



The Wedding Chapel

Rachel Hauck

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An old, forgotten chapel holds the key to love and forgiveness.

Retired hall-of-fame football coach Jimmy Westbrook never imagined anything would come of his labor of love—building a wedding chapel for Collette Greer, the woman he fell in love with in 1949. But now a realtor wants the land the chapel sits on, and he sees no reason to hang onto the past.

Photographer Taylor Branson is trying to make a life for herself in New York. Leaving her hometown of Heart's Bend, Tennessee, she put a lot of things behind her, including her family's string of failed marriages. When she falls head-over-heels for Jack Gillingham, a top ad man, their whirlwind romance and elopement leave her with doubts. Jack, while genuine in his love for Taylor, can never seem to find the right way to show her he really cares.

When a post-mortem letter from Taylor's Granny Peg shows up, along with an old photo, she is driven to uncover family secrets and the secret to her own happiness, starting with an assignment to photograph an unknown, obscure wedding chapel back in Heart's Bend.

Taylor begins a mission to convince Jimmy that the chapel is worth saving—and that forgiveness and healing might happen within the chapel's walls . . . for both of them.

The Wedding Chapel Details

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From Reader Review The Wedding Chapel for online ebook

Jerry says

Like a Hallmark Channel telefilm, this sweet story shows the power of love...and that, as 1 Corinthians 13 says, "love endures all things".

Rissi says

Investing in "The Wedding Chapel" isn't hard. The decades long love story is sure to stir the reader's emotions and as is true to the signature style that is Rachel Hauck, the book has a wonderful concept of love so that despite the complex story, by its conclusion everything is wonderfully brought full circle. At the core, the story is about two couples. The first is Jimmy and Collette; 19240s, high school sweethearts, life hasn't been kind to the now elderly couple. Collette left, leaving Jimmy with a shattered heart and nothing but a shell of a dream. In the present day, Taylor married Jack on a whim – in fact, they eloped much to the shock and horror of Taylor's family. Six months into their marriage and Taylor senses their relationship is fading – fast. Leaving to return to her hometown for a job, it takes a wedding chapel, a reunion and a carefully hidden secret for over 50 years to open their hearts to new possibilities.

This is a kind of "raw" story. It's not the typical contemporary fluff in the same sense as Rachel's prior works. In fact, this reminded me of Nicholas Sparks "The Longest Ride" in some sense though as one would expect, "The Wedding Chapel" has a far more rewarding payoff. After a mediocre beginning (strictly on my part, not because the book was ill-written), about ½ way through the book, something clicked into place and the flow of this story worked its magic. I think my primary hesitation with the story was the four person point-of-views and within that, two of the POV's shift back in time as well as unfold in the present. For me, as a reader, this is often too "messy" for someone who enjoys a two-person switch-off, back-and-forth only between the primary characters. With this story, I understand why it was so important to dig deeper into Jimmy and Collette's story. Fortunately, the end result is really, quite beautiful.

I have to confess I liked (surprisingly) Taylor and Jack's story best. In particular I liked Jack. Written onto these pages is a very real and very flawed male protagonist, who underneath his insecurities and messy past lays a heart of gold. I never doubted that Jack loved Taylor with a kind of reverence, and I stand resolutely by the fact that he cherished her. He just needed to find a way to move past ghosts that were trapping him in a past he didn't know how to repair. Both of them came into their whirlwind romance with baggage, what they hadn't counted on was those ghosts rearing up, affecting who they were as one half of each other's hearts.

"The Wedding Chapel" is very different than Rachel's last adventures which took us on the adventure of a lifetime with their three royal brides, but it's a heartwarming story nonetheless. This is certainly one of those books that has that something special. Personally I found it quietly impacting. Everyone's story leads to a satisfying place and gives the characters a promising future, bringing them all to a place of new beginnings and forgiveness.

Sincere thanks to the publisher for providing a complimentary copy of this book for reviewing purposes.

Nicki Olsen says

My Thoughts

Wow. Wow,wow,wow,wow,wow,WOW! I do not have a clue how Rachel pulled this off but I am so glad she did!! Why am I so surprised she did? Let me list the reasons:

1. I generally am not a fan of stories about couples with marital problems. I read fiction to escape stress and that feels like non-fiction to me.
2. The story is not just told from one persons point of you but from four. FOUR!
3. This is one of those books where it switches from one scene to another-this one happens to be from 1948 to 2015!
4. I didn't feel lost when it ended. (This is not a bad thing, read to the end!)

The funny thing is, those are all things that make it difficult for me to get into a novel with. That and the fact that I had 2 days to read it. I finished it in 3 1/2 hours. No food. No water. No bathroom breaks. I don't know what you call it but around here...that's called obsession.

I was entirely and completely obsessed with this book. It was beautiful. Heartfelt. Well written. Captivating. Enchanting. Breathtaking. Surprising. Endearing. There are not enough words to describe how much I loved this book.

Absolutely worth reading 50,000,000,000 times. And I will. Believe me.

My overall thoughts

The best contemporary/historical mixed novel I have ever read! Beautiful and redemptive, this story will captivate you from beginning to end!

My Rating

I give The Wedding Chapel by Rachel Hauck...

5 stars!!

*I received this book from litfuse, the publisher, and the author in exchange for an honest review, which I have given. All thoughts were my own and I was not compensated in any other way.

Erin says

Make no mistake, this is the type of book that must be coupled with a steaming hot cup of tea and a cat curled at your feet. Rain or sunshine, completely optional. "The Wedding Chapel" is also one of those books that generally readers have a good indication about how the book is going to turn out. For me, it was a good weekend read; purely for pleasure! I loved the four people in this story, Taylor, Jack, Jimmy and Colette. Sometimes in this vast and often frightening world, it is nice to be able to escape into a story that is all heartbeat and rainbow.

I know, I know, I haven't really delved into the plot, but it's only because I don't want to give even a morsel of this beautiful story away.

Beth says

This was my first book by Rachel Hauck, and I think perhaps not the best one to start with of her books. I found it to be an intriguing story, but struggled with the telling of it. From the get-go, I was less than thrilled with the four different points of view. Perhaps this shows my youth and frame of mind at this point in life, but I was much more interested in Taylor and Jack's marriage than I was Jimmy and Colette's relationship from years ago. I'm just a reader that would much prefer to get into one or two character's heads and get to know them really well; instead, I felt like I was skimming each person's story. Because of that, some of the story-arcs just fell flat for me.

The faith element seems on the nose in some scenes, and while I love the idea of layered family secrets, they were pretty obvious from the beginning of the story. The story seemed to be trying to be a mystery and focused a lot on secrets of the past, whereas I wished it would have focused on the family dynamics of the present-day.

I did like Rachel's writing style and found it to be very readable. Again, this is my first book by this author, so please take my opinion for what it is. I did like the book, and I do still want to check out more of Rachel's books, so if anyone has any recommendations of what to try next, I'm all ears.

Hannah says

The Wedding Chapel

Okay, so...this one called up some pretty decided opinions from me, so I'm going to do my review in a slightly different format than usual to be sure I accurately express my thoughts/feelings.

1. Readability. Score 2/5. I tried months ago to read this book and laid it down in the first chapter. I tried again a few weeks later, the week it was coming out, in order to get my review up in time. I made it four chapters in and got frustrated and put it down. Last week I read a friend's review and decided to give it another try, so I knew I'd have to keep reading if I was going to manage. Once I got halfway, the going was better, as I'd gotten interested in the characters.

The grammar drove me batty. I honestly would have been able to read more easily if I'd had a print copy and a red pen so I could fix it along the way. Misplaced modifiers and passive verbs intruded a couple times as well. There were spelling errors on nearly every page in the last third of the galley copy. I hope that a lot of this would have been fixed before final publication, but after seeing how much made it into the final copy of Hauck's last title, I am doubtful that all of it was fixed.

2. Characters. Score 5/5. Honestly, it was the characters who got me to the last page. I wanted much more of Jack and Taylor and their attempts to make their marriage work. They're in love, but they come from broken families, and they are having a really hard time with communication and assumptions. I wanted them to fix things and have their happily-ever. Collette I didn't particularly like until the very end, and I found Jimmy likable but not compelling.

3. Plot. Score 3/5. Sweetest thing ever that a man would build a wedding chapel for the girl he loved, stone by stone and beam by beam. The rest of the plot, secrets and all, I guessed accurately by chapter 10. Peg's secret? Taylor's surprise? Learning about her grandparents? The history about her father? Sorry, got it all. Does that make me a jaded reader? Maybe.

4. Is it clean? Score 2/5. Ages 18+. Cursing: "he swore"; nothing specific stated, other than a 'golly g...' which in my world is a swear. Sex: stops short of explicit description...shows pretty much everything else; mentioned quite a bit. Morals: sleeping together outside of marriage, affairs, living together before marriage. (view spoiler)

5. Is it Christian? Score 0/5. If a book is published in the Christian market, I include this factor in my rating. So...Jesus was mentioned exactly one time in the entire book. One time. The Holy Spirit is mentioned about a half-dozen times. God is mentioned over and over, and 'having faith'; even 'miraculous' is used several times. One thing that was particularly surprising to me was that Taylor made a comment to Jack near the end of, "Weren't you one of the Christian kids in high school?" or something to effect. I mean, she's been married to him for six months and dated him for two, and she doesn't know? Reading the Bible is recommended once; it is said that Jimmy dealt with his bitterness by starting to go to church and reading through the New Testament and noticing how much it spoke of forgiveness. Other comments are made: "I'm trying to get to Heaven;" "Having faith enough to get to Heaven;" etc.

Don't get me wrong; the book is extremely spiritual, almost mystical. Some of the characters hear an audible heartbeat that they believe is the presence of God. I am not going to argue that point. I am going to point out something, though. Talking about God and feeling a presence and having faith is not the salvation of the Bible. There are many faiths and only one Saviour. As such, this book fails to be a Christian book. It could nearly as easily be a Jewish or New Age book. Faith in itself cannot save. Many people understand the existence of God/gods and the need to have faith in their lives. What makes Christians Christian is one thing: Jesus Christ. You cannot relegate Jesus to one reference and have a Christian book.

Overall score: 2/5.

The characters make immoral choices and do deal with the broken lives that result. There is a lot of heartache and a very broken large family picture. I feel that the mystical "heartbeat" of the story really fell flat. I had a hard time with a lot of the moral implications of the past as the story came to feel more and more like a classic soap opera. Yes, the ending is sweet, but the storytelling is not a winner for me. I found the time-period jumps jarring in a number of places, and even the flashbacks felt confusing a couple of times. Once I realized what the Big Reveal was going to be, I did feel a little cheated, like the author had been keeping secrets just for the fun of my not knowing what was going on.

It will probably be a while before I pick up another Rachel Hauck book.

There is so much more I could say, but I am trying my level best to avoid spoilers.

Thanks to NetGalley for a free ecopy to review.

Catherine says

I love Rachel's books and this was no exception. As always, highly recommended!!
#allthetears

Bess says

The last two chapters were my favorite. I love this author but for whatever reason, I didn't care for this book.
*shrug

Tressa (Wishful Endings) says

THE WEDDING CHAPEL was another roller-coaster ride of emotions from Rachel Hauck. I always feel like Rachel writes from the heart about real struggles and difficulties that readers can relate to on some level. This story was no different. It was heartbreaking, but also beautifully hopeful for two couples who must face their past and let it go in order to accept a better and brighter future. They must forgive and choose to not repeat mistakes. To open their hearts and risk the possibility of failure. To love in order to see that there is something better and stronger and more for them that God is pushing them towards. It was a book that left my heart full at the end and one I'd definitely recommend to those who have enjoyed this author's other books and who enjoy Christian romantic fiction.

This story was definitely character driven, which worked well since I loved the characters. They had insecurities and faults and histories that weren't perfect or even nice in many ways. They struggled. They faltered. They made mistakes. They also searched their hearts. Prayed. They made good decisions or what they thought was best and they fought for that. I cheered them on. I loved both the historical story of Jimmy and Collette (Oh, that sister Peg!!! How I wanted to strangle her!). I loved Jack and Taylor's story. There were moments that cracked me up or made me want to cry because the emotions and struggles were so true (such as the pregnancy feelings and cravings).

It was honestly just a great story. I thoroughly enjoyed it and would recommend it to book groups and those looking for something that will wring their heart, but be worth the pain for the joyful end.

Content: Some innuendo and closed-door scenes relative to the story and characters - clean.

Source: I would like to thank Zondervan for my complimentary copy through Litfuse Publicity for the book's tour, which did not affect my review in any way.

Staci says

The Wedding Chapel is a dual story line with a current day thread about Jack and Taylor and the history of Jimmy and Colette from the 1940s and 1950s. As a fan of historical fiction, I really enjoyed learning about Jimmy and Colette and how World War II impacted their lives.

All of the characters have struggles to work through and I enjoyed the journey. I look forward to reading other novels by Rachel Hauck.

Emilie Hendryx says

A multi-generational story of healing and restoration.

The intricate tapestry of *The Wedding Chapel* by Rachel Hauck creates a complex picture of interwoven lives. Each character thread is specifically placed. No one thread can shape the image by itself, but together they weave a tale that speaks of the power of healing and restoration.

The story of Taylor Branson and her new husband Jack is juxtaposed to an older tale of aging high school football coach, Jimmy Westbrook and his estranged love, Collette Greer. Battling miscommunication and the damaging toll that keeping secrets can take, these four lives are forever changed through the course of the story and their encounter with the wedding chapel Jimmy built for his true love.

I enjoyed this dual-time story set in past and present day New York and Hearts Bend Tennessee. Of course, the fact that Taylor was a photographer appealed to me as well, seeing as how I am also one. As I've come to expect with Rachel's books, her descriptions painted a vivid image for me and the depth of each character was strong. Emotions came off the page, affecting me in a personal way. I also enjoyed the ending and the strong themes that were wrapped together cementing the importance of restoration.

One thing I did want to see more of was Taylor and Jack's story. I felt like--at a certain point which I won't say so as not to spoil anything--I wanted to see more of why they changed not just how, but maybe I'm being nitpicky ;)

I'd definitely recommend this to fans of Rachel Hauck as well as those who enjoy romance, historical romance, and dual-time novels.

Originally posted on my blog: <http://eahendryx.blogspot.com/2015/09...>

I received a free copy of this book for review purposes, but was under no obligation to read the book or post a review. I do so under my own motivation and the opinions I have expressed in this review are honest and entirely my own.

Carole Jarvis says

Reviewed at *The Power of Words*: <http://bit.ly/1kxjH01>

From its rural setting in the small Tennessee town of Heart's Bend, to its rich characterization and emotional depth, *The Wedding Chapel* is my kind of book, a story that has that special something that's hard to describe. There's an ethereal quality, grace and elegance, symbolism, and the feel of God's heart throughout. Rachel's writing is exquisite and the feel of the story is a little reminiscent of the family saga format that I've always loved, only shorter. This is one of my favorite reads of the year.

First, a few facts: *The Wedding Chapel* is different from Rachel's royal wedding series, but it was fun to see a couple of its characters mentioned. The multi-generational narrative centers around two couples,

combining a classic historical romance with a contemporary romance/marriage gone off-course. The story is also told from four points of view, with scenes taking place from 1948 to the early 50s with Jimmy and Colette's backstory, and then Jack and Taylor in 2015. I enjoy this style and had no trouble keeping up with the flow. Characters are complex and there's nothing "fluffy" about this story. Real life issues are dealt with – jealousy, deceit, regrets, unforgiveness, lack of communication, bitterness, and the devastating, far-reaching effects of sin. Then, in contrast, we see repentance, confession, forgiveness, second chances, and love.

At the heart of this story is the wedding chapel, which beautifully symbolizes hope and healing, while vividly conveying that there is no time limit on love and second chances. Spiritual themes are present in a subtle way through most of the story, then shine strongly in a conversation toward the end between Jack and his foster dad, Sam Gillingham. Sam pointedly tells Jack that "the good Lord has freely given you everything you need to heal from such a deep hurt, but you choose to keep walking around wounded." Wow! I hate to think how often that could be said of me.

The story ends in an emotionally satisfying way, ripe with the joy of forgiveness and a fresh start – reminding me of these promises found in Christ as well. The Wedding Chapel is an enjoyable and compelling read. Highly recommended.

Thank you to Litfuse Publicity for providing a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Carrie Schmidt (Reading is My SuperPower) says

The Wedding Chapel entranced me from the very beginning. The dual timeline added an element of intrigue that kept me turning the pages and inhaling the words as quickly as possible. I especially loved the fact that readers get to see the story from various perspectives as the focus alternates between the four main characters. To me, this kept the plot flowing and the emotional investment strong.

As always, Rachel Hauck writes with grace and heart, her words flowing masterfully across the pages. The vivid characters felt like real people, and I was sad to say goodbye to them when the story concluded. I could have easily set up camp there in Heart's Bend for quite some time, and that's in large part a result of Hauck's talent for descriptive phrasing and depth. The town, the plot and the people wrapped around me like a hand-stitched quilt and refused to let go.

A fellow reviewer mentioned that she felt sin was "excused, justified, and even glorified" in The Wedding Chapel but I personally saw none of that here. What I saw was a family torn apart and devastated by sin. I saw broken hearts and wasted lives and needless pain. One small decision that could have been justified as only affecting two people rippled out and tangled countless people in its destruction. Some innocent. Some not so innocent.

Tucked away between the family history mystery and the wedding chapel is the even more important theme of love. Not just romance. But true love, the kind that lasts for sixty years even when rejected time and time again. The kind that sticks it out when the marriage falters or veers off course. The kind of love that confronts painful secrets and difficult truth and still forgives. The kind of love that accepts the abandoned, the orphaned, the hard-to-love and models the Divine picture of adoption – without manipulation or agenda. In today's world, this reminder is all the more important and vital, and Rachel Hauck paints it beautifully.

I could not help but think as I read The Wedding Chapel that it would make the perfect book club read – or a Hallmark movie. It has all the right elements: emotional tug, compelling characters, an enduring story, and

romance (of course). I would easily recommend it to fans of Kate Morton, Katie Ganshert, Susan Meissner or any of Hauck's previous novels, for that matter. This is a wonderfully uplifting and incredibly engrossing story that will remind you of the power of secrets and restoration ... and how the Truth (and the love of a Father) will set you free.

(I received a copy of this book in exchange for only my honest review.)

Dawn says

A wedding chapel that has never seen a wedding. The football coach who built the chapel stone by stone as a tribute to his lost, but never forgotten, love. The elderly actress with past regrets. A newlywed couple with communication problems. "Coach" Jimmy Westbrook poured his heart and soul into building a chapel for the wedding he hoped to have with his high school sweetheart, Collette Greer. For over sixty years, the chapel has stood vacant. It's a place where Jimmy's memories live. Photographer Taylor Branson left her hometown of Heart's Bend, Tennessee to make a name for herself in New York. She doesn't believe in love based on the track record of her family's failed marriages. When she's swept off of her feet by Jack Forester, also from Heart's Bend, Taylor opens her heart a bit to love. Jack's got his own demons that are hurting his relationship with Taylor. Despite his very real and deep love for Taylor, he struggles to share his heart. When Taylor is asked to photograph a wedding chapel in the hills of Tennessee, she reluctantly returns home. The beauty of the chapel, and Coach's obvious love for the woman he built it for, touch something deep inside Taylor. The longer she's in town, the more she discovers that she doesn't want to give up on her marriage. She's captivated by the beauty of the chapel and Coach's story. Yet Taylor also discovers that her own family is connected to both Jimmy and the chapel in a way that she never imagined. Will Jimmy live in the past or be willing to move on? And can Jack and Taylor build a strong marriage despite their rocky beginnings? And for Taylor's elderly aunt, Collette Greer, will she be able to finally gain the peace she longs for from the past that haunts her?

Wow. That's really all I can say about this book. Having read several others of Rachel's books including *The Wedding Dress*, I had a good idea as to what to expect with this one.

She has seamlessly woven the past with the present and four differing viewpoints to make this a novel I really couldn't put down. Even though the book is told from Taylor, Jack, Jimmy, and Collette's perspectives, I wasn't lost at all. Each piece just peeled back another layer of this remarkable story.

Why did it capture me so much? First of all, the story telling. My heart hurt for Jimmy and for Collette. I wanted Jack and Taylor to talk to each other. Needless to say, I was enthralled by the characters and their lives.

While this one is very different than the *Royal Wedding Series*, I still loved it. It was similar in style to the *Wedding Dress*.

I received this book for free from BookLook Bloggers for the purpose of reviewing. My thoughts and opinions are my own.

Recommended to fans of women's fiction, Rachel Hauck, Julie Lessman, Karen Kingsbury, Jody Hedlund, Denise Hunter, Irene Hannon, Susan May Warren, contemporary fiction.

Rating - 5 stars

Note - The review will be posted on Amazon on or around November 17, 2015.

Laura says

Although this book had its well written moments, I tend to struggle with how Hauck tends to write mystical or supernatural events into her stories. In *The Wedding Chapel*, she wrote about a heartbeat that two characters would hear loud and clear. This is weird to me and would honestly creep me out, but that's beside the point. When such mystical events take place it just ruins the credibility of the characters that she honestly does develop quite well. The second thing that I didn't care for, was the lack of communication for a duration of 60 years. To claim that you are in such deep love, yet to just walk away, is kind of unfathomable for me. Regardless of these personal frustrations with the book, Hauck does prove that she can pen strong characters that feel real, and that she can weave a message of forgiveness and hope with ease. I thought she did a good job of jumping back and forth between four point of views and two time periods smoothly. I enjoyed the book overall. It's just not a book I would be interested in reading again.
