

****Bumper Video – Bachelor**

Bachelor Title

Welcome to the North Pole, also known as Plano Texas. I am glad to share the Word of God with you today here at Redemption Church or by our online podcast. The Word of God is powerful whether you are hearing it inside this room or in whatever room you find yourself. We believe God is in this room.. and your room.

We are in the last week of the Bachelor Series. We have covered a lot of ground in this series.. but the central point has been that God is a groom seeking, and making himself available to a bride. That Bride is Israel & the Church.. the people that come after the covenant of Abraham – that is a covenant of faith.

We talked about Jewish wedding procedure and how it symbolizes everything that God wants to do with His bride.

Last week we specifically told you that the Bride's only responsibility is to decide she wants to give herself to the groom. That is not a one-time decision, but a choice that we must make every day. As the bride waits for the nisu'in, the surprising arrival of the groom, she must prepare herself for His coming.

I am excited and nervous about today. When we were praying and preparing for this sermon series a few months ago, it ended differently... But a few weeks ago, after week one actually, God directed me in a different way for this final sermon. I apologize for some of the social awkwardness this sermon contains and also for the kind of mixed metaphor...

We have talked about the Groom. God, Jesus Christ, is the groom.

We have talked about the Bride. We believe that Israel is the bride of Christ and that we who aren't of that natural lineage have been grafted into that body (Romans 11:17) as members of His Church. You can say it is physical Israel and Spiritual Israel... Physical Israel and the Church... We believe that when Jesus sees us, His Church, He sees His beloved. We believe when He sees the nation of Israel, the seed of Abraham, He sees His beloved. When believe that when He looks

upon the seed of humanity... from Adam onward... that He sees someone that He has made Himself available to and has proposed an eternal life with... He longs to make all of us His bride.

There is one more figure God wants us to talk about. The groom, the bride, and the **friend of the groom**.

John the Baptist uses this term in John 3. Let's take a look..

John 3:28 You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.'(NIV)

John 3:29 The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.(NIV)

John 3:30 He must become greater; I must become less.(NIV)

John 3:31 "The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all.(NIV)

Again let us read John 3:29

John 3:29 The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.(NIV)

The Bride belongs to the groom (bridegroom). We understand this right? He identifies Jesus Christ as the groom here, and Israel as the bride (because the Church isn't birthed until after the resurrection in Acts 2).

But then he talks about "the friend" of the groom. ...now hold of Jean Baptiste... who is this friend?

Well John the Baptist is referring to himself as the friend of the groom. I think that is clear... He says "that joy is mine."

But is John the Baptist the only friend of the bridegroom? Not according to Jesus..

Luke 5:34 Jesus answered, "Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them?(NIV)

In the KJV it reads this way...

Luke 5:34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?(KJV)

This is a difficult passage to translate... but King James Version does a better job than the New International Version here. The word for Children or Guest is **huios (hwē-o's)** is most often translated as son... It is different from the word **PHILOS (fē'-los)** which means friend or one with an intimate relationship. Although it is slightly different language.. it is referring to the same idea that there is someone in close relationship with the groom. Jesus refers to His disciples as no longer being slaves/servants, but being PHILOS, friends.

John 3 says friend of the bridegroom and Luke 5:34 says children of the bridechamber...

So what is this friend of the bridegroom.. bridechamber?

Context... **Eliezer – Servant (& heir) of Abraham**

Eliezer was Abraham's eldest servant. In fact, if Abraham and Sarah would not have been able to have children... which was likely except for God worked a miracle and keeps His promise. If they had not had a child, then Eliezer would have been the heir. That comes into play symbolically, because the servants of God are also heirs! Although we are Servants of God, we are also Heirs.

Abraham wanted Isaac to find a wife

Eliezer, whose name means God is my help, set out to find a bride for the first born groom. He didn't want Isaac to choose a wife from the surrounding area, which we can assume is because they worshipped idols. Instead Abraham asked his servant to travel back to Abraham's homeland and find a wife for Isaac. (This servant is not actually named, but it is likely that it is in fact Eliezer – being the most trusted servant.)

This job of finding the bride for a groom is referred to as "friend of the bridegroom." Eliezer is the example of a servant/heir who travels into a foreign land to redeem a bride. He prepares the way for the groom to meet His bride. In Genesis 24, the friend of

the groom, takes the bride Rebekah to the land of Canaan, the land of promise to meet the groom. Isaac, the groom, sees her from a long way off and goes to meet her and that night betroths her.

We are to be the Bride of Christ, but God wants us to also be “friends of the groom.” Now I know this mixes the metaphor, but listen to this truth. Although you a part of His beloved Bride collective that spans throughout the world and throughout time, God wants to use you as a servant who is also an heir, to bring a new person in contact with the groom.

Eliezer was a friend of the groom. John the Baptist was a friend of the groom, who prepared the way of the Lord, to prepare the way of the groom to meet His beautiful, repentant & pure bride. The Disciples were friend to the groom or as Jesus says servant/heirs to the bridal-chamber.

The Bridal-Chamber, that Jesus was referring to in Luke 5, was the room that the groom was preparing in His father’s home. The Disciples were servant/heirs of heaven. In the Jewish concept of friend to the bridegroom the friend would bring the groom into contact with the groom for Betrothal, and the friend would also be present at the Nisu’in, the surprise return for the Wedding Ceremony. The friends would rejoice when the groom told them it was time to go get His bride! This is referenced by John the Baptist who in **John 3:29** says **The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice..(NIV)**

You are called to be a friend of the Groom. Jesus the groom has asked you to serve Him in this way...

Matthew 28:19 **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,(NIV)**

This is known as the GREAT COMMISSION, but did you know there are 4 other accounts of Jesus giving the command to us to be friends of the groom...? To go out and bring someone in contact with the groom...?

Mark 16:15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.(NIV)

Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.(NIV)

Luke 24:47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.(NIV)

John 20:21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."(NIV)

John 20:22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.(NIV)

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."(NIV)

You should be well acquainted with the Great Commission! It is the mission of the Church! It is the mission Jesus has given us. It is the mission that Jesus has given you! This mission not just for pastors, teachers, preachers, worship leaders, or whatever church title you can think of... This is a mission for everyone that wants to follow after Christ.

God loves you! Congrats! You are His beloved Bride! But don't you realize there are other people who need to meet the Groom.

Bring them to the Groom

Eliezer brought the bride to the Groom. She had never met the guy... Eliezer could hand over his smart phone for her to check out the groom's pictures, he could only do His best to describe the groom... That servant heir tells this bride that there is someone she needs to meet, and He takes her all the way to the place where she sees the groom face to face.

Somebody needs to bring their friends to the groom. Somebody needs to bring their family to meet the groom. Somebody needs to travel outside of their normal circles and find someone who hasn't met the groom.

Have you ever brought someone to the groom. Have you ever shared Jesus with someone? Have you ever been bold enough to tell someone about Him. Are you anxious for someone to meet Him? If He truly is the best thing in your world, don't you think that He will be the best thing in their world.

Have you told someone about Jesus? Are you a friend of the groom? Do you realize He has commissioned you to go and tell someone about Him?

Do you realize that someone brought you in contact with the groom? Do you understand that you wouldn't be here today if someone haven't been a friend of the groom?

I CHALLENGE YOU TO SHARE WITH US WHO INTRODUCED YOU TO JESUS. GET OUT YOUR PHONE AND **TEXT US** – 214 856 0550 Tell us who brought you to the groom?

Who are you going to bring to the groom?

We serve the Lord! And God instructs us in His word that we should serve Him through serving others. We know the parable where He says "when you've done to the least you have done unto me."

In **1 Peter 4:10** we are instructed... **Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.(NIV)**

As you have been served... serve others.

Are you taking the opportunity to serve others?

We serve the Lord when we serve His bride. Are you serving His bride? You came to Church today, but are you serving? You know the word and power of the groom, but are you serving anyone by sharing? There are many ways to serve right here in this local community... but are you doing it?

- Alzheimer Care

- Youth Ministry
- Small Group
- Giving
- Outreach

Are you a friend of the groom? Are you excited that He is coming back again? Like John, do you rejoice at the sound of His voice? Are you will to decrease that He might increase?

Do you want God to use you? Let me tell you exactly what God is looking for...

God is looking for a friend He can trust with His bride.

Our scripture memory verse from last month told us that God was to present to Himself a radiant church.. **2 Corinthians 11:2 I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.(NIV)**

In ancient times Queens and Princesses, heirs to thrones, would have servants. Some servants were there to do common chores and beautification, and some servants were there to provide strength and protection. Concerning the protection of these royal women, they would look to hire soldiers, big strong muscular guys with swords.

But given these soldiers were men, there were times when it wouldn't be appropriate for them to be in the room with the queen or princess. They might be undressed and it wouldn't be proper.. Also it wasn't easy to trust these strong men, because while they might use their strength to protect, many men have used their strength to harm and rape.

The King needed to find a friend he could trust. Someone who could be trusted to protect and serve and never harm.

NOW I APOLOGIZE FOR THE AWKWARDNESS OF THIS TOPIC... But it is a scriptural topic and it is what God wants us to hear today.

Kings started using Eunuchs. These were men who had their sex drive removed.. In study I found that while there were some forced to

become eunuchs, many were born that way and many chose that way of life out of service to the King.

If you want to serve the King, He needs to be able to trust you with His bride. If you want to be great in His kingdom, you must protect and serve His Church. If you want to be a friend to the groom, you need to have all the wrong desire, all the improper motivation, and all the abusive nature removed.

Can God trust you with His bride?

I want to talk to anyone who feels called to serve this body... who wants to minister to the needs of this community. Can God trust you with His bride?

John 3:29 The bride belongs to the bridegroom.

Pastor can I remind you... She's not your bride. She belongs to the groom. She doesn't have your name... She has HIS name! Preacher, teacher, youth worker, worship leader... our job is to serve the Bride and be trustworthy with His bride. I'm not the groom... I'm just a friend to the groom. This is not my church... It the Church of Jesus Christ the groom.

When it comes to God's Church, we need the motives of a Eunuch. Our only desire is to serve the King by serving His Bride.

BE CAREFUL! Because the deeper you get in the Bride's living quarters... the more access you get to isolated places, the more easy it would be to take advantage of the King's Bride. God wants to call you into places of service, vulnerable places... moments where people share their heart ache and weakness... moments where people confess their sin... opportunities to take what does not belong to you... opportunities to misuse power and authority... **GOD WANTS TO CALL YOU...** but can he trust you with His bride? Are you a friend to the groom?

When it comes to the church we really don't hold back any punches around here... That is to say we point out when the Church world gets it wrong, when the church world is full of hypocrisy or greed, when they are focused on denominations instead of Jesus... We tell it like it is. Very direct and forward... We don't wear rose colored glasses... **BUT**

YOU BETTER KNOW that the Church is God's beloved Bride. Yeah she has been unfaithful at times, yeah she has committed adultery and fallen into harlotry... but you better know... She is God's beloved Bride.

His perfect will is to restore her and embrace her. HE WILL present to Himself a radiant Church... without stain, wrinkle or any other, but holy and blameless.

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT THE King's bride. Be careful how you handle her... how you treat her. Do not take her for granted, but serve her protect her, lay your life down for her. She is dear to Jesus Christ.

Are you a friend to the groom? Can He trust you with His bride? Will you serve?