

For the director of music. To the tune of "Lilies." Of the Sons of Korah. A *maskil*. A wedding song.

- ¹ My heart is stirred by a noble theme
as I recite my verses for the king;
my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.
- ² You are the most excellent of men
and your lips have been anointed with grace,
since God has blessed you forever.
- ³ Gird your sword upon your side, O mighty one;
clothe yourself with splendor and majesty.
- ⁴ In your majesty ride forth victoriously
in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness;
let your right hand display awesome deeds.
- ⁵ Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies;
let the nations fall beneath your feet.
- ⁶ Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever;
a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.
- ⁷ You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy.
- ⁸ All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia;
from palaces adorned with ivory
the music of the strings makes you glad.
- ⁹ Daughters of kings are among your honored women;
at your right hand is the royal bride in gold of Ophir.
- ¹⁰ Listen, O daughter, consider and give ear:
Forget your people and your father's house.
- ¹¹ The king is enthralled by your beauty;
honor him, for he is your lord.
- ¹² The Daughter of Tyre will come with a gift,
men of wealth will seek your favor.
- ¹³ All glorious is the princess within her chamber;
her gown is interwoven with gold.
- ¹⁴ In embroidered garments she is led to the king;
her virgin companions follow her
and are brought to you.
- ¹⁵ They are led in with joy and gladness;
they enter the palace of the king.
- ¹⁶ Your sons will take the place of your fathers;
you will make them princes throughout the land.
- ¹⁷ I will perpetuate your memory through all generations;
therefore the nations will praise you for ever and ever. ^(NIV84)

Where were you on April 29, 2011 at 3:00am? If you were like millions of Americans, you were on your couch watching TV, because on the television was something earth-shattering, news making, change-your-life-forever good. Millions of Americans got up early or stayed up late to watch the television coverage of the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton!!! Now, I wasn't up at that time, but I definitely saw bits and pieces of replays of that historic event – The Royal Wedding. The world was watching and I was watching, too. Maybe you watched it as well. Long time sweethearts finally tying the knot – Some would say that they are “a match made in heaven.”

Today we hear a wedding song from God's Word. I don't think Psalm 45 was read at “The Royal Wedding,” although it would have been incredibly fitting. Psalm 45 is a royal wedding song. It's a song sung of a king and his new beautiful bride. This Christ the King Sunday, as we meditate on this Psalm we're going to find out that this wedding truly is **A Match Made in Heaven** (even more so than William and Kate).

Many of the Psalms have a heading at the beginning to help us understand some background information about the Psalm. Often they tell the author, the circumstances of the writing, directions for how the Psalm would be used in the temple worship service in the Old Testament. Psalm 45 has a heading like that as well.

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It tells us that this is a wedding song, written by the Sons of Korah who were the temple musicians and it was written for the Church Music minister, it even tells the name of the tune it was to be sung to. This was definitely a hymn that was to be sung as a worship song.

But we still haven't begun to identify the king. Who is the groom that this song is about?

¹ ***My heart is stirred by a noble theme
as I recite my verses for the king;
my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.***

It seems this could be any old king. He is one who is greatly revered by the writer and presumably by many others as well. But slowly, through our verses, the identity of the king is revealed. He is one whose ***lips have been anointed with grace...who is clothed with splendor and majesty. He ride(s) forth victoriously in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness; His right hand display(s) awesome deeds. The nations fall beneath his feet.***

A person could still make the case that perhaps this is the wedding song of King David or Solomon or Hezekiah. But the next 2 verses (6 and 7) close the book on those ideas.

***Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever;
a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.
You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy.***

On Christ the King Sunday, you maybe saw that one coming. You maybe had this figured out already, but the king in the Wedding Song is Jesus. ***His lips have been anointed with grace.*** Think of the power and love in his words, as he called those fishermen to follow him, as he called the lepers to receive his healing, as called the demons to leave those people, as he called Lazarus forth from the dead. Christ's lips have been ***anointed with grace.***

The writer says:

⁴ ***In your majesty ride forth victoriously
in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness;
let your right hand display awesome deeds.***

He *rides forth in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness*, because we couldn't ride that way and we couldn't live that life. God demanded that we live a kingly life, that we be the ones that are always on the side of *truth*, never telling white lies or deceiving others to spare ourselves some pain. He demanded *humility* from us, but too often we puff up our own egos and are over-inflated with pride. We trample the reputations and consciences of those around us without giving it a second thought. God demands that we live lives of *righteousness*, but the lives that we deliver are far from it – as far from perfection as you can get!!

The King's splendor and glory is magnified through the lens of human imperfection. He was truly one of a kind. That's why the psalmist continues:

⁷ *You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.*

Of no other human being could it be said: *You love righteousness and hate wickedness*. We maybe have those intentions, but they don't come out all the time – and certainly not perfectly the way that God demands. But for Jesus that is true all the time. That's why God set Jesus in a class of his own. He was anointed, or set apart, above all others. He was the first of the class!!

But nowhere has the phrase "opposites attract" been more appropriate than in the relationship between us and our king. He is mighty and powerful and perfect. But we are weak and flawed. He is victorious, yet we are defeated and deflated. But that's exactly what attracted him to us. Our King came and picked us up and claimed us to be his own. He offered us an opportunity of a lifetime, of an eternal-lifetime. He chose us to be his bride. He proposed to us arranged for us to be with him for the rest of his life.

Now I have already spilled the beans on who the bride is! It's you. You are the bride of Christ. You are the one that the psalmist sings of. You are a member of the Church. You are the one that the groom longs to spend the rest of his life with.

Christ the King finds beauty in you. He finds you to be worthy, not in and of yourself, but he makes you to be a fitting bride. He makes you to be a member of his Church. We are with Him **A Match Made in Heaven.** We are the one that the psalmist sings to:

¹⁰ *Listen, O daughter, consider and give ear: Forget your people and your father's house.*

¹¹ *The king is enthralled by your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord.*

We are to forget our people and our father's house, because the King desires us now. We don't need to keep serving ourselves, we don't need to continue to be slaves to sin, because the King will change our lives forever. Just as a bride leaves her father's house to become one flesh with her new groom, thus the Church can leave its life of sin and honor and worship our Lord and King.

When William and Kate got married, I mentioned before that the world was watching. And like happens at most weddings, the bride stole the show. The world was watching the bride, waiting to see what she would be wearing. In the days leading up to the wedding, there was a great deal of secrecy behind the royal wedding dress. The designer even threw away fake scraps to throw people off who might go digging through the garbage to try to get a clue what the

dress might look like. In the weeks after the wedding, Kate's dress was even put on display at Buckingham Palace and the number of tours given skyrocketed, because people wanted to see the dress up close.

It's a big deal what Christ's bride is wearing, too. Paul tells us what Christ's bride is wearing. In this section encouraging husbands on how to love their wives, pay attention to Christ as the groom and the Church as his bride. Pay attention to not only what the bride wears, but how it is that she wears it. Listen to Paul's inspired words: ***Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless*** (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Christ loved his bride, the Church, enough to ***give himself up for her***. He gave his life on Calvary's cross so that we could be his bride and so that we could be properly dressed. Nothing short of his death would make us able to stand in his presence, but he loved us that much. He died so that we could live. He saved us from a life of poverty so that we could be rich in his love. Paul points us to a special day – he describes it with 3 w's - ***washing with water through the word***. Christ made us holy and cleansed us from sin through baptism. He claimed us to be married to him and to live for him all our days. On that day he drowned our sinful nature and raised us up again wearing his perfect robes of righteousness. No spots, stains, wrinkles or blemishes, he made us holy and blameless.

The psalmist sings the same song:

¹³ ***All glorious is the princess within her chamber;
her gown is interwoven with gold.***

¹⁴ ***In embroidered garments she is led to the king;
her virgin companions follow her
and are brought to you.***

¹⁵ ***They are led in with joy and gladness;
they enter the palace of the king.***

In Christ, your robe is his life, his perfection, the righteousness that he has earned. We are beautiful in him. We are beautiful because we are married to Christ, and that marriage will last forever.

Those of you who are married have kept mementos of your wedding. Maybe it's a cake topper, a copy of the invitation, champagne glasses, or a dress you'll never wear again. That is a fitting tradition to remember that special day, but keep in your hearts mementos of an even more special day. Remember that you all – married or single - are married to Christ. He is your groom. He is your King. You are married to him here on earth and forever in heaven. He vowed a marriage to us that will last forever, nothing can take us away from him. Nothing can take from us the seat that we have at the marriage feast in heaven. We have been promised a place there with our groom, with our Lord, with our King.

The wedding song is one that we can sing all our days. We can celebrate our marriage to the King and rejoice that heaven is ours. We can rejoice all our days and look forward with a confident hope for the day that our king will return in glory. It's on that great and glorious day that the words of the familiar hymns will come true. May the song writers confidence and joy be ours today, tomorrow and forever that we might confess:

***Lord, when your glory I shall see
And taste your kingdom's pleasure,
Your blood my royal robe shall be,
My joy beyond all measure!
When I appear before your throne,
Your righteousness shall be my crown;***

*With these I need not hide me.
And there, in garments richly wrought,
As your own bride I shall be brought,
To stand in joy beside you.*

Amen.