

****Bumper Video – Bachelor**

Bachelor Title

Welcome to Redemption Church. It's a beautiful day in Plano Tx and I am excited to be kicking off our new sermon series today.

In this Bachelor series we seek to compare and contrast the modern idea of love with God's ancient plan for love. In the end we hope you will see that **God is the architect for love and that He provides the love we have always looked for.**

Modern Love

This will be our working definition of the modern idea of love.

Modern Love - Get the most attractive, wealthy, popular, powerful person possible.

Now you may be tempted to say that I am just being an old stick in the mud, not with the times, and against having a good time. ..BUT PLEASE hear me out. I'm not here to argue old ideas versus new ideas... I am here to encourage us to embrace the truth that sets us free and reject the lies that enslave us.

Modern Love - Get the most attractive, wealthy, popular, powerful person possible.

If you will take a moment to look around you will see that the modern idea of love is completely messed up and ultimately destructive.

We see this in Jr High & High School, where we are encouraged to date the head cheerleader or varsity Quarterback. To date the Prom King or Prom Queen. It continues into adulthood where we are encouraged to marry a trophy wife or husband. It has led to a nation overrun with marital disaster and divorce.

The modern idea of love equates courtship with online shopping. Just look in the catalog, see the photo and name brand and then immediately jump head first into a relationship with someone we don't really know.

There are new social medias like Tinder where people in a mile radius are given your picture and GPS coordinates and they decide if they want to meet up... or let's be real.. hook up.

In our society sex has become meaningless... but calling rather than texting is a huge deal and to be celebrated as the definition that someone really cares.

Commitment has become giving up on finding better.. because after all the idea is to find the most attractive, wealthy, popular or powerful.

And of course your relationship isn't official.. until facebook says it is. Our online persona defines who we are... we must be happy... look we posted a picture where we are smiling.. We better only appear to be the best, and attractive, wealthy, successful person popular.. because that is what this modern idea is founded upon.

But this foundation is constantly changing.. because it is hard to remain the most attractive, wealthy, popular, and powerful. There is this unspoken jealousy of others and a constant comparing of ourselves against others... Mirror mirror on the wall... facebook facebook on my iPhone... who is the fairest of them all.

The modern world bases love on external attributes while the inward bares little importance... Intelligence, character, integrity, grace, dignity.. they aren't as easy to spot on Instagram.

If your idea of love is to have the most.. the highest and best.. then you are always shopping or being shopped. There is little to no trust because your significant relationship might find someone better than you...

This modern view is widely held & celebrated.. We even make TV shows based on it. In the true spirit of this concept of love they make it a contest.

The Bachelor

Quick show of hands.. Have any of you seen this show? Guys it's ok to raise your hands.. we know that you were just spending time with someone you care about.

The Bachelor show is currently in its 19th season and still pulls in big ratings numbers. I don't think 19 seasons count the spin off seasons of the bachelorette either..

A quick description of the show.. There is 1 ridiculously attractive athlete, model, wealthy playboy tycoon Bachelor, business man. And then there are 25-30 drop dead gorgeous bombshells competing for his heart. He has a rose for his one true love and at the end of the season he will pick one of these 30 women and ask her to marry him.

Who will he choose? How will these women get him to love them? (sounds healthy right!?)

Can we expect a genuine moment on this show? Can we expect a genuine moment in life anymore?

God the Bachelor

What if I told you that God is a Bachelor?

Now sometimes there is a negative connotation to the word bachelor. Culture sees bachelors as single guys who enjoy being single, play the field and are afraid of commitment.. God is not like this kind of bachelor. When we say Bachelor we mean someone who is available and looking for someone to spend their life with.. This describes God. God the Bachelor does not operate by today's modern idea of love. God created and operates in the original idea of Love...

Over the course of this series we are going to be taking a fresh look at God through the lens of him being available for a relationship and looking for a bride.

God is a Groom looking for a bride

To reveal God, His character, His nature, His heart.. the Bible gives us some understandable & teachable metaphors.

- God is a shepherd looking for and caring for His sheep.
- God is a King who governs fairly and protects the people of His Kingdom.
- God is the Light of the world and bread of life.

- God is a Rock and He is Father.

But one of the most prevalent metaphors for God is that God is a Groom looking for His Bride. It is prevalent and also in my opinion the most complete picture of His plan and His love.

Old Testament reference to God and His bride..

The entirety Psalm 45 prophecies of a Lord & King who will be a groom. The chapter gives instruction to the bride to make herself ready for the groom.

Several other prophets speaks of a new covenant that God will give to Israel. This covenant will be deeper and more relational. It implies marriage.

Isaiah 54:5 For your Maker is your husband-- the LORD Almighty is his name-- the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.(NIV)

Jeremiah 31:31 "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.(NIV)

Jeremiah 31:32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.(NIV)

In the book of Hosea God reveals that He has married an unfaithful wife.

The more you look the more you see that it has been God's plan from the beginning to enter into a marriage covenant with a bride.

The Old Testament process for marriage deserves to be studied. It reveals the bride and groom.

The bachelor sees the woman he wants to spend His life. He goes to his earthly father and tells him of his plan to marry this treasured

woman. With joy the father of the groom prepares a dowry.. Now this is reverse procedure from the rest of the world. For the rest of the world, the bride's family pays the groom to take care of their daughter.. like a request that they would treat her well and not abusively, which was a major problem in the ancient world (and sadly women today are still mistreated)

This reverse dowry that the groom's family would pay the bride's family was called a mohar, and was to be of equivalent value to the worth of the bride. BUT the MOHAR was not purchasing the bride against her will.. THIS MOHAR HAEBREW TRADITION IS UNIQUE FOR THE ANCIENT WORLD THAT TREATED WOMEN LIKE OBJECTS! The Mohar purchased the right of the groom to ask the bride to marry him. The bride had free will to say no, but because the groom was showing his want, desire, a commitment to her, many would say yes.

Here is how she would say yes. The groom would offer the bride a drink by saying "This is my covenant..." She would say yes by drinking... if she did not drink she rejected his marriage offer. When she drank it marked the start of a betrothal, where she took on His name and was referred to as "one bought with a price." They were betrothed but not completely married... they lived separately.

Upon saying yes, the happy groom would give a precious gift to the bride before he would have to leave. The MOHAR was a purchasing gift for the right to ask for marriage, but the MATTAN was an empowering gift of the best wealth the groom could give. The MATTAN would sustain the bride while the groom was away?

Where did the groom go? He went to prepare a place called a MONE. The King James translates this word as Mansion, but it is a small living space within the groom's father's house.

While the groom is away building this future dwelling place, the bride is preparing herself and making herself ready for the grooms return. When will the groom return... well that wasn't set. In fact the groom himself didn't know when he would return for his beloved.. The groom's father would decide when the son was to return. It could happen at any time and could be very unexpected.

When the time came the groom would come and carry his bride away and announce his arrival with the blowing of horns..

There is so much more to dive into... but let's stop here. DID YOU NOTICE ANYTHING ABOUT THIS PROCESS? Did it remind you of anything... or anyone? ..It should remind you of Jesus our groom.

Jesus the son sees you and wants to spend the rest of time with you. He goes to His heavenly Father who pays the MOHAR, which is to be an equivalent value of the bride. This price is the cross and the gift of His only son. That is how much the bride is valued! This MOHAR purchases the right of Jesus to pursue us, but we the bride have the free will to say yes or no. The bride does not pay to receive this groom.. the groom's family pays the price.

We are told in (I Cor. 6: 19-20) that we have been redeemed with a price. We are also told that our bride's price is not just silver and gold but His own life blood (I Pet. 1:18-19)

And our scripture memory verse..

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her(NIV)

When we say yes to Jesus the groom, he bestows a MATTAN gift upon us – The Holy Spirit. This precious gift empowers us and sustains us and leads us while we wait for the groom to return. The groom has gone away to prepare a place for us in His father's house...

Jesus said no man knows the day or the hour that the son of man will return... only the Father! (Matthew 24:36) When the Father decides, the trumpet will sound and the Son will return for a bride who has been preparing herself for her groom. Then we will be forever with Him in His everlasting covenant.

Jesus... God wrapped in human flesh... is the groom. We are the bride. He is searching us out. He is purchasing us. He is bestowing precious gifts on us. His name is placed on us. He will return for us!

Much of Jesus's language and word choice blatantly revealed His plan for marrying His followers.

He tells his disciples I go to prepare a place, a MONE for you... This is marriage language.

He hands them a cup and says this is the blood of my new covenant... marriage language.

Immersion into water was a part of marriage ritual... Jesus was baptized and commands your baptism.

When asked why his disciples aren't fasting he intimates that they are in the betrothal party with the bridegroom and that the time for fasting happens after the groom is taken from them.

The People of Israel, and us the Church who have been grafted in (Romans 11:17) are the 1 bride of the 1 God!

There are some that believe God has divorced Israel and that they were replaced by the Church. I do not believe that. I don't believe God has multiple wives.. He has 1 bride and He remains faithful even when His bride fails. I am so thankful for my inclusion in the bride of Christ!

God wants to marry you... Unlike the reality show The Bachelor... We aren't the contestants competing for the heart of God. We are the prize! You already have His heart!

God is Available

From the very beginning God has shown us His availability. God has always shown that He is searching for someone to have a deep relationship with. That is the story of the Bible.

God was available in the Garden. He was available as Israel wandered in the wilderness. He is available to us in the face of Jesus. His Spirit is alive and available right now. God is available.

Availability is Key

I ask you.. **What good is someone who is not available?**

They might be the best looking person on earth... but they aren't available for a relationship with you.

They could have wealth and power... but when you call on them they aren't available. Sure they have the needed resources to fulfill the need.. but they lack availability. Maybe they aren't emotionally available. Maybe they don't make time... What good is someone who is not available?

When it comes to God

- What good is His strength if it is not available to you?
- What good is His wisdom if it is not available to you?
- What good is His pure heart if it is not available to you?
- What good is anything He has to say if He is not available to come down into your life?

Of course God is available to us.. Sometimes we don't sense it... Israel, the children of Jacob thought God was not available to them, but the Prophet Isaiah set them straight..

Isaiah 40:28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.(NIV)

Isaiah 40:29 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.(NIV)

Isaiah 40:30 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;(NIV)

Isaiah 40:31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.(NIV)

His strength is available! His power is available! God is available!

Philippians 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.(NIV)

Why distress about your needs when God's glorious riches in Christ Jesus are available to you!?

Availability is Key and God is Available to you!

God's progressive revelation... where he reveals Himself to us over time... always has demonstrated availability.

He revealed Himself to Abraham as Jehovah Jireh, which means He is my provider... God, your groom, is available to be your provider.

He revealed Himself as Jehovah Rapha to Israel in the wilderness... they were bitten by poisonous snakes... but God was available! He reveals Himself as Jehovah Rapha, which means He is my healer... He was available and healed anyone who turned to Him!

On and on he keeps revealing his character, power, and ability... but not just that. He reveals His availability!

Jehovah Nissi – He is our victory Banner.

Jehovah Shalom – He is Our Peace

On and on... He even reveals Himself in Human form as Jesus... Yeshua... which means Jehovah Savior – He is our Salvation. Salvation is available to us!

What good would any of that be... if He weren't available to us?

There is a reason He is available like this... HE WANTS TO MARRY YOU!

Your greatest ability is your Availability!

Are you available?

Are you available to your spouse? To your family? To your friends?

Are you looking for someone to spend your life with? Work on being available.

Stop trying to follow the modern love idea. You don't have to be the best looking. You don't have to be the most wealthy or powerful, or popular. You just need to be available! And if that is not enough... then you have not found someone to give your life.

The biggest relationship pitfall is a lack of availability.

People will say... "The reason that couple got divorced was that someone had an affair.. and people found out." But long before the affair.. someone stopped being available. They stopped being available to their spouse and started being available to other things and other people.

Husbands & wives, are you available? Are you more available to other things? ..like your job, a hobby, watching tv, playing with your phone, or facebook.

Genesis 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.(NIV)

For the cause of a Bride does a groom leave his family and home... to make himself available to his bride.

BE AVAILABLE!

If you aren't married, perhaps you are looking for that relationship right now or at least one day you might want to pursue that relationship.. I want you to use availability as a litmus test.

Are you available for God? **There is no relationship without availability.**

In the modern idea of love find you find your self-worth in your ability to attract. But God wants to show you your true worth through His pursuit of you and His availability.

We worshipped together today in song and in remembering scripture and in giving... When you were doing that... you were making yourself available.

We have received God's word together today. You were alert. You paid attention and took note. You took time to learn about God. Every moment you were sitting listening to this story about Jesus the groom... you were making yourself available.

The next thing we will do is take time to talk to God. We are going to invite you come receive prayer in the first 2 feet. We invite you to repent of anything that is keeping you from being available to God. I challenge you to make yourself available today. These altars are open now... come pray. If you want prayer just come up to the first 2 feet. I challenge you to take a step from your seat up to this altar today. Come make yourself available.