

THE MYSTICAL ROMANCE

THE LESSON: REVELATION 19

There is only one truly epic romance. It's the story of a bride and a groom. It's a story of undeserved love and unfathomable sacrifice. It's the story of Jesus loving us so much that he died to ransom us from our sin so that we could be with him forever.

Christian marriage is sacred because it points us to the greater love story that all believers share in. Our lives, whether we marry or not, are like signs that can tell others about our Lord. But the marriage relationship points to the Gospel in a unique and powerful way when it emulates the love of Christ for the Church: humble, grace-filled, and sacrificial. This is why St. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, wrote, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25).

Not only does Christian marriage point to the spiritual reality of Christ and the Church, but it serves other important purposes too. It draws men, women and children into families. It provides us with opportunities to love God and one another. And it also brings about spiritual growth in husbands and wives. Through one another they can come to better understand what it means to love and be loved, unconditionally and sacrificially.

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Consider this: If we are believers, then all that we experience in this life is carrying us forward to a glorious consummation, "preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Corinthians 4:17). Christians believe that Jesus will come again in glory, that the dead will be raised, humanity judged, and believers go on to experience eternal life with their Lord. The Book of Revelation records for us St. John's divine vision of these "last things". We're going to take a look at the passage describing Jesus, our triumphant bridegroom, and the divine marriage feast.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE "FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES", WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Spend some time praying the prayer below for the people you know who are married, or are preparing for marriage. You may also want to pray that if and when you marry, God might bless your marriage in this way, asking him to help you to view marriage, not through a distorted lens, but through a clear one.

O God, who hast consecrated the state of Matrimony to such an excellent mystery, that in it is signified and represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and his Church: Look mercifully upon thy married servants, that they may love, honour, and cherish each other, and live together in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness. O Lord, bless them, and grant them to inherit thy everlasting kingdom; through the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (ADAPTED FROM THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY, BCP PAGE 571)

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REVELATION 19: **THE EPIC MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB**

⁶Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. ⁷Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ⁸it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

⁹And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” ¹⁰Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

¹¹Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹²His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.