

James Crawford "You Are Jesus' Beloved Bride" Part 4  
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## "You Are Jesus' Beloved Bride"

Intro:

A healthy husband has the ability to nurture His beloved wife even in her broken, immature state. Jesus is this kind of a husband. The Bible says we are His bride, and you can bet, He will never give up on His sweetheart!

What does this have to do with our series on the new emerging apostles? Well, God's anointed apostles will never let you forget who you are in Christ, and what you mean to Him.

So, in this message, I'll teach you how to balance this out in your walk with God. As Jesus conforms you into His image of a mature, surrendered vessel of honor, He will lead you with amazing kindness and understanding.

Ephesians 5

25 Husbands, **love your wives**, just as **Christ also loved the church** and **gave Himself for her**, 26 that **He might sanctify and cleanse her...**

### 1. True Apostles Betroth Us to Christ in a Healthy Way

2 Corinthians 11:2

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For **I feel a divine jealousy** for you, since **I betrothed you to one husband**, to **present you as a pure virgin** to Christ.

As the apostle who founded the church in Corinth and led many of them to Christ, Paul was their spiritual father. He describes his role in their lives as that of a father betrothing his virgin daughter to be married. They are betrothed to Christ.

In the culture of Paul's day, the betrothal period was much more binding than the modern concept of an engagement. A father would betroth his daughter to a man to be married months or years in the future. The father's responsibility, in part, was to protect his daughter's virginity and well-being until she was safely married to her husband.

Paul describes the Corinthians as betrothed to Christ. They belonged to Christ in the same way that a promised bride belonged to her betrothed husband in the ancient world. They were Christians, but they were not yet *with* Christ.

Paul saw it as his duty to protect them from anyone attempting to steal them away from their true faith in Christ before they were safely with Him in eternity. The false apostles, in teaching a different gospel about a different Jesus were attempting to do exactly that.

Like a father protecting his beloved daughter, Paul felt divinely and

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appropriately jealous for the Corinthians on behalf of Christ. It was more than his duty to protect them from false teaching; it was personal for him.

## 2. **You Are Righteous, Regardless of Human Opinions**

Don't let men tell you how righteous you are. Your opinion about you isn't that important either. God alone knows if you're right with Him. Ask Him how you are doing. This is what matters.

1 Corinthians 4:3-4

3 But with me **it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you** or by **a human court**. In fact, **I do not even judge myself**. 4 For **I know of nothing against myself**, yet **I am not justified by this**; but **He who judges me is the Lord**.

This is great news because God is a merciful judge who says this. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

We are not justified by our own acts of righteousness, but by the precious blood of Jesus.

Galatians 2:16

...a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in

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Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

Now, having said that, some people think they are right with God, and they are not. So, the key here is, receive wise counsel, know the Bible and talk to God.

### 3. Love Sees No Wrong

In 1 Corinthians 13, the "love chapter," we have a list of love's attributes. Included in the description of love are some things that love is not. Verse 5 says that love "keeps no record of wrongs."

Or, as the Amplified Bible translates it, "**It takes no account of the evil done** to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong]."

Jesus Christ provided the ultimate example of this type of love. On the cross He paid the price for the sins of the entire world. **While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)**. Jesus kept no record of wrongs; rather, He prayed, "Father, forgive them," from the cross as He died (Luke 23:34).

Colossians 3:13-14 also ties forgiveness to love: "Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord

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forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." **Refusing to keep a record of wrongs is a clear expression of God's love and forgiveness.**

So often, people say they love each other, but, as soon as one gets angry, **out comes the list of past sins!** Accusations fly, painful memories are dredged up, and bygones are no longer bygones. This is not love. True, godly love forgives and refuses to keep track of personal slights received. The focus of love is not one's own pain, but the needs of the loved one.

Our bridegroom has the capacity to love us perfectly in this way. His nurture is perfect and constant, never fluctuating!

But we don't stop here. We must go on to maturity.

#### **4. How Anna Sacrifices Without Constraint**

Anna will be known forever as the one person in the Bible who never left the church house. She prayed and fasted night and day!

Luke 2

36 Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age and had lived with a

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husband seven years from her virginity;

37 and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day.

Not everyone is called to do exactly what she did, but everyone is called to surrender their lives to God exactly as she did. This is a process, and we must be patient with ourselves and others as we proceed toward this mature state of our Christianity.

## **5. Judgment is Coming, Learn to Abide Now**

The entire earth will shake under the hand of our God the Judge. We, His people will live and thrive under the canopy of His Presence. He is maturing us in the Spirit right now. Intimacy with Him is the key to our survival. Our land of Goshen is His Presence.

John 15

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

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7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

## **6. My Prophetic Word**

Convince My bride by My Word, that they are righteous before Me. They can do no wrong in My eyes. Help My Annas balance this. As I refine and mature them, I will show My lovingkindness each step of the way. Teach My bride to marry Me with this balanced approach.