

Message Two

The Beautifying and Killing Functions of the Word of God for the Church as the Glorious Bride of Christ and the Corporate Warrior of God

Scripture Reading: Eph. 5:26-27; 6:17-18; Rev. 19:7-9, 11-16

- Eph. 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
Eph. 5:27 That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.
- Eph. 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,
Eph. 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints.
- Rev. 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.
Rev. 19:8 And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.
Rev. 19:9 And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.
Rev. 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.
Rev. 19:12 And His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems, and He has a name written which no one knows but Himself.
Rev. 19:13 And He is clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God.
Rev. 19:14 And the armies which are in heaven followed Him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white and clean.
Rev. 19:15 And out of His mouth proceeds a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations; and He will shepherd them with an iron rod; and He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.
Rev. 19:16 And He has on His garment and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

I. The beautifying function of the word of God is for the church to be prepared to be Christ's glorious bride, and the killing function of the word of God is for the church to function as God's corporate warrior in slaying His adversary—Eph. 5:26-27; 6:17-18; Rev. 19:7-9, 11-16:

- Eph. 5:26-27 See above.
Eph. 6:17-18 See above.
Rev. 19:7-9, 11-16 See above.

A. In Ephesians 5 the word is for nourishment that leads to the beautifying of the bride, but in Ephesians 6 the word is for killing that enables the church as the corporate warrior to engage in spiritual warfare.

B. The beautifying function of the word of God produces the church in the image of God, and the killing function of the word of God issues in the church with the dominion of God—Gen. 1:26.

- Gen. 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

C. The overcomers live by every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God in order to be governed, controlled, ruled, and restricted by the Word of God in following Him to become His bride for His expression and to defeat His enemy for His dominion—Matt. 4:4; Deut. 17:18-20; Rev. 19:13-14.

- Matt. 4:4 But He answered and said, It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God."
Deut. 17:18 And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write out for himself a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the Levitical priests.
Deut. 17:19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, in order that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes and doing them,

Deut. 17:20 So that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers and he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right or to the left; that he and his sons may extend their days over their kingdom in the midst of Israel.
 Rev. 19:13 And He is clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God.
 Rev. 19:14 And the armies which are in heaven followed Him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

D. The Lord Jesus came as the Word of God in the flesh to judicially redeem the church (John 1:14), He became the life-giving Spirit as the word of God to organically save the church (1 Cor. 15:45b; Eph. 5:26; 6:17), and He will return as the Word of God with His overcomers to set up His kingdom on earth (Rev. 19:13-16; 17:14; Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45).

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
 Eph. 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word.
 Eph. 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God.
 Rev. 19:13-14 See above.
 Rev. 19:15 And out of His mouth proceeds a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations; and He will shepherd them with an iron rod; and He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.
 Rev. 19:16 And He has on His garment and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.
 Rev. 17:14 These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they who are with Him, the called and chosen and faithful, will also overcome them.
 Dan. 2:34 You were watching until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the image at its feet of iron and clay and crushed them.
 Dan. 2:35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed all at once, and they became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.
 Dan. 2:44 And in the days of those kings the God of the heavens will raise up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and its reign will not be left to another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms; and it will stand forever.
 Dan. 2:45 Inasmuch as you saw that out of the mountain a stone was cut without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will happen afterward; and the dream is certain, and its interpretation trustworthy.

II. As the bride, the church must be beautiful, “not having spot or wrinkle or any such things”; the beautifying of the church is by Christ as the life-giving Spirit sanctifying the church, cleansing her by the washing (lit., laver) of the water in the word—Eph. 5:26-27:

Eph. 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
 Eph. 5:27 That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

A. The beauty of the bride comes from the very Christ who is wrought into the church and who is then expressed through the church; our only beauty is the reflection of Christ, the shining out of Christ from within us—2 Cor. 3:16-18.

2 Cor. 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
 2 Cor. 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
 2 Cor. 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

B. In the past, Christ as the Redeemer gave Himself up for the church (Eph. 5:25) for redemption and the impartation of life (John 19:34); in the present, He as the life-giving Spirit is sanctifying the church, beautifying her, by the washing (the laver) of the water in the word; and in the future, He as the Bridegroom will present the church to Himself as His counterpart for His satisfaction (Eph. 5:26-27; cf. S. S. 8:13-14).

Eph. 5:25 Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.
 Eph. 5:26-27 See point A above.
 S.S. 8:13 O you who dwell in the gardens, / My companions listen for your voice; / Let me hear it.
 S.S. 8:14 Make haste, my beloved, / And be like a gazelle or a young hart / Upon the mountains of spices.

C. Unless the priests in the tabernacle washed in the laver, there was no way for the tabernacle to operate; likewise, unless we are cleansed by the laver of the water in the word from earthly defilement, there is no way for the church life to operate—Exo. 30:17-21; Eph. 5:26.

Exo. 30:17 And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,
 Exo. 30:18 You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for washing. And you shall put it between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it.
 Exo. 30:19 And Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet with water from it;
 Exo. 30:20 When they go into the Tent of Meeting, they shall wash with water, that they may not die; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn an offering by fire to Jehovah,
 Exo. 30:21 They shall wash their hands and their feet, that they may not die. And it shall be a perpetual statute to them, for him and for his seed throughout their generations.
 Eph. 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word.

D. The Bible speaks of two kinds of defilement: the defilement that comes from sin and the defilement that comes from the earthly touch, from having contact with the things of the world—cf. John 13:12-17.

John 13:12 Then when He had washed their feet and taken His outer garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, Do you know what I have done to you?
 John 13:13 You call Me the Teacher and the Lord, and you say rightly, for I am.
 John 13:14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.
 John 13:15 For I have given you an example so that you also may do even as I have done to you.
 John 13:16 Truly, truly, I say to you, A slave is not greater than his master, nor one who is sent greater than the one who sends him.
 John 13:17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

E. The washing at the laver signifies not the washing away of sin by the blood of Christ but the washing away of the defilement that comes from contacting earthly things, by the life-giving, speaking Spirit:

1. The life-giving Spirit is the speaking Spirit, and whatever He speaks instantly and presently (Gk. *rhema*) is the word that washes us.
2. The way to have the washing of the water in the word is to pray-read the Word—Eph. 6:17-18.
 Eph. 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,
 Eph. 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints.
3. If day by day there is no speaking of the Lord within us, then in our practical experience the Spirit is absent, for the Lord's speaking actually is the Spirit—John 6:63; Eph. 6:17.
 John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
4. As long as we have the Lord's present word, we have the life-giving Spirit; we know that Christ as our person is present with us by His speaking, for His speaking is the very presence of the life-giving Spirit.

F. The laver typifies the washing power of the life-giving Spirit issuing from the death of Christ; the locating of the laver after the altar signifies that the washing power of the laver comes out of God's judgment at the altar:

1. After passing through God's full judgment at the altar (the cross), the crucified Christ entered into resurrection and became the life-giving Spirit who washes us—1 Cor. 15:45; 6:11; Titus 3:5.

1 Cor. 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

1 Cor. 6:11 And these things were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Titus 3:5 Not out of works in righteousness which we did but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

2. The dimensions of the laver are not given, signifying that the life-giving Spirit is immeasurable, unlimited—John 3:34.

John 3:34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for He gives the Spirit not by measure.

G. The laver was made of bronze from the mirrors of the serving women who served at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting—Exo. 38:8:

Exo. 38:8 And he made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze from the mirrors of the serving women who served at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.

1. Bronze signifies God's righteous judgment—cf. Num. 16:38-39; 21:9.

Num. 16:38 The censers of those who have sinned against their own lives, let them be made into beaten plates for a covering of the altar, for they presented them before Jehovah and they became holy. So they shall be a sign to the children of Israel.

Num. 16:39 And Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers which those who were burned had offered; and they beat them out as a covering of the altar,

Num. 21:9 And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the pole; and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

2. The laver of bronze was a mirror that could reflect and expose, indicating that the word of Christ has the power to expose and judge our uncleanness and show our need to be washed.

III. We need to "receive the...sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit"—Eph. 6:17-18a:

Eph. 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,

Eph. 6:18a By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit.

A. The antecedent of *which* is *Spirit*, not *sword*, indicating that the Spirit is the word of God; both the Spirit and the word are Christ—2 Cor. 3:17; Rev. 19:13.

2 Cor. 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Rev. 19:13 And He is clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God.

B. Christ as the Spirit and the word furnishes us with a sword as an offensive weapon to defeat and slay the adversary.

C. The sword, the Spirit, and the word are one; when the constant word in the Bible becomes the instant word, that word is the Spirit as the sword that kills the adversary.

D. We should pray-read the Word primarily to experience the sword as the killing instrument to slay God's adversary; since the enemy has injected himself into our being, what we need

is for the killing power of the word to be applied to us to deal with the elements of the adversary within us—Eph. 6:17-18.

Eph. 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,

Eph. 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints.

- E. Pray-reading is a practical way to kill the negative elements within us.
- F. Because the self is the greatest enemy, we need to experience the killing power of God's word; the more we take in the word with its killing power, the more our pride and all the negative elements within us are put to death.
- G. As we pray-read the Word, the battle is raging as the negative elements in our being are slain; eventually, the self, the worst foe of all, will be put to death.