

A Brawling Bride

By Anthony Scherffius

There is a story told about a wedding. The excited groom stood next to the preacher officiating the wedding, awaiting his bride to be. The music was playing, smiles were on every face, the room watched with anticipation as the doors opened to reveal the bride, but she was not there. Confusion swept the room. The groom was scared, angry, worried, and confused all at once. Voices filled the room as everyone was wondering where the bride was. The room went silent when the bride finally appeared. Her dress was torn, she was bruised and bloodied, and hands showed signs of punching and slapping. She was almost unrecognizable. As the groom looked at her with disbelief and disappointment, one person in the room commented: "The bride has been fighting again."

I wonder how many times that story has been told about the bride of Christ. How often do we find ourselves, awaiting to be presented to the Bridegroom, fighting and brawling with others and unfortunately even our own brethren. The Bible talks about how we are to conduct ourselves while we await the ceremony with our Bridegroom—Jesus the Christ. Jesus makes clear the judgement is coming but no one knows the day or the hour in which it will come, not even the angels nor the Son of Man, but only the Father knows (Matthew 24:36ff). Therefore he tells us what we need to do in order to be ready:

1.) Matthew 25:1-13—Be Prudent In Our Preparation—In verses 1-4 you have *The People*. The Kingdom of Heaven is comparable to those who were invited to be a part of the great celebration, but yet were either careless and ill-prepared or careful and prepared. There will be two types of people on the day of judgement: The unprepared virgins (those who are foolish) and the prepared virgins (those who are prudent). In verses 5-10 you have *The Problem*. The foolish were ill-prepared, moochers, late and irresponsible. The prudent were focused, prepared, responsible, and early. Then in verses 11-13 you have *The Punishment*. The friends who

were once invited to be a part of something joyous and great were now seen as strangers and outsiders, never to enter the great celebration.

2.) Matthew 25:14-30—Be Stewards In Our Preparation—Jesus tells another parable to explain another aspect of preparation. He says in verses 14-18 there is a *Responsibility*. The master shows trust in verses 14 and 15: "He gave them each according to his own ability." The master knew his servants/slaves. He knew what they could handle and what they could not handle. Then you see the servants' use of talents in verses 16-18—The first two doubled the gifts given (5 and 2 talents), where as the third hid and wasted the gift given (1 talent). We see the *Productivity* in verses 19-25. Five talents were doubled to 10, two talents were doubled to four, but one talent was only preserved. Notice what the one talent servant says: "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours." a.) He admits to having knowledge about his master and how he does things; b.) He made the excuse of being afraid; c.) He thought returning what he had as it was would be adequate. Finally we see the *Inactivity* in the final verses. (Vs 26) "You wicked, lazy slave, you knew... (vs 30) Throw out the worthless slave..." The servant was: wicked and lazy, yet knowledgeable. He did nothing and therefore was worthless.

3.) Matthew 25:31-46—Be Serving In Our Preparation—In this last section Jesus does not give a parable like the other two, but gives what will take place at the judgement using terms to describe two different groups of people. In verses 31-33 you have *The Separation*. The Son Of Man will come in glory followed by His legions of angels. He will show His authority and Kingship by sitting on His throne. He will justly divide the people into TWO groups: the faithful and the unfaithful. In verses 34-45 Jesus describes the two groups (faithful and unfaithful) as sheep and goats. The sheep, when they saw someone in need they acted: They gave food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty. They took strangers and clothed the naked. They visited

prisoners. On the other hand, the goats, when they saw someone in need, shirked their responsibility: They did not provide food, drink, clothing or visitation. Therefore, Jesus concludes with verse 46, *The Sentencing*: "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Jesus is very clear about what he expects from his bride. He wants her to prepare. In her preparation he expects her to be prudent with the commands given, stewards of the things entrusted, and servants to all who have need, especially to those of the household of faith.

Remember in Prayer

Neely Lovelady is home and recuperating from her surgery.

Sharon McMillan is scheduled for more tests on 3/6, and will see her cardiologist on 4/20.

Flora Johnson continues in Hospice care.

Luanne Patterson is scheduled for knee surgery on 4/10.

Remember Also:

Melva McManus,
Archie & Nancy Underwood,
Joy Tull, Judy Mitchell,
Samuel & Diana Ramirez,
Steven Coats, Donna Roberts,
Branden Skinner, Jimmie Ivey,
Lee Wright, Hayden Gammon,
Flora Johnson, Chris Calvin,
Roger Elam, Louis Thomas

IMPORTANT DATES

March 8- NH Worship Svc./2:00
March 15- Elder/Deacon Mtg./4:00
March 26- NH Birthday Party/2:00
March 29- Potluck Luncheon
March 29- 5th Sunday Question & Answers/PM Service



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April 24-26
"Resume of a Christian"**



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