



Around the Word
Bible Study
 Epiphany, 2016

Hymn Study
**O Morning Star, How
 Fair and Bright (Stanza 2)**

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
 —John 1:5

[O Morning Star is] a spiritual bridal song of the believing soul concerning Jesus Christ, her heavenly Bridegroom, founded on the 45th Psalm of the prophet David.
 —Philipp Nicolai

One morning Nicolai was in great distress and tribulation in his quiet study. He rose in spirit from the distress and death which surrounded him to his Redeemer and Saviour, and while he clasped Him in ardent love there welled forth from the inmost depths of his heart this precious hymn of the Saviour's love and of the joys of Heaven. He was so entirely absorbed in this holy exaltation that he forgot all around him, even his midday meal, and allowed nothing to disturb him in his poetical labours till the hymn was completed.
 —Richard Lauxmann, on the composition of "O Morning Star"

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Opening: "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright" (Stanza 2)

Come, heav'nly Bridegroom, Light divine,
 And deep within our hearts now shine;

There light a flame undying!
 In Your one body let us be
 As living branches of a tree,
 Your life our lives supplying.
 Now, though daily
 Earth's deep sadness
 May perplex us
 And distress us,
 Yet with heav'nly joy You bless us.

Compare stanza 2 of "O Morning Star" with Psalm 45, which was the basis for this hymn. Where do you see elements of psalm 45 in this stanza?

"Come, heav'nly Bridegroom"

As the final book of the Bible, Revelation serves as a kind of summary of everything that came before and points us toward the future. What is the prayer of the Church as She looks forward? See Revelation 22:20.

Why is the pronoun "She" customarily used to refer to the Church? See Revelation 21:2. Why profound mystery refers to Christ and the Church, according to St. Paul? See Ephesians 5:21–32.

How does St. Paul define the Church in Ephesians 2:19–22? How does our Lord characterize His relationship with His Church in Matthew 25:1–13? In other words, who is the Bridegroom in this parable, and who is the Bride? What is the Bride's job, according to Matthew 25:6? How does this agree with Genesis 2:24?

Notice, however, who does the acting in Matthew 25:6 versus Genesis 2:24. Why is it essential that Christ (the Man) hold fast to His Wife (the Church)? What would happen if He left this up to us? See Matthew 25:8, 10 and Matthew 26:40–41. How does this correspond to Hosea 3:1? Compare also Jeremiah 3:20. Why, according to Jeremiah 3:12, does the Lord forgive His faithless, adulterous Bride? Notice also how Psalm 30:5 characterizes God. How does this correspond to Exodus 34:6–7?

Read the following passage concerning the three purposes of marriage from St. Augustine:

"If now we interrogate, so to speak, those goods of marriage to which we have often referred, and inquire how it is that sin could possibly have been propagated from them to infants, we shall get this answer from the first of them—the work of procreation of offspring: "My happiness would in paradise have been greater if sin had not been committed. For to me belongs that blessing of almighty God: 'Be fruitful, and multiply.' For accomplishing

this good work, diverse members were created suited to each sex; these members were, of course, in existence before sin, but they were not objects of shame." This will be the answer of the second good—the fidelity of chastity: "If sin had not been committed, what in paradise could have been more secure than myself, when there was no lust of my own to spur me, none of another to tempt me?" And then this will be the answer of the sacramental bond of marriage,—the third good: "Of me was that word spoken in paradise before the entrance of sin: 'A man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they two shall become one flesh.'" This the apostle applies to the case of Christ and of the Church, and calls it then "a great sacrament." ("On Marriage and Concupiscence," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, V; 23).

What three purposes of marriage does Augustine identify?

Here Augustine follows the Latin (Vulgate) translation of Ephesians 5:32, which uses the word "sacramentum" for "mystery." See the following passage from the *Augsburg Confession*, in which the German Evangelicals responded to the Roman church's insistence that they regard marriage as a Sacrament.

"In Article XIII our opponents [the Roman Catholic Church] approve the statement that the sacraments are no mere marks of profession among men, as some imagine, but are rather signs and testimonies of God's will toward us, through which he moves men's hearts to believe. But they insist that we enumerate seven sacraments. We believe we have the duty not to neglect any of the rites and ceremonies instituted in Scripture, whatever their number. We do not think it makes much difference if, for purposes of teaching, the enumeration varies, provided what is handed down in Scripture is preserved. For that matter, the Fathers did not always use the same enumeration.

Matrimony was first instituted not in the New Testament but in the very beginning, at the creation of the human race. It has the commandment of God and also certain promises, but these apply to physical life and not strictly to the New Testament. If anybody therefore wants to call it a sacrament, he should distinguish it from the preceding ones which are, in the strict sense, "signs of the New Testament," testimonies of grace and the forgiveness of sins. If matrimony should be called a sacrament because it has God's command, then many other states or offices might also be called sacraments because they have God's command, as, for example, government.

Ultimately, if we should list as sacraments all the things that have God's command and a promise added to them, then why not prayer, which can most truly be called a

sacrament? It has both the command of God and many promises. If it were placed among the sacraments and thus given, so to speak, a more exalted position, this would move men to pray. Alms could be listed here, as well as afflictions, which in themselves are signs to which God has added promises. But let us pass over all this. No intelligent person will quibble about the number of sacraments or the terminology, so long as those things are kept which have God's command and promises. It is much more necessary to know how to use the sacraments," (*Apology*, XIII, 1–2,14–18).

According to the *Augsburg Confession*, the important thing is not the numbering of the sacraments, but that we do not "neglect any of the rites and ceremonies instituted in Scripture, whatever their number."

When was marriage instituted? Is it divinely mandated and does it contain promises? What makes marriage different from Baptism, Absolution, and the Sacrament of the Altar? If we regard marriage as a sacrament (thereby defining a sacrament as that which has the command and promise of God), what else might we call a sacrament?

"Your life our lives supplying"

Why is it essential for us to remain in Christ? See John 15:1–8, especially v. 4–5. What happens to those who do not do good works to those who do? See verses 2 & 6.

In John 15:7, our Lord promises that you will get whatever you ask for, so long as you do what? (Pay special attention to the first part of this verse). If this is happening, how does that inform the content of our prayers?

Notice also the result of God's answering our prayers in John 15:8. What impact will this have on God the Father? What does our Lord assume we will pray for if we are abiding in His Word, especially in light of the second half of verse 8?

"Yet with heav'nly joy You bless us."

According to the hymn, God blesses us with heavenly joy even though what is happening?

See Psalm 30:11. How does a mother comfort her infant? See Isaiah 66:11. How does this picture correspond to how the Lord comforts and brings us His heavenly joy, even when earth's deep sadness causes us distress and perplexity? See 1 Peter 2:2. What, then, is the apostle's secret to being content in any and every circumstance (Philippians 4:11–12)?

What positive function can our suffering accomplish? See 2 Corinthians 4:17–18; 12:7. Why was Uzziah's strength detrimental to himself? See 2 Chronicles 26:16a.

St. Peter identifies two types of suffering in 1 Peter 4:14–16. What are they? In 1 Peter 4:13, the apostle speaks of sharing in Christ's sufferings. When does this happen? See again verses 14 & 16. Why is it necessary for this to happen? See Matthew 10:25.

Closing: Psalm 45

¹My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;
I address my verses | to the king;*

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my tongue is like the pen of a | ready scribe.

²**You are the most handsome of the sons of men; grace is poured up- | on your lips;***
therefore God has blessed you for- | ever.

³Gird your sword on your thigh, O | mighty one,*
in your splendor and | majesty!

⁴**In your majesty ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and | righteous- ness;***
let your right hand teach you | awesome deeds!

⁵Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's | enemies;*
the peoples fall | under you.

⁶**Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of up- | rightness;***

⁷**You have loved righteousness and hated | wickedness.**

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your com- | panions;*

⁸your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and | cassia.

From ivory palaces stringed instruments | make you glad;*

⁹**daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor; at your right hand stands the queen in gold of | Ophir.**

¹⁰Hear, O daughter, and consider, and in | cline your ear.*

forget your people and your | father's house,

¹¹**and the king will desire your | beauty.***

Since he is your lord, | bow to him.

¹²The people of Tyre will seek your fa- | vor with gifts.*

the richest of the | people.

¹³**All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven | with gold.***

¹⁴**In many-colored robes she is led to the king, with her virgin companions following be- | hind her.**

¹⁵With joy and gladness they are | led along*
as they enter the palace | of the king.

¹⁶**In place of your fathers shall | be your sons;***
you will make them princes in | all the earth.

¹⁷I will cause your name to be remembered in all gener- | ations;*

therefore nations will praise you forever and | ever.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**



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