

☞ **What is the Church?**

The Bride of Christ

☞ Church = ekklesia... **people called forth with a purpose**

☞ Here's our creed regarding the Church: *"I am part of the Church, which is God's primary means of accomplishing His purposes on Earth."*

☞ **The Church is... we are... the Body of Christ:**
Every part is important and needed; there is Diversity with Unity

The Church is... we are... the Temple of God:
We are his People; we are Prepared; we welcome his Presence

The Church is... we are... The Family of God:
Brothers and sisters rooted in love and respect for each other

☞ **The Church is... we are... the Bride of Christ**

☞ **Ephesians 5:22-33**

☞ **Christ as the groom** is committed to these things:

Love – see 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. **5** It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. **6** Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. **7** It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. **8** Love never fails.

☞ **Gave himself to make us holy and clean; to present us to himself.**

- sacrificed himself
 - to purify and free us from guilt
 - to wash away the dirt
- so that we can stand beside him

☞ **Church as the bride** should be committed to these:

Submit – to arrange under; be subject to; to obey

Respect – reverence; in awe of

Become one with Christ – singular; more and more like Jesus

Revelation 1:15 ...his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.

Revelation 19:6 ...Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah!"

☞ Proverbs 31:10-31 The wife of noble character

☞ v11 Her husband has full confidence in her = **trustworthy**

☞ v12 She brings him good not harm, all the days of her life. = **honor & praise to Jesus**

☞ v13 She...works with eager hands. = **diligent servant**

15 She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family

17 She sets about her work vigorously;

27 does not eat the bread of idleness.

☞ v16 She considers a field and buys it; = **wisdom**

26 She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

☞ v20 She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. = **generous & thoughtful**

☞ v21 When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet. = **prepared**

25 she can laugh at the days to come.

☞ v22 she is clothed in fine linen and purple. = **righteous & royal**; authority

25 She is clothed with strength and dignity;

Revelation 19:8 (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

☞ The Wedding Ceremony - Characteristics of the Bride:

☞ White dress – **purity**

2 Corinthians 7:1

let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. (*Reverence leads to purity*)

Philippians 2:14-15

Do everything without complaining or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure... (*Contentment and cooperation lead to purity*)

1 John 1:8-10

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (*Confession leads to purity*)

☞ Veil – **modesty**

1 Timothy 2:9

I also want women to dress modestly

Colossians 3:12-13 (*spiritual clothes for believers*)

...clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

☞ "Blushing" – **innocence**

Romans 16:19

I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

Innocent = unmixed; unharmed; unspoiled

☞ Ring – covenant; promise; **belonging**

John 3:29

The bride belongs to the bridegroom.

1 Peter 2:9

a people belonging to God...

☞ New Name – **identity and status**

Revelation 3:12

(to him who overcomes) I will write on him the name of my God

Titus 2:14

a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

☞ Preparation

Revelation 19:7

his bride has made herself ready.

1 Peter 1:13-14

prepare your minds for action...

Titus 3:1

be ready to do whatever is good...

Matthew 24:44

So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

This idea of being prepared is a key element in studying the church. As the temple of God we talked about being prepared for his Presence, his Purposes, and his Plans. And here again today, as the Bride of Christ, we are to be prepared: looking to the future; heavenly minded; ready to do good; ready for his return.

☞ Let's be prepared for the Lord: **ready to worship; ready to serve; ready to enter his presence.**

All of these things for the bride (preparation, purity, principled) are things that Christ, the groom is working in us. Remember the introduction? He works in us to be holy; to be cleansed; and to be presented to himself. So, our part is not so much about trying harder as it is to cooperate with his work in us. That takes us back to the idea of **submission** and ☞ **respect** and ultimately **becoming one with Christ**. He's doing all the work because he loves us.

☞ **Loved by the groom**

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

Proverbs 31:28-29

her husband... praises her: 29 "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."

Song of Solomon 4:9

You have stolen my heart, my bride; you have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes

☞ **Remember who you are! You are the bride of Christ! He loves you intensely!** He wants you **to be pure and holy**; a trustworthy and wise servant; generous and thoughtful; honoring and **submissive to him; becoming more like him**. Church, we are his bride! We are marrying into a royal kingdom. And he is full of love for us!

Men, don't fret. Next week will be geared more for you.