

The Bachelor 3 – A Prepared Bride

****Bumper Video – Bachelor**

Bachelor Title

Welcome to Redemption Church! My name is Chris Fluitt, I serve as lead pastor here. It is a beautiful day in Plano Tx and to those here in the room with me and to those watching or listening on the internet, I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ.

We are in the 3rd week of our sermon series, The Bachelor. Last week we told you that God has a rose for you. He has a rose for everyone. God's love does not eliminate, it embraces. This is very different from Modern love that seeks the best and eliminates the rest.

God has chosen you. But you still have a choice.

Every marriage proposal waits on an answer. A marriage proposal is a question that must be answered. The bride with her own free will must say "Yes" or "No."

It is **Your Choice**

At the end of the Bachelor TV show, in dramatic fashion, the bachelor has 2 women in front of Him with 1 rose. He decides which woman he will give his rose, and then he asks her to marry him. Just because she is chosen, just because she has a rose in her hand, does not mean she doesn't have a choice. She can say yes or she can say no.

And that is good news! What would life be like if you belonged to anyone that wanted to have you? What if you could not refuse?

God wants you.. but there are others that want you as well...

Potiphar's wife desired to have Joseph.. What if you couldn't say no? He did say no, even though it put him in a dungeon.

Satan desires to have Peter and to destroy him, but Jesus prays that Peter's faith doesn't fail. Jesus does not pray that other's won't desire Peter... He prays that Peter will have the faith to say no.

It is **Your Choice**! And sometimes you need to say no!

2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?(NIV)

It is your choice who you will be joined to.. There are some people you need to say no to..

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.(NIV)

It is your choice on who to love. You need to say no to this world.

Your Choice

You have a choice. RIGHT NOW! RIGHT HERE! You have many suitors, with many roses... but you only have one heart to give. It is your choice.

We have talked about the Jewish marriage process. (Check week 1) I want to add to this a little.

The groom proposes to the bride and the bride makes her choice. She says yes. That marks the beginning of their marriage, but it is not yet complete. There are 3 parts to the **wedding ceremony**.

- The Betrothal
- the wedding ceremony
- the wedding feast.

These 3 parts also point to **God's Marriage Plan**

- Justification – Betrothal/mohar/salvation
- Sanctification - Bridal Prep/mattan/holiness
- Glorification – Wedding day/ Nisu'in/Christ's return
 - Wedding ceremony in the Father's house - 7 day celebration
 - Wedding feast on earth – Millennial Kingdom

I want to talk to you about the space **After the betrothal yet before the wedding**

In the Jewish wedding process there was to be no cohabitation. After the bride said yes, the groom went back to his father's house and the bride went back to her father's house. They were not to see each other during this time, but they were supposed to be preparing themselves for each other.

The modern world could learn a lot from this. In today's culture we often freely give ourselves to people... but we never prepare ourselves for the person.

- The one night stand... gives yourself but doesn't prepare for a life together – and it usually doesn't last.
- Cohabiting before marriage gives yourself... but it doesn't prepare. Instead of preparing yourself for that person and for that life... we just hand over the key to our apartment – and it usually doesn't last.
- Even when we do marry, we often give ourselves without preparing ourselves to be given. We spend much more time preparing the wedding ceremony than the time we spend in preparing ourselves to be in a covenant with our spouse.. Because of this many marriages don't last.

This in-between time... After the betrothal yet before the wedding, was where the groom and bride made themselves ready. The groom needed to prepare the habitation and the bride was to make herself ready for her coming groom.

This bridal preparation meant making her own wedding gown, getting ready for her new role, transferring her allegiance from her father to her new husband, and setting her mind on this new life with her love.

Revelation 19:7-8 speaks this about the Bride of Christ.

Revelation 19:7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.(NIV)

Revelation 19:8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)(NIV)

We are in this between time of betrothal and the wedding ceremony. We need to be in a time of preparation. The bride has fine linen, bright and clean... She has righteous acts... The righteous acts you do on earth are preparing you for this day when you see Jesus.

Part of this preparation is simply being faithful to God. The bride was supposed to be pure for her groom. She was to be a virgin who had saved herself for marriage. In fact there were serious penalties for brides who in this betrothal time did not remain faithful. Death was an option for brides who were messing around during this time between the betrothal and marriage.

This is why things were tense between Mary, the mother of Jesus, and her husband Joseph.

Matthew 1:18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.(NIV)

Matthew 1:19 Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.(NIV)

She was pledged to be married to Joseph... yet the wedding ceremony had not yet come. She was in the space **After the betrothal yet before the wedding** when she became pregnant with

the Messiah, God's son, Jesus Christ. Mary appeared to be unfaithful and Joseph could have had her killed (Deuteronomy 22:21), but out of mercy was only going to quietly divorce her. Thankfully an angel came and set the record straight to Joseph...

The point here is that as we are in this space between the betrothal and the wedding.. we should be faithful to the groom. Even though we aren't face to face with the groom, we must be faithful.

No one wants a spouse that is not faithful when their back is turned.

In this time of preparation, the bride is referred to as "consecrated," or set apart. The bride to be always wore a veil, so it was apparent to others that she was engaged, and belonged to someone else. This veil was symbolic of a pledge or a commitment.

Do you belong to the Groom? Can people tell that you are pledged and set apart for Jesus? Are you actively preparing for the wedding day?

Wedding Day: Nisu'in

When the wedding day would come, that day was called the Nisu'in. On this day the groom often surprised his bride by his unexpected or early return.

Because of this tradition, all Jewish brides were said to be stolen, caught up, or snatched up by surprise. Christ said His return was like a thief in the night and that we would be caught up to meet Him. The return of Christ the groom will be surprising.

Should the Jewish groom come at night, the bride needed to be prepared for such an occasion. She needed a lamp at the ready to guide her. The bride needed to be ready. She was to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white.

The wedding ceremony itself was held at the groom's father's house and usually included only a few invited guests. At this time a series of benedictions are made and the couple were finally made husband and wife.

All of this parallels to God's plan for our union with Him. A common thread is found throughout this plan.

It is the groom's responsibility to find us, purchase us, ask us, create a place for us, sustain us...

It is the bride's responsibility to make a choice.

Can I talk to you about the choice? The choice is not a 1 time decision. Throughout Christianity that is what it has become. You said a sinner's prayer that one time, you confessed that one time, you had that experience that one time.

We need to understand that.

Love is a choice

Marriage is a choice you make everyday

Marriage is not a one-time decision. Your relationship with God is not a one-time decision. You need to make the choice every day.

The bride makes the choice. She says yes. She is not done. She needs to continue making that choice. She needs to start getting ready. (The groom also makes that choice everyday by the way)

In the book of Revelation, Jesus speaks to the churches... He speaks to His bride. One of the reoccurring concepts is that they have stopped making their choice everyday... That in the betrothal period they have stopped preparing. He tells them to return to their first love... to return to that first decision they made when they decided they would be married.

Love is a choice! Make that choice everyday! Keep coming back to that choice. Experience your betrothal, experience your wedding ceremony, every day. Too often those become distant memories.. it's because we have stopped preparing ourselves for each other... we have stopped making that decision.

To not prepare is the same as having said no

Imagine a bride who said yes, but her actions said no. When the groom came she was not prepared. Much of the Bible is about this subject. The entire book of Hosea serves as a metaphor for a bride who no longer prepares herself for the groom she is betrothed to... instead she prostitutes herself and prepares herself for other men.

Jesus gives us a parable about prepared & unprepared brides..

Matthew 25:1 "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.(NIV)

Matthew 25:2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise.(NIV)

Matthew 25:3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them.(NIV)

Matthew 25:4 The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps.(NIV)

Matthew 25:5 The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.(NIV)

Matthew 25:6 "At midnight the cry rang out: `Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'(NIV)

Matthew 25:7 "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps.(NIV)

Matthew 25:8The foolish ones said to the wise, `Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'(NIV)

Matthew 25:9 "'No,' they replied, `there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'(NIV)

Matthew 25:10 "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.(NIV)

Matthew 25:11 "Later the others also came. `Sir! Sir!' they said. `Open the door for us!'(NIV)

Matthew 25:12 "But he replied, `I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'(NIV)

Matthew 25:13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.(NIV)

This parable can come off as harsh. Sorry sister your flashlight battery is dead... should have gone with the titanium lithium ion energizer.. get out here I don't know you.. But lay that feeling to the side and learn what Jesus is saying.

The 10 women in this story share many similarities but some striking differences.

Some of the similarities

- They were all virgins waiting for the groom.
- They all had lamps and at one time they all had oil and light

The difference

- 5 wise and 5 foolish
- Some ran out of oil

We need to understand what Jesus means by wise and foolish. Does it mean intellect? Does it mean common sense? Does it mean correct choices? Here is what it means in the greek..

Wise = Single minded Foolish = Double minded

The wise bride is singularly focused. She remembers everyday "This is the choice I made. This is the person I want to live for. This is who I preparing for and the life I want to live."

The foolish bride is focused on other things.. The foolish may be focused on the groom some of the time but not all of the time.

And when he tells her “I don’t know you” it is not like the scripture where he says “depart you workers of iniquity I never knew you.” The Greek there says he literally never met them... but in this parable when the groom says I don’t know you... it means we don’t have an intimate relationship... we don’t have a relationship worthy of a wedding...

Do you want a relationship with Jesus worthy of a wedding? Then we need to prepare..

Our memory verse tells us that Christ will present a prepared bride to himself...

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

Ephesians 5:26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,(NIV)

Ephesians 5:27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.(NIV)

I said one sentence earlier that needs to be corrected. I said - No one wants a spouse that is not faithful when their back is turned.

That isn’t entirely true. God still wants us. The entire bible is the story of God wanting us... even though we are unfaithful, even though we forget, even though we seek other things, even though our love for Him is never quite to the level as His love for us... In

spite of all of that, He wants us.. He desires us... He draws us.. He calls us... He waits for us.. He pursues us.. He loves us.

It's our choice. Will we say yes? And will we live a life that says Yes? We will be prepared for His return?

At times we are foolish/double minded... We need to change. We need to repent. We need to stop being unfaithful to the Lord.

But we can't do this on our own... We will always fall short trying to get prepared on our own...

We need the Oil of the Spirit

The wise brides in Jesus' parable brought oil with them. Oil in scripture is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit in preparation. We need God's Spirit working in our lives.

John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.(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)

Romans 8:9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.(NIV)

Do you have His Spirit? You need the fruit of the Spirit that Galatians 5:22 tells us about.

Is the Spirit working in your life? Are you single minded? Are you ready for the return of the groom?

Revelation 22:7 "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."(NIV)

The Spirit and the bride, they say come... They are saying to the Groom "Come!" Not just the bride... but the Holy Spirit along with the Bride!

The Bride needs the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit prepares the bride... calls the bride into purity. Leads the bride into truth. Gives the bride power.

MUSICIAN

Do you have the Holy Spirit? You need to have the Holy Spirit. Do you know if you have received the Holy Spirit? If you don't know, you need to do something about it today. It would be FOOLISH to let this moment pass you by.

If you have received the Holy Spirit, then are you letting the Spirit be active in your life? Are you living in the Spirit and singularly focused on Christ's return?

It is Your choice... What are you going to do today?

Maybe you have never said yes today..

Modern Love... Attract the best..

Jesus is the best