

Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, December 14, 2014.

We will begin this meeting of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, with a spirit of great thanksgiving to our King for providing us with an opportunity to consider the imminent marriage supper of the Lamb -- between Christ and His Bride the church -- through the marriage of two of our members, Katherine Jane Hockenbarger and Jacob Zacharias Phelps. Dear friends, this body of believers love each of you with great affection, because we have cause to believe that we will spend an eternity with you in grateful service to our God in His Kingdom.

Having been asked to conduct this matter, it became my most solemn duty to examine the proper manner in which this most important event is to be conducted, in accordance with Holy Scripture; and very importantly not in accordance with the traditions of men. You two are reputed among this body and indeed before the whole of this generation to be walking orderly in service to God, and are neither bound to another man or woman according to scripture.

After having searched the Scripture I proffered, and you have each heartily agreed to, vows that will be made and entered into, from the light of your Scriptural duties to each other as husband and wife. Accordingly, Jacob, please take the ring that you have brought and place it upon Katherine's finger while I recite the vows you are hereby taking with her as your wife:

"Do you, Jacob Zacharias Phelps, take this woman, Katherine Jane Hockenbarger, to be your lawfully and scripturally wedded wife; to love her above every other creature, to give honor unto her as unto the weaker vessel, to have your heart wholly trust in her; to daily edify her in Scripture; to provide for her temporal good; to hold her in no bitterness, do her no cruelty, and deal not treacherously with her, but rather to conceal all her faults, failings, and infirmities; and keep yourself only to her as being heirs together of the grace of life, until that day comes that Christ returns or that God sees fit to separate you from her in death?"

Now Katherine, please take the ring that you have brought and place it upon Jacob's finger while I recite the vows you are hereby taking with him as your husband:

"Do you, Katherine Jane Hockenbarger, take this man, Jacob Zacharias Phelps, to be your lawfully and scripturally wedded husband; to love him above every other creature; obey him as the head of the house, even as Christ is the head of the Church; adorn yourself with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, being in subjection to him in the Lord; to hold him in no bitterness, do him no cruelty, that you be not afraid with any amazement of wicked men; and keep yourself only to him as being heirs together of the grace of life, until that day comes that Christ returns or that God sees fit to separate you from him in death?"

Then, inasmuch as you have entered into this covenant of marriage before God and the membership of this church, I hereby exercise the authority as an Elder with the Westboro Baptist Church and declare you husband and wife.

"Wherefore [you] are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Matthew 19:6)

If you two sweet lambs will now take a seat, we will discuss more fully this blessed subject.

Beloved, I was married in this church -- and I know that there are many sitting here this afternoon who likewise were married in this church. I have known for most of my conscious life that there is a warp-and-woof level connectivity between the marriage of a man and woman and the relationship between Christ and the church. Frankly, however, I have heretofore not felt the weight of that connectivity like I feel it now; today. I hope, with the help of the Holy Spirit, that these words I have prepared for you will be effectual in making the connection of the significance it deserves in your hearts and minds.

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." (2 Corinthians 11:2-4)

There have been many fruitful words spoken by the members of this church about the subject of this parallel between the marriage of a man and woman and the *semper fidelis* ante type of Christ and His only pure church in the earth. So many words, that any logical analysis would compel the conclusion that we live in a generation that absolutely, wholesale -- to the last jot and tittle -- hates and rejects the simple words of Scripture on the matter. Here in this house, however, the subject is ever-fresh. We are given such a love for the subject matter, we bask in the glow of each new and nuanced ray of light that streams from this blessed truth; as the Book says:

"For THEY eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. But the path of THE JUST is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Proverbs 4:17-18)

So, when my young friends asked me to speak today, I was moved to search out a nuance that would -- when focused acutely upon -- give those who hunger for the Bread of Life nourishment and joy and peace and comfort. These words from Paul to the Corinthians lit the kindling I have collected up in my heart and mind for many years, as I considered the various ways in which the relationship between Christ and His Bride -- and more importantly the marriage supper of the Lamb -- instructs the church on how to conduct her affairs in this wilderness of sojourning. Upon it being lit, other gems scattered throughout God's Word were revealed; and the joy of this fresh type ... example ... symbol that we celebrate today flooded in upon me.

To give any serious consideration to that event of Christ going into the wedding supper, we must spend some time with the parable of the ten virgins. We find them being discussed in the very heart of Christ's eschatological preachments in Matthew 25:

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And

while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." (Matthew 25:1-13)

Among these ten virgins were five who trim their lamps, taking care not to waste their oil, and five who possess lamps and put on the air of righteousness, but having no concern with the exercise of the gifts of grace (or oil) are incapable of having any proper ***"respect unto the recompence of the reward."*** (Hebrews 11:26) As Paul wrote of the Jews, these five ***"have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."*** (Romans 10:2) The single distinction that is made between these two groups of five virgins; is the oil! The five foolish virgins had no proper respect or concern for the oil -- those graces that energize the Saints of God to do the works referred to by James, to wit:

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." (James 2:17-18)

They didn't bring any oil with them, to fill the lamps. They had no oil, and they had no concern for the need to have any oil! They associated themselves with those who had and respected these gifts of grace, but had themselves no concern for the exercise of such graces. Like the rich man of Luke chapter 12, they each said:

"Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." (Luke 12:19)

And look at our opening text again. Look at these to whom Paul expresses great concern that their ***"minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."*** (2 Corinthians 11:3). What is the behavior that he sees these Corinthians falling into? Is it not the seeping in of false doctrine? Is it not the failure of maintaining the pure doctrines of grace? Is it not the same as failing to have respect unto the divine nature of the oil? Read the words:

"For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." (2 Corinthians 11:4)

We know this "he" that cometh! Whether it be the Antichrist himself, ***"even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,"*** (2 Thessalonians 2:9), or one of these about whom we're told:

"there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." (2 Peter 2:1)

It is a confident assertion that they are coming into the very bosom of God's elect -- because the five foolish virgins are immediately in proximity to the five wise virgins! These five foolish ones not only despised what little oil they had in their lamps -- wasting it for ungodly service -- but they had no thought for the souls of the wise virgins, demanding they give their precious oil to waste further! For these to act so "privily", a

relationship is required, whereby those who hear the "**damnable heresies**" brought in by these false teachers "**might well bear with them.**" We know, because we are instructed very thoroughly about these, that their numbers and intensity of activity will increase in these last days:

***"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."* (1 John 2:18)**

We're on to something here, my dear friends. This point of examination ties into a proper understanding of the relationship the Church-Bride has with Christ; and therefore it is a most fitting thing to talk about at the joining of these two Saints in one flesh. Let's put a pin into this point I've nailed down, and go look at the book written for the very purpose of celebrating this relationship.

***"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine. Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee."* (Song 1:2-4)**

What amazing expressions of affection; that first love felt between a husband and his espoused. In this type, he pours out his good ointments -- the best and most coveted of the gifts of sovereign grace -- and it draws the virgin soul to him. And, having so anointed his espoused bride with the ointments, those same fragrances attract his greatest affections for her:

***"How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!"* (Song 4:10)**

If you read the words of instruction to the called-out Israelites, when they received the instructions for how they must minister in the temple of God under the Mosaic law ... you will see time and again the expression "**of a sweet savour unto the LORD**". Those ordinances being obediently followed, with a proper appreciation in the heart of the priest of the significance of the type -- as tying intimately into Christ who would ultimately fulfill them -- were a perpetual sweet savour to God. And to put that same image upon the New Testament church -- Christ's Bride, what is written?

***"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:"* (2 Corinthians 2:14-15)**

But, returning to the Song of Solomon, we see many times the affections, the anointings, the drawings forth, the highest expressions of love pour out between these two; a proper view of how the members of this body yearn for ... pant for ... any and all indicators that our God is with us. Much time spent in this book will bring much comfort and delight. It also instructs in the more narrow nuance on which I have placed my focus. Consider this curious passage found in the fifth chapter of this song:

"[BRIDE:] I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, [CHRIST:] Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of

the night. [BRIDE:] I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer." (Song 5:2-6)

Having been so utterly consumed with the love and affection she held for her husband, the bride here has -- perhaps from the straitness of the path, or some crook in her lot -- allowed the love to wax cool ... she has failed to trim the lamps ... she has, per chance, allowed herself to bear with some Son of Belial who has proffered another doctrine ... so she sleeps. Being in such spiritual slumber, when her blessed husband calls to her, she is annoyed and can scarcely bear to so much as put herself out to get out of bed and answer the door! A dangerous state to be found in. A deadly state to be found in.

But with great affection, and a willingness to overlook her faults, her failings, her infirmities, a long-suffering Christ puts forth his hand to pour out a fresh supply of oil ... such that it drips from her fingers and from the handles of the lock; instantly infusing her with great passion again! She rushes to rejoin her husband -- but finds herself without the warmth and tender affection being returned; because of her slothful spirit:

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;" (Romans 12:10-11)

Listen to me, my son. Four separate times, in the writing of this Song of Solomon, Christ refers to the Church as ***"my sister, my spouse"*** (Song 4:9, 4:10, 4:12, and 5:1) There is a two-pronged relationship that now exists between you and your bride. She is bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh ... but she is also your sister, with whom (Lord willing) you will spend an eternity in service to God! What you do to her, you do to Christ! What you do to her, you do to the Church! This is your happy duty now. Many opportunities will exist on every day for you two to show your affection for your spouse ... just as many opportunities exist on every day for every member of this body to show our affection for our husband, the Christ!

We're talking here today about a most dangerous pattern of behavior. If you look about at this generation -- chiefly to the veritable flood of religious institutions pretending to some spirituality at least, and Christianity in large part among this vile nation's population -- what do you find? In word and in deed, you find mostly ***"the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place"*** (Matthew 24:15). It didn't begin there! As Alexis DeToqueville said of America's greatness: *"Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."* And now she most certainly has ceased to be both good and great.

It began with bleeding false doctrines into the blessed, shining light of truth. When free will took root, so too did the cycles of deterioration spoken of from Romans 1:21 thru 31, and we now have fag marriage as the rule of law in Kansas and America ... and soon the world over. But it began, when the church members were willing to "bear with" some flesh-worshipping idea presented as a doctrine. Idolatry crept in and took root; then

fornication became routine, then adultery was little thought of, so the filthiest of abominations become part of the zeitgeist! Layer upon layer, like an intricately woven garment, the justifications for changing the truth of God into a lie, and worshipping the creature more than the Creator who is blessed forever, has become the norm. In the same way, if you let it begin Jacob, you will find yourself where Malachi found the Children of Israel:

"For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously."
(Malachi 2:16)

That type, the beginning of the weaving of that garment of violence against the pure type of Christ and His Bride the Church, is what I'm speaking of this afternoon. It is in the nature of the depraved heart of man to go to idolatry -- spiritual fornication and adultery -- and thereafter chase the physical replication of what their heart has long since done. Without the continual supply of the oil, the lamp will go dark, the soul will slumber, and the door to the marriage supper of the Lamb will be shut!

But it is not so, among the Church -- the Bride of Christ! The members of this chaste bride -- this little band of souls who are Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile -- understand that there was a reason that God almighty; ***"And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female."*** (Matthew 19:4), to wit:

"And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."
(Malachi 2:15)

Christ has prepared for himself a godly seed of humans who have made up, throughout the millennia -- carefully tended and gently cared for -- the perfection of beauty as described in Ephesians:

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:27)

There is a righteous church in the earth! There will be a righteous, godly seed in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. My dear friend and brother Brent -- with whom I stood ... when he stood where you now stand -- has shown a fondness for a passage of scripture that I will now bring to bear on this nuanced discussion; from Revelation chapters two and three.

"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; ... I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." (Revelation 2: 1-5)

This passage bears a remarkable spiritual parallel to the scene in chapter five of Solomon's Song. Through fatigue of the fight, the pressures of corruption that is in the world through lusts, the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things -- the little Bride has half gone to sleep! The fervency of spirit is gone! And if the church at Ephesus in this passage will not **"repent, and do the first works"** they will find themselves in the category of the Laodiceans to whom Christ, being fed up with the slothful spirits of some in their membership, wrote:

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." (Revelation 3:15-16)

Through manifold trials and deliverances, this little flock has learned that the God that dwells in eternity lays out these providential matters to instruct His people in the earth. We sit here today looking upon the joyful sight of you two, and the fervent affection that you have within you, as you sit on the proverbial launching pad for your life's single most important temporal relationship. How does Paul put it?

"he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. ... she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." (1 Corinthians 7:33-34)

It is a popular thing, in this present world, to mock that pure affection and to market how it so quickly waxes cold, such that each will most assuredly find the other burdensome in time. But to market it so is to blaspheme the Word of God, and to invite false doctrine into this church. This acuteness of affection that moves through these who we have married today -- captured in the notion of "espousals" in scripture -- is what describes the state of love between God and the called Jews, to wit:

"Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the LORD, and the firstfruits of his increase." (Jeremiah 2:2-3)

An examination of all the scripture addressing the relationship that has now begun between you two -- Jacob and Katherine -- requires you to make it ever-fresh ... evergreen ... ever-loving, without excuse or cavil! Do NOT bear with any who would encourage you otherwise, for to do otherwise, is sin!

" For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."
(Ephesians 5:30-32)

We all here, when we see these two in this day when they are espoused one to the other, must take serious stock with regard to how we deal with each other -- husband to wife, wife to husband, member to member, and how fervently we get about the business of showing our affection for Christ, through the exercise of all the gifts of grace we have individually received -- talents (to use that parable). Will we slothfully bury these in the earth, or will we invest them fully every day? Will we let ourselves wax lukewarm, or will we keep careful watch over our oil and maintain our first love? We all know the day is near upon us, when we will hear those words -- sweet to the ears of the watchful, horrifying to the ears of the slothful:

"Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." (Matthew 25:6)

Thank you all for this opportunity to speak on such an occasion, to those most blessed who shall shortly be ***"called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. "*** (Revelation 19:9)

I love you all most dearly.

Amen.