

CALLING OF THE BRIDEGROOM

30For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:30-32)

- Paul talks about the complete and perfect bond shared between a husband and a wife when they join in marriage. God created us so that we may share this deep bond with Him.
- Unlike the rest of the creations for whom God has prepared respective partners, Adam was initially alone – because God is his partner.
- God loved Adam so much so that He breathed spirit-bearing air into Adam so that Adam may converse and connect with Him, for God is spirit.
- God is love. He longs to pour forth His love into each of us so that we may enjoy Him as He enjoys us.

2The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, (Matthew 22:2)

- God created Eve for Adam in order for Adam to understand that we are to God just as Eve is to him – “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”.

+ THE ETERNAL LOVER

7Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. (Revelation 19:7-9)

- The marriage of the Lamb is God’s dream. He wishes to be our partner.
- However, because Adam heeded the lies of Satan, that original love disappears. In place of it is a vast emptiness.
- Jesus incarnates to wash away our sins and to take us into union with Him.
- God created us so that we may find Him to be our lover in spirit. Jesus died for His Bride and His Church. He wishes to turn every curse into blessing.

+ A-GUO’S TESTIMONY: CEASELESS PRAYERS, ABIDING IN GOD’S LOVE

- A-Guo is a passionate young man after God’s heart. Little would we expect that A-Guo, of years before, was addicted to playing internet video games. He would play games for many hours at a time, causing problems in his health and lifestyle. However, when he encountered the Holy Spirit, he was a changed person. Shy by nature, he was completely delivered from timidity after being filled with Holy Spirit. He now worships before God with all his heart and strength and is wrought with spiritual hunger. Having

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read about the gifts of the spirit (e.g. healing, prophesy, deliverance) in the Bible, he wrote them down and put them on his wall. God started answering his earnest prayers, first healing his injury when he prayed for himself and his mother. Gradually, he started praying for sick people in his church, and many of them were healed. At 20 year old, he was a walking miracle. He was invited to speak at many churches. Holy Spirit moved at the sound of his voice, and many who heard him speak became physically and emotionally healed. Once, at the Spirit's prompting, A-Guo entered a Buddhist sculpture shop and talked to the shop owners about Jesus. There was overwhelming joy in his spirit afterward, though he didn't see results. His service was not dependent on immediate results, but dependent on the joy and courage received from the indwelling Lover. Soon, the Spirit inspired him to author a book, *A Transformed Boy*, wherein he documented his testimony that moved many readers and spiritual leaders.

- A day of ceasing from prayer weakens us, so we must always be earnestly seeking after God. A-Guo spent the eve of his 20th birthday dedicated to prayer, which turned into five hours of soaking in God's presence. Since then, he has been spending one hour in the morning and night to draw close to God to preserve His abiding presence at all time.
- God wants us to be His best friend. We must abide in Him always in order to live an abundant life as God has promised us. When we start to spend time with God, we become aware of the friend inside of us, we are no longer lonely and we become transformed.

+ JESUS LONGS FOR US TO BE HIS BELOVED

Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. (John 14:12)

So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. (John 16:22)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. (John 14:16-20)

- Jesus said He will come back for us, and in Him we shall receive joy. Through the indwelling Spirit, Jesus lives inside of us. He changes us and leads us toward a life of abundance, glory, and influence. The apostles saw first-hand the fulfillment of Jesus' words, at the earthquake and the tearing of the temple's curtain that separated God and men. Ever since then, all who look upon Jesus are filled with wholesome joy, no longer living in shame and guilt.
- If faith is built on mind knowledge alone, our spirits will grow weak. A lifestyle of faith is cultivated by an individual effort of seeking and pouring our hearts to Him. It is not dependent upon attending weekly services and engaging in serving.

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+ TESTIMONY: UNDISTRACTED DEVOTION, YIELDING GREATER WORKS

- A boy from Nigeria came from an orphaned background, raised by a grandmother that passed away when he was 15 years old. One day, he met Jesus through watching a Christian television program. After the program, he returned to his room with a repentant heart and decided to commit his life to spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth. Six months after committing his life to Jesus, he left for a university in the former Soviet Union.
- However, due to the lack of religious freedom, he was forced to read the Bible and pray privately.
- With God’s grace, he formed the largest church in the Soviet Union before the age of 33. And by 35, he expanded the church to the biggest church in Europe. By 40, he has authored more than 50 books.

+ RESPONDING TO THE BRIDEGROOM’S LOVING CALL

- Through Holy Spirit, Jesus’ triumph enters us. He pursues us, loves us, and dies for us. God created us not to be poor in spirit, but to emanate His glory. We become ever stronger and beautiful with close pursuit of the Bridegroom.
- We are the chosen ones. We are His beloved of whom He dreams.

+ DISCUSSION

1. Do you admire A-Guo’s life? What aspects of his life do you admire? What are some things that you’d like to start working on? Sacrifices are needed to be made in order to love. What sacrifices are you willing to make for Jesus?
2. One of the dreams in God’s heart is to have everyone become saved and to nurture mature sons and daughters of God. This week is Pastor Yuan’s Conference; do you have any plans to spread the gospel? For friends who have not accepted Christ, what kind of actions would you like to take so that they will be able to hear of the gospel?
3. Please share action plan #3.

+ ACTION PLAN

1. This week, through waiting upon God, learn more about the dreams that God has for your life (You may create a schedule to achieve it)
2. Pray about the people around you that you would like to spread the gospel to. This week is Pastor Yuan’s Conference; do you have any plans to spread the gospel?
3. Are you facing any difficulties in your life? Try to tell God about it and understand how God wants to bless you through your difficulties.