

A Royal Wedding

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[0 : 0 0] 1661, his dying words, glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land. And very famously, a free church minister's wife and cousins took those words and turned them into a hymn called The Sands of Time Are Sinking, which has an incredible 19 verses.

And perhaps the most famous of those verses is, The bride eyes not her garment, but her dear bridegroom's face. I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of grace.

Not at the crown he giveth, but on his pierced hand. The Lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel's land. And what we see right throughout Samuel Rutherford's letters is this theme of the bride and the bridegroom.

And of course, Rutherford was using the rich imagery of the Bible, which right throughout Scripture talks about Christ and his bride.

We see this language of marriage used throughout the Bible. We see it, of course, supremely in the Song of Solomon. But we see it also in Isaiah and in Jeremiah and in the prophet Joel.

[1 : 2 6] We see it used by John the Baptist in John chapter 3 at the end. We see it in 2 Corinthians. We see it, of course, most used in Revelation.

We see it, of course, most used in Revelation. We see this imagery of Christ as the bridegroom and the church as the bride. What we have before us in Psalm 45 tonight is a royal wedding of epic proportions.

People love a good wedding, don't they? And the people love, more than anything, a royal wedding. I can still remember where I was when Prince Charles and Diana got married, where I watched that wedding as a nine-year-old.

But there's great pomp and ceremony. There's great fuss about the bridegroom. There's usually even more fuss about the bride and the bride's dress and the bridal party.

But as we read Psalm 45, we begin to realise that this is no ordinary wedding. Because the focus is not so much on the bride in Psalm 45.

[2 : 3 7] The focus is on the bridegroom. And right at the start, we see that the psalmist is very excited about his theme.

It says, The psalmist's heart is stirred, as the NIV says, or moved, as the Christian standard version, or as we have it in the ESV, it overflows.

Or the most familiar words to some of us, of course, is the AV, my heart, and dining is. The psalmist is crafting and moulding this psalm of praise to this wonderful king, this bridegroom.

His heart is overflowing. Excitement, as he wants to retell in glorious detail, this wedding. A wedding of cosmic and eternal proportions.

When he says that his heart overflows with a pleasing theme, he's saying really that his heart overflows with the best theme of all.

[3 : 5 6] It's much stronger than just pleasing. It's the very best theme of all. And many people think that Psalm 45 is talking about perhaps Solomon, or perhaps David's marriage to a queen.

But as we quickly realise, as we study this psalm, there are so many aspects of this psalm that can only refer to the Lord Jesus Christ alone. Spurgeon says famously, Some see in this psalm only Solomon.

They are short-sighted. Some see Solomon and Christ. They are cross-eyed. Well-focused spiritual eyes see Jesus only. And what I want to do tonight is to look at three themes, or three aspects of this psalm.

First of all, a glorious king. And then secondly, a beautiful bride. And then thirdly, an enduring kingdom. So first of all, let's look at a glorious king from verses 2 to 9 of this psalm.

And let's split this section up into various headings. First of all, we see in verse 2, the beauty of his character and words. This king has a beautiful character and beautiful words.

[5 : 21] This king has a moral beauty about him. You are the most handsome of the sons of men. Grace is poured upon your lips.

Or as the AV says, Fairer than the children of men. He is bright. This king is bright. He is radiant.

We see this word, excellent, or most handsome. We see it in the Song of Solomon, where it talks about the comeliness or the beauty of this king.

Song of Solomon talks about the chiefest among 10,000 in chapter 5. This king isn't just good looking. There's something radiant about his character.

There's something that draws people to him. When people get a glimpse of this king, they are taken up with his beauty. They are drawn to him. And those people who follow this king, there's also a beauty about them because they radiate the grace and the beauty of this king.

[6 : 37] And this king is known for his gracious words. Grace is poured upon your lips. This king is not just special because of his radiant beauty.

He's special because of what he says. Now, David and Solomon were both known for their wise words, weren't they?

David was the psalmist. Solomon was, we believe, behind Proverbs. But it's said of this king that he was blessed. Therefore, God has blessed you forever.

You see, this king, his radiant glory and his gracious words are evidences or proofs that this king is blessed and anointed of God.

We read it in the New Testament, don't we, that in Luke 4, all bear him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.

[7 : 47] And that famous verse in John 7, no man ever spoke like this man. These grace-filled words were the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spurgeon said, Spurgeon said, beauty and eloquence make a man majestic when they are united. And we see this beauty and eloquence in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we don't only see the beauty of his character, we also see, very unusually, the beauty of his war in verses 3 to 5. The beauty of his war.

This king is not heading to the palace for a life of leisure. This is a warrior king. This is a king with a lot of enemies that he's got to defeat before he gets married and before the wedding is consummated.

We see here all the trappings of official glory. His sword, his scepter, his throne and his anointing.

[8 : 59] He's clothed with splendor and majesty in verse 3. And what is the cause of this warrior king? Is this warrior king interested in bloodshed?

Is he interested in cruel conquests of other lands? This king is interested in the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness.

And what was the pomp of this king, the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, the pomp of the Lord Jesus Christ was to be born in a stinking stable to suffer rejection for most of his life and to ride into Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey and to die a cruel death.

This warrior king is very different from the warrior kings of this world. This warrior's war is based on truth and meekness, not dictatorship and cruelty.

And you see, only in Christ can it be said that love and faithfulness meet together and righteousness and peace kiss each other.

[10 : 23] Christ alone met the demands of the law of God and met the demands of God's justice as he hung on the cross bearing our sin. And we're told there in verse 5 that your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies.

The peoples fall under you. What are Christ's arrows? Well, Christ's arrows, of course, are the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the gospel. He is conquering men's hearts through the gospel.

The Holy Spirit is convicting men and women of their sins and converting them to Christ. The gospel primarily doesn't aim for men's heads.

It aims for men's hearts. It moves their behavior through the gospel to love, righteousness, and holiness. And you see, one of the great aspects of Christ is that Christ is a warrior king.

Of course, he is Jesus meek and mild, but he is also a warrior king. We're told in Habakkuk 2 that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

[11 : 40] Christ is conquering. He is conquering this world. And the consummation of this marriage will be when every sin is destroyed in this world. That's why Christ is a warrior king.

Christ is the warrior king of Revelation 19. His eyes are like a flame of fire. He is the warrior king of Isaiah 63. I have trodden the winepress alone and from the peoples.

No one was with me. I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath. Their lifeblood spattered on my garments and stained all my apparel. And it's very important as we study the Lord Jesus Christ that we get a balanced picture of him.

He is also the warrior king. He is the glorious and majestic king of Psalm 45. And then we also see thirdly the beauty of his rule in verses 6 and 7.

The beauty of his rule. And of course this is quoted in Hebrews chapter 1. This very psalm is quoted in Hebrews chapter 1 verses 8 and 9.

[12 : 56] But of the Son he says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.

Who will be under this king's authority? Well, we're told that he will reign on a throne that will last forever and ever.

This king is called God, Elohim. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. And what we have in Psalm 45 is a clear prediction of the Messiah.

Just like we have in Isaiah 9 where it talks about the mighty God and Psalm 110. A clear prediction of the divine Messiah. Somebody said, It is an example of Old Testament language bursting its banks to demand more than a human fulfillment.

How can Solomon or David, how can God say of Solomon or David, your throne, O God, is forever and ever. It can only refer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

[14 : 09] And that's why it is quoted in Hebrews 1. Hebrews 1 is all about the supremacy of Christ. The writer to the Hebrews is trying to prove that Christ is superior to the angels.

So he refers back to Psalm 45. This king's throne is eternal. His kingdom will be characterized by justice.

It will not be a kingdom of corruption. It will not be a kingdom of political posturing. This hero king will love righteousness and hate wickedness.

The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Isn't that what we see in life of Christ?

We see a life of uprightness. We see a life of righteousness. Can that be said of Solomon with 700 wives and 300 concubines? Can that be said of David, a murderer, an adulterer?

[15 : 11] It can only be said of the Lord Jesus Christ. His kingdom will be ruled in justice and righteousness. It's amazing, I think, to think of these psalms, all these psalms full of Christ.

We can go through the whole book of psalms and see Christ. We see him in Psalm 1, don't we? The ultimate blessed man. We see him in Psalm 2. We see Christ in Psalm 40, in Psalm 41, Psalm 89, Psalm 110, Psalm 118, the chief cornerstone.

Christ is right throughout the psalms. And the Israelites were singing these psalms for hundreds and thousands of years before Christ came into the world.

It could only be sung in faith of a future king because none of the kings of Israel could have embodied this psalm. And then, just lastly under this heading, we see the beauty of his robes in verses 7 and 8.

The beauty of this king's robes. Finally, in the second half of verse 7 and 8, we reach the marriage. We begin to hear about the marriage.

[16 : 25] And we hear about his robes that are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia from ivory palaces. Stringed instruments make you glad. And suddenly we see a glimpse of the queen in gold of Ophir.

We finally get to the marriage ceremony. And what we see, of course, is that the king has been commissioned. He's been anointed. Beautiful oil has been poured over him.

That's what we see in the Lord Jesus Christ, don't we? We see it at his birth. The wise men brought gold and frankincense and myrrh. There was fragrance at his birth.

There was fragrance in his life as he was anointed on two occasions. At his burial, Nicodemus brought 100 pounds of myrrh and aloes to place upon that holy body. There was fragrance at his death and at his burial and at his resurrection.

And here we have this picture of these royal robes full of all these fragrant spices. We're told that he comes out of an ivory palace.

[17 : 36] What did ivory symbolize? This ivory symbolized opulence and glory. It came from the most noble of creatures, the elephant. It was the last word in luxury and glory.

And it speaks, of course, of Christ coming from glory into this sinful world to redeem a people for himself. It reminds us of that beautiful hymn of Henry Baraclough.

My Lord has garments so wondrous fine and myrrh their texture fills. Its fragrance reached to this heart of mine with joy my being thrills.

Out of the ivory palaces and to a world of woe, only his great eternal love made my saviour go. So in this great description of this warrior king, what do we have?

We have his moral glory as a man. We have his official glory as a king. We have his divine glory as God. And we have his meritorial glory as the bridegroom.

[18 : 38] We see the excellency of his person, the equity of his rule, the eternity of his throne, and we see the ecstasy of his heart. The warrior king, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But having laid out all about the warrior king, the glory and majesty of the king, the psalmist now turns to point to where his bride arrives in verse 9.

And our second point tonight is a beautiful bride in verses 10 to 15. Who is the queen of this psalm?

Well, clearly it is the church. If this was an ordinary wedding, we'd expect lots of detail about the bride, wouldn't we? But the focus of the psalm really has been all around the bridegroom.

But the psalmist doesn't tell us very much about the bride. But he does tell us one or two things. He tells us, first of all, that this bride has a new allegiance in verses 10 and 11.

[19 : 47] O hear, O daughter, and consider and incline your ear. Forget your people and your father's house, and the king will desire your beauty.

The psalmist is taking the bride aside for a quiet word before she gets married. As some of us perhaps are doing with our children, we take them for a quiet word.

We take them aside for a quiet word before they get married. What happens in a wedding? Well, what happens is Genesis 2 reminds us there is a leaving and there is a cleaving.

And if we don't get the leaving right, the cleaving doesn't work very well. When we get married, we have new priorities. We have a spouse.

We have new loyalties. We have new responsibilities. And the psalmist is here, is giving her some advice. He's telling her to pay careful attention.

[20 : 55] And she is to forget her people and her father's house. What is this telling us? Well, it's telling us that when we become a Christian, we are to turn our back on our old priorities and our old affections and our old allegiances in the world.

There is a cost to following Christ. And the psalmist is saying to the bride, to the bride of Christ, to the church, to Christians, he is saying that you are to forget your father's house, you are to forget your old allegiances, and you are now to follow this warrior king, the bridegroom.

Galatians 5 reminds us those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. And people say, well, I'm not prepared to give up all that I have in the world.

I'm not prepared to give up all my friends. I'm not prepared to give up all my sin. But what the psalm, of course, reminds us is that whatever we give up in Christ, we gain much, much more in following him.

Spurgeon says, we part with folly for wisdom, with bubbles for eternal joys, with deceit for truth, with misery for bliss, with idols for the living God.

[22 : 30] this new life, the Christian life, it calls for total submission to this husband. Since he is your Lord, bow to him.

Since he is your Lord, bow to him. Since he is your master, even your owner, we're to follow Christ with total submission and total obedience.

And what does it mean in verse 12? The people of Tyre will seek your favour with gifts. The riches of the people will. Tyre, Tyre was the, Tyre was the place of great wealth.

It was the millionaire's role of that day. What it is saying is it's saying that whatever we lose by coming to Christ, we will gain so much more with all the riches that Christ will bestow upon us.

That's what it's saying in verse 12. It's talking of the riches that Christ bestows on the church. So we see a new allegiance under this heading of a beautiful bride, but then also we see the beauty of the bride.

[23 : 47] We finally get a glimpse of the blushing bride. All glorious is the princess in her chamber with robes interwoven with gold.

What are we told? Well, we're told that this bride is gloriously adorned with a beautiful dress that is interwoven with none other than gold itself. The richest of all precious metals.

And where did she get this amazing dress from? Well, she got it from the king. And of course, that teaches us that the king, the church's beauty is not in our talents, it's not in our beautiful buildings, it's not in our own righteousness.

It is that we are clothed with the perfect righteousness of Christ. Isaiah 61 verse 10 reminds us, I will rejoice greatly in the Lord. My soul will exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation.

He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. The great glory of the church is the righteousness of Christ.

[25 : 07] Christ. Not our talents, not our gifts, not powerful preaching, but the righteousness of Christ. Christ covers us in his own righteousness.

And let's remember that Christ is jealous for his church. He is jealous for his bride. He wants faithfulness and fidelity from his bride.

And that is why we are not left to our own strength as a church. Jude reminds us, to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy, to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord before all ages, now and forevermore.

He is able to keep the church, he is able to keep the Christian from stumbling and to present us before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.

Don't be surprised if you're chastised in this world. Don't be surprised if the church is shaken up, is sifted. Christ is jealous for his pure bride.

[26 : 29] And then thirdly and lastly we see a glorious and enduring kingdom. A glorious and enduring kingdom in verses 16 and 17.

We've already seen in verse 6 that this is a kingdom that will endure long beyond Solomon or David. Here we see a promise of this kingdom being passed down through generations and generations.

It reminds us of what it says in Hebrews 2 that God will bring many sons and daughters to glory. This is a kingdom that will pass down through the generations before the final consummation.

We're told that these princes will be throughout the land. You will make them princes in all the earth. Princes just denotes the honoured position for Christians.

our honoured position in the kingdom of God. Christ's kingdom will be in every land, it will be in every tongue, it will be in every nation. This kingdom will go across the world.

[27 : 38] And this kingdom will be an enduring kingdom. His name, his kingdom will be remembered in all generation.

And of course in Psalm 45 we see the fulfilment of God's covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7 verse 16. Your house and kingdom will endure before me forever and your throne will be established forever.

That could never just be talking about David, it was talking about the Lord, Jesus Christ, David's greater son. So we have a glorious and enduring kingdom.

What can we say in conclusion about this psalm? How can we apply it to our lives? We've seen a glorious and gracious king, we've seen a beautiful bride, and we've seen a glorious and enduring kingdom.

What has all that got to do with us today? Well let me just give you three things to take away with you tonight. First of all, worship and wonder. This psalm starts with the psalmist being overwhelmed with the glory and majesty of this warrior king.

[28 : 52] He had by faith had a glimpse of the warrior king in all his glory and all his majesty. When was the last time that we had a glimpse of the king in our lives?

When could we say that our heart was overwhelmed with a glimpse of the king? The psalmist's heart in Psalm 45 is overflowing or gushing with a noble theme.

And it reminds us that Christianity is not just about doctrines, it's not just about beliefs, it's about our hearts being stirred with love and worship to our king, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I suppose the question for us tonight is what does stir our hearts? What does get us excited? What do we worship from day to day?

But then also this psalm gives us comfort and consolation. The kingdoms of this world with all their pomp and ceremony will pass away.

[30 : 02] The Babylonian kingdom passed away, the Roman empire passed away, the Assyrian empire passed away, the British empire passed away. The empires and the kingdoms of this world are temporary.

The gates of hell will not prevail against the kingdom of God. And that should be a great comfort for us as we, as the people of God, increasingly enter a time of pressure and persecution in our society.

Christ's sovereignty and glory mean that he is in control of all the great events in history and all the small events in our lives. Behind a frowning providence God hides a smiling face.

The psalm comforts us that God is in control of all the big events and all the small events of life. This king is in control.

Whatever is in front of us this week, whatever is in front of us this year, we can take comfort that King Jesus is reigning and ruling in justice.

[31 : 14] Christ holds the scepter and nobody can wrestle that scepter out of his hands. And then just lastly, in terms of application, we have invitation and calling.

Why did the kingly bridegroom come to this earth? He came as a saviour. He has come into this world in great humility to extend to you and to me the invitation of the gospel.

And the great invitation tonight is to stop drinking from the broken systems of this world and to start drinking from the fountain of Christ's glory and riches.

He came so that we could drink from the fountain of life. Our good works won't save us tonight. Our church connections won't save us.

The only thing that will save us tonight is the finished work of Christ. We've had so many reminders over this last year of the fragility and the brevity of life.

[32 : 29] There are people with us, there are people who are no longer with us that were with us even a year ago. Life is short and eternity is long. And tonight this psalm is calling out to us to receive Christ as he has offered to us in the gospel.

Put your trust in this glorious king this evening. Look forward to an eternity gazing upon the glory that we have in Psalm 45.

As Rutherford says, O Christ, he is the fountain, the deep sweet well of love, the streams on earth I've tasted, more deep I'll drink above.

There to an ocean fullness his mercy doth expand, and glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you for the glory of our warrior king tonight. We thank you for this noble theme that we've been able to look at for a short time, Lord. We thank you, O God, for the glory of your reign.

[33 : 42] We thank you, O Lord, that your kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness. righteousness. We thank you, O God, that your war is with regard to truth and meekness and righteousness.

We thank you, O God, that your kingly rule is not a rule of corruption and power and tyranny, but a loving rule of righteousness and meekness and truth.

Lord, would you bless your word to us tonight. We thank you, O God, for the richness of your word. We thank you, Lord, that we can sing your word and we can see such great depth and beauty in it.

And, Lord, we pray that most of all you would fill us with fresh gazes and looks upon this king of glory, and that, Lord, it would stir our hearts afresh at this time.

Bless your word to us, we pray in Christ's name.