

john 15:4
A b i d e in **ME**



Bible studies for disciples who make disciples

Loudonville Community Church

Volume 6 - Number 12
The week of February 14, 2021

Christ in You: *Enjoying Our Union with Christ*

Betrothed to Christ

Ephesians 5:22-33; 2 Corinthians 11:1-3

PREVIEW: METAPHORS AND MYSTERY

The believer's union to Christ is a wonderful reality, but difficult to grasp. Therefore, the writers of Scripture, even Jesus Himself, used word pictures, similes, and metaphors to communicate the mystery of our union. Read the following passages and identify the metaphor or image each one provides into this profound reality.

John 15:5 _____

1 Corinthians 3:16 _____

Colossians 1:18 _____

I. MARRIAGE AS A METAPHOR OF OUR UNION WITH CHRIST

Vines, buildings and bodies are just a few of the ways Scripture speaks of our relationship with Christ. One of the more intimate and personal metaphors found in Scripture depicts our union with Christ to be like marriage.

Read Ephesians 5:22-33

²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸In the same way husbands should love their 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 Christ does the church, ³⁰because we are members of his body. ³¹"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

STUDY NOTE

This passage is considered crucial in understanding the obligations and duties of husbands and wives in Christian marriage. Appropriately, its phrases are often dissected and closely examined. Some readers get hung up on words like *submit* or the reference to the headship of the husband and often miss the main point.

(Exercise) In the passage above, circle every reference to Christ (including pronouns) and underline every reference to the church (including pronouns).

1. What does this simple exercise tell you about the main point of the passage?
2. Reflect on the metaphor of marriage as a picture of Christ and His bride (i.e. the church). What do you notice?
3. In verse 32, we again encounter the word *mystery*. What is the mystery Paul is making known here?

STUDY NOTE

Paul's main point is not just about Christian marriage. Paul teaches that the original institution of marriage was created to speak of Christ and the church. In verse 31, the Apostle quotes Genesis 2:24, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

4. How does the reference, "the two shall become one flesh," correspond to Christ's union with His church?
5. Read John 17:21-23. Jesus prayed that we might know and enjoy this unparalleled oneness with Him that He shares with the Father. What is the power in appropriating the reality that Christ shares a one-flesh union with His people?
6. Review the entire passage again and list all the things that Christ does for the sake of His bride, the church?
7. What is the one activity that is ascribed to the Church in this passage?
8. How does this passage lead you to love and savor Christ more?
9. In what ways should our marriages reflect this one-flesh union?

II. PROTECTING OUR ONE-FLESH UNION WITH CHRIST

STUDY NOTE

The union of Christ and His bride points to an exclusive relationship. We are to worship and live for Him alone. However, another powerful metaphor found throughout the Bible is the picture of spiritual unfaithfulness on the part of God's people. In the New Testament, the Corinthian church was imperiled by such unfaithfulness. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians records his pastoral quest to call them back to their marital-allegiance to their Husband.

Read 2 Corinthians 11:1-3

"I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! 2 For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. 3 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ."

10. To whom were the Corinthians betrothed? (Note the past tense indicates a completed action with continuing results).
11. Paul likens his concern for the Corinthians to a divine jealousy. How can jealousy be a divine quality?

What insight does this give us regarding God's feelings for His people?

12. As in Ephesians 5:31, he goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden to find a parallel to the Corinthian church's peril. To whom does he compare their growing seduction and why?
13. Sin is a betrayal of our union with Christ. In what ways can the church, in general, be in danger of spiritual adultery?

Why do we worship other things in place of Christ?

14. What false lovers entice you to forget your true Husband and the faithfulness He deserves?

(Please turn to the back page to spend a moment of meditation and worship through the hymn:
(The Church's One Foundation)).

Sermon Notes: *Betrothed to Christ*

Ephesians 5:22-33; 2 Corinthians 11:1-3

THE
BIBLE RECAP
BY D-GROUP

Sunday, February 14 thru Saturday, February 20, 2021

Leviticus 5-7, Leviticus 8-10, Leviticus 11-13, Leviticus 14-15,
Leviticus 16-18, Leviticus 19-21, Leviticus 22-23

Closing Meditation

(You may choose to sing together or
simply read this hymn)

The Church's One Foundation

*The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the Word:
From heav'n He came and sought her
To be His holy Bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.*

*Elect from every nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation,
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy Name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.*

*'Mid toil and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore;
Till, with the vision glorious,
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.*

*Yet she on earth hath union
With God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won:
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we,
Like them, the meek and lowly,
In love may dwell with Thee.*

