A person wearing a white robe is holding a bouquet of yellow and white roses. The background is a warm, golden-yellow glow. The title 'A Rose For Jesus' is written in a large, elegant, red cursive font, overlaid on the image.

A Rose For Jesus

SADHU SUNDAR SELVARAJ

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A ROSE FOR JESUS

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Dedication

This book is worshipfully dedicated
to the Heavenly Father for His grace and mercy,
to the Lord Jesus Christ for His revelation
of many truths,
to the Holy Spirit for inspiring and teaching
me to put it all together
and
To every believer who wants to be a Bride –
made rapture-ready for the Bridegroom.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my gratitude and heartfelt thanks to the following saints who had worked day and night towards the birthing of this book:

Amutha Arnasalam, for proofreading the manuscript with an eye like an eagle;

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Preface

In a bad car accident on June 19th 2004, the two sons of Retha McPherson, the former Miss South Africa, were thrown from the vehicle. The resulting injuries and the coma of her 12 year-old son, Aldo, brought this family closer to God. While in the coma, the boy had a supernatural encounter with God.

The Lord God allowed Aldo to visit Heaven. During the visit, God downloaded the entire Bible into his mind, which he is able to recall as needed. He showed him many of the saints of old and a golden bridge leading to a closed door behind which a marriage feast was occurring. People outside were knocking, trying to get in, crying because the door was closed. The Lord Jesus told Aldo that the feast was for His Bride, but many were not ready.

When Retha sought the Lord Jesus about her son's vision, the Lord told her, "The reason the Bride is not ready is because she keeps herself busy with works instead of having a passionate, intimate relationship with Me." He further told Retha that He didn't come to start a religion. He came to have relationships with each of us. When we press into His presence, that is when we see miracles, signs and wonders.

The Lord Jesus explained to Retha that we are the Laodicean church spoken of in the book of Revelation – the last church before He comes. He explained that we should be “fire-hot” in our relationship with Him. Instead, many are “ice-cold.” He said He is coming “very, very, very soon!”

The messages in this book were first preached at the End-Time Handmaidens & Servants Canadian conventions held in Saskatoon in June 1999 and in Regina in June 2002. *For a time such as this*, in which we are presently living, I felt prompted by the Spirit to release these messages in book form for the preparation of the Bride to meet her Bridegroom. In addition, this book contains even more revelation than what was publicly preached almost 16 years ago.

The time in *now* for all believers to put away all filthiness of flesh and spirit and to arise out of spiritual lethargy and get ready to meet their Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, who is coming soon for His Bride.

With Love & Blessings

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sundar Selvaraj', with a stylized, cursive script.

Sundar Selvaraj
September 2015

CHAPTER 1

The Bridal Make-Up

Once, as I was waiting on the Lord, the word of the Lord came to me saying, "I want you to share not only on the beauty of the Lord, but also on the beauty that I desire in the heart of my Bride. Share about the beauty that I desire to be in My Bride."

I pondered these words in my heart. Throughout the day, I waited at the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ and prayed for further understanding. I asked the Lord, "Please teach me about this. How do you want me to share on this subject?"

The Lord then showed me a beautiful vision. In this vision, I saw a bride beautifully dressed in all her bridal garments, including a veil over her face. She was then brought before the bridal bedchamber. Waiting for her there was a very handsome bridegroom. When she entered into the bedchamber, He took her by the hands and with great love he looked into her face. There was great beauty in the face of the bride. When the bridegroom lifted the veil off the bride's face, he gazed into her beautiful face for a long time. It was as though he was trying to soak in all the beauty that he saw in her face. As I was looking at this vision, the Lord Jesus came to me and said, "I am preparing My bride unto Myself."

I Am Preparing My Bride Unto Myself

SONG 2:14

14 "O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the secret places of the cliff, Let me see your face, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely."

Have you been praying: "Lord I want to see your Face! Lord I want to hear your Voice! Lord I want to see your Glory"? In fact, the Lord Jesus Christ is saying to you: "Stop asking Me 'I want to see your Face, I want to hear your Voice, I want to see you in all your beauty.'" *The time has come for the Bride to get ready to meet the Bridegroom.* The Lord Jesus is preparing His Bride unto Himself. Look at the scripture quoted above carefully. It is the bridegroom who is saying the bride: "Let me see your countenance. Let me hear your voice." What that means to you as the Bride of Christ is: *Show your face to the Lord God. Let Him hear your voice.*

When most believers pray, it is like children asking for gifts from Santa Claus. Oftentimes we treat God just like Santa Claus. It is like entering a supermarket with a shopping list of what we want. In the same way, many spiritual theorists have come up with different definitions or formulas for prayer. For example, "The A, B, C of Prayer: Ask, Believe, and Confess." So simple, it seems. But prayer is not merely asking, believing and confessing the promises of God. That is, at best, a very mediocre view of prayer. Real prayer is much more than that.

There are so many *beggar Christians* in the Church at large today. They are like the beggars you may see on the streets of some poor countries. They stretch out their hands, begging for the mercy of passers-by, hoping that one of them will show them

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kindness. You should not come before God in prayer in that manner. You are not a beggar in your relationship with God. How a person prays reveals their inner spiritual state.

A real spiritual Christian who knows his true standing before God would not pray in this way, begging for favors, but will rather talk with God. A Christian who ‘prays’ the way I described above is a very shallow and immature Christian, because he or she does not know the meaning and concept of fellowship and communion with the Lord. They have not experienced communion with God, nor abiding with Christ Jesus, nor waiting on God. When you enter into that realm of fellowship with the Lord, abiding in Christ Jesus, communing with God and waiting on God, no words are necessary.

When you come and stand before the Lord Jesus in prayer to reveal yourself to Him, He will look directly into your heart. And when He looks into your heart, He will know all things about you. This is the highest realm in the Christian life - *communing with God*. In these last days before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, He is calling the Bride to come into that state where she can forever be in the bridal bedchamber, being one with, being in union with the Bridegroom.

The Bride's Purification

How does the Lord desire the Bride to be when she is in the bridal bedchamber? Before a bride can go into the bridal bedchamber, she needs to prepare herself. Every bride does that. In the book of Esther we see the principles of how the Bride of Christ is to prepare herself to meet her Bridegroom.

ESTHER 2:12 (AMP)

12 Now when the turn of each maiden came to go in to King Ahasuerus, after the regulations for the women had been carried out for twelve months – since this was the regular period for their beauty treatments, six months with oil of myrrh and six months with sweet spices and perfumes and the things for the purifying of the women.

This is the beautification process that the Bible very clearly describes Esther having completed before she was brought before the king. This is the first part of the process for the bride to make herself ready.

Esther went through these long months of preparation just for that one moment to appear before the king. This same principle applies in the Spirit to everyone who wants to become part of the Bride of Christ. They must prepare themselves to stand before the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

The Beautification Process

The Bible tells us that Esther was a fair and beautiful woman (Est 2:7), whereas Vashti was just a fair woman, but not a beautiful woman (Est 1:11). She was very fair to look at, but not a beautiful woman. In contrast, Esther was not only fair, she was also beautiful.

This is something you need to take note of – the distinction between *fair* and *beautiful*. The word “fair” in Hebrew is *to’ar yapheh*, which means *outline*, i.e. *figure* or *appearance* or *beautiful*. She had a well favored form. She also had a comely and goodly countenance. The Hebrew word also conveys the concept that she

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was the *fairest one*. The word “beautiful” in Hebrew is *mar’eh towb*, which means *an appearance (the thing seen – the looks)*. It conveys the concept that Esther was a good woman who was gracious, joyful, pleasant and kind.

When the Bridegroom comes looking for the Bride, He looks for both of these qualities. All throughout the book of Song of Solomon, when the bridegroom is speaking words of love to the bride, he always uses two words interchangeably. These words are *fair* and *beautiful*.

SONG 1:15

15 Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove’s eyes.

SONG 4:1

1 Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove’s eyes behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead.

SONG 6:4

4 O my love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, Lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners!

In these Scriptures you find the bridegroom calling His beloved fair and beautiful. You must be fair and beautiful. One of these adjectives refers to *external beauty* and the other to *internal beauty*.

No matter how ugly a woman may be, with all of the modern cosmetology and photoshop that we have today, even a 100 year-old woman can be made to look like a young maiden. But so far, no one has discovered any make-up to beautify the inner person.

Only the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ has that power. Only the Holy Spirit has that special, supernatural make-up that will make your inner being fair and beautiful. And when your inner being is beautiful, so will your outer countenance be.

Let me share with you a spiritual mystery. The real beauty that is in your heart can pierce through the natural skin to make your external skin fair and beautiful with the light and glory that comes from a life of intimacy with the Lord Jesus. You will find this demonstrated in the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus is Himself the light (Jn 8:12; 9:5). When He allowed the light that was within Him to break forth out of Him, light passed through His skin and began to shine out of His natural body. The apostles Peter, James and John beheld His glory, shining like the brightness of the sun (Matt 17:2). Where did the light come from – from the outside? No. It came from within. It began to break out and shine forth.

This same mystery is also manifested in the life of the prophet Moses. The Bible says that his face shone with light (Ex 34:29). The Amplified Bible gives the more precise meaning: *the skin of his face shone and sent forth beams*. In order for light to send forth beams it must come from the inside. This same thing can happen inside you; and you will be fair and beautiful.

Ingredients for Purification

Look at the ingredients that were used by Esther for purification.

ESTHER 2:12

12 Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months' preparation, according

The Bridal Make-Up

to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women.

This Scripture says that before Esther could meet the king, it took her one year to purify and beautify herself. The process of beautification took one year. There were six months with oil of myrrh followed by six months with sweet spices and with balms for the beautifying of women. The Bible does not specify what the sweet spices were. Why sweet spices to beautify? The Bible tells us very clearly that our bodies are the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16; 6:15). Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. God walks in and out of that temple, He talks with you there and He makes His presence very real (2 Cor 6:16).

When giving instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle, the Lord gave the prophet Moses very specific instructions how to make the anointing oil for the lamp and incense for the altar of incense.

EXODUS 30:23-25

23 "Also take for yourself quality spices – five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty shekels), two hundred and fifty shekels of sweet-smelling cane,

24 five hundred shekels of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil.

25 And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil.

EXODUS 30:34-38

34 And the Lord said to Moses: "Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with these sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each.

35 You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, and holy.

36 And you shall beat some of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you.

37 But as for the incense which you shall make, you shall not make any for yourselves, according to its composition. It shall be to you holy for the Lord.

38 Whoever makes any like it, to smell it, he shall be cut off from his people."

Both the anointing oil and the incense consisted of sweet spices. This means that each time the anointing oil was poured on the candlestick and lit, not only did the lamp give out light but it also gave out a sweet smell that permeated the entire Tabernacle. Then they put the incense on the altar. When the smoke arose, it also gave out a sweet aroma that totally covered the entire Tabernacle. There was always a sweet smell rising up before the throne of God.

Every time the priests entered the Tabernacle they smelled the sweet fragrance. In the same way, when the Lord God looks at us, if you want to be the Bride, you must purify yourself with the oil of myrrh and the sweet spices that Esther used. We must beautify ourselves so that we may appear before the King. And when He looks at you, He will see you as fair and beautiful. He will then greatly delight in your beauty (Ps 45:11).

Myrrh

Let us look in-depth at the six months preparation with the oil of myrrh. What is myrrh? Myrrh is the aromatic resin of a number of small, thorny tree species of the genus *Commiphora*, which is an essential oil termed an *oleoresin*. Myrrh resin is a natural gum. It has been used throughout history as a perfume, incense and medicine. It comes from a thick gum that flows from the pierced bark of a knotted, thorny tree. The gum hardens into red drops called *tears*.

“Myrrh,” in Hebrew is *mowr* which means *as distilling in drops; bitter*. Myrrh, then speaks of *bitter suffering*. When the spice is being burned, it will burn very slowly, so it is a very slow process of purification. That is why when Esther used the myrrh it took her six months just to use that one spice alone – because it is a slow process of purification. It takes a long time for the myrrh to enter into your skin and purify you.

What does the myrrh of “bitter suffering” signify? Where are we going to find myrrh to immerse ourselves in for six months? You could not live in a bathtub of myrrh for six months to achieve purification, could you? What it really means is *obedience unto death*.

The Bible says of the Lord: “Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered” (Heb 5:8). The Lord Jesus Christ learned obedience through the things He suffered. It’s a slow process of purification.

What does this mean for us? The Bible says, “And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal 5:24). To crucify the flesh is a slow process of purification.

You cannot crucify your flesh overnight. Every now and then it will lift up its ugly head and manifest. It's a slow process of purification – a daily dying to self (1 Cor 15:31).

In the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul writes in vivid detail the struggles that he faced between the spirit and the flesh, just like you and me.

ROMANS 7:1-25

1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?

2 For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.

3 So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another – to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.

6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."

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8 But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.

9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

10 And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.

11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.

12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.

16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.

17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.

20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.

22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

25 I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

He wrote very frankly so that we can identify with him. What you and I experience is exactly what all the prophets, patriarchs, apostles and saints have gone through and are going through. In Romans chapter 7, the apostle Paul wrote about the struggles between the flesh and the Spirit. But when he wrote the epistle to the Galatians he said, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...” (Gal 2:20). What does that really mean? The flesh has been crucified – *dead*.

The apostle Paul had an issue with Mark. When Mark was a young man, in his youthful vigor, he disappointed him. Later on, as they were about to set out on one of their missionary journeys, Barnabas wanted to bring Mark along but Paul would not let him. The apostle Paul was an absolute perfectionist and could not stand any flaws in anyone; he wrote Mark off. As a result of the contention between them, the apostles Paul and Barnabas parted company (Acts 15:36-40).

Several years later, though, the apostle Paul admitted that Mark was a very useful person to him (2 Tim 4:11). He even called Mark his “fellow laborers” (Philem 24). What had happened to the hot-tempered Apostle Paul? His flesh died – it was crucified. He now saw everyone differently, with the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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I once fasted for 40 days in 1987. During the fast I had a visitation from the Lord Jesus. The Lord appeared to me and stretched out his hand and asked, "What do you see?" I saw a small little baby in His hands whom I recognized as a sister in our church. I said, "Oh Lord, is this so and so?" The Lord Jesus asked me, "What do you think about this person?"

Frankly and honestly I told the Lord what I thought about her. I said, "Lord Jesus, this woman is a real pain in the neck. Whenever there is backbiting in the church she is the originator of it. Whenever there is murmuring and slander she is the author behind it. Lord, I do not know why in the world you gave me this spiritual daughter. She is a real thorn in my flesh, Lord." The Lord patiently listened to what I told Him and then He said, "Come and stand behind Me."

When I stood behind the Lord Jesus, He told me, "Put your eyes directly behind My eyes." When I did, He then said, "Now look at her through My eyes." As I did so, I was shocked at what I saw. Whatever ugly qualities I saw in her before no longer existed. She appeared beautiful, clean, and pure. Needless to say, I was shocked.

The Lord Jesus then said to me, "This is how the heavenly Father sees all My children – through My eyes. I am their sanctification. I am their perfection. I am their beauty. I am their Glory. In spite of their weaknesses and shortcomings, when My Father looks at them, He sees them through My eyes and every imperfection ceases to exist. That is why the Bible says you can come boldly before the Throne of Grace in My name."

If we desire to be the Bride, the first beautification process that we must all undergo is to be purified by the oil of myrrh. To die to flesh is to learn to discipline and crucify the flesh. For so long we

have been taught that this is our nature and there is nothing we can do about it, and God loves us and accepts us as we are. That is a lie from the pit of hell. The Bible emphatically says, “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor 7:1). Crucifying the flesh is the first process towards becoming the Bride.

Sweet Spices

After soaking in myrrh for six months, Esther then beautified herself with sweet perfumes for another six months (Est 2:12). What are the sweet perfumes? The Bible does not tell us very clearly. I sought the Lord for this and in a vision, the Lord Jesus told me very clearly that they were the sweet odors that were the ingredients used for making the incense used in the Tabernacle of Moses.

EXODUS 30:23-25,34

23 “Also take for yourself quality spices – five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty shekels), two hundred and fifty shekels of sweet-smelling cane,

24 five hundred shekels of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil.

25 And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil.

34 And the Lord said to Moses: “Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with these sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each.

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Twelve different kinds of spices were used for the making of the anointing oil and the incense. The word “spices” in Hebrew is *besem* meaning *fragrance*; by implication, *smell, spice, sweet (odor)*. These spices were used by Esther for the remaining six months of beautification. When she immersed herself in these spices she was fragrant with a “sweet smelling odor.”

What are these spices?

Cinnamon

Cinnamon is a spice obtained from the inner bark of several trees from the genus *Cinnamomum* that is used in both sweet and savory foods. While *Cinnamomum verum* is sometimes considered to be “true cinnamon”, most cinnamon in international commerce is derived from related species, which are also referred to as “cassia” to distinguish them from “true cinnamon”. Cinnamon is a sweet spice that does not grow in the wild, but in a closed garden.

“Cinnamon” in Hebrew is *qinnamown* meaning, *cinnamon bark (as in upright rolls); emitting an odor*. The spice is harvested in quills of the fragrant, inner bark of a tree.

This spice signifies *holiness of the heart*. As the Bride of Christ we need to have holiness of the heart. The Bible tells us that without holiness it is impossible to see God (Matt 5:8; Heb 12:14).

Calamus

Acorus calamus (also called Sweet Flag or Calamus) is a tall perennial wetland monocot of the Acoraceae family, in the genus *Acorus*.

In spite of common names that include the words “rush” and “sedge,” it is neither a rush nor sedge. The scented leaves and more strongly scented rhizomes have traditionally been used medicinally and to make fragrances, and the dried and powdered rhizome has been used as a substitute for ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg.

Calamus is a fragrant oil derived from a marsh plant known as sweet flag. “Calamus” in Hebrew is *qaneh* meaning, *a reed; by resemblance a rod; a stalk or a reed (as erect); upright.*

This spice signifies, *reverential worship for God.*

LUKE 7:36-38

36 Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat.

37 And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil,

38 and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.

A sinful woman looking for redemption came to the Lord Jesus. As soon as she saw Him she felt so convicted of all her sins that she stood before the Lord and wept. Her tears fell on the Lord's feet. Upon realizing that her sinful tears had soiled the holy feet of the Lord, she bent down very low and wiped the tears off His feet with her own hair – a woman's glory. Seeing the true reverential worship coming from this woman's heart, the Lord lifted her up and crowned her with forgiveness.

Cassia

Cassia typically refers to cassia bark, the spice made from the bark of East Asian trees related to the “true cinnamon” (*Cinnamomum verum*) of Sri Lanka. Cassia, smells and tastes quite similar to cinnamon but is inferior to it, a humbler plant.

“Cassia,” in Hebrew *qiddah* meaning *cassia bark (as in shriveled rolls)*. This spice signifies to *bow down, to stoop, to pay homage*.

Bowing down in humility, you learn to worship the Lord your God with reverence. This is something that is missing in modern-day charismatic Christianity. Many have never learned how to worship God with reverence. Most of the time, when we worship God, it is a great insult to His holiness. Our worship is a great insult to the majesty, holiness and the glory of God. That is the reason why the *shekinah* glory of God never comes down during our worship – because we do not know how to worship in Spirit and in truth in a spirit of humility.

The Bible tells us that God hates those who are prideful, but He exalts the humble in heart (Matt 23:12; Mk 14:11; Lk 18:14). We must learn to put on the cloak of humility. The Lord Jesus Christ said: “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt 11:29).

When we learn from the Lord Jesus, we will adopt His meekness and lowly demeanor. If you don’t walk in humility, you need to check and see who is reigning in your heart, whether it is Satan or the Lord Jesus. Satan is the embodiment – the personification – of pride, whereas the Lord Jesus Christ is the personification of humility.

Stacte

Stacte is simply the sap that drips from the tapping of the wood of the balsam tree.

“Stacte” in Hebrew is *nataph* meaning *a drop; to fall in drops; specifically, an aromatic gum*. The aroma of this spice is so strong that when the incense rises up from the tabernacle it can be smelled for miles even across the Jordan. This spice signifies *walking in grace and truth*.

The Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ came bringing grace and truth (Jn 1:14). How are we to exhibit this? We exhibit it by walking in mercy and lovingkindness: “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Mic 6:8).

One of the most amazing Scriptures I have read in the Bible is this: “But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil” (Lk 6:35). God is kind even to ungrateful people.

This is one thing that none of us humans ever exhibit or practice. God is kind even to the ungrateful and unthankful people. How do we react when we do a good deed for someone and they do not even bother to thank us? Wouldn’t we think *why do they not even have the simple courtesy to say thank you?* We would normally think that way, wouldn’t we? But look at the Lord God. He is kind even to the unthankful people. The Bible further says, “that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His

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sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt 5:45).

God makes the rains to fall equally and the sun to shine equally both on the good and bad people, even on those who are ungrateful and unthankful to Him. This is how God displays His goodness, His mercy, and His lovingkindness. We need to purify ourselves to walk likewise in mercy, truth and lovingkindness.

Onycha

“Onycha” in Hebrew is *shecheleth* meaning *peeling off by concussion of sound; a scale or shell, i.e. the aromatic mussel*. It is also from the word *shachal* meaning *to roar; a lion (from his characteristic roar)*.

This spice conveys the concept of roaring like a lion. What does it mean? *Boldness*. The Bible says, “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Heb 4:16). That boldness comes because of the blood of the Lord Jesus (Heb 10:19).

This Scripture tells us that we can come boldly before the throne of grace. Before we can come boldly we often-times find that we are held back by some kind of fear. Before coming to the throne of grace, we must understand what fears are keeping us from coming boldly.

Once, during my hours of intercession for the many people who write to me for prayer every month, I was taken up in the Spirit. When I was in the Spirit I was standing on the streets of gold. Beautiful gold. There, far in the distance, I saw the throne of the living God. It looked like the Ark of the Covenant

(Rev 11:19). Above the ark appeared a pulsating, living and moving cloud. I perceived it to be the presence of Father God.

The moment I saw that, there came upon me such fear that I dared not take another step forward. At that moment, the Lord Jesus Christ came, stood by my side and said, “Come let us go there.” I said, “No Lord, I am fearful.” He put his arms around me and said, “Do not fear. Let us now go boldly before the throne of grace in My Name.” Putting His arms around me, the Lord brought me before the throne of God – the throne of His grace.

The moment the Lord Jesus put His arms around me every trace of fear disappeared. A great boldness came into my heart. And there before the throne of grace, together with the Lord Jesus Christ, I interceded for the many people who wrote to me for prayer.

How can we attain to this boldness? In order to have this boldness, there must be no condemnation within our heart and mind. The Bible says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit” (Rom 8:1). So if you continue to walk in the Spirit there will be no condemnation. The moment you sin, the first fruit of sin is condemnation. You will immediately feel condemned and you will not have any boldness before the throne of God.

Galbanum

Galbanum is an aromatic gum resin spice, the product of certain umbelliferous Persian plant species in the genus *Ferula*, chiefly *Ferula gummosa* and *Ferula rubricaulis*. Galbanum-yielding plants

grow plentifully on the slopes of the mountain ranges of northern Iran. It occurs usually in hard or soft, irregular, more or less translucent and shining lumps, or occasionally in separate tears, of a light-brown, yellowish or greenish-yellow color, and has a disagreeable, bitter taste, a peculiar, somewhat musky odor, an intense green scent. Galbanum is collected by splicing the stems of the ferula plant.

“Galbanum” in Hebrew is *chelbenah* meaning *an odorous gum (as if fatty)*. It is also from the word *cheleb* meaning *to be fat; fat, the richest or choice part (best, fatness), marrow*.

This spice denotes *fatness and being the best*. We are not talking about bodily fat. The animal fat is the best part of the offering which is reserved for God alone (Lev 3:16-17). What does this signify? It signifies *worshiping God in Spirit and in truth in the beauty of holiness*.

JOHN 4:24

24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

PSALMS 96:9

9 Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth.

Present day charismatic Christianity knows very little about worshiping God in Spirit and in truth and in the beauty of holiness.

The Bible says that when the Levites and priests worshipped God, the cloud of God’s glory came down into the temple built

by King Solomon (2 Chr 5:11-14). When the Old Testament covenant people worshiped God with one mind and with one heart, the Shekinah cloud came down so tangibly that the priests fell on their faces, the musicians fell on their faces and none of them could stand up to worship God.

The Bible tells us that the New Covenant believers are better than the Old Covenant believers because of the blood of Jesus Christ (Heb 7:22; 8:6). The Bible further tells us that the New Testament believers are all filled with the Holy Spirit, a privilege which people under the Old Testament covenant did not have, with the exception of kings, priests and prophets. The laity did not have the Holy Spirit.

My question now is this. When every believer under the New Covenant is filled with the Holy Spirit, why is it that we are not experiencing the Shekinah cloud of God's glory in our worship services like what the people under the Old Covenant experienced? Why – what is the difference? This was a question that I had in my heart for many years and I kept on praying and asking the Lord for an answer.

In 1989 and 1990 I had two visitations from the Lord Jesus during which He spoke to me about this subject. The Lord said, "The reason the people under the Old Covenant experienced the cloud of My glory is because they worshipped Me in the beauty of holiness. Charismatic Christians are worship in the flesh most of the time." How sad!

So let us learn to worship our Bridegroom, the Lover of our souls, in Spirit and truth in the beauty of His holiness.

Frankincense

Frankincense, also called *olibanum*, is an aromatic resin used in incense and perfumes, obtained from trees of the genus *Boswellia* in the family Burseraceae, particularly *Boswellia sacra*. The English word is derived from Old French “*franc encens*” (i.e. high quality incense). There are four main species of *Boswellia* that produce true frankincense. Frankincense is a gum resin that flows from the inner wood of a tree resembling the mountain ash.

“Frankincense” in Hebrew is *lebownah* meaning *frankincense* (*from its whiteness or perhaps that of its smoke*).

We are familiar with Frankincense more than any other spice. Frankincense is a pure white substance because of its glittering, milk-white, resin *tears*. When burned, this spice gives off a strong balsam odor. This spice signifies *living a pure life before God*.

The Bible tells us that as the Lord is pure so should we too be pure (1 Tim 5:22; 1 Jn 3:3). We are to lead a pure life before the Lord our God. When frankincense is burned, white smoke will rise up. This signifies the *maintaining of a clear conscience before the Lord your God, without any offense*. The apostle Paul says that he served God with a clear pure conscience, without offense to anybody (2 Tim 1:3).

Henna

Henna (also known as *hina*, the henna tree, the mignonette tree, and the Egyptian privet) is a flowering plant and the sole species of the *Lawsonia* genus. The English name “henna” comes from the Arabic, *ḥinnāʾ*. The name *henna* also refers to the dye prepared from the plant. Historically, henna was used for

cosmetic purposes in Ancient India or Carthage, as well as other parts of North Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and South Asia. Bridal henna nights remain an important custom in many of these areas, particularly among traditional families.

Henna, together with a few other spices for beautifying, is mentioned in the Book of Song of Solomon.

SONG 4:13-16

13 Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard,

14 Spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices –

15 A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

16 Awake, O north wind, and come, O south! Blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out. Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its pleasant fruits.

Henna, also known as *camphire*, comes from a tree whose leaves yield a stain used as a red dye.

Henna has a very interesting use as a red dye. An Eastern woman (and I have seen my own sisters do this) will use it the night before her wedding. They make a red paste and spread it on her palms and on the soles of her feet. She will leave it on her hands and feet all night and in the morning when it is washed off, her hands and the soles of her feet will be a beautiful red. Sometimes, the henna is applied in a variety of designs.

“Henna” in Hebrew is *kopher* meaning *a cover, i.e. (literally) a village (as covered in); (specifically) bitumen (as used for coating), and the henna plant (as used for dyeing); figuratively, a redemption-price.*

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This spice signifies *the applying of the blood of Jesus Christ upon our hands and feet* (cf. Ex 30:21). When we lift up our hands in worship and prayer our hands must be clean. They can be clean only by the blood of the Lord Jesus (Ps 24:3-4). And when we walk into the house of God our feet should be clean too – again, by the blood of Christ (Isa 33:15).

When the Lord looks at your hands lifted up in worship they must be clean hands. And when the Lord looks at your feet dancing before Him and coming unto Him they must be clean feet. Every day when you pray, apply the blood of Jesus Christ to your hands and to your feet. And when you lift your hands before the throne of God, the Lord will see the blood of Christ Jesus on your hands which will make us acceptable before His throne.

Spikenard

Spikenard, also called nard, nardin, and muskroot, is a class of aromatic amber-colored essential oil derived from *Nardostachys jatamansi*, a flowering plant of the Valerian family which grows in the Himalayas of Nepal, China, and India. The oil has, since ancient times, been used as a perfume, as a medicine and in religious contexts, across a wide territory from India to Europe. Spikenard is produced from the hairy, dried stems of a plant grown at heights of up to 13,000 feet in the Himalayas in the sun's pure and strong light.

“Spikenard” in Hebrew is *nerd* meaning *nard, an aromatic*. This spice signifies *light*.

The Lord Jesus Christ is light itself (Jn 8:12; 9:5). The Lord Jesus called us “children of light and not darkness.” So how are we to live? – *As a light-giving person*. The Bible says, “You are the

light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt 5:14-16).

So, how can we be a light-giving person? It is only possible if we continue to be in fellowship with the God of light.

1 JOHN 1:5-7

5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

When we fellowship with God who is light, His light will bathe us in the pure light of heaven. That pure light will penetrate into our bones and marrow to cleanse, refine and purify.

Such fellowship can be practiced – cultivated – by staying in God's light-giving presence. How so – you may ask? God's word is light (Ps 119:105). When you meditate on God's word it enters inside you and floods your being with light (Ps 119:130). Praying and lingering in God's presence through praise and worship will fill us with His light. That light of God will penetrate into our pores and fill our spirit, soul and body with the light of God. The continual partaking of the light of God will eventually build up to a transfiguration experience like the Lord Jesus had (Matt 17:2; Mk 9:2-3; Lk 9:29).

Saffron

Saffron, is a spice derived from the flower of *Crocus sativus*, commonly known as the “saffron crocus”. Saffron crocus grows to 20–30 cm (8–12 in) and bears up to four flowers, each with three vivid crimson stigmas, which are the distal end of a carpel. The styles and stigmas, called threads, are collected and dried to be used mainly as a seasoning and coloring agent in food. Saffron, long among the world’s most costly spices by weight, is native to Greece or Southwest Asia and was first cultivated in Greece.

Saffron is a very expensive spice. It is collected from three tiny, orange-red stigmas of crocus sativus flowers. It is yellow-gold in color when dried. It is a spice that, medically, strengthens the heart.

“Saffron” in Hebrew is *karkom* meaning the *crocus: saffron*. Saffron signifies *godliness*.

1 TIMOTHY 6:11

11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

This Scripture admonishes us to diligently live a life of godliness – (1 Tim 6:6,11; 2 Pet 1:5-7; 3:11).

Aloe

Aloe is a succulent plant species. The species is frequently cited as being used in herbal medicine since the beginning of the first century AD. Extracts from Aloe are widely used in the cosmetics and alternative medicine industries, being marketed as variously having rejuvenating, healing, or soothing properties.

“Aloe” in Hebrew is *ahaliym* meaning *aloe wood (i.e. sticks): - (tree of lign-) aloes*. It means *little tents or the bridal tent*. It looks like a three-cornered shape of the capsules of the lignaloos tree whose resin is fragrant.

This spice signifies *intimacy* – an intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

SONG 2:4-17

4 He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

5 Sustain me with cakes of raisins, Refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick.

6 His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.

7 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.

8 The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, gazing through the lattice.

10 My beloved spoke, and said to me: “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

11 For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

12 The flowers appear on the earth; The time of singing has come, And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.

13 The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!

14 “O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the secret places of the cliff, Let me see your face, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your face is lovely.”

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15 Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.

16 My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies.

17 Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bether.

The Lord Jesus Christ extends an invitation into an intimate walk with Him. How can we build an intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ? By loving Him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. Also, by abiding in Christ Jesus (Jn 15:4-7).

Olive Oil

Olive oil, is a fat obtained from the olive (the fruit of *Olea europaea*; family Oleaceae), a traditional tree crop of the Mediterranean Basin. The oil is produced by pressing whole olives and is commonly used in cooking, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and soaps, and as a fuel for traditional oil lamps. Olive oil is used throughout the world and is often associated with Mediterranean countries.

“Olive” in Hebrew is *zayith* meaning *an olive (as yielding illuminating oil), brightness*. Olive oil is used to rub on the skin to give it a shiny appearance.

This spice signifies the *Holy Spirit*. You can never purify yourself without the Holy Spirit. The olive oil used as an anointing oil in the tabernacle of Moses was used to sanctify the priests (Ex 28:41). The Lord Jesus Himself prayed that God should sanctify us (Jn 17:17).

Attar of Rose, a fragrant oil, is one of the most valuable products of Bulgaria and is heavily taxed on export. Once, a tourist unwilling to pay the duty sought to evade customs by concealing two vials of the precious ointment in his suitcase. Unfortunately, a small quantity of the aromatic oil leaked out. By the time he reached the train station, the aroma was emanating from the luggage, announcing the presence of the hidden treasure. The authorities promptly confiscated the costly souvenir. The scent of holiness in the life of a believer who walks in meekness and humility before God cannot be hidden.

When you yield your life to the Holy Spirit and walk in partnership with Him, asking Him to help you to be like a Bride who must make herself ready to meet the Bridegroom, He will come to you like olive oil. He will totally smear you with His supernatural olive oil that will make you shine from the inside out, from deep within your inner being to your outer countenance.

As I was writing this, in a vision, the Lord showed me the Garden of Eden. I saw an exquisitely beautifully colorful garden. Butterflies were flying leisurely through it. Then I saw a wind blowing upon the garden. When it did, the sweet smell from the spices in the garden permeated the whole atmosphere of the garden.

The word of the Lord then came to me: The wind is the Holy Spirit Whose breeze is ever-present in the garden. The body of the believer, the temple or dwelling-place of God, should become like that garden. His or her life should be scented with these twelve spices. When a believer lives such a consecrated life, the Lord Jesus will walk in that garden just like He walked in the Garden of Eden in fellowship with Adam and Eve (*cf.* 2 Cor 6:16).

CHAPTER 2

The Bridal Gown

REVELATION 19:7-9

7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

Another aspect of how the Bride is made ready concerns how she is adorned.

The apostle John was taken to a place in heaven. Upon reaching there, the angel told him to look. He saw the city, New Jerusalem, coming down from a higher realm of heaven to where John was at that time. He saw New Jerusalem adorned and decorated like a Bride made ready for her bridegroom (Rev 21:2). Such was the beauty of this city, the New Jerusalem, that the angel compared it to a Bride who had made herself ready for the wedding.

Prepared to be Ready

We must not end up like the foolish virgins, but instead, we should be like the wise virgins who made themselves ready. Look at the last part of Rev 19:7. It says, “His wife has made herself ready.” The Jewish New Testament gives more meaning to that phrase. It says, “the wife prepared herself to be ready.” It is one thing to be ready and it is quite another thing to *be prepared to be ready*. The sad thing is that most Christians think that they’re ready but very few are really prepared to be ready.

A pastor who lives in Vancouver, Canada once narrated to me a very interesting dream his wife had. In the dream she saw two men going towards a boat. One was fully dressed in scuba gear. The other man just had his swimming trunks on. Both got into the boat and rowed into deep sea. Then suddenly from nowhere came a huge tempest and caused the boat to capsize.

From where she was standing on the shore she saw the man who had the diving gear on swim safely and reach the shore. She did not know what happened to the other man who only had his swimming trunks. Perplexed, she turned and looked at the Lord who had been standing beside her all the while. He, too, had watched the whole scene but said nothing. She asked the Lord what happened to the person with the swimming trunks.

The Lord answered her that the man who was fully equipped with scuba gear reached the shore because he was prepared. The other man with just the swimming trunks, even if he had reached the shore, would have made it by the skin of his teeth and only because of the grace of God. At the Rapture, if you are caught up, it is because you made yourself ready. If you are left behind, and

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if you enter the Kingdom of God at all, you would have made it just by the skin of your teeth and by the grace of God.

The scary part of the dream is this: The Lord did not show her whether the second man had made it or not. ‘Once saved does not mean forever saved.’ You can lose your salvation at any time if you are not careful. If you think this is very hard to accept, all you need to do is to study the Bible.

Hold Fast Your Crown

The Bible tells us very clearly – *guard your salvation*. One of the most severe warnings Jesus Christ ever gave is found here:

REVELATION 3:11

11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

The Lord says to hold on to our crown. Do not lose it. Why should you hold fast to your crown if there is no danger of losing it? If there is no danger of losing something, why should you hold fast to it? If nobody is coming to steal your goods, why should you guard them? There is an enemy after your soul, an enemy after your crown.

The Lord Jesus Christ very lovingly admonishes us to hold fast our crown – salvation. He that endures to the end, only he shall be saved (Matt 24:13). What then of those who do not endure till the end?

In these last days the Holy Spirit is calling the Church with the invitation, “Come into the bridal bedchamber. Don’t just stand

outside. Come; come inside where your Bridegroom has prepared everything for you.” Did the Lord say, “I am going to My Father’s house to prepare a place for Myself? No. Rather, He said, “*I am going to My Father’s house to prepare a place for you*” (Jn 14:2). Not for Himself but for us.

If He has gone on to prepare a place for us, what should our attitude be? Shouldn’t we too get ready to go to that mansion? Some may think, “Since He is doing the preparing, why should I bother to do anything?” That is our present attitude. It should not be. The wife – the Bride, must also prepare herself to be ready.

Are You Rapture-Ready?

There is so much confusion about the Rapture. Theologians have done a great disservice to the body of Christ by confusing it further.

There are three theories as to when the Rapture will happen: *pre-tribulation*, *mid-tribulation* and *post-tribulation Rapture*. So which is the right one? When will the Rapture actually take place?

In 1985, I fasted for 40 days. On the 40th day of the fast, the Lord Jesus Christ, accompanied by hundreds of angels, came down in the clouds into my room. He said, “Now I will show you the things that are going to come to pass on this earth.” When He spoke those words, the wall against which I was standing disappeared and I saw many world events that are going to take place in the days to come.

I saw the Rapture as it took place and the last great revival that will sweep the whole world. I saw the coming of the Antichrist,

his reign, and the great worldwide tribulation that would follow. I saw all these events taking place in chronological order. I knew when each event would take place. After showing me this, the Lord Jesus said, “Seal up this vision and do not tell anyone.”

I cannot reveal the chronological sequence of events, but I can affirm with certainty that they will take place. Whenever I share this, people ask me one question: *Since you saw all the events taking place in chronological order, which rapture timing is correct – pre-trib, mid-trib or post-trib?* I’ve always answered like this: Whether it is pre-trib, mid-trib, or post-trib, if you want to take the *rapture trip*, the most essential thing is to *be ready*.

Does it really matter when the rapture will take place in relation to the tribulation? What would be the point if you did know, and yet you were not ready? But if you are ready, whether it is pre-trib, mid-trib or post-trib, when the trip comes you will be taken. We could be completely correct as far as our theology is concerned, but what is the use if our hearts are far from the truth? There is nothing wrong with theology, but we try to be so doctrinally and theologically correct and yet we can be so out of the Spirit.

How To Be Ready

On March 4, 2015, in the evening, at 9:45 PM, as I was waiting on God and meditating on His Word I received a vision. In it, I saw standing before me a beautifully-adorned Middle Eastern bride. She wore a pure white gown. She had a laced veil on her head that looked like a head covering. As I gazed at her, at the same time I saw her as a tall, beautiful, crystal-clear glass chandelier shining very brightly with light coming from within it. On her feet, she wore pure-white shining shoes.

As I pondered the vision the Holy Spirit gave me the following understanding:

1. The beautifully adorned bride represents a believer who needs to get ready as the Bride of Christ.
2. The crystal-clear transparent glass signifies that the believer needs to be made clean so that he has nothing to hide.
3. The light that came from within the chandelier signifies holiness – the glory that came forth from the Lord Jesus at His Transfiguration.
4. The head-gear veil signifies:
 - i) The Priestly Crown – holiness unto the Lord
 - ii) The bride thinks of no other than her bridegroom – single-minded devotion.
5. The pure white crystal-like shoes signify a walk before God with a perfect heart.

This is how the believer is expected to make themselves ready as the Bride. How does the wife – the Bride – make herself ready?

REVELATION 19:8-9

8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

When we are born-again, the Lord God clothes us with a garment of salvation and adorns us with a robe of righteousness

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(Isa 61:10). What is this garment of salvation like? It is *fine linen*. The fine linen, the Bible tells us, is the *righteousness of the saints* (Rev 19:8).

Look closely at this scripture. It is not the *righteousness of Christ*, but the *righteousness of the saints*. There is a vast difference between the righteousness of Christ and the righteousness of the saints. Righteousness of the saints is also called *righteous deeds*.

The Bible tells us very clearly that “all our righteousness are like filthy rags” (Isa 64:6). When we accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal savior, God imputed the righteousness of Christ to us (Rom 4:6; 5:17). From then on, when God looks at us, He sees us complete, perfect, sanctified, purified and righteous in Christ Jesus.

As far as our position in Christ is concerned, we are righteous. There is no doubt about it; there is nothing you can do to change it. But that is not enough. The Bible tells us, “Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (Jas 2:17). So after being born again, after putting on the garment of salvation, and after putting on Christ Jesus as your righteousness, the Lord God now expects us to possess the righteousness of the saints.

Consider the following illustration. Let’s say I give you my watch. You will look at the watch and say, “Nice watch. Thank you, dear brother.” If anyone asks you about the watch, you will say, “This watch was given to me by Brother Sadhu.” You will keep on replying that way for some time. But after a while, when someone asks you about the watch, you will say, “This is my watch.” After some time, you will no longer say “this is Brother Sadhu’s watch.” The Sadhu’s watch has now become your watch. When something you have received has been experienced, actualized and put into practice, it becomes your own.

In the same way, the righteousness of Christ which we have received from Him becomes our righteousness when we walk in the Word, walk in the truth and we begin to practice His righteous deeds. That righteousness will spontaneously flow out of our inner-most beings, a testimony of the Living Christ within us. The righteousness of Christ has become our righteousness.

Let us look a little further at the fine linen. The Bible describes it as *clean and white*. What does *clean and white* actually mean? From the day that you receive the garment of fine linen until the day that the trumpet sounds calling for the Rapture, it is your duty to make sure that the fine linen remains clean and white.

If you are not careful, the linen can become defiled and soiled through the lusts of the flesh and the works of the flesh (Jude 23). The Bridegroom – the Lord Jesus – when He walks into our midst to look for a Bride clean and white should not be shocked to find a Bride in soiled garments. No earthly bride would walk down the aisle on her wedding day in a dirty gown. For that one moment of her life, every bride will be dressed her best. She will not want to mess up that day.

Clean and White Linen

The fine linen that the Bride is adorned with must be clean and white. It must be maintained clean and white because it can get filthy.

2 CORINTHIANS 7:1 (AMP)

1 THEREFORE, SINCE these [great] promises are ours, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that contaminates and defiles body and spirit, and bring [our] consecration to completeness in the [reverential] fear of God.

The Bridal Gown

Purify yourselves from the filthiness of the spirit and the flesh. After you are born-again, when you allow sin to still reign in your body, your spirit can become defiled. Your soul can become defiled and your flesh can become defiled. That is why the Bible tells us to pursue and perfect holiness. The Jewish New Testament translates this scripture quite beautifully as: “strive to be completely holy, out of reverence for God.”

The word “strive” in Greek is *agonizomai* meaning *to contend*. The English word “agonize” comes from this same Greek word. This word-picture reminds us of the Lord Jesus agonizing in the Garden of Gethsemane. He agonized – contended with His flesh to bring it under submission to Father God’s will (Lk 22:39-44).

When you strive, you are working hard at something. You strive to pursue your heart’s desire, to be holy and to be blameless. The Bible admonishes us to keep our spirits, souls and bodies holy and blameless till the Lord comes (1 Thess 5:23).

Bejeweled

After you put on the clean and white garment, then the Lord God decorates you with jewelry.

EZEKIEL 16:11-13

11 I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck.

12 And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head.

13 Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty.

ISAIAH 61:10

10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

The jewelry mentioned in Ezekiel chapter 16: *nose-ring, bracelets, earrings, rings, necklace, and crown* signify the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the Bride.

The “bracelets” signify the gifts of power, namely the gift of faith, the gift of working of miracles, and the gift of healing, because they often involve the laying on of hands. The “chain on the neck” signifies the gift of the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. The prophet Daniel was honored with a gold chain put around his neck when he interpreted some strange “other-worldly” language to King Belshazzar (Dan 5:16).

In the year 1986 I was fasting for three days in the Himalayan Mountains. On the third day the Lord Jesus appeared before me with two ministering spirits from heaven. The Lord Jesus said to me, “I am going to bless you with a new gift. I am going to anoint you abundantly with the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge.” When He spoke this, one of the ministering spirits that was standing beside the Lord Jesus presented a beautiful chain with a crystal stone hanging in the middle. The crystal stone was huge and engraved with intricate designs. When he put the chain on my neck, I felt a powerful anointing come on me. From that day onwards these two gifts – word of wisdom and word of knowledge – began to work very powerfully in my ministry.

The Bridal Gown

The nose-ring signifies the gift of discerning of spirits. Earrings signify the ability to hear and include the gifts of prophecy, diverse tongues and the interpretation of tongues. The Bride is now not only adorned in a beautiful clean and white fine linen but also bedecked with fine jewelry.

The Beauty That The King Desires

What is the result of making ourselves ready to meet the Bridegroom? How will the Bridegroom see us when we are all fair and beautiful – in righteousness and true holiness?

1. The King desires your beauty.

PSALMS 45:11

11 So the King will greatly desire your beauty; Because He is your Lord, worship Him.

Each time you come before the Lord in prayer, before you even come, the King will be anxiously waiting for you because He greatly desires to see your face. You will exhibit the glory of the Lord.

When you come before the presence of the Lord, He will begin to feed you.

EZEKIEL 16:13

13 Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty.

What will the Lord feed you with?

- i. **Flour** – the *Word of God*.
- ii. **Honey** – the *joy of the Lord*. The Bible tells us to taste and see how good the Lord is (Ps 34:8). The joy of the Lord will always be bubbling out of you.
- iii. **Oil** – *fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit*. You will be anointed with fresh oil that will make you beautiful – within and without (Ps 92:10; 45:13).

2. You will find grace and favor with God.

ESTHER 2:17

17 The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

3. Your eyes shall see the King in all His glory.

ISAIAH 33:17

17 Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; They will see the land that is very far off.

4. The Lord will put His beauty of perfection – His holiness – upon you.

EZEKIEL 16:14

14 Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord God.

5. You will be counted worthy to be raptured – caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

REVELATION 19:9

9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

It is God's expressed desire to perfect a people among the larger body of Christ to become the Bride. Will you prepare to make yourself ready to meet the Bridegroom?

CHAPTER 3

Bride's Love

SONG 1:4

4 Draw me away! We will run after you. The king has brought me into his chambers. We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you.

What would a bride do in the bridal bedchamber? Many believers desire to enter into the most Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies to a believer is the bridal bedchamber to the bride. The experiences encountered by a believer in the Holy of Holies are exactly the same as the experiences that a bride encounters in the bridal bedchamber.

There are many mysteries in the spiritual realm but the majority of Christians are not ready to grasp or understand them. I concur with what the apostle Paul wrote in the book of Ephesians:

EPHESIANS 5:25-32

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

28 So husbands ought to 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 the Lord does the church.

30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

The apostle Paul left the mystery hanging in mid-air without divulging its secrets. If the church today, in this 21st century, is not able to comprehend the deep things of the Spirit, how much less during the time of the apostle Paul? He had just implied that *we are bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh*, and then quickly finished by saying that this is a deep mystery. He could have gone further to explain the mystery – a powerful revelation of the union between the Bride and the Bridegroom. But instead, the apostle Paul left the mystery sealed up; perhaps it was not yet time to release this revelation.

The apostle John says in the book of Revelation, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (Rev 1:10). I have spoken with many mystics, seers and prophets who say the experience of being 'in the Spirit' is still a mystery to them. It is difficult to comprehend what really constitutes being in this state.

What does it really mean to be 'in the Spirit'? It does not simply mean stepping out of the natural realm and stepping into the spiritual realm. To be 'in the Spirit' is a far deeper spiritual experience. It has something to do with the bridal union with the Bridegroom. It is, indeed, a marvelous mystery.

The Bridal Bedchamber

Allow me to take you on a journey to explore the bridal bedchamber. How does the Bridegroom expect the Bride to behave in the bedchamber? If I may, I will be a little more candid and frank in explaining this mystery. I sincerely and humbly hope that the reader will not misunderstand me as I use this earthly concept to try to illustrate a heavenly mystery. I cannot think of a better illustration of the union between Christ and the believer than this. Please try to think broadly, and not in an earthly, human sense.

The union between the Bride (the believer) and the Bridegroom (the Lord Jesus) can best be described as *making love* with Jesus. The term "making love" is not to be confused with the earthly concept of love-making in the context of a sexual relationship, like that between husband and wife. It is a much higher experience. What do I mean by this?

Christianity is not a religion but a *relationship*. If you can understand the concept of prayer as not merely asking for things, but as a relationship of communion, your whole attitude towards the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father God and towards the Holy Spirit will change drastically. Your attitude towards Christianity itself will drastically change.

The reason why most Christians are lethargic and lukewarm is because they treat and view Christianity as a religion. Christianity is not merely a religion, but a relationship between a father and his son, between a father and his daughter.

So what happens in the bridal chamber and how does the bride behave? How does the bridegroom behave when they are alone in the bridal bedchamber? First, you need to understand that prayer is not a mental exercise, but a relationship. When you grasp this fact, you can go further in understanding what constitutes the concept of making love to the Lord Jesus. When we understand the concept of communing in love with the Lord Jesus in an intimate way, we can go further in our walk with the Lord.

Most of the time when we pray, we may begin by singing a couple praise and worship songs and then we get straight down to business, asking for things from God: *Father God, bless this, Father God bless that...* and we go through the rest of the formula. Is this how you pray?

Crucify your Impatience

When you come before the presence of the living God, before you jump into asking, confessing, and believing for things, the first thing you need to do is to *crucify your time*.

The greatest obstacle to a meaningful and intimate relationship with the Lord is our impatience. We are so time-conscious that we feel as though we must have everything done in – say, five minutes, or perhaps ten minutes at most. Anything more than that and the alarm will go off. Or we may doze off.

When you come to sit at the feet of the Lord, leave your watch or alarm clock behind. Just sit still before the Lord (Ps 46:10).

Do not say anything. Just sit down at His feet and let all the raging storms and waves within your heart and mind settle down. The reason why our prayers are not answered and not even heard most of the time by the Lord Jesus Christ is because our prayer frequency is not attuned to the frequency of heaven. Get your mind focused first; sit down and be still. Don't rush off to go through your shopping list of requests. When you are settled down, talk love to the Lord Jesus. How exactly do you talk love to the Lord Jesus?

Talking Love to the Lord

When I first came to the United States in 1991, I stayed with a loving American family. I noticed how the husband and wife talked to each other. They called each other lovingly using names such as: *honey*, *darling*, or *sweetheart*. I wondered why they did not use other words like *pepper*, *salt* or *ginger*. Or how about *cheese* or *butter*? Why only *honey*, *sweetheart*, and *darling*? "Why don't they call each other by their names?" I wondered. I then realized that they called each other *honey*, *sweetheart* and *darling* to show their love and affection for each other.

I was once a guest at my friend's house for lunch. He and his wife were lovebirds since their college days. They got married after college and continued being a very loving couple. The Indian culture is very orthodox and traditional. External displays of affection are very rare. The wife normally does not call her husband by name. Rather, she addresses him as in the ancient days by the title *lord*, as Sarah used to call her husband Abraham

(Gen 18:12). In these modern days, Indian women feel at liberty to call their husbands by name, or as “daddy”, as their children call them.

So while we were having lunch, the wife called her husband from the kitchen, saying “De Kanna.” The word *de* in the Tamil (Indian) language is used to call someone who is younger and is disrespectful when used at someone older. Certainly a wife should never use that word to call her husband. So when I heard this woman calling her husband by that coarse word, it was a total shock to me. I thought to myself, “Why would this woman address her husband like that?” I tried to keep my composure and minded my own business, focusing on eating her delicious food.

The woman came over from the kitchen to the dining room with a bowl of salad and laid it on the table. She then put her arm around her husband, pinched his ears, and said, “De Kanna (sweet darling), how’s the cooking?” I experienced culture shock, even though I was within my own culture.

After lunch was over, the woman went to make tea in the kitchen. In a soft voice I asked the man, a good friend of mine, “By the way, I am really curious about something. Why did your wife very irreverently and disrespectfully call you as ‘De Kanna’? What kind of a man are you to accept these insults, even while you continue to love and embrace your wife!”

Upon hearing this, he started laughing and said to me, “This is called love, brother, love – sweet talk between a husband and a wife. This is how she expresses her love for me.” They were two lovebirds. Indian families are generally very conservative in expressing their love, but not this couple – they were very open about expressing their love and affection for each other.

Later on in my life, when I began to walk closer with the Lord and began to experience intimacy with Him, I recalled this incident and realized how this couple bypassed the formalities of a marriage relationship and were just like two very close, intimate friends. This is how our relationship with the Lord Jesus should be in the bridal bedchamber. Like two good friends who can sit down and just talk and laugh about everything.

Most of the time, when we pray we address God as “*Dear Jesus*” or “*Father God*.” We use the same phrases and words over and over again. The first step in getting intimate with the Lord Jesus is to use descriptive names to express our love for the Lord God.

A study of the Book of Psalms will show us how King David does not use the same phrases or words repeatedly. Instead, he consistently used different phrases and words to express his love for the Lord God. It is no wonder that the Lord God called him “Beloved” and “a man after my own heart.”

When King David closed his eyes to pray, he instantly touched the heart of God. The very first sentence that he uttered would totally melt God’s heart, and the Lord would then say, “David my son, whatever you ask, I will give you, because you touched my heart.”

Let’s consider some examples. In Psalms 65:2 he addresses God as, “O You who hear prayer.” Instead of just saying ‘Lord God,’ he calls out to God with great passion: ‘O You who hear prayer!’ Read the following scriptures to see other ways by which King David called upon God:

PSALMS 123:1

1 Unto You I lift up my eyes, O You who dwell in the heavens.

PSALMS 132:5

5 Until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

PSALMS 134:3

3 The Lord who made heaven and earth bless you from Zion!

PSALMS 135:21

*21 Blessed be the Lord out of Zion, who dwells in Jerusalem!
Praise the Lord!*

Notice in the Scriptures above how King David used different phrases to address God. Each time King David knelt to pray, the angelic hosts must have watched with eager anticipation to see how he would express his love and devotion to God next.

There is a certain man of God in the United States who was graced by God to be taken up to heaven. Among the many things he saw in heaven there was one thing in particular that mystified him. He saw seraphim flying around and above the throne of God (Isa 6:1-2).

Each time they flew around the throne they would cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty." They have been doing this for eons. So the man of God became quite curious and asked an accompanying angel, "Don't these seraphim ever get tired of flying around the throne singing Holy, Holy, Holy?" The angel's response astounded him.

The angel said, "Each time the seraphim fly around the throne they see God's character in a new manner. When they see that, they get so excited they cry 'Holy, Holy, Holy.' By the time they

finish one revolution and come back for the next round, they see another facet of the nature of God and they get so excited that they cry again, 'Holy, Holy, Holy.'" Can you imagine that for eons these seraphim have been going around and around the throne, beholding a new revelation of God's nature each time? Marvelous!

We must remove from our eyes the veil of mere religiosity and see the Bridegroom new and afresh. When you do, you will get enthralled by the awesome beauty of His face. When a person beholds the beauty of the Lord, how else could he possibly respond but to fall on his face and worship Him who is beautiful beyond description? He is too marvelous for words and too wonderful for comprehension. He is like nothing you have ever seen or heard. Only such an encounter could cause inspired words of love to spring forth from the well of our heart.

Give your Heart

To such a one as the Lord Jesus, who has given His life for us that we may become *bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh* (Eph 5:30), do you not think that we owe much more than the mere belief that we've been offering Him? What does He ask of us? Did He say, "Give me your car, your house, your wealth"? No! All He asks is, "Give me your heart. I want to come and make My abode there" (Jn 14:23; Rev 3:20). That is all He is asking of us – *an undivided and totally surrendered heart*.

Moreover, consider how the bride of the Song of Solomon addresses the bridegroom:

SONG 1:7

7 Tell me, O you whom I love, where you feed your flock, where you make it rest at noon. For why should I be as one who veils herself by the flocks of your companions?

She calls the bridegroom “O you whom I love.” Observe how intimately the bride calls upon her beloved. Not with a mundane title, but with a love that springs forth from the depths of the well of her heart.

This should be the first thing you do when you sit down in the presence of the Lord. Just open your heart and call to Him: *Oh Rose of Sharon, Oh Lily of the Valley, Oh Bright and Morning Star!* Every time you mention a new descriptive name of the Lord Jesus, fresh love will bubble up in your heart. When it bubbles in your heart, it unleashes a fresh flow of the rivers of the life of the Holy Spirit to flow through you like rivers of living waters. You are then continually bathed in His love. It is as though a bucket of water is being poured over your head and you are bathed with a fresh baptism of the Lord Jesus’ love.

This is what I personally practice to enter into the realm of the Spirit. Just touch the heart of the Lover of your soul first. Then He will arise from His throne and stretching forth His hands towards you and say, “Come, My Bride, come.” The love of God will begin to flow through you and within you. The next moment you will find yourself standing before Him at His throne, beholding the glories of heaven!

This is what the church must learn to do. Throw away your watches; sit at His feet and gaze at His beauty. Don’t just study the Word, but meditate on it, especially on the book of Psalms. Learn from the Psalmist how to use descriptive words to express

your love for God. Study the names of God and the names of the Lord Jesus.

Give Him Appreciation

When you begin to enter into that level of intimacy with the Lord Jesus and open your heart to Him, the hand of the Lord will begin to draw you to Himself. "Is it really true?" you may wonder. Look at what the Bible says:

SONG 1:4

4 Draw me away! We will run after you. The king has brought me into his chambers. We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you.

When you begin to draw near in love towards the Lord Jesus, He will stretch out His hands to hold your hands and will begin to draw you to Himself. The fervency of His pull on you is dependent on the love that flows out from your heart towards Him. Prayer is not just a time to ask God for things; it is the outflowing of a beautiful relationship like the one between a bride and her bridegroom. Learn to appreciate Him for who He is and what He has done for you. Don't just simply say "Lord, give me this or give me that."

Give Him *commendation*. Consider these Scriptures to see how King David extols and commends God for His goodness.

PSALMS 36:5-9

5 Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

6 Your righteousness is like the great mountains; Your judgments are a great deep; O Lord, You preserve man and beast.

7 How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.

8 They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures.

9 For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.

PSALMS 40:5

5 Many, O Lord my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done; And Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order; If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

These Scriptures show how King David extols and commends God for all the wonderful things He had done in his life. He goes on blessing God and showing appreciation to Him. Just express your love to God.

Give Him Honor

You can also show appreciation by giving *honor* to God.

PSALMS 29:1-2

1 Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, give unto the Lord glory and strength.

2 Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

PSALMS 34:3

3 Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.

PSALMS 135:5

5 For I know that the Lord is great, and our Lord is above all gods.

We can give honor to God by glorifying and magnifying his Holy Name. He will be thrilled when you do that. That is what the angels in heaven are continuously doing. If you study the book of Revelation very carefully, the angels offer a seven-fold praise to God, just like the seven colors of the rainbow. The rainbow can be seen over the throne of God (Rev 4:3).

The angels in heaven offer without ceasing seven-fold praise to God, using seven different words to praise and worship the ever-living eternal Lord God (Rev 5:12; 7:12). Why are angels powerful? It is because they continually praise God. (For a more detail study of this, please read the book *The Art of Worship*.)

The reason why the angels and believers are asked to praise continually is not because God will cease to exist otherwise. No, that's not it. The Lord God is the eternal great I AM – the One *who was, and is, and is to come*. It is so that we can be strong in the power of His might.

When you give commendation to God, you stand before His Presence, and from His Face will flow grace and blessings towards you. The seven-fold blessings of God, like the seven-fold light-rays of a rainbow, will shine forth from His Face to baptize you with His goodness and love. Isn't the Lord Jesus wonderful?

Give Him Thanks

We can also show our appreciation to God by giving Him thanks.

PSALMS 30:4

4 Sing praise to the Lord, you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name.

PSALMS 50:14

14 Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High.

PSALMS 75:1

1 We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks! For Your wondrous works declare that Your name is near.

In everything give thanks to the Lord for it is good and pleasing to Him (1 Thes 5:18). Learn to give thanks to the Lord for every small thing He does for you. For in doing so, you are showing your appreciation to Him. Consider the incident of the healing of the ten lepers.

LUKE 17:11-19

11 Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off.

13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

14 So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

*15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned,
and with a loud voice glorified God,
16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And
he was a Samaritan.
17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But
where are the nine?
18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God
except this foreigner?"
19 And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has
made you well."*

The Lord Jesus healed ten lepers but only one man, a Samaritan, came back to give Him thanks. The Lord then asked the man what happened to the other nine who were healed. He expected them to be grateful and thankful, as well. It is the least we can do to show our gratitude to the good Lord who showers us with His manifold blessings which we don't even deserve.

Is there anyone who deserves His mercy? Is there anyone who deserves His grace? We don't deserve either God's blessings or His grace. We don't. If there is anyone who deserves to go to hell more than Lucifer, it is us. Lucifer was never created in the image of God but we were; yet what do we do – and in all of it remain unthankful and ungrateful. So the least we could do is to give thanks to God and magnify Him for all His wonderful deeds.

Lie on His Bosom

One of the highest forms of intimate relationship with the Lord in prayer is to learn to lie on the Lord Jesus' bosom. It is the secret place of the Most High God which very few of His saints have

discovered. When the prophet Moses wanted to see the face of the Lord God, the Lord asked him to meet at a certain place.

EXODUS 33:20-23

20 But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."

*21 And the Lord said, "**Here is a place by Me**, and you shall stand on the rock.*

22 So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.

23 Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

The Lord God has a secret place. The Psalmist calls it *the secret place of the Most High God* (Ps 91:1). This secret place is the bosom of God. Please consider the following scriptures:

JOHN 1:18

18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

PROVERBS 8:30-31

30 Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him,

31 Rejoicing in His inhabited world, and my delight was with the sons of men.

The Lord Jesus abided in this place – the bosom of God – during His earthly sojourn, just as he does in heaven.

What endeared the apostle John to the Lord Jesus, above all the other apostles? Among the twelve disciples, three of them, Peter, James and John, belonged to the inner circle. Among these three, only one, John, was an intimate friend of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus loved John because, among the twelve, John was the only one who was always leaning on His bosom.

What does it really mean to lie on the bosom of the Lord Jesus? Let us look at this scripture from several different angles as seen in different translations of the Bible:

JOHN 13:23 (KJV)

23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

JOHN 13:23 (TLB)

23 Since I was sitting next to Jesus at the table, being his closest friend,

JOHN 13:23 (NET Bible)

23 One of his disciples, the one Jesus loved, was at the table to the right of Jesus in a place of honor.

JOHN 13:23 (BBE)

23 There was at table one of his disciples, the one dear to Jesus, resting his head on Jesus' breast.

JOHN 13:23 (The Message)

23 One of the disciples, the one Jesus loved dearly, was reclining against him, his head on his shoulder.

JOHN 13:23 (AMP)

23 One of His disciples, whom Jesus loved [whom He esteemed and delighted in], was reclining [next to Him] on Jesus' bosom.

The word “bosom” in Greek is *kolpos*. It is used to describe *the front of the body between the arms*. It is used figuratively to emphasize *a place of honor, blessedness, and intimate affection*.

The apostle John sought a place close to the Lord Jesus. It was he who chose that place. He clung to the Lord. When the other disciples fled in fear for their lives when the Lord Jesus was arrested, John risked his life and chose to stay close to the Lord Jesus at His trial (Jn 18:15). Even at the place of the crucifixion, it was only John who still stood by the Lord (Jn 19:26).

It is absolutely possible for any believer to find that secret place of God and learn to abide in the bosom of God. To lie on the bosom of God means *to abide in Christ Jesus*.

As I was praying in the afternoon of August 30, 2015, I saw a vision. A bright and fiery hand took from within me what looked like a seed and planted it in the soil of a garden in heaven.

The seed began to germinate and sprout. It grew into a beautiful, glistening flower – seemingly made of light itself. It looked quite similar to a morning glory flower. The flower then began to shine forth with glory.

As I watched, the Lord Jesus appeared, translucent and radiant. He plucked the flower and placed it in the hands of the Father God. The Father God appeared so gigantic that the Lord and I, standing beside Him, looked tiny in comparison. The Father God also appeared translucent, filled with light and fire.

He took the flower in His right hand and placed it in His dwelling place.

The Lord Jesus then said, "If you want to abide in the Father's dwelling place, you must be transformed into light. That is possible only by abiding in Me – fellowshiping with Me in the light and walking in the light." The Bible says: "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn 1:5-7).

Does not the Bible say: "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded" (Jas 4:8). The Lord Jesus reciprocated John's longing for intimacy by loving him back. John's place of rest and refuge was nowhere other than the bosom of the Lord Jesus. He would regularly lie on the bosom of the Lord Jesus and gaze into the beauty and wonder of His face. As a result, the Lord Jesus esteemed and valued John's love. John became a delight to the Lord. The Lord then conferred on him the honor of sharing with him the secrets of the end-times (Rev 1:1-2).

Let us also consider another example in the Bible.

LUKE 10:38-42

38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.

40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things."

42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

When the Lord Jesus Christ visited Bethany, Mary, the youngest sister of Lazarus, sat at His feet and listened to His words, much to the chagrin of her older sister, Martha. Martha engaged herself to show off her culinary skills to their honored guest, whereas all Mary did was just to sit at His feet and look intently into the face of the Lord Jesus. Mary never spoke a single word; she just sat at His feet. Mary was the perfect Bride who sought the intimate union with the Lord Jesus by sitting at His feet. It is comparable to lying on the bosom of the Lord.

When you practice this art of waiting – lying on the bosom of the Lord Jesus – how will He then respond to you? The Bible says: *He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love [for love waved as a protecting and comforting banner over my head when I was near him]* (Song 2:4, AMP).

Observe the phrase, "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." He will pull you over to Himself and put His arms around you and shower you with kisses. It is quite like a newly married couple would express their intimate love in the bridal bedchamber.

The Lord Jesus, like the bridegroom, will pull you to Himself and hold you close to His bosom. He will speak tender words of love to you: "How lovely are your cheeks; your earrings set them afire!

How lovely is your neck, enhanced by a string of jewels. We will make for you earrings of gold and beads of silver" (Song 1:10-11). He will begin to gaze into your face to study your beauty.

This experience is so beautifully described in the love poem of the Song of Solomon:

SONG 2:14 (AMP)

14 [So I went with him, and when we were climbing the rocky steps up the hillside, my beloved shepherd said to me] O my dove, [while you are here] in the seclusion of the clefts in the solid rock, in the sheltered and secret place of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.

In December of 1994 I was visiting Kenya on a ministry trip. I spent New Year's Day of 1995 there, too. On the first day of the year, as there were no meetings, I spent that day fasting, praying and waiting on the Lord. I started by singing some sweet worship songs of love to the Lord Jesus. As I was thus engaged in worshipping the Lord, the glorious presence of God came and permeated the hotel room. This propelled me to sing more intimate songs of worship. As I was lost in worship, my spiritual eyes being opened, I saw the Lord Jesus standing before me.

As I was kneeling beside the bed, the Lord came and sat on the bed beside me. He then looked right into my eyes with tender love that was so captivating. Thinking that the Lord had come to speak to me about something, I asked him, "Lord Jesus, what do you want to speak to your servant?" He said casually, "Nothing in particular. I have not come to talk to you about any matter. I have just come to receive this worship that you are giving Me." And then He merely said, "Just go on." I went on singing songs of love

to the Lord. The Lord took delight in my offering of love to Him as He kept smiling at me. After a while, He just disappeared. I was so thrilled that day – the first day of the New Year.

When the heart of the Lord is delighted and thrilled by our worship, He will stretch out His hand to us. Clasp our hand in His, He will lead us into His banqueting house. What is that place? The Bible says: “Blessed is the man You choose and cause to approach You, that he may dwell in Your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, of Your holy temple” (Ps 65:4). It is the banqueting house of His mansion. Why was the apostle John singled out among the other apostles to see the apocalyptic events found in the Book of Revelation? It is because he was always leaning on the bosom of the Lord Jesus.

So, does this mean that if we live a life of walking in intimate fellowship with God, the Lord God will then take us into His secrets? The Bible says: “The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant” (Ps 25:14).

I once heard the experience of a dear man of God in India who was graced by the mercies of God to see the Face of God and the dwelling place of Almighty God. He was taken in the spirit up to heaven. While there, the Lord Jesus asked him if he would like to see the face of God. Puzzled, the man of God, knowing the Bible like most of us, said to the Lord, “But isn’t it written that nobody can see the face of God?” (Ex 33:20; Jn 1:18). To which the Lord smiled and answered, “Yes, but haven’t you read what I said also?”

Seeing his bewildered face, the Lord quoted to him the following scripture: “All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Matt 11:27; Lk 10:22; Jn 16:25).

The Lord Jesus took hold of his hand and led him to a faraway place which was secluded from the other parts of heaven. The whole region was mountainous and seemed covered with marvellous light (Dan 2:22). There was a particular mountain which seemed covered with snow (Ps 48:1). The man of God realized that it is the Shekinah glory of God that appears like snow on top of it (1 Tim 6:16). The whole atmosphere and ambience in this place was stillness and absolute silence. Because the Almighty God dwells in such a lofty and mountainous place, that is why, perhaps, each time He appeared before the Old Testament saints, the chosen venue was always a mountain (Ex 19:16; 24:12-18).

The Lord Jesus told him that in the midst of that particular mountain is the abode of God the Father (Dan 7:9,13). The man of God stepped closer and saw a majestic and lofty white throne, on which he could perceive a Being seated (Rev 20:11). The Lord Jesus then told this man of God, "I will enable you to catch a glimpse of My Father's face just for a fleeting second." At the word of the Lord a mist-like cloud that was hovering over the mountain faded for just a split-nanosecond. This man of God then saw the face of the God of Israel (Ex 24:10-11). What a blessed privilege! This privilege is for every true believer who has made his or her heart pure, and who seeks the Lord God with all their heart like the Bride.

Even today, the Lord will offer you the same blessing, the same privilege, as He gives to any one of his dear brides. If you are willing to learn to talk love with Him, He will pull you to Himself. He will take you by your hands, pull you to Himself and put His arms around your waist and will look tenderly into your eyes.

I have heard lovers tell me that when they are deeply in love, they don't talk with words, they talk with their eyes. That is exactly what the Lord Jesus Himself does. He will look deeply into your eyes and you, too, can look deeply into His. With that one look He will communicate to you a thousand things.

When you learn to do away with your mundane traditions of just simply praying to ask for things and instead decide to be like a bride, walking in intimate love with the Lord Jesus Christ, I promise you in Jesus' name that every time you close your eyes, you will be brought to the banqueting house of your Bridegroom. Every time you close your eyes, you will see the face of your Bridegroom.

The Lord is calling *you* into such an intimate walk with Him. Remember what the Lord Jesus said: *I am preparing to gather My Bride to Myself.*

JOHN 14:3

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

The Bride's Walk

On December 31, 2000, I was waiting on God, spending the whole day in fasting and prayer. As I waited on God, my spiritual eyes were opened to see a unique vision. I saw the heavens parting before me, and as I beheld the open heavens, I saw a very beautiful woman seated on a donkey. I observed that this woman was immaculately dressed, adorned like a bride made ready for her wedding day. On the left and right sides of the bride were her many bridesmaids and the entire party was moving in unison, which I knew in my heart meant that she was going to meet her bridegroom.

I observed this vision very carefully and noted a few things:

1. The bride was very beautiful.
2. She was immaculately and elaborately decorated with all kinds of ornaments and make-up.
3. She was riding on a donkey.

As I saw this, I paused the vision and recalled what the Bible says concerning Rebekah: "Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel" (Gen 24:64). When Rebecca was going to meet her bridegroom, she rode on a camel. She was elaborately decorated with all kinds

of jewelry and beautifully dressed like a bride, accompanied by her bridesmaids, to go and meet her bridegroom Isaac.

Continuing back to the vision, as I was beholding this, I pondered in my heart what this meant and what message the Lord God was giving to me and for what purpose. I asked myself where the bride was going. I realized she was going to meet the bridegroom. That is the most important point here. Where does the Church stand today? She is waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church, like a bride, is moving towards meeting the Bridegroom. And when they meet, just as when a bride and a bridegroom meet together in the natural, a marriage will take place.

In a marriage, the couple exchange vows and make a covenant. The priest who conducts the marriage will ask the bridegroom and the bride several questions. He will ask the bridegroom if he promises to take care of his bride and the bridegroom will answer, "Yes, I do." Then the priest will ask the bride if she will do the same and she too will answer, "Yes, I do."

What is the priest asking the couple? He is asking both of them an identical question. Unless both of them reply identically, the priest will not solemnize the wedding. This means they must both agree together in oneness to have a marriage covenant. Except they be in agreement, they cannot have a marriage covenant.

The Bible asks: "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3). Likewise, if you are the Bride and the Lord Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom, if you want to walk together, there must be agreement. There must be a common denominator between the Bride and the Bridegroom whereby there can be a

covenant, whereby there can be a union, whereby there can be a solemnization of a joining together.

How did the Bridegroom walk when He was on this earth?

MATTHEW 21:1-5

1 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,

2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me.

3 And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

4 All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

5 "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

The Lord Jesus Christ came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey and the foal of a donkey, which is the donkey's baby. More than 500 years before the Lord Jesus Christ was born and walked on the earth, the prophet Zechariah prophesied: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zech 9:9).

Consider the similarities. The Lord Jesus, the Bridegroom, came to Jerusalem riding on a donkey and the foal of a donkey. In a vision, I was shown the Bride riding on a donkey going to meet the Bridegroom. What does this mean? Every believer, just like the Bride, must be arrayed and clothed in fine linen clean and white and be made ready. As much as all of this is necessary, she must also constantly walk in humility before the Lord her God.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, is coming back again very soon for His Bride. The believers who have purified themselves as He is pure and who claim to want to meet Him must walk in humility.

The Bible tells us, “Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world” (1 Jn 4:17). Observe the phrase: “as He is, so are we in this world.” And how *was* the Lord Jesus in this world?

The Holy Bible gives us accurate and very vivid descriptions of the greatness of God.

1 TIMOTHY 6:16

16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

This Scripture tells us that God is full of light and dwells in unapproachable light. Look how awesomely it describes the dwelling place of God – *God dwells in unapproachable light*. Not you, not the angels, nobody can approach that light because it is pure light.

Scientists tell us that when you walk on snow in the mountains while the sun is overhead at midday, you should never look directly at the snow. If you do, you would be temporarily blinded. Snow blindness – *photokeratitis*, a type of temporary eye damage caused by snow reflecting UV light. Fresh snow reflects about 80% of the sun’s UV radiation.

When I walked in Tibet over the snowy mountains, many times I was tempted to look directly at the snow. On the other hand, I dared not because then I would be groping in darkness. But it is a very real danger because the entire snowy landscape is as one big sheet, like a reflective mirror. It fully reflects the entire force of the sun's rays. It can tear the retina and may cause temporary or permanent blindness.

If looking at created snow can cause a man to go blind, how much more would looking at the pure, uncreated, self-existing light. That is why the Lord God told the prophet Moses, "No man can see me and live."

How awesome and terrible to look upon is this light! The Bible says that the Lord God is a consuming fire (Heb 12:29). "Consuming" in Greek is *katanalisko* meaning, *to consume utterly*. He is not an ordinary fire, but a consuming fire, which is holiness.

The nature of God, the essence of God, God's very being is holiness. That holiness emanates as light and as fire. The Bible also tells us in Psalm 29 how powerful and authoritative is His voice.

PSALMS 29:3-9

3 The voice of the Lord is over the waters; The God of glory thunders; The Lord is over many waters.

4 The voice of the Lord is powerful; The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

5 The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars, yes, the Lord splinters the cedars of Lebanon.

6 He makes them also skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox.

7 The voice of the Lord divides the flames of fire.

8 The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; The Lord shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh.

9 The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth, and strips the forests bare; And in His temple everyone says, "Glory!"

So some of the characteristics of God that we have looked at here are: He is like pure light; He is full of consuming fire; He has a commanding and authoritative voice. This is the greatness of Almighty God.

And yet see what the Bible says about this great and awesome God: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb 2:9). The Lord Jesus was made a little lower than the angels!

When I first read it, this came as a great shock to me! Whenever the angels, 24 elders and all the saints in heaven worship the Lord Jesus, none of them were found sitting on their thrones or even standing. Rather all of them would fall on their faces to worship Him who has existed from eternity to eternity (1 Tim 6:15). How could this Almighty God, who for eons has been worshipped by the angels and all created beings, now suddenly become so much lower than even His angels? What indescribable humility!

Being made a man, the Lord walked in absolute humility when He lived on this earth.

PHILIPPIANS 2:6-8

6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Though He was God, He did not demand and cling to his rights as God, but humbled Himself, lowered Himself, abased Himself in humiliation to become man and voluntarily relinquished His rights to be treated equal to God. My dear reader, let this sink into your mind for a moment.

This Great Almighty God, He is pure. His eyes cannot behold evil.

HABAKKUK 1:13

13 You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, and hold Your tongue when the wicked devours a person more righteous than he?

His eyes are much purer than to behold evil. He abased Himself, humiliated Himself to become a man. The greatest lesson that any one of us can learn from the Lord Jesus Christ is humility. Forget about His love, forget about His kindness, and forget everything else. The greatest quality of Almighty God Himself is humility.

The Almighty God created everything by His word, and at His command everything came into existence as he said 'Let there be... Let there be.' That Almighty God put on humiliation to become a man to live among us, to save us from sin. Is it possible for us to imitate Christ Jesus and cast away our high sounding names and titles, cast away our reputation and become like a slave?

Lowliness and Meekness

MATTHEW 11:28-30 (KJV)

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The Lord Jesus Christ did not just preach humility; He lived a humble and meek life before He preached humility. That is the one thing that will always set Him apart from all other gods.

Let me remind you of the time that the Lord Jesus entered into Jerusalem. When He entered Jerusalem He came riding on a donkey and a foal. The Great Almighty God could have come in pomp and splendor, but He chose to come on a donkey. I would like to take you a little deeper into a spiritual mystery in that scripture we saw earlier – Zechariah 9:9. Why a *donkey* and the *colt or foal* of a donkey? Donkey signifies *lowliness* and the foal of a donkey signifies *meekness*. How amazing that the Lord Jesus also described Himself as being meek and lowly (Matt 11:29)!

Let me confirm this with another truth. Recall when Rebecca came to meet Isaac. Bible scholars all agree that Isaac is a type of the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, and that Rebecca is a type of the Bride, the Church. When Rebecca, the Bride, came to meet Isaac, the Bridegroom, the Bible says, “Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel” (Gen 24:64-65).

The Bride's Walk

When she first started on the journey to meet her bridegroom she was seated on a camel. But when she neared her bridegroom she came down from the camel and she beheld her bridegroom. As she came down and beheld her bridegroom, she took a veil and covered her face. She assumed two postures. First, the act of “coming down from the camel” represented *lowliness*. From an exalted position, she lowered herself. Secondly, the act of putting a veil about her face, covering her face represented *meekness*, not wanting to be known.

As the Lord Jesus rode on a donkey and on a foal, representing lowliness and meekness, so are we to be in this world. Like Rebekah coming down from the camel and putting on a veil, so should we possess the twin qualities of humility – lowliness and meekness.

To walk in humility means to put on lowliness of mind and meekness of heart. Lowliness and meekness are the two springs of humility. If these springs are not flowing inside of you, how can you claim to be a Bride waiting to meet the Bridegroom? If you do not have humility, if you don't have these two springs of meekness and lowliness flowing inside of you, how can you claim you are walking in agreement with the Bridegroom to meet Him and make a marriage covenant?

One of the greatest lies engineered by the devil is this: *It does not matter how filthy a life you live, God knows your human weakness because you were born with it.* This lie is largely propagated today packaged as *hyper-grace theology*. Beware!

In my ministry among the Tibetan people I have met with and come to know the lifestyle of Tibetan monks. The greatest lesson I learned from them is humility. The amount of humility

that these monks possess is amazing. When I leave their presence I pray, “Lord, I must be two times more humble than they are. If I claim to follow the true God, I must be twice as humble as they.”

We are always seeking to be known, seeking to have our names well publicized, well known everywhere. In the commercial and corporate world it is common practice that when an organization wants to present a large donation they will have a huge check about 10 feet by 5 feet with three people carrying it to present it to the receiving organization.

Christians, for the most part, do not do that. But we go around boasting to everybody. Our hearts are full of pride. When you walk in humility, one of the signs of humility is *seeking not to be known*. That is the first sign.

“Lowliness” in Greek is *praus* meaning *mild*, i.e. *humble, abasement, humiliation and low estate*. To be humble means lying low – keeping a low profile – to have lowliness of mind (Eph 4:2; Phil 2:3).

“Meekness” in Greek is *tapeinos* meaning *gentle, mild, meek, humiliated*: - *base, cast down, humble, of low degree (estate), lowly*. Meekness “consists not in a person’s outward behavior only, nor yet in his relations to his fellow man. Rather it is an inward grace of the soul. It is the portion of the spirit in which we accept God’s dealings with us as for good, without murmurings, disputing or resisting” (Vine’s Dictionary of New Testament Words).

To put all of this into one single word, it means to be gentle - *Gentleness*.

The apostle Peter asks women to be adorned in this manner:

1 PETER 3:3-4

3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward – arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel –

4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

The Bride should be adorned with *a quiet spirit*, with *meekness and gentleness*. Are we like that? The Bride must walk in humility. Pride is the greatest of all sins (Prov 16:5).

Pride: False Humility

Pride originated inside of Satan. How it originated in him when he dwelt in a place of absolute holiness and love is a mystery. Like created humans, angels also have a free will, or moral choice, and they can use their moral choice like us to choose to do right or to choose to do wrong (Jude 6). So the archangel, Lucifer, exercised his right to choose to conceive pride within himself. Pride originated in him and pride deceived Lucifer himself (Ezek 28:2). The Bible tells us very clearly that pride will deceive our heart (Jer 49:16; Obad 3).

Pride deceives because it creates false humility. Outwardly it may give the impression that you are humble, but inwardly you are inflated with pride. You may not know it unless and until the all-seeing eyes of God illuminate it. Pride can come in many forms.

Let me give you one simple way to recognize whether there is pride in your life or not. If you are ever offended or hurt that

means there is pride in your life. Even if it is a tiny amount, the size of an ant, it can destroy you. Why do we feel offended or hurt? Is it not because we are conscious of our reputation being injured?

To be clothed with humility you must cast down that good-for-nothing reputation of yours and put it under your feet. It cannot save you and neither can it bring your name up to heaven. Your name – your reputation – remains behind on earth on a tombstone. All the wealth of this world cannot be brought to heaven. If, while you are alive, you have the opportunity to do good and you refuse to do it, when you die, what good will your money be? (Jas 4:17). If we can be absolutely sincere and honest, just bow down and look into your heart and you will see so much pride there.

Pride is the root cause of strife, contention, division, murmuring, backbiting and an independent attitude. Why do we want to talk about somebody else? Because there is pride in us. We want to gossip, backbite, and create strife. This is a serious disease in the larger body of Christ. If you walk around with the attitude that your pastor does not recognize your talents or that your church leadership does not realize your potential, then you are wanting recognition. What is recognition? *Recognition, is an outward manifestation of inner pride.*

When you are truly clothed with humility, you don't even recognize your own existence. The "I" is no longer there. The self is extinguished.

Recently, I met with a prophet of God who lives in South India. During our conversation, he told me of a recent visitation that he had from two angelic beings from heaven. They told him that pride in the eyes of God is the greatest of all sins. God is

merciful and gracious to forgive the sins of our weak flesh, even when we continue to make the same wrong choices. But the sin of pride is something He cannot tolerate.

The legendary man of God, Sadhu Sundar Singh, met a very godly saint living in one of the caves in Mount Kailash, Tibet. This saint is believed to be about 400 years old. The Sadhu asked the saint what his name was. The saint replied thus: "When I was like an ordinary man of the world I had an earthly name. But since I am not quite the same as an ordinary man any more now, my name is CHRISTIAN."

"The word SIN described the unregenerate state of my sinful nature," the saint continued. "But now, after being given eternal life by the Lord, the self has been removed from my nature. Instead of the letter 'I' as found in the word for SIN, the letter 'O' has been substituted. It signifies that an illimitable Being has come in me. The letter 'O', if you will observe, has neither beginning nor ending. Now, instead of **SIN**, which was my past state, the **SON** — the Lord Jesus who is the same yesterday, today and forever — now dwells in me. And now, by the Lord's grace, I am dead to sin and alive in Christ Jesus."

This very unassuming answer from the saint took the Sadhu by surprise. Such an attitude of meekness and utter humility indeed is the hallmark of true godliness.

When you bring a wax candle close to a source of fire, the wax begins to melt into liquid. The solid candle has a form and image, but the liquid wax has neither form nor image. The closer one gets to God, the more one's identity becomes one with the Creator. It is of this mystery that the apostle Paul wrote: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and

the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal 2:20).

The Bride's walk is a walk of humility. God dwells with the humble and meek people (Isa 57:15). The proud will be abased (Matt 23:12; Lk 14:11). Those who humble themselves shall be exalted because when the humble are exalted they will not even realize that they have been exalted. They can be trusted with God's glory. Can God really trust you?

God loves and desires humility in us (Mic 6:8). Humility is one of the good things He has already shown you. None of us can say *I did not know*. He has already shown us. Every victory you have over pride in your life and every moment of pride that you overcome in your life increases the presence of God in your life.

Why was the Lord Jesus able to be filled with the Holy Spirit beyond measure? (Jn 3:34). Simply because the Lord Jesus Christ was totally dead to the "I". The very fact that He came to this earth qualified Him to receive the Spirit without measure because He put on humility.

The Bride of Jesus Christ must walk in humility like the Bridegroom. If two cannot agree, how can they walk together? If you claim to be the Bride who is waiting for the rapture – to be united with the Bridegroom – with great love I warn you that unless you become converted and humble yourself as a little child, you will never enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt 18:4).

The Bride's Secret Bedchamber

SONG 1:4

4 Draw me away! We will run after you. The king has brought me into his chambers. We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you.

Let us look carefully at this phrase: “Draw me, we will run after you: the king has brought me into his chambers.”

What is a chamber? A chamber is a place of rest and it is also a place of intimacy between a husband and wife. It is a private place where visitors are not allowed. Sometimes even the children are not allowed; it is out of bounds. It is a secret place between a man and his wife. A secret place – the bedchamber.

Draw Me, We Will Run After You

When God draws you and you run after Him, the King will bring you into his bedchamber. The bride must learn where the bedchamber is. There are two things she must do.

1. She must make her own bedchamber; she must learn where this bedchamber is.
2. She must learn to be translated from her bedchamber to the bridegroom's bedchamber.

The bride's secret bedchamber is composed of two stages. First, it begins in her bedchamber and then it progresses into the bridegroom's bedchamber. Unless and until we learn this, we cannot really become the Bride who has made herself ready (Rev 19:7).

She had made herself ready to go into the Bridegroom's bedchamber. Before she can go to the Bridegroom's bedchamber, she must make herself ready. Where did she make herself ready? It had to be in her own bedchamber.

Unfortunately, today's bride, instead of creating a bedchamber for herself, has created a *workplace* for herself. It is a workplace where she has set up many idols that she bows down to and worships. She has not created a bedchamber for herself where the bridegroom can come to visit her and be ravished by her love.

Each time He comes looking, He cannot find the bride's bedchamber because she is so busy in her workplace. So He has to wait outside, knocking on the door, waiting for her to realize that there is a bedchamber that she must create. There is a bedchamber to be discovered, and there is a bedchamber into which the Bridegroom will come.

We are not talking about a general relationship between a believer and God. If we were talking about that, God would come anywhere, and everywhere. We are talking about a different – an intimate – relationship between the Bride and the Bridegroom.

Five Stages of Growth

There are five levels of relationship through which we can progress in our walk with God.

1. When you are born again, you become a *child* of God.
2. We grow to become *sons and daughters* of God.
3. We then progress to become a *servant* of God.
4. From there, we can become a *friend* of God.
5. And finally, we are yoked with the Lord to become His *wife* – the Bride.

In which of these five stages are you in? Are you at the stage of being a child of God, a son or daughter who has learned to exercise the family rights? Or are you a servant of God who is faithful in the house of God, doing something for the Lord God? Or are you a friend of God, learning to walk so closely to Him, sharing mysteries and secrets as a friend? When you've reached the stage of a friend, you have learned that a friend loves at all times; not just some of the time but at all times.

Learning to Love

When I first went to the USA in 1991, many people came to me and said, "Oh brother, we love you." In most contexts such words would mean that one is truly loved. Love is beyond merely liking. We are loved. But later on I discovered that what they really meant was not *love*, but *like*.

In the West, I discovered, when people say *love*, they often don't really mean *love* but only *like*. In the East, when we say "I

love you” it means we will even give our life for you; I will stick my neck out for you. That is love. In the West, they look at their dog and say “I love my dog.” Then they look at a person and say “Oh, I love you, my brother.” Which *love* is your love? If you love me with the same love that you have for your dog, what does that mean? Do you see how meaningless and valueless the expression is?

Because you mix love and like so easily, you can turn it on and off. If you really love, it is turned on all the time, no matter what state the object of your love is. It stays constant.

We must learn how to love God. It does not come automatically. It does not come like lightning and thunder from heaven. In order to develop our love for God, we must learn to *hunger* for Him. Unless and until you hunger, God will not come down. He will not draw nigh unto you unless you first draw near to him (Jas 4:8).

Consider this example from the life of the prophet Moses.

EXODUS 3:1-6

1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

2 And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.

3 Then Moses said, “I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.”

4 So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”

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*5 Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."
6 Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.*

When the prophet Moses saw the burning bush that was not consumed by fire, he was intrigued by it. When he decided to take the first step to draw near to see the strange and mysterious phenomenon, the Lord, too, moved near towards Moses to talk with him.

If you study this passage carefully, it was an Angel of the Lord that came in the fire that was upon the bush. Angels can come and go in fire. We see this in the incident described in Judges 13:8-20.

*8 Then Manoah prayed to the Lord, and said, "O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born."
9 And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her.
10 Then the woman ran in haste and told her husband, and said to him, "Look, the Man who came to me the other day has just now appeared to me!"
11 So Manoah arose and followed his wife. When he came to the Man, he said to Him, "Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?" And He said, "I am."
12 Manoah said, "Now let Your words come to pass! What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?"
13 So the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful.*

14 She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe."

15 Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, "Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You."

16 And the Angel of the Lord said to Manoah, "Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the Lord." (For Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the Lord.)

17 Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, "What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?"

18 And the Angel of the Lord said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?"

19 So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the Lord. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on –

20 it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar – the Angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground.

So, after being fascinated by the strange phenomenon of the burning bush, the prophet Moses decided to take a step beyond passing curiosity to really understand who are what was behind it. When he drew near, God also stepped through the veil – drew near to him – and spoke to him.

Hunger for God

MATTHEW 5:6

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

We must hunger and thirst for God. If we don't hunger and thirst after spiritual things, we are living a very mundane life. We are not living the life for which God created us. We are created for God's praise, not for our own pleasure (Isa 43:7,21).

Remember this; *we are not our own*. We have not comprehended this and because we have not understood, we are living a life devoid of the presence and glory of God. We only visit God when we are in some sort of a *crisis*.

Hungering after God is the first step in creating a bedchamber for ourselves. Hungering for God really has three components.

1. A thirst for the *Presence of God*.

PSALMS 42:1-2

1 As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God.

2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

2. A thirst for *God's Glory*.

PSALMS 63:1-2

1 O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water.

2 So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory.

The Presence of God is different from the Glory of God, and both are different from the manifest Presence of God. They are each different levels of the Presence and the Glory of God.

3. A thirst to *abide permanently in the House of God.*

PSALMS 84:1-4

1 How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts!

2 My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the Lord; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

3 Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, Where she may lay her young – Even Your altars, O Lord of hosts, My King and my God.

4 Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; They will still be praising You. Selah

If you do not come to this place of hungering and thirsting, you will never come to the place of God's habitation in you with His glory and His presence. You may only experience a visitation. These are two very different things – *visitation* and *habitation*. A visitation is a temporary visit. You visit God and He visits you. That's all. A habitation is creating a dwelling place by regularly and consistently visiting with God. You come and dwell in God and He dwells in you.

When I first began to taste and see how good God is, it created within me an insatiable passion. One of the reasons that I spice my writings with my spiritual experiences is not to boast how great a spiritual person I am but to provoke you to jealousy so that you will deeply hunger for God and say, "I too must have this same experience and much more."

I was praying every day and every night, "Lord, I want to see you, Lord I want to hear your voice." During every minute of privacy I would find a quiet place somewhere that I could drop to my knees and pour my heart out to God. I would say to Him, "If I don't see You, I die. What is the use of living in this world

if I can't see Your face? What is the use of living in this world if I can't hear Your voice? How can I call myself a child of God? What child is there who does not know his Father's face?" This is how I used to pray every day.

Many months passed by as I prayed this every day. On September 24, 1983, as I was waiting on the Lord, my spiritual eyes were opened and I saw my first vision ever – it was of the Lord Jesus Christ hanging on the cross. This vision lasted for twenty minutes. I saw how the Lord agonized as He was hanging on the cross. I saw it from different angles – right, left, front, back, top and bottom. From every angle I saw how the Lord Jesus Christ truly suffered and agonized on the cross.

At that moment, it seemed as if a dam in my eyes burst and tears ran down from my eyes like rivers. I did not know why I was crying; I had no control over it and the tears flowed like rivers for twenty minutes. From that day onward, my spiritual eyes were permanently opened. But I was not satisfied with even that experience. I hungered for more.

I said, "This is not enough, Lord because I still have not seen you." I only saw visions, and when I prayed for people I would see things about their lives in symbolic form with the meaning revealed to me. Still, I was not satisfied. I would get up at 2 a.m. every day and pray till 6 a.m. I did this every day when I was a high school teacher back in 1982, before I entered into full-time ministry in 1983.

Every day I would pray the same prayer: "Lord Jesus, I want to see you. I want to see You. It is meaningless to live in this world if I don't see Your face." Every day I prayed this. After having my spiritual eyes opened, the hunger intensified. It was not satisfied.

You must always have an unsatisfied hunger. The day you feel satisfied, you become lukewarm.

You must always feel unsatisfied. Never ever feel satisfied. Heaven is limitless. There are many greater things in heaven and there are many worlds out there in the universe which are still to be discovered. There are many things that go on in other planets in the universe. Don't think it's all just dust. These places are more real than even what NASA can imagine.

I kept on praying. Every day, at the end of my prayer session, when I didn't receive what I was praying for, I would say to myself, "Maybe today the Lord Jesus is busy and He will come tomorrow. Perhaps He had to visit someone else so He will come tomorrow." Every day I would wait for him and continue to expect Him to come, if not today then perhaps the next day.

One morning at about 5 a.m. in the later part of September 1983, after I had finished praying, I decided to lie down for a little while before getting ready to go to school. As soon as my head hit the pillow, I heard a loud sound booming from the four corners of my bedroom. It was as if gigantic speakers were put in the four corners of my bedroom. A voice, so melodious and mixed with the sound of many waters and music, spoke. It was like all three sounds were mixed as one yet all three could be heard distinctly (*cp.* Rev 1:10,15).

I was graced by the mercies of God to audibly hear – loud and clear – the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ speak to me. He spoke to me, a person not worthy of His manifold grace, for fifteen minutes about the ministry that I would be doing for Him. This encounter greatly encouraged me and that experience permanently opened my ears to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus

Christ. But I was not satisfied because I still had not seen my Father's face. Something was still missing. I kept asking, "How can I be your child if I still do not know my Father's face?"

Lord, Show me Your Face

It is a great privilege and honor to see the Lord Jesus Christ up in heaven. It is wonderful to see Him who gave His life for us. But it is also a great and noble honor to be able to see the Father – to see His face while we are still living on earth. So I kept praying for this favor and grace every day.

Two months later, in November of 1983, I was praying in my room over hundreds of letters from people who had written for prayer. I told my colleague that no one should knock on my door while I was praying. No matter how urgent the matter, they should never, ever knock on my door until I come out from prayer.

I entered into my prayer closet at 10 a.m. and spent some time worshipping the Lord. After that, I spent about three hours reading the Word of God. Then I took these three hundred letters to pray for them. As I was about to begin prayer I felt and heard the sound of someone turning the doorknob. I thought to myself, "Who would open the door?"

Just as soon as this thought went through my mind, the door opened and there stood the Lord Jesus Christ. I was stunned! He stood about six feet tall and He wore a beautiful royal blue robe. He stood there at the door. I just looked at Him, staring. He closed the door and walked towards me. His robe flowed the way our clothes flow around our body when we move. It was a real and tangible experience. He came and stood beside me, and I was still stunned.

I just stared at His face for a long time, not knowing what to say. I gazed upon the beauty of His face. He stood beside me and then He knelt down and said, "I have come to pray with you." That was a big shock to me. The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords knelt down beside *me* – mere dust –and wanted to pray together with me! When the Lord said that He had come to pray, instantly, the Holy Spirit brought a scripture to my mind: "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25).

I was still too stunned to say anything, but the Lord Jesus looked at me with a love as tender as a mother's, in fact, many times more so, and said, "Let us now pray for all these needs. Put your hands on these letters" (*cf.* Isa 51:22; Jer 50:34). Usually, I would read each letter to the Lord and then pray over them. But the Lord said, "Just lay your hands on the letters." When I did, He then placed His hands on top of mine and said, "Now let us pray." It was then that I saw His face at close range. The Lord Jesus has beautiful sea-blue eyes. When you look into His eyes you see transparent pools filled with liquid love. And, oh yes, He has beautiful rosy-red cheeks. His golden brown hair rested on His shoulders. He also has a high forehead. Indeed the Lord was beautiful beyond description!

The Lord lifted up His face and began to pray – groaning, sobbing and sighing – all the while with His face lifted heavenwards. His tears flowed like rivers. No words came out of His mouth, just sobbing. When I saw that, I understood what the Scripture meant: "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom 8:26-28).

From the innermost part of His belly, the Lord groaned for the first person's request. The Lord Jesus Christ treats every person's prayer as if you were the only person in this whole world and no one else existed. When He had finished the first prayer, He told me how to reply to the person. We went through all the three hundred letters, one by one. Not a collective prayer, but one by one – all three hundred. And He gave me three hundred replies for the three hundred people.

When we were finished, He stood up, put His hands on my head and blessed me. Then He left the same way He had entered. From that day onward, my spiritual eyes were opened. Every time I close my eyes to pray, I see the Lord Jesus Christ standing by my side (*cp.* Ps 16:8). This is a great spiritual grace the Lord has favored me with.

After I reached this level, I was not satisfied either. There rose up another hunger in me. Now I wanted to see Heaven. I began to pray every day like the Psalmist: "How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the Lord; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (Ps 84:1-2). I wanted to see my Father's house. So I prayed every day, "Father where is Your house? You came to My house, now where is Your house?"

Seeing Heaven

The second week of March 1984, as I was praying, an Angelic Being visited me in the Spirit and said, "Not very long from now the Father will answer your prayer." Somehow in my spirit I knew it was about my desire to see heaven. I was so happy because I now had a sure promise. I waited patiently and prayed, even more earnestly after this word.

On March 24 1984, I got up as usual to pray at 3 a.m. I bowed my head to wait on the Lord. Suddenly, in an instant, I found myself in a huge green park. It was so beautiful! I wondered where I was. One moment I was in my very small bedroom and the next in an enormous expanse with all kinds of wonderful trees, benches and arches. I did not know that I was in Paradise until two very large seven-foot tall angels came up to meet me and said, "Welcome." I looked into their faces and I will never forget their smile – beautiful feminine smiles. Angels do not look male or female as far as the shape of their bodies. But their faces have different appearances. Some of them look feminine and many of them look masculine.

The elder of the two said to me, "Come," and they brought me to a place in Paradise where there are little children. Babies who die go there. When children are aborted, none are lost. When a woman suffers a stillbirth or has a miscarriage, none of the babies are lost. Every life is safely preserved in Heaven. The Lord Jesus said that their angels are always beholding the face of His Father (Matt 18:10). So how can any be lost? The moment that they have life, an angel is appointed to look after each baby. These feminine angels like the ones I saw take care of each baby and they oversee each baby's growth, their education and their training. The children attend school, but not like we do.

That was my first visit to Heaven, but still I would not be satisfied. Knowing there was more, how could I remain satisfied? I wanted to see more; I wanted to see far greater things. Likewise, you too should hunger and thirst after righteousness – the things of God. Don't be satisfied.

True Hunger

When do we hunger and thirst in our everyday lives? You will only hunger when your stomach is empty. Then you hunger. In the same way, you will only hunger and thirst for the things of God when you lose the love for the things of this world.

1 JOHN 2:15-17

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world.

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

When you lose your love for the things of this world, then, and only then, will a true hunger for spiritual things be born within you. Unless and until you lose your satisfaction in the things of the world, you cannot have real hunger. It won't come. Instead of real hunger, you will only have mere curiosity. God doesn't satisfy curiosities.

Please remember this: *God does not satisfy curiosity or wishful thinking.* Most believers say something like: "I wish I could see Jesus." Have you said something similar? They are wishful believers. They think God is like a wishing well into which you throw a penny and make a wish. There are no fairy godmothers in heaven who will wave their magic wand to grant your wishes. They doesn't exist. But there is a God who hears prayer (Ps 65:2). And God answers the prayers of the hungry ones.

Don't be satisfied with the little blessings that you get from God. Look at these Scriptures from the Song of Solomon.

SONG 2:3-6

3 Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

4 He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

5 Sustain me with cakes of raisins, Refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick.

6 His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.

The bride became satisfied by the things that she saw and the things of which she partook in the banqueting house. The banqueting house is not the bridegroom's bedchamber. Note this well. The banqueting house, the hall of reception, is not the bridegroom's bedchamber. Observe what the bride said next.

SONG 2:7

7 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.

What does this Scripture tell us? The bride became satisfied with the mundane and earthly things that she experienced. And until she loses that satisfaction, the bridegroom waits. He will not disturb her. He waits patiently until she grows tired of worldly satisfaction. Then, a dissatisfaction will arise from within her. A banqueting house will no longer be enough for her. She will look eagerly – longingly – for the bedchamber. This is what the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Himself too, waits for patiently.

So don't be satisfied. Keep hungering and thirsting and being dissatisfied. Real dissatisfaction begins when you lose the love for and the satisfaction with the things of this world. That is when real hunger for God begins, and when it does begin, you will develop a deep cry from your soul unto God.

Draw Me or I die

SONG 1:4

4 Draw me away! We will run after you. The king has brought me into his chambers. We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you.

The bride cries, "Draw me." It is a cry that comes from the innermost being. *Draw me or else I will die if you don't draw me* – that was her cry. Unless and until God draws you to Himself, you cannot draw near unto Him (Jn 6:44).

Just as the first work of redemption was imputed to us and implanted into our spirits, likewise, the first drop of hunger must come from heaven. One drop is all that is needed. Once you receive that one drop you must learn to develop it until it becomes a flowing river inside of you. "Draw me!" – from her innermost being the Shulamite kept crying.

Unless the Father God draws you to Himself you cannot come to the Lord Jesus Christ. So let your passionate cry be: "Draw me, Lord. Draw me to Yourself; draw me to Your bosom. Draw me to Your heart; draw me into Your bedchamber." Pour your heart out before Him and sincerely cry out to Him.

When you cry out to God in this manner, the Lord Jesus will reach His hand inside of you and take away your stony heart and give you a heart of flesh that will long after him and thirst after him (Ezek 37:26-27). As the deer panting for the streams of water, let your soul continually long after the Bridegroom – the Lover of your soul (Ps 42:1).

Seek with all your Heart

Seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. We can learn the principle of crying out to God in hunger from the Shulamite. We cannot follow or duplicate methods and formulas but we *can* follow principles.

SONG 3:1-3

1 By night on my bed I sought the one I love; I sought him, but I did not find him.

2 "I will rise now," I said, "And go about the city; In the streets and in the squares I will seek the one I love." I sought him, but I did not find him.

3 The watchmen who go about the city found me; I said, "Have you seen the one I love?"

The two recurring phrases in these Scriptures are, *him whom my soul loves* and *I sought him*. These are strong action words. Seek the Lord God with all your heart and with all your soul. Not just with your mind. Not with intellectual knowledge. Not just a cursory mention: "Lord, I need you." It is the absolute desire of the Lord Jesus Christ for everyone to come into His bedchamber. The door is open. Many choose not to go in. Only very few choose to go in. Why is this?

Many are not willing to pay the price; they want an easy way out. Broad is the way that leads to destruction and narrow is the gate that leads to life (Matt 7:14). If you are not willing to pay the price, if you are not willing to crucify the flesh, if you are not willing to die, then forget about this life of an intimate relationship with the Lord God. Forget about being His Bride. Be content to be just a member of the larger body of Christ. Just be content, because the other choice – to be His Bride – is costly.

The closer you choose to walk with the Lord, the narrower the road becomes. Finally, it is so narrow that it is like walking on a thread. Only those with clean hands, clean minds, clean feet, and a pure heart will walk that tiny, narrow road (Ps 15). Seek Him with all your heart. Not just your lips.

Your Heart and Bedchamber

SONG 3:4

*4 Scarcely had I passed by them, when I found the one I love.
I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him
to the house of my mother, and into the chamber of her who
conceived me.*

When you begin to seek the Lord your God with all your heart, you must prepare your heart as a bedchamber for the Bridegroom to come and visit you.

Please take note that this Scripture says “house of my mother” in verse 4. It does not say “house of my Father” because the Father’s house is the Bridegroom’s house. The Lord Jesus said, “In my Father’s house are many mansions” (Jn 14:2). Notice that there are *two* houses - the Father’s house and the mother’s

house. The “mother’s house” belongs to you. We say *motherland*, not *fatherland*. We say *mother tongue*; we don’t say *father tongue*, do we? So, “mother’s house” belongs to you, whereas “Father’s house” belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you begin to seek the Lord your God, you create in your heart a bedchamber. That house must be clean and spotless for the Bridegroom to enter in. The Bible says, “Cleanse [your] hands, [you] sinners; and purify [your] hearts,” that God may come near to you (Jas 4:8) and, “You are all fair, my love, and there is no spot in you” (Song 4:7). When you begin to seek the Lord your God with all your heart, you prepare your heart and your life as a clean bedchamber, spotless and clean.

The Lord Jesus Christ is always standing before you and knocking (Rev 3:20). This Scripture, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Rev 3:20), has often been misquoted, as though the Lord Jesus Christ were standing and knocking on the hearts of unbelievers. This Scripture is part of the message to the Laodicean church.

REVELATION 3:14-22

14 “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

15 “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

17 Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ – and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked –

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18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.""

It is the believer's heart on which the Lord Jesus Christ is knocking. This means that He is standing outside your heart, not inside your heart. Why is He standing outside your heart? Isn't it because the inside of your heart is so overcrowded? There are so many different pieces of furniture when there should only be one piece of furniture: a bed. Instead of just the bed, other pieces of furniture crowd the bedchamber so that He – the Bridegroom – cannot enter in. So He stands outside knocking.

The Lord Jesus counsels, "He who has an ear, let him hear" (Rev 3:22). It seems like there are many people who do not have ears to hear. Everybody has ears but not everyone is listening. If the doors had been left open, the Lord would not have to knock; He could just walk in.

We need to understand four points from this Scripture.

1. The ears are not listening; they are closed.
2. The doors have not been left open; they are closed.
3. The Lord Jesus Christ is standing outside, not inside.
4. The heart has not become a bedchamber.

He is standing outside and knocking; He does not just walk in. You must open the door and say, "Come Lord Jesus" just as in Revelation 22:20. He can only come if your heart has become a bedchamber.

When He enters into your heart – the bedchamber – the Scripture says, "He will dine, or *eat*, with you" (Rev 3:20). He doesn't come empty-handed. He brings food from the Father's house for the Bride. He will break bread with you. Consider the following incident from Scripture:

JOHN 21:2-13

2 Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.

3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.

4 But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

5 Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No."

6 And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

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7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea.

8 But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish.

9 Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread.

10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."

11 Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.

12 Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"—knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.

After His resurrection, when the Lord Jesus visited the discouraged and disillusioned disciples, He gave them food to eat; he barbequed fish for them. In a sense, this act symbolizes the communion He last shared with them before He was crucified. At the Last Supper the Lord Jesus gave them bread and wine (Lk 22:19-20). Here, by the beach, He gave them bread and fish.

When you have truly made yourself ready as the Bride and prepared your heart as the bedchamber, the Lord comes to visit you. When you have become His Bride, the first stage of an intimate bridal relationship begins with the Bridegroom in the bedchamber. What happens next is the best part. Stage two

occurs when, having become His beloved Bride, He makes you His beloved Queen.

His Beloved Queen

ESTHER 2:2-12

2 Then the king's servants who attended him said: "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king;

3 and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to Shushan the citadel, into the women's quarters, under the custody of Hegai the king's eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty preparations be given them.

4 Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti." This thing pleased the king, and he did so.

5 In Shushan the citadel there was a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite.

6 Kish had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been captured with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

7 And Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

8 So it was, when the king's command and decree were heard, and when many young women were gathered at Shushan the citadel, under the custody of Hegai, that Esther also was taken to the king's palace, into the care of Hegai the custodian of the women.

9 Now the young woman pleased him, and she obtained his favor; so he readily gave beauty preparations to her, besides her

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allowance. Then seven choice maidservants were provided for her from the king's palace, and he moved her and her maidservants to the best place in the house of the women.

10 Esther had not revealed her people or family, for Mordecai had charged her not to reveal it.

11 And every day Mordecai paced in front of the court of the women's quarters, to learn of Esther's welfare and what was happening to her.

12 Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months' preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women.

We read in these Scriptures that Esther first made herself ready as a bride. For twelve months, she prepared her body, her soul and all that was within her to shine in beauty. When she had made herself ready, she was accepted by the King. He accepted her as a bride but had not made her his Queen yet. Then, later, he took her into his bedchamber and consummated the marriage; she became his queen. From your mother's house you now go into the Father's house. From your bedchamber you go into the Bridegroom's bedchamber.

After the Lord Jesus Christ enters into your heart you become an overcomer and He lifts you up to sit beside Him on His throne to reign (Rev 3:21). If He is the King, you are then the Queen. So *first* you become the Bride. *Then* you are transformed and lifted up to sit beside Him as His beloved Queen.

When our love pleases the Lord, He will cause us to sit on His throne. When you enter into His bedchamber, there is a place in Him there for you where you will truly, truly know Him. The

experience of entering there will cause you to know Him in all His majesty, in all His glory and in all His beauty (Song 5:16). He will reveal Himself to you. When He comes inside you, into your bedchamber, you will see Him as He really is (Jn 14:20).

The Key to the Bedchamber

There is a key principle you need to follow in order to create a bedchamber for the Lord within your heart. You need this key to make a bedchamber within yourself. The key is the *nakedness of your heart* and the *nakedness of your soul* before His eyes. What does this mean?

Simply put, in the privacy of a couple's bedchamber there is no one else except the husband and his wife. There, in the secret place of their bedchamber, the husband sees all that is in his wife and the wife sees all that is in her husband. No cosmetics and no fine clothes to hide their naked bodies. The husband and the wife see each other as they really are.

Likewise, the nakedness of your heart and your mind reveals everything about you to God. There is nothing to hide and there is nothing to be ashamed of before your Bridegroom. Once you begin to remove the veils from your heart, from your mind, from your soul and from your spirit for your king and your lover to see you as you truly are, a beautiful love relationship begins between the Bridegroom and the Bride. It begins with nakedness – *honesty, sincerity and truthfulness*. Both the heart and mind must be unashamedly, unreservedly revealed to the Lord.

If you can come to that state of absolute openness then you have become the *Bride-Wife*. You have created a bedchamber for

yourself and the Bridegroom enters into your heart. Every time that you open your heart more, He enters one step deeper. At every progressively more earnest invitation another step, then another, then another. Finally He is on the bed. Seated on the bed together, the Bridegroom and the Bride will share secrets. They will share secrets and talk.

After a season of conversation, the Bridegroom will say to His Bride, "Come, let us go to My Father's house." Once you have made a bedchamber in your heart, then the Lord will hold your hand and will lead you into His bedchamber. For that, you do not need a key. He will take your hand and walk with you to the Father's house. When He takes you to His Father's house, He will also take you to meet His friends. It is written of this here:

ZECHARIAH 3:7-8

7 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'If you will walk in My ways, and if you will keep My command, then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here.

8 'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, You and Your companions who sit before you, for they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.

This is real and it is a gift for all the children of God. The Bible says that all that the Father has belongs to His children (cp. Lk 15:31). Everything is for you. These privileges are especially for the Bride.

So learn to make *your* bridal bedchamber. Create in yourself a bedchamber where the Bridegroom can come to visit you.

The Bridegroom's Bosom

The Song of Solomon is one of the most wonderful books in the Holy Bible. The things written in it are simple yet so profound that our minds have trouble understanding them. That is the beauty of the deeper spiritual life. The Song of Solomon is full of very simple truths conveyed to us by the Lord Jesus Christ. When you open your heart to understand them, they are a deep fountain, a deep well from which you can draw waters over and over again, a well whose bottom you can never reach.

There is a deep secret in the bosom of the Bridegroom.

SONG 3:6

6 Who is this coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchant's fragrant powders?

Let us compare this Scripture with another Scripture.

SONG 8:5

5 Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I awakened you under the apple tree. There your mother brought you forth; There she who bore you brought you forth.

In Chapter 3, verse 6, the bride looks at the bridegroom and describes him: “how majestic he is, how beautiful he appears, and how magnificent he looks.” I would like to draw your attention to one very important word. It is not the beauty of the bridegroom that we want to note here. The word that we want to note is *wilderness*. Both these Scriptures mention someone coming out of the wilderness. Who is this that comes out of the wilderness?

Finding Treasure in the Wilderness

These two Scriptures are talking about two different people, not just one. In both cases, the observers are the friends of the bridegroom. In the first Scripture, it is the bridegrooms who emerges victorious from the wilderness. In the second, it is the bride, but she is leaning in total reliance on the bosom of the bridegroom and they are just walking.

Have you ever seen two people in love who are walking down the street holding each other very closely? They embrace each other or hold hands, or sometimes the girlfriend, wife or bride leans on her beloved's shoulder or bosom. The friends of the bridegroom see both the bridegroom and the bride walking together through the wilderness. The bride was found in the wilderness and here we see both the bride and the bridegroom walking together through the wilderness.

This is the word of the Lord that came unto me: *Kisses of pleasure are shared in the secret of the cliffs. My dove must arise from the clefts of the rock to know me and to show me her face.*

SONG 2:14

14 "O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely."

For too long we have been saying, "Lord, I want to know you. Lord, I want a touch from you." Haven't we all prayed this prayer? Let us now look from heaven's perspective. From heaven's perspective it is not about us wanting to know God or touch God. God, in fact, is saying, "Show me *your* face." It seems that we are the ones hiding *our* faces. Read carefully again what this Scripture says: "Let Me see your face, and let Me hear your voice." This means that God wants to see our face and hear us talk to Him.

It seems that most of the prayers that we pray do not make any sense to God. Most of our Christianity is mere supermarket Christianity, meaning that we only come to God with a shopping list. When you learn to lean on the bosom of the Bridegroom, you do not need a shopping list. Rather, you become the owner of the supermarket. That means that you can go in and take all that you want without having to pay a dime. Why should you be content to be just a shopper when you can be the owner?

There was once a very good and kind-hearted king in India who was very generous and benevolent. The king used to go out in disguise to see the people and to see how well they were doing. One day, the king, disguised as an ordinary peasant, was walking around the streets in their country with a few of his ministers. He was dismayed to discover that there was much poverty throughout his country. This troubled him and he had no peace for several days.

After some further thought, he decided to do something about the poverty in his kingdom. He made a royal proclamation and He invited every one of his subjects to come to his palace and take away anything they wanted. This king's huge palace had treasures for everyone.

So before daybreak nearly every citizen queued before the palace, waiting for the gates to be opened. When the gates opened, they went in one by one. The first man was not sure whether the king meant what he had said or if he would have his hands cut off for taking the king's treasures. So he went in very slowly and asked if he could really have a golden vase. The king, who stood at the door, said, "Take it". When he came out with the golden vase, everyone else standing outside were very happy.

One by one, each person went in to get something and the king's resources were never depleted because he had so much. Finally, a very old woman went in. She went up to the king and said, "King, are you sure that I can take anything that I like in this palace?" The king with great love said, "Mother, you can take anything you like that you see in my palace." She went around the entire palace to see everything because there were so many beautiful and valuable things there.

She came back to the king and said, "King are you really sure I can have anything I see in this palace?" The king said, "Of course." Once more, she went around the entire palace and came back to the king, asking again, "King, are you really sure that I can have anything I want?" The king said, "Of course, my dear mother." He even helped her by escorting her around the palace and showing her all the exquisite and rare treasures there.

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They came back to the entrance of the palace and once again the old lady asked, "Oh great and venerable king, please don't get angry with me. Please be patient with this old mother of yours. Are you really, really sure that I can take anything that I see in this palace?" The king said, "My dear mother, you can take anything that you set your eyes upon." As soon as he said that, the old lady grabbed the king and said, "I want to take you to be my son."

Do you know why she said this? If she takes the king, all his treasures come together with him. Not just one or two things, but all the treasures which the king owns. In the same way, don't come before God with a shopping list. It may last just for a day or two. But if you take the King with you, you have all the resources and treasures of heaven with you all the time. This attitude will change your mindset from being a *consumer-minded* Christian to a Christian full of the real abundant life that the Lord Jesus Christ wants us to have (Jn 10:10).

The bridegroom and the bride are walking together through the wilderness. Where is the place of the bride? She is not just holding hands with the bridegroom. The bride is resting on the bosom of the bridegroom. Nowhere else. She is not just holding his hand and walking side by side; she is leaning on the bosom of the bridegroom. There is a deep secret concerning the bosom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are two things which we want to study here: *wilderness* and *bosom*.

Favor in the Lord's Bosom

The apostle John, the beloved disciple of the Lord Jesus, was often seen lying on the Lord's bosom. That seemed to be his favorite secret place. When they were having the last supper, John was seated next to the Lord Jesus Christ and was reclining on His bosom.

JOHN 13:23-25

23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

24 Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

25 Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

The Lord Jesus, too, had found the bosom of God the Father to be His secret place.

JOHN 1:18

18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

The simple things of God always confound the wise. That is why God has given the simple treasures of His mysteries to babes (Matt 11:25; Lk 10:21). They can understand easily, without confusion. Seated next to the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostle John was seen reclining on His bosom. Everyone knows that John was the Lord Jesus' favorite disciple. And the Lord Jesus knows that He is John's favorite because he is always leaning on the Lord's bosom.

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When everyone fled from the crucifixion, the apostle John was the only one who stayed back, even until the last breath of the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn 19:25-26). If he could, he would even have lied on the bosom of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. Such was his love and adoration for the Lord. The love between the bride and the bridegroom described in the Song of Solomon could appropriately be applied to the apostle John and the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the Lord Jesus spoke of His betrayal, Peter coaxed John to ask the Lord Jesus, "Lord, who is it?" (Jn 13:24-26). Others posed the same question, but the Lord evaded their questions and did not answer. But when John asked, the Lord could not keep the answer secret. When you lie on the bosom of God, He shares His secrets with you (Ps 25:14). Nothing is hidden because lying on the Lord's bosom opens a great vista into the marvelous mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

The Lord God has a bosom (Jn 1:18). The bosom is the chest area. What is so special about the bosom? Let me reveal to you a secret concerning the bosom of God.

When the Lord God manifested Himself to Abraham, He said, "I am Almighty God" (Gen 17:1). The word "Almighty" in Hebrew is *El Shaddai*. The real meaning of the word *El Shaddai* is *strong-breasted father and mother God*. God has dual natures – *father* and *mother*. This was first revealed to me in 1991 when the Lord gave me a message to share with women. (You may want to read the book, *Women Are Special to God*.)

The phrase *El Shaddai* embodies this dual nature. When a baby lies on the mother's breast, suckling, she finds solace, comfort, security and love. When she grows up, she will lie on the bosom

of the father for strength and security. This is the dual nature of God, a motherly nature and a fatherly nature.

Recovering True Revelation from the Darkness of Deception

Lucifer was the highest of all Archangels whom the Lord God loved dearly like a son. He had access to the innermost secrets of God and to the secret treasures of heaven. No others had that, none of the other archangels such as Gabriel or Michael had it. One such secret place that he had access to was the un-revealed place known as the “stones of fire”. He also walked on the holy mountain of God where God the Father dwelt (Ezek 28:14).

You may have heard of a phenomenon in the Universe called the *black hole*. A black hole is a region of space from which nothing, not even light, can escape. According to the general theory of relativity formulated by the legendary physicist, Albert Einstein, a black hole is the result of the curving of space-time caused by a very dense mass. Around a black hole there is a boundary of no return called the “event horizon.” Black holes are black because they absorb all light that hits them, reflecting nothing.

Several years ago, while on a ministry trip to Tibet, as I was praying together with a friend I was graced by the manifold mercies of God to find myself in the Spirit standing at the edge of a black hole. The black hole’s diameter was huge. I have always loved astronomy and particularly black holes because they are a mystery even to scientists.

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Standing at the edge of the black hole, I peered down into it. I was mystified to see miles down into the black hole. Light, instead of going upwards, was going downwards for miles. There was no end.

As I stood there, the Lord Jesus Christ also stood by my side and gave me a scientific explanation of a black hole. Then, He explained how the black hole is a parable that relates to the origins of Satan. Lucifer was originally created by God as the Archangel of Light, Colors and Sound (Isa 14:12; Ezek 28:12-13). His name, *Lucifer*, in Hebrew is *heylel*, which means *brightness; the morning-star*.

Light, sound and color emanated from him all the time. When he allowed pride to be born in his heart, the light that was going out from him curved and bent inwards. From being the Archangel of Light, he became the prince of darkness because light was no longer coming from within him. Darkness is the absence of light. Darkness does not exist. Darkness only seems to exist where light is not present. So when light was no longer going out of Lucifer, in the absence of light, he became the prince of darkness.

In the same way, when the early church was founded, it was founded in a supernatural way. Signs and wonders were common occurrences. Not only signs and wonders but visitations of the Lord Jesus Christ and of angels were common. So common, in fact, that no one was surprised when they happened. Let's read Acts chapter 12.

ACTS 12:1-15

1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church.

- 2 Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.*
- 3 And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread.*
- 4 So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.*
- 5 Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.*
- 6 And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison.*
- 7 Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands.*
- 8 Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me."*
- 9 So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.*
- 10 When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.*
- 11 And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people."*
- 12 So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.*

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13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer.

14 When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate.

15 But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel."

The apostle Peter was in prison and an angel came and rescued him. When he left the prison, he came to his brethren who were gathered together praying for him. He knocked on the door and a servant girl went to see who it was. When she asked who it was at the door she recognized the voice of Peter. Overcome with excitement, she ran to the other disciples to tell them Peter was standing outside. Notice verse 15 which describes how everyone reacted. They merely shrugged their shoulders and said, "It is just his angel."

If there was a knock on the door right now and one of us were to open the door and see a bright shining angel, what would be our immediate reaction? Wouldn't it be "Ohhh, Ahhh." But look at the disciples' immediate reaction. What caused them to react that way? It was a common occurrence. It was not something extraordinary or amazing for them to see angels. This is our heritage.

How far have we fallen today? Instead of light going out from the church, the way it was meant to be, the church has become like a black hole. Our light has turned inwards. Have you read of the time in church history called the "dark ages"? That was the period when the church became a black hole, not a light giver. Instead of being sons of light as we were supposed to be, we became like a black hole (Matt 5:14-16; Matt 6:23; Eph 5:8).

We have lost our rich heritage of regular supernatural encounters with heaven.

If anyone comes into a church today speaking about mystical experiences or deeper revelations that may be extra-biblical but are not un-biblical, our immediate reaction is to brand them a heretic or ask them to prove it from the Bible. There are many mysteries and secrets in heaven which are not recorded in the Bible.

One night, as I was praying, I saw in a vision a normal, average-sized Bible. As the pages were flipped opened, I saw several books in that Bible that present-day Christianity has categorized as non-canonical or apocryphal books. One such book was the *Book of Enoch*, from which Jude quotes concerning the second coming of the Lord Jesus (Jude 14-15). Another was the *Book of Jasher* (Josh 10:13; 2 Sam 1:18), *Book of Nathan the Prophet*, *Book of Gad the Seer* (1 Chr 29:29; 2 Chr 9:29), *Book of Shemaiah the Prophet* (2 Chr 12:15) and the *Book of the Wars of the Lord* (Num 21:14).

All these books were there in the Bible that I saw in my vision. I saw the table of contents with all the books written there – one complete Bible. When the same hand that had flipped opened the Bible now closed it, I saw that this Bible was extremely thick. I realized that all of this had been taken out of our regular Bible. However, in Heaven, all these books are kept safe for eternity.

The Bible we presently possess – I believe and confess with all my heart – is all sufficient for our salvation, redemption, justification and sanctification. Nothing more, nothing less. All the other books exist for our good spiritual pleasure, but are not necessary for salvation.

Hidden Treasures Revealed in His Bosom

When you lie on the bosom of your Bridegroom, He reveals secrets to you.

Consider Delilah's strategy to make Samson reveal his secret.

JUDGES 16:1-20

1 Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.

2 When the Gazites were told, "Samson has come here!" they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, "In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him."

3 And Samson lay low till midnight; then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all, put them on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.

4 Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

5 And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Entice him, and find out where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver."

6 So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength lies, and with what you may be bound to afflict you."

7 And Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

8 So the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, and she bound him with them.

9 Now men were lying in wait, staying with her in the room. And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he broke the bowstrings as a strand of yarn breaks when it touches fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

10 Then Delilah said to Samson, "Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Now, please tell me what you may be bound with."

11 So he said to her, "If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

12 Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And men were lying in wait, staying in the room. But he broke them off his arms like a thread.

13 Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me what you may be bound with." And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom" –

14 So she wove it tightly with the batten of the loom, and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled out the batten and the web from the loom.

15 Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength lies."

16 And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, so that his soul was vexed to death,

17 that he told her all his heart, and said to her, "No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from

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my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

18 When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up once more, for he has told me all his heart." So the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hand.

19 Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him.

20 And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.

When Delilah enticed Samson to lie on her bosom and caressed him with lustful love, he could not keep his secrets from her. Making him lay between her breasts and with seduction in her eyes she enticed him to reveal the secret of his great strength. She got this secret out of him because Samson could not withhold it from her while lying on her bosom. Samson disclosed his secret.

When you lie on the Bridegroom's bosom, He will not keep secrets from you. That was the privilege the apostle John had. Among all the disciples, including the apostle Paul, none was as privileged as John. Of all the apostles, Paul was the most brilliant. To him the mysteries of the hidden wisdom of God were made known. However, to the apostle John the Lord revealed the secrets of the kingdom and the end-times.

We read of the following incident that happened during the Last Supper:

JOHN 13:21-26

21 When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

22 Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

24 Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

25 Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

26 Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

While eating the last supper with His disciples, the Lord Jesus, with sorrow in His heart, mentioned that one of them was going to betray Him. When probed by all of them, the Lord said nothing. But from the apostle John, who was lying on His bosom, the Lord could not withhold the secret of who would betray the Son of Man.

It was also to the apostle John that the Lord revealed the secrets of the mysteries of God's house and of the end-times. This we find described in the Book of Revelation. These are the privileges of lying on the bosom of God. He will hold your hand and say, "Come My beloved. Let us go and I will show you My bedchamber." The bedchamber is heaven.

The Wilderness Journey

In the Song of Solomon, we see both the bridegroom and the bride coming out of the wilderness. Was the bride sent into the wilderness or did she just happen to wander there for no particular reason? You can be sent to the wilderness by divine arrangement or you can end up there by default – i.e. because you didn't obey God's voice and therefore there was no other place for you to go.

A wilderness is a barren and desolate place. There is absolutely nothing in the wilderness. Why does God put us in a desert? There are two reasons: *default* or *divine arrangement*.

1. Humbled to Lean on God

DEUTERONOMY 8:2-6

2 And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

3 So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

4 Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.

5 You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you.

6 Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.

God leads us into the wilderness to humble us. The Lord God took the Israelites around the wilderness for 40 years to humble them, because they were always grumbling and murmuring. They were just a day away from the Promised Land, but were made to wander in the wilderness for 40 long years due to their unbelief. They were in the wilderness by default.

There is a saying that a fish would not get hooked and caught if it just knew how to keep its mouth shut. So in response to their grumbling, the Lord said, “Okay, let me take you for a walk. Let’s take a walk in the desert.” It lasted for 40 years. During those 40 years every adult – 20 years and above – who came out of Egypt died in the wilderness. That is a sad thing; to be taken out of the kingdom of darkness only to die in the wilderness as a consequence of refusing to walk in the light. This is true for ministers as well as believers today. We can die never having entering into the perfect will of God for our lives.

With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, all the others who entered the Promised Land were either less than 20 years old at the time of Israel’s refusal or the children born in the wilderness during the 40-year journey. Everyone else who inherited the promise did not possess it. It is one thing to inherit the promise and another thing to possess it. They are worlds apart. You can inherit a promise. God can promise to raise you up, to bless you, etc., but you need to possess it by walking in the promise. If you don’t walk in it, if you don’t prepare yourself to possess it, you will not get it.

Learn to lie on the bosom of your Bridegroom and consult Him, ask Him for direction, ask Him for guidance every step of the way. Even while walking through the wilderness, when you learn to lie on His bosom, how can you miss God’s will?

2. To Learn to Trust God with all our heart

There is absolutely nothing else for us to lean on and depend on in the wilderness. We are totally cut off from everything.

In June 1986, I went to Ladakh, in Kashmir, India. Ladakh, before the British arrived in India, belonged to Tibet. The terrain looks exactly like Tibet. The Lord told me to go and preach to the Ladakhis living there. But what He didn't tell me was that I would have to walk for 12 days through the wilderness surrounded by snow-covered mountains. He never told me I may not get proper food to eat; I may not know from where I would get my next meal. He didn't even tell me there were no hotels available. He simply said, "Go!" and in childlike naivety and youthful zeal I went, solely trusting God.

In the wilderness you rely totally on God. When you rely totally on God, you learn to die to self.

Trained in the Wilderness

The wilderness is a place where you are trained in warfare. God trains you to fight wars. When the Israelites first came out of Egypt, God fought for them (Ex 14:14). But the Scripture says later of King David, "He teaches my hands to make war, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze" (2 Sam 22:35; Ps 18:34; 144:1). When you are a baby, God will fight for you. Then He expects you to grow up. You cannot be a baby all your life. When you grow up, He teaches your hands to make war.

How is the Lord going to teach you to make war? By bringing you into the wilderness. There, cut off from all your friends, from

all your prayer partners, from all your spiritual mommies and daddies, with nobody there, it is the survival of the fittest. Either you win the war or the devil wins. There can only be one winner, not two.

Consider the wilderness experience of our dear Lord Jesus Christ.

LUKE 4:1-13

1 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2 being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

4 But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'"

5 Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

7 Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

8 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

9 Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here.

10 For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you,'

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11 and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"

13 Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

The Lord Jesus Christ was in the wilderness. Was He there by default or was He sent there? The Scriptures say that the Holy Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. The Greek meaning is that He was pushed there, or He was moved there. Driven, but not by default. For what purpose would God drive *you* into the wilderness? To make war – to teach your hands to make war. Sometimes you find that you are in a wilderness, cut off from everything. Why are you there? God is training your hands to make war. When you are cut off from everything that you know, you bend your knees and cry out to God.

This is just like the bride reclining on the bosom of the bridegroom. Why does she do that – put her head on His bosom? *Total reliance!* This act signifies you are dependent on the Bridegroom to protect you, to provide for you, and to care for you. You are brought to that place – remember this – to learn to lie on His bosom.

Also, you are there in order for you to know what is in your own heart. We think that we know what is in our heart, but often we do not really know. The Bible tells us that God brought the children of Israel into the wilderness to make them see what was in their heart (Deu 8:2, 5). When you are cut off from everything and find yourself in the wilderness, how do you react? Do you blame God or do you humbly trust Him to bring you out of the wilderness?

Heart Attitude of Surrender and Submission

I know a dear brother who, through mistakes he had made, ended up in a wilderness that lasted for years. When I first met him in 1988, he had already been in that state for two years. During that period he lost his business and became bankrupt; he lost his reputation. He lost everything. He was in the wilderness. He came crying to me every day. He would say, "Please pray. Please ask the Lord when I will come out of this wilderness." I would tell him, "Don't worry brother, very soon." He would ask, "How soon?" Again I would answer, "Very soon."

How could I tell him how soon it would end? It is not given to us to know how long our desert wanderings will last. The length of your days in the wilderness depends on you – how soon you learn your lesson. It is in your hands. If you take longer to learn, you will stay in the wilderness longer. If you learn in a day, you may be out in a day. If you stay in the wilderness longer, the presence of the Lord, though no longer visibly present, is still there with you.

Three years passed by since the initial start of the man's wilderness experience. Sometimes there was not enough food for his family. I was very sad and prayed very much for him. But the Lord would never tell me how long it would last or when it would be finished. The Lord would just say, *Tell him to wait*. He kept asking, *How long?* All I could say to him was, *Wait*.

After about a year since I first met him, we were going to have our annual partners' meeting. As I was praying for the meeting the Lord told me to invite him and that it would be his day of

blessings and deliverance. Excited for him, I called him and asked him to come to the meeting. He said it would be very difficult as he had another engagement. He said, "I really cannot come, but please pray for me over the phone." I said that was not what I was told to do. If he wanted his breakthrough, he should come. Desperate to be set free, he somehow managed to come to the meeting. After the message I began to pray for our partners, first collectively, then individually.

As I started to pray for him, I saw the heavens open and the glory of God shone down on him. That day, when the glory of God shone on him, he was set free from the wilderness that very second. He came out of the wilderness and the Lord restored all the things he had lost. The obvious question is: If the Lord could deliver him in a second, why did it take that many years for him to come out of the wilderness?

During the three years, as he walked through the wilderness, the attitude of his heart was not right. It was not one of being humbled or repentant for the mistakes he had made that caused him to enter the wilderness in the first place. Instead, it was one of self-justification, complaining and grumbling, like the Israelites. Perhaps that prolonged his stay in the wilderness.

What should be your heart attitude when you find yourself in the wilderness? Let's look for a model from the life of our dear Lord Jesus.

1 PETER 2:21-23

21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

22 Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth;

23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

The Lord Jesus Christ patiently and willingly submitted himself to the ways and the righteous judgments of God.

The Lord God brings us into the wilderness and puts us there for us to see our own hearts. We think we know ourselves better, but the truth is our natural carnal mind does not know. Deep within us, our spirit man alone knows what is really inside of us (1 Cor 2:11). These two things – what our natural mind knows and what our spirit knows – are miles apart. It is a long journey from what you know in your mind to what is in your heart.

When God Withdraws His Presence

In the wilderness, sometimes God purposely withdraws Himself and hides Himself away from you.

PSALMS 18:9-11

9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down with darkness under His feet.

10 And He rode upon a cherub, and flew; He flew upon the wings of the wind.

11 He made darkness His secret place; His canopy around Him was dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.

When the Lord God walks with you through the wilderness, that is not too bad. But when God withdraws from you, you are all alone. God can be friendly but despises familiarity. When we have walked with God for a long time, we become so familiar

with Him over time that many times we take God and His word very lightly and we begin to, unconsciously, loose the fear of God. This becomes a stumbling block in our spiritual life. So every now and then God withdraws His presence from us to make us realize that He is God and we are but dust, and that we cannot do anything without Him (Jn 15:5).

The dark cloud that surrounds us – the dark night of our soul – will drive us to our knees. We never want to lose the presence of God in our lives. Every time the presence wanes, bend your knees and fast and pray until His presence returns.

Let's look to the Shulamite to learn from her how she handled such a situation.

SONG 4:12

*12 A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up,
a fountain sealed.*

SONG 5:6-8

*6 I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and
was gone. My heart leaped up when he spoke. I sought him, but
I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.*

*7 The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck
me, they wounded me; The keepers of the walls took my veil
away from me.*

*8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved,
that you tell him I am lovesick!*

The bridegroom was lost from the bride's view. She went around looking for Him. He had withdrawn. Why? God despises familiarity. Let us never forget that He is the great God of the whole universe. He is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the

Last, the Beginning and the End (Rev 1:11). Of His Kingdom there is no end. Never lose sight of that!

King Nebuchadnezzar, the great emperor of the Babylonian empire, also had to learn this painful lesson through a terrible experience.

DANIEL 4:2-37

2 I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.

3 How great are His signs, and how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation.

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace.

5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

6 Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream.

7 Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and I told them the dream; but they did not make known to me its interpretation.

8 But at last Daniel came before me (his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him, saying:

9 "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation.

10 "These were the visions of my head while on my bed: I was looking, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great.

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11 The tree grew and became strong; Its height reached to the heavens, and it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.

12 Its leaves were lovely, its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, the birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

13 "I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven.

14 He cried aloud and said thus: 'Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, and the birds from its branches.

15 Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth.

16 Let his heart be changed from that of a man, let him be given the heart of a beast, and let seven times pass over him.

17 'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'

18 "This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you."

19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for a time, and his thoughts troubled him. So the king spoke, and said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you." Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!

20 *"The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which could be seen by all the earth,*

21 *whose leaves were lovely and its fruit abundant, in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home –*

22 *it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth.*

23 *"And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him';*

24 *this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king:*

25 *They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.*

26 *"And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules.*

27 *Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity."*

28 *All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar.*

29 *At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon.*

30 *The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"*

31 *While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!*

32 *And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."*

33 *That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.*

34 *And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation.*

35 *All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, "What have You done?"*

36 *At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me.*

37 *Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.*

King Nebuchadnezzar had known the greatness of God and had even extolled the greatness of God. But his heart became filled with pride of self-made accomplishment though he had previously acknowledged that God had prospered him. Though being warned in a dream not to be prideful but to humble himself, he failed to pay heed to the warning. He took the warning, from a watcher – a high ranking angelic being – very lightly.

In a momentary lapse of his remembrance of the greatness of God and momentary forgetfulness that it was God who made him great, his thoughts bent inwards, like the light in a black hole, and he boasted how his own great might had accomplished all these things.

At that very moment the judgment of God fell upon him. In an instant he was transformed physically, not allegorically, into a beast. It was a mind-boggling total DNA transformation. He was driven out into the “wilderness”. His wilderness experience lasted seven long years. At the end of the appointed “prison term” his mind was restored to him and he humbled himself and truly acknowledged, from a broken and contrite heart, the greatness of the living God.

The Lord Jesus Christ was God in human form (Phil 2:6). Yet you always find Him praying on his knees, many times all night (Lk 6:12). Even in His humanity as the Son of Man, He never took His relationship with God for granted. He gave us an example of how we should live a life totally dependent on God in godly fear.

God Draws You Closer to Discover More

In the wilderness God draws you near to Himself, speaking to your heart, "Where have you gone My son? Where have you gone My daughter?" He is drawing you. When you are cut off from everything else you are forced to draw closer to Him.

When you are in such a situation, check your heart to see if pride has bred there. Check to see if you have taken God and His word lightly. Check to see if you have lost the fear of God.

When you are in the wilderness, remember your first love for the Lord. Draw closer to Him in the same way you sought Him during the early years of your salvation. The Lord God is still with you, though hidden. He is wooing you and drawing you to come closer to Him. The bride leaning on the bosom of the bridegroom is the place where she belongs and the place where she ought to be (Song 8:5).

The leaning on the bosom signifies *complete trust* and *dependency*. Let's consider a classic biblical incident.

JOHN 12:1-3

1 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead.

2 There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.

3 Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

While the Lord Jesus was dining at the home of a certain man called Simon the Leper (Matt 26:6; Mk 14:3) Mary came and stood beside Him while Martha, as usual, was busy serving food. She had in her hand a very costly box. The alabaster box, in the Jewish culture, is a gift that a bride would present to her bridegroom on their wedding night. She would break the box in his presence and anoint his head and feet. Then she would bend low to kiss his feet. It would require an entire lifetime of savings to purchase such an alabaster box of costly spikenard oil. Every family would save their money to purchase this gift for their daughters.

The alabaster box represents the virgin bride presenting her virginity to her husband. On her wedding night, before they would consummate their marriage, she would break the box and anoint her husband's head. By breaking the box and anointing the Lord, Mary was saying that she could not go to another bridegroom because she recognized the Lord Jesus Christ as her Bridegroom. By this act she said to Him, "There is no one else in my life but You."

She then bent down and kissed his feet. That was an act of total surrender. By that gift and by her act she said to the Lord: "Lord, You are my all. I don't have anyone or anything else. I have surrendered my all to You. I trust You will take care of me." It was not just a gift that she presented to the Lord Jesus, but her entire life. She had nothing more to give.

You come to this place of total abandonment when you lie on the bosom of your beloved Bridegroom. Pleased by your acts of total surrender and abandonment, the Lord will then promote and lift you up (*cp.* Matt 26:10-13). God will reveal secrets to you and will share His heart with you (Ps 25:14).

God does not withhold His secrets from His friends and His Bride. The secrets of God are waiting to be discovered. You must learn to rest your head on the bosom of the Lord. From the place of lying on His bosom learn to hear His will, hidden in the Lord's heart. Then lift up your face to gaze at His face to learn the manifold depths of the love and wisdom of God (Eph 3:17-19).

His Bosom, the Gateway

JOHN 1:18

18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

JOHN 1:18 AMP

18 No man has ever seen God at any time; the only unique Son, or the only begotten God, Who is in the bosom [in the intimate presence] of the Father, He has declared Him [He has revealed Him and brought Him out where He can be seen; He has interpreted Him and He has made Him known].

As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, the word "bosom" in Greek is *kolpos*. It signifies *the front of the body between the arms*. Hence, to recline on the "bosom" was said of one who so reclined at table that his head covered, as it were, the "bosom" of the one next to him. In Jewish custom, reclining at table in the "bosom" of the host was a place of honor.

To lie on the bosom of someone shows an intimate and affectionate relationship one enjoys in the company of the other. Like a son lying on his mother's bosom for comfort; a daughter lying on her father's bosom for solace and security or friends lying on each other's bosom to share secrets.

It is not just a physical place; it is a *gateway – a portal* – to enter into the throne room of God. I once read of how an Indian saintly man of God, Dr. DGS Dhinakaran, saw the bosom of God. During the early days of his humble ministry he used to earnestly pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Once, as he was praying very earnestly with great yearning for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, he heard a voice from heaven saying, “Come up here” (*cp.* Rev 4.1). He then, in a vision, saw a hand coming down from heaven and lifting his spirit up to heaven. In heaven, he saw himself standing before the throne of the Lord Jesus.

With a sweet smile on His face, the Lord Jesus asked him, “What do you want?” Immediately he answered, “Lord, I want all the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.” The Lord did not say anything to his request. At that moment, the man of God perceived in his spirit that someone was standing behind him and was pleading, “Lord! You said that the harvest is plenty, but the labourers are few (Lk 10:2). This young man has come forward and is willing to go through any kind of sufferings for You. All that he is asking You is for the nine gifts. Why don’t You grant his desire?’ Only then did the man of God realise that it was the Holy Spirit who was interceding for him (Rom 8.26).

The Lord Jesus smiled at the intercession of the Holy Spirit and said, “Well, let’s go to the Father.” The man of God was then lifted to a different place in heaven. Amidst what looked like snow-capped mountains, he saw a very high white throne and perceived the presence of the Father God on the throne but did not see His face. Suddenly, a voice thundered from the throne, “What do you want?” Trembling with the fear of God, the man of God said, “Father, I want the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.” After a short silence, again the voice thundered, “Do you want Me or My gifts only?”

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Not knowing what to answer, the man of God stood there, confused and lost. The Holy Spirit then counselled him, "Say, Lord, it is You that I want." When he repeated what the Holy Spirit had said, he perceived that the Father God was extremely pleased with the answer. He then saw the Lord Jesus Christ coming out from what looked like the bosom of the Father (Jn 1:18). From the face of the Lord Jesus came a powerful anointing of millions of multi-coloured rays of light and filled the man. From that day, all the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit began manifesting in his life.

The Bible says, "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (Jn 1:18). How can someone come out of the bosom of God, if there is no gateway into it? This is a mystery. The Lord Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you" (Lk 17:21).

If the kingdom of heaven were somewhere out there at the far end of the universe, how could it be that the Lord said it is *within* us? If the kingdom of heaven is within us, it is also safe to say that it is also within the Lord Jesus Christ. If it is within the Lord Jesus Christ, then if we lay our head on His bosom, His bosom then becomes a gateway for us to enter in, doesn't it?

The Lord Jesus declared, "I am the door" (Jn 10:7,9). What did He mean by that? Door to what? Door to where? These are some deep mysteries. The word "door" in Greek is *thura* meaning *a portal or entrance (the opening or the closure, literally or figuratively)*. When you lie on His bosom, as the apostle John frequently did (Jn 13:23), the Lord will lay hold of your hand and say, "Come, let's go for a walk. Don't lie too long on my breast. Let's go

inside". When you enter into this gateway, this portal, you will be translated to your Father's house. The Lord will then say to you, "Look at the many mansions in My Father's house. Let me show you your house" (Jn 14:2).

Would it not be great to see your house in heaven? God is a good God who does not limit Himself to anyone. The Bride must learn to submit herself to God. We must learn to submit ourselves to God and not lean on our own understanding.

PROVERBS 3:5-6

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

To lean on one's own understanding is a great enemy. There are really just two things we will end up leaning on:

1. The bosom of God, or
2. Our own understanding.

If we lean on our own understanding, we will end up in a ditch and never get out of it. If we learn to lean on the bosom of the Lord Jesus Christ, He will always, like the good shepherd, lead us by the streams of living waters and into the green pastures where we will never, ever be hungry (Ps 23:2; Isa 49:10). The beauty that is upon the Lord Jesus will also be found upon us.

Let us learn a spiritual truth from these Scriptures:

PSALMS 45:10-11

10 Listen, O daughter, Consider and incline your ear; Forget your own people also, and your father's house;

11 So the King will greatly desire your beauty; Because He is your Lord, worship Him.

The phrase “forget your own people” means *do not rely on your own understanding*. The phrase “forget your father’s house” means *not living your life according to the ways of the world*. When we purpose in our heart and make a resolute decision to forsake both of these and then learn to lean on and lie constantly on the bosom of the Lord Jesus, we become a special beauty for the Lord to desire.

Secret of the Stairs

SONG 2:14 (KJV)

14 O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

“O my dove” is how the bridegroom calls out to the bride. The Lord Jesus is calling and wooing His Bride to a deeper level of intimacy with Him. If we sincerely believe that the Lord Jesus is coming for His Bride, then we must also understand that He is coming for a Bride who knows Him. She must know Him.

One of the cardinal principles of the Bride – she must make herself ready to meet the Bridegroom to become His wife (Rev 19:7-9). She must make herself ready to know the Bridegroom. This knowing, *yada*, in the Hebrew, goes beyond superficial cursory knowing to one that is intimate and experiential. This *yada-knowing* is borne out of an intimate walk with the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus.

If we do not know the Bridegroom, if we have not prepared ourselves, then we would not know what the Bridegroom likes and dislikes, what He wants, and what He doesn’t want. Neither would we know what His will is. We can only know all of this as

we make ourselves ready to know our Bridegroom in the way that He wants us to know Him.

“The kisses of pleasure are shared in the secret of the stairs. My dove must arise from the clefts to know Me and show Me her face,” is the word the Lord Jesus gave me for the Bride. *The kisses of pleasure are shared in the secret of the stairs!*

What is this secret of the stairs? What does the Bible really say about this? This is what the various translations of the Bible say:

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION:

My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.

THE LIVING BIBLE:

My dove is hiding behind some rocks, behind an outcrop of the cliff. Call to me and let me hear your lovely voice and see your handsome face.

COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE:

My dove, hiding in holes in the rock, in the secret recesses of the cliff, let me see your face and hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.

NEW CENTURY VERSION:

My beloved is like a dove hiding in the cracks of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff. Show me your face, and let me hear your voice. Your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.

Secret of the Stairs

AMPLIFIED BIBLE:

[So I went with him, and when we were climbing the rocky steps up the hillside, my beloved shepherd said to me] O my dove, [while you are here] in the seclusion of the clefts in the solid rock, in the sheltered and secret place of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.

From these Scriptures we can surmise that the secret place is a secret hiding place in the clefts – cracks in the mountainside. The word, “secret places” in Hebrew is *cether* meaning *covert and protective secret place*. The word “stairs” in Hebrew is *madregah* meaning *a stair-like steep and inaccessible place*.

This original meaning of the words, then, tells us we must come out of hiding. We hide ourselves in what we think is a place that is inaccessible for God. It may not be just a physical place, but it can also mean that we are hiding ourselves in a covert place deep within our heart.

It was in such a place that Adam and Eve hid themselves from God’s presence thinking that God will not know where they are (Gen 3:8). When God called out to Adam asking him where he was, it was not because God actually did not know where Adam was (Gen 3:9). The Bible says that there is not a single place in heaven or earth or even in hell where we can hide from Him (Ps 139:7-9). Instead, it was the same thought as in this passage: “O my dove, [hiding] in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.”

So, let's make ourselves known to God so that we can know Him (1 Cor 13:12).

Delight in God

PSALMS 37:4

4 Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

When we delight in God He, too, delights in us. Unfortunately, the church always gets this backwards. We must take the first step. Does not the Bible say, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (Jas 4:8)?

Psalms 37:4 is often misquoted and misused by almost all believers. Most of us have prayed along these lines: "Lord, You have said in your Word You will fulfill the desires of my heart. Therefore I pray for a big house, for this, for that, etc."

The promise in this Scripture is conditional. The condition of receiving the desires of your heart is that you delight yourself in the Lord God first. This must take place first. If you have not fulfilled this requirement, the desires of your heart, no matter how much you fast and pray, will never be fulfilled. All of our desires, as noble as they may seem, are selfish. They are never, ever pure.

True Worship

On September 27, 2014, while visiting Jerusalem, as I was meditating on the Scriptures I saw myself in heaven with the Lord Jesus. He lifted me up to Himself the way a father would lift up

his small son and asked, "When will you come and give Me kisses and climb on My lap?" With a puzzled look I asked, "How Lord?" The Lord answered, "This is what you do when you praise and worship Me."

You begin to delight in the Lord through praise and worship. Just singing songs is not worship, but that is largely what we do in our churches and in our prayer life. The many songs sung in most Churches today make no sense at all. There is very little praise or glory to God in many of these songs. Of course, there are some very good songs, but those are just a minority among the large collection of "make-me-feel-good" songs.

Do you know why, when we conduct our worship services, we hardly ever experience the glory of God? It is because most of the churches today do not know how to worship God in the beauty of holiness (Ps 29:2; 96:9). She is absolutely ignorant concerning this. She thinks she knows, but she is totally ignorant of how to worship God in Spirit and truth (Jn 4:23-24). There is so much jumping up and down but not much real dancing in the Spirit before the Lord.

Worship must be directed towards God Himself; it must not be for the self-gratification of the believer. Worship is not singing to each other to get you into a swinging mood or make you feel good. That is not worship; that is not praise. Read the Psalms, all 150 of them. Every one of them sees the worshipper bowing down before the majesty and the glory of God. That is true praise; that is true worship.

When you sincerely worship in Spirit and truth, even if there are no musical instruments around, the angels will come down from heaven and hold your hands and dance with you before

the Almighty God. That is true praise and worship. That is true worship in spirit and in truth, and in the beauty of holiness.

One day in 1985, I sat down to praise and worship God and to meditate on His Word. I prayed, "Dear Holy Spirit, I want to worship the Lord now. Please come and fill me with a spirit of praise that I may worship the Lord in spirit and in truth."

After praying I opened my eyes to look at the songbook in front of me. When I did so, two angels with musical instruments in their hands stood before me. I asked them, "What are you doing here?" They replied, "We have come to praise the Lord with you." So I said, "Okay, we will sing song number 10."

Before I started singing, I suddenly remembered and I said to the angels, "By the way, you do know these songs are in the Indian language, right? Do you know the Indian language?" The angels had a sweet, gentle smile on their faces. They gleefully said, "Go ahead and sing. We will join you." I began to sing a song glorifying the majesty of God. The two angels joined me, singing in the Indian language, beating their drums and clanging their cymbals, which they had brought with them. They were having wonderful time worshiping the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

The entire time we were praising, I was seated on the floor and the angels were standing. But as we moved from praising the Lord to worshipping Him, both angels assumed the kneeling position. As they began to worship the Lord, they put down their instruments, and a look of intense adoration and awe filled their faces.

Whenever a phrase left their mouth that extolled the holiness of God, they bowed down with their faces to the ground and

worshipped the Holy One of Israel. I learned the true expression of worship by watching these angelic beings. That is how I understood where we have gone wrong in our churches; I understood what is the true form and pattern of worship. It is this true pattern that God desires in the church.

After it was all over, I thanked the Lord for the wonderful time of worship. I then sat down to meditate on the Word of God. The two angels were still waiting so I told them that the worship was over and they could go back. They didn't budge, so I said, "No more singing, it is over. Now I am going to meditate on the Word." They looked at me and said, "Teach us the Word." I said, "I have never heard anything like this before."

At that moment the Holy Spirit showed me this Scripture: "Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into" (1 Pet 1:11-12).

The Bible is given for us, not to the angels. Why do they need the Bible? They don't need to get saved; we do. So we have been given the Bible. And yet this book contains many mysteries and revelations which even the angels greatly desire to know. So I had a Bible study with the angels and taught them some deep mysteries from the word of God that they had never known before.

When you sincerely delight yourself in the Lord, He delights in you. When He delights in you, the whole of Heaven is with you.

We read in the Book of Esther that there came a time of great danger for all the Jewish people in the Persian Kingdom.

ESTHER 5:1-3

1 Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house.

2 So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter.

3 And the king said to her, "What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you – up to half the kingdom!"

Queen Esther was given the task to save the Jews. After fasting for three days, she put on her royal apparel and went in and stood in the King's court, waiting for the King to look at her. Look at the three stages of progression here:

First, she fasted for three days. *Second*, she put on her royal apparel. *Third*, she waited for the King in his court. These were the three things Queen Esther did in delighting herself before her king.

When the King saw her standing in the court, he stretched out his royal scepter to her and said, "Come up," and she went up. The King stretching out his scepter towards her, indicated that she had found favor and grace in his eyes. As she came up and stood before his throne, he looked at her with love and said

tenderly, “Esther, my queen, what do you want? It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!” With these few words, the King revealed what was in his heart towards her.

When you delight yourself in the Lord, He will take great delight in you. In the midst of that delight your heart is purified. Your mind is purified. All the selfish passions, wants and desires are burned away by the fires of the living God. Out of the ashes will emerge a pure heart that is a sweet-smelling aroma – a living sacrifice, before the Lord. And when the King beholds that sacrifice, even before you open your mouth to say anything, He will grant your desires.

When you delight yourself in the Lord, all your selfishness dies and only that which is pure remains to rise up like a cloud of incense before the Lord. All that God then sees is worship and delight from a pure heart, refined, transformed, and purified by fire. Then He will grant every one of your petitions. It will no longer be a selfish desire, or a selfish request, but a pure request.

Intimate Fellowship

When you delight yourself in the Lord, you will begin to have intimate fellowship with the Lord Jesus.

SONG 1:2

*2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth – For your love
is better than wine.*

What are the kisses of His mouth? It is an intimate fellowship, a communion between you and your Bridegroom. It is an intimate invitation to come and sit at His feet.

Enemies of Intimacy

Why do we always rush through our times with the Lord? Devotional books intended to help us spend quiet times with God should only be a means to the end of real quality intimate times with God, and not an end in themselves.

If you take a devotional book, read the day's reading, then close the book, say "Amen," and get up and walk away, that is not the same as spending real quality time with God. That kind of devotion is merely *milk* – the food of babies.

Devotional books can aid us to spend time with God but should not replace your times of meditating the Word. I personally use a devotional book in my own quiet time just to stir up my mind and prepare myself to enter into the presence of God. You must feed on the Word – that is real *meat* – the food of those who are mature. Devotional books should whet our appetite for the real meat that is in the living Word. Do not let them substitute spending quality times with God.

Get rid of your watch and switch off your mobile devices. These are two of the greatest enemies of the Christian life. They come between you and your Bridegroom trying to build an intimate relationship. They are like the little foxes that spoil the vineyards (Song 2:15). They rob us of the wine which then cannot be enjoyed by the Bride and Bridegroom.

When you sit in the presence of the Lord, speak love to Him through songs of praise and through songs of worship. Express all your love to him. As you do that, the Bridegroom will come and sit beside you and he will lavish kisses upon your face.

Kisses of Pleasure

My first ever trip to the African continent was in the year 1994. I went to Kenya in December of that year. One day, for some inexplicable reason, the meeting was cancelled. I had one whole day with nothing to do. I decided to spend that day in fasting and prayer. Since I had no specific agenda to pray through I decided I would just minister unto the Lord and wait on Him.

I began to sing songs which describe the Bride's love for her Bridegroom. As I began singing, a great love began to flow from my heart towards the Lord. After about 15 minutes of singing, I saw the Lord Jesus Christ manifest, seated on the bed beside which I was kneeling down. The moment I saw Him I said, "Yes Lord, here is Your servant. What do You want to speak to me?" He said, "I have not come to speak to you but just to enjoy this worship that you are giving Me." That is all He said. He just merely said, "I have come to enjoy this love which you are giving Me. These kisses that you are giving Me – I have come to receive them. Just keep on going."

I knelt close to Him, I grasped His hands in mine, and looking directly into His face I sang straight to Him. He continued smiling in enjoyment. The Lord never spoke another word. I saw the look on His face and found that He was enjoying the worship in a way quite similar to the enjoyment you see on a friend's face when both of you are having a good conversation. The Lord kept on smiling and enjoying the time of worship for about one hour; then He disappeared.

Kisses of pleasure are shared in the secret of the stairs. When you delight yourself in the Lord, He will take great delight in you and He will come to visit you.

Perhaps you may have experienced this without actually seeing the Lord Jesus by your side with your physical or spiritual eyes. Perhaps you may have experienced a warm sensation on your cheeks or something like a warm breath blowing on your face. If you have experienced this, it is the Bridegroom coming down to your side, blowing kisses of love on you.

He enjoys the love that you're giving Him and He comes down and stands very close to you and blows his kisses over His Bride. Isn't God good? He is a wonderful, wonderful, good, and tender lover. He loves you more than you love yourself and more than you love Him. One gentle kiss from Him will wipe away all your tears, will bind up and heal your broken soul and console your weeping heart.

So then what is the secret to intimacy with the Lord? Run to His feet. Sit at His feet. Don't run to people asking them to pat you on the shoulder and encourage you in your self-pity. But that is what we usually do. We want people to pamper us in our self-pity. *Self-pity is a sin.* It is a sin in the eyes of God.

Don't wallow in self-pity. Instead, bring your broken heart to the Lord Jesus, entrust it into His precious hands and love Him. The very next moment, He will be right there beside you, and He will put His arms around you, holding your face and looking gently at you. "Why are you weeping when I am here?" He will ask. He will take your broken heart in his hands, make it whole and give it back to you in one piece – as good as new. The Lord Jesus will do this for you if you will delight in Him. When you delight in God, He, in return, will take great delight in you.

His Pure Dove

Observe how the bridegroom addresses the bride.

SONG 2:14

14 “O My dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the secret places of the cliff, Let Me see your face, Let Me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.”

SONG 5:2

2 I sleep, but my heart is awake; It is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, “Open for me, my sister, my love, My dove, my perfect one; For my head is covered with dew, My locks with the drops of the night.”

SONG 6:9

9 My dove, my perfect one, is the only one, the only one of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her. The daughters saw her and called her blessed, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

He calls the bride *My dove*. Why does the bridegroom call her a dove? What is so special about a dove? What are the characteristics of a dove? If we can answer these questions, then we have discovered a secret, a key, to how you can be a Bride.

The word “dove” in Hebrew is *yownah* which means, a dove (*apparently from the warmth of their mating*). In Greek it is *peristera* which denotes *a dove or pigeon, indicating harmlessness*. From these two original words we can surmise that doves are harmless and warm up easily to intimate love.

The dove was an ancient symbol of purity and innocence. It was the only bird allowed to be offered in sacrifice by the Levitical law. Doves are pure, undefiled and harmless. Even the Lord Jesus, the Creator who made doves, counseled us to be harmless as doves (Matt 10:6). The word “harmless” in Greek is *akeraioi* which Moffatt and Goodspeed have translated as *guileless*, and Weymouth as *innocent*. The word also means *unmixed*, *unadulterated*, *simple*, and *unalloyed*.

There is something very peculiar and unique about doves. In all of God’s creation, both animal and human, there is an organ in our body that actually defiles our internal organs. It makes our internal organs unclean. Only the dove, among all of God’s wonderful creation, does not have this organ. The dove has no gallbladder or bile; as a result, the dove is pure within. She is undefiled.

This is the reason why the dove is chosen as the symbol of the Holy Spirit (Matt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:22; Jn 1:32). There is absolutely no impurity inside a dove. Look at its outward appearance: it is white. She is not only white on the outside but she is white on the inside, too; a perfect symbol for the Holy Spirit.

So who are you? The Lord – the Bridegroom, – calls you *My dove*. If you are a dove, then the first and foremost qualification for the Bride is to be pure, undefiled, innocent, guileless and harmless. To be harmless means that you do not have any evil intentions in your heart or thought against one another. Be harmless, undefiled and pure.

Secondly the dove is faithful and true to only one spouse. This is a very interesting characteristic of a dove. When a dove finds a mate, they will remain absolutely true and faithful to one

another. In them is the marriage covenant – “till death do us part” – fulfilled.

When a dove’s spouse dies, the other one remains unmarried and will keep on crying and mourning for the lost loved one until she too dies (Isa 38:14; 59:11). Likewise, the Bride must be faithful and true to her Bridegroom.

Thirdly, the dove is single-minded. When the dove lays her eyes on the spouse that she has picked, she will never look at another. She remains devoted and sees no one else. What does this characteristic of the dove mean to us?

PSALMS 27:4

4 One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.

Look at the first part of this Scripture: “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.” Not *two* things but *one*. One thing have I desired, and I will seek after it until I get it. No turning left, no turning right. Like a dove with single-minded devotion.

Why do we not obtain what we are seeking after? It is because we give up half-way there. We get tired of waiting. Many Christians have good intentions but fail because they do not seek and pursue after the Lord with all their heart. They fall short just before reaching the end.

Seek after the Lord, and be single-minded in your devotion. Don’t give up. *One thing have I desired.* If you sincerely seek the face of God, if you sincerely seek the glory of God, if you sincerely seek the House of God, don’t stop short of reaching your goal.

Don't give up until you get it. You must have stubborn faith. Don't be stubborn in your attitude. Stubbornness can be positive or negative. Use your stubbornness to move God. That is a good stubbornness. Don't be stubborn with each other. That is bad stubbornness.

Look into your heart. Do you *really* love the Lord your God or do you *think you* love Him? Or do you *pretend to* love Him? If you really love the Lord your God then you will seek after Him whom your soul longs for.

Hiding in Clefts

Where is the dove? She is found hiding in the cleft of the rock (Song 2:14). A cleft is a crevice or gorge deep down in the rocks. That is where doves make their nests. Doves like to make their nests in the gorges and the deep crevices in the clefts of the rocks (Jer 48:28). Why so? So that their nests are hidden from all danger.

The cleft is a place of security and safety for the dove. Clefts are secret places in the rocks which people cannot easily find. Only the doves know where to find them. Like the dove, are you hiding in your own secret place? Does God have access to the clefts in your life? Are you hiding your heart and your secrets from God? Is there a place in your life that even God has no right to touch? Many people make a cleft in their hearts and in their lives and they hide there and will not allow even God to touch those areas. Do you have such a place in your life?

If you want to be a Bride, you cannot remain there anymore. It may be your hiding place of safety. Whatever your background, good, bad or ugly, whether you were abused as a child, whether

you were molested as a child or whether you were deeply hurt by a Christian leader, we tend to hide in a cleft and build a wall around ourselves. You hide there not wanting to trust anybody else and not wanting anyone to come near. So you create a secret place and set boundaries around it that not even God can cross. A Bride cannot be like that.

Bridegroom Calling the Bride

The Bridegroom is calling the Bride to come to the warm embrace of His eternal, unfailing love.

SONG 2:10

10 My beloved speaks and says to me, rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

SONG 2:14 (KJV)

14 O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

Why is the bridegroom calling the bride in this way? It is because she is hiding down below in the clefts, the secret places. The bridegroom is standing at the top of the cliff calling down to the bride, “my dove, rise up, come up, don’t hide there, come on up.” The Bridegroom is calling the Bride: “Come away from the clefts, up the stairs to meet your God.”

What are stairs? Stairs are the way to ascend. From the place of hiding which is inaccessible to all, the Lord God is extending a hand to you, like He would extend His hand to help a sheep fallen into a crevice, to help you come to Him.

Stairs are doorways – *pathways to heaven*. Let's consider an incident recorded in the Old Testament.

GENESIS 28:12-13

12 Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

13 And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: "I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants."

Interestingly, the word "ladder" in Hebrew is *cullam* meaning *a stair-case; ladder*. In the dream, the patriarch Jacob saw a doorway opened and a ladder – or staircase – come down. Where did he saw the dream? The Bible says, "So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep" (Gen 28:11). Now, where is that *certain place*?

That "certain place" is the place where Jacob's grandfather, the prophet Abraham himself, had an encounter with the Lord God.

GENESIS 12:7-8

7 Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

8 And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.

That “certain place” is none other than Bethel where Jacob laid down to sleep. “Bethel”, which means *house of God*, is a place where there was an open heaven or a portal – a doorway – to heaven. When Jacob was in *that* right place he had an open heaven experience and saw a stair-way come from heaven.

Shall we go on with more biblical secrets? That place, Bethel, is the very place where the Lord Jesus was born. Amazing! The Lord Jesus was born in the very same place where the prophet Abraham had an encounter with God and sanctified that place for the Messiah to come.

Not only that; the biblical secrets don’t stop there. Later on, the Lord Jesus Himself said that He was the door (Jn 10:7-9). The word “door” in Greek is *thura* meaning *a portal or entrance (the opening or the closure, literally or figuratively): door, gate*. This *thura* is the same word used when the apostle John said, “...a door *standing* open in heaven” (Rev 4:1). The Lord Jesus Himself is the portal – a doorway into the heavens. That is why He told Nathaniel: “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” (Jn 1:51). And that is also why He said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn 14:6).

I once read of a marvelous experience of a certain woman of God. In a spiritual encounter, she was being chased by a battering ram. As she ran, an angel flew by to aid her. Seeing the angel, the woman asked him how she could hide herself from the ram. To this, the angel replied that the only place of safety was higher up. Saying that, the angel waved his hand and a *stairway* appeared. It seemed that it touched the earth and reached up into heaven. Isn’t that similar to what Jacob saw?

There were hand-rails on either side of the narrow stairs. The stairs were as clear as glass. As she climbed up the stairway she came into paradise. The angel who helped release the stairway tied the cascading stairway with a scarlet cord to a docking post. A sign above the post said: *Stairport*. The angel then told her that there are many such hidden stairways located all over the world. The only way to find them is to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

If you want to walk with God in the intimacy of the King's bedchamber, meet Him in your secret place of prayer. Yes, you can pray anywhere. You can pray in your car; you can pray in your kitchen; you can pray while you are bathing. You can pray anywhere you like, but there is a secret place of the Most High God where He will *want to* meet with you face to face. If you want to have an intimate relationship with Him you must go there. Not Him coming down to you when you are driving your car. That is different. Don't mix up the two. Meet Him in the place that is reserved for no one else but Him.

Consider these two Scriptures.

EXODUS 19:20

20 Then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

EXODUS 24:12

12 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

God wanted to reveal Himself in a greater way to the prophet Moses. The Lord told him to come up the mountain. *Come up the secret stairs and I will meet with you.* Why didn't God go down to meet the prophet Moses? It doesn't work that way. You must come up to Him.

In 2007 I was visiting a dear family in Florida, USA. One evening as I was having tea with my host, an angel visited me. When I looked at the angel, he motioned for me to go to my room as he wanted to talk with me. So I excused myself and went to my room. I then asked the angel what is the message from God. He said, "God wants to meet with you and talk with you. He wants you to go to Israel and fast for seven days."

Humbly and meekly I asked the angel, "If it is just to fast and pray, why can't I do it in India; why go all the way to Israel?" He looked at me and said, "Haven't you read in the Bible when Moses wanted to see God's glory? God told Him to come and meet Him at the place chosen by God" (*cp.* Ex 33:21-22). So I went to Israel accompanied by a minister of God in December 2007. We fasted for seven days. It was during that time that the Lord asked me to do the "Open Heavens Prophetic Conference" in Jerusalem.

As sincere as you may be in your desire to see the Lord God, as much as you want to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus, why are you not seeing Him or hearing Him? It is because you have not gone up to meet Him where He is. You are sitting in your comfortable place and asking Him to come down to where you are. Yet the Lord is waiting patiently for you to come to your senses and to know and realize that He is the Holy One who inhabits eternity (Isa 30:18). He is not your slave to command.

The Christians in the East have an intimate walk with God because they revere God. The Western Church does not know very much about what it means revere God. She just plays with God. She thinks God is her next-door neighbor. But that does not diminish God's love for you. He blesses you as far as His Grace goes, but the moment you rise up to meet Him in His place, you will walk in His glory. You will see His glory.

The prophet Moses wanted to see the glory of God. How do you think he must have felt when God said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live" (Ex 33:20)? His face must have become like that of a little boy looking with great longing into his father's face. When your child looks at you with that kind of a face, can you say no to them?

So the prophet Moses too must have had such a sad and longing face. The Lord must have looked down at him and His heart must have been moved with compassion. He must have thought to Himself, "What can I do for My dear friend?" He then thought of a way to create a loophole to circumvent what He had spoken in verse 20. Look at the following Scriptures to see how much the Lord longs to manifest Himself to us.

EXODUS 33:21-23

21 And the Lord said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock.

22 So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.

23 Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

Please observe closely verses 21 and 22 where the Lord says, “There is a place by me, and I will put you in the cleft of the rock.” Instead of the cleft of the rock where the dove goes to hide the Lord has His own cleft – the secret of the stairs. If you want to know God intimately, just as the Bridegroom knows His Bride, you must climb up the secret stairs to meet the Lord God where He is.

There are three ways to climb up the secret stairway.

1. Praise and Worship

When you begin to praise and worship God, all the impurities in your heart are washed away. A purification takes place. We can then stretch out the wings of faith to mount up to God (Ps 55:6).

2. Meditate on the Word of God

The Bible says, “That he might sanctify and cleanse her [the church] with the washing of water by the word...” (Eph 5:26). God’s word is like cleansing water (Jn 15:3). When you meditate on the word of God, your mind is cleansed and purified.

Most, if not all, of us share a common problem when we pray: *our minds wander*. Your mind wanders and suddenly you remember everything under the sun and you forget to read and meditate the Bible.

How shall we tame the mind? I was once travelling in the western part of Tibet. One morning, while walking in the wilderness, I met an American man flying a huge kite. I stopped to observe his art of flying. The kite was tied to a strong string many feet in length. Holding one end of the string in his hand, and aided by the forces of the wind, the man flew his kite. The

kite glided higher and higher. When strong winds began to blow, the kite would flap about in different directions. This man then quickly but steadily pulled the kite back on its right course.

As I was beholding this, I was then impressed in my spirit that likewise we must control our mind like the soaring kite. Assailed by various other thoughts, our mind is capable of flying in wrong directions. The string that held the kite is like a sanctified strong determined will and mind. We must will to pull back the mind, with its wild thoughts, from wandering off. The Bible says, "Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).

So, before studying the Word, first prepare and quiet your heart when you come before God. Second, praise and worship God for a while. When you praise, your mind will quiet down. Afterwards, when you meditate on the Word, your mind will remain focused and be brought into oneness with God.

Queen Esther did not immediately come and stand before the king to plead for her people's survival who were threatened with extinction. She fasted for three days. She put on her royal robes and then came and stood before the king (Est 5:1).

For the Bride of Christ, there are two stages of preparation: praise and worship followed by meditating on the word. By the time you sincerely enter into praise and worship and then meditate on the word of God, your mind will come into stillness and oneness before the Holy Spirit. Only then enter into prayer.

In that state, when you pray, your heart will never waver and your mind will never wander. You will have oneness of heart,

oneness of mind, together with the Holy Spirit. This is one of the spiritual meaning of the Scripture: “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20). Not just two or three believers, but your spirit and your soul are two, and the third one is the Holy Spirit. You become one, and the Lord Jesus Christ is there. When He is there, He will still all the raging storms and winds in your mind and bring quietness and stillness. Your eyes will then behold Him and your heart will see Him. Your ears will hear His voice.

3. Waiting on God

Most Christians do not practice this at all or are simply just ignorant of it. The foundation of your walk with God is waiting on Him. If you don’t have this foundation, you cannot walk with God. Let us consider an example.

EXODUS 24:12-18

12 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them.”

13 So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.

14 And he said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them.”

15 Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain.

16 Now the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

17 The sight of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.

18 So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

The Lord God asked the prophet Moses to come up to the mountain because He wanted to speak with him. When the prophet Moses went up to the mountain, he waited patiently there for six days before God's glory came down. On the seventh day, the cloud of glory came down. And God spoke to him face to face for forty days and forty nights.

What is the key to the greatness of men like Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Elijah and many other of whom we read in Scripture? Why are we awed by men who walk with God? What makes such saintly men of God great? What makes men like these great and wondered-at? Is it their great spirituality? I will tell you their secret: *they simply obeyed implicitly.*

They simply obeyed without any questions. God told the prophet Moses to come and wait. There was no other thought in his mind. He only had to do one thing – *wait*. If God did not show up until the fortieth day, he would still be waiting, because the Lord told him to wait.

Most Christians' problem today is that we cannot obey. We always want to question God and tell Him why we cannot obey. The foundation of true spirituality is obedience. If you want to walk with God, you must obey. He will tell you to forsake all and follow Him. If you forsake all, you must believe with childlike simplicity that He will take care of you. He will, if you obey.

Look at the Lord Jesus Christ. He Himself, when He was on this earth, climbed the “secret stairs” to meet with the Father God.

MATTHEW 14:23

23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.

LUKE 6:12

12 Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

LUKE 9:28

28 Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray.

The Lord Jesus climbed up a mountain – the secret stairs to talk with God.

Let Me See Your Face

SONG 2:14

14 “O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.”

When you follow in the Lord’s footsteps, when you climb up the mountain – “the secret stairs” – to be alone with God, what does your Bridegroom desire? To see your face and to hear your voice.

Make yourself known to God (1 Cor 13:12). Bare your heart and expose the inner secrets of your naked heart to Him. The Lord Jesus, your Bridegroom, waits for you to reveal yourself to Him.

SONG 5:2

2 I sleep, but my heart is awake; It is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, "Open for me, my sister, my love, My dove, my perfect one; For my head is covered with dew, My locks with the drops of the night."

The Lord Jesus stands before you and knocks at the door and waits for you to open (Rev 3:20). He is waiting for you to reveal your heart to Him. Whatever is in your heart, open your heart and talk freely, uninhibited, to God. Don't use King James English or grammatically correct or politically correct sentences before God in prayer. Talk to Him like a little child – innocently and freely. Frankly and without fear express to Him whatever is in your heart.

When you love the Lord Jesus with all your heart, it will open up your heart to God. The Bible says, "But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him" (1 Cor 8:3). The Bridegroom desires to see your face. The Bridegroom desires to hear your voice. The Bridegroom desires to see your heart. Unveil your heart before Him. Make yourself naked before His all-seeing eyes. Tell Him whatever is in your heart. Hide nothing. Keep no secrets; just like it ought to be between a husband and wife.

*But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him
(1 Cor 8:3)*

Marriage of the Lamb

REVELATION 19:7-9

7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

The Marriage of the Lamb is the greatest event that pertains to the Bride of Christ. Note that in this verse it says that the Marriage of the Lamb *has* come. Or as the Amplified Bible puts it: *[at last] has come*.

It has already come; not that it is coming in the future. It *has* come. When did it come? Your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ is marked by three phases. From the day that you were born again until the day that you will meet the Bridegroom at the marriage supper of the Lamb, there is a three-stage process. This process is similar to that of an Oriental wedding.

The Engagement

First, the betrothal. Betrothal is the legal consummation of the marriage by the parents of the bride and of the groom, with the payment of the dowry.

The word “betroth” in Hebrew is *aras*, which means *to engage for matrimony*. It means that once a woman and man are betrothed, they belong to each other and the marriage contract is sealed.

The betrothal in your life took place when you gave your life to the Lord Jesus Christ and accepted Him as your Savior. That was the moment you were betrothed, or promised, to the Lord Jesus Christ.

An engagement took place between you and the Lord Jesus Christ at that very moment when you said, “Come Lord Jesus, come into my life.” At that very moment, a promise was made: “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor 11:2).

In every engagement ceremony, there is an exchange of rings between the couple. What is an engagement without a ring?

The Lord Jesus told us the Parable of the Prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32). When the prodigal son returned to the father, the first thing the father did was to put a ring on his hand (Lk 15:22). In the same way, once you were lost in sin and living in the kingdom of darkness. When you accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you were betrothed or engaged to the Lord Jesus

Christ as His Bride. At the moment of acceptance He put a ring in you – the seal of the Holy Spirit – the seal of the promise that symbolizes the bond between you and the Lord Jesus (Gal 3:14, Eph 1:13).

A dear prophet friend, Dr Bruce Allen, once had the following prophetic encounter with God. He saw the Lord Jesus standing in front of him next to a portal. In His hand the Lord was holding a small box. He opened the box and took out a beautiful engagement ring. The diamond must have been about 3 or 4 carats. Inside this flawless diamond he saw what he could best describe as what happens when you drop red food coloring into water. It disperses into stringy clouds.

Within the diamond he saw the blood of the Lord Jesus floating around in the same manner. The Lord then said to him: “I am proposing to My Bride in this hour. This ring represents the bridal price I paid and how much I treasure her – it cost Me everything.

How is the betrothal between God and His people sealed?

HOSEA 2:19-20 (AMP)

*19 And I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy.
20 I will even betroth you to Me in stability and in faithfulness, and you shall know (recognize, be acquainted with, appreciate, give heed to, and cherish) the Lord.*

Verse 19 tells us that God has betrothed us to Himself “in righteousness, justice and love,” which in essence is holiness.

The engagement is the first event that takes place when we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. From that moment until the marriage of the Lamb, there is a period of waiting and preparation.

Period of Waiting and Preparation

After the betrothal, the bride now prepares to meet the bridegroom. The Bible says, “And His wife has made herself ready” (Rev 19:7). This is the most important phrase in the entire passage regarding the marriage supper of the Lamb, and one that we cannot afford to overlook.

Consider the phrase “His wife.” Since the betrothal is now over, the bridegroom can claim ownership of the bride. That is why she is referred to here as *His wife*. And the bride can claim ownership of the bridegroom as well. That is why the Scriptures say: “For I have betrothed you to one husband” (2 Cor 11:2). The Bridegroom – the Lord Jesus – is coming for His Bride, the remnant true and loyal church.

Bridegroom Coming for Bride

REVELATION 16:15

15 “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

Suddenly, without any announcement or warning, He is coming for His Church. Only they who have made themselves ready will hear the sound of the trumpet that will be blown. Not everyone.

Marriage of the Lamb

In 1985 I went to Singapore for meetings. I landed at the airport and took a cab to go to the pastor's house, about 15 kilometers away. While we were traveling, at about 10 p.m., I suddenly heard the sound of a trumpet. I turned and looked to see where the sound was coming from. The airport was on reclaimed land by the sea and the area on either side was just barren land. So there was nowhere that anyone would be playing the trumpet at that hour. For a while, I thought I may be just imagining the sound, thinking it may be an after-effect of the noise of the jet engines during my long flight.

A few minutes later I heard the sound of the trumpet again. So I asked the driver, "Excuse me, sir, where is this sound of a trumpet coming from?" He turned around, looked at me puzzled and asked, "What sound?" I said, "Don't you hear the sound of a trumpet?" I described the sound and I even tried to imitate the sound I was hearing. He shook his head as though he didn't quite understand what I was saying.

I just kept quiet and a few minutes later again I heard the sound of the trumpet. Sensing something spiritual I quieted myself to be still. I heard the still small voice of the Holy Spirit say, "Listen carefully." When I did, I perceived the sound of the trumpet coming all the way from heaven. Our spirit is intelligent enough to sense the direction from which something is coming.

Then the Lord said, "There are two of you in this car. Only you heard the sound of the trumpet but not the cab driver. Likewise, in that day, only they who have made themselves ready will hear the sound of the trumpet calling the Bride, 'Come up.'"

There is so much controversy about the rapture in Christian circles everywhere. Let's consider what the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul said about the catching away.

MATTHEW 24:40-44

40 Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.

41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:14-17

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

The word "taken" (Matt 24:40) in Greek is *paralambano* meaning to receive near, i.e. associate with oneself (in any familiar

or intimate act or relation); - receive, take (unto, with). Additionally, paralambano can mean “to take to (or with) oneself,” as in “taking a wife.” It also denotes the removal of persons from the earth in judgment when the Son of Man is revealed. This Greek word can also mean that a thing will be removed and put on a shelf for future use.

The word “caught up” in Greek is *harpazo* meaning *to snatch or catch away*. It is used of the act of the Spirit of the Lord translating Philip (Acts 8:39); of Paul being “caught up” to paradise (2 Cor 12:2,4); of the rapture of the saints at the return of the Lord (1 Thes 4:17); of the rapture of the man child (Rev 12:5). This verb conveys the idea of force suddenly exercised – of forceful seizure.

Is there any biblical proof for the rapture – or catching away? Of course there is.

1. The prophet Enoch was translated without tasting death (Gen 5:24).
2. The prophet Elijah was translated alive, taken up in the eyes of witnesses (2 Kg 2:11).
3. The Lord Jesus Christ while blessing the people was taken up alive to heaven in a cloud witnessed by 500 people (Acts 1:9-10).
4. The Lord Jesus said concerning His disciples that some will not die till they see the kingdom of God come (Matt 16:28; Mk 9:1; Lk 9:27).

According to the Collins Dictionary, if you refer to some of the people or things in a group, you mean a few of them but not all of them. If you refer to some of a particular thing, you mean a part of it but not all of it. To give us an idea of what the Lord Jesus might have meant by some, He later took the apostles Peter, James and John – some of them – with Him to a mountain to pray; while praying He was transfigured and the three – i.e. *some* of the disciples – saw the glory of the Lord Jesus (Matt 17:1-2; Mk 9:1-2; Lk 9:27-29).

However, the Transfiguration of the Lord Jesus witnessed by the three disciples is *not* the fulfilment the Lord's word, "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" (Matt 16:28). Please look at these three parallel scriptures carefully:

1. "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the *Son of Man coming in His kingdom*" (Matt 16:28).
2. "And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the *kingdom of God present with power*" (Mk 9:1).
3. "But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they *see the kingdom of God*" (Lk 9:27).

Note the emphasis on the phrase "the kingdom of God" in these three Scriptures. Please take note of how the Lord Himself said the kingdom will come.

Marriage of the Lamb

MATTHEW 26:64

64 Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

MARK 14:62

62 Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

MATTHEW 25:31

31 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory."

These Scriptures refer to the physical manifestation of the kingdom of God – this is what the Lord referred to when He told the disciples that some will not die before they see the kingdom. This manifestation of the kingdom of God will definitely take place *only* at the visible second coming of the Lord Jesus. This then alludes to the fact that some of the disciples will be *alive* till the end – till the second coming of the Lord Jesus. This confirms what the apostle Paul wrote, saying: "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thes 4:17).

Mystery! Mystery! Mystery! May the Holy Spirit give you the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation that the eyes of your understanding may be enlighten to understand these mysteries.

Furthermore, in addition to the subject of the rapture being a great controversy within mainstream Christianity, there is another controversy – *when* will it happen: *Pre-Tribulation rapture*,

Mid-Tribulation rapture or *Post-Tribulation rapture*? When will the Church – the Bride of Christ – be raptured? Most Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians lean towards a pre-tribulation rapture. This means that before the tribulation begins on the earth, God will remove the Church. They cite the examples of Noah's family being saved before the worldwide flood and Lot's family being saved from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as proofs.

Well, when will the rapture really take place? The Lord Jesus Himself has answered that question.

MATTHEW 24:40-44

40 Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.

41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Please look at verses 43-44: "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." The emphasis is – *be ready*!

Let's not fight over trivial issues such as which is the correct time of the rapture. The most important aspect is *getting ready* – the wife has made herself ready! When you are ready, whether

the rapture takes place before, in the middle of, or after the tribulation, you will hear the trumpet when it sounds and the Spirit of the Lord will catch you away as he did to Philip (Acts 8:39-40).

May I share with you a deeper mystery? You do not have to wait for the rapture to take place at some time in the distant future. You can have your rapture *right now*. It is absolutely possible. When your spirit and soul are transformed into the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus, then your body, too, will be transformed. You will then be instantaneously transformed into light and be caught up alive into heaven before the actual worldwide rapture. This is secretly taking place around the entire world. Many people are experiencing translation.

The Holy Spirit once explained to me that only in exceptionally rare cases, certain people who walk and live very close to God in their earthly lives, are translated alive into heaven without tasting death. In the Bible, special mention is made of the prophets *Enoch* and *Elijah* who were translated alive into heaven without tasting death (Gen 5:24; 2 Kg 2:11).

How is this possible? During the earthly life of certain individuals, they have walked before God in purity, holiness and fear. They were already living before the presence of God as if they were actually living in the holy presence of God in heaven (1 Kg 17:1; 18:15). They also served God with a holy zeal. And since they lived so close to God in habitual fellowship and constant touch, it just pleased God to translate them to heaven.

The word “translate” in Greek is *metatithemi* meaning *to transfer to another place*. A similar word *methistemi* means *to change, remove (meta, implying change, histemi, to cause to stand)*.

And yet another related word, *metathesis*, means *a change of position*. Therefore we could define “translation” as *a sovereign act of God, whereby He causes those in whom He is well pleased, to be transferred from earth to heaven*.

When the Holy Spirit explained these things to me, in a vision, He showed me things concerning the translation of a certain servant of God who labored much for the Lord in the early 1900s in India. In that vision, I saw this servant of God who was about 40, crossing the high Himalayan Mountains to go to a distant mountain village to preach the gospel. As he was high up on the mountain pass, two angels appeared before him (*cp.* Gen 19:1; Lk 24:4, Jn 20:12, Acts 1:10). He seemed to recognize them and was calm and relaxed in their presence.

They then told him with great love and joy: “You have pleased and found favor with God. The Lord is now calling you home.” As he stood surprised, these angels tapped his shoulders. A marvellous thing then took place. He was clothed in a celestial body like when a man puts on a new set of clothes (2 Cor 5:2, AMP). In a split second, he stood there with a glorified and immortal body (Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 15:53).

He was then brought by these two angels to heaven where he was received with great joy and jubilation by the hosts of heaven. When he was brought before the Lord Jesus, tears of joy streamed down from his eyes (Rev 5:4). Wiping away the tears from his eyes (Isa 25:8; Rev 7:17), the Lord Jesus embraced that faithful servant of the Lord with great love.

These things foreshadow the translation or rapture of the Bride of Jesus Christ before the coming of the Lord (Matt 24:40; 1 Cor 15: 51-53; 1 Thes 4:15-17).

Why should you taste death? Death is the result of the curse of sin. If we have been redeemed from the curse of the law, then we should also be redeemed from tasting death. If you walk with God, you will not taste death because there is no death in the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn 11:26). He is life (Jn 11:25). He is life, so when you walk with Him you will emit life – the *zoe* life. Eventually, you will be so full of the Lord Jesus Christ that His life will embrace you totally.

Not All Will Be Ready

REVELATION 19:7

7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

Only the Bride who has made herself ready will be caught away, not all who are part of the body of Christ. The larger part of the body of Christ is different from the Bride of Jesus Christ. The Bride of Christ is part of the Body of Christ, but the larger Body of Christ *is not* the Bride of Christ.

Let's suppose there is a wedding in your church. The bride is a woman. All the female guests who come to the wedding are women too. On the wedding day only one women – she who has made herself ready as a bride – will walk down the aisle to meet her bridegroom. Not all the women who come to the wedding will walk down the aisle.

In the whole body of the Lord Jesus Christ, how many are making themselves ready like the Bride? According to the parable of the wise and foolish virgins narrated by the Lord Jesus, it

is only 50% - five wise and five foolish (Matt 25:1-13). All the virgins wanted to meet the Bridegroom but only five were ready.

Bride's Responsibility to Make Herself Ready

The Lamb's wife made herself ready! How did she make herself ready? We studied earlier how Esther went through twelve months of preparation before meeting the king. From the day you were betrothed to the Lord Jesus Christ until the day that you are married to Him, it is your solemn responsibility to remain a chaste and pure virgin. This is how she makes herself ready; she protects herself. She keeps herself clean in the same way that an unmarried woman guards her virginity. Your spirit, soul and body must be preserve pure, holy, blameless and undefiled for the Lord (1 Thes 5:23).

The Bride of Jesus Christ must be a pure virgin, undefiled in her heart, her soul and her body. This means you have no other gods, and no other husband besides the Lord Jesus. Keep your heart in single-minded devotion. That is what it means to be the virgin Bride of Jesus Christ – keeping your heart and keeping your soul in single-minded devotion, uncorrupted by the things of the world and the love of the world (Jas 4:4).

The Bride's Garments

The lily, a bridal flower, is considered to represent purity and chastity which also speaks of the character of the bride. Like the whiteness of the lily, we should be pure and holy before God (1 Thes 4:7; 1 Pe 1:15-16). The lily is soft and tender. Likewise, we

should live a life of godliness consisting of meekness and humility of heart (Col 3:12; 1 Tim 4:8). The lily is fragrant. Likewise, when we purify ourselves, God will look down upon us and smell the sweet aroma of the beauty of holiness in our life.

How can we prepare ourselves as the Bride?

REVELATION 19:8

8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Please note the phrase: “And to her it was granted.” When was it granted to her? It was granted after she had made herself ready, not before. *After* she had made herself ready, a wedding garment – fine linen – was granted to her. The original Greek word implies that the grant is an act of God’s favor and grace because the bride had chosen, purposefully, to make herself ready. A wedding garment – fine linen, clean and white – is granted to her.

Fine Linen

The fine linen, the Scriptures explain, is the *righteousness of the saints* (Rev 19:8). The Bible tells us that our *own* righteousness is like filthy rags (Isa 64:6). We have no righteousness of our own. If that is true, why does the Bible say here that the white garments represent the righteousness of the saints? If our righteousness is as filthy rags, and we are only righteous in Christ Jesus, then where did this righteousness of the saints come from? The righteousness of the saints comes as a result of *righteous deeds* – works that we do when we obey the Word of God.

The Bible counsels us to put on the *new man* – the nature and character of Christ Jesus (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10,12-14), and

put away the *old man* – garments of the fallen nature and habits (Eph 4:25-29; Col 3:8-9). By putting on the Lord Jesus Christ and practicing what the Word teaches – *new Christian habits* – you are walking in the righteousness of the saints. The Bible says that the prophet John the Baptist’s parents, Zachariah and Elizabeth, were considered righteous before God because they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord and were blameless (Lk 1:6). Furthermore, when you walk in righteousness you receive the boldness to appear before the King (Heb 4:16; 10:19).

Clean Garments

What is meant by the garments being clean? The word “clean” in Greek is *katharos* meaning, *clean, clear, pure*. The garment is clean and looks clear without any spots and is pure from defilement.

There are two kinds of defilement – *original sin* and *daily sins*. We have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ from original sin (Eph 1:7). But, even so, every day of our life we commit sins. This is something that defiles your garments. The lusts of the flesh can defile your garments (Jude 23; Gal 5:19-21). Just like we wash our dirty clothes, the spiritual garment, too, can be cleansed daily by meditating the Word of God and daily confessing our sins to God (Eph 5:26; 1 Jn 2:1-2).

White Garments

2 CORINTHIANS 7:1

1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Marriage of the Lamb

The word “white” in Greek is *lampros* meaning *radiant, magnificent or sumptuous (in appearance): goodly, gorgeous, white*. “White” then signifies *holiness* – something within the heart and spirit which God alone can see.

Holiness is inward beauty, whereas cleanliness is external beauty. Our God is holy and they who want to walk with Him must be holy (Lev 11:44; 1 Pet 1:15-16). Without holiness it is impossible to see God (Matt 5:8; Heb 12:14).

The fine linen, clean and white, that the Bride wears is not just a garment that happens to be clean and is white in color. It is actually a garment of light. The righteous acts that a person does are composed of light. Look how beautifully the Scripture puts it, “He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday” (Ps 37:6). So when the Bride puts it on, it is a garment of light, clean and bright, glistening white.

Rapture-Ready Bride

In September 2015, I was in Berlin, Germany for a three-day prophetic conference. On the morning of September 9, I was reading a devotional where the author wrote: “Every time I get close to a rose bush I am unable to resist the temptation of pulling a flower from it.” As I was reading this sentence, the Word of the Lord came to me, “When the people of God begin to emanate My graces – the works of My Spirit in their lives – I will smell a sweet aroma which rises from them. Then I will pluck them to keep with Me.”

This is the *rapture-ready* Bride. She must emanate the graces – the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).

When the Lord God wanted to meet with the Israelites and “marry” them at Mount Sinai, He told the prophet Moses to prepare them for three days. They should sanctify themselves by washing their clothes and abstaining from sexual relations (Ex 19:9-19). But when God came to meet and embrace them, they could not even endure the sound of the trumpet announcing His arrival.

Instead of drawing near to God – into His inviting arms – they shut their ears and told the prophet Moses that they were afraid to meet the Lord God and went backwards – the exact opposite of drawing nigh unto God (Ex 20:18). Why wouldn’t they want to embrace God? Why couldn’t they draw near to God? They outwardly cleansed their clothes but inwardly were not pure. Only the pure in heart can see God (Matt 5:8). Only those who pursue a life of holiness can see Him (Heb 12:14).

In contrast to the Israelites before the mountain, the Bride who has made herself ready – having her spirit, soul and body pure and holy and who is then adorned with a glistening garment of fine linen, clean and white – is not only able to meet the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, but also walk hand-in-hand with Him to the marriage of the Lamb.

Blessed Are the Called

REVELATION 19:9

9 Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

Marriage of the Lamb

Are you ready to meet your Bridegroom? In 1991 the Lord called me to a three days fast. On the third day I saw a vision. I saw the beautiful starry universe with all the breathtaking galaxies and star systems. As I was looking, suddenly one by one the stars exploded. In a short while the whole universe was darkened. I was shocked, wondering what had happened.

Then, from a far-away corner in the universe a door opened. I saw into the door and was surprised to see within it the Shekinah glory of God. As I was looking, a ball of light – consuming fire – came forth and stood outside the door facing the universe. Its brightness was greater than that of the universe. The ball of light started moving. I saw millions, if not trillions, of smaller lights circling the great light. Emanating from what looked like the waist of a man were innumerable saints. I then saw the being inside the light. It was none other than our blessed Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

I was stunned when I realized that I was beholding the second coming of the Lord Jesus. When the Lord's entourage started moving towards earth, a voice thundered throughout the universe, "I am coming soon. There will be no more delay." I then saw a hand write this inscription over the universe: "Revelation 19:11-16 and Revelation 19:7-9." A thundering voice then said to me, "Prepare the world for My coming. The first message – Revelation 19:11-16 – is for the unsaved people. The second message – Revelation 19:7-9 – is for the Christian. *Emphasize* verse 9 to the Christians."

The warning the Lord God told me to give was: "Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" (Rev 19:9). *Blessed are those who are called.* If they who are called are blessed, then the reverse is true for those who are not called. What about those who are not called? Who will be called? Those

who have purposed and determined to make themselves ready. Not everyone will receive an invitation.

God is selective. The invitation to the Marriage of the Lamb – the rapture – is extended only to those who have made their spirit, soul, and body pure and holy – clean and white. I trembled with fear when the Lord told me to emphasize that.

Blessed are they who are called. What about those who are not called? You should make diligent effort to pray that you will receive the invitation. The Lord Jesus counseled us, “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Lk 21:36). It is a privilege to be invited – to be counted worthy – to be caught away, so that you do not experience the wrath that is going to come upon the whole earth.

The Mystery of the Marriage Supper

How can there be a marriage without a feast? A wedding, in every culture, is celebrated joyously with friends and relatives with a grand feast. The Lord Jesus even told a parable about a king throwing a feast to celebrate his son’s wedding.

MATTHEW 22:2-14

2 *“The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son,*

3 *and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.*

4 *Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fattened cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.”’*

Marriage of the Lamb

5 But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business.

6 And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them.

7 But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.'

9 Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.'

10 So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.

12 So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless.

13 Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."

If you observe verse 14, the Lord Jesus concluded the parable that many were initially called but few chose the good or better part. Only the *chosen* – not all – are *invited* to the marriage-union supper.

Let me draw your attention to this incident in the New Testament:

JOHN 21:1-13

1 After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself:

2 Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.

3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.

4 But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

5 Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No."

6 And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea.

8 But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish.

9 Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread.

10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."

11 Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.

Marriage of the Lamb

12 Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?" – knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.

Before the Lord Jesus was crucified, He told His disciples – all twelve of them – to meet Him in Galilee (Matt 26:32; Mk 14:28). After the resurrection, the angels reminded them to go to Galilee to meet the Lord (Matt 28:5-7; Mk 16:5-7). Even the resurrected Lord Jesus told the women, who came to embalm His body, to tell the disciples to meet Him in Galilee (Matt 28:10).

So, the disciples are now in Galilee. But observe carefully the Scripture quoted above from John 21:1-13. A careful reading of verse 2 gives us the name of seven disciples. What happened to the other four disciples? (Four, not five, because Judas Iscariot had already committed suicide.) *All eleven were called* – invited to meet the Lord in Galilee – but *only seven chose* to be there.

The Lord had a special feast for those who chose to answer the call. This feast – this higher call – it is not for those who are just called, but specifically for the chosen and set-apart ones.

We also see a foreshadowing of this union-feast with God in the Old Testament:

EXODUS 24:1-11

1 Now He said to Moses, "Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar.

2 And Moses alone shall come near the Lord, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him."

3 So Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the Lord has said we will do."

4 And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

5 Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord.

6 And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient."

8 And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words."

9 Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,

10 and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity.

11 But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank.

Among the more than three million Israelites who were camping at the foot of Mount Sinai only seventy-four were chosen – invited to a special feast – a dinner with the Lord God of Israel. *Not all!*

The experience of dining with the Lord Jesus need not be just a future experience in heaven. It can be a *daily experience* in the *now!*

Marriage of the Lamb

REVELATION 3:20

20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Let's analyze this Scripture in detail.

1. "Behold I stand at the door and knock" = the Lord Jesus is extending an invitation to all to have an intimate relation with Him.
2. "If anyone hears My voice and opens the door" = how many will pay heed and receive the invitation from the extended hands of the Lord Jesus?

Only those who are willing to pay the price and pay heed to the call of God – only to them the Lord Jesus will manifest Himself and serve them His own flesh and blood (Jn 6:48-58).

The Marriage of the Lamb has come. As His wife – the Bride – have you made herself ready? God wants you to be stirred up with holy passion, with holy desire, so that together with the Holy Spirit you can look up to the heavens and say:

REVELATION 22:17

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

May We Hear From You

Dear friends, we believe this book has been a blessing and challenge to you. Millions of people from around the world have been blessed by Brother Sadhu's messages on books, CDs and DVDs. We believe that even now you have been blessed by this book. Why don't you take a minute and write to tell us how you have been blessed by this book.

If you would like Brother Sadhu to pray for your needs, write to him today. He will personally read your letter and pray for you with much compassion beseeching the Lord Jesus Christ to bless, comfort and grant the miracles you need.

If you would like to know more about the ministry of Sadhu Sundar Selvaraj and receive our free newsletter "Healing Love", feel free to write to us. We will send you one and you, too, can uphold Sadhu and this worldwide ministry in your intercessory prayers.

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105/229, M.T.H Salai,
Villivakkam, Chennai 600 049
Tamilnadu, India
jmchennai@jesusministries.org*

*Jesus Ministries
P.O. Box 9055
Lancaster CA, 93539-9055
USA
jmusa@jesusministries.org*

Do You Need Prayer ?

Oh, that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleads for his neighbor! (Job 16:21). Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven (Matt. 18:19).

Brother Sadhu, please uphold me before the throne of God and agree in prayer with me for

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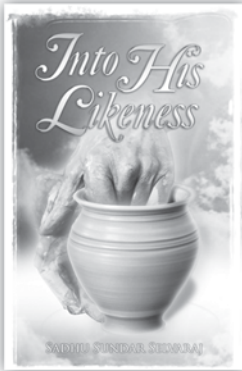
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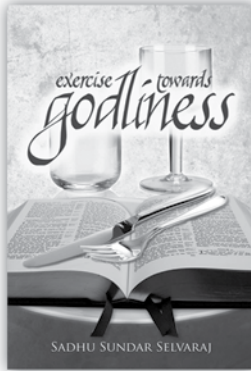
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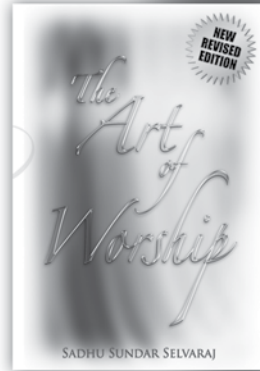
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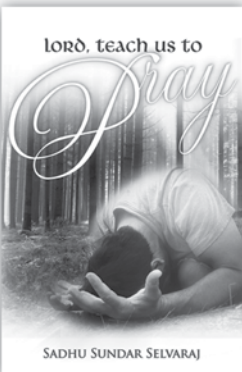
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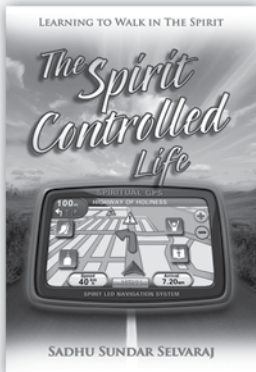
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ON DOVE'S WINGS

The Bride has made herself Rapture-ready!

"Behold, the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, is coming for His Bride, the Church!" – is a common message familiar to all Christians. But is the Church *really* the Bride? If not, who then is the Bride?

Since the Bridegroom is coming for the Bride to take her to the Marriage of the Lamb, she, the Bible counsels, has to make herself ready. The author, very beautifully, draws analogies from the life of Esther how she made herself ready to meet her bridegroom, the Persian king.

In this book, the author explains in simple language how every believer can prepare themselves to meet the King. The many illustrations and spiritual anecdotes make complex Scriptures and scriptural terms easy to understand even for a new believer.

This is a must-read book for all believers who want to be *rapture-ready* to meet the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, at the Marriage of the Lamb.



SADHU SUNDAR SELVARAJ is a forerunner who has been graced to prepare the way of the Lord for His Second Coming. At 16, he experienced a supernatural encounter with the Living Christ. He has been preaching the Gospel and bringing the healing power of God since 1979 to more than 50 nations. His television network, Angel TV, currently reaches all the six continents with 12 channels in eight different languages. Brother Sadhu, as he is lovingly called, is the author of more than 12 books. His life and ministry will provoke, encourage and teach you the fear of God and to walk intimately with Christ Jesus.

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