

The Bridal Cry

INTRODUCTION

Revelation 22:17 is a very familiar passage, but I don't know that we have gone deep on this subject. I don't claim to be doing that tonight, but we'll look at it a little. The depths of this passage are, I think, far beyond what meets the eye in a casual reading. There are so many implications related to the generation the Lord returns in Revelation 22:17. There are many. I could list twenty different implications of verse 17. We'll go through a few of them tonight. Let's read it.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17).

There are a number of descriptions of the Holy Spirit's activity; there are several of them there. It's describing the activity of the Holy Spirit in this hour, if you read just beneath the surface. There are a number of descriptions of the Holy Spirit's activity. There are a number of descriptions of human response. There are several different exhortations to action, or invitations to go deeply in God, all in this passage.

We're in a season, a prophetic season on the planet right now. Both believers and unbelievers are in a radical season of shifting. If I had one phrase to describe what I want to talk about tonight, I would use the phrase “radical shift.” There's a radical shift in the spirit that's going to be manifest in the natural, both in the kingdom and outside the kingdom. We're in a season, these days right now, and it will increase as we get nearer to the Lord's return. The Lord's return may be five years or fifty years away. I believe we're in the generation when the Lord returns, but I believe we have a few years. I don't think it's coming at any moment. I think there are a number of things that have to happen first. It could be ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years. I don't know, but I know we're in that time frame where the Lord is setting up for the most dramatic thing possible—the appearing of the Lord.

There's change about to break in everywhere. Constant change is here to stay. It's true. For the person who wants to lock down and hang on and resist change, it's the worst hour of human history to be a resister of change. It's the absolute worst time in all of human history to be one who resists change.

CHANGE WILL OCCUR AS A MANIFESTATION OF BRIDEGROOM PASSION

Now here's the point; here's the premise. Premise one: the radical shift is coming. Premise two: the radical shift will be caused by the manifestation of the burning desire of the Bridegroom God. The Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom God, is going to cause the shifts to happen; not just to show forth His power, but as a manifestation of His passion. He has such desire; the desire needs a full manifestation in the natural realm. It's the desire, the burning desire of a bridegroom God that's at the very source and core of all the shifting that's occurring. No one can stop the manifestation of His desire.

Desire is a very critical word in the spirit. It will be manifest in a way that's going to shake everything that can be shaken (Heb. 12:26). But I want to lead that back to the reality of a God who has all power, and who also has burning desire, and His desire for His people as a bridegroom is the source and the origin of this shifting that's happening all over the globe, in the kingdom and outside the kingdom. The shift is everywhere. He's setting up a drama that's so dynamic and so glorious and so significant and so intense. It's rooted in His desire as a

bridegroom God. It affects everything. The nature of the visitation isn't just power demonstrations; it's power demonstrations flowing out of a heart that's volcanic in its explosion of desire. God is going to reveal His desire for people, His desire for His bride. That revelation and that manifestation is going to cause the shifts everywhere.

THE BRIDEGROOM WILL SHOCK HIS CHURCH WITH HOW DEEPLY HE FEELS

We know a shift is coming; many people are saying that. But I want you to connect the shift not just to the God of power, but the God of burning desire. The Body of Christ is about to be surprised by passion. C. S. Lewis wrote the book *Surprised by Joy*. Jack Deere, a dear friend of mine, a very good friend of mine, wrote a book playing off that title: *Surprised by the Power of God*. It was an excellent book, a bestseller, where he talked about his journey as a Dallas Theological Seminary professor into the power of God.

There's another surprise, and if I had to give it a title, I would entitle it, *Surprised by Passion*. The Bridegroom God will shock His Church with how deeply He feels. We have ideas of power, but we haven't thought deeply about the ramification of the King of kings being a king of volcanic desire. It's about to explode. It will break in upon the created order, and everything is going to change related to desire. We're about to be surprised by desire, surprised by passion. That's what I would call the theme in the next several years in the Body of Christ. I don't mean two or three years, but even in the next decade or two. Surprised by passion; it's coming from on high. God is going to cause new mantles to be released upon His servants, men and women. We believe God is bringing forth an army, men and women: women prophets, women apostles, women pastors, women teachers. I'm not jumping in on the politically correct bandwagon of, "Let's get the women excited and tell them they're great." I don't want to enter into that spirit. I want to talk prophetically from the heart of God. I want to talk from revelation and conviction; not just kind of say at a women's conference, "You guys are this and that."

Everyone says, "Yay, that's so nice that you finally affirmed us!" I don't even want to get into that. I want to give a prophetic declaration, an utterance. I want to talk from God's heart. God is raising up men and women with new mantles, shifts of alliances; new governmental shifts in the Spirit; many, many things that are going to be happening. We'll find that the God of desire is the One who is the author of all of this. We'll be surprised by passion.

THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE WILL BE IN PERFECT UNITY IN THE LAST GENERATION

Now, let's look at this. I don't know how far I'll get, but there are a number of significant shifts that are implied in this verse. Things will be significantly different because of what this verse prophesies. First, it pictures the Holy Spirit and the Church as a bride saying something and doing something that's in perfect unity. When it says, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come', the first point is that worldwide—I want you to catch the scope of this— worldwide the Holy Spirit is speaking and doing, and has a people in perfect agreement.

This has never happened in history, ever, except for a moment in the book of Acts. Even then, you can debate and say, "Well, they got off into so much stuff so quickly." What this verse is declaring is that there's going to be a time before Jesus returns when a billion people on the earth will be agreeing and participating in what the Spirit is saying and doing on the earth. That's already a shocking statement. Victory is inevitable. It's the first time in history that the Body will move in perfect concert, like a symphony, in unison with His heart. We'll call it "active intimacy with God." For 2,000 years we've been out of sync with what the Spirit is saying and doing. There's always a group that's in sync for a season. Even they normally get out of sync a year or two later.

Beloved, we'll be in sync; I'm talking about a billion people in sync with what the Spirit is saying and doing. The implications are massive.

THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL ACTIVELY ANOINT THE WHOLE BODY OF CHRIST

Shift number one, or implication number one, is that the Holy Spirit will be actively anointing all of His people. For a billion people to be in sync, that implies a manifest anointing never, ever seen in history. You don't get a billion people in sync with what the Spirit is saying or doing unless the Spirit releases a greater manifestation of His activity.

I say, "Lord, how is this going to happen?"

He says, "I will turn up the measure of My manifestation beyond any time you could imagine."

Shift number one: there's going to be a radical increase of the Holy Spirit's presence and activity in the midst of a people hungry for it. That's going to be a gigantic shift. It will change things. A lot of God's people are going to be offended and out of sync in the initial stages of the intense increase of manifestation. I want to say something that sounds negative, but it truly is not. Part of it is, but part of it really isn't. I'll say it positively first, and then work my way back. I believe this profoundly. I believe the Holy Spirit has been raising up seeker-sensitive congregations as a part of His grace and gift to the people of the earth. I really believe it; I believe He has called it and anointed it.

However, I believe most of the seeker-sensitive congregations aren't the fruit of revelation and conviction, but the response to ministerial burnout. They're looking for some kind of increase and momentum. They're looking at what the other man is doing and they're jumping on the bandwagon. I'm not trying to pick on that group; that's not my point. I'm talking to you; I'm not talking to the man you're thinking of. I'm talking to you right now. I really believe it's happening. One of the spokesmen who really understands trends in the Body of Christ says one of the most disturbing trends today, wholesale, is how many charismatic leaders are abdicating their conviction and their position to contend for the power of God and backing down into conservative, dialed down, Christianity, believing for very little in terms of the realm of the Spirit. They're burnt out, they're tired, and they want an increase of momentum and numbers and economics. He said it's a shocking trend in the Body of Christ in America.

Some are really called to it. I have no idea who is and who is not. I don't care; I'm too busy trying to sort out my own mixed-up life to figure out who's doing it right or wrong. I have no interest; I have no space on my little hard drive called my mind and emotions to figure out if that man down the road is doing it right or wrong. I really don't have any extra space to think about that. I'm not trying to empower you into criticism; what I'm trying to say is this: there's a massive visitation of the Holy Spirit's presence. He wants His people contending, believing, pressing in, fasting and praying, laying hands on the sick, prophesying. When it appears we have almost nothing to offer, we're in the place where the Lord gives the increase. We're faithful with little.

The Lord spoke to us about IHOP-KC. He said, "I want you to do this thing." We have fasting teams, 365 a year, every day. We have healing teams, prophecy teams, all this stuff. It sounds wonderful, but you know what? We're not that great. We're pretty much just like everyone else. We say, "Oh, man, it's my fasting day! Oh, gee." I'm talking about me. This is what I feel like. "I'm leading the prayer meeting today. It's too early, man. I'm tired. You guys want to lead the prayer meeting today? I'll be there. You want to lead it?"

“No, we’re tired, too.”

“OK.” I’m talking about real humanity doing this. We call the sick forward.

“I don’t want to lay hands on them, you lay hands on them.”

“I don’t want to lay hands on them. I did yesterday and nothing happened.”

“Well, let’s do it again.”

We take our hand out of our pocket. We’re tired. We lay our hands on their heads. We don’t have to have energy; we really don’t. It’s 6:00am. “Jesus, heal.”

He says, “I just want you doing it. I want you reaching for it. I want you pressing for it.” You don’t have to pray loudly, you don’t have to get all excited. Just show up and move towards it, and do it as a lifestyle. The Lord says, “I will surprise you by My passion as a Bridegroom. I’ll break in, in power when you least expect it.” I’m not talking about doing it heroically. I’m talking about showing up and doing it.

NOW IS THE TIME TO CONTEND FOR THE POWER OF GOD

We’re contending for this thing; we’re fighting for it. Groups all over the earth are fighting for it, but many, many men in the 1980s and 1990s who believed in the power of God, and still do, have become closet charismatics in the last five years. They were on the front lines ten and fifteen years ago. They’ve experienced lot of burnout. I actually have mercy. I understand it; I’m not even criticizing it. What I’m saying is this: dust yourself off, rise up, and press in. Get with some people who press in. This is the time in history to go for all that God will give the hungry heart in the power of God. It really is.

Shift number one: the Holy Spirit will be actively anointing and manifesting His presence enough to get a billion people. That’s just a made-up number.

Actually, I think it’s more than that, because the harvest is coming in. The harvest is going to be more than a billion. I’m just going to use the word *billion* to make it an easy way to say it. Imagine a billion people in sync with what God is saying and doing. We’re talking about a manifest glory that makes weak and broken people enter into that globally. It’s coming, and this verse declares it, if you can see it in that verse. Verse 17 is so glorious, that the Spirit and the Bride would say the same and do the same thing. It’s off the charts, how stunning that implication is.

GOD IS OFFERING HIS PEOPLE THE DEEP THINGS OF HIS HEART

The Spirit says in Acts 2, “All flesh, all My servants, will prophesy” (Acts 2:17, paraphrased). I’ve heard this so many times in twenty years: “Well, I’m not really into the prophetic.”

I say, “Well, get into it, then! What do you mean you’re not into the prophetic? If you’re a born-again believer, you have to be into soul-winning, holiness, the Word of God, serving, and the power of the Holy Spirit. What do you mean, you’re not into the prophetic?”

That's an oxymoron to me. "I'm a radical believer, but I'm not into the Bible, holiness, evangelism, the power of God, or loving one another."

You have to be into it!

"Well, I was raised not to believe it."

I say, "Forget all that! Get into it!" I'm not trying to be crass with people who truly don't. I'm just saying there's this weary spirit, and undoubtedly some of you have it on you. The Lord really wanted to call you here to confront that, for you to shake that off: becoming domesticated, and even getting a group of people with Bible verses to back up why we can let go and settle down. Don't let go! Get hold of a vision, shake it off, dust it off, stand up, get with some people, and press in! This is the hour. It's not the hour to be domesticated, and to get a bunch of people who give you good rationales why: "We did this so hard in the eighties and the nineties, and all this. People got hurt." I'm telling you, the Holy Spirit and the Church, as the Bride of Christ, are going to be so in sync before this thing is over. You want to be forerunners; you want to be in the middle of this. You want to help others get into it. God is offering the deep things of His heart to His people.

In 1 Corinthians 2:10, God says, "The Holy Spirit has searched the deep things of God's heart, in order to give them to us" (1 Cor. 2:11, paraphrased). The offer is for the deep things of God's heart. He's about to break in, in power.

HE WILL QUIET THE STORM IN THE HEARTS OF HIS PEOPLE BY SINGING OVER THEM

You know the passage: "God will rejoice over you with singing, and He will quiet you in His love" (Zeph. 3:17, paraphrased). I've studied Zephaniah, and that passage is specifically about the generation of the Lord's return. I'm sure we can claim it all throughout redemptive history since Zephaniah, but it's particularly written for the generation of the Lord's return.

God will be singing. How is He going to do that? Through His prophetic singers on the earth. He will be quieting the storm in people's hearts with the revelation of His love. He's going to sing over them and quiet their hearts with love. It's the raging storm of fear, the raging storm of shame, the raging storm of addiction, the raging storm of performance and comparison. He says, "I will quiet the raging storm. I will sing love songs, as a God of love." This is the Bridegroom God. He's going to raise up men and women, prophetic singers, young and old, with such intense levels of revelation of His burning desire. He's going to quiet the storm on the inside of the people of God while the storm is breaking on the outside all around the world. We'll be quieted by love, by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit singing through people by the Holy Spirit. He's going to give us the deep things of His heart.

Look at this. I'll take this a teeny bit out of context, but I believe it anyway. Turn back one chapter, to Revelation 21:9. This is the activity of the Holy Spirit. Point one: there's going to be a shift of the Holy Spirit's heightened activity. That's what I'm talking about. I'm skipping a few phrases, but one of the angels says to John, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:9). An angel appeared to John and showed him the revelation of the Bride. He showed him a dimension of the Bride by showing him the heavenly city. It's not the fullness of the bride, but here's my point: God sent an angel to a man on an island to reveal the bride. That's the context.

Now I'm going to move over it and take it out of context. I believe angels are going to be sent, angels, to show us the depths of who we are as the Bride of Christ. We'll have angelic experiences. We'll have revelatory experiences in realms of the glory of God that we can't imagine. The Holy Spirit sovereignly, supernaturally, is going to sing over us and quiet us with love. He's going to show us the bride, even with the agency of angels. Remember Acts 2:17: everyone is going to have dreams and visions—everyone who moves with a heart of obedience towards the Holy Spirit, a heart of obedience towards Jesus, everyone. When it says, "I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, and all will prophesy," that really means *all*. All the servants of God will do this.

"Well, I don't move in prophecy."

You will. Do you want to?

"Yes."

You can! That's what we tell our interns. Again, we have a few hundred students and interns. They come in, eighteen, twenty, twenty-two, twenty-three. We say, "You know what? You can prophesy. You can heal the sick. You can understand how God feels about you and enjoys you."

They look at us with big eyes and say, "Really, all of this is true?"

I say, "You just give us a small amount of time. You open your heart, and we'll fill your mind, from the Word of God, with the reality of this." This is for everyone. That's shift number one. It will be a heightened manifestation of the Holy Spirit. It has to be for Revelation 22:17 to happen.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS MOVING THE BODY TO RESPOND IN WHOLEHEARTEDNESS

Number two; there's another shift. There's going to be a heightened response of the Body of Christ. It's not just that God is going to move significantly higher. The Church is going to respond in a significantly more wholehearted way. There's going to be heightened response. There's going to be wholeheartedness, because for the Spirit and Bride to say and do the same thing, it not only means God is doing more. It means the Church is responding; we're in sync. We're talking about a wholehearted people. That's a radical shift in the Church worldwide. In parts of Asia and Africa, there's a wholeheartedness that's emerging. In the Western world, wholeheartedness is not the condition of the majority of people. There will be a radical move in the spirit, a shift to wholeheartedness. That's going to mess things up when this happens, because the people are going to end up moving and shifting over. It's a shift in the Spirit, to shift over to that which is blatantly, intentionally wholehearted. That which isn't, isn't going to like that.

The Holy Spirit is moving the Body to respond in wholeheartedness. That's what this means. The Bride, the Church, actually says, "Yes!" She is fully in sync to what the Spirit says and does. Beloved, for that to happen, that will change the face, the layout of the Body of Christ in America. There's such a small percentage of radical believers clustered together, going hard after God. God says, "I will get in your midst and blow on it, and gather unbelievers to be saved. Many lethargic Laodiceans gave up their vision long ago to be domesticated believers, I will turn them upside down and ruin them. I will bring them into partnership." It will mess up the structures everywhere. It's really going to happen. It sounds exciting, but it will cause trouble.

You see, the Lord did this some years ago. There was a very established synagogue system led by the Sanhedrin. A few fishermen went outside of the system and got on fire. They couldn't be bought, they couldn't be coaxed, they couldn't be managed. A ton of people around the world ended up in a new system, and it caused the death of most of those leaders who started that system. They were physically killed. This isn't a small thing, but God is going to cause a shift of a higher manifestation of the presence, so get in line with it. He's going to raise up lovesick, wholehearted believers in sync with His heart. That's going to be disruptive as well. Don't imagine it's just going to happen in a vacuum. It will happen with real people, in real time and space. Really big ministries are really going to shrink to really little. Really non-existent ministries are going to get really big. A lot of people are going to be upset in the process. It will happen, and it will probably affect the life of every single person in this room. Every one of us will be affected by this in a pretty intense way before it's over.

THE CHURCH WORLDWIDE WILL GLORIFY THE BRIDEGROOM GOD

Shift number three: there will be a massive shift in the way the Church sees God for the Spirit and the Bride to say, "Come." They're saying "come" to Jesus, but it's not the Spirit and the Body of Christ saying "come"; it's the Spirit and the Body in a bridal identity. They have to have a new revelation of God. There's a shift, there's a radical change coming in the way we view God. We'll learn that the Taskmaster and the Coach is really a lovesick Bridegroom. That's going to change everything. I'm telling you, again, it sounds exciting. I'm not trying to put your fire out, because you're excited about it. I'm excited about it, but I'm thinking more of the hassle this is going to cause everywhere. "Lord, do You know how much trouble this is going to cause?"

"Yes."

We're wholly inadequate in our view of God. I don't mean, just so much; you can fill in the blanks. We'll end up with the revelation of a bridegroom king. Not only a lovesick God, a God with power who is radiant in His righteousness, but He motivates by desire and passion. He's going to reveal Himself as a bridegroom. He has never done it in history, ever, in a universal way among the redeemed. There has never been a time globally where the majority of the people of God understood Him as a bridegroom. It has never happened, but it's about to happen. That means you'll be studying and talking, studying different materials and using different language, and teaching different subjects when you talk about God, all over the Body of Christ. I am, you are, all of us are.

Never have the people of God worldwide universally seen the Messiah as a God of burning desire, the Bridegroom God. We have seen Him in many different ways, but never that way. The primary face He's going to show the end-time Church is Himself as a bridegroom. This is radical. We're not equipped to make that clear to most people. We're not equipped, even in our own prayer lives, to sort out what that means. The Lord says, "I will get you on the fast track. I will equip you to have a different view of God." Not that we're throwing out everything we've learned, but we're adding the scriptural revelation of the God of burning desire to what we know. We'll find out that about half of what we knew isn't going to fit with what the Scriptures say about the Bridegroom God.

We'll say, "Yeah, but I've known that my whole life. I learned that in Sunday school. That has to be true. I've known it for sixty years. It has to be true."

It's not the Spirit and the body; it's the Spirit and the redeemed in a bridal identity. They're viewing God differently, and it will be a radical shift. The music you listen to is going to be filled with it. Books you read are

going to be filled with it. We'll see God differently, and that's going to put some men out of business and shake up other people. It will make other people mad, because it will change so much.

The fourth shift is the way we view ourselves. When we view Him differently, the next step is to view ourselves differently. We won't see ourselves only as a bride. There are seven different biblical identities of the people of God in the New Testament. We're a bride, we're a body, we're a family, we're an army, we're a priesthood, we're the temple of the Holy Spirit, we're the kingdom of God. There's an identity that's going to be emphasized. We won't throw away the revelation that we're the kingdom of God. We won't throw away the revelation that we're the temple of the Holy Spirit, the dwelling place of God. We won't throw away the fact that we're an army, we're a family, we're a priesthood, we're a body. We won't throw any of that away. What's going to be center stage is that we're a bride.

Almost no one in the world understands that right now. I preach on this subject a lot. A few years go by, and I say, "I hardly understood anything I was thinking about a few years ago." The Lord whispers in my heart, "You hardly begin to understand the beginning of the beginning of where this is going"; so I'm throwing myself in this, as well. Even though I've focused on this subject, I want to tell you: to see ourselves as a bride is going to be a shift in the Spirit.

WOMEN ARE THE SONS OF GOD AND MEN ARE THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

You say, "Well, what about the men?"

I talk to men all the time. I say, "Men, women are the sons of God. Men are the Bride of Christ." It's not about gender, it's describing a position of privilege. As sons of God, the privilege men and women have is that we operate in the authority of God. As the Bride of Christ, the privilege we have as men and women is that we have access to the deep things of God's heart. We have revelation and experience of the burning desires of God. Men and women both need it equally.

I love to go men's conferences and say, "Men, you need this desperately. You don't just need to move in the sonship dimension of authority and power. God has invited you to experience the deep things of His heart." That's going to be shift number four: the way we view ourselves, as a cherished bride. We will feel cherished. Beloved, that's a nice statement, but 99 percent of the Body of Christ doesn't feel cherished by God. We'll feel cherished (Eph. 5:27-29). He's going to nourish and cherish His Church. We'll feel it in the generation He brings her to spotless maturity. He will make us spotless and pure by cherishing us and nourishing us, as the New King James says in Ephesians 5:29. We'll feel cherished by Jesus; not just forgiven, but cherished. We'll feel clean. We'll feel like we're the great prize of all the ages that the Father has given Him as His inheritance. We'll feel like He prizes us as His inheritance. It will change so much. It's fantastic, but it will mess up our systems.

I remember talking to a man recently; he has been in ministry for over twenty years. He's a holiness preacher, preaching prayer and revival. He's been here for less than a year. He says, "I'm so messed up right now on this bride thing. It's so true. I can't make heads or tails of it. None of my old sermons work. None of my old motivations work. I can't shake them over hell on a rotten stick, threatening them like I used to. I have to do everything differently. I pray differently, I minister in the healing lines differently, I motivate sinners differently, I motivate the righteous differently. I'm so unskilled at all of this! I've been in ministry as a teacher for twenty years. I don't even know what to do right now."

I said, “Give yourself a minute. Don’t be too hard on yourself.” A lot of what he has is workable and real. It’s still there, but he needs to rework it all: a cherished bride. The Church doesn’t function as a cherished bride right now, because we don’t see ourselves that way, because we don’t see Him as a passionate bridegroom. That’s a major shift; that’s a giant shift. The implications are massive. When we see ourselves differently, we will feel so different.

Shift number five, the way we view the work of ministry. The way we view the work of ministry is going to change radically, because the Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” Notice what’s happening here. I’m getting a little ahead of myself, but the primary ministry is the Church crying out, “Come.” Right now, the prayer ministry is on the outside of the Church. In the generation where the people see Jesus as a bridegroom and themselves as a bride, the primary—not the only, but the primary—ministry is going to be the ministry of coming and crying out to Him, “Come.” In the overflow, we say to the lost and the sick and the broken, “Come!” There are two ways we cry, “Come!” One is to God, and one is to people. The priority here is that we’ll come into the place of encounter. We’ll cry under the unction, in sync with the Holy Spirit, “Come,” in worship and intercession. Then there’s going to be an overflow, but it will change all the paradigms of how we do and think of ministry.

THE CHURCH WILL HAVE A BRIDAL VIEW OF MINISTRY BEFORE THE LORD RETURNS

With respect to most of our ministries, we can function if the prayer meetings quit; it doesn’t make any difference to the ministry at all. As a matter of fact, it’s not just that they quit; they haven’t started. “We have a million-dollar budget. No, we don’t give a thousand a year to prayer and fasting and worship. We don’t raise up leadership for that kind of stuff. We do the real stuff.”

There’s going to be a radical shift in ministry, where the primary occupation of a billion people will be crying, “Come,” together as a Bride. In one direction, it’s called *worship* and *intercession*. In the other direction, it will have an overflow of the “come” to the sick and the lost and the broken, in the horizontal direction. Notice where it comes first. I look at this and say, “Lord, we’re all going to be postured differently in our hearts.”

He says, “You surely are.”

Beloved, I’m not talking to those guys; I’m talking to me. We have a little of this and a little of that going on here, but I tell you, it’s not very deep. It’s not very deep and we haven’t done it very long, and we’re novices. The Lord is saying, “I just want you, Mike, to know that you need to get into this river you’re pointing at.” So it’s not like if you get enough people to get the schedule stretched out, all of a sudden you’re in. No, no, no. This thing is going to shake us up in our little IHOP-KC world. No one is going to stop the King of kings from pulling off verse 17. The Church will be a praying and interceding church. We will have a bridal view of ministry.

You say, “What does that mean? What’s a bridal view of ministry?” John the Baptist said it brilliantly in John 3:29; in essence he says, “I’m a friend of the Bridegroom. My whole preaching ministry is grounded in the fact that I’ve heard the voice of the Bridegroom” (Jn. 3:29, paraphrased). When you hear the voice of the Bridegroom—and I don’t mean an audible voice experience, although that’s going to be happening a lot more than we can imagine; I’m talking about when the Word of God warms our heart. It’s a spirit of obedience and a spirit of meditation. We’re reading the verses about Jesus’ heart for us, and we hear Him say, “I love You, I

love You.” You’re hearing the voice of the Bridegroom through the Word and the anointing of the Spirit tenderizing your heart. That’s what I mean by hearing the voice of the Bridegroom. Yes, there are higher dimensions of it, but the regular way we hear the voice of the Bridegroom is through meditation on the portions of Scripture that talk about His heart, and it tenderizes us when we hear the voice of the Bridegroom.

John said, “I’m a friend of the Bridegroom.” You view people differently. You don’t view people as objects that will build your ministry; they’re the Bride of Christ. They have a value so unique and so intense because of who they are to a God of bridegroom desire. We view ministry very, very differently. Instead of striving and performing and trying to pull off an image of how much we have, we get a burning heart of overflow. Our whole ministry base is different when we minister from an overflow, by interacting with the God of the burning heart and getting it a little in us. Our plans are different; what we do is different. It will change ministry radically in America.

THE RIVER OF HIS DESIRE IS THE REVELATION OF HIS HEART

That’s shift number five: the way we view ministry. Shift number six is the emotional makeup of the Body of Christ. This is wonderful. The way we carry our hearts before God is going to be so different. Look at Psalm 36:8. I love this; it’s one of my favorite Psalms. It’s an obscure little phrase, but I love it. David said, “Let me drink from the river of Your pleasure” (Ps. 36:8, paraphrased). That’s a prayer that I’ve been focused on for many years. I want more. I have a little. He has answered a little; He’ll always answer it if you’ll stay with it, a little. I said, “Lord, I want to get into the river of Your desire.” The river of His desire is the revelation of His heart.

“Lord, I want to experience Your desire for me.”

The Lord might say something like this: “It’s a mighty river! You get in the way of My desire, the revelation of how I feel. You get lost in it, and it will ruin you.”

I call it “the River called ‘Desire.’” We call this revelation “the bridal paradigm,” the revelation of God’s burning desire. Some of our folks just use the language, and they don’t do anything with it. Others, in their inner heart, they want to drink in that river. They want to go into it, not just say the key verses. IHOP-KC is like any other place. We get our own little culture, and our own little cool phrases, and our own little cool thoughts. It doesn’t mean that we’re encountering the river ourselves, in individual ways. I’m desperate for all our people to drink of this river. It means that in our inner man we’re experiencing the pleasure God has for us; the pleasure He has for His kingdom, the pleasures God has for holiness Himself; it’s a giant subject. I call it “the River called ‘Desire.’”

People say, “I want to get into that paradigm. It’s pretty neat.”

I say, “Oh, that river has a mind of its own. Go dip your toe in that river.” You want to do a little bridal paradigm, get a few tape series. Get a little of that going, get a little of this over here going. That thing touches you; I mean really, you’ll spend your money differently. You’ll spend your time differently. You’ll make radical changes. This one fanatic moved from Hawaii. I don’t mean you have to move. You don’t have to go somewhere else to make it happen; you just have to obey God. You’ll end up finding ways to fast more, give more, pray more. The stuff you’ve spent so many years building and protecting, you don’t care about anymore.

Your whole family gets upset, but you don't. This river has a mind of its own. You get near that river, into the flow, the life flow of the burning desire of God's heart, and it touches you.

THE EMOTIONAL MAKEUP OF THE BODY OF CHRIST WILL BE TRANSFORMED

Oh, I'm thinking of one lady. She had been in ministry for thirty years. She's a good friend. Her husband came to me. He says, "My wife is ruined. She has been hearing this and that and studying these things. Oh, my goodness!" He said, "The things that used to excite her don't excite her. She wants to be at the feet of Jesus. She fasts two and three days a week. Who on earth gave her that idea? She's reading these bizarre books. She cries all the time, and she's happy with nothing. She wants to sell the house." He said, "I want my wife back!"

I said, "I didn't ruin your wife. She tiptoed up to that river and didn't realize that it has a mind of its own. He's a person; He's called the Holy Spirit. She got into it for real."

It will wreck your life and your plans. It's true and you know it. The Bible calls it lovesickness (Song 2:5). The bride said, "I'm lost in love, lost in love."

Then the lovesick bride, even in her weakness, feels confident. She feels clean. She feels fearless; when you're lovesick you feel fearless. It's alive inside; you're lost in love. I tell you, with a healthy diet of fear and shame in our lives, we're totally preoccupied with our image. "How do they think? What's going to happen? Am I going to lose it, am I going to get it?" Do you know how much energy it takes to manage all of those emotions? To look good, to be understood right, to be postured right? We all do it, but it's fueled by constant fear and shame. Our motivation structures, our value structures, are so different when shame and fear get dismantled.

My point is, the emotional makeup of the Body of Christ will be transformed, and it will be a worldwide phenomenon. You won't be able to buy off His bride. You won't be able to train her into domestication. You won't be able to make her polite, in that political sense. She's going to be reckless. She's going to be careless, in a holy, godly way. "I don't care," the saints are saying in Revelation 15:2, as they come up victorious from the mark of the Beast (Rev. 15:2, paraphrased). They came up victorious. They lost their lives, they were martyrs, but they were victorious in love. They stood before the onslaught of the evil in the last days, and they said, "If you don't recant, if you don't do it differently, we'll take your life."

They say, "Who cares? Take my life! Are you kidding me?"

The people say, "What do you mean? We'll kill you. We're serious."

They say, "I'm in a whole other realm, mister. That's fine."

They came up victorious over the evil one. They came up victorious. They died, but their heart was thriving in love. That's where the end-time church is going. Imagine the liberty. This is the ultimate liberty. Imagine being so freed from shame and fear on the inside that we're not just captured with thinking who, what, and where. Are we getting more, are we getting less? There are so many questions that clutter our souls. Imagine being free from that. We actually have energy to love and to give. We have energy to die as martyrs. We're freed to be lost in love, because we're lovesick. The Body of Christ is going to be a politically incorrect reality at the end of the age: politically incorrect because we care about nothing. We're exhilarated on the inside. Oh, I love it! I love it.

CONNECT BY REVELATION TO THE REALITY OF WHAT THE SPIRIT IS SAYING

Let's look at the passage again: Revelation 22:17. It says, "Let him who hears say, 'Come'" (Rev. 22:17b). Instead of the word *hears*, you can say, "Connect by revelation." Some of you are connecting by revelation at the heart level to this message. I don't mean just tonight. In the last few years, you've connected to this reality. You're hearing. When the Bible talks about hearing, it's talking about a heart connection through revelation. It says, "Now, let the people who are connecting at the revelatory level, at the heart, say, 'Come.'" I want them to enter into this thing. I want them to engage in the mandate."

When you get touched by this, you enter into the mandate of verse 17. The center really is worship and intercession. The overflow is renewal to the redeemed and evangelism to the lost. We cry, "Come" to the Church and to the non-church. We cry "come" upward, and we can't help but cry "come" outward. When we do it to the Church, we call it *renewal*; when we do it to the lost, we call it *evangelism*. He says, "The person who hears this message, let him cry 'come.'"

AN ANOINTING ON WORSHIP THAT FLOWS FROM THE BRIDAL PARADIGM

Shift number seven: anointing on worship. When this says, "Let him who hears say, 'Come,'" it's talking about saying, "Come," to Jesus. Beloved, the implication is a massive worship anointing that obeys this. They'll say, "Come" with prophetic music. They'll say, "Come" with the new songs of Zion, the new songs of God's heart. When they say, "Come" to Jesus, that's intercession. That implies a level of anointing flowing out of a bridal paradigm in their worship. There's going to be a new anointing of worship flowing out of the bridal paradigm. You're watching it breaking out a little. Ten years ago, if you got all the songs that had the subject of the Bride in it, in the whole Body of Christ, there were about a hundred. Of course, I'm making up the number; I never bothered to count them, but there were so few. Today, if there were a hundred ten years ago, there are a thousand right now. They're coming out from everywhere; from the east and west and north and south the bridal songs are coming. There's a shift coming in the worship ministry. It will be a new anointing and a new revelation: an anointing on worship, a presence worship; a worship that breaks the yoke flows out of the cry, "Come." It's a bridal call to a bridegroom. That's the implication of this verse.

It's not just going to be a new anointing on worship. That means worship leaders. That means musicians, dancers, singers. There's going to be a new anointing on intercessors, because there's going to be an intercessory cry, "Come." The whole end-time church is going to be swept into this cry. If there are a million intercessors in the earth today, there are going to be a billion of them. This thing is going to explode beyond measure, the number of people answering the invitation of the Spirit to get into intercession based on a revelation of the Bride of Christ. He said, "the Bride." We're talking about a billion people who are going to be crying, "Come."

Let's just talk about the church in the West. Right now, they're not crying, "Come." The church doesn't talk to God that much in the Western world. They're not crying out anything, really, except for, "Oh, my goodness! The building got a little too big, and the budget is going down. We're in trouble. We have to figure out a way to stop the hemorrhage."

I'm not trying to be crass. I'm just saying the shift is going to be radical, because the massive energy of the ministries of the end-time church is going to be mobilized and financed around crying "come" upward, and then crying "come" outward. That's where the cry is. That's where the resource, the anointing, the economics, and

the people of the kingdom are going to be focused. I promise you, it will be true. This isn't a false word. There will be a major shift in intercessory ministries.

“WHOEVER THIRSTS, LET HIM DRINK THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY”

It says, “Let the one who thirsts. . .” Now here's an interesting one. Every one of these phrases is so loaded. “The one who thirsts, let him now come.” “Let the person who thirsts, let the person who hears this message” because someone just said to them, “Come to the Bridegroom!” You know, the first two things were saying “come” in worship to Jesus. We're saying “come” in intercession to Jesus. It's similar, but there are some differences. We're saying “come” to the people. Come to what? Come to the Church? No. I mean, God is building His church, and I'm for the Church. Are we saying, “Come to the meeting?” No, we're saying, “Come to the Bridegroom God.”

It's a bride saying, “Come.” It's Matthew 22. Jesus said, “In that day, the kingdom of God will be like a great king arranging a wedding for His Son. He will send out His servants, and they will call the lost in the highways and the byways to a wedding feast” (Mt. 22:2-14, paraphrased). The end-time cry to the Church and to the lost will be a cry to come to the wedding, to the Bridegroom God.

Some of you—let's just say some of you are in the room. You say, “I haven't heard much about this.” Right now, you're hearing this man, me, say to you, “Come to the Bridegroom God!” and your thirst is being awakened. What are you supposed to do with awakened desire? Instead of the word *thirst*, write, “Your desire is awakened.” The Spirit of prophecy, the Holy Spirit, is saying here, “Get up and take action and come. Begin to change your lifestyle. Act on it, act on it!” The awakened desire will go away if you don't act on it. Respond to it. He says they will.

It's not just an awakened desire. It's more than awakened desire, more than people saying, “I want to come.” Beloved, there are believers on fire with this revelation that are getting the attention of the Church and the lost. They're being awakened to desire because they're seeing passion. They're feeling the passion of the Bridegroom. God is going to raise up thousands of men and women all over the earth crying out with such a reality that the Church and the lost will be thirsty when they see the bridal church cry, “Come.”

The Church and the lost will be thirsty. They'll say, “We want to come to this Bridegroom. We want to get lost in desire. We want the pleasure and the power of lovesickness. We want the pleasure, the power, and the freedom of lovesickness. We want to come.”

There will be a new shift in the renewal ministry, because the people are going to get thirsty and they'll come. It will be a bridal revelation drawing them. There's going to be a new revelation, a new shift, in evangelism. Right now, almost all the evangelism on the earth is devoid of the subject of inviting them to a bridegroom God. The most effective source of evangelism, using the Bridegroom paradigm of God's heart, is going to be to Israel, but that's another subject. There will be a colossal increase of effectiveness in evangelism when the Church gets in sync with who it is they're worshipping. Number one: He's a bridegroom. Number two: they'll be in sync with who they are—the cherished bride. Number three; they actually live lifestyles of worship and intercession. Then they'll turn in this overflow like a water hose on the lost and the church that's out of sync with this. They'll go after them with such an overflow of this reality in their lives. It will change evangelism; it will change renewal. It will change worship ministry. It will change intercession. It will change the way we view God and the way we view ourselves.

“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SHALL BE LIKENED TO TEN VIRGINS”

There are going to be new mantles. God is in a time right now where He’s giving this one a new commission, new marching orders, and taking away what He gave another. Look at Matthew 25. I’m going to go through it, because I want you to see this. I don’t know that you’ll follow it, but I at least want to point out a verse to you. Given time, I could back up everything I’m saying from the Scriptures, but I won’t take the time. I’m just going to say it to you and trust the Lord to help you figure it out later. Work on it. Matthew 25:1-13 is one of the most significant prophetic parables about the end-time ministries and the mantles, the commissions, the callings, the spheres of authority. It’s related to the revelation of Jesus as a bridegroom. There’s so much more in that idea. It means more than I understand, for sure. It’s a massive idea.

Look at chapter 25:1: the ten virgins. These are ministries. They know Jesus; they have lamps. Lamps are ministries in the parable language, because you’re giving light to people in darkness. You’re giving light to others. All of them have ministries, and all of them are actually actively engaged in meeting the Bridegroom. There’s going to come a time when the vast majority of ministries are touched by this subject. It says they’re all going out to meet the Bridegroom (Mt. 25:1). There’s coming a time when it will become so mainstream before the Lord returns to say that Jesus is a bridegroom God. The whole Church will be in sync with this thing (Rev. 21:17).

FIVE OF THE VIRGINS WERE WISE, AND FIVE WERE FOOLISH

Here’s what will happen: half of them are going to neglect developing this reality that God gives them as a free gift. They’ll neglect to develop it. They’re called foolish; that’s verse 3. The other half is going to go after it with an active intimacy. God calls them wise—even after this thing takes root, and even after it becomes the mainstream of what God is doing amongst the prophetic people of the Body of Christ. The whole Body of Christ will be prophetic. There will be those who become so preoccupied with shining their lamps, they’ll forget it’s about passion for a bridegroom, and their lamps will go out.

“GIVE US SOME OF YOUR REALITY, GIVE US SOME OF YOUR INTIMACY”

One of the most powerful statements in this is in verse eight. He said this, “The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, some of your reality, some of your revelation of the Bridegroom God. Our lamps, our ministries, are going out’” (Mt. 25:8, paraphrased). There are going to be new mantles, new spheres of authority, new divine commissions. There’s going to be a diminished mantle, a diminished authority, a diminished sphere related to this subject in the Body of Christ before the Lord returns. Many people with large ministries are going to say, “What I did for the last thirty years isn’t working!” It’s a combination of the crisis in the earth, the glory of God on the Church, the hunger of the people awakened, and this thirst we talk about, this awakened thirst. “My messages aren’t hitting the mark with anyone!”

There’s going to be a new hunger, a new appetite in the Body of Christ. They’ll demand the type of ministry that brings them into contact with the fire of God’s heart. What these ministries are going to say is, “My lamp is going out.” That’s not my real point; my real point is that there are going to be new mantles, new divine commissions. There are going to be people in their twenties, people in their eighties, men, women, old, young, people who had no ministry ever; suddenly, God is going to begin moving on them with a new revelation that will touch the heart of the need of the people. Those who had nothing going on, all of a sudden their lamps are going to be filled with oil, and they’ll be shining light.

DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY WILL BE SHUT TO THE ONES WHO DON'T MOVE IN THIS SPIRIT

Go down to verse 10. I won't try to explain this one to you, because it's a complicated concept, but it's a very clear concept. There are going to be different doors of opportunity shut in the Spirit to people who don't move forward in this direction. Doors of opportunity will be shut. Some people think this parable says that if the door is shut, they're lost. No, in a Hebrew wedding in ancient Hebrew culture, there were seven days to the wedding, and seven different nights, and the final night was the culmination of the wedding. Not all the visitors were invited to every single night of the celebration. What God is telling many of His end-time ministries is, "I will go into a season of bringing forth My body as the Bride of Christ. If this isn't something you're living in, you'll miss this round of what I'm doing."

The door is shut. It doesn't mean they're lost; it doesn't mean they won't have an opportunity. "Go get some oil, and maybe tomorrow night, or in the next season, I'll open the door to you." I don't know that you all followed what I just said in the last three minutes. Here's the bottom line; whether you can see it in this parable or not, it's stated in other places as well. Some doors of opportunity will be shut, and others opened, related to the revelation of the Bridegroom God. There are going to be new structures, new alliances, new shifts in all these things. God is raising up a unified body of believers. The Lord cares about historic relationships that people have, but what God cares about in your city is the Body of Christ in its unity in your city. What's happening in so many places is people are unified to their stream, and denominational headquarters is back somewhere else. Charismatic or non-charismatic, I'm not picking on the mainstream denominations. We all have denominations; even the ones who haven't made them legal entities, they're still denominations. I'm not saying that's particularly bad; that's not my point. My point is, we end up with a loyalty to a system that's based somewhere else.

The Lord says, "I will mess up all the systems. I will create whole new alliances, whole new shifts. I will cause the bride in My city to come forth. That's the primary thing I will be doing with My people—not all of them, but many of them in that city: bringing them forth, lovesick, finding other lovesick people."

All these structure changes are going to happen in the next ten and twenty and thirty years. It's based on the Bridegroom revelation. Change is coming.

My point is this: some of you will tap into two or three of these shifts that are coming; others, the other two or three. I don't know that anyone will be involved in every one of these shifts in a major way. The point is that change is coming. Change is coming. There's a bridegroom God with so much desire. This desire is going to cause such reverberations in the earthly structures, both within the kingdom and within that which is not the kingdom. The desire of His heart is what will cause His activity; He's going to shift everything around. It will be centered around one reality: God with a burning heart.

The Lord is saying to us right now in this conference, and He's saying to us in our lives, "I'm about to make some major shifts. Get in sync with what I'm doing. I'm giving you time to get in sync."

Amen. Let's stand.