

Theme: The Church is the Bride of Christ, Whom He loves and for Whom He gives Himself that she might be glorious, full of the beauty of holiness.

## I. Intro - Mark Antony in Julius Caesar

- A. Shakespeare's play about the death of Caesar
- B. Antony's speech - real point only as he moves along
- C. Paul does something similar in Ephesians 5:22-33
- D. Question 70: What is the Church?  
The Church is the Body, Bride, and Temple of Christ, the community of all true believers for all time.
- E. What does it mean that the Church is the Bride of Christ?

## II. A Passage About Marriage?!

- A. On one level, Paul is speaking about marriage  
Wives, submit to your husbands... <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives... <sup>33</sup> However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Ephesians 5:22, 25, 33
  - 1. Paul is giving household instructions from 5:22-6:10
  - 2. The first, longest, and most important is instructions about husbands and wives
  - 3. Though this passage is misunderstood and maligned by many today, it is full of rich biblical teaching on how husbands and wives should relate in marriage.
  - 4. I certainly encourage all husbands and wives to read, meditate on, and apply these instructions
  - 5. But we must never lose sight of the underlying reality on which Paul bases these instructions.

- B. The deeper point - Christ and His Bride, the Church  
For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. Ephesians 5:23-27
  - 1. Paul roots the instructions in the relationship between Christ and the Church
  - 2. Wives learn their role and responsibilities by meditating on the roles and responsibilities of the Church and Her relationship to Christ.
  - 3. Husbands learn their role and responsibilities by meditating on the roles and responsibilities of the Christ and His relationship to the Church.
  - 4. The surprising twist: which is the reality and which is the reflection of the reality  
"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." <sup>32</sup> **This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church.**  
<sup>33</sup> However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Ephesians 5:31-33
    - a. The point is ultimately about Christ and the Church
    - b. The real marriage is between Christ and the Church, and human marriage was given to be a physical, visible reflection of that deeper, older union which will survive into eternal ages.

### III. The Church: The Bride of Christ

#### A. God's people are His Bride

1. This idea is not something restricted to this passage
2. This idea runs from the OT through to Revelation  
I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion.  
<sup>20</sup> I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord. Hosea 2:19–20

For **your Maker is your husband** — the Lord Almighty is his name — the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth. Isaiah 54:5

Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, **I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign Lord, and you became mine.** Ezekiel 16:8

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For **the wedding of the Lamb has come**, and his bride has made herself ready. <sup>8</sup> Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Revelation 19:7–8

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, **prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.** <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. **They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.** Revelation 21:1–3

3. The idea also underlies when God refers to His people's unfaithfulness as spiritual adultery (Hosea; Ezekiel 16), and also books like Ruth and Song of Solomon have spiritual applications relating to the Church as God's Bride.
4. The reason for the covenant motto “I am your God and you are my people” is because we are His Bride, the one He has brought to Himself, betrothed, and loved.

#### B. The implications of the Church as the Bride of Christ

1. Christ loves the Church and cares for her needs  
Husbands, love your wives, just as **Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...** <sup>29</sup> After all, no one ever hated his own body, but **he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church —** <sup>30</sup> **for we are members of his body.** Eph 5:25, 29–30
  - a. Jesus loved the Church and gave Himself up for her
  - b. Jesus feeds and cares for the Church
  - c. As a believer, you can be certain that You have never been unloved. Jesus has loved you from eternity, gave Himself for you, and will care and keep you until you into eternity.
2. Christ is working to make the Church glorious, full of the beauty of holiness  
Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup> **to make her holy**, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as **a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.** Eph 5:25–27
  - a. Jesus loves the Church so much He wants her to be radiant and glorious, without stain, wrinkle, or blemish

- b. This means the Church must be filled with the beauty of holiness
- c. Jesus gives His Word to the Church so that she will not be seduced and deceived by the shifting standards of this present world, but will be formed by God's unchanging will and Word.
- d. Jesus loves the Church so much He will not leave us in our sin, but works to purify us through His Word.

### 3. The Church must submit to Jesus

Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.  
Ephesians 5:24

- a. The Church is called to submit to Jesus
- b. Jesus is our Husband, our Head, and our Lord, and so we must willingly and gladly submit ourselves to Him.

### 4. The Church must be faithful to Jesus

I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. 2  
Corinthians 11:2

- a. The church in Corinth was becoming unfaithful to Jesus, rejecting the call to holiness, and embracing a host of sins and vices that were contrary to God's Eternal Law.
- b. Paul reminds them that they are the Bride of Christ, and therefore must be faithful, not committing spiritual fornication or adultery.
- c. Whatever external pressures may come, the Church must always remain faithful to Jesus.

### 5. I must love and honor the Church as Jesus' Bride Husbands, love your wives, just as **Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her** Ephesians 5:25

- a. Jesus loves the Church! She is His Bride!
- b. Despite the flaws and failures of the Church, we must love her, speak well of her, pray for her, and honor her.

#### c. Derek Webb - The Church Lyrics

I have come with one purpose  
To capture for myself a bride  
By my life she is lovely  
And by my death she's justified

I have always been her husband  
Though many lovers she has known  
So with water I will wash her  
And by my word alone

So when you hear  
The sound of the water  
You will know  
That you're not alone

Cause I havn't come for only you  
But for My people to pursue  
You can not care for Me with no regard for her  
If you love Me, you will love the church

- 1. Jesus does not love just me - He loves the Church
- 2. To love Jesus, we MUST love the Church

## IV. Applying the Word

- A. Do I understand what it means for the Church to be the Bride of Christ?
1. The Church is not just a human organization trying to do good and carry out God's will - the Church is the very Bride of Christ.
  2. This means that believers are not just servants of Christ - we are His beloved.
  3. Do I know the depth of Christ's love for me and for other believers?
  4. Do I view the Church - with all her flaws - as the beloved Bride of Christ?
  5. What do my words and actions towards the Church indicate of my view of her?
- B. The Table - Jesus Feeds and Cares for His Church, and we renew our vows to Him
1. At the Table, we celebrate and receive Jesus' sacrifice and gift of Himself for us
  2. At the Table, we give ourselves back to Jesus and renew our covenant vows to Him.
  3. Come, be fed and received by Christ, and give yourself back to Him!

### The Church - The Bride of Christ

Ephesians 5:22-33

September 13, 2020

Communion

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Teaching keywords: Church; catechism; Jesus; covenant; eschatology

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, <sup>17</sup> encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church — <sup>30</sup> for we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup> This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church.

<sup>33</sup> However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Ephesians 5:22–33