

# **THE CHURCH**

## **4. The Bride of Christ**



### **Introduction**

The Bible gives us different pictures of the church, to help us understand God's purpose for us. We have already seen that the church is like a temple, or building, and also a family. Another wonderful illustration of the church is found in Ephesians 5, and it is that of the church as 'The Bride of Christ.'

### **Scripture Reading: Ephesians 5:23-33**

#### **A. CHRIST IS THE HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOM**

Let's begin by looking at Jesus, who is the Heavenly Bridegroom.

##### **A. Christ is the head of the church**

We see in these verses that Jesus is the head of the church, just as the husband is head of the wife. As head, the husband has the responsibility to lead his wife and family and provide for them, and in the same way, Jesus, as our 'husband', leads and provides for us. See Ephesians 5:23.

##### **B. Christ loves the church**

Just as a young man loves the woman he wants to marry, our Heavenly Bridegroom loves us. Ephesians 5:25. This love is not sentimental or physical, it is a love that gives. Jesus loved us so much he gave his life for us, and there is no greater love than that. Read John 15:13.

Many people are searching for someone to love them, but another person can never fully satisfy our deepest inner needs. A wife or a husband can't, even though they may be caring and loving. The only one who can is Jesus, because his love for us is perfect. His love can fill our inner being, and meet our greatest longings. See Romans 5:5.

#### **B. THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST**

If Christ is the Bridegroom, then the church is the Bride. There are 3 things we learn about the Bride from the verses in Ephesians.

##### **A. The church is to submit to Christ**

In Ephesians 5:22, 24 the apostle Paul reminds wives to submit to their husbands. When a woman marries her husband, she is choosing to come under his authority, and the same is true when we surrender our lives to Jesus. We come under his authority, and his authority is greater than anyone else's! When we submit to Jesus and obey what he tells us, it proves we truly belong to him. This is what it says in John 14:15 - 'If you love me, you will obey what I command.'

Whenever we meet together as the church, it is not to do whatever we want to, but to submit to the leadership of Jesus and please him.

## **B. The church is to respect Christ**

Not only is a wife told to submit to her husband, but she is also told to respect him. We see this in Ephesians 5:33. Respect is not just doing what someone says, it is an attitude of the heart. If a wife does what her husband says, but despises him in her heart, it doesn't please the Lord.

In the same way, the church is not only to do what Jesus says, but to honour and respect him. Some Christians think that God will forgive them, so they don't take sin very seriously. It is true he loves and forgives, but this kind of attitude shows that someone doesn't truly honour Jesus. We must remember who he is! He is Lord, and has been given authority by God over all heaven and earth. One day we will stand before him and give an account of how we lived this life.

When we sincerely honour him it will not be difficult to obey him.

## **C. The church is to be pure**

The last thing we learn about the church as the Bride, is that she is to be pure and spotless. Look at Ephesians 5:26-27 again. Jesus gave his life for the church, so we can be cleansed from our sin and made clean. He wants a beautiful bride.

Brides often spend a great amount of money on the gown they wear on their wedding day, but Jesus is looking for a Bride who has kept their clothing spotless and lived a righteous life. Read these wonderful verses about the Bride: Revelation 19:7-8.

## **Conclusion**

The church is 'engaged' to Jesus Christ, and when he returns the wedding feast will take place. It is called 'The Wedding of the Lamb' in Revelation 19:7. Once the wedding has taken place, we will be with Christ forever. Notice it says in that verse, 'the bride has made herself ready'. How can you make yourself ready? By seeking to obey Jesus day by day. If you do sin, be quick to repent and ask him to wash you clean again. As you honour and respect Jesus, and submit to his Word, you will become pure and spotless, and be ready to meet him. So let's prepare!