

The Wedding Clothes

"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast... and the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' The man was speechless. Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" Matthew 22:1-13

This parable is really a commentary on Christ's own wedding to His bride at the end of this age. There is one thing certain about this wedding: God will not allow anyone to participate in His Son's marriage unless they are wearing the right wedding clothes. Now let us take a look at Christ's heavenly wedding from the perspective of the Book of Revelation. "I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder shouting, 'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. *It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.*' Then he said to me, 'Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-9).'" Again, the Bible is clear you cannot participate in Christ's wedding feast unless you have the right wedding clothes. The Bible also says these wedding clothes signify our sanctified works done in faith.

In these last days, many professing Christians are not wearing these wedding garments. They think they are spiritually dressed to meet Christ when they are actually stark naked. Jesus said, "You do not know that you are naked. Buy from Me white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed (Revelation 3:17-18)." It is important to note here that Jesus was speaking to

those in the church and not to unbelievers. Here Jesus declared we must buy our *own* wedding clothes. For two thousand years, God has never changed the price that the bride of Christ must pay for her wedding clothes. The cost is always the same – the price is our soul-life. Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his soul-life will lose it, but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake and the gospel's will find it (Mark 8:34-35)."

Therefore, we can only buy our wedding clothes if we pay for them with *our soul-life*. Nothing else will suffice. What does it mean to lose our soul-life for Christ's sake? God has made us spirit, soul and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). When we were born again, our sinful nature died and our regenerated spirit became made one with Christ's Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17). Our soul, however, is our individual personality – our will, intellect and natural temperament. Because we retain free will, our soul does not automatically come under Christ's Sovereignty. However, once we know that we have already died with Christ, we are capable of submitting our whole being to Christ's authority so that God can transform and restore our soul. God does not want to suppress or destroy our soul. He made the human soul and meant it to be a useful instrument, just like our body. But now that we are in Christ, the important question is this: Will we live according to the power and desire of God's Spirit within us or will we quench the Spirit and live according to the strength of our soul and our natural desires?

Losing our soul-life means we give up our whole being completely to Christ's Sovereignty. It means we exchange our own attitudes, affections and abilities for Christ's attitudes, affections and abilities. This is what it means to walk in sanctification. "Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God... and do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may prove what the will of God is... (Romans 12:2)." This is what Paul meant when

he exhorted believers to "be made new in the attitude of your minds... and take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (Ephesians 4:23; 2 Corinthians 10:5)."

Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a pearl of great price. He said when a man found such a pearl, he sold all he had to buy it (Matthew 13:46). Therefore, we prove we are Christ's disciples by yielding ourselves by faith to Christ's Sovereignty so that His thoughts become our thoughts and His actions become our actions. Jesus said, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate... his own *soul-life*, he cannot be My disciple (Luke 14:26)." The issue is one of ownership. Will we continue to be enslaved to our soul's natural desires, or will we be enslaved to God in sanctification? Every Christian who lays down their soul-life to Christ will overcome sin, the world and the devil. Everyone who overcomes will be dressed in wedding clothes ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb. Jesus Christ said, "You have a few people... who have not soiled their clothes. *They will walk with Me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before My Father (Revelation 3:4-5).*"

Losing our soul-life for Christ's sake is only possible *if* we believe that our sinful nature has already died and been removed by Christ's death on the cross. Why? Because when God included us in His Son's death in this way, He made it possible for us to walk in sanctification by faith and wear wedding clothes as the bride of Christ. Tragically, many professing Christians are not ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb. If they do not buy their wedding clothes soon, they will be speechless when God throws them out of His Son's wedding, for they will have proven themselves unworthy and shamefully unclothed.

"Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed." Revelation 16:15