

## The Wedding Supper – Rev. 19:6-9

Several years ago, I was asked to officiate a wedding for some friends of mine. I was glad to do it and we talked about all the details. Who was going to talk, what was to be said, who is going to stand where and when and how and all the fun details. At the end, I asked them if there was a certain way they wanted me to dress. Some people like a nice suit. Some just want boots and jeans. Some don't care at all.

They said they didn't really care but if I wanted to match them, their colors were going to be blue and silver. So, that was no problem. I had a navy-blue jacket and a silver shirt. I think I might have had a red tie. And when I got that on, I thought those colors looked pretty good together. It was a good combo, you know.

What I didn't know is that those are also the colors of a Bud Lite can. And that is what the theme of the wedding was: Bud Lite. There were Bud Lite cans everywhere. It was an outdoor wedding at their house and when you first walk up, there was a book to sign in and it was on a table made of empty Bud Lite cans. The chairs were all set up in a row and at the end of each row was a little decorative wreath made out of Bud Lite cans. The couple walked down a path of crushed Bud Lites and stood under an arch made of – you guessed it – Bud Lite cans. The vase that held the flowers, the decorative lights, and of course the thing in everybody's hands – Bud Lite.

I didn't stay for the reception afterward, but I had a pretty good idea what was in the kegs over by the house. I really didn't mind and I would have done the wedding no matter what. They were and are dear friends. I had just never been dressed up as a beer can before and it felt a little funny. I'm sure you can imagine.

You can imagine because what you wear to a wedding is very important, isn't it? It doesn't matter if you have a big, fancy wedding or a good old fashioned redneck wedding, I want to dress appropriately. I don't want to be over-dressed or under-dressed.

Now, can you imagine being at literally the world's biggest and fanciest wedding? Can you imagine a wedding with literally millions of people and everybody is dressed in their absolute finest? Can you imagine a wedding where you and all your Christian friends and all the Christians from all over the world are all together, even the ones from years past who have died and are now alive again and we are all considered the Bride? Not only that, but the Groom...the Groom at this wedding is dressed in all His glory – glory from eternities past, glory given to Him by God the Father...the Groom shows up and His name is Jesus!

Whoa! I don't know about you but I want to be dressed up! There is a time and place for boots and jeans but for this occasion, I want to be wearing my very best and then some! Don't you? Well, let's look at a fascinating passage of scripture that talks about just that. Turn in your Bibles to the last book, the Book of the Revelation, and almost to the last chapter. Chapter 19 is a continuation of a vision that God gave the Apostle John of what the End Times will be. And here we will see what our church should look like as well.

Poor John! I can't imagine seeing all the God has revealed to him. It must have been just absolutely overwhelming. And this passage is just a small example of what he has seen. I'd like to read Revelation 19 and verses 6-9. John is being spoken to by an angel as he sees a vision of Heaven. Let's look at it. In **Revelation 19:6-9** John says, *"Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: 'Hallelujah!*

*For our Lord God Almighty reigns.*

*7 Let us rejoice and be glad*

*and give him glory!*

*For the wedding of the Lamb has come,*

*and his bride has made herself ready.  
8 Fine linen, bright and clean,  
was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.)*

*9 Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”*

Okay, that’s just not enough. It’s not enough for just me to read these words. Do you see there in **verse 6** where John says he heard what sounded like a great multitude and rushing waters and loud thunder? Well, I don’t have a soundtrack of all that but I want us all to stand and read what John heard together. It will help us to get a better feeling of what John was experiencing.

*“Hallelujah!  
For our Lord God Almighty reigns.  
7 Let us rejoice and be glad  
and give him glory!  
For the wedding of the Lamb has come,  
and his bride has made herself ready.  
8 Fine linen, bright and clean,  
was given her to wear.”*

Do you know what that word *Hallelujah* means? It simply means “*Praise the Lord!*” Hallel means praise and jah comes from Yahweh or Lord. The angel (or angels) that John hears says praise the Lord, there is going to be a wedding! And the bride has made herself clean and has been given her wedding dress. But what does all that mean?

The imagery of marriage is used often in scripture. A wedding was the biggest and greatest celebration and social occasion back then, maybe even more so than it is today. It was a huge party and often lasted for days. There was a lot of eating and drinking – maybe Bud Lite, I don’t know – but at the end there was usually a huge feast.

In several places, scripture uses the imagery of a wedding or marriage to picture the Lord’s relationship with His church, the family of believers; all who have put their faith in Jesus. In **2 Corinthians 11** Paul says, “*I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.*” We looked at **Ephesians 5** a few weeks ago where Paul says, “*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.*”

That presentation will occur at the Rapture, which we all know can happen at any minute. But after the Rapture, the rest of those left behind on earth will go through the Tribulation. That will last for seven years. And at the end of those seven years, the time will come when Jesus will lead us all back to earth for the marriage ceremony and the great wedding and a huge feast, the marriage supper of the Lamb. And all of that will kick off what is called the Millenium, which lasts for a thousand years.

Now, how many of you have ever had to wait on a bride to get herself ready for a wedding? I don’t know how many times I’ve seen it. A bride will be in the back room getting ready. She’s been in there for hours. The time comes for the wedding to start and we’re just waiting. A few minutes later, the bride’s friend comes out and assures everybody she’s almost ready. Right? You’ve seen it. What are we going to do? Start without her? So, we wait. And it’s always worth waiting for. I’ve never seen a bride who wasn’t beautiful. I’ve seen some that just barely made it but they are all beautiful. It might have taken a lot of work, but they’re beautiful.

But for us, as the Bride of Christ, how do we get ready? Is it a lot of work to get ready? Well, hear me out but in one sense it is a lot of work. Paul said in **Philippians 2** that we should **work out** our salvation with fear and trembling. In **Colossians 1** he wrote, *“I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.”* The bride of Christ makes herself ready in the power of God, by the grace of God and through the work of the Holy Spirit of God and when we are cleansed from all sin and any impurity, we present ourselves as flawless, blameless and unblemished virgins to the Bridegroom.

We know that it is not through any work of our own that we are righteous and able to go to Heaven. **Isaiah 64:6** says all of our righteous acts are as filthy rags. Can you imagine waiting for the bride to come out at her wedding and she finally does and she’s dressed in dirty, smelly overalls with holes in them? Neither can Jesus. So, our righteousness is imputed from Jesus to us. That gets us to Heaven and when we present ourselves at the wedding we will be clothed in what **verse 9** says is linen, fine and clean. But where does that linen come from? It tells us right there.

*Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.*

**\*Get a male volunteer\*** This isn’t how it’s going to work but let me give you an illustration that might help you understand how it’s going to work. I’m going to place this sticky note on you to represent every righteous act you have ever done. This one is for the time you donated to our food pantry. This one is for the stuff you donated to Operation Christmas Child. Aren’t these righteous acts just beautiful? This one is for when you came to Bible study. For donating your time. For showing love to that homeless person. For when you witnessed to your neighbor. Isn’t that linen outfit just beautiful? The yellow really brings out your cheekbones. Just lovely.

The problem is...that’s all the good deeds you’ve done. Each one of those sticky notes is more beautiful than the last but there’s just not enough to cover you. Each one of those represents a time when God worked through you and you did what you were supposed to do and you did it with the right attitude and you gave God the credit and the glory for it.

But there’s just not enough. How embarrassing. And I hear you. But Todd, I did lots of good stuff. I helped a lot of people. I gave a lot of money. There should be lots of righteous deeds credited to my account. What about those?

Well, scripture tells us that at the Bema seat judgment when all Christians are judged for all the good things they have done, that not all of it is going to count. **1 Corinthians 3:12** says, *“their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. 14 If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. 15 If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved.”*

And what is the fire that determines whether a work is good or bad? It’s your motive. Why did you give that money or donate your time? Was it to be seen by people? Was your motive so that some person might see you do it and be impressed. Did you want somebody to give you credit? Were you hoping to look good or be admired? You know that kind of thinking is exactly what killed Ananias and Sapphira in **Acts chapter 5**. So, don’t be surprised when you get to Heaven and some of your good deeds have been burned up.

And what a shame it would be to show up to the world’s biggest and fanciest wedding ceremony wearing only a few sticky notes. And then...what if...what if...like the elders in **Revelation 4** did with their crowns...do you remember what they did with those crowns? The elders were given crowns to wear but they all said, no, we want to give these crowns to the one who is worthy to receive glory and honor and power and they laid those crowns at the feet of Jesus. What if you wanted to lay your beautiful linen at the feet of Jesus but you only had a few? How embarrassing! That’s not a good gift for the bride to give the Groom.

I hear people say sometimes, *“I’m not worried about all those rewards. I just want to be in Heaven. As long as I’m there, that’ll be enough.”* And I get that. I understand. It’s way better than not being there because the alternative is Hell. But think about the thief on the cross next to Jesus. You know, that was his best and worst day at the same time. Can you imagine anybody any more grateful than that guy in Heaven? It is only because of God’s incredible, scandalous, amazing grace that Jesus was able to look over at that guy and say, *“Today, you will be with me in paradise.”* (Luke 23:43)

But think about this. He has absolutely nothing to wear to the wedding. He never did one good deed in his life that wasn’t burned up. He has nothing with which to glorify God when he gets to Heaven. No offering to make, no fine linen, not one sticky note. He will be there and he will be loved and accepted as family but he will regret for eternity not having any righteous acts to honor the bridegroom, Jesus, with.

How about you? Have you made yourself ready? The first step is to come to have a relationship with God through His Son Jesus. Without that, you will never be ready. But the next thing is to allow God to work in you and through you as you **work out** your salvation as Paul says in Philippians. That phrase “work out” in Greek is “katergazomai” and it means to work to completion. That is our part, it’s what we do when we are saved to work and do good deeds, yes, with the Spirit’s help and strength but we have to do it. And we have to do it with the right attitude. That attitude says, *“I want to do this and I want God to get the glory because He deserves it and I don’t. And it is only through Him that I can give this or do this so, thank you, Lord!”* And we know that He sees us do it so we don’t have to tell anybody else because we aren’t doing it for anybody else. Boom! Eternal sticky note. 😊

Sooo...what are you wearing to the wedding? A long, flowing, beautiful and God-honoring spotless linen toga? Or...something much less? It’s up to you. Let’s bow our heads and close our eyes and allow God to speak to you right now. Don’t say anything to Him just yet except, *“Lord, what would you have me do?”* And then just listen.

Is there something you should give? Is there something you should do? Is there somebody you need to talk to? Maybe you need to start with getting yourself right with God. Just listen.

If you don’t hear Him say anything, if nothing comes to mind, maybe there is a problem with your communication. Maybe you have sin in your life. Get rid of that right now by just asking Him. Name the sin. Agree with Him that it is sin and then repent of that sin and that lifestyle.

Maybe you don’t have a real relationship with God. You know about Him. But you don’t know Him. All you have to do is believe that Jesus, who is God, died on the cross to pay the price for your sins that you couldn’t pay. We are all sinners and all deserve Hell. But God the Father sent His son Jesus to die on the cross and pay the price the Father said was due for your sin. Believe in Him and let Him change your life, because He will. Do it right now as the music plays.