

Warm Bodies in a Cold War

Ephesians 5:21-33

#28 in our series from Paul's letter to the Ephesians

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[This message is a continuation of last week's message. We're talking about sex. Please hear me, this message is for you; if you think, during the message: "Hey! This message isn't for me." You're listening to a lie. The evil one lies to us about our sexuality all the time; I don't want you to listen to him. And I don't want you to listen simply to your own past. I want you to listen to the Word of God.]

Prayer

Father I thank you for the people in this room, for whom you have given absolutely everything. I claim the blood of your covenant over this Sanctuary, over these people, over our lives. Lord wherever the evil one would seek to condemn us or shame us, Lord we claim the blood of the covenant. Wherever actions in the past would seek to tell us who we are that's contrary to what you tell us, about ourselves, we claim the blood of the covenant over that. Wherever our will is not in conjunction with your will, we claim the blood of the covenant over that because the blood of the covenant *is* your will. I thank you Lord that all of us have broken wills and yet, you are filling us with your will, and so we will ever praise you for the fact that you are Salvation. May we worship you in truth.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Message

It was cold war abroad and cold war at South Elementary in Littleton Colorado. Along with field day, the very worst day was Valentine's Day, it was worse than the Cuban Missile Crisis. For an entire week before the dreaded day, we would each work frantically preparing our valentine receptacles: shoe boxes covered in crayon, construction paper and glitter-bright plumage attached to each receptacle to attract valentines. We place the receptacles around the perimeter of the room and for ten agonizing minutes, on Valentine's Day, we distributed our valentines.

I'm sure some teacher told us it was all about giving valentines, but we all knew it was all about getting valentines. It was a cold war. So, if you gave a valentine to some girl, for instance, and she didn't give one to you, it was a crisis. Why? Because you just exposed a weakness that was not reciprocated by an equal and opposite weakness. So, all at once, she was in a position of power in a cold war situation. You might as well just fall at her feet crying: "I surrender! "Please don't flaunt your valentine receptacle, so filled with the weight of glory over my humble valentine receptacle...so empty...save for one cowboy valentine, from the teacher, bearing the heartwarming message: 'Howdy Partner!' I surrender, I'm last, you're first. You are the head of the class."

There should be a law: "Every child will receive the exact same number of valentines, and every valentine will be exactly the same." Otherwise, people get hurt; people get crucified.

Cold war is all about a balance of power.

A democracy is a balance of power.

Our government is constructed to maintain a balance of power.

Our Declaration of Independence states: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal..." Yet if anything is not self-evident, I think it would be that. I mean some men are

created short and some tall. Some men are created with high IQs and some with low IQs. If equal means "the same," it's certainly not "self-evident" that all men are created equal. The founders obviously didn't believe "all men are created equal," for they would not let their slaves vote or their women vote. And now you may be getting nervous. It's because I'm messing with the balance of power in a cold war situation.

Well, I think we'd all agree that skin color is a difference that just doesn't run very deep. Yet, gender is another matter.

Well, by the early 90s our society had really made some changes. The equal distribution of valentines was a requirement at my children's elementary school. Even in the 80s, the prevailing view seemed to be that men and women were exactly the same. In fact, you could even pick your gender by changing your plumbing at a clinic in Trinidad.

In the church, we worked hard at gender-neutral translations of scripture. Many denominations, like mine, enacted legislation in order to balance power in ecclesiastical offices.

I think my very worst day in seminary was one particular day in 1985, in my class on pastoral theology. Professor Roebech was leading a discussion on misogyny and gender roles in the family and church. I raised my hand and said something like: "I don't think I hate women; I just don't understand how you reconcile what you're saying with scriptures like 1 Timothy 2:11-14, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16." I might have also mentioned our text for today, Ephesians 5:22-24. I was genuinely confused, and honestly I just asked the question.

What happened next was the end of the cold war; it was World War III. I mean, for about a half hour, one after the other, women stood up and denounced me. It was clear that they spoke from some very real and very legitimate pain. Then, this guy stood up (whom I'm convinced was not in pain but just wanted a date) and apologized to all the women in class, that in this day and age, that had to be subjected to someone like me. Then, Professor Roebech stood up and ended the discussion, but no one even addressed the question. It was the cold war once again. So I might be an idiot for even attempting to address this text, but let's give it a whirl...

Ephesians 5:21-27

....submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Literally: "in fear of Christ") Wives, submit ("subordinate yourselves" – Markus Barth) to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Since the wife is also the church, her husband is also Christ. She shouldn't obey her earthly husband if it violates her obedience to Christ (her ultimate husband). Yet, Paul still wrote: "*Subordinate yourself in everything.*"

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Well, that's not very politically correct. And it clearly holds the potential for an immense amount of abuse and incredible pain, and yet, it's clear that Paul seems to think there are differences between men and women and those differences might affect roles we play and how we relate. I think we'd all agree that men and women are different. Right? We're just confused about how they're different and what it means.

Is this the difference?

[Image of "What Women See": (A forest) "What Men See": (A forest of toilets)]



What do women see? A forest full of trees.
What do men see? A forest of toilets.

Maybe this?

[Cartoon of a girl and guy sitting together with their arms around each other. They each have a thinking bubble over their head. The girl's is filled with a heart, the guy's is an upside-down heart that is shaped like a bottom]

Women think about love and men think about sex.

Maybe this?

[Image of one button with "Man" written over it. Image of multiple buttons, switches, and girls with "Woman" written above it.]

Men are simple and women are complex.

[Image of a women's pregnant belly that says "Baby" and a man's belly that says "Beer"]

Men's bellies hold beer and women's bellies hold babies.

You know in this modern age where physical strength is not a great asset, it seems that there's very little a man can do that a woman can't do. And very much a woman can do that a man can't do: give birth. Yet. even in 2013 she still needs a man to contribute to the process, and it's very difficult to make the man contribute against his will. So anyway, what's the difference, and what does it mean?

Theologian Emil Brunner wrote:

Our sexuality penetrates to the deepest metaphysical ground of our personality. As a result, the physical differences between the man and the woman are a parable of the psychical and spiritual differences of a more ultimate nature.

In other words: “Boys have penises and girls have vaginas.”

The shape of their organs is like the shape of their hearts.

And maybe their organs are connected to their hearts.

And maybe that’s why God cares so much about what you do with them, for, when you join them, you join two hearts.

Well, in Ephesians, Paul talks about “headship.” We could make all sorts of graphic jokes at this point, but headship does seem to have something to do with initiation, penetration, and leadership. Its “complement” has something to do with invitation, reception, and nurturing.

Well, I really don’t know the details – yet we all know: There’s a difference!

And any difference means:

There’s something you don’t have that someone else *does* have.

There’s something you can’t do that someone else *can* do.

And the difference makes you feel incomplete. How do you handle that feeling?

A few months ago, my twenty-three year old daughter Elizabeth and her boyfriend Francisco from Chile were watching home movies in our TV room, when I heard all the laughter. Elizabeth came and got me. She said, “Dad, you’ve got to see this! This explains everything.”

This is our backyard in 1992. The video is blacked out in places, for obvious reasons.

Clip from *Hiett Home Movies*. [See the next page for the clip]

[Peter and his children Jonny and Elizabeth are outside playing.]

Jonny: *I need to go potty. I want to go potty in the grass.*

[Peter lets him go in the grass outside. He encourages him for doing such a great job, all by himself. Then Elizabeth, who is still in diapers, also declares that she needs to pee.]

Peter: *Elizabeth, honey, you don't have a pee pee.*
[Elizabeth looks slightly disappointed.]

Peter: *I'm sorry*

[Mom (Susan) peaks out the window and says, "You can come inside and go pee pee.]"

Peter: *Uh oh! I think we're in trouble.*

Johnny: *What?*

Peter: *I think she doesn't want us to go in the yard anymore. Ok? And Jon, we'll just do that at special times when Daddy says it's ok.*

[Elizabeth still continues trying to figure out how to go pee pee outside.]

Peter: *Elizabeth...honey...sweetheart, it won't work for you that way. But we'll teach you how to go pee pee. Ok?*

[Elizabeth continues to look quite distraught that she can't pull off the amazing feat that her brother did.]

Peter: *You have special equipment that you can do special things with too.*

I love that face: "Daddy, where is it, and how do I get one?"



Well, I suppose she could take one. I'm not trying to be crass...but she could take one; Lorena Bobbit style. Take one...but once taken it wouldn't work well. But that is one strategy: Just yank the fruit from the tree.

Sigmund Freud argued that all little boys suffer from castration anxiety, and all little girls must deal with penis envy. Maybe he was on to something, but it doesn't only work in one direction. Along about seventh grade, I remember thinking, "Wow! Breasts are good. I wish I had breasts. If I had breasts, I'd just stare at them all day." But then I thought: "Maybe not because if I had them I wouldn't enjoy them, at least not in the same way."

So, how could I know them? I could just take them. Men do that. They just take fruit from the tree; we call it rape. They want to "know the good" but they end up "knowing evil." They take life but know death, and that's a problem.

So as a society, how do we handle such a profound difference? Well, to avoid castration, rape, open warfare, and horrific abuse, we cover it up...the difference.

As soon as Adam and Eve yanked the fruit from the tree; they covered it up...their difference. They covered the place where they were different from each other, and they hid themselves from God...once they saw how they were different from God.

We cover it up, and what do we cover?

That place where we feel shame.

That place where we see that we're incomplete.

That place where we are unequal and thus vulnerable to pain.

That place that is connected to our heart.

That place where diversity becomes unity in the image of the Trinity.

That place where two people become one flesh.

That place where the Groom enters His Bride, who is His temple, and gives her His Seed, which fills her emptiness with fruit that is Life.

We cover that place, and God helps Adam and Eve cover that place, with a sacrifice.

(I bet it was a Lamb. God helps Adam and Eve cover that place.)

In fact, they are to keep that place covered in this fallen world, except in the sanctuary of their covenant.

So anyway, how do we handle the difference?

We can deny the difference and repress the difference or take the difference, like you take forbidden fruit from a tree, or perhaps, there is another way to overcome the difference.

Henry Kissinger, the great statesman, so experienced with negotiations during the Cold War said: "I am convinced that no one will win the war between the sexes, for there is far too much fraternizing with the enemy." That seems so true. Many of my greatest wars have been with a female named Susan, and we'll fight over things that inevitably have to do with our gender like whether or not our son should be allowed to go pee pee on the grass.

At times, I really get offended and will go to war, and the war will go cold. And yet, along about the third day, I'll find myself overwhelmed with this intense desire to go fraternize with the enemy. And then, not only do our gender differences appear to be less of a problem, those differences actually become the attraction. Listen closely: The very thing that offended me becomes the very thing that attracts me and I fraternize.

Come to think of it, Jesus did a lot of fraternizing with the enemy. The thing that offends Him is our sin, but the thing that attracts Him is our shame, our surrendered shame, our naked shame. It hurts Him that we take His life on the tree. Yet it delights Him to give His life on the tree. He says, "I give it to you; take and eat, take and drink." It's His body and blood and His life that completes us in the image of God. We try to take it, but we can only receive it, by grace, through faith.

Well, Elizabeth pointed at the TV and said, "This explains everything," as she sat on the couch, fraternizing with the enemy. You know... I kind of hope Francisco is the one, and if he is...well...there won't be anything left for Elizabeth to envy.

Well, that's an awful lot to think about. Maybe that's why God made you male or female...so you'd spend a lifetime thinking about it, whether you like your gender or don't like your gender, whether you're married or single. You know Paul was single, and Jesus was single, but none of us are going to stay single.

Ephesians 5:28-32

In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

Paul quotes Genesis chapter two and says it all refers to Christ and His Bride, the Church. Just think about that:

It was His Church that took His life on the cross.
And it was for His Church that He gave His life on the cross.
It was there that our warfare is ended.

The warfare began in Genesis chapter three when Eve tried to take the good from the tree. But God divided Adam and made Adam male and female in Genesis two. So God prepared these warm bodies before the "Cold War" even began. (Theologians call that "supralapsarianism,") God was telling the story of communion before our disunion with Him, telling the story of reparation before our separation from Him.

As we preached last time, "Adam" means "humanity." Adam was one; Adam was he and she. But Adam didn't recognize his Helper, who is God, so God took one side of Adam and made Eve. He told Adam to cleave to Eve in the hope that all humanity would learn to cleave to Him, for God is our helper—God is Salvation...made fit for us on a tree, called the cross. God is Jesus. Jesus is the ultimate Adam, and we are His Bride.

The Bible ends with a wedding feast, your wedding feast.

Therefore, two persons become one flesh.
Therefore, sexuality in marriage is communion in the sanctuary of a covenant.
Therefore, your sexuality is a sign pointing to your consummated relationship with Christ in glory, and perhaps, even your relationship with ALL in glory, for Christ will be in all and all will be one body.

And so of course Satan attacks your sex life because if you believe a lie about sex, your heart believes a lie about God, a lie about love. Yet, even then, God is still telling the story. Maybe even *especially* telling the story, for then you truly see that you need a Helper to meet you in your place of shame, to fill it with Mercy bearing the fruit that is Life.

Well good sex, in a good marriage, is to be a picture of Heaven. How a person seeks the One Reality is to be a picture of how a person seeks the other.

Nothing is wasted: All the yearning...
All the waiting...
All the longing...

prepares you for your final destination,

Whether you're single like Paul or married like Peter, whether your desires have been twisted like David's or are as noble as the virgin Mary's. So rejoice: "The children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married," says the Lord. "Fear not...your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name."

Well, warm bodies in this "Cold War" tell the story of Christ and His Church. Paul informs us that men play one role in that drama and women play another role in the same drama. Now, as soon as you try to define the roles, with a book of rules or a list of laws, the Bible seems to violate the rule and break the law. Paul never says anything about who takes out the trash, does the dishes or earns the most money. When he gets around to defining headship, he does it with a story, and you know the story.

It's clear that some things are cultural so in one place, in one town, he'll tell women not to speak in church BUT ask their husbands when they get home, and yet, he expects them to pray and prophesy in church. Apparently, in one place, (scholars debate this) he expects women to even lead the church. In Corinthians, he writes: "Judge for yourselves: doesn't nature tell you men should have short hair?" "Judge for yourselves:" I'm free to judge and thus say, "No." Samson was commanded to have long hair. In Corinthians, he was writing to Greeks and Romans, not Jews. Paul was getting at the unchanging story as it applied to Roman culture not dictating universal hairstyles for every age.

So some things are cultural, and some are universal. In 1 Timothy, he writes: "...*Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing...*" Well every Adam has been deceived, except One, and I think that's the Adam that Paul has been talking about, The *Eschatos* Adam. And we are all saved through childbearing; God said it: "The seed of the woman will crush the head of the snake." Christ is Adam, and we are His Bride and even His mother. Men play one role in that drama and women play another. If you're a woman you might say: "That's a bad deal...men are Jesus?" No, men are supposed to be like Jesus.

Sometimes I preach, and I think: "Wow, it must be such a privilege to be a woman. Something in her is made to receive the Groom and experience Jesus." You know in the gospels it seems like all the men are confused about Jesus, and all the women "get" Jesus. It's shocking when you see it.

Sometimes I preach and think, "It's an honor to be a woman," and sometimes I think, "It's an honor to be a man," to imitate Jesus and share in the fellowship of His suffering." It's a privilege to be feminine and a privilege to be masculine. Yet, on a deeper level, we're all feminine, for we are all His Bride, and maybe we're all masculine for we're all his body.

In Galatians, Paul writes: "*There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*" and maybe that's why Jesus said: "*In the age to come, they neither marry nor are given in marriage.*" and maybe that's because everyone is married, that is one flesh, one body. I mean Heaven is a wedding banquet, right?

And now listen to Paul in verse 28:

"Husbands love your wives as your own body."

You know, Paul has already told us that we're all part of one body, and Christ is the head. Maybe that body starts coming together, in this age, in my marriage.

Whatever the case, my wife is my own body, just as Adam said: "...bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." "She is me and me is she." He wanted her because she was he, his own body.

In seventh grade, I realized breasts are good, and I wanted some. And, of course I did, they're my own body.

On May 28, 1983, they became mine.



Now, I let Susan wear them, most of the time, but they're my own body and not just those...but her feet, her hands, her eyes, her heart, her gifts. And you know, sometimes when she aches I think I kind of start to ache. When she feels good, I feel better.

I wanted my own body; does Jesus have a body?

And of course two-year-old Elizabeth was frustrated and confused. According to both Paul and the book of Genesis, she just realized that she was missing part of her own body. "Where's my pee pee?"

How is she going to get it back? If she marries Francisco, she will get it back and "the two shall become one flesh." And if she ever divorces Francisco, it's not just severing that part, it's severing her heart, so no wonder God hates divorce.

The "two shall become one flesh." Paul says "flesh" and that's fascinating to me because Paul usually talks about the flesh as if it's a bad thing and not a good thing. So, maybe the problem with flesh is not its physicality but its isolation. I mean, my flesh only feels its own pleasure and its own pain. I eat a cheeseburger, and you do not taste it. You eat a cheeseburger, and I do not taste it. But in the sacrament of the covenant, in intimate communion, when two become one flesh, there is a moment when her pleasure is literally my pleasure...like she eats a cheeseburger and I taste it, and it's ecstasy; it refers to Christ and the Church. I can't take that moment; I have to romance that moment. My will must become her will, and it refers to Christ and His church.

Ephesians 5:30 "*We are members of His body.*"

We are made of Him.

It began when God spoke His Word, breathing His Spirit into clay.

I am that spirit in clay, and I feel incomplete and unfinished, like I need to be finished.

I am finished when He gives me His Life on the tree.

You see, He finishes us.

He completes us with Himself.

I don't complete me; I don't create me. I am completed by Him, and He is Good.

In the garden, Eve saw the good hanging on a tree, and she was tempted to take the good to make herself "good," in the image of God.

In Jerusalem, Israel saw the Good and hung Him on a tree. She was trying to take the Good to make herself God. She had Jesus envy.

I see the Good and try to take the Good to make myself Good, but I kill the Good and make myself bad.

I see Love and try to take Love to make myself Love, but I crucify Love, incapable of Love.

I see Jesus...

If I think that I can take Jesus, according to the law in the power of my own flesh,
if I think that I can create me, using Him,
if I subordinate Him to me...I crucify Him and create a lie about me, the old man.

If on the other hand....

I receive Jesus by Grace through Faith,
if I see He creates me with His own flesh,
if I subordinate myself to Him...

I receive Him, I become Him...His Bride...His body...the New Man.

His life is my life:

His faith is my faith. His hope is my hope. His love is my love. His joy is my joy.

His will is my will...and it's ecstasy!! And it can only happen through submission.

I love what C.S. Lewis wrote in one of his novels. It's advice given to a young bride who resents her husband. He says,

"It's not your fault. No one has ever told you obedience—humility—is an erotic necessity."

In another place he says,

"Have as much equality as you please, the more the better in our marriage laws, but at some level consent to inequality, delight in inequality, it is an erotic necessity."

I think he's saying: "The fact that God makes us all different and the command that we submit one to another is not a curse, it's an erotic necessity, called the Kingdom of God.

Hopefully you noticed that this whole passage in Ephesians starts with a phrase that describes what happens when we're filled with the Spirit. Verse 18 says, "*Be filled with the Spirit.*" Verse 21: "*Submitting (subordinating yourselves) one to another in the fear of Christ.*" You see, we're all to subordinate ourselves one to another. So "headship" must be a form of submitting, surrendering, or subordinating yourself to another.

So what is headship? Paul's been telling us all along.

Ephesians 1:22: "*God appointed him head over all to be head of the church.*"

Ephesians 1:10: "*This is the plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things "anakephalaio" under one wounded head -one sacred head now wounded.*"

Philippians 2: "*He emptied himself and made himself nothing...therefore God has highly exalted him.*"
(to Head of the Church)

Jesus said: "*If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.*"

Jesus is the first and best at subordinating Himself.

The Head leads by subordinating Himself in love.

Jesus is first because He freely chooses to be last.

So without Christ, this whole world is hiding their inequalities in shame. This whole world is trapped in a cold war. No one truly gives valentines, so no one truly receives valentines, so Valentine's Day is a mockery of love.

Chad Thompson was like me, and Valentine's Day was usually hard. His mother Ruth Ann was a friend of mine in California, and she told me the story. One year Chad came to Ruth Ann and said, "This year Mommy, I want to give a valentine to every kid in my class. That really troubled Ruth Ann because Chad wasn't popular, and she knew the gift wouldn't be reciprocated, but she helped him anyway. Together, they worked hard on each one and so a bit of Chad was placed in each one. On Valentine's Day, she waited for him with a knot in her stomach. She had prepared a plate of cookies anticipating a little boy with a broken heart. When the bus arrived, she watched intently as children got off the bus, laughing and playing. Then...her heart sank. As always, Chad was in back by himself. His hands were empty. (Not a note, not a scrap.) Tears came to her eyes as she ran out to meet him. Chad saw her and exclaimed: "Not a one mom, not a one." He smiled and said, "Mommy, I didn't miss a one."

When Jesus our Lord ascended from the garden in which we had crucified Him on the tree, I picture His Father running out to meet Him...fresh holes from nails driven through His feet and hands, a tremendous wound in His side...carrying nothing but a smile as He says: "Not a one Father, not a one...I didn't miss a one. I died for them all—the sins of the world, and I gave each my gift of flesh and blood, fashioned to fit each and every wound."

Do you see the difference? He has made Himself last of all and slave of all...subordinate to all ...in Love.

Do you see the difference?

He's like you, yet different than you.

He is steadfast Love that *never* ceases and Mercy that *never* comes to an end.

And you are not.

That's why He scares you.

That's why you fear Him.

Not because His Love may end,

But because it *WON'T* end.

He is Love, and we are not.

And yet....we will be.

We're a terrified Bride on her honeymoon night

...about to be filled with Love and impregnated with Life

...of course, we're afraid.

Verse 32-33: "*This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*" Literally: "Each one of you must love his wife as himself, in order that the wife...may fear her husband."

We're afraid of Love,

But if we submit to Love,

We will be filled with Love,

And Perfect Love will cast out fear.

Communion

So He took bread, broke it and said, "This is my body given to you." And He took the cup saying, "This is the covenant in my blood."

You do realize that you are all unequal...right? Yet, you are each worth exactly the same amount. You are worth the body and blood of the Bridegroom.

And what are we so afraid of, Bride of Christ?

We're afraid of this (Peter points to the table.) We're afraid of His headship.

We're afraid of being filled with Him.

And He will *not* rape us, and so, He romances us, in this fallen world.

What does He want?

His Bride—empowered by His own Spirit to say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

We're all going to a wedding banquet.

Do you know what happened at a Jewish wedding banquet? They all gather together at a party and then the groom and bride go to a wedding chamber. The friend of the Bridegroom waits for the Bridegroom's voice.... "It is finished! The wedding is consummated." And then the friend cries out to everyone there: "Time to celebrate." Then the party would start and go for an entire week, seven days!

Communion

Here's a banquet; It's just a taste. We wait for that great banquet. But in this world God gives us just a taste. As you come to the table just say, "Fill me Lord Jesus; I long for you Lord Jesus." He loves to hear that, for you are His Bride.

Lord Jesus we offer ourselves to you; we wait for you.

There are some who have waited all their lives and haven't been married, and you use that to teach us about waiting...that waiting will not be in vain.

Lord we surrender our shame to you. There are some who struggle with immense shame. Even that will not be wasted. For you fill those empty places with the knowledge of yourself.

Some have a very fulfilling relationship in this area. Lord, that's just a taste, a picture of who you are and what you have for us.

As your people, as your Bride we say, "Come Lord Jesus, fill your bride; for we're beginning to see that you're the good.

We say this in Jesus' name, in the power of His Spirit. Amen

Benediction

So Jesus, thank you for how you love us. We confess we've taken you and tried to chop you up into pieces that we can put on our calendar and fit into our lives, into a religion we can make work for us, and you keep loving us until that day we see you come again... for your bride. Lord Jesus, we wait for you, we thank you, even now you are here in your Spirit and you touch us with your Spirit. So, Spirit of Jesus we invite you to fill us and keep on filling us like the apostle said: "*Be filled with the Spirit, singing songs and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in your hearts, giving thanks always and for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" And subordinate yourselves to each other in fear, in the wonderful fear of the Great Bridegroom.

You are good Jesus, and we thank you, in your name, Amen.

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