

## **Session 8 Our Call to Emphasize Jesus as Bridegroom, King, and Judge**

*Please refer to the teaching notes for this message.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Tonight we're going to look at part eight in our series on, "Studies in the Bride of Christ." In part seven we looked at the clear statement in the Word of God that at the end of the age, the Holy Spirit is going to emphasize the revelation of Jesus as Bridegroom, King, and Judge. There are over 300 different titles of God in the Bible. There are 300 facets of that glorious diamond called "the personality of God." Those are just the ones that are described in the Bible itself. Three will be emphasized here above all the others.

This is review because we looked at this in part seven. Tonight, in part eight, I will give seven different prophetic encounters we've had over the years. I'll spend two, three, four minutes on each one, describing some events that happened in the Spirit which helped us to know with clarity that we were to emphasize these various facets of Jesus' ministry and personality. The Word is enough, of course, and the Word makes it clear that the Spirit is going to emphasize these facets in the generation in which the Lord returns. The Lord really helped us out—He gave us some hints—some pretty profound prophetic encounters.

### **JESUS: BRIDEGROOM, KING, AND JUDGE**

I want to give you a little overview. These were not just personal encounters; they were movement-forming encounters. By that I mean that, from the beginning, twenty-seven or twenty-eight years ago, the Lord spoke time and again that there would emerge a young adult movement of singers and musicians in the days to come. We know that movement is IHOP–KC, and it has begun. Now we're moving right on into our twelfth year. I want to give some experiences over the last twenty-eight years in which the Lord gave us clarity on what to emphasize concerning the messages that go forth from this house and the truths concerning Jesus as Bridegroom, King, and Judge. A passionate Bridegroom, a sovereign King, and a righteous Judge: it's those three truths that are often separated from one another, but we are to hold them in tension. There's no contradiction in Jesus' personality when He shows Himself as Bridegroom, King, or Judge. We don't have to pick our favorite description. Rather, there's a holy synergism of truth, if you will, in which Jesus shows forth the fullness of who He is by expressing all three of them simultaneously.

### **THE PASSIONATE BRIDEGROOM**

This is from part seven. Again, we're on part eight tonight: the passionate Bridegroom. Jesus is revealed as the God with burning desires. That's what we mean by "The passionate Bridegroom." Jesus is the God of burning desires. The essence of the Bridegroom message is the revelation of Jesus' beauty, His majestic beauty, His emotions for us, His fiery affections, and His commitment to us. I have a little of this laid out in paragraph B. I don't want to go into it now, so you can look at it in the notes.

### **JESUS: THE GOD OF POWER**

Paragraph D. The next facet that the Word of God makes clear is that Jesus the sovereign King. This is the God of power. This is the God most familiar to us: the Jesus that manifests His power, the Jesus that anoints His people. When we talk about revival, when we talk about healing, when we talk about the great harvest and a billion souls coming in, when we talk about financial provision—supernatural provision—that is Jesus the King, the God of power. When we talk about Him restoring individuals, restoring each of the spheres of society, restoring nations, or even restoring the earth itself at His second coming in the millennial kingdom, that's Jesus the King. The God of power is the face of Jesus with whom most believers are at least a little familiar. The God

of burning desire, the God with fiery affections, the jealous God, the Bridegroom God who loves with intensity, is new to many believers. The God who breaks in with power, who restores individuals, provides money, heals bodies, sends revival, releases renewal, brings in the great harvest, touches the realms of society, restores the nation, the Jesus of power—we're familiar with Him.

### **JESUS: THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE**

Paragraph E. The one that we, as the Body of Christ, are most unfamiliar with is Jesus, the righteous Judge—the God who removes everything that hinders love. He intervenes with His zeal to confront all oppression. He doesn't ignore it, but there's a time in history—and I believe we're in that time frame—when He's going to manifest His zeal, break in with power, and remove everything that hinders love on the planet. Jesus, the righteous Judge, has a strategic plan. This is related to the revelation of Jesus the Judge. He's the God with zeal to intervene and remove everything that hinders love, but He's also the God with a clear plan. There are unique dynamics to His plan.

The Bible makes it clear that there is one generation in natural history that will set the stage for the earth's transition into the age to come. Personally, I believe we're in the early days of that generation, and there will be very unique, dramatic, and unprecedented dynamics. Jesus is the Judge who has the plan to confront everything that hinders love. Right now, He's allowing many things that hinder love to continue, even as He has done throughout history. He confronts them occasionally, but there is one generation in which He will confront them fully and boldly with unique dynamics that transition the planet into the age to come. That is Jesus the Judge.

### **WE DON'T HAVE TO CHOOSE OUR FAVORITE JESUS**

Again, this is review from part seven. We will go on to the seven prophetic testimonies in one moment.

Paragraph F. I want to mention again that we don't have to pick our favorite. One man says, "I like Jesus the Bridegroom. I like the God of desire, the God of intimacy."

Another man says, "I'm not really into the intimacy thing. I don't know much about His desire. I'm into the God of power. I'm into the King. I like the healings, the revival. I like the transformation of society and nations. I'm into transformation. I don't know so much about the desire part and the intimacy. I want power."

There aren't too many in this next category, but another man comes along and wants the God who stops the negative. He wants Jesus to intervene, zealously and dramatically, as the God of judgment. He prefers the God who isn't patient with who or what is oppressing the nations, but breaks in with zeal to stop it.

### **THERE'S NO CONTRADICTION IN JESUS**

The good news is that we don't have to choose one, because there's no contradiction in Jesus' heart, in His personality, or in His ministry. When He shows Himself as Bridegroom, He actually magnifies Himself as Judge and King. When He shows Himself as the great Judge, He's actually showing His love as the Bridegroom God. Again, we looked at this in the last session. God never suspends one of His attributes to exercise another. He never puts His desire as a Bridegroom on hold to show His power as a King, or vice versa.

In my own personal life, it was in the 1970s when I began to see Jesus the King. I met the Lord in 1971. In the seventies, I was trained and taught. I related to the God of power, the God that healed, the God of revival, the God of evangelism, the God of financial miracles, the God who broke in with power. It was in the 1980s that I began to see the Bridegroom. This was new. When I look back over the last thirty-five years of ministry, this

was the biggest shift. It was the Bridegroom revelation that really threw me off the most. It was the one that I was most surprised and unfamiliar with. Again, this was in the 1980s. He began to talk to me about the Bridegroom God. He said, “I’m the God of power, I’m the King, but I’m also the God of desire. I’m the Bridegroom.”

I thought, “OK. What does all this mean, Lord? What? What?” This really threw me off, and it took me awhile even to adjust to this. At the very beginning, I didn’t like it. It seemed girly to me—Jesus as the Bridegroom God. It seemed like flowers, Song of Solomon, perfume, necklace, body parts, things like that. I said, “I’m not into that sort of thing. That’s not what I’m really into, the Song of Solomon thing.” Well, what I didn’t know was that I really am into that, but I just didn’t know it yet.

### **JESUS’ END-TIME PLAN TO TRANSITION THE PLANET**

It was in the 1990s when I first began to see Jesus as the Judge, as the God who had a strategic plan with unique dynamics. In one generation, the most intense positive and the most intense negative will happen, simultaneously, to transition the planet into the age to come. Most believers who understand the King and the Bridegroom really have no concept of the unique dynamics of His plan to transition the planet. They’re not thinking that He has an end-time, global plan to transition this planet. They’re simply looking for greater revival. No. The Jesus with great boldness will fully confront all evil and all oppression and all injustice. He will drive it off the planet forever. This is where we are all going. He wants us to see not only His desire as a Bridegroom, not just His power as a King. He wants us to cooperate with His plan as the Judge who will bring justice to the earth and drive oppression off the planet.

In the year 2000, about ten years ago, I began to bring the three different facets of Jesus together: Bridegroom, King, and Judge. They really are the three components I put together in the forerunner ministry for preparing the way of the Lord. We won’t be able to prepare, either ourselves or others, for the unique dynamics of what’s coming without revelation of Jesus as Bridegroom, King and Judge. We can’t pick one at the expense of the other. The three of them must operate together. Jesus has more than desire and more than power. He actually has a plan. He has zeal to confront oppression in a way He has never done before in history.

### **THE BRIDEGROOM, KING, AND JUDGE ARE THE SAME**

Top of page two. Let’s look at these seven encounters. These were prophetic encounters. Some of them have several different parts. I’ll do this briefly, and won’t go into all the details because I want us to understand, as we’re studying the Bride of Christ, that we can’t understand the Bridegroom God without understanding the King and the Judge. Some people are really into the Bridegroom, but they don’t like the Judge. What they don’t understand is that the Bridegroom and the Judge are the same Man. He’s fully God and fully Man. There’s no contradiction. We can’t understand the God of desire, the Bridegroom God, without understanding the God of zeal, the Judge, the One with zeal to intervene and remove everything that hinders love.

Again, these are movement-forming encounters and that’s why I’m sharing them. I’m not just telling my story. This isn’t my story, although my story is here a little. This is our story. In these experiences the Lord was saying, “This is what this movement is: to carry this stewardship, to bring this forth in song, in proclamation, in all kinds of ways they’re to communicate this facet of who I am.”

### **“I WILL ESTABLISH TWENTY-FOUR HOUR PRAYER”**

Roman numeral II. The first encounter began in May 1983. Most of you are aware of the twenty-one day fast we had a long time ago, in May 1983. There were about 500 young adults. We committed to twenty-one days of fasting and prayer. The Lord supernaturally called us to do this in a dramatic way. The most significant event in that twenty-one day fast is what I want to talk about. The Lord gave us the first deposit in terms of a supernatural confirmation of what was to be the message of this movement. We were meeting for twenty-one days from six in the morning until twelve at night. Most people came for six or eight hours; they came for a long time. Some came the whole eighteen hours. There was a core group that really lay before the Lord the whole eighteen hours for twenty-one days. It was pretty boring, pretty oppressive, and pretty uneventful, to be honest.

However, there were two or three very dramatic things that happened during those twenty-one days. For example, the Lord spoke audibly. He said, “I will establish twenty-four hour prayer in the spirit of the tabernacle of David.” He spoke it audibly. He was talking about IHOP–KC back in 1983. At the time, I didn’t have any thought of doing twenty-four hour prayer. That really threw me off. I thought, “Who would want to do twenty-four hour prayer? I want to do the stuff. I want to see the power. I don’t want to be in prayer meetings praying for power; I want to get out and do it. I don’t want to be in a room asking for it; I want to be in the field doing it!”

### **“THIS ONE THING... ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE”**

During this time of fasting, there was a day when I was gripped with Psalm 27:4. It’s the statement of David. David says, “One thing I have desired of the Lord, that I will seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.”

This was probably about day ten; I didn’t note the exact date. It was right in the middle of this twenty-one day fast in May 1983. This verse hit my spirit with such force and clarity, and it stayed with me all day. I was in this prayer room the whole eighteen hours. I paced. I took a few naps, right there in the prayer room. Most days, I paced back and forth and drank my coffee. Those were some pretty boring, oppressive prayer meetings. I had this one sentence, verse 4, in my spirit. “This one thing... all the days of my life, I will gaze on the beauty of the Lord... This one thing... all the days of my life.” I prayed this for twelve hours. I’ve never, ever prayed one prayer for twelve hours—ever. It was given to me. It wasn’t like I had found it in the Bible and said, “Oh, this is a cool one.” It hit me so clearly that I couldn’t let go of it. I prayed it privately. I didn’t pray it on the microphone. I kept saying the same sentence, over and over, and groaning it before the Lord.

### **BOB JONES AFFIRMS THE PLAN OF GOD**

Most of you know of Bob Jones and the role he played prophetically. He came to me the next day. He said, “I had an experience with the Lord. I saw the Lord”—in one of his night-vision experiences—“I heard His audible voice. He told me to tell you yes. The answer is yes. Here is what yes means—the Lord spoke this out loud—‘I will establish twenty-four-hour prayer in the spirit of the tabernacle of David.’” So, Bob came to me and said, “The answer to your prayer yesterday was yes.”

I said, “OK. I was in the prayer room for eighteen hours. Which prayer are you talking about?” I was thinking of the ten prayers I had prayed on the microphone. We had to pray on the microphone the whole eighteen hours. Everyone took ten turns just to keep the prayer going. That’s why I asked him, “Which prayer?” I prayed Ephesians 1, Ephesians 3, Colossians 1... I had done them all.

Bob Jones said, “None of those prayers. That’s not what the Lord is saying. The Lord said yes to the prayer He gave you yesterday.”

I said, “And what would that be?” I was a little mystified.

Bob said, “Psalm 27:4: “One thing . . . all the days of my life I will behold the beauty of the Lord.”

I said, “That’s remarkable! That’s the prayer I prayed all day. I didn’t tell anyone. I didn’t pray that on the microphone. That’s remarkable! How did you know that? I never even thought of the possibility that God might have given it to me. It was just a sentence I couldn’t get free of...”

He smiled and said, “Well, the Holy Spirit gave it to you. It was a sovereign experience from the Lord where He visited you and gave that to you.”

I said, “Really? What does it mean? I don’t even know what it means. It’s a bizarre little verse.” If you don’t know what “All the days of my life I will behold and gaze on His beauty,” you think, “What?”

He said, “I’ll tell you what it means. The Lord told me audibly. It means twenty-four-hour prayer in the spirit of the tabernacle of David.”

I said, “It doesn’t mean that. It can’t mean that.” I pulled my Bible out.

He said, “I heard it audibly; I promise you that’s what that means.”

I said, “Well Bob, you’re a prophetic man, but you’re not really a Bible man. You’re wrong.”

Well, I was wrong—again. I’ve been wrong many times and have a lot of practice with it. Anyway, I remember looking at him and saying, “I don’t want to do twenty-four -our prayer. Are you kidding me? In “the spirit of the tabernacle of David”? What’s that?”

He said, “With singers and musicians.”

What happened in this initial word is that the Lord spoke audibly and confirmed what I had carried all day long. For twelve hours I had prayed this prayer. No one knew it. I hadn’t told one person.

**AN ANGEL DECLARES: “WHEN YOU GET TO 500, YOU WILL GO TO 5,000 OVERNIGHT”**

Then an angel appeared. This isn’t really for this session; it meanders away from the story a bit. He spoke and said, “When you get to 500, you will go to 5,000 overnight by multiplication.”

There would be five hundred full-time staff. Right now we’re a little over 500 by our counting. I don’t believe it’s the divine counting. I believe when the divine counting sees 500 full-time people, not 500 on the list, not 500 who signed up, but 500 from heaven’s point of view, we’ll have dramatic growth overnight. The angel appeared in the context of all of this, said this, and gave some confirmations. It was quite dramatic. Most of you know the story. That growth is glorious, but it’s also a burden. When I think of the implications of that—and I

don't think we're far away from it—there are many good things related to it, but there are many burdensome things as well. That's another story for another day, though.

Here's the point: The Lord said, "You will do twenty-four-hour prayer," but the verse He gave us was Psalm 27:4. All that I saw in Psalm 27:4 was, "All the days of my life." Really. That's what I got—24/7 prayer for the rest of my life, with singers and musicians.

I said, "How are we going to do this?"

Bob Jones said, "I don't know."

We put a sign on the wall that said, "Twenty-four-hour prayer in the spirit of the tabernacle of David." For sixteen years we waited for IHOP–KC to start. I didn't know what it looked like. People asked me for years, "What's 24/7 prayer in the spirit of the tabernacle of David?"

I would always say, "I don't have a clue what that means. God spoke it audibly. When we have 500 full-time, we'll have 5000. That's all I know. Until it happens, I'm not even worried about it."

### **ONLY THE THE BEAUTY OF GOD CAN SUSTAIN THIS**

Here is the point I'm making: The phrase of Psalm 27:4 that hit me in my thinking was, "all the days of my life." For real, I was captured by the twenty-four-hour description of it with the singers and musicians. What David was talking about was the beauty, the encountering of God's beauty. Beloved, I'll tell you this: We're coming now upon the twelve-year mark of IHOP–KC, and without encountering the beauty of God, there's no way to sustain the twenty-four-hour structure. You can't sustain this just by people being diligent in work. David understood that, and David was right. He offered up night-and-day prayer with singers and musicians. He organized 4,000 of them and they prayed night and day. He understood that the key to it was the subject: the beauty of God.

### **THE CALL TO ENCOUNTER HIS BEAUTY**

One reason I say that is that even many in our midst today are like I was in the eighties and nineties. I was more focused on the twenty-four-hour nature of the mandate and the singer-musician dimension. I wasn't focused on the call to encounter the realm of His beauty. That was one of the premier points God was making. It wasn't until twelve years later, in 1995, that it finally hit me. It's a beauty dimension! It's about the beauty, not just persevering 24/7. It's not about organizing singers and musicians, although, yes, we need to do that. It's about the realm of His beauty. The God of beauty is related to the Bridegroom God. The truth of the beauty of God is related to Jesus, the Bridegroom with desire.

### **MANY LOSE THEIR WAY IN PURSUING POWER**

I know this: for us to sustain IHOP–KC in the way God wants us to do it, whether we're on the platform, in the chairs, or whatever role we have in this assignment; the only possible way we can sustain it is if, as individuals, we're locked in, hungry, and pursuing the realm of His beauty. It's the beauty of God that keeps our spirit invigorated. I believe that many aren't focused on that. I don't know the percentage that are and the percentage that are not. Most, by nature, are focused on the God of power. Power is good; He's a king, and power is really good. But if we see power without beauty, we'll lose our way in our pursuit of power unless we're sustained by encountering His beauty at the heart level. We'll lose our way in the pursuit of power even as we are praying to

be used with power. So many through the years have stumbled, fallen, and lost their way in many different areas because their hearts weren't connected to a fascination with the Man Christ Jesus. Again, Jesus is fully God, fully Man.

I spent more time on that encounter than I will on the other ones. That was the first one, and the Lord was laying the foundation. Again, I missed it. I missed the beauty dimension of it back in 1983. I only saw the twenty-four hours and the musical dimension of it. The most important aspect was the beauty dimension, and I missed it. The revelation of beauty is related to the Bridegroom God, but I didn't know that. I missed the beauty dimension of that first encounter.

### **THE SECOND ENCOUNTER: JESUS THE BRIDEGROOM (JULY 1988)**

Roman numeral III. The second encounter was five years later. The Lord speaks in a very straightforward manner about the Bridegroom God. But I had no understanding of Jesus the Bridegroom, and honestly, I never thought about it. I had no interest. In fact, it wasn't even on my mind back then. I loved Jesus the King, the warrior King, the Jesus with power; that's the facet of His personality I was excited about. I didn't realize that we better understand Jesus the King when we see Him as a Bridegroom King.

### **“SET ME AS A SEAL UPON YOUR HEART”**

Paragraph A. July 1988. This was five years after I experienced this Psalm 27:4, twenty-four-hour prayer calling from the Lord. Again, that's a movement calling. It's a personal calling, but it's also a movement calling. It's personal for many of us. Then, five years later, I'm in my office one morning. I'm reading a wedding card. This wedding card contains a passage from Scripture, Song of Solomon 8:6–7: “Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm. For your love is as strong as death. Your jealousy is more powerful and more demanding than the grave” (Song 8:6–7, paraphrased). The jealousy of God, the love of God, is so invasive, so consuming, so all-encompassing. He's the Bridegroom God with passionate desire, fiery love.

I read this card and I was struck by this. I instantly thought of Jesus. The card was written between a husband and a wife. But as I looked at it, the Spirit of the Lord came upon me in a very clear way. I began to talk to Jesus. I began to say, “Jesus, seal my heart with Your seal of love, Your fiery seal.” I was setting Jesus on my heart. I said, “Jesus, fill my heart with fiery love for You.” The presence of the Lord began to increase. I began to weep. I was tenderized in seconds. The Spirit of the Lord was so powerful.

I was in the office. I picked up the phone and called the receptionist. I said, “I'm having an unusual encounter with the Lord, so if someone calls or comes by, please don't interrupt me. Something unusual is happening.” In my thirty-plus years of ministry, I've never, ever called the receptionist and said, “I'm in an encounter, please have no interruptions.” It was a rare experience. I wish I'd had a bunch of these. Regrettably, I only had it once.

### **AFFIRMATION OF THE BRIDEGROOM MANDATE**

I continued to pray, “Holy Spirit, be the seal of fire upon me, so that I would love Jesus with a consuming love.” I continued to weep. Ten minutes later, the phone rang. I was a bit surprised and a little mystified. I picked the phone up. The receptionist said, “I apologize, because I know you said not to call, but this is really different. Bob Jones is on the other line and he said he heard the audible voice of God for you for right now.” The receptionist said, “If God is on the line, I should let Him in, right?”

I said, “That’s good. Always do that.” Now it wasn’t God obviously, it was a messenger from God, but the point is, it was God’s message.

I said, “Hello? Bob?”

Again, this was five years later. The Lord had used Bob in powerful ways. People in our community knew of his prophetic history and the accurate words the Lord was giving him prophetically. I was still kneeling on the floor with my Bible opened to Song of Solomon 8:6, and with the wedding card lying there. I had been weeping now for ten minutes. I was a wreck. I said, “Hello?”

Bob said, “I literally only have one minute.” He told me why: he said he had to go because there were people waiting for him. He said, “Mike, the most remarkable thing happened. I just heard the audible voice of God, awake. I heard it while being awake.”

Later he said: “It’s as important as the word I gave you five years ago that you were going to do twenty-four-seven prayer in the spirit of the tabernacle of David.” This is the second audible voice mandate. Here at the thirty-plus year mark, I’ve only had two of them. I had that one in 1983 and this one in 1988. He said, “Here is what the Lord told me. He said, ‘Song of Solomon 8:6–7. Call Mike Bickle and give it to him right now.’”

#### **AN ANOINTING TO UNDERSTAND THE BRIDEGROOM**

Of course I had Song of Solomon 8:6–7 open as I was reading it and weeping over it. Bob called me and said, “The Lord told me to tell you He’s visiting you on the truth of Song of Solomon 8:6–7. God is going to release an anointing for this truth, sovereignly, across the whole Body of Christ. He’s going to raise up messengers from different tribes and streams in the Body of Christ.” “The Lord is sovereignly going to release an anointing of understanding Him as the Bridegroom God,” was the essence of what he said. That is point one. God is going to release the anointing that’s in this verse, Song of Solomon 8:6, an anointing related to the truth of this verse.

Bob continued, “Secondly, the Lord wants you to know that He wants you to focus on this all the days of your life—for the rest of your life.”

I said, “Wow!” It was a sixty-second conversation. We hung up because something was happening and he had to go. I just began to weep again. The presence of the Lord was on me. I thought, “This is remarkable: that God would tell a man audibly about the verse I’m reading—in the very seconds the Spirit of the Lord is touching me on that verse.”

#### **A SERIOUS READ OF THE SONG OF SOLOMON**

I called my wife, Diane, a little later. I said, “Diane, the most remarkable thing happened. Remember five years ago when God gave us that audible-voice commission to do twenty-four-hour prayer? We have another one. We have two commissions, two mandates.”

She said, “What?”

I told her the story: “Song of Solomon 8:6–7.”

She said, “Wow, that’s amazing.”

Since it was going to be a life commission, I thought it would be good for me to read the Song of Solomon for the first time in my life in a serious way. I had read the Song of Solomon a little as a youth pastor to get jokes for the youth group and things like that, but I had never read it in a serious way to encounter God—never. I was excited! I had just gotten an audible, voice of God commission. The power of God was on me even before the prophetic man had called me. So, I read Song of Solomon. It's eight chapters and I had never read it before. I read chapters 1–3. It's like perfume, fragrance, flowers, necklace, body parts, necklace, flowers, body parts, roses. I said—and this isn't a joke—"This is horrible!" This was divine prison sentence, not a great event. I'm not kidding! It was horrifying to me. I told the Lord, "Lord, give me the book of Romans as a life mandate." Romans had been my favorite book for many years. "Or, even the book of Revelation"—which I didn't know anything about—"I'll even take that one if I have to, but not this!"

Now a number of you know that my father was a world champion boxer. He was a boxer for eighteen years, an amateur world champion; then he was a prize fighter for about six, seven, or eight years after that—I don't know the exact amount. The point is, many of our family friends were boxers. I was in the gym when I was four, five, and six. I would see my dad down at the Municipal Auditorium where we have our conferences. From a young age I would watch him box and beat people up. All my life, I could always tell my friends, "My dad could beat up your dad!" I knew it for a fact.

I told the Lord, "I'm the son of a boxer. I've grown up in bars with my dad's boxing friends." My dad took me to the bars for years. Five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, fifteen, all those weekends, he would take me and I would have a ball. I know a whole lot about bars, but we won't go into that. I had zero foundation in religion, absolutely none. I thought Moses was a Catholic priest. I had no knowledge of anything—for real. I had no knowledge. I reminded Him of this. I said, "Lord, I'm the son of a boxer. I can't do this. I can't do this."

I went home that night and Diane was so excited. She said, "Man, you called this morning! Is this the most exciting day of your life?!"

I said, "Have you ever read the Song of Solomon?"

She said, "Oh yes, it's awesome!"

I said, "No, it's horrible! I can't do this. I mean, I can't. I borderline won't do it, but God is God. I know I'm going to, but this doesn't work for me!"

Little did I know that the principles of this eight-chapter love song would radically transform my life. Of course, the only principles I'm interested in, in that eight-chapter love song, are those that are validated in the New Testament. Some people do funny things with that book. I'm interested in reading it in a way that affirms New Testament truth, the first commandment, and the release of understanding the beauty and love of God.

### **THE THIRD ENCOUNTER: THE FIRST COMMANDMENT MANDATE (OCTOBER 1989)**

I'll go on to the third encounter. It was about a year later. I've had this Song of Solomon mandate for a year now. I'm reading it and not enjoying it—at all. I'm reading commentaries on it and thinking, "Bah, humbug!" I essentially said, "I'll do this, but only at gun point. You're God and I'm a little man. You're powerful. I'll do this, but I'm doing it under protest." Song of Solomon was very boring to me. The commentaries were even

worse. I thought, “Why am I doing this?” The Lord underlined it again; He underlined the truth of how important it was the next year.

I want to say this: The Song of Solomon message is the message of the first commandment, of loving God with all our heart. It’s the message of the Bridegroom God; it’s the message of the God of burning desire. That’s what we’re talking about. It’s a critical message for this movement. It’s not just a personal mandate; it’s a movement mandate from the Lord.

Roman numeral IV. That office encounter was in July 1988. About a year later, in October 1989, we experienced a very dramatic event. We had six different congregations in the Kansas City area, and we were dedicating one on a Sunday morning in October 1989. Noel Alexander was the one doing the dedication. He was up front reading Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart” (Deut. 6:4, paraphrased). He said the Lord gave him that verse in a very special way. He had told me beforehand, “The Lord gave me this verse on the first commandment: to love the Lord with all our heart.”

Noel got up and said, “I want to dedicate this building, but the Lord sovereignly gave me this word for this people.” It wasn’t just for that congregation, for that day. It was for this young adult movement, singers and musicians, whether a young adult, old adult, single adult, married adult, or grandpa adult. It doesn’t matter what age; it’s all ages. Everyone is involved, but it’s a young adult movement from heaven’s point of view. Noel had this word for this movement. All these promises that God had given us—again, we know now it’s IHOP–KC.

On that day we didn’t fully understand all the details of it. Noel stood up and said, “This is the word of the Lord. He sovereignly gave it to me. ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.’ I’ll say it again: ‘Hear, O Israel; you shall love the Lord your God.’” When he said the phrase, “You shall love,” when he said *shall*, lightning struck the building. I was sitting on the front row, and I could see a ball of fire roll across the building. This bolt of lightning struck the building and the whole place screamed. It was terrifying. You may think, “That would be neat!” It wasn’t neat; it was absolutely terrifying; it was so loud. Many of us saw the ball of fire rolling. Noel didn’t get to finish his sentence. The Lord made it very clear. It’s very clear to us that after giving us the Song of Solomon mandate a year earlier, He was telling us now to do the first commandment. The Song of Solomon message, the first commandment message, and the Bride of Christ message are all one message. He was saying, “You must do this. I’ve sent lightning from heaven.” It’s actually a more dramatic story, but I spent too much time on the first two stories, so I have to move on.

#### **THE FOURTH ENCOUNTER: “CALL THEM HEPHZIBAH” (NOVEMBER 1995)**

Top of page three. I’ll look at the fourth encounter: “Call them Hephzibah.” This is about seven years after I received the mandate to do the Song of Solomon word. This is a movement word as well. So far, all these prophetic encounters had been about the Bride of Christ, because this was the most challenging of all. All of us appreciated Jesus the King; we were all into that. It was for the Jesus of desire that we lacked a little motivation. We didn’t have a first commandment, beauty-of-God culture in our community; we had a power of God culture. What I want to say is that we don’t have to choose; we can have the power of God and the beauty of God. We can have the power of God and intimacy with God, which is the same thing as the beauty of God. We don’t have to choose between the two. We also don’t have to choose between those two and the third one: Jesus the Judge who has zeal to confront everything that hinders love; the Jesus who has a plan to transition the earth into

the age to come. We can be involved in that plan, operate in His power, and still connect with His beauty in those three facets of His personality: Bridegroom, King, and Judge.

Paragraph A. This fourth encounter was in November 1995. I had a very powerful, prophetic dream. In this dream, I was on a very large platform. I assume it's down at the Kansas City convention center with thousands of people. I was on a large platform with a microphone in my hand, getting ready to preach to the thousands and thousands of people there. Then, the audible voice of God, which I assume is the Holy Spirit, spoke like thunder in this room and said: "Call them *Hephzibah*, for the Lord delights in them! Call them *Hephzibah*, the Lord delights in them!"

### **THE GOD WHO DELIGHTS IN US CHANGES OUR HEARTS**

As you can see in the passage from Isaiah 62:4, the Lord says, "You shall be called *Hephzibah*," which means, "I delight in them" (Is. 62:4, paraphrased). I was to tell these young people, "God delights in you! God delights in you!" When I told them that, and this is a strange way to put it, but their emotional chemistry shifted and they understood the God of desire. He's the God who actually likes them. He's the God who wants to be with them. He's not just the God who's going to use them, not just the God who will forgive them, but He's the God who actually enjoys them. When I proclaimed this, the countenances of these young people changed, and their hearts shifted dramatically.

I want to say this: God's delighting in them is very important to this worldwide, young-adult movement—of which we're only a fraction of a percent. This young-adult movement is a billion strong, from all the different streams in the Body of Christ. We're a fraction of one percent of it. In our little part of it and in the rest of the Body of Christ, I want to say this: The *Hephzibah* message, which is the message that God delights in them, which is the message of the Bride of Christ, which is the message of Song of Solomon, which is the message of the first commandment—it's all the same message—will transform them on the inside. It's not enough that they're workers in the kingdom, or even vessels of power. It's critical that they're workers; it's critical that they learn how to flow in the power. When they understand the Jesus of desire and the Jesus of power and Jesus the Judge, the Jesus with zeal to confront everything that hinders love—when they get that whole package together—it will radically change who they are. I saw the change in these young people; I could see their countenances shifting. That's the *Hephzibah* message: God delights in us.

I woke up from the dream and the power of God was on me. His manifest presence was resting on me in quite a dramatic way. I won't go into the details of that, but it was a very powerful experience. The Lord was, in essence, saying again, "I gave you Psalm 27:4 in 1983 and I confirmed it audibly: 'this one thing, the beauty of God.' Then I gave you Song of Solomon 8:6, audibly, five years later. Then I hit the building with lightning to emphasize the first commandment. Here I am giving you a dream again. I want you to lay hold of this; I want you to lay hold of this."

### **WITHOUT GOD IN THE SECRET PLACE, YOU LOSE YOUR WAY**

Again, I grew up in the culture of the God of power. For most of us, that's the God we're most familiar with. The God of desire was the biggest ambush, and the most challenging. I really couldn't make sense of it. The God of judgment was another challenge and another problem that would come a little later.

It seems like every year or so, or maybe a little less frequently, He would give another encounter. I can see it now; He was saying in essence, "IHOP–KC, you'll never make it if you don't connect with the beauty of God.

You'll never make it by just praying for revival and praying for tasks and initiatives and projects—even the justice initiatives that are so critical to God's heart. You must personally encounter God in the privacy of your heart as the Bridegroom God. You must, or you'll lose your way in the service of the kingdom, in all the great service of the kingdom that's so important to the Lord." That's what He's saying time and time again.

**NOVEMBER 1996: "JESUS, YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL"**

Roman numeral VI. About a year later, in November 1996, I was actually right here in this very auditorium. We had an all-night prayer meeting, it was around midnight, and I was standing right over there—not that location matters. The same thing that happened back in 1983, when the verse from Psalm 27 hit me and I prayed a single phrase for twelve hours; it happened again. This has only happened twice. This time was a little different. At midnight, I said to the Lord, "Jesus, You're so beautiful." I got that phrase from the Song of Solomon. I had been reading it and trying to go after that Hephzibah understanding. I really wanted to understand this. I said, "Jesus, You're beautiful."

When I said, "Jesus, You're beautiful," the power of God rested on me. I thought to myself, "Wow, that was surprising!" It was around midnight. I said again, "OK. Jesus, You're beautiful." The power of God hit me. I thought, "Cool, I like that. Jesus, You're beautiful." The power of God hit me again. It happened three times in a row. It only took a second to say, "Jesus, You're beautiful," so I kept saying it. An hour went by. Every single time I said it, the presence of God came on me. I thought, "I've never had anything like this happen to me on this level before." And it's never happened since.

For two hours, three hours, four hours, five hours... the whole night, for five hours, I said one sentence and a few variations on it. "Jesus, You're beautiful." I would say, "What's happening? Why is this taking place so dramatically?" I had that twelve-hour experience back in 1983 where I prayed one prayer, but I didn't feel any presence on it. I couldn't get free of it, though, it just got in me, and I said it a thousand times over twelve hours, or maybe even more. This time, though, I felt His manifest presence the whole time.

That all-night prayer meeting was over at 5:00am. I went home and went to bed. I awoke at eight in the morning and lying there in bed, I thought, "That was so remarkable. I'll try it again." I was kind of experimenting. "Jesus, You're beautiful."

His presence came on me. I said to myself, "It's still working!" Again, in my nearly forty years of walking with the Lord, I've never had anything like that happen. I got up, got in my car, and said, "It's still working!" I drove back over here. The building was empty and it was Saturday morning. I went right back to the original spot. Now, don't go back there and see if it works; don't get funny about it! I went back to the same place to see if it worked, but don't you do that. I said, "Jesus, you're beautiful." For two more hours, every single time I said it, the power of God hit me. Then it ended. I thought, "That was the strangest seven hours..." There was the original five, and then the two that I experienced after I awoke.

**"CALL THE CHURCH TO THE BEAUTY OF GOD"**

A week later, a lady sent me a letter. I have it here in paragraph B. She said, "I had a dream about you on November 30"—the very night I prayed for five hours—"In this dream, the Lord said He was going to open up to you the revelation of the beauty of God. He wants you to call the Church to the beauty of God. He wants you to focus on the beauty of God."

### **IT'S EASY TO MISS THE EXPERIENCE HE DESIRES FOR US**

After all these five or six experiences from 1983 to 1996, after those thirteen years, I was finally starting to lay hold of it. The Lord said, “Really. When I told you Psalm 27:4 back in 1983, ‘this one thing... you will gaze on the beauty of God,’ you could have gotten it then. Here it is, thirteen or fourteen years later, and I’m still winning you over to this message!”

Why am I telling you that? Because, although I had a clear, supernatural calling to do this, I still didn’t give myself to it. I dabbled with it, but I didn’t give myself to it. I believe some of you, maybe many of you, have been around here for a year, or five, or ten years. You know the language, you’ve got the rhetoric down, you have the poster, you own the tee shirt, but you don’t actually do it. It’s IHOP–KC rhetoric. It’s language we all know. I want to tell you, the language of His beauty won’t exhilarate and fascinate our spirit. The language of His beauty won’t do anything for us—but the experience, the revelation of it touching our spirit—that is what will radically shift who we are on the inside. It’s not just His beauty, but one facet of His beauty: it is His desire at the revelation of Jesus, the Bridegroom God.

### **TO JUDGE IS AN EXPRESSION OF HIS LOVE**

Roman numeral VII. The sixth experience. May 1997. That year was the year God emphasized Jesus the Judge. I’ll only give you the briefest synopsis of these next two stories for the sake of time. This was new to me. Everyone knows Jesus is a judge. Even a brand-new believer knows that. We don’t know much about it, and it seems like it’s a contradiction to the reality of Jesus the Bridegroom and Jesus the King, but it’s not. It’s actually an expression of His love as a Bridegroom, not a contradiction of it.

I hear people say all the time, “In the New Testament, Jesus doesn’t judge.” That’s because they have a completely wrong paradigm of what judgment really is. Judgment is His zeal to intervene and remove everything that hinders love, because He wants a people who love Him with all their heart—because He loves us with all His heart.

### **A CALLING AND AN INVITATION TO THE FORERUNNER MINISTRY**

May 1997. I’ll skip this one, but it’s powerful. This was when the Lord spoke to us about ten thousand John the Baptists coming forth in this movement. Let’s go to the seventh and final one. First, I got a prophetic word from Rick Joyner in July 1997. Rick told me, “The Lord is going to visit you, really soon. He’s going to transition you. He’s going to give you new things.”

“OK. Cool, Rick.”

That was in July 1997. In August 1997, the next month, I had a prophetic dream. I won’t give the details, but in the dream the Lord spoke Isaiah 40, which is the forerunner chapter. I had this idea that God was going to transition me, and in July Rick affirmed that He would. In August, I had a dream and the Lord said, in essence, “I’m giving you a calling and an invitation to the forerunner ministry.” I didn’t really know what the forerunner ministry was. I could talk about it for three minutes back then, and I could have given you a guess. I never thought that much about it.

### **THE WIND AND THE FIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Top of page four. There are a few components to this seventh experience. First, there was Rick’s word, and then the dream I had right after that; but it really picked up in September. Rick gave me a word in July, I had a dream

in August, and September was the big month. This is the final part of this seventh encounter. I was at the prayer meeting and we still had two more years before the beginning of IHOP–KC. We still had daily prayer meetings at our church and I would go to those prayer meetings. Every Wednesday morning I would go from 6:00am until noon. I would go for six hours, read the Word, meditate—just like many of you do in your prayer times. At that time I was reading these three passages of Scripture written here in the notes for you. I was reading these three verses and the most unusual thing happened: the wind and the fire of the Holy Spirit came upon me in a very dramatic way. I realize I’ve said the Lord visited me in a very dramatic way six or seven times already in this one-hour testimony. I’ve given you almost every experience I’ve had in my life in this one hour. In thirty years, these were the main events. This was one equal to the others. It was so dramatic.

**“I SAW AN ANGEL STANDING OVER YOU, POURING FIRE ON YOU...”**

I was reading these three verses: Revelation 2:17, Revelation 3:12, and Revelation 19:12. The Lord highlighted them to me. I sat there for six hours, from six in the morning until noon, and for about three of those hours the Spirit of the Lord was like fire and wind—like an air current. I had never felt an air current that was so distinct. I looked up and said to myself, “Surely, the vents are on.” There were no vents, so I looked around and said, “Where in the world?” The wind was swirling around me, and burning fire. I thought, “What is happening?” It was really intense. I’ve had the fire of the Lord experience a few times over the years, but nothing like this.

So, I prayed these three verses for three hours. What these verses mean, in essence, is that God is going to reveal more of Himself. He was saying, “I will reveal more of who I am to you.”

As I was reading this, a friend came up and handed me a note from a man named Terry Bennett. I barely knew him; maybe I had shaken his hand once. Terry Bennett was in the back of that prayer room; he wrote the note and left. The friend handed it to me and I was reading the note. Remember, I felt the fire of God, the wind of God, while I was reading those three Bible verses.

Terry wrote, “I had the most unusual vision of you just now. I saw an angel standing over you, pouring fire on you—it was like a tornado of wind was around you.”

I was thinking, “OK...”

He went on and said, “The Lord told me to tell you these three verses: Revelation 2:17, Revelation 3:12, and Revelation 19:12.” These are the very three I had been reading that entire morning.

I said, “What does this mean? This is so strange.” I wasn’t manifesting. It wasn’t like the fire was on me and I was moving my body. I was feeling intense. I feel lots of things in the Spirit and many times I don’t show anyone what I’m feeling. It’s just something between the Lord and me. I felt it intensely for hours. I was sitting there, trembling in my spirit. I was locked into God and these three verses. Then this man said, “I saw an angel with my eyes,” and gave me the same verses. I thought, “That’s the most remarkable experience. How could he have done this?” I took the note. I didn’t even address the man who gave it to me. I said, “Thank you,” and put it in my pocket. I was blown away by that; absolutely blown away. I didn’t fully know what to make of it unless God wanted to show me new things about who He is.

## **ONE WEEK LATER: THE SECOND FIRE AND CURRENT OF WIND**

Paragraph D. Two weeks later, I was back on Wednesday morning. I sat in the chair from six in the morning until noon. That's what I did every Wednesday: I sat there for six hours with my Bible open.

I was sitting there in that six-hour period. Suddenly, it happened again. For the second time, I felt the fire and the current of wind, just as I had felt them two weeks earlier. I looked around, thinking, "How is this happening?" I felt burning, intense fire all over my body. I thought, "What's happening?"

## **WHO IS THIS WITH GARMENTS STAINED RED?**

Then the Holy Spirit led me to Isaiah 63:1–6. This is a most remarkable passage. It is revealing Jesus the Judge. I didn't really know Isaiah 63 well. I had read it a few times, but I found it a little confusing. It's describing Jesus at the time of the second coming, as He's marching up on His way to Jerusalem. Literally, He has come back and touched down on the earth. He's marching, on His way to Jerusalem, to the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives is going to split, and all these things are going to happen. Many are unaware of this, but Jesus at His second coming, is coming in the context of a military conflict centered around the city of Jerusalem. A lot of people, when they think of the second coming, imagine Him appearing in a flash of lightning, we leave earth, it's over, and, we say, "Wow, that was a close one!" He does come, He does flash with lightening, we are transformed, we are raptured, but it doesn't end there. He goes into battle. It says here in Isaiah 63 that He's marching though the nations on His way up to Jerusalem. If you read the context, it is clear that this is talking about Jerusalem. Blood is all over His garments. Isaiah the prophet asks Him, "Who is this Man with red garments, and why are Your garments red?" (Is. 63:2, paraphrased).

Jesus answers: "I'll tell you why My garments are red. I'm trampling the nations and the blood of My enemies is splashing upon all my garments. It's because the day of vengeance is in My heart and the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of favor, has come. I'm coming to bring justice to the earth, and the blood of my enemies is being shed" (Is. 63:3–4, paraphrased). Jesus has blood all over Himself. It's described right here in Isaiah 63. It's a passage about the second coming. It's about Jesus.

## **"I LOOKED, BUT THERE WAS NO ONE TO HELP"**

Here is the key verse. Verse 5: Jesus is speaking: "I looked, but there was no one to help, and I wondered that there was no one to uphold [Me]; therefore My own [right] arm brought salvation for Me; and My own fury, it sustained Me" (Is. 63:5). In other words, "My anger against oppression sustained Me and I finished the task. I have trodden the nations in My anger. I made the nations drunk in My fury. I brought them all down; I brought their strength down to the earth. I have destroyed all the wicked in the earth" (paraphrased). This is talking about the second coming. This is such a dramatic passage.

I was reading this. Again, I was in the prayer room for six hours and the wind and fire fell as it had two weeks earlier. It was all over me. I said, "Oh my goodness, what's going on?" Again, over the thirty or forty years of my walk with the Lord, this has only happened twice, and both times within two weeks. I was so captivated. The Lord says in Isaiah 63:5, "There's no one to help Me. I wondered why there was no one." What that means isn't that there's no individual. There's no government, no national government that would be in agreement with Jesus. There was no nation that said, "Hey, I'll stand with You in Your judgment against these other nations." All the governments of the earth, all the kings of the earth said, "No, I'll have no part of it; if You want to judge, You're on Your own."

Jesus essentially says, “No king would stand with Me with all his resources.” He says, “That’s OK, I’ll do it with My own fury.”

**“WILL YOU STAND WITH ME AS JESUS THE JUDGE?”**

Then, the Lord speaks to me: “Will you stand with Me as an individual?” He’s talking about nations and kings. He says, “Will you stand with Me as Jesus the Judge?”

This word comes so clearly that I begin to weep. I say, “Yes Lord, I’ll stand with Jesus as Judge. I don’t know You as Judge. I know You as King, a little. I know You as Bridegroom. I know Your power and Your desire, a little. I don’t know You in Your zeal with a plan to transition the earth and drive all evil off the planet. I don’t know that side of You—but yes, I will.”

**THE JESUS IN WHITE AND THE JESUS IN RED**

Then, He spoke to me again: “You’ll be rejected, even by some of My people; but will you stand with Me, the Jesus of red?” In Song of Solomon 5:10, Jesus is altogether lovely. He’s dazzling. He’s radiant in His white garments and everyone likes the dazzling, beautiful, radiant Jesus—filled with beauty—of Song of Solomon 5. Everyone likes Him, the Jesus of white. The Jesus of red actually breaks in with judgment, kills the oppressors of the earth, sheds blood, and cleanses the planet in one time frame. He’s going to transition the entire earth into another age. It’s so dramatic. He asks, “Will you stand with Me?”

I said, “Yes Lord. Not only with the Jesus of white, the Jesus of beauty, the Bridegroom Jesus. I’ll stand with the Jesus that wears red. I will stand.” I was weeping. The Spirit of God, and the fire and the wind, was on me. It went on for two, three, four hours or more. I don’t know.

**TERRY BENNETT AFFIRMS MIKE’S ENCOUNTER**

Now, this man, Terry Bennett, whom I didn’t know—the one who slipped me a note by way a friend—comes up to me sheepishly. I hadn’t spoken with him before. He didn’t want to come, but he could tell the Spirit of God was touching me. I’m so engaged, but he taps me on the shoulder. He says, “Mike, my name is Terry. I gave you the note two weeks ago.”

I look up in the midst of the presence of God, the fire, and the wind, and I say, “Yes, yes, hi.” I’m thinking, “Could we do this some other time?” but I don’t say this out loud.

He says, “I won’t bother you every time in the prayer room, but the angel that visited you two weeks ago with the wind and the fire is visiting you again, right now.”

I looked at him. I didn’t say yes. I typically don’t say yes. I’m not trying to fake the people out. I want to encounter God; I’m not trying to make some big story. I looked at him and said, “Go ahead.”

He said, “I gave you three verses last week; I hope they touched you.” They were the very three I had been reading two weeks ago. He said, “This time the Lord told me—the angel who poured this fire on you—said he’s going to visit you with the Jesus of red from Isaiah 63. He’s going to reveal His zeal to you. He wants to know, will you stand with Him as the Jesus in red?”

I said, “Oh my goodness.” I didn’t say anything else, but in my heart I said, “Yes, Lord, I’ll stand with You.”

## **THE DNA FOR THE YOUNG ADULT MOVEMENT**

Yes, everyone likes Jesus the King with power. Jesus the Bridegroom with desire is a little odd for some folks—not just men, but a lot of folks don't like the Jesus of desire. It's invasive, because He wants all of us. He doesn't just want to use us; He wants to consume us as the Bridegroom. He wants abandonment. He doesn't want soldiers and workers that check in, check out, use His power, win people to the Lord, and then go and live their own lives. He wants to be all-consuming. He's the Bridegroom God, the God of fire and desire. The Jesus of judgment is offensive. Even the Body of Christ doesn't like the Jesus of judgment, let alone the nations.

I said, "Yes; Lord, Bridegroom, King, and Judge. We'll sing it; we'll pray it; we'll prophesy it; we'll preach it; we'll write it; we'll dance it. We'll have dramas, media, and children's church with Bridegroom, King, and Judge."

It was clear to me, two years before IHOP-KC started, that the DNA for the young adult movement—at least the beginning nature of it—was set, established, and supernaturally confirmed. I want to tell you this: Jesus the Judge is a critical part of Jesus the Bridegroom. That's why I put it in this series. Amen.

Let's stand.

## **MINISTRY TIME**

So, will you stand with the Bridegroom and the Judge? Everyone wants the power; that's a given. Power isn't offensive. People like the power. Maybe it's a little offensive, but people like the power. The Jesus of desire wants all of you. The Jesus with zeal as Judge is offensive. Will you stand with Him?

Here is what I'm going to ask you as the team comes up. I want to ask you this question, and I want you to come forward and respond if you want to respond. You can also respond from your chair; you don't have to come forward. If you'll say, yes to the Bridegroom, King, and Judge—and again, you've already said yes to the King. Everyone wants power, healing, money; everyone wants transformation and all those cool things. I want them; you want them. I'm not just talking about the IHOP-KC rhetoric, because everyone at IHOP-KC says, "Yay, the Bridegroom God!" If you go down deeply and ask a few questions, you will see that it's not established in our midst in a really strong way. It really isn't. He's the God who wants everything from you—everything. He wants your private time, private thoughts, everything. He wants everything. He's the God of desire who likes you, and the Jesus of Judgment. The distinction of this altar call is that it's new to you. If you're saying, "I haven't really said yes to the Bridegroom," or, "I haven't said yes to the Judge; I haven't said yes to one of them, but I'm saying yes for the first time tonight," or, "I'm saying yes in a new way tonight," if that's you, I want you to come and stand before the Lord. Take a stand and say yes to Him. "Yes, I will stand with You, the Judge. Yes, I will stand with You, the Bridegroom. I will. I will. I know it will cost me everything, but I'll stand with You. I want to be involved in Your global, end-time plan and all of its unique dynamics. I want to be a part of it."

If that's you and you haven't said yes on one of those issues or one of those facets of Jesus, or maybe you said 'yes,' but it was years ago, and you lost your way on it, and you're willing to take a stand—then I want to invite you to come and take a stand. Again, you can do this at your chair as well.

Lord, we say yes to You. Jesus, I say yes to You. Bridegroom, King, and Judge, I say yes.

Jesus says, “No one would stand with Me. Will you stand with Me? Are you embarrassed about that part of Me? Do you think I don’t understand love because I’m a Judge?”

Jesus, we’ll stand with You.