

There is great hope in the truth that Jesus Christ is our Bridegroom, the lamb that was slain. The cross of Christ offers freedom from condemnation and forgiveness for all who come to Him in repentance. When you know that you are guilty and in need of mercy, the picture of the Lamb holds out tremendous hope. This is His invitation, **“come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost”** (Isaiah 5:1). He knows everything about you. He knows your mess and He invites you to come freely! When you trust in Jesus, His perfect, sinless record is credited to you. You are justified before the throne of God, despite your past! This is a wonderful hope for those who live their lives under a crushing burden of guilt and shame. He gives beautiful, shining garments to His bride, taking away her filthy rags.



by David White (Fall 2001 [Harvest News](#))

## Because of the Lord's Great Love

By Carl Tuttle

See Print Copy for song.

Old Orchard Church  
October 11, 2009—10:15 to 11:45 a.m.

For I am jealous for you  
with a godly jealousy;  
for I betrothed you to one husband,  
that to Christ I might present you  
as a pure virgin.

### Credits

**Cover Art:** Leonardo da Vinci: Portrait of a Young Woman. c. 1475.

**Cross on inside cover:** Antioch: metal censer, c. 1050.

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## Celebrating Jesus: Husband of the Church

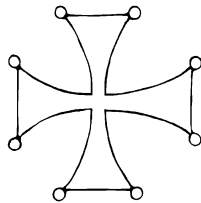
Before the face of Christ  
We are all feminine—  
Together, the Bride he loves,  
The delight of his heart.

Blessed be our Lord Jesus  
For his Husband-love,  
His faithfulness to us  
Even in our unfaithfulness to him.

Praise him for his sacrificing love,  
For he went to death for the sake of his Beloved;  
Praise him for his high purposes for us—  
He who, even now, is making us a pure Lover  
To live with him in tenderness forever.

Grant us, O Lord,  
To see more clearly into your love,  
For then we shall love you more deeply,  
And find our delight in bringing you pleasure.

Alleluia!



### Scripture Readings

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 62:1-7; 11-12

New Testament Reading: Ephesians 5:22-33

### Today's Sermon

“Back to School Sermon”

*Mark Tucker, associate pastor, preaching*

## He Who Makes Us Beautiful

My heart grieved for “Matthew” as he sat across from me and poured out his life story. An older brother sexually abused him for years. He spent the majority of his life addicted to alcohol, drugs and gambling. Living alone at 65, he persists in empty sexual encounters with strangers, while inwardly longing for meaningful relationships. Although the overall picture he communicated was heartbreaking, what really impacted me was the burden he bears. The weight of shame combined with the belief that he can never be free from guilt feeds his rebellion and drives him repeatedly into his sin pattern.

If you have a history of sexual sin, you can probably relate to the spiritual anguish that led Matthew into deep despair and hopelessness. Is the reality of your guilt and shame continually before you? The wonder of the Gospel is that in Christ we have a living Redeemer who comes to people in the slimy pit they have dug, draws them out, washes them whiter than snow, and even claims them as His precious bride!

Scripture uses many rich images to depict God's relationship with His people. One of my favorites is the marriage metaphor—He is our Husband, we are His bride. The Bible utilizes marriage because it depicts an exclusive relationship—a covenant in which absolute devotion is sworn to another. This is the type of relationship God expects from His people. When He called Israel to be His chosen people and brought them up out of Egypt, He established an exclusive, covenantal relationship with them. The language He used in the giving of the Law is illustrative of the commitment between a husband and wife. The first commandment demands absolute faithfulness to the Lord and the second affirms that He is a jealous God. In light of His care and deliverance, love and loyalty are expected as the natural response of the people to their gracious God.

Unfortunately, the marital overtones are expressed negatively as well. Idolatry is described as lusting after other gods. When Israel rebels, she is prostituting herself to other gods. Sadly, the most extensive use of the marriage metaphor in the Old Testament is this indictment against the unfaithfulness of the people. Hosea is the first to directly use the marriage metaphor in the Old Testament in this indictment against the unfaithfulness of the people....

In the New Testament, the intimacy of a marriage relationship between God and His people is fully realized. The wondrous expectation of the new covenant anticipated from the Old Testament has been fulfilled in the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and imminent return of Jesus Christ. He emerges as our long-awaited Bridegroom! Jesus identified Himself as the Bridegroom when questioned on the issue of His disciples' fasting. He is the Bridegroom in view in the parable of the ten virgins. The coming of His kingdom is described through the parable of the wedding banquet. Furthermore, much like a human bridegroom, Jesus has gone to prepare a place for His betrothed bride (John 14:2, 3).

*Continues on back.*