

Sabbath School Today **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

Family Seasons **Lesson 2: The Choices We Make**

Marriage and the seventh-day Sabbath are the two divinely appointed institutions that show us the character of our Creator God, Who both made us and redeemed us, and upon Whom we must learn to depend for our every need.

From the divorce rates in America, it appears that many people do not make the right choices when selecting the person who will become their life-partner. There are varied criteria that individuals use in forming their ideals of the perfect marriage partner, but the most important should be compatibility in spiritual matters. When two become one in marriage, their ideas about God and worship must be aligned for a successful life partnership. This is why Paul admonished us, “be not unequally yoked” (2 Cor. 6:14).

In marriage we become intimately “one” with our spouse, and through equal submission we gain a sense of what God intends for us to feel toward Him. When we see the “big picture” of the everlasting covenant, we discover that the Godhead, as a united entity, were willing to submit Themselves completely in Their “marriage” with the human race. This total commitment was made visible through the Son’s becoming “one” with the human race in His incarnation. Only through Christ, our Kinsmen Redeemer, is there salvation from sin, and that salvation came at a very high cost.

God was willing to lay down His own existence in order to save us from eternal destruction. No human being has ever shown equal or greater love toward their spouse. “Think about it; God swore by Himself! That is, He pledged Himself, and His own existence, to our salvation in Jesus Christ. He put Himself in pawn. His life for ours, if we are lost while trusting Him. His honour is at stake. ... Think of what would be involved in the breaking of that promise and that oath. The word of God, which brings the promise, is the word which created the heavens and the earth, and which upholds them.” [1]

“The oath of God is really a pledging of His own existence. He swore by Himself. He has thereby declared that His life would be forfeited if His promise should fail. ... Upon the existence of God depends the existence of the heavens and the earth. But He has pledged His own existence to the fulfillment of His promises. Therefore the existence of the heavens, yea, of the entire universe, depends upon the fulfillment of the promises of God to the believing sinner. If a single sinner, no matter how unworthy, or insignificant, or obscure, should come to the Lord sincerely asking for pardon and holiness, and should fail to receive it, that instant the whole universe would become chaos, and vanish out of existence. But the sun, moon, and stars still hold their places in heavens, as a proof that God has never failed a single soul that put his trust in Him, and as a pledge that His mercies fail not.” [2]

True Sabbath-keeping is a major part of the everlasting covenant promise. We learn to submit to God, and rest completely upon His promise to us to save us from our sin. God said that we “must enter into to His rest” for “he that is entered into His rest, he has also ceased from his own works, as God did from His” (see Heb. 4:9-11). “God has pledged Himself. God is under obligations, not to man, but to Himself; because He swore by Himself [see Heb. 6:13]. Some must come and enter that rest, in order to save His word in order to save God from breaking His oath. It must be so.” [3]

The whole Gospel message is focused on the consummation of the “marriage of the Lamb.” The message from that Lamb to the Laodicean church, is “I know your nakedness, and I have the remedy; return unto your Husband, and receive the wedding garment from Me.” When the bride finally heeds this message then will be heard “the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let 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” (Rev. 19:6, 7).

That wedding garment is Christ’s robe of righteousness. “The guests at the marriage feast were inspected by the king. Only those were accepted who had obeyed his requirements and put on the wedding garment. So it is with the guests at the gospel feast. All must pass the scrutiny of the great King, and only those are received who have put on the robe of Christ’s righteousness.” [4]

“Nothing can man devise to supply the place of his lost robe of innocence. No fig-leaf garment, no worldly citizen dress, can be worn by those who sit down with Christ and angels at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God’s presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. ‘I counsel thee,’ He says, ‘to buy of Me ... white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.’ Revelation 3:18. This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising.” [5]

“And we have it further, ‘Buy of Me gold tried in the fire, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed.’ And you remember the description that we have already had of that raiment. The figure is, it is, ‘that garment that is woven in the loom of heaven, in which there is not a single thread of human making.’ Brethren, that garment was woven in a human body. The human body—the flesh of Christ—was the loom, was it not? That garment was woven in Jesus; in the same flesh that you and I have, for He took part of the same flesh and blood that we have. That flesh that is yours and mine, that Christ bore in this world—that was the loom in which God wove that garment for you and me to wear in the flesh, and He wants us to wear it now, as well as when the flesh is made immortal in the end! What was the loom? Christ in His human flesh. What was it that was made there? [Voice: The garment of righteousness.] And it is for all of us. The righteousness of Christ—the life that He lived—for you and for me that we are considering tonight, that is the garment.” [6]

The choices we make every day determine whether we will have the necessary wedding garment. It cannot be purchased with any amount of “good works,” positive thinking, or mindless meditation. No human devising can fashion the garment that will cover our sins. The wedding garment is a gift from the King Himself.

“Now then, He wants that garment to be ours, but does not want us to forget who is the Weaver. It is not ourselves, but it is He who is with us. It was God in Christ. Christ is to be in us, just as God was in Him, and His character is to be in us, just as God was in Him, and His character is to be woven and transformed into us through these sufferings and temptations and trials which we meet. And God is the weaver, but not without us. It is the cooperation of the divine and the human—the mystery of God in you and me—the same mystery that was in the gospel and that is the third angel’s message. This is the word of the Wonderful Counselor.” [7]

Here Jones described how the marriage of the Lamb is to take place. The Lamb will be “one” with His bride. Her character is to be transformed into the Lamb’s character. The Lamb will dwell with and in His bride, thus fitting her for her place in the heavenly court. God is doing the transforming. It is His work, not ours. We are to cooperate with Him, submit to His divine weaving. Choose to let Him complete His work in us.

“Many times, brethren, the threads seem all tangled when we look at them. The meshes seem all out of shape, and there is no symmetry at all to the figure; there is no beauty at all to the pattern as we see it. But the pattern is not of our making. We are not the weaver. Although the threads become tangled and the shuttle as it goes through gets all clogged and we do know how it is all coming out, who is sending the shuttle? God sends the shuttle, and it will go through. You need never mind, if the threads get tangled and you can see nothing beautiful in it. God is the weaver; can He untangle the threads? Assuredly He will untangle them.” [8]

“Brethren, let Him weave away. Let Him carry on His blessed plan of weaving through all our life and experience the precious pattern of Jesus Christ. The day is coming and is not far off when the last shuttle will be shot through, the last thread will be laid on, the last point in the figure will be met completely and sealed with the seal of the living God. There we shall wait only for Him that we may be like Him because we shall see Him as he is.” [9]

Then the cry will go up from the heavenly choir, “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let 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.”

It is our choice whether we will be faithful in our marriage to the Lamb and demonstrate that faith through true Sabbath-keeping, resting completely in His power and love.

—Ann Walper

Endnotes:

- [1] E. J. Waggoner, *The Everlasting Covenant*, p. 87, 88 (2002 ed.); *The Present Truth*, July 9, 1896.
- [2] E. J. Waggoner, *The Gospel In Creation*, pp. 114-116.
- [3] E. J. Waggoner, General Conference Bulletin, March 1, 1897, p. 7.
- [4] Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 312.
- [5] *Ibid.*, p. 311.
- [6] A. T. Jones, General Conference Bulletin, February 9, 1893, p. 207.
- [7] *Ibid.*
- [8] *Ibid.*, p. 208.
- [9] *Ibid.*

Notes:

Pastor Paul Penno's video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://youtu.be/kU6aEW3DLk0>

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