

THROUGH A CULTURAL LENSE ..

THE BRIDE (Church) AND THE GROOM (Jesus)

Gifts (miracles) will confirm the message, but fruit will confirm the messenger!

As we all know the Bible calls us the bride of Christ and the Bible calls Jesus our heavenly bridegroom

- So what is the responsibility of the bride and what is the responsibility of the groom?
- To know that we need to go back and have a look at weddings in the 1st century
- Today it happens backwards / the bride is the star of the show / the groom does almost nothing / he asks her to marry him and then he simply shows up at the wedding ceremony / when the wedding day arrives, the bride is dressed in white and when she walks down the aisle the trumpets sound / everybody admires her and everybody forgets about the groom standing in front of the church!
- But wait a second: the Bible says we are the bride of Christ / so are we supposed to be the star of the show? / absolutely not – we all know that Christ is the star of the show
- in the time of the Bible the roles of bride and groom were completely reversed / it was the groom who did everything / the man did the proposal / he selected the date and the venue for the wedding / he picked the place to build a house where they were going to live after the wedding / he built the house .. and ladies .. he even did the interior decorating of the house / it was the man who did almost everything / and not the other way round
- In those times the groom had to approach the father and ask permission to get married / but what is more he had to establish a covenant with the father / he had to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that he could provide for her and that he was the right one for her
- And if the father approves of the covenant, they move on to the next stage / and that was that he offers a price for the bride / and let's be clear on this one: there was no way that he could walk in and make a low offer / he had one shot to impress the father – one opportunity to make this woman his wife / they didn't date in those days / they just had to know – this is the woman that God has for me / so this man would make an offer to the father / he would give the highest price possible / he would pay as much as he could / because the more he offered, the more he shows how much he loved his bride = listen with your spiritual ears ..
- So after the groom entered into a covenant with the father, the groom would go to a separate room where the daughter was waiting / the door was closed and the groom would knock on the door and if she was ready to accept the covenant and marry the groom, she

would stand up and go and open the door and the son (the groom) would go in and have a meal with her – to establish the covenant between bride and groom

(3) - Now if we go back to Rev 3: 20: Jesus said 'I stand at the door and I knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him

- At the last supper Jesus said – I have come to make a new covenant with you / and then He said I'm gonna pay the highest price for you / no man has more love than He who lays down His life for another / it corresponds with the cultural tradition of the day – the groom paid a price for the bride for 2 reasons: to show how much he loves her; to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is able to take care of her

- Jesus (our heavenly bridegroom) did not take the easy option / He knew that the only price that would be acceptable to the Father was if He paid with His blood and with His life for the bride / so He went to the cross, paid the highest price and established the covenant with the Father

- You see, today the bride has many responsibilities before the wedding / but in the time of the Bible it was the groom that had all the responsibilities

- This is exactly what Jesus did / He paid the price, He established the covenant / He knocks at the door / He offers us the cup / He gives gifts to His bride / He prepares a house for us –

(4) John 14: 2: In My Father's house there are many homes .. I am going away to prepare a place for you / this corresponds with the responsibility of the groom in biblical times / as I said earlier – it was the groom that selected the date and venue of the wedding, he prepared the house and even did the interior decorating / the groom had to pay the price for his bride and fully take care of her

- All that the bride had to do was to prepare herself and make herself ready for the groom

- Who has been to a Portuguese wedding? / at the reception – the marriage supper – the feast after the wedding ceremony – they take a shoe and pass it around / and the people put money in it to help pay for the wedding / this tradition originates from Bible times

- In Bible times they put a wrinkle in the wedding dress of the bride / they took the material of the wedding dress and fold it on itself and so they create a pocket in the wedding dress / when the bride walks down the aisle, people would put money into the wrinkle (pocket) / and it would help to pay for the wedding

(5) - Now! Look at what Jesus said! .. in Eph 5: 27: I'm coming back for a bride - without spot or wrinkle !! / no wrinkles necessary for this wedding – because I already paid for everything!! / tetelestai – I finished the work! / My bride was bought at a very high price – I paid with My blood for her and I laid down My life for her /

(6) Let's celebrate the new, better covenant with thankful hearts!!