

## REVIVE CHURCH- EPHESIANS #20

### PICTURE OF THE BRIDE

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Recap- Last week we covered the true meaning of mutual submission. True submission is under a person's voluntary choice to be under the influence of another. **In the Kingdom of God submission protects, ensures, and secures it never demands.**

Ephesians 5:25-32 25Husbands, love your wives, *just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28*So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31“*For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.*” 32*This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

Recall that I said that there were seven pictures of the church given throughout the book of Ephesians. **The assembly, the body, the workmanship, the family, the temple, the bride and the army.** *Today we are going to take another look at Ephesians 5 but this time instead of emphasizing submission, I want to emphasize the picture of the bride.*

**Paul is speaking to believing husbands about their relationship to their wives he speaks of love devotion and care, yet this is not the full meaning of the passage. Paul goes on to say that the husband and wife relationship is patterned after the relationship of Christ and His church and he adds this is a great or profound mystery. *This great mystery of oneness between Christ and His bride, the church. The two shall become one!***

**Human History began with a marriage and it will end with a marriage. A remarkable feature of the creation story was that God had everything ready for Adam before he appeared on the scene.** His entire environment was there vegetation, animals etc. **This is a wonderful picture of God's provision for us. In the new creation everything we need has already been prepared for us when we arrive on the scene.**

**There was just one thing missing for Adam, a mate.** God had a purpose in not immediately providing a mate for Adam, He wanted Adam to understand something of the longings that he has for personal fellowship with human beings. **He allowed Adam to experience the lack of that fellowship, the lack of a mate and then he provided the mate (Genesis 2).**

**One day just as God presented eve to Adam, he is going to present the church to Jesus at the marriage supper of the lamb.**

***Revelation 19: 6***And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7*Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the*

*Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” 8And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

- **Notice the bride is expected to provide or prepare her own clothing.** In the Bible fine linen is always a type of purity, the scripture states the fine linen is the righteous acts of the Saints or the righteousness of the Saints.
- **There are two Greek words for righteousness.** The first is imputed righteousness, (*dikaosune*, dik-ah-yos-oo'-nay) when you and I believe in Jesus Christ his righteousness is imputed to us, we are made righteous with his righteousness. The other Greek word for righteousness (*dikaioma*, dik-ah'-yo-mah) is righteousness lived out, or our acts of righteousness.
- The word used describing the fine linen, the righteous acts of the Saints is *dikaioma*, righteousness that has been lived out. **Think of it this way: imputed righteousness is what gets you into heaven, lived out righteousness is what we will be arrayed in for all eternity. The bride has made herself ready by her righteous acts.**

**In every culture there is one rule about marriage. The bridegroom never prepares the bride, the bride always prepares herself.** The responsibility is placed on her. The scripture says that the bride has made herself ready by her righteous acts. **The imputed righteousness of Christ will not avail for the bridal feast it has to be the lived-out righteousness.** Something that we may not spend a lot of time thinking about has an eternal significance **We are preparing for a wedding and Jesus places an importance on our garments.**

**Praise God we are not alone and are not meant to enter into a striving for religious perfection hoping God approves of us.** We are however meant to enter in to a fellowship with Holy Spirit guided by the word of God and strengthened by one another.

**A beautiful picture of this is given to us from the book of Esther.**

*Esther 2:8b-Esther also was taken to the king's palace, into the care of Hegai the custodian of the women. 9Now the young woman pleased him, and she obtained his favor; so he readily gave **beauty preparations** to her, besides her allowance*

*15Now when the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his daughter, to go in to the king, she requested nothing but what Hegai the king's eunuch, the custodian of the women, advised. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her.*

*I feel that this story from Esther is a picture for the bride of Christ. Just as Esther only listened to Hegai, we have been given the Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth, sanctifies us by his power, convicts us of sin, leads us into all righteousness. Holy Spirit brings us into true beauty preparations. If we like Esther will do nothing but what the Holy Spirit and the holy Bible tells us, if we will emulate the life of Jesus Christ and not listen to the voice or advice of another, we will be amazed on that Day, the garments that we will be wearing.*

*26that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. Eph.5:26-27*

Jesus sanctifies and cleanses the bride through the washing of water by the word, He washes us whiter than snow, it is Christ that makes us holy and without blemish! We enter into His finish work and spend our lives in this process of the bridegroom perfecting us. Many of us may need to upgrade to a Biblical perspective of the church, the bride of Christ that the groom is coming for. If your eschatology or end time belief is one that over emphasizes difficulty, hardship suffering over beauty you may want to reevaluate and realign so that the image Christ has for his church becomes the image that you have in your spirit. Yes, we will have difficulty yes we will have hardship and suffering but that is never to be the primary theme of the church's life rather the beauty, excellence and worthiness of Jesus Christ who is coming back for a bride that is the image of Himself, spotless, pure and burning with desire for him. The church will be permeated with the manifest presence of God. When you see a young woman who is really in love with her husband her face just beams with love for him, she is radiant. This is how God the father wants the church to be for his Son! A radiant church without spot or wrinkle unbelievably beautiful and God will accomplish this task He is going to do this!

**What is required in our relationship to Christ, the bridegroom as his bride? Listen to what Paul writes to the church in Corinth.**

*2Corinthians 11:2-4-2For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!*

To understand this picture it helps to be acquainted with the basic principles of marriage among the Jewish people in which there were two main ceremonies.

- **The first was betrothal which was something like an engagement.**
- **The 2nd which usually followed about a year later was the actual marriage ceremony** and it was followed by the physical union between the man and his bride.
- In Hebrew custom the **betrothal was a very sacred, binding covenant agreement between a man and a woman.** Although they still lived apart and did not come together in physical relationship, the woman was bound to the man by that covenant.
- If in the course of that time she broke her engagement to marry someone else or had sexual relations with another man she was treated as an adulteress and the covenant was officially nullified by something that was known as a divorce. This practice is exemplified in the story of Joseph and Mary they were betrothed but not yet married.

In a similar way when we become Christians we are engaged to Christ, but the marriage has not yet taken place that is still in the future. **In the time between engagement and marriage, our loyalty to Christ is being tested.** *Paul was saying I want you to be a chaste virgin when you marry the bridegroom. A reminder that he was speaking to Corinthian Christians who were formerly prostitutes homosexuals and drunkards yet the grace and blood of Jesus gave them the privilege of being redeemed and cleansed therefore in God's sight of being a pure virgin. It was as if they'd never sinned.* **Paul states be careful not to lose your purity or be careful that you don't get tricked into wrong relationships that will make you unfit to be the bride.**

1. Don't let the enemy corrupt your mind from the pure simplicity of faith in Jesus Christ and total commitment to him. The enemy and culture want to blemish the purity that is in Christ and the devil is always trying to slither into the garden of the bride and bring corruption.
2. Don't accept a different version of Christ, or the gospel.

Derek Prince

*“At the close of this age, it is my firm conviction that there will be only two groups in christendom not two denominations but two groups. One will be the bride and the other will be the harlot. What will the difference be? Water baptism? Speaking in tongues? I don't believe so. I believe the distinction will be loyalty to Jesus Christ. The bride will remain true the harlot will be seduced from her loyalty to Jesus.”*

Communion

**Matthew 26:26-29 (NKJV) 26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke [it,] and gave [it] to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave [it] to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. 28 “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 “But I say to**

you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.”