

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Propheying Message Two : Christ as the Physician and the Bridegroom

I. Overview:

In calling people to follow Him for the kingdom, the Lord Jesus ministered as a Physician, not a Judge. A judge's judgment is according to righteousness, whereas a physician's healing is according to mercy and grace. The Lord Jesus forgives our sins and also heals us in every way. As our Physician, the Lord heals us mainly in our spirit and in our soul, not mainly in our body. Matthew 25:1 is a further word concerning the Lord Jesus as the Bridegroom; He is the pleasant person for our enjoyment. We should appreciate Christ not only as our Physician for the recovery of life but also as our Bridegroom for a living enjoyment in His presence. In the Gospel of John, Christ is revealed both as the Lamb and the Bridegroom. The Lamb is for redemption, and the Bridegroom is for the wedding. As the Bridegroom, Christ must have a wedding; our position is that of the bride, and the position of the coming Christ is that of the Bridegroom. We are on the earth being prepared to become the bride to meet Him, and He is on the throne in the third heaven prepared to come as the Bridegroom to meet us.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Explain the record of Matthew that all things related to Christ took place outside of religion. In that day Judaism was the genuine religion, the religion founded according to God's holy Word. But everything concerning Christ took place outside of that. In other words, Christ had nothing to do with religion. The record of Matthew 1 tells how the birth of Christ was accomplished outside of Jerusalem, away from the temple, having nothing to do with the holy priests.

B. Expound Matthew 2 telling us how people found this Christ.

Matthew 2 has told us how people found this Christ. He was not found in Jerusalem; He was not found in the temple; neither was He found by any priest or any holy people. We are all familiar with the account of the heavenly star appearing in a pagan country to people with no Bible and no genuine religion. We know also how those heathen magi exercised their natural mind, concluding that the King of the Jews should be born in Jerusalem.

Day 2 —

A. Expound the Lord taking the opportunity to reveal Himself as the Physician.

The Lord took the opportunity given Him by the Pharisees' question to give a very sweet revelation of Himself as the Physician. Those who are strong have no need of a physician, but those who are ill. The Lord was telling the Pharisees that these tax collectors and sinners were patients, sick ones, and that to them the Lord was not a Judge but a Physician, a Healer. A judge's judgment is according to righteousness, whereas a physician's healing is according to mercy and grace.

B. Describe the self-righteous Pharisees.

The self-righteous Pharisees criticized the Lord Jesus and condemned all those unclean people. But the Lord seemed to say, "These people are not unclean; they are sick. I have not come as a Judge to condemn them but as a Physician, as their dear, lovely, intimate Healer." The Lord Jesus was surely indicating that the Pharisees, who thought that they were righteous, were actually just as sick as the others.

Day 3 —

A. Explain the Lord being able to heal all our sicknesses.

The Lord's word in Matthew 9:13, addressed to the Pharisees, indicates that the Lord Jesus heals man's spiritual illness, the illness of sin. Sin came first and death follows. Between sin and death there are all kinds of illnesses, diseases, and infirmities. As sinners, we are sick absolutely, for we are sick physically, spiritually, morally, and mentally. But Jesus, the Forgiver and the Physician, is able to heal all our sicknesses.

B. Expound the Lord not coming as a Judge but a Physician.

Without the environment portrayed in Matthew 9:9-13, the Lord Jesus would not have had the opportunity to reveal Himself as the Physician. As the Lord was feasting with all those sick ones, He revealed Himself as the

Physician. Those tax collectors and sinners were spiritually sick. While the Lord Jesus was feasting with them, He was healing them. The Lord seemed to tell the Pharisees, "If you feel that you are not ill, then I have nothing to do with you, and I cannot heal you."

Day 4 —

A. Fellowship Paul giving us a proper appreciation of Christ as the believers' Physician.

Paul's experience in his later ministry helps us to have a proper appreciation of Christ as the believers' Physician. In 2 Timothy 4:20 Paul says, "Trophimus I left at Miletus sick." Why did the apostle leave such an intimate one in sickness without exercising healing prayer for him? Why he not also executed his healing gift to cure Timothy of his stomach illness, rather than instruct him to take the natural way for healing.

B. Explain the gifts of the miraculous powers and eternal life.

In the decline of the church and in suffering for the church, the gift of power is not as much needed as the grace in life. According to the New Testament, miraculous gifts may have a place when the church is first raised up. But for the church to withstand decline or persecution, miraculous gifts or powers are not very helpful. Only the eternal life on which we are to lay hold is prevailing. By this life we can withstand decline and persecution.

Day 5 —

A. Expound the Lord's answer for fasting in Matthew 9:14.

In Matthew 9:14 the disciples of John asked the Lord Jesus, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast much, but Your disciples do not fast?" In His answer, the Lord revealed Himself as the Bridegroom. Matthew 25:1 is a further word which reveals that the Lord will come back as the Bridegroom, as the pleasant and attractive person. As the Bridegroom, He is the pleasant person for our enjoyment. When He is present, there is no need of fasting.

B. Explain the words in Matthew 9:15, how to apply them.

In dealing with the self-righteous Pharisees, the Lord indicated that He is the Physician to heal the sick. In dealing with the fasting disciples of John, He revealed Himself as the Bridegroom coming for the bride. John the Baptist had indicated to his disciples that Christ is the Bridegroom, and in Matthew 9:15 the Lord Jesus reminded them of this. The Lord first healed His followers, then made them sons of the bridechamber. Eventually, He will make them His bride.

Day 6 —

A. Explain Christ being revealed both as the Lamb and as the Bridegroom.

Revelation 19:7-9 unveils that the Lord Jesus is the Lamb as the Bridegroom. Similarly, in the Gospel of John, Christ is presented both as the Lamb and as the Bridegroom. One day John the Baptist declared, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" Later, John the Baptist also indicated that Christ is the Bridegroom. Gospel of John, Christ is revealed both as the Lamb and as the Bridegroom.

B. Expound Christ's goal is not to remove sin but to have the bride.

In the book of Revelation, which is also written by the apostle John, we see again that Christ our Redeemer is the Lamb and the coming Bridegroom. Therefore, as the Bridegroom, He must have a wedding. The wedding of the Lamb will be a universal wedding. It will be the marriage of the Redeemer and the redeemed. At the end of the Bible we see a city, the New Jerusalem. This city is the wife and the redeeming God is the Husband.

III. Conclusion:

Christians often think that God heals people because He has the power to do so. This is our natural concept. God's healing is not a matter of power but of authority. All He needs to do is to say, "Depart, sickness!" This statement holds authority. He could also perfectly use the same authority to command the spiritual and physical illnesses that afflict us to leave. Therefore, He heals us with His authority. The church is likened to the bride; without a bride, there would be no way for the bridegroom to return, nor would there be a purpose for his return. Christ must be fully prepared through the bride herself before He can return. As the Book of Revelation tells us, when the bride is prepared and ready, the bridegroom will return. This is why we are confident that in these last days, God will recovery the church life and prepare His bride.