

# The Devoted Bride of Christ (Kannada)

by Zac Poonen

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*God is looking for devoted followers who will choose between the world and Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 58:22

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:24, Matthew 6:33, Luke 14:26, Luke 17:32, Acts 2:42, Galatians 1:10, Colossians 3:2, James 4:4, 1 John 2:15-17

**Topics:** "Christian Devotion", "Spiritual Commitment"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of wholehearted devotion to Jesus Christ, highlighting the need to prioritize building the church over mere religious meetings. It draws parallels from the Old Testament story of Rebecca's unwavering commitment to Isaac, illustrating the necessity of choosing to be fully devoted to Christ without divided affections for the world. The speaker challenges listeners to prioritize pleasing God above all else, even if it means forsaking worldly attachments and relationships.

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## Transcript

For many years, we have not had that opportunity. And part of the reason was that there has never been a shepherd here who could lead the church. And then, where there is no shepherd, it is not possible to build a church.

See, we must understand that though many Christians love to have meetings, it may surprise you to know that God is not interested in meetings. He is interested in building the church. And if God is to cooperate in a meeting, it will always be with the goal of building a church.

If you read the Acts of the Apostles, you never find Paul going around just having meetings. He was always building the church. And he was not interested in going any place where the church could not be built.

Today, we have so many preachers from so many parts of the world who travel only to have meetings. And there are huge crowds that come to these meetings. That is more like a mela.

And in countries like India, it is very easy to get such crowds anywhere. A lot of work that is called God's work is not really God's work. Because God's work must be done in God's way.

Otherwise, a religious meeting can be like a political meeting. A lot of political meetings where lots of people gather. Because there is some popular leader who is coming to speak.

Now, Christians also have meetings like that where some popular man comes to speak. I have never been interested in going to such meetings. Because I know they don't have any effect for eternity.

Most Christians don't respect the word of God enough to obey it completely. And that's why they don't see that the Lord is only interested in building the church. In the Old Testament, I want to show you an example.

Everything written in the Old Testament in Genesis chapter 24, everything written in the Old Testament was written for our instruction. And here we read a picture of what Jesus is doing today. This is a large chapter.

It's perhaps the biggest chapter in the book of Genesis. And the whole chapter is about one subject. And that is that Abraham wanted to get a bride for his son Isaac.

And he sends his servant Eliezer to go and bring a bride for his son. This is a picture. Abraham is a picture of God the Father.

And Isaac is a picture of Jesus Christ. And Eliezer the servant is a picture of the Holy Spirit. So the father has sent the Holy Spirit into the world to find a bride for his son.

And this is what he told his servant. Verse 4, go to my country, to my relatives and take a wife for my son Isaac. That's what the Holy Spirit has come to do.

God says go among those who want to be my people. And from them find a bride for my son. And then the servant says, supposing verse 5, the woman is not willing to come with me.

Then what shall I do? Then Abraham said, verse 8, if the woman is not willing to come with you, you are free. Then leave her alone. So the Holy Spirit comes and says, do you want to be a bride for Jesus Christ? And many people say no, I don't want to be a bride.

I want to be a bride for this world. My interests are here. I want to enjoy everything here.

Can I be married to the world and also married to Christ? And the Holy Spirit says no. You have to make a choice. You have to make a choice.

Either you get married to the world or you get married to Christ. You can't marry two people. Then some people say, no, I want to be married to the world also a little bit.

And the Holy Spirit says, okay, you're free. You can do what you like. But then there are some preachers who will come and say, oh, that's all right.

You can be married to the world a little bit. You can also be married to Christ. And so there are a lot of Christians living in this deception that you can have two husbands.

And one day when Jesus comes back, Jesus will say, I don't know you. I know you came to the meetings. I know you broke bread in the meeting.

And you gave money for God's work. And you sang the song. But you wanted two husbands.

I don't want a woman who wants two husbands. You go and ask any man in the world if he'd like to have a woman who wants two husbands. I've never met anybody like that.

Every man wants a woman who will only choose him. Many of you brothers are married. Would you like your wife to have another husband? You'll all say no.

Not only husband, even if she is interested in another man, you'll be disturbed. Then how is it that you want to be the bride of Christ and you also have a lot of interest in things in the world? You know why God allows us to live in this world? I'll tell you. To see whether you'll be interested in this husband or not.

He's testing you. He allows you to see how attractive this other husband is, this other man is. This man called the world.

And why does he allow you to see how attractive the world is? Only one reason. To test you whether you are fit to be a bride for Jesus Christ. And when you show your interest in this world, it doesn't matter who you are.

It could be me. I show some interest in this world. When Jesus comes again, he will say to me, I don't know you.

I'll say, Lord, but I went around preaching so many places for you. And I blessed so many people. Yeah, that is all right, the Lord will say, but you are interested in this world.

I don't want a wife who has two husbands. So please remember that. That's very serious.

I'm saying this because you should not get a surprise when Jesus comes. You can say, well, I belong to a good church. It doesn't matter which church you belong to.

Because it's a question of where your heart is. If your heart is interested in sin and the things of this world, and how to know whether you are interested in the things of this world, it means you have very little interest in Jesus Christ. You know, we see many cases in the world of young people who are in love with each other.

Some young boy and girl are in love with each other. They're always planning to meet somewhere secretly. See, that is the mark of someone who's really interested in, who really loves someone.

But then you see sometimes some husband and wife, they hardly talk to each other. Husband and wife are there, they do their own thing in the house, and they're not even interested in each other. Haven't you seen husbands and wives like that? There's no love between them.

They're not really interested, but because they're married, they stay in the same house. Many Christians are like that. Yeah, they say, we are Christians, I'm married to Christ.

But they're like this, husband and wife in the house, not at all interested in each other. They eat together, but they're not really interested. And that woman, when she's working somewhere, she may be talking very happily to some man at that place of work.

And that man also may be talking very happily to some girl in the place of work. There they are very happy to talk to somebody else. But when they come home, they're not much interested in each other.

They're not divorced, they're married, but they're not much interested in each other. Many Christians are like that. Their interest in Jesus is very minimal.

You know, like some husband and wife, they stay together because they have children. Well, how to leave the house and leave the children? Or it's bad in society, it looks bad if I divorce my wife. That is how some Christians are.

Their relationship with Jesus Christ is exactly like that. And those are the people to whom when Jesus comes back, he'll say, I don't know you. You claim to be a Christian, but I don't know you.

You know what true Christianity is? You see a picture of those two people who are in love with each other, young boy and young girl, always planning, thinking, how can we meet, how can we talk, how can I talk to her or talk to him? They have cell phones, they can talk anywhere. When you're a Christian like that, when you're desiring to fellowship with Jesus like that, you're a real disciple of Jesus. That means you're always thinking, how can I talk to the Lord? When can I finish all my work and get to be with Jesus? Those are the only people who are ready for the marriage of Jesus Christ when he comes.

And I don't care if you come to CFC or any church, Jesus will say to you, I don't know you. Because what did God say to the Holy Spirit? What did the father Abraham say to Eliezer? If the woman is not willing, leave her alone. And that's what God tells the Holy Spirit says.

If you're not interested, I won't trouble you. Why is it so many Christians are more interested in watching a movie than reading the Bible? You think they're interested in Jesus Christ? Yeah, maybe a little bit. Yeah, they're interested in Jesus Christ.

But their maximum interest is in that movie or some secret sin. Yeah, then what does the Holy Spirit say? You have this much interest in Jesus? So much interest in all the things of earth? Okay, go marry the world. I'm not asking you to come to be the bride of Christ.

No, you can sit in the meeting for the next 50 years. At the end, Jesus will say to you, I don't know you. Yeah, I believe some of you sitting here are going to hear those words from Jesus one day.

You're just playing the fool. And God is not fool. So the servant of Abraham went to the far country and found this girl Rebecca.

And then his relatives told her, verse 55, let the girl stay with us for a few days, at least 10 days and then afterwards she can go. Maybe 10 days. And the servant said no.

We have to go immediately. Not even 10 days. So they said, let us ask the girl.

Verse 57, let's call the girl and consult what she says. And they called Rebecca. You want to go with this man straight away without waiting 10 days? Look what she said.

Verse 58. She said, yes, I want to go. Do you know, those are the type of people the Holy Spirit is looking for today? Who'll say, Lord, I'm ready.

I want you more than my relatives. I find in India, it's so true that so many believers, they are more attached to their relatives than they are to Jesus Christ. And they compromise so much in so many things when it comes to pleasing their relatives.

When it comes to weddings and funerals and visiting relatives, it's almost as though believers completely forget that they are now disciples of Jesus. They don't behave like disciples of Jesus when they are in the midst of their relatives. What did Jesus say to them? Go, stay with your relatives.

I don't know you. He said, if you want to be my disciple, if you want to be my bride, you've got to love me more than your father and mother and your brother, sister, anyone. That's how we become the bride of Jesus Christ.

That is how Rebecca became the bride of Isaac. Supposing she had said no. Supposing she said to Eliezer, well, let me just stay one or two months and then I'll think about it.

What do you think Eliezer would have said, the servant? He would have said, sure, stay. Stay six months. Stay one year.

Stay forever. I'll go and look for somebody else. And what would have happened? She would have missed the privilege of being in the ancestral line of Jesus Christ.

Yeah, there's a lot you can miss if you choose something else. But I hope there will be some people here who will really take the right decision. And say, Lord, I'm going to be your bride.

I'm not interested in anything else. Lord Jesus, you are the passion of my heart. You know, when I sometimes see young boy and girl going together, all by themselves, in love with each other.

I say, Lord, I want to love you more than they love each other. Will you say that next time? You know, all over India now in the cities, you see young boy and girl sometimes going together. And when they can't get married, sometimes you read, they go and commit suicide.

Because the parents would not allow the marriage. I'm not saying they are right. They may be wrong in what they're doing.

But one thing is true. They love each other so much that they're willing to die. I say, Lord, I want to love you like that.

They can't live without each other. And if somebody tries to separate them like parents or something, they say, we'd rather die. I say, I'm supposed to be a bride of Jesus Christ and I don't love Jesus like that.

So those lovers challenge me to love Jesus like that. Say, Lord, I don't want to be separated from you even for a moment. And all those lovers always, when they finish their work or study or something, they're always wanting to be together.

They're always planning, where can we meet? Where can we meet? Where can we meet? I say, Lord, give me a passion like that. That I'm always thinking of talking to you. That if I lie down in bed, I want to talk to you.

That if I travel in a train or sit in a bus, I want to talk to you. Because you are my lover. And I love you more than any human being loves another human being.

It doesn't matter if we don't do anything for Christ. If we love him, that's enough. The most important thing you can do is not come to a meeting or give money for God's word.

A lot of preachers say, God's interested in your money. Do you think a husband who collects his wife's money and allows her to go and live with another man is a good husband? What type of husband is that? His wife goes to work and earns money. And he says, give me your money.

You can go and live with anybody you like. What type of husband is that? Do you think Jesus is like that? Give me your money and go and live for the world. That's a deception.

That's not the true Jesus Christ. Jesus says, I don't want your money. I want you.

That's what a true husband will say. I don't want your money. I want you.

So God's not interested in our money. He's interested in you. And if you don't give your whole heart to him, you can't be his bride.

The same way when I see a businessman in the world, whose whole passion in life is money, morning till night it's money. There are businessmen like that in Bangalore and Hubli everywhere. Even at night they'll be dreaming about how to make more money.

And I look at them and I say, boy, what a devotion this man has to his God. His God is money. And he thinks about his God day and night.

I worship the true God, Jesus Christ. This fellow worships a false God, money. But he is more devoted to his false God than I am to my true God.

Then I hang my head in shame and I say, Lord, forgive me. That man is more devoted to his money than I am to Jesus Christ. I say, Lord, forgive me.

I want to be more devoted to you than any businessman on earth is devoted to his money. I have met so many people in my life who sacrifice everything to make money. You know what all dangerous jobs they take in order to make money.

There are many people in the world who do many, many very, very dangerous jobs to make money. They go to risky places and do many, many dangerous things where they can even be caught and put in jail just to make money. Amazing how much risk they are willing to take to make money.

I am not willing to take a risk for Jesus Christ. Then I have to say that that man is more devoted to his God than I am to the true God. We should be ashamed of ourselves.

There are many examples like this. People who travel so many distances to make money. Work a job, then work a second job, work 12 hours a day to make more money.

Work overtime to make money. And I see Christians who won't even take half a day's leave to attend a conference. I say, you think such people are devoted to Jesus Christ? No, they are not devoted to Jesus Christ.

They will serve Jesus when it is convenient. When it's raining, they say, oh well, today it's raining, I don't think I'll go to the meeting. Have you seen any businessman like that who says, I think it's a little few drops of rain, I don't think I'll open the shop today.

No. Only Christians say such things. Not businessmen.

I'll tell you something. The people who worship false gods are so devoted to those false gods. But those who say they are worshipping the true God, Jesus Christ.

They have so many interests in pleasing their relatives and friends and displease God. My life has been a very happy life for more than 45 years as a Christian. One reason is, I decided right at the beginning, I will never please any of my relatives.

I will offend all my relatives. I'm not bothered. I want to follow Jesus Christ.

I have no friends I want to please. I want to please Jesus Christ. I have many brothers and sisters in my church in Bangalore.

God is my witness. I don't want to please any of them. I am willing to offend all of them.

I have many co-workers who are elders in churches. I'm not interested in pleasing one of them. I'm not a politician.

I'm willing to offend every one of them. Because I have only one husband. So even one person I want to please in my life.

And that's Jesus Christ. He died for me. And I'll never forget that.

My relationship with him is not like a friend. It's a devotion. And that's why we read that the Lord is looking for those who are devoted to him like that.

I want to say this to you also my brothers and sisters. You know why you are discouraged often? Why you get angry so often? Why you don't get grace from God to get victory over sin? Now I'll tell you the reason. Because you are not devoted to Jesus Christ.

You come to him when you are in trouble. Everybody in the world goes to God when they are in trouble. That's not a great thing.

The rest of the time when everything is going smoothly, that's the time you are tested to see whether you are devoted to Christ or not. And that's why many Christians, their life is not happy. And if I were to ask you honestly, to give an honest answer, can you really say that you are a very happy Christian? I think many of you will say no.

But that's not right. That's not the way it should be. It's because there's something else that's drawing your affection away from Christ.

There's somebody you want to please. Maybe you want to please your relatives or your neighbors or your friends or your wife or your husband or somebody. Jesus Christ is not the one Lord of your life.

But Rebecca here, we read that she said, I will go. And she never changed her mind. And those of you who are married sisters, you can understand this.

See, some of you, when you got married, you continued to stay in the same town that you grew up in because your husband was also there. But some of you, when you got married, you had to leave your home and go to where your husband was. That's how we read here.

Rebecca had to leave her home and go to where her husband was. But there's one difference between you sisters and Rebecca. Rebecca could not catch a train or a bus and go back to see her relatives.

She never saw her relatives for the rest of her life. So when she said, I will go, she knew that was a permanent goodbye. I will never see my father or mother or brothers or sisters for the rest of my life.

What a decision she took. Imagine if you had to take a decision like that. If you had to take a decision where you'd never see your parents or relatives again for the rest of your life when you get married.

I don't know how many of you would have got married then. Now it is so easy nowadays. Every year you can go and see your relatives.

Not for Rebecca. It was a permanent decision. And knowing that, she still couldn't even stay 10 days there.

All of a sudden, one day, her life was changed. This is a picture in the Old Testament of how we are supposed to be devoted to Christ. Remember 45 years ago, one day, my life was changed.

My whole direction of my life changed. And that's what's made me a very, very happy man today. So that is why I say to all of you, if you turn around completely like that, your life can also be very, very happy.

It's not enough just to believe in Jesus Christ. You know what Rebecca did? She turned around from her father, mother, brother, relatives, and every completely and went towards Isaac. Some of us have turned only a little bit.

All our world, our friends, our relatives are all here. And Jesus is there. And we have turned a little bit.

And we are moving. And we are wondering why we are not reaching Jesus Christ. You'll never reach Jesus Christ.

He is there. You see, I've turned away from my relatives and the world. Not fully.

You've turned a little bit. You're better than those worldly sinners. But you'd be a very happy person if you turned completely around.

This is the meaning of repentance. To turn around completely. And Rebecca turned her back.

And she never looked back. You know once Jesus said, in Luke's Gospel, chapter 17, he's talking about the day when Jesus comes. Verse 30, it will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.

On that day, if someone is in the housetop, whose goods are in the house or in the field, let him not turn back. Don't turn back. Then he said, remember what happened to Lot's wife.

If you try to save your life in this world, you'll lose it. Like Lot's wife lost her life. But if you're willing to lose that for my sake, you'll preserve it.

What happened to Lot's wife? God wanted to save her. Not because she was a righteous woman. But because she married a righteous man.

And for the sake of her husband, God was willing to save the wife. But when they came out of that city that was being burnt, Sodom and Gomorrah was being burnt and God pulled Lot and his wife out of that city. It says Lot's wife suddenly began to think of all the things she left behind.

Oh my lovely clothes, I couldn't carry all of them. All the expensive things I bought for my house, all are there. They were a very rich family.

That's why Lot went there. And he was one of the richest people there. I can imagine he had a lot of wealthy things in his house.

And she felt very sad. You know, women are more attached to the things in the house. And she looked back and the Lord said, you're interested in all that? The same judgment that fell on them, fell on her immediately.

That was far away, Sodom and Gomorrah. And all that judgment that was falling from heaven, over there. Little bit of that judgment fell on her.

And she became a pillar of salt. Immediately. That's because this judgment fell on her and she became a statue.

Picture the statue of a person looking back like this. And Jesus said, remember that. And she missed what her husband got.

And Jesus said, it can be like that in the day the Son of Man comes back. When Jesus comes again, some people are looking in the wrong direction. They may have attended many meetings, but their heart was not with the Lord.

You know, Jesus would rather have two or three people who are wholeheartedly His, than a whole lot of people who just come for meetings. How can we make a church strong? You think the church in Publi or Hospet will become strong just because you have 100, 200 people there? No. You can have 1000 people, it is not strong.

Jesus had such a strong church with 11 people. What a strong church that was. It turned the whole world upside down.

Today we have churches with 1000, 2000 people, they can't even touch their city. So, the strength of a church doesn't depend on the number of people. No, the most important thing is what type of people there are.

Supposing you have 10 sons. Another man has got only one son. Who can get more work done? You with 10 sons or he with one son? What's the answer? There is a catch in that question.

Supposing your 10 sons are all lame and sick and blind and paralyzed. They are lying in bed the whole day. They make more work for you.

And here is one healthy son. He can do much more with that one son than you with your 10 sons. It's true.

It's the same in the church. The Lord is not interested in multitudes of paralyzed, sick, half-hearted people who are just interested in the world. See, that's the trouble today.

Today we have a whole lot of believers who have got so much knowledge. They have left CSI, CNI churches and Methodist, Basil Mission. They have all left all that.

And now they have come to say, we have come to a good church. But what's the use if you are sick and paralyzed and blind? You might as well sit in those old churches. Why have you left it? The Lord wants those who are wholehearted.

He wants people like Rebecca who will say, yes, I'm going right now. They say, Rebecca, you're not going to see your relatives anymore. That's okay.

I have to follow the call of God. I tell you, if the Lord has got 10 people like that, He can really build a church anywhere. Who are not interested in pleasing anybody in the whole world.

Who have no favorites. Who are not trying to please their wives or their children. Jesus said that.

If you love your wife or children more than me, you can't be my disciple. There are many parents like that. They want to please their children.

I tell you, even your children will not become disciples of Jesus. No, I decided I will not please my wife. I will not please my children.

I'm not interested in pleasing my wife. I'm not interested in pleasing my children. If I seek to please Jesus, that's the most important thing.

Then He will bless me and bless my family. But if I seek to please my children, the Lord is not going to bless my children. If I seek to please my wife, the Lord will not bless my wife.

But if I seek to please the Lord, He will bless me and bless my wife and children. So, don't let the devil make a fool of you. The devil says, no, no, no, you must please your wife, otherwise she'll get angry.

I think that's what the devil told Adam. When Eve brought the fruit to Adam, Adam may have thought like this, God's told me not to eat this. Then the devil whispers in his ear, just look at Eve's eyes, she'll get angry with you.

Oh, okay, darling, give it to me, I'll eat it. There are husbands like that today also. They are followers of Adam, not followers of Jesus Christ.

They want to please their wives. They want to please their children. Like Eli, he wanted to please his children.

Whatever his children did wrong, it's okay. Where can such people be servants of God? I want to ask all of you sitting here, my dear brothers and sisters, Do you really want to please God in your life? You make a decision today like Rebecca. I am not interested in pleasing my relatives.

I am not interested in pleasing my family members. I am not going to be devoted to the things of this world. I will use the things of the world.

Jesus had a house to live in. Jesus used money. In fact, he worked as a carpenter to earn money to support his family.

When Joseph died, Jesus was the eldest son. He had four younger brothers, two younger sisters, and his mother. Eight members in his family.

And he had to work to support eight members. There are not many people who are working to support eight members in their family. Most of us are working to support three or four.

Jesus worked to support eight members in his family. He made stools and benches and earned money to support his family. There is nothing wrong in that.

But he didn't love money. But he earned money. There is nothing wrong in earning money.

And he needed to earn quite a lot to support eight members in his family. So naturally, if you have got many members in your family, you have to earn enough money to support all of them. That's okay.

But Jesus had no interest in that. He did everything to please his father. So that's how we are supposed to be.

We have to touch many things. Now the best picture is like a ship in the water. Or you may not have all seen a ship, but you have seen a boat in the water.

At least a picture of a boat in the water. You know how a boat is in the water? The water is touching the boat on all sides. But no bit of the water comes inside the boat.

There is a little hole in the boat and the water starts coming inside. What will happen after some time? What will happen? It will sink. And that's what's happening to many Christians.

They say, oh, just a little bit of the world comes in. Be careful. Be careful of that little bit of the world that comes in through some book or television or magazine or some habit.

And a little bit of the water is coming inside the boat. Yeah, yeah, it's not yet sinking. You just wait another five, six years and see what will happen.

It will be drowned. So the water must touch the boat, but must not come inside the boat. Same way we can touch money, but money should not come inside us and become our love.

Yeah, we need to use money, we need to use lots of things in this world. But we are not to be gripped by all those things. Let's pray.

Let's bow our heads before God. You know, you don't need any more knowledge. I think a lot of us have got plenty of knowledge.

What you need is to take a decision. And even a decision is not enough. Because you have taken many decisions in your life.

And that has also not helped. You need to do two things after taking a decision. You must say, Lord, fill me with your Holy Spirit.

You must ask. And secondly, you must believe that God will help you. Lord, I ask you for the power of your Holy Spirit.

Otherwise, I can never keep this decision. And I believe you will grant my prayer. Thank you for hearing me.

In Jesus name, Amen.

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