

(Say Jokingly as “The Princess Bride” priest) Mawage. Mawage is what bwings us together, today. Mawage, that bwessed awangement, that dweam within a dweam...

Okay, just kidding. That’s a Princess Bride reference for those of you who don’t know. Who here knows what Princess Bride is? *(Raising hand)* And for everyone else who didn’t raise their hand, you are no longer invited to the reception.

But in all seriousness, as you can assume by my unusual placement in front of the bride and groom that you would think I had something important to say. And indeed, I do. So important in fact, that even though this union is a beautiful picture of it, it nevertheless pales in comparison to it. And that is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now, many of you may have heard wedding messages from 1 Corinthians 13 where we find the popular, “Love is” passage, or perhaps you’ve heard a message from Ephesians 5 where it teaches that marriage mirrors Christ and the church.

And while those passages are appropriate for weddings, many don’t understand what they really mean because they lack the most fundamental knowledge of what is the gospel?

Simply translated, the gospel means “good news.” And what is that good news? Jesus Christ died for sinners.

Now to help us understand the weight of this amazing and glorious truth, I want to tell you a story about a woman who was born into slavery. But this woman wasn't upset by it at all. As a matter of fact, she was 100% okay with it.

Even more than this, she didn't really didn't believe she was born into slavery at all. In her mind, she was free to do what she wanted, when she wanted. And no one was going to tell her otherwise. And unbeknownst to her, that was the trick.

She doesn't know that very thing that keeps her enslaved is not chains or fences, but her own deceived heart. Furthermore, this woman is a known criminal. She breaks the laws of the King as freely and flippantly as she desires, without regard to the present or eternal consequences of her actions. And because of this, she has the sentence of death upon her life for her crimes.

Then, one day, the King of the land, knowing the deeds of this woman, went out among his people, in order to find her, so that he might demonstrate his love and mercy toward her. And when he had found her, he said these surprising words to his councilmen:

“Men, there she is, the woman I wish to give my life in marriage.”

Shocked and appalled, they said to the King “Sir, you must be mistaken. That is a slave woman. And known criminal! She is notorious for breaking your laws, and defying your authority. She is not fit for a King. She is better off dead than being your wife.”

Then the King said to them, “I’m well aware of her crimes against me. But I love her. And desire to give her my hand in marriage.”

Offended by what they are hearing, they pleaded with him and said, “My Lord, the only way this is possible is if you were to lay aside your crown, and become like her. Not only that, since she is such a notorious criminal, the sentence of death is upon her life for her crimes against you!”

“Furthermore, she is enslaved by her own heart. It would take a miracle of God to convince her to love you, never mind marry you. She hates you, and your laws, and your whole being.”

“In order to have her as your bride, you would have to somehow free her from her slavery and commute her

death sentence.”

Then the King said these unbelievable words, “Then so be it.”

Now in order for us to appreciate this story, we must first understand that we are the slave woman.

God’s word teaches us we all are born sinful, and enslaved by sin. Yet we aren’t just victims, but willing and happy participants. And just like this woman, we don’t even think we’re slaves at all because our own hearts deceive us!

We do what we want, when we want, where we want, however we want, because in our mind, we are free. And our love for sin, as the bible teaches, is the very thing that deceives our hearts, keeps us captive, and blinds us from the redemptive truth that Jesus Christ died for sinners!

And because we love our sin, the Scriptures teach that this makes us enemies of God. And just like this woman, we break God’s laws freely and flippantly without regard to the present consequences or eternal judgement.

Now I know at this point, some of us may be saying to ourselves, “George, what a buzzkill this is! Isn’t this a bit too much for a wedding sermon?” Please be patient with

me.

Because in order for us to be awestruck by the radiant diamonds of God's amazing grace, He must first show us the black backdrop of our guilty disposition before Him.

And because this is _____'s and _____'s passion, as well as mine, and the believers who are here today, we would love nothing more than, on this day, for you to hear the basis for their salvation, their marriage, and love for one another.

So when I talk about mankind's sinful condition before God, it isn't because I'm self-righteously seeking to stand in judgement over, but communicate to you our greatest need. That is, redemption and reconciliation with God that is only through Jesus Christ.

And before we begin to quickly point fingers at how bad everyone else is, and start measuring up our good deeds from the bad, God's says in his Word there is not one good person on the earth. And even though none of us here are as bad as Hitler, every one of us will be accountable for their own sin before God.

But, and this is the best part, this is what makes the good news so good! And redemption from sin so glorious!

Because just like the King in our story, Jesus, knowing

full well how much we defy him and break his laws, still sought to demonstrate his love and mercy toward his people by redeeming them, and setting them free from their sin. How? By paying the ultimate price.

We often judge the value of a man's love to the woman he wished to marry by the gift he presents to her.

And in Philippians 2:5-11, God reveals just how great was that price to redeem us.

It says:

[Phl 2:5-1] 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 but instead, laid aside his divine right by taking the nature of a servant, by being born in the likeness of men.

8 And by taking a human nature, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God the Father has highly exalted him and given him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue

confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father

The promise of redemption and reconciliation to God are for those of you who are here today who repent from their sin and trust in Jesus Christ alone to save you. When this happens, you will be given the gift of eternal life, and you will know and love God, because God will supernaturally change your heart by His grace. You'll be born again! And Jesus said, unless you're born again, you will not see the kingdom of God.

Many today want **reconciliation** with God, but not **repentance**. Others want **redemption** but not the **Redeemer**. But unless you repent from sin, and are born again, you cannot have either.

And what we are witnessing today between _____ and _____ is a temporary, yet profound, picture of the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Because the sinner for whom Christ died, Christ loves and remains faithful to, forever. And the sinner who has been saved by His grace, from that point forward, can't help but express his love and submission to the one who gave His life. This is one of the reasons why in Scripture Jesus is depicted as a faithful husband. And those who whom he has saved, as his bride.

Now when we read passages like Eph 5 where it teaches that men ought to love their wives as Christ loves the church, because he gave himself for her, it makes sense. And when we read the popular “love is” passage about how love is patient, love is kind, etc., it makes sense. Because it is grounded and nurtured through a proper understanding of the gospel.

Therefore, it is my prayer, that today you would be reconciled and redeemed by the loving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. And that this marriage would serve as a constant reminder of the price Jesus paid to reconcile us to God, and redeem us from our sin.