

**At This Wedding, the Lord Is the Groom, and You Are the Bride**

1. **And There's Wedding Jewelry**
2. **And There's a New Name**
3. **And There's a Wedding Reception**

*Weddings Today – A Microcosm of a Heavenly Wedding*

- In my time as pastor, many weddings. This how wed day usually goes for me: visiting with guests; bride and maids in mtg room; hang out with groom, groomsmen; mood of excitement, joy. Also nervousness. Usually try talk one on one with groom before service; conversation sometimes: bathroom, sit down. Coach him, take deep breaths, calm down. Not all; some calm, collected; other nervous Nellie. When bells ring, groom and I walk this aisle; he stands there; I there. I get to watch procession. Bridesmaids, bride out mtg room with father, cong stands; I see facial expressions on bride and father as walk down. If you've ever been bride or father of bride, you know those emotions. Whole time, groom back to me; can't see face. But when father of bride hands daughter over to groom, they turn, step up first step, I can finally see groom's face: all joy, no nervousness, just pure excitement and happiness. Finally standing next to woman he loves; he'll marry her; filled with joy. That's how wed starts for me.
- Today, Isa takes us to wedding. **Vs. 5b**. This is a wedding. Title. You bride because you Church. All Christians, Church. Church, Christ's bride. Exactly 2<sup>nd</sup>: **"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church"** (Eph 5:25). Rel between husb/wife meant be microcosm, miniature reflection of rel between Lord and his people, Church. **Vs. 5b**. That's what today's lesson is all about: a wedding. Title. And just like at weddings today: parts.

*And There's Wedding Jewelry*

- **Vs. 3**. Wedding jewelry. I've seen this plenty: bride wears beautiful jewelry/necklace, meant just for special day. Sometimes bride gives gifts to bridesmaids: beautiful jewelry/necklace, wear that day and keep. Of course, in service, exchange rings. Weddings involve jewelry.
- Here, instead of bride wearing jewelry, the bride is jewelry. **Vs. 3**. Means that to God, you are beautiful, precious, radiant. Every bride wants be beautiful on wedding day. As the Church, you are beautiful bride to your Lord. Doesn't even want to put crown on head; just wants hold it in hand, gaze at it. Like nothing he's ever seen before: you are his crown, his bride, his Church.
- Funny thing about that: when you look at Church, look beautiful to you? Or rough shape? Christianity mocked, ridiculed, labeled intolerant today like never before. So many false teachings in Christianity, hard to keep all denoms straight. Many people (clergy!) call sin acceptable, and pure doctrine outdated, unloving. When comes to sin, always remember, church is community of sinful people. So shouldn't be surprised at how often disappointed in behavior of other believers; or, if personalize, how often disapp in own behavior. Supposed to be beautiful bride of Christ. Actions, words, thoughts: more like ugly bride!
- But that's not what Christ sees! **"Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless."** (Eph 5:25-27). What Christ sees. In baptism, Jesus gave us spiritual makeover, cleansed us, made us beautiful in God's eyes. By death, res of JC, God doesn't see our sins anymore; they've been washed away. All he sees is his crown. **Vs. 3**. At this wedding, there's wedding jewelry.

*And There's a New Name*

- Something else: new name that's given – kind of like how at weddings today, bride gets new name. Not always case. But pretty often, when woman marries man, she changes her last name to his. End of service, I get to announce, "Mr. & Mrs. ~~~;" they have same last name.
- At this wedding, between Lord and you Church, also a new name given. **Vs. 2b. Vs. 4a**. Mean? Timeout from wedding: remember, Isa writing hundreds years before Jesus. Always looming in background, Babylonian captivity. Such big part of Isa, I think we've mentioned it in almost every one of these Isa

sermons: how in year 586 BC, Babylonian army captured city Jerusalem, took thousands Judeans into exile in Babylon. Isa writing to these people, who probably feel deserted, like land left desolate.

- So, **vs. 4ab**. I say Hephzibah, you say gesundheit. Not common name; when picking names for daughters, Heph didn't make top 10. Names in OT always had meaning. Most names today do, too. Kirk = Anglo variant of church. Sarah = Heb for princess. Samuel = Heb, God hears, listens. Madilynn = English version of (Mary) Magdalene. Abigail = Heb, father's joy. Names have meanings; you could quickly search on internet for meaning of your name. Name Hephzibah = my delight is in her. Beulah = married.
- So God: **vs. 4bc**. For those people in exile, these names meant: God still loves/delights in you; your time in Bab soon over; will come home soon, be married again to homeland.
- But what names mean for us? If Heph = my delight is in her, then God delights in us. If Beulah = married, then God married to us. And God is delighted to be married to us, despite fact we cheat on him, unfaithful to him. Basically what sin is. Whenever we sin against God, to him it's like we're having an affair. One time in Bible, God talking re sins of Jerusalem, actually said, **"I am filled with fury against you, declares the Sovereign Lord, when you do all these things, acting like a brazen prostitute" (Ezek 16:30)**. Strong words! Remind us: we're not always faithful bride to our Lord; God has right to divorce us, send to hell, because of our sins; just like woman has right to divorce husband for cheating on her.
- But in this marriage God calls us Hephzibah, Beulah! God delights to be married to us! Those are new names we receive from faithful groom.

#### *And There's a Wedding Reception*

- Finally, at this wedding, reception. Usually when wedding service here at church wraps up, couple greets guests, pictures, then travels to reception hall. Grand entrance, with happy music, all guests cheering, as bride and groom march into hall; everyone can see them, share in their joy. Best man, maid honor give speeches. Lately seen this: sometimes groom gives speech, too.
- Here at this wedding between Lord and his Church, it's like God takes mic, gives speech. Says, **vs. 1**. Like God to whole world, "Look at my bride. Can't stop talking re her. Look how stunningly beautiful she is, like light shining in the darkness." **Vs. 1b**. Where she get this R & S? Remember: **"Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy" (Eph 5:25)**. Church's holiness, R, & S aren't our own; come only from JC, who as bridegroom loved us so much, that he willingly left heaven, came to our wicked world, suffered terrible death on cross, rose from dead in majesty in order to make us holy, righteous, and give us gift of salvation. That's how Church has R & S – only through JC.
- So now we're on way to wedding reception, in heaven, where we'll feast with Jesus forever. **"Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" (Rev 19:9)**. And there finally whole world will see Christ and Church united in marriage forever. **Vs. 2a**. And at this wed reception, celebration will never end. **"This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the Church" (Eph 5:32)**.

#### *Conclusion*

- Today Isa takes us to wedding. Title, parts. And what God joins together, no one can separate. For **vs. 5b**.

#### **Isaiah 62:1-5 (NIV 1984)**

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. <sup>2</sup> The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. <sup>3</sup> You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. <sup>4</sup> No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married. <sup>5</sup> As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.

