

The Leaven in the Bread
The Church: Body or Bride
November 1, 2009

- I) Intro
- a. Well, here we are, the fourth and final week of this series.
 - b. We've been examining the leaven in the message that is taught today.
 - c. And, we'll wrap things up at the end so I want to go ahead and get into our message for today.
 - d. It is a message that is often times never really examined and that is that the Church becomes the Bride of Christ.
 - e. We in Christendom tend to just assume this because well to be honest, there is no way one can account for any other explanation given the standard and typical views of Scripture.
 - f. And I think the reason for this lack of understanding of the Bride is no coincidence and for the same reason I feel marriage here on earth is such an important union.
 - g. Marriage is the picture of Christ and His Bride to everyone around us.
 - h. That is what we are going to look at today.
- II) And to begin, we need to take a look at the word "Church"
- a. Ekklesia-from Ek-out of and Kaleo-to call=to call out of
 - b. Stresses a group of people called out for a special purpose
 - c. The term Church can be understood in two ways:
 - i. When Christ used this term, He had the full picture in mind and knew the ultimate meaning of this world, but you can't deny how the term fits in this dispensation as well.
 - ii. The Church is "called out" of this world.
 1. Better understood as those "called"
 2. The Body of Christ
 3. Children of God, a member of the family of God
 4. Revelation 3:14-18 depicts the Church at the end of this dispensation as "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"
 5. One can be called and fit in this category and still live according to the flesh.
 - iii. The Church is realized and "called out" at the Judgment Seat of Christ and it is those who are "called out" of the Body that make up the Church.
 1. Understood as those "Called out" of the "Called"
 2. The Bride of Christ
 3. Adopted Firstborn Sons of God, those whose right is the inheritance, to rule with Christ
 4. Ephesians 5:25-32 depicts the *"glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing"*

5. One can only be called out and fit in this category by denying themselves and picking up their cross daily.

III) The Body of Christ

- a. What do the Scriptures refer to believers as?
 - i. Ephesians 1:22-23 *And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is His body*
 - ii. Colossians 1:18 *He is also head of the body, the church*
 - iii. Ephesians 5:22-23 *“Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body”*
 - iv. It is evident that the Church, those who have believed in a universal sense, comprises the Body of Christ.
 - v. This is the designation of believers during this dispensation.
 - vi. We are the Body of Christ.
 - vii. Nowhere in Scripture does it say that the Church during this dispensation is the Bride of Christ.
 - viii. The Church during the present dispensation is the Body of Christ.
 - ix. But we tend to have this sense of entitlement that we deserve to be the Bride so we read that into the Scriptures.
 - x. For example, this Ephesians passage:
 1. We read that a husband and his wife are likened to Christ and the Church, His body.
 2. Well, when you look at the meaning of the word, as we did, and we realize that there is a higher calling for the Body of Christ, that there will be a group “called out” of the body, it makes sense why this comparison is made.
 3. For the time being Christ is the Head of the Body and husbands and wives are to mirror their marriages after this fashion. But that doesn’t mean the Body automatically becomes the Bride. Christ is going to treat the Body the same as His Bride for the Bride is called out of the Body.
 4. It is describing Christ and His future Bride, who has yet to be revealed and will not be revealed until the end of this dispensation. So of course we are going to read about Christ and the Church in this dispensation because that is what we know, we understand how he deals with the Church today.
 5. It wouldn’t make sense to make a comparison to Christ and His future Bride because we aren’t there yet, we aren’t living in that time.
- b. So, being that we are the Body of Christ, I am not going to spend tons of time on this, but I do want to take a look at one passage and it is a long one, but I like it so this is the one we’re going to look at.

- i. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 ¹²For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
1. Once we believe, whatever ethnicity we are, whatever background we have, no matter how different the world may say we are or we may feel, we are one body.
 2. We have been given the same gift of the Holy Spirit who comes in and dwells within us and gives each of us a gift or gifts of some sort.
 3. Romans 12:6 *Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly.*
- ii. ¹⁴For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. ¹⁹If they were all one member, where would the body be? ²⁰But now there are many members, but one body. ²¹And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²²On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; ²³and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, ²⁴whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, ²⁵so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.
1. So, what do we see here?
 2. We see that the Body of Christ is similar to our physical bodies.
 3. So, this may seem weird or strange to some of you, but when I was younger, I had a quirky habit. Say I was tapping the desk with my two hands, when I was done, I always had to tap the desk using my right hand last. Or if I had an itch on my arm, I would scratch my left arm

then scratch my right arm. I favored my right arm. For whatever reason, I viewed my right arm as better than my left.

4. Well, more often than not, we tend to do the same thing with people in the church.
5. We tend to think one person is more important than another.
6. But the truth truly is that we all need each other.
 - a. It's ironic because I have only broken two bones in my life. My left leg and my left arm. During those experiences I realized how important my left arm was etc.
7. I have two examples I want to give and then we'll continue:
 - a. This trip to Africa
 - i. Most would say that Pastor Herbert was the most important part of this trip.
 - ii. Well, while what he did was crucial to helping them understand and the way he uses his gift of teaching to communicate the truth to the people over so they get it is important, he would not have been able to go over there unless you were faithful and tithed and gave above your tithe in order for him and the team to go
 - iii. Or, if you hadn't gotten up at 2am to account for the time change when you prayed that the hearts of those hearing the Sunday sermon would be open and receive the truth, maybe the words Pastor Herbert spoke would have fallen on deaf ears.
 - iv. Had the team not gone, there would have been too much for one man to do on his own.
 - b. The past four weeks for me
 - i. The encouragement the congregation has been to me with letters, stopping by on their way home, pulling me aside.
 - ii. The truth of the matter is, I don't enjoy standing in front of people.
 - iii. I remember the first time I spoke here. I finished speaking, dismissed everyone and walked out the doors.
 - iv. I couldn't stand standing around after I just preached because I never feel like I

did a good job. I could have hit a homerun so to speak, but I would still feel like I didn't speak well.

- v. But, I don't let that stop me from doing what God wants me to do.
- vi. The Elders were able to handle the children so I didn't have to worry about that.
- vii. Same with the music. I gave them the topics I would be speaking on and they put it all together.
- viii. You may not always enjoy working with kids, but you know what, you have a way with them and they just love you.
- ix. Prayer may be your gift so you praying during the service, throughout the week for the rest of us is vital to the growth of this Body.
- x. This is what being different members of the same body looks like.
- xi. Finding our gifts that the Spirit has given us and using them, even if the person we may have to work with in the nursery gets on our nerves at times or doesn't do things the way we like them being done.
- xii. We all help each other out, putting aside our selves and staying focused on God and being obedient to what He wants us to do.

IV) Transition

- a. If we are the Bride of Christ basically because we are the Body of Christ, why is there this sense of urgency throughout the Scriptures?
- b. Why are we told to repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near?
- c. Why do we have a cross to bear after Christ has paid the price?
- d. Why must we reconcile the justice of God with His love and understand that the Lord disciplines those He loves?

V) The Bride of Christ

- a. Adam and Eve
 - i. Romans 5:14 *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.*
 - 1. Adam is a type of Christ
 - 2. That which happens to Adam, we will see take place with Christ.
 - ii. Genesis 2:18, 21-23 *Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."*

²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. ²²The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. ²³The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

1. Ish-man Ishshah-woman
 2. What do we see here?
 - a. The woman, the man's wife, was taken out of the side of the man and presented to the man.
 - b. The woman was there all along, from the beginning.
 - c. But not until the right time was she called out and built/fashioned into a bride.
 3. So, what's that mean concerning Christ and His Bride?
 - a. Those who will compose the Bride of Christ can be found in the Body of Christ at some point during this dispensation.
 - b. The Body of Christ contains all those who have believed in Christ during this dispensation. The Bride will be called out of the Body at the proper time and will be revealed and presented back to Christ.
 - c. The proper time will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ at the end of this age. (Cf 1 Corinthians 3:11-15)
 - i. Matthew 22:14 *"For many are called (kletos), but few are chosen out/selected (eklektos)."*
 - ii. The Bride of Christ will be those who are chosen out of the chosen.
- b. Rebekah-The Bride of Christ
- i. Abraham and Sarah-God and Israel; Isaac, God's son, Christ; Servant is the Spirit
 - ii. We see Isaac is the child of Promise right?
 - iii. Genesis 22 we see Abraham go to sacrifice Isaac, but the ram stuck in the thickets became the substitutionary atonement-obvious type of God sending His Son to be our atonement for sin.
 - iv. Not long after this, we see the death of Sarah in Genesis 23, typifying God setting Israel aside after the sacrifice of Christ in order to deal with the Gentile Nations and the Church.
 - v. It is at this point in Genesis 24 that we see Abraham send his servant back to his relatives to bring back a wife He could present to His son Isaac.

1. Genesis 24:2-4 *Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, "Please place your hand under my thigh, ³and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live, ⁴but you will go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac."*
 2. It was imperative that the servant did not take a bride for Isaac from the Canaanites as they throughout Scripture are a type of the world, an unsaved people.
 3. He went to the people of Abraham, typifying the Church as a whole. This giving further credence to this bride being called out of the called.
 4. It is from the people of Abraham that the servant finds Rebekah, a virgin, drawing water from the well.
 5. Drawing water from the well is a common theme throughout Scripture depicting those who are in the Word of God, the living water and who are filled with the Spirit (do not be drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit).
 6. After time has passed, the servant eventually takes Rebekah back and presents her to Isaac.
 7. There is more to the type, much more in fact, but the part we have looked at here shows us more of who the Bride of Christ is to be.
 8. She is to be of His family, a virgin and drawing water from the well so to speak. She will be the one called out of the called.
- vi. It is then interesting to note, it is at this time in Genesis 25 that Abraham takes a wife for himself, and she is fruitful. This pointing to God taking Israel back after the Church has been removed and the Bride has been "called out." Israel will at that time produce the fruit that it should have produced in the beginning.
- c. Naomi-Israel, Mother-in-law
- i. Orpah
 1. Part of the family of Ruth and Naomi-believer grafted in
 2. Returned to her carnal ways
 - ii. Ruth
 1. Gentile, Moabite (carnal), led away from Moab and her fleshly desires
 2. Follows Naomi to her bridegroom
 - a. We see her journey to another land (we are on our way to our inheritance, just as Israel journeyed from Egypt onto their inheritance)

- b. We see her work in the field (Christians living in this world during this dispensation)
 - c. We see her prepare herself to meet Boaz her kinsman-redeemer and bridegroom on the threshing floor (Christians working out our salvation so that we will be ready to meet Christ at the Judgment Seat of Christ at the end of this dispensation)
- d. Ten Virgins
 - i. We see a smaller group chosen out of the bigger group which was chosen out of an even bigger group.
 - 1. Those who have had sexual relations, those who are virgins and then you have wise virgins who separate themselves from the foolish virgins.
 - ii. All had oil but the foolish didn't have extra supply-quit walking in the Word, were no longer filled with the Spirit but filled with self.
 - iii. The wise virgins enter the marriage feast while the foolish virgins are rebuked.
 - iv. 2 Corinthians 11:2-3 *"For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. ³But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ."*
 - 1. It should be our goal to be presented to Christ as a pure virgin.
 - 2. There remains however, the fear that we may not be pure virgins, we can defile ourselves by our actions, our minds can lead us astray.
 - 3. There are consequences for this.
- e. Ephesians 5:25-27 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.*
 - i. Christ has given Himself for the Body, so that the Body would be sanctified and made holy as God is holy.
 - ii. At the end of this age, those who have endured the process of sanctification will be presented to Christ without spot or blemish.
 - iii. Recall the passage in 1 Thessalonians 4:3 *"For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality."*
 - iv. And we being part of the Body are in a sense betrothed to Christ, our future groom.

- v. Anything we do that is not of God is as if we are committing sexual immorality with our potential future spouse.
- vi. Our being part of the “called out” is dependant on us and if we put to death our flesh and walk according to the light.
- f. Revelation 19:7-8 *“Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.”* ⁸*It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”*
 - i. The bride has made herself ready.
 - ii. The wedding garment is composed of the righteous acts of the saints.
 - iii. Here we see those who are “chosen out” of the “chosen” and they are the ones at the marriage of the Lamb.

VI) Conclusion of Series

- a. We’ve been examining the leaven in the bread, the corruption that has infiltrated the message of the Word since the beginning of this dispensation.
- b. The question is where to from here? What is our role in this?
- c. Well, I think the important thing to remember in all of this is that God’s plan will continue.
- d. There is nothing we can do to prevent that.
- e. As depressing as it may sound, the fact of the matter is that there will be no big tent revival.
- f. There will be no worldwide kum-by-ya moment where the Church wakes up and repents.
- g. The Church as a whole will not accept this message.
- h. There must be the Church as a whole who doesn’t understand the full truth so that the smaller group will be called out, those who have understood and those who have persevered till the end and are overcomers.
- i. The Scriptures tell us this:
 - i. We’ve read previously in Revelation 2-3 how the leaven began corrupting the message of the Word in the very beginning of the Church, with the Church in Ephesus when they left their first love.
 - 1. The leaven continued to spread throughout the Church to the end with the Church of Laodicea where God tells the Church that He will spew them out of His mouth because of their lukewarm-ness in regards to the message.
 - 2. The Church in Laodicea being the seventh and final Church mentioned by John, representing the Church at the end of the dispensation and here at the end we see the message is lukewarm. It will not be scalding hot.
 - ii. Our foundational Scripture of Matthew 13:33 we see the leaven leavens the whole lump.

1. This is not a one and done process where the message goes from being fully pure to fully corrupted and can go back and forth.
 2. This is a slow process but once it starts, the leaven continues to grow and continues to spread.
 3. The leaven will always be in the bread once it has been put in there.
 4. This process has been going on for 2,000 some years now so you can imagine how much of the message the leaven has already corrupted.
 5. When Christ returns, the whole loaf of bread, the whole message of the Word, the Gospel of Grace and the Gospel of the the Glories of Christ will have been corrupted to its fullest and there is nothing we can do to prevent this growth from taking place in the Church as a whole.
 6. We can however, prevent this growth and the spreading of the leaven in us as individuals.
 7. It is in that where the hope lies.
 8. We are to humble ourselves and be faithfully obedient to the Word of God.
 9. He who overcomes, he who is a son of God and suffers with Christ, He will be a co-heir with Christ and revel in the glories of Christ.
- j. When we began this series, I had two goals in mind.
- i. To take a deeper look at the message taught in Christendom today so we can align our minds with what Scripture says and not rely on what man has interpreted Scripture to mean over the past 2,000 years.
 - ii. To strengthen our faith and understanding so that we would be encouraged to persevere in our race of faith and that we will be able to share the truth of Scripture with others. While this message does contain a huge individual aspect in the sense that we must focus on our personal race of faith, I believe it is our responsibility to share the truth with other believers. But we must first have an understanding of the foundation.
- k. I want to close with a parable I was reminded of in the Bible Study on Sunday night, the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican found in Luke 18:9-17.
- i. Christ tells of two men who go to the temple to pray.
 1. The first is a Pharisee who thanks God for not making him like the others: swindlers, unjust, adulterers etc
 2. The second is a Tax Collector, a person viewed as unholy simply because of his profession. He couldn't lift his eyes to heaven because of the shame. He beat his chest and begged God to have mercy on him, a sinner.

- ii. We then read in verse 14, *"I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."*
- iii. We are to be like this tax collector.
 1. Don't focus on the others around us, focus on ourselves.
 2. Don't look down on others and pass judgment on other believers because they are blinded by the leaven.
 3. That is not the point of this series.
 4. The point is for us to realize the leaven and to get it out of our lives so we may pursue the truth.
 5. The point is for us to be able to help other believers persevere and understand the meat of God's Word, not to keep it for ourselves.
 6. The point is that it is by the grace of God that we understand the little bit that we do and that makes us no better than anybody else.
 7. The point is that we are all part of the same body and we need to build each other up not tear one another down by judging.
 - a. *Romans 13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.*
 8. The point is to realize that it is because of the Justice of God that He loved us so much to send His Son and have Him crucified as our sacrifice so that we may then take up our cross and persevere. And when we fail, when we live according to our flesh and not by the Spirit, we confess our sins and God forgives us and we repent and continue on the path of righteousness being faithfully obedient to the Word as we understand that the kingdom of heaven is near and the Spirit is in this world, searching for the Bride of Christ, those believers who have made themselves ready for that day, those who will be called out of the called.
 9. It is my prayer that all of us will not be hindered by our own selfish ambitions but submit to the Word of God and be found faithful in that day of Judgment and God will tell us "Well done, my good and faithful servant" and we will then proceed to enter the marriage of the Lamb as the Bride.