

# The Second Sunday after Christmas

## A BEAUTIFUL CHRISTMAS WEDDING

Text: Isaiah 61:10-62:5

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Nothing is more beautiful than a Christmas wedding. Weddings are beautiful at every time of the year, of course, but there's something special about Christmas weddings. Colors are deep and rich. The carillon bells become Christmas bells. We sing "Joy to the World" with special reason. The Advent wreath and the Christmas tree decorate the sanctuary. Perhaps the wedding is after dark, with lights down and candles glowing. A Christmas wedding is beautiful!

Our text for this Second Sunday after Christmas uses a number of images to illustrate the beautiful relationship God restores with His people. The one illustration that seems to dominate is the image of a marriage, a wedding, which takes place because of Christmas. And it is beautiful.

### ALMOST EVERYTHING AT A CHRISTMAS WEDDING IS BEAUTIFUL.

#### I. We've been beautifully decked out for a Christmas wedding

##### A. Text spoken for time when God's people not feel beautiful

1. Last chapters Isaiah offer comfort for days Judah need
  - a. Isaiah looked ahead captivity Judah Babylon
  - b. Captivity expose just how ugly sins been
  - c. God's people be marched away dirty/stripped/naked to foreign land
2. But Isaiah says God would restore to land, restore beauty as chosen people  
**(61:10-62:2a)**

**"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its bud, as the garden causes the things that are sown to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations. For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory."**

The images Isaiah uses offer an equally apt description of how God restores us by sending His Son.

##### B. Picture is very much like beautiful Christmas wedding

1. We've been beautifully decked out for Christmas wedding (61:10)

**"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."**

- a. Gown is gorgeous--white, spotless
  - b. We're richly adorned--never looked so good
  - c. God has dressed us perfectly/beautifully
3. Perhaps it is candlelight service (62:1)

**"For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns."**

(in flickering light bride even more beautiful--if that's possible)

3. A sanctuary full of worshipers hushed
  - a. Almost in awe, in reverence (62:2a)

**"The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory."**

- b. It is beautiful wedding
5. Almost everything at Christmas wedding beautiful

D. Isaiah saying God makes us look this good

4. Don't always feel so beautiful, do we
  - b. Bad enough having look in mirror some mornings
  - c. But worse, lives often anything but beautiful
    - i. Not beautiful feeling hearing constant bickering home
    - ii. Sun may be shining, but not beautiful day if no job go to, or if family used come home to not there anymore
    - iii. Gray hairs, increasingly stooped posture remind how fleeting earthly beauty is
  - d. For all kind reasons, most us probably just don't feel beautiful about selves
5. Yet beautiful is how God sees us
  - . Clothed with garments of salvation
    - a. Covered with robe of righteousness
    - b. Like bride adorned jewels--at Christmas wedding
6. Beautiful is how God sees us, and God always sees things way really are
7. Almost everything beautiful at Christmas wedding

II. The wedding match is most beautiful (62:2a-5)

**"You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name. You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God."**

**You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you."**

It certainly is a beautiful match God made for us.

A. God marries us to Himself

**(3) "You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God."**

1. As King holds/admires crown, as groom beholds/admires bride, most beautiful creature he's ever seen, so God holds/gazes admiringly at us
  - a. Chosen us be His own
  - b. We His most precious creatures
2. Amazing, because forsaken/desolate what we were
  - a. Image Isaiah using: wife rejected
  - b. Israel, prostituted herself by idolatry
    - i. Had been untrue to Husband--Lord
    - ii. As result, God had forsaken, she was desolate
  - c. Every time we ignore God's will, we do same--cheat on faithful husband
3. Musical Guys and Dolls:
  - a. Young lady (given little too much) wants more than anything else be married
  - b. Regrets that "she's gettin' a kind of a name for herself, and the name ain't his"
4. By our sin, earned names "Forsaken"/"Desolate"
5. But see what God does **(2b,4)**

**"You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name....You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called Hephzibah, (Hephzibah means "My Delight Is in Her") and your land [shall be called] Beulah; (Beulah means "Married") for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married.**

- a. God gives new names: "God's Delight is in Us," "Married"
- b. Married to God
- c. God gives us His name
  - i. God has adorned w/ His name--His beautiful name
  - ii. That's most beautiful adornment could ever wear
7. Almost everything at Christmas wedding beautiful

C. And truly this is Christmas wedding

6. This marriage consummated when Christ became human at Christmas

7. God married us to Self, but if God not become Man, not have been real marriage
  - a. Could never see who married to (**John 1:18**)

**"No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."**

- b. Know how old days: bride's veil kept groom from seeing her
  - c. Remember how in OT Jacob married wrong sister!
  - d. If not for Christ coming at Christmas, marriage to God would been hidden by veil that worked other way
  - e. We--bride--could never have seen past own veil to see bridegroom
4. But when Christ came, God became truly one with bride: Church (**John 1:14**)

**"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory. the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth."**

- a. As husband/wife become one flesh in marriage, so Christ/Word became one flesh with us
  - b. He took on our own flesh/blood
  - c. Came into our home, lived with us
5. In very beautiful way, Christmas we became married God
  - a. What a beautiful match--God Himself with His people
  - b. Almost everything at Christmas wedding beautiful

There is, though, at this Christmas wedding one less than beautiful sight. Ironically, it's the most visible sight.

III. (Only) the Bridegroom Himself is anything but beautiful

- A. Always one problem with beautiful weddings: sometimes emphasis turns to drippy sentimentality
  1. "It was a beautiful wedding, Pastor"
    - a. If means worship gave glory God, indeed beautiful
    - b. But if means all people saw were bridesmaids dresses, then missed
  2. That one problem at beautiful weddings especially possible at Christmas weddings because possibility same problem with Christmas: drippy sentimentality, seeing nothing but cute baby
    - a. As beautifully as God has decked us for marriage to Him, essential see Bridegroom as He had look make marriage possible
    - b. As beautiful as Christmas is in all our minds/ memories, essential see rough/painful scene came w/ it
- B. Bridegroom no means not decked out
  1. As we wear rich wedding garments, adorned jewels, He swaddling clothes

2. As we decked garlands, He lies in straw
3. Worst, as we stand robes righteousness, takes on rags of our sin
  - a. Our sin for which He stripped naked, led cross
  - b. Our sin for which He hung public disgrace, for which died
4. What magnificent exchange!
  - a. His glory/His beauty for our sin
  - b. We stand forgiven because He takes our sin
  - c. This--forgiveness--is garment salvation
  - d. His perfect holiness in place our sin is robe of righteousness
  - e. His humble garb in manger/His grotesque form on cross earned beautiful garments in which decked out, new name which we assume when married to God

A married name. A beautiful name. Almost everything is beautiful at a Christmas wedding.