

A Wedding Designed by God

Preached by: Matthew S. Black

Text: Song of Solomon 3:5-11¹

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Series: Song of Solomon (Passion, Purity, & Fidelity)

Introduction: Open your Bible to **Solomon 3:5-11**. We continue in a series of messages entitled “Passion, Purity, and Marital Fidelity”. Today we look at the wedding day for Solomon and his Shulamite farm girl bride. The title of the message is “A Wedding Ceremony Designed by God”.

The wedding ceremony is symbolic of the marriage of Christ and His church. A Christian wedding is the anticipation of the wedding that is to come between Christ and His Bride when we will fully be united eternally with Christ. What a day that will be! In every way the wedding day should display the Church’s relationship with Christ.

It is the day when two people become one in every way: spiritually, emotionally, physically, and socially. The wedding ceremony is so important because it lays the secure foundation for your family, and for many generations to come.

I often remember my wedding vows.

“I Matthew take you Jill to be my lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, honor, protect, and cherish, abandoning all others and dedicating myself wholly to you ‘till death do us part.”

Jesus will never leave or forsake His Bride. We men must never leave or forsake the bride God gave us.

Let us read Song of Solomon 3:5-11, “I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases. 6 What is that coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the fragrant powders of a merchant [traders who would come from all around the world]? 7 Behold, it is the litter [kingly carrying chair] of Solomon! Around it are sixty mighty men, some of the mighty men of Israel, 8 all of them wearing swords and expert in war, each with his sword at his thigh, against terror by night. 9 King Solomon made himself a carriage from the wood of Lebanon. 10 He made its posts of silver, its back of gold, its seat of purple; its interior was inlaid with love by the daughters of Jerusalem. 11 Go out, O daughters of Zion, and look upon King Solomon, with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, on the day of the gladness of his heart.”

Let us pray. [Prayer for Guidance]

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from the *English Standard Version* of the Bible.

The wedding ceremony is special because it is a vow before God and witnesses. It symbolizes the union between Christ and His church.

That vow is a vow of fidelity, devotion to God, protection and provision for the wife, and the permission and blessing of the parents.

I. The wedding ceremony symbolizes the couple's **fidelity** to each other (vs. 5).

The Shulammite farm girl has more anticipation of love than most young marryable women. She is a poor peasant girl about to be a queen. And yet, she demonstrates ***self-control***. Some people say, "I just can't help myself." That is *not true!* You can and you must. Listen to this young lady's words.

Verse 5, "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases."

These words speak of ***purity*** and self-control.

On my wedding day I remember the wedding vows: Jill was mine "to have and behold from this day forward". In my marriage vows I said, "abandoning all others and dedicating myself wholly to you 'till death do us part." That's why this young lady was controlling herself. She was reserving what was most precious for her king and soon to be husband.

Love is not to be awakened until after the marriage vows. It is for this day the couple has preserved themselves.

God said in **Genesis 2:24**, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." It is not until you leave and cleave through a marriage covenant before God and witnesses that you may become one flesh.

Staying pure is hard work, but it is worth it a thousand times over. It is the day that you have reserved yourself for each other. You have kept yourself from the world's lusts. You have remembered **Hebrews 13:4**, "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."

You have remembered **Proverbs 5:15**, "Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well." And now, this is the day that God has given you your own cistern that will fulfill you and by His grace bring you many generations of godly children.

II. The wedding ceremony symbolizes the couple's **devotion** to God (vs. 6).

Listen to the description of Solomon. He is described as one who is devoted to God and led by Him into this marriage.

Verse 6, "What is that coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the fragrant powders of a merchant [traders who would come from all around the world]?"

I remember my wedding vows: "for better or for worse". If I am married, I do not have the authority to split in two what God has put together. Every lawful marriage is put together by God. "What God has joined together, let not man separate" (**Mark 10:9**).

It is clear from this description that Solomon was led to this marriage by God. In great contrast to Solomon's hundreds of political marriages, this woman is the wife of Solomon's youth. He was led to this marriage by God. We see this by the description.

- A. Solomon is the shepherd-king. **Verse 6**, "What is that coming up from the wilderness...?" As a king he has become a shepherd to win the love of this lowly shepherdess. The image of the green wilderness pastures where the shepherds would pasture their sheep is given. They would literally "come up" to Jerusalem, which was truly the beautiful royal city set on a hill.
- B. God is the true shepherd king. Solomon is described as coming up like "columns of smoke" from the wilderness. **Verse 6**, "What is that coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke."

This is a striking reference to the leading of the Spirit of God who manifested Himself through a pillar of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night in the wilderness.

A marriage is not just between you and your spouse. It is between you, your spouse and God. It is a holy, unbreakable vow before the divine Author of marriage. Therefore it is important to follow the leading of God into your marriage!

"A recent survey concluded that 80 percent of relationships in which couples were living together without marriage vows end in separation. Sixty percent of those who are married by a justice of the peace are divorced later. Forty percent of those who are married in churches

eventually divorce. And those who read their Bibles together [regularly] divorce only at the rate of 1 out of 1,050”.²

It is so important that a marriage be founded upon devotion to God!

Think of the joy when the church’s wedding day comes, and we see the King of kings and Lord of Lords coming for His Bride!

III. The wedding ceremony symbolizes the **sacredness** of marriage (vs. 6b).

Solomon is described as “...perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the fragrant powders of a merchant” (**Verse 6b**). This marriage was extravagant. This extravagance points to the permanence of marriage. You don’t spend all this money and have this kind of lavish display for some overnight fling. This marriage is “til death do us part”. The costly fragrances point to the sacredness and significance of the marriage. The Scriptures teach that marriage is permanent.

Explanation: The **merchants** here refer to **the traders** that would have brought the very best of the perfumes from across the world. Solomon spares no expense to make this wedding one never to be forgotten for his bride.

The marriage is special and sacred. It is to be celebrated. It is extravagant.

“The Scriptures teach that marriage is one of the most important events in a person’s life. Therefore it is fitting that the union of a couple be commemorated in a special way.”³

Application: Consider the extravagance of Christ’s love to us! **Romans 8:32**, “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”

IV. The wedding ceremony symbolizes the man’s **protection** of his bride (vs. 7-8).

Verses 7-8, “Behold, it is the litter [the couch on which servants carry the king] of Solomon! Around it are sixty mighty men, some of the mighty men of Israel, 8 all of them wearing swords and expert in war, each with his sword at his thigh, against terror by night”.

² Tommy Nelson. *The Book of Romance* (Thomas H. Nelson: Nashville, 1998), 71.

³ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1:1017). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

He arrives on his chariot-chair with sixty groomsmen beside. Solomon's royal litter, the couch upon which he was carried by his servants. This is a royal, full-dress military wedding. These are the navy seals or green berets of Solomon's army.

"The king was taking no chances with the safety of his bride. If bandits would appear at **night** and terrorize the bride, the soldiers were ready for them. The lesson is valid today for a would-be husband. He should give proper thought and planning to protect his bride. One form this takes is providing economic security for her."⁴

Ephesians 5:25-29, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but **nourishes and cherishes** it, just as Christ does the church".

The word **cherish** means "*to warm with body heat*". It has the idea of not leaving the body **vulnerable**. A man is to protect his wife. What does Paul mean about nourishing and cherishing his own body? Well, when your body is vulnerable you **cherish** it. When you hit your thumb with the hammer you carefully protect it and shelter it. You make sure no one and nothing can do it any more injury.

Application: God is jealous for his people. He is our shelter and our shield and our high tower. Christ cherishes His Church. Do you realize what Christ has done for us?

He bore the wrath of God for us! He took the shame of our sin upon us! He intercedes for us. He guides us. He says, "I will never leave you or forsake you". We abide under the shelter of His wings. We can say "I am His and He is mine!"

V. The wedding ceremony symbolizes the man's **provision** for his bride (vs. 9-10).

Verses 9-10, "King Solomon made himself a carriage from the wood of Lebanon. 10 He made its posts of silver, its back of gold, its seat of **purple**; its interior was inlaid with love by the daughters of Jerusalem."

The song even describes the chair which is the finest quality for this occasion, even inlaid with love. The women of the court have lovingly contributed to this day. Everyone shared the joy.

⁴Ibid.

Purple cloth was made using a pigment from the murex shellfish; it was even rarer than silver and gold.

A man must be ready and willing to provide for his wife. It is his responsibility, not hers. Lack of money is one of the greatest causes of tension in life, and it certainly is true in marriage.

In the New Testament, husbands are called to lay down their life for their bride and to **nourish**, or *provide* for them (**Ephesians 5:29**).

- The is our Shepherd. **Psalm 23:1**, “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.” You can see how Christ is the believer’s provider.
- **Psalm 84:11**, “No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.” Christ will nourish His Bride. He will provide for her in every way. He cares for her.
- **1 Timothy 5:8**, “if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

VI. The wedding ceremony symbolizes the **permission & blessing** of the parents (vs. 11).

Verse 11, “Go out, O daughters of Zion, and look upon King Solomon, with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, on the day of the gladness of his heart.”

Solomon’s mother crowned him with the wedding crown that a groom wore in those days, usually a laurel crown of leaves. It was a sign of her approval that he was marrying a woman she valued and would love as a daughter. It is also a sign to the general public that he would be leaving his parents’ home and making a home of his own.

For centuries upon centuries, crowning was a part of marriage ceremonies. Today, the bride is crowned with her veil. The bride even in ancient times would be crowned with a garland of flowers by her father.

All of this symbolizes the parent’s permission and blessing. Today, usually the wedding ceremony begins with the minister asking, “Who gives this woman to be married to this man?” The father normally gives permission by saying, “Her mother and I do”.

1 Corinthians 7 demonstrates the importance of the father’s permission. It’s clear in the NKJV.

A. A bride must have her father's **permission**. **1 Corinthians 7:36**, "But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry."

If a young lady has come to physical maturity and has the desire to marry, and she has such a desire that it requires her to be married, the father should take serious consideration of that and permit marriage.

Verse 37, "Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well. 38 So then he who gives her in marriage does well, but he who does not give her in marriage does better." Why was this such a big deal? Why would Paul have to remind the fathers that they were not "sinning" when giving their daughter in marriage? The context is that some father's in this church had dedicated their daughters to the Lord's service as single people. At the time some of the girls came to physical maturity and wanted to be married. Paul said, you are not sinning if you dedicated your daughters and they want marriage. Let them marry. The father should consider the daughter's desire for marriage, and if the young man is godly, the father should consider the daughter's desires.

B. The giving of the bride is the father's **prerogative**. Look at **verses 37-38**, "Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. 38 So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better". If the daughter has no necessity of getting married, the father still has the prerogative to encourage her in marriage or to encourage her to remain single. It's fine if the father encourages his daughter or son in marriage, but it is even better if parents encourage singleness if they can bare it. **Matthew 19:12**, "...there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it" (ESV).

A wedding that is approved by the parents is one that God blesses!!

VII. Finally, the wedding ceremony symbolizes the great **preparation** and joy that God gives a couple who diligently give their marriage to Him (vs. 11b).

Verse 11b, "...on the day of his wedding, on the day of the gladness of his heart." Do it right and you will have gladness of heart. Do it wrong and you will have questions.

Conclusion: If you have any question about entering into marriage, wait! Don't go forward until you have all the green lights. Make engagement a time of further preparation. A wedding designed by God is one truly to rejoice in!