so to speak, of the ladder, and we can go no higher, and there's no need for us to, because we fully understand that there is nothing whatsoever in God's creation whiter than snow.

Nothing. So with the heart deceitful above all things, nothing that you can compare with it. And this is not the failure of the prophet to think of a suitable word, but to simply a solemn fact that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?

But that is a sign. This garment is spotless. But she's taught to seek nothing less than this.

That's the beauty of it. This is where she earnestly desires to be absolutely right, to be taught of the Lord, taught of the good spirit.

[13 : 33] She knows there's much to be rid of, much cleansing, much washing through the word, many things to be solemnly corrected, but with all this she seeks to be right.

She does not mind the trials which cleanse her, the tests which prove her, but she earnestly desires this wedding dress.

There's the parable of the man there who had not on a wedding gown and he was cast out. And such pictures as these act as a cleansing influence upon her.

And she doesn't turn aside from them. she's taught to read the word of God consecutively, not to pick and choose. The word of God may comfort or it may search, as I was saying last summer.

But that's its purpose. If the word of God never cleanses or searches or detects in your heart, where do you stand? In relation to truth.

[14 : 50] it is this that is of such vital importance to her, therefore, while she is here below, but only through the good spirit.

It would not long for an immaculate righteousness, a spotless road without wrinkles, spot, blemish, or any subsistence.

Would you? Would you know anything about it? If God hadn't taught you, why do you hold fast to this as vital, something that you will never part with, if it were not the good spirit who parted it in your heart?

But there is something else, something else. What's that? Love. Love. What is all the wedding dress?

without love? What is it? What is it? What is the ring without love?

[16 : 04] What is it? Look at it today in our poor neighbours and fellow countrymen and women. Solemn past the love to which we've come today.

The lowering of the standards, divorce laws and the night. Look at the place to which we've come. But where this love is, there is the youth.

And is there any less here? we could quote many scriptures, couldn't we? But we will quote the one that is most quoted.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

the same whosoever as in this text. Love. Not universal love, but love.

[17 : 26] You must love a particular person, object. Love must be centered, affection must be rooted.

Is there therefore any ground in the gospel for a poor, guilty sinner to venture upon the thought of love?

Have you got any thoughts in your heart that you are what you are and you're here because of this, that God has loved you?

love? Now there is of necessity the reciprocation of love. Love isn't one-sided, but it can be more one side than another.

It still remains to be love, but there are some affections that are much different. love. Now it is so with the love of God, that is immeasurable.

[18 : 37] Sinners, although they are brought to love, cannot love with the same profound sincerity and depth as God loved them. Can they?

You cannot match the everlasting love of God to you. you may have a sweet warmth of it in your heart.

You may be well acquainted with that good scripture. We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.

But you can't rest on that merely upon the cold brimmed because in your heart you know you do love the brethren. And you feel it going out and it is reciprocated.

It is something of a returning nature. You can't stop it, nor do you want to.

[19 : 49] But oh with this bride, she has love in her heart. and the heavenly bridegroom Christ Jesus has spoken very, very clearly to her about this.

And he's left her in no doubt as to what he required of her hands. he has said among many other things, if he love me, keep my commandments.

Yeah. What a balance there is there, isn't there? what a responsibility if you love me keep my commandments.

It all hinges, therefore, on this love. This is the great motive power. It must be. Anything else would be about superficial. formality could come and go, wouldn't it?

You could separate yourself, you could go back and walk no more within, as many do. people. And here, the Spirit and the Bride say, come.

[21 : 23] The Bride has said, come, before me. She has asked her this blessed Bridegroom Christ Jesus to warm her heart.

Let her feel some of that heavenly heat, that drawing power, that desire to love him, follow him, and to do what she well knows he has exhorted her to do.

There's not a question with her as to whether he meant it or whether he didn't. He has made it abundantly clear. Now, this, you see, is the very nature of love that, no use talking about it, professing it without practicing it.

Love is a practicing grave, a working grave, isn't it? You just can't go home and sit down and pay no attention to your husband's needs, can you?

And look at it in the reverse, too. And in any other sphere of natural affection, real, love is self-sacrificing. Why, look at those good women that warn themselves to the fingertips in love.

[22 : 53] Love, love, love. Yes. Do they expect a reward from those they serve? No, no, not they.

This sacred, divine love of God, therefore, is set out clearly as requiring a return as it should be. It would be unnatural if it didn't.

Indeed, it could not be called love if it did not. So that the bride is not only dawned and prepared, but she is in love.

Now, where is this Christ in the previous verse, then I, Jesus, who sent his angel to testify these things? Where is he revealed to her if it isn't in the gospel?

Not with her mortal eyes does she see him? What does she love about him? She loves his truth. That vast ocean of truth, of his birth, of his life in all its aspects, of his suffering and death.

[24 : 16] She feels a drawing, believe me. The Holy Spirit sees, well to it, that she does. He's not allowed to be seen in a corner, as if they didn't apply to her.

She sees him in his glorious resurrection. She sees him speaking to Mary in the garden. One of the most affecting scenes that love could witness is in the garden after the resurrection where she's supposing him to be the gardener.

Then unto him, Sir, those boarding heads tell me where those lay there. Jesus replied, Mary, is your heart never been softened with that most gracious description.

It doesn't need any further remount than that their heart overflows one. So does that, therefore, of the bride.

So with Thomas, it took away all his unbelief, Thomas. in this, therefore, we have the love reciprocated back again from the source whence it came.

[25 : 49] And the spirit and the bride say, come. Not only is she to love, but she is to walk, to walk here.

And this is where we left the matter this morning, in one sense, she's given grace to walk in love. The precepts, all that is commanded in the sacred precepts.

Not the Lord Moses, but in the precepts, which exceed that, because they are in love. they are able to be well used by turning them into prayers.

She is therefore supported by the grace of her God and given all needed sight to see what he requires.

This is her delight, it should be, it is, by the good spirit. Not that she doesn't wander from this, not that she doesn't back stride, not that her love doesn't grow lukewarm and cold, read the third of this book, not that she doesn't fall into Laodicean condition, no, or wander far, no, but what brings her back again but love.

[27 : 33] And why did the father, he, a constant eye upon the place where he thought his son would appear. His father saw him a great way off.

He recognised the returning son. He went and made him. And all the manifestation of love on both sides.

The spirit and the bride say, come. So there's her life here in this wilderness, for all come from this, no angels are found in this company.

It's not one. He descended lower than the angels to redemption. But it was fallen man that he redeemed.

And fallen man is raised to the height of, as I said, last Sabbath, the same, whether he thinks it sounds himself so or not.

[28 : 48] This being so, then, she's called to walk. walk. And she's called to walk in the pathway of her preparation.

She's to have her earthly affections weaned. She's to be taken off of idols. She's to be shown that there's one person and one person alone.

first. She's to set her heart upon things above. Her treasure is to be there, not on things on the earth.

That is she weaned. Feeling also ready. I go to prepare a place for you, and so on.

It's called, it's it. the spirit and the bride say come, we're ready. The holy spirit prompts, the holy and the redeemed is ready.

[30 : 00] As I've already said, everyone is called, and not only called, but now prepared for that great moment when Christ will leave his throne of mediation, and no longer fill that office of the mediator, for he will no longer be necessary.

He will have accomplished and finished that holy world. Then we come to the other side, and let him that heareth say, come.

there's a different thing all together. Him that heareth say, come. Now, this is individual question or salvation.

Him that heareth this great announcement of the eternal spirit and the church of God God.

But it refers, we believe, more particularly to the individual state upon earth. And if we measure ourselves by this, we shall have a very close measurement.

[31 : 28] Even so, come, Lord Jesus, says verse 20, but let him that heareth say, come. come. How many times, therefore, has the individual believer, the member of this mystical body, used this word, come?

It is in response to Christ's invitation, come, unto me, all free that to labor and a heavy labor, which has been such an appealing text, perhaps to this person in earlier days, dear Lord, and may I come?

This is the gospel invitation. The character very clearly delineated.

This is the person that will understand what the invitation is. And let him that heareth say, come.

Is he likely to say, go? Does he not want to be drawn nearer and closer?

[33 : 00] Does he not shine nearer, nearer to him clinging by my healthy soul with her? Surely, this word, come, is on his lips, come.

Do you not feel thankful sometimes to be able to come to the throne of grace, all your burdens, your responsibilities, all your anxieties, your cares, your sinfulness, your unworthiness?

Do you not feel at times the blessedness of this open door of gospel invitation? Come.

let him that hear it. But what qualification has Jesus put upon this hearing? Why, this, he that hath the ears to hear, let him hear.

This is the qualification. If he has ears to hear, he cannot hear. God have given them, says the prophet Isaiah, the spirit of slumber, they shall not be.

- [34 : 25] Oh, how many may sing, I heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and rest, who never once knew the solemn reality of the need of rest.
- but nonetheless be that as it may, let him that hear it say, come. It is the full-hearted response, either here or there, and let him that is asserted come.
- Taking us right back to Old Testament time, 55th of Isaiah, for example, hold, everyone that's thirsty, come ye to the waters.
- Another blessed gospel invitation, that marked the qualification, waters are no good to you if you're not thirsty, it must follow.
- It's the same with coming to the house of God on the Sabbath, as I often tell my people here, I have no greater desire for them on the Sabbath, than that they come to the house of God hungry and thirsty.
- [35 : 48] If God favour me with the people who are hungry and thirsty, then I know, whatever my feelings are, all will be well.
- They must, they must thirst. thirst. And where this thirst is, it is very easily understandable.
- It is nature's most tense mood and moment, if you've ever experienced thirst. And you will well know what that thirst is.
- And how there is such an intensity that nature cannot bear at long. We can go much longer without food than we can without water.
- But how sweet is the symbol that is used. Even on the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, didn't it? Blessed are they that hunger and thirst.
- [36 : 56] After what? Why, after righteousness. this is what they searched after. And if so be that we are enabled thus to understand it, what reality there is in it.
- Search. And let him that is a search do what? Why, come. Come where? To whom? Where is he likely to get his thirst quick?
- Well, as I referred you this morning to this first verse that he showed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.
- There, nothing else. The same as with the immaculate wedding armor. So, with the clear water and pure truth of the gospel, unsullied by human agency, that is what he thirsts after, the righteousness of Christ.
- Jesus has made it abundantly clear. And he says that they are blessed in thirsting. You may view it as being blessed in having your thirst satisfied.
- [38 : 24] which, of course, naturally is the answer. But if you look at our Lord's words, he says, blessed are they that hunger and thirst are to righteousness, for they shall be filled or satisfied.
- And this pure river, clear as crystal, is that which Jesus spoke of to Nicodemus, being born of water and of the Spirit.
- The washing of the world, not only external, but the needless, the satisfaction of gospel truths, giving all honor and glory to the Lord Jesus.
- is this man likely therefore to shine down and not ready? And let him that is a third come.
- This means action where? Mostly at your bedside, but also the house of God or anywhere for that matter.
- [39 : 44] come. This blessed desire that finds an expression in secret places, that in common to live.
- Now, if you know the scripture abounds with such places as these, you see the thirsty David coming. But you come with him in some of his psalms.

let him that is a thirst come. And whosoever will. How glorious it is.

Even you, sinner, can't escape from that net. Now, not as unworthy as you are, you'll never get through that sacred gospel net, whosoever.

you may almost damn yourself in your own eye, you'll never get through that net, whosoever.

[40 : 56] One of the most glorious words in the whole of the gospel, whosoever will. look at this wonderful bride, her garner, but look at her willing heart.

Let us just, a matter of interest, look at the wedding survey. Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband?

will. And what is the answer? I will. And from that moment, the whole matter is settled.

Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife? What is the answer? I will. And from that moment, the thing is done.

Now, when it comes to this sacred word before us here, whosoever, are you going to discriminate?

[42 : 06] Is there going to be some distinction drawn that so and so really is not a thick character? That Jephthah mustn't come and Samson mustn't come?

And you certainly can't have Rahab. she won't do. No? No? Who sent her? Who recorded their names among the faithful worthies that the Holy Spirit?

We've only a few pages, and not that, only a few verses of some of their lives. What about the dying thief? Are you going to agree that he was really saying, or was it as some would pervert the truth and say that he was not?

Whosoever will. But rather than an arguerous point in a wrong spirit, look in your own heart. Bring it home to yourself.

Are you willing? It really doesn't matter, you know, about the majority, although selfishness is not some point in the gospel mainly.

[43 : 28] But really it doesn't matter in the reality of the thing if you say, well, I don't know this whosoever will as men have argued it out for centuries.

The great point is, in this great day, in the day of judgment, when the spirit of truth and the bride shall say, come, this is the whole point.

Have you been willing to go? Is your heart willing now to be made willing? Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God and to enjoy the pleasures of sin proceed?

is it? Has it been? You know your heart, your nature better than anyone else. It may be pretty dogged.

It may be a hard heart, but you've got. And nature ruined my sin, yes. But whosoever will.

[44 : 39] Oh, the sinner drops into this. He is in the next. He's happy to be there. He says, reasons for himself. There's no exccruciate word here, no reservation, nothing in bracket, no parenthesis here.

Whosoever will, and what is he to do, take of the water of life? How much force? Freely, meaning, as much as he needs, as much as he wants.

Look how this then compares with the thirsty sinner for earth, and the blessed gospel, and how they drink it in, and what sacrifice they make for the gospel's sake, and how willing they are to make every effort that this precious gospel should reach their ears and their hearts, and that they should be as the bride prepared and ready, and that in that great day they should be among that number who will be, as with the Spirit saying, come, even so, Lord Jesus, come.

Amen.