

Text: Rev. 19:6-10

Title: "The marriage supper of the Lamb" – Part One

Time: 7/15/2018 am

Place: NBBC

Intro: Richard Baxter was a well-known 17th century Puritan who was a prolific writer. One of the largest books I own, with some of the smallest print, is the fourth and last volume of the collection of his Practical Works. The one I have is a collection of his writings about the Reformed or Protestant pastor. There is much biblical and practical counsel in this book.

The third volume of that set contains the book that Richard Baxter remembered as his most influential work, *The Saints Everlasting Rest*. I can email you a copy of this work if you would like me to. It is a book about the believer's final rest in God's kingdom, and I thought it would be good to start this morning by referring to it, because the focus of our study of the Book of Revelation is beginning to be that glorious future. This focus starts this morning with our text on the marriage supper of the Lamb.

In his first paragraph addressed to his readers, Baxter gives us what should be our goal in studying this glorious future:

"Reader, whatever thou art, young or old, rich or poor, I entreat thee, and charge thee, in the name of thy Lord, who will shortly call thee to a reckoning, and judge thee to thy everlasting unchangeable state, that thou give not these things the reading only, and so dismiss them with a bare approbation; but that thou set upon this work, and take God in Christ for thy only rest, and fix thy heart upon Him above all. – May the living God, who is the rest of his saints, make these our carnal minds so spiritual and heav-

only, that loving Him, and delighting in Him, may be the work of our lives ; and that neither I that write, nor thou that readest this book, may ever be turned from this path of life; *lest, a promise being left us of entering into this rest, we should come short of it, through our own unbelief or negligence*" (1).

Why should young and old, rich and poor, seek to understand this future? Because the Lord will shortly call us to a reckoning and judge us to our everlasting unchangeable state. What should we find when we seek to understand this future? We should find Christ to be our rest and our salvation. We should determine that loving Him and delighting in Him should be the work of our lives, "*lest, a promise being left us of entering into this rest, we should come short of it, through our own unbelief or negligence.*"

So with that need of our hearts in mind, notice with me three things about the marriage supper of the Lamb: its glory, its garments, and its invitations. This week our focus will be its glory.

I. The glory of the marriage supper of the Lamb (vv. 6-7a).

Illustration: When I think of the glory of a wedding celebration, I think of the many things that make it a special day, unlike any other day. The decorations are special; the ceremony is special; the clothing is special; the music is special. All of those things are the glorious accompaniments of this special event. Those things are the special glory of a wedding celebration.

Application: To appreciate the special glory of the marriage supper of the Lamb is to see its glorious accompaniments. We have a few mentioned in this passage.

1. There is the glory of a loud *Hallelujah*, meaning *Praise the Lord!* (v. 6a).

Illustration: We have had some severe weather recently. A few days ago, Dixie and I were trying to get our walk in before a storm hit, and while we were in an open area of the sand pit, a bolt of lightning with its thunderous roar struck close enough to us to scare my dog and put her into an all-out sprint. I began jogging myself, because I was reminded how loud a single clap of thunder really is.

Application: John tells us this voice sounded like strong claps of thunder (plural) and many waters. The *Hallelujah* was loud, and it was in unison, spoken by a great multitude with a single voice.

Our *Hallelujah* as a local church is much smaller than this. We are not a great multitude, just a small assembly. The unity of unison does not come easily for us either. We have trouble saying the same thing in the same way at the same time. When we do praise the Lord, it is remarkable when someone hears us and is willing to listen (Kris was a wonderful exception a few weeks ago at our hymn sing). But one day everyone is going to hear us in loud unison. In the meantime, we need to work on our *Hallelujah*, making it as loud as we can make it, and as much in unison as it can be. This is the goal of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

2. There is the glory of an omnipotent, divine King (v. 6b).

Illustration: Part of the glory of the legend of the Yankee slugger Babe Ruth comes from an interview he gave after his famous 5th inning homerun in the 1932 World Series against the Chicago Cubs, in which Ruth claimed that after getting to an 0-2 count, he pointed to the centerfield flag-

pole to call where he was going to hit the next pitch for a homerun. He hit the next pitch, and it was a homerun in that direction.

The catcher for the Cubs, Gabby Hartnett, claims that when Ruth pointed he was pointing to the Cubs dugout with two fingers extended noting that he only had two strikes on him, not three. So Hartnett says that Ruth did not call the homerun like he claimed he did. The world may never know for sure.

Application: When this glorious King begins to reign on earth, there will be no doubt that He called it long beforehand. The fall of Babylon and the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth are the consummation of what was anticipated prior to the seventh trumpet judgment when anti-christ's Babylon was still at the height of its power (Rev. 11:15). Yet He called this victorious reign even before that. As far back as Gen. 3:15, God promised that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head.

How do we know that His promise can be trusted? He is God, and He is omnipotent (all-powerful or Almighty). He will reign in the future over a kingdom established on this earth, because there has never been a time during which He did not reign as the ultimate authority in heaven and in earth. The kingdom of the world dominated by the spirit of antichrist, which will culminate in the empire of eschatological Babylon, is allowed to rebel against Him only because He allows it for His own glory and His greater purpose.

So what does He want us to do in this world where the serpent is alive and well and where the spirit of antichrist, which will someday give rise to the destructive tyranny of Babylon, dominates everything? Jesus taught us the answer to this question when He taught His disciples how to pray.

He said to pray this: "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Our calling, as we wait for the kingdom of this world to become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, is to preach the gospel of the kingdom, so that people might enter the Lord's kingdom, which is not yet of this world. They do this by being born again (Jesus to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God").

The day is not yet upon us when the kingdom comes, but rather today is the day we are invited to come into the kingdom. Remember the prayer of the thief on the cross, "Lord, remember Me when you come into your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). Have we asked to be remembered this way?

3. There is the glory of marital happiness and joy (v. 7a).

Illustration: A good marriage is one of the greatest sources of happiness and joy a human couple can experience. I think this is especially apparent in the relationships of those who are given multiple decades of marriage together. I saw it again recently in the Cambrias, who had been married for 60 years together, and who struggled with the sicknesses of their final days together.

Application: You may not be blessed with the joy and happiness that marriage can bring. If you are married and not experiencing that joy, the problem is the flesh and the solution is confession of sin and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. But I think we all know someone whom we remember as exhibiting the real glory of true marital happiness and joy. Perhaps we can remember those days with our own spouse.

The Bible teaches that this glory of human marital joy is but a mere shadow of the glory of the marital joy this passage

speaks of. Every marriage is a God-designed picture of Jehovah's love for Israel and Christ's love for His church.

Isa. 61:10, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

2 Cor. 11:2, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

We are in a covenantal relationship with Christ as His people, which is similar to the covenant of marriage. On the one hand, the potential for happiness and joy from this relationship depends upon the chastity of separation. We should love Christ, not other things, nor ourselves. A marriage is as strong as the spouses' love for one another, and that love is exclusive – we must sacrifice the opportunity to love others and even ourselves in the same way that we love our spouse, or our marriage will bring us no joy or happiness. We must forsake the adultery of allowing our idols compete with our love for the Lamb.

In addition, this relationship calls us to abide in the union-love of Christ. Just like every marriage is about two people becoming one, so we are called to a relationship of loving oneness with Christ. We do not live our days apart from Him, but in fellowship with Him. He is not a stranger to us, but our closest friend. We do not ignore Him, we love Him and His people, who are also His bride. We do not have to wait for the celebration supper to enjoy the blessings of our marriage to Christ. We can know that blessing now.

Conclusion to Part One: And so the first thing we notice this morning about the marriage supper of the Lamb is that there is much that is glorious about it – a loud and unified *Hallelujah*, a divine and omnipotent King, and the happiness and joy of marriage to the Lamb.

Are you married to the Lamb this morning? Do you even know who He is, what He has done for you, how much He loves you? Or is Jesus only a religious leader to you who lived long ago – someone you do not know, someone who has done nothing for you, and someone that could not possibly love you? Our passage tells us that Jesus is God's sacrificial Lamb who died for sinners, and He has a bride, and as part of His bride this morning our church says, "Come." Come to Him for salvation from sin; come to Him for everlasting love; come to Him to be part of His bride.

Many of us this morning would answer, "Yes, I know that I am married to the Lamb; I remember the day of my salvation." Then the question for us would be, "How is your marriage?" Do you have loves in your life that are greater and stronger than your love for the Bridegroom and His Bride? To the degree that is so, we are committing the adultery of idolatry.

Do you work on your marriage to the Lamb, to experience a greater oneness with Him? Are you growing to love Him more? Are you spending time with Him? Is He often on your mind? Do you want to please Him more? Or has selfishness ruined the marriage relationship He has so graciously and sacrificially established with you?

Perhaps we need to take some time to renew our vows, forsake our affairs with idols, and determine to love our Bridegroom as He deserves again this morning.

II. The garments of the marriage supper of the Lamb (vv. 7b-8).

III. The invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb (v. 9-10).

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*