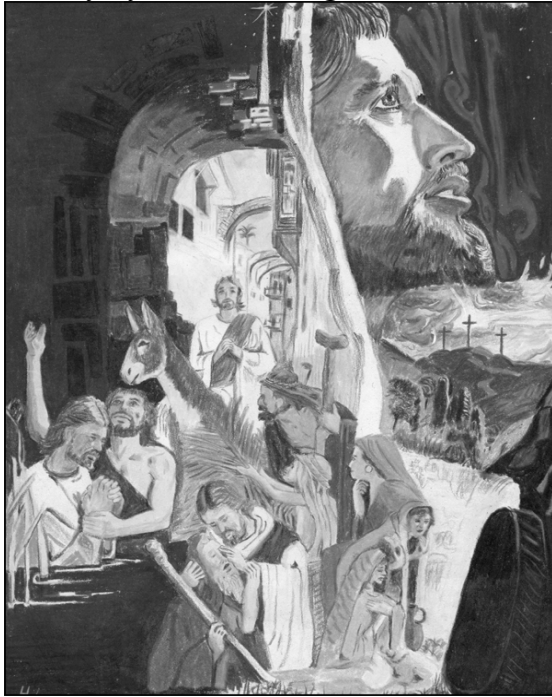


THE WORD – Part IV

The Gift of a Risen Bridegroom



"If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead." (Luke 16:31) Since January we have been talking about the word of God. Last month we opened the door for our discussion concerning the gifts of the Lord as they flow from the Spirit through the word of God, who is Christ Jesus our Risen Lord. We looked at a few words commonly translated as word in our English Bibles. We looked at one word which is never translated as word but which is used quite commonly in conjunction with the word of the Lord in the Old Testament. That word was the word *massa*. Sometimes it is translated as oracle but most often in the King James Version it is translated burden.

It means a burden to be lifted up and is used to understand the intricate interrelationship

between prayer, song, praise and prophesying and/or moving in any of the 21 gifts listed in the books of Romans, 1 Corinthians and Ephesians. Over the next month or so we will study these specific gifts and the awesome ability God gives us to join Him in fulfilling Jesus' commands in the Gospels to preach, prophesy, cast out demons, disciple and take back what was stolen by the devil since Jesus now gives us all authority to do so.

Before we look at these gifts individually I felt a burden from the Lord not to leave another foundational teaching concerning how we function in His gifts. As we just read from the Gospel of Luke, there is a reality that we can never forget. Even if gifts, miracles, signs and wonders are as spectacular as one coming back from the dead, people will not believe until they have a faith encounter with the word of God. That word is Jesus Christ. But for many living today, as well as those living during Jesus' day, they did not believe just because they heard He died and then lived. They believed because they knew the previous words spoken and written concerning the Christ; then they saw the miracles done in His name by His disciples. That caused faith to rise in God's word and they believed and confessed with their mouth, believing in their heart that Jesus is, indeed, Lord. They then had their own miraculous encounter with Christ, the Living Word. In order for this to take place, God's people must have the same burden that Jesus has. Last month we looked at that as a foundational teaching in the Old Testament for moving in the gifts. As we receive His burden for His people, and we lift that burden up to Him in song, prayer, praise and word, He comes down, removes our burden and delivers His people. This *massa* or oracle or word of speaking forth opens a door for God to move into the earth realm. Jesus took back all authority for the face of the earth that was stolen by the devil and then restores mankind in authority (Matthew 28:18-20). Since authority has been restored to mankind, it is now our

responsibility to invite our awesome King to reside and reign in a situation in Holy Ghost power. One word for glory in the Hebrew is the word *kabod*. It includes the weighty splendor and lavish magnificence of His honor. God's glory is weighty simply because it surrounds Him. An aspect of inviting the Lord into our situation is in understanding His weighty burden for His people in a particular situation. As we receive this and speak it back to Him He shows up and broods over us and our situation with His *kabod*. That presence of God in conjunction with His awesome word spoken forth changes our situation!

Yet none of this can actually take place to its fullest until we understand another concept which Jesus laid down in the New Testament for us to be able to move in His gifts. It is also seen in the Old Testament, but finds a crescendo in the New Testament. It is the understanding of the marriage of the Lamb to the Bride. That marriage relationship reproduces an understanding of His body. Over and over again in the New Testament Jesus speaks of laying down His body. John talks about the voice of the bridegroom and Jesus talks about the wedding feast. Without our marriage or espousal to the Lamb and our relationship with Him there would be no understanding of what burdened Jesus enough to go to the cross and lay down His life. That burden is His eternal love for us and the yearning to see us delivered into His arms, instead of the bowels of hell for our sin. In fact, the first time I was taught the gifts as a young, Spirit-filled believer, our pastor taught 1 Corinthians 12, 13 & 14 together as a whole. He did it this way because he said it was impossible to separate the gifts in chapters 12 and 14 from the message of love in chapter 13. Not to sound sacrilegious, but he called those three chapters the 'Holy Ghost sandwich.' In other words, two slices of gift-filled bread with love as the meat. That was almost 25 years ago. Since then I have listened to the 'best and the brightest' teach on this subject and I have to admit that in

many cases (not all), the meat of love is totally forgotten in their teaching. And we wonder today why there is so much competition in the church and why so many move in their gifts amiss. We wonder why we do not rightly divide the word of truth.

The Good News is that I continue to hear the Spirit of Truth call out to be restored by the love of Christ. No matter how many years one is in 'ministry,' whether a few or a lot, the cross is still the only way to be restored. Without the intimate understanding of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus flowing through us, I doubt that we can claim espousal to the Lamb. In every marriage there is always an engagement period. In our modern time we view it as a waiting period to see if things will work out. But in Jesus' time that was not the case. In fact, you had every legally binding covenant within the marriage contract in operation; the only thing lacking was consummation. It is this waiting period that we will highlight this month and examine it in relation to our souls and our spirits rightly dividing the word of truth.

There are times when people become offended with the gifts of the Spirit as well as with those who function in them. There are many reasons for this. One is a misunderstanding of the intimacy or marriage relationship between the body and the bride and the bridegroom. The other that we will touch on briefly is satanic jealousy and envy. Last, but not least, some people function in their gifts amiss. Let's talk about the misunderstanding of our intimacy with Jesus. I come from a long line of married people. My husband and I will celebrate our 24th wedding anniversary this year. My aunts and uncles are all very old married people (to their first spouses). The same is true on my husband's side of the family. We have 4 divorces in my immediate family, but by and large I grew up watching healthy intimacy and friendship between male and female relationships. Not everyone is as blessed. I'm

not trying to say we didn't have our fair share of dysfunction; it just wasn't based on intimacy. When my husband and I were first married we went to my Aunt Dot and Uncle Bill's house for a family gathering. At that point my aunt and uncle were probably married about 40 or so years. We were going over family photos when my uncle came upon a photo of my aunt at a family picnic, circa 1940s or early '50s. As he looked at the photo you could tell that it brought back memories for him. In the photo my aunt was very appropriately dressed, relaxing on a picnic blanket, tummy down and turning slightly to smile for the camera. It was a cute shot of a sweet looking young woman. This is how my husband and I viewed the photo. But my uncle saw it in a different way. As he was pointing to her back he said, "And that's why I married your aunt. It wasn't her brains that attracted me at first." My husband flashed a huge grin across his face and I chuckled and said in a joking voice, "Why, Uncle Bill, I thought it was her cooking!" He chuckled and used the opportunity to give us, as a young married couple, wholesome advice on staying married for a long time. We loved being around my aunts and uncles and this was my Uncle Bill's gift of wisdom to us for that moment.

Frankly, this is how it is with God's gifts to His bride. He is our Elder Brother, Lover, Friend and Lord. Imagine if I got all religious on my uncle and started chewing him out for mentioning my aunt this way. If I had done that, I would have misunderstood his relationship with his wife and his motive for spontaneously sharing with us. While I didn't have the same set of eyes he had for the gift God gave him in his wife, I would have missed an opportunity to learn something about God and family if I would have rebuked him or shunned his gift. It was out of an intimate place and experience (at that time) of almost 40 years with his spouse that my uncle was able to share with us. This is how it is with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There is an engagement period, or a period of waiting on the Lord each and

every day that we develop an intimate knowledge of how He thinks and why He does what He does that we gain wisdom to share with others. Quite often, after time in His presence we are able to spontaneously move in His gifts. When people criticize other people for sharing a gift it's because they misunderstand the intimacy of our Lord and confuse the motives. They don't rightly discern His Body because they have not rightly divided the word of truth. In 1 Corinthians 11:28-32 Paul tells the believers that many are asleep (have died) because they haven't rightly discerned or recognized the body at the communion table. Let me say this, while communion is an outward act of remembrance, it is also an inward place of intimacy where we share and remember the effects of the cross. Ephesians tells us because Jesus descended he arose and gave gifts to mankind (Ephesians 4:8-10). Because Jesus was taken up to heaven the Holy Spirit has descended and also has given us gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1-3, 12, 13). As a result of this awakening of our spirit man, the natural gifts given to us are quickened (Romans 12:1-6a).

Not discerning the body is also an inability to discern soul and spirit. This is also why people move amiss in the gifts. Sometimes their motives are off and sometimes they don't discern the time of intimacy within the mind of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2: 9-14). When I was a young believer the Lord quickened to my spirit that He could so fill up the totality of my spirit that my spirit could so infuse my soul to the point that purity in spirit, soul and body could be a reality forever. This is total rapture. It is a place where God consumes us totally. It is a place where the word is a two-edged sword (as we saw last month) and divides flesh so that we recognize those areas in us that prevent the gifts from flowing in purity. Hebrews 4 starts off with God's people hearing His voice and entering into rest---rest from sin, from strife, from flesh---a place of faith-filled waiting on Him where His voice is sharp in our spirit, thus giving us grace to approach His throne in confidence. (Hebrews

4:1-7, 12-16) When we are functioning this way, it is 'easy as pie' to discern and recognize His body---not in judgment, but in recognizing the awesome gift God has made each of us to be. Many people say marriage is based on a soul relationship. While it may start that way for humans, I believe God ordains the husband and wife for a destiny relationship in the spirit realm first. As a marriage progresses, they search out why their unique relationship was ordained by God (if they are followers of Christ), and what it is they can do to fulfill His call, as they celebrate and enjoy each other. Isn't this how it is when we first come to know Christ and His body? It is by the Holy Spirit we are wooed to Him. When we accept Him our spirits are redeemed. This changes something in our soul and flesh. Over time our soul and flesh-filled desires become changed. Because of the word of God that divides soul and spirit, we are able to discern the Holy Spirit in us and each other. The gifts come out uniquely resurrected with Christ in a new intimacy. When others criticize this, they really have not partaken of the same communion of intimacy with Jesus and thereby discern the body improperly. They divide spirit and soul wrongly.

This is why it is so important to wait on Jesus and develop a place of deep intimacy with Him. As we move in the gifts He gives us we receive His love and His burden for the earth or our own sphere of influence. I'm not necessarily talking about time and place when I talk about waiting on the Lord, but attitude. Let me briefly share why I believe length of time and 'purity' of a physical place is not as relevant as we think when I speak about waiting on the Lord. We have been talking about Christ, the word and the parameters for His gifts to flow through us. We have discussed receiving His burden of love, which He exhibited when He willingly gave His life for us. All of this is an attitude of the heart. The reason why I don't focus on the length of time or precisely where it is you find that place with Him is because of the example Christ laid

down and the example God has shown us in our enemy. Jesus left the celestial palaces of heaven and prayed on a sin-filled planet during a time when an empire of hideous immorality ruled the world. While we know He rose early to pray, His work involved many people pulling and tugging at His time. Yet the communion Jesus had with the Father was so evident in His daily life and walk with God that it still overflows to us today.

Conversely, the Bible tells us that Lucifer was the most magnificent worship machine created before Adam was formed. He abode in the celestial palaces of heaven and spent day and night before Almighty God. Yet this was not enough for him. His attitude was to be God in God's place and to take what God had created. I don't like to make a comparison between our Lord and the enemy for a number of reasons. One, God has no comparisons---no ifs, ands, or buts about it!! Two, satan is a created being with no ability to be redeemed therefore he never had and never can have the same place of intimacy that mankind has the potential of receiving. But for us to understand how it is that sometimes we can act like the devil instead of Christ, even as saints or ministers exercising Godly gifts, we need to realize how we can be affected by our enemy.

In Ezekiel 28 the writer gives us a description of how beautiful the Lord made Lucifer. It would seem from the description that he was a living, fiery, breathing gem that echoed and sang God's praise. One of the words that lets us know this is the Hebrew word neqeb. It is translated as pipes in the King James Version and bezel in most other translations. I believe there is a reason why the King James translators use the word pipes instead of bezel. When used in this passage, think of this word as describing a large, plain gold wedding band that holds a gem as it blows sound through it. That 'breath' resonates light through the gem and brilliant, almost fired-color essences stream in many

directions. Remember that the prophets were trying to describe what they saw in the heavenlies through earthly terminology. That terminology is based on the Hebrew. In this case we are fortunate because the Hebrew language is like a tree or large body of water with many roots or tributaries. As God breathes and it is released in the earth by this language, He yields it as a sharp, dazzling diamond---almost like a dual-edged sword, exposing all sides of a situation. Now try to stay with me as I go through some of the tributaries of this word. Neqeb comes from the word naqab. It is a root word meaning to puncture or perforate (more or less with violence). As a result some of the meanings of the word can mean to appoint someone or some thing, sort of like 'X' marks the spot. It can mean to blaspheme, bore, curse, release expression with (holes), name, (pierce) or striking through (even the words libel or slander can be seen in this word). It does not always have a negative meaning. Also notice that it is just the opening through which the wind or breath or water or whatever substance flows through. Before it branches off to the word neqeb, the word neqe can correspond to it (but not necessarily be rooted to it). Neqe means to be pure or clean. This word can branch off in many directions. Now jump a whole stream over and we have the word nesa (meaning to carry away, like an insurrection). This word is directly related to the word nacah (pronounced nawsaw) and it is where we get the Hebrew word massa (burden) from!

I believe here is the Lord's point of using the words He chooses: Just like massa gives us a burden to lift up, and we pour out the words through our mouths (which, by the way, are pipes that breath flows from), the enemy tries to puncture, slander or wound us so that what flows out is marred, misshapen or dual-spoken by a double-mindedness. This is why I refuse to receive a negative word about someone unless the Lord has spoken to me first, and in many cases before I ever have trouble with a person.

If you're like me, you know the pain of being set up by the devil and human beings and the trauma of the imprisonment of false accusations and slander by those who look perfect. Since we know this pain, why would we want to do the same to others? Jesus took this pain willingly, knowing that the devil is the accuser of the brethren. He became burdened for His bride long before we knew we could have that kind of relationship with God. Isaiah 49, written over 700 years before Christ was born says this to His people: "But Zion said, 'The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.' Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee. Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. 'As I live,' saith the Lord, 'thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.'" (Isaiah 49:14-18, KJV)

It is amazing to me that Jesus was punctured by nails and sword so that by His stripes we are healed and by His puncturing the burden of our sin-drenched souls can be made whole so that we can become His bride. For those of you that have been wounded by church people, family and life in general, realize that the breath of God (that word *peh* that we looked at last month) can move through the holes in your heart caused by that wounding and create something new out of nothing (the word *devar* that we looked at last month). This newness revives our spirits and births new life. Just at the moment that we feel God has forsaken us, the holes in the palms of His hands takes over and flows the river of life into us, creating something new for us by opening a path in the heavenlies. During this time of spring and Passover and Resurrection Sunday (Easter), allow the truth of the word of

God to make an opening in your heart to revive you. For those of you that are filled with the Holy Spirit, speak life into those around you. For the rest of you I say this, "You shall live and not die and declare the glory of God." (Psalm 118:17) This is the gift that the Lord left us by the Lamb of God and the Holy Spirit, LIFE and that more abundantly. If you need prayer or contact, please let us know. Log on next month for more.....

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