

Introduction

We are in the midst of a short series on the church. We saw that the Greek word for church is *ekklesia*, and it means those who are called out. The church is God's people, who have been called out of darkness into His light. They have been sanctified, which means to be made holy, and therefore, they are called saints.

Second, we saw that the church is made up of disciples, which means learners. Being a disciple is not a choice that some people in the church decide to do; if you are a follower of Jesus, you are called a disciple. As disciples, we are learning to live our lives like Jesus, our Lord.

Third, we saw that the church is God's family. When we receive Christ, we are adopted into God's family, and we can call Him, Abba, Father. Consequently, we are all brethren, which is the plural of brother; We are brothers and sisters in Christ, and we are to show the same love and care for one another that a family should have.

Fourth, we saw that the church is also the body of Christ. Christ is the Head of the church, and we are the members of the body. When we receive Christ, we become part of the global body of Christ. However, for us to follow Christ, we must be part of the local body of Christ. We are to obey and submit to our leaders, those who watch over our souls and who will give account to God for our lives.

Our focus today in this fifth message on the church is on the bride of Christ. In Revelation 19:7-10, John wrote, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

(Re 19:7-8) "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." {8} It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

Who is this bride of Christ, and how did she become the bride of Christ? In 2 Corinthians 11, Paul wrote that he was jealous for them with a godly jealousy, for he betrothed them to one husband, so that to Christ he might present them as a pure virgin." The church is the bride of Christ. When we receive Christ, and become part of the church, the bride of Christ.

(2 Co 11:2) "For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you *as* a pure virgin."

In this message we are going to look at the betrothal to Christ. Second, we will look at the preparation for the wedding, both by the groom and by the bride. Third, we will look at the marriage of the Lamb. The betrothal and marriage of the Lamb comes out of the Jewish culture, and so I will be speaking about the various aspects of the Jewish proposal, preparation, and marriage to give us a better understanding.

Who is the bride of Christ?

1. The betrothal to Christ
2. The preparation for the marriage
3. The marriage of the Lamb

1. The betrothal to Christ

In Revelation 19:7, the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. That is the culmination of the marriage. We need to go back to the beginning of the process, the betrothal, to see what has taken place to arrive at this point.

(Re 19:7) “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.”

When I married my wife, that was not the beginning of our relationship; it was the beginning of a new chapter, but we had known each other for four years prior to being married. Shortly after I met Karen, my parents came to Fort Worth to visit me, where I was a Sophomore at Texas Christian University (TCU), I brought Karen to meet them at the Holiday Inn in Euless, where they were staying. When my mother met Karen she said to me, “If I looked the whole world over for a perfect wife for you, I could not find a better one. You had better marry her.” The Holy Spirit told my mother that she was the one for me. At that point, I had not been thinking of marriage; I was only a sophomore in college and had just turned eighteen years old. The only thing that I knew was that I really liked her, and enjoyed being with her. We did lots of things together, took walks, talked, and had lots of fun.

Karen and I dated for four years before getting married. I was a year ahead of Karen and so I had graduated and played professional golf for a year, while Karen was finishing her senior year. There was not a question in my mind about marrying her; I was waiting for Karen to graduate before we got married. After she graduated, I went to see her in Fort Worth on my way home from the Regional Qualifier for PGA Tour Qualifying School. My plan was just to visit her, not to get engaged to her at that time. I intended to get more established in my career before marrying her, but when I saw the garage apartment that she was living in, something welled up inside of me, and I asked her to marry me. I called her father to ask her hand in marriage, and he told me no. Karen got on the phone and spoke to her dad. He thought I was someone else, and did not realize that it was me, so he gave me his approval on one condition; I had to take both hands. A couple of weeks later, I earned my PGA Tour card, and my parents helped me buy a truck and fifth wheel to travel the PGA Tour in. So, when we got married, we had a place to live, and we traveled the tour together.

After asking Karen to marry me, she went home to Cincinnati. She and her mother planned our wedding ceremony. They bought the wedding dress, and picked out the bride maids dresses, the tux for me, and for the groom’s men. We had the small rehearsal dinner at her parent’s house, and it was lovely. Our wedding was held at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, where her parents were members. It was a lovely service, and we had our first communion together as a married couple during the ceremony.

I did not grow up in the Jewish culture, and my betrothal and wedding did not follow the exact pattern that we see in scripture. To help us understand being the bride of Christ, I want to take a few minutes to go over the steps in a Jewish marriage.

The marriage begins with the marriage proposal. The groom established a marriage covenant with the bride, which is called a ketubah, which is a legal document. Sometimes the friend of the groom, the shoshbin, would help prepare this legal document. The shoshbin would help with the contract, the negotiations, and would act as a legal witness and advocate. After the marriage ceremony, his duties as shoshbin were completed.

When a Jewish man betroths a woman, they are legally married. The marriage is consummated when the two become one after the wedding ceremony. If the engagement were broken off before it was consummated, it would require a certificate of divorce. When you and I became Christians, we were betrothed to Christ. We were given a new covenant, and were from that point on legally married. We are the bride of Christ.

The betrothal to a bride was also done with a payment to the bride's father, a dowry (Strong's H4119), which is called a mohar. When I betrothed Karen, I did not have to pay a dowry. If I would have had to pay a dowry, I would have had to wait to get married. When David was invited by Saul to marry his daughter, Michal, David said, "Is it trivial in your sight to become the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man and lightly esteemed?" So, Saul said that he did not desire a dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. Saul was deceitful, and was actually hoping that David would fall at the hands of the Philistines. However, David rose up with his men and struck down two hundred men, and brought the foreskins to the king, and Saul gave him Michal for a wife. The dowry did not always have to be money.

(1 Sa 18:20–27) "Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. When they told Saul, the thing was agreeable to him. {21} Saul thought, 'I will give her to him that she may become a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.' Therefore Saul said to David, 'For a second time you may be my son-in-law today.' {22} Then Saul commanded his servants, 'Speak to David secretly, saying, 'Behold, the king delights in you, and all his servants love you; now therefore, become the king's son-in-law.'" {23} So Saul's servants spoke these words to David. But David said, "Is it trivial in your sight to become the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man and lightly esteemed?" {24} The servants of Saul reported to him according to these words *which* David spoke. {25} Saul then said, "Thus you shall say to David, 'The king does not desire any dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies.'" Now Saul planned to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. {26} When his servants told David these words, it pleased David to become the king's son-in-law. Before the days had expired {27} David rose up and went, he and his men, and struck down two hundred men among the Philistines. Then David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. So Saul gave him Michal his daughter for a wife."

In Hosea 2, God told us that He would betroth us to Him forever. He would betroth us in righteousness, justice, lovingkindness, compassion, and faithfulness. Then, He said that we would know the Lord. We have been betrothed to Jesus with a holy and righteous covenant. The result of our betrothal is that we will know the Lord. We will have intimacy with God. When I think of marriage, it is the most intimate relationship we have on earth. When a man and woman are married, they are naked and unashamed. There is complete openness and trust. They know one another. There is no one that knows and understands me like my wife does. My children do not know and understand me like she does. She really knows and understands me. In the same way, God wants us to know Him and have intimacy with Him. He betrothed us to Him so that we would know Him, and have an intimate relationship with Him.

(Ho 2:19–20) "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and in compassion, {20} And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD."

In 2 Corinthians 11:2, Paul wrote that he had betrothed them to one husband, so that to Christ he might present them as a pure virgin. Paul had shared the gospel with them and brought them to

Christ. Every person who has heard the gospel, believed, and received Christ into their lives has been betrothed to Christ. Paul had a godly jealousy towards them. God is a jealous God. He does not want us to go after other gods or idols, which is often referred to as spiritual adultery.

(2 Co 11:2) “For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you *as* a pure virgin.”

In 1 Corinthians 6:20, Paul wrote that we have been bought with a price, and therefore we are to glorify God in our body. We also find in Revelation 5:9, that Jesus was slain, and with His blood He purchased for God men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. Jesus paid the dowry or mohar for His bride with His own blood.

(1 Co 6:19–20) “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? {20} For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”

(Re 5:9) “And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”

Often, when a man was betrothed, he would give a gift or gifts to the bride. These were called a Mattan. This was not the dowry or mohar, it was something in addition. When Abraham’s servant found Rebekah, he gave gifts to the family of the bride. We find that when Jesus entered into a covenant with us, He gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is a pledge of our inheritance. With the Holy Spirit, we have many gifts of the Spirit.

(Ge 24:53) “The servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother.”

(Eph 1:13–14) “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, {14} who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God’s* own possession, to the praise of His glory.”

2. The preparation for the marriage

After the betrothal, the groom would return to his father’s house and begin to prepare for his marriage. Even though he was legally married, he would prepare for the consummation of that marriage and the ceremony. Unlike our culture, where the bride and her family prepare, the groom bore that responsibility. The length of time between the betrothal and the wedding was generally twelve months, but that was not set in stone. This time of separation was called the kiddushim, which means sanctification, or to be set apart. The bride and groom were separated from one another, yet they were set apart for one another, or sanctified.

In the first message in this series on the church, Paul wrote to the saints in the church in Corinth, those who had been sanctified in Christ Jesus. The word, sanctified, means to be made holy, to be set apart, and consecrated. When we were betrothed to Him, we were sanctified. We were set apart for Him, and we now belong to Him.

(1 Co 1:2) “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their *Lord* and ours:”

In Ephesians 5, Paul wrote that Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of the water with the word. Jesus sanctified the church. We have been made holy, and have been set apart by the Lord.

(Eph 5:25–26) “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, {26} so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,”

When Jesus came to the earth to find His bride, He established a new covenant with His blood, paying the price to purchase us. Then, He returned to the Father, and He said He was going to prepare a place for us. He was preparing for the marriage ceremony and supper. In John 14, Jesus said, “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places...for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” Jesus, our husband, is preparing a place for us. And, at the end of this time of preparation, He is going to come and get us and bring us with Him to the place He has prepared. His coming back for the bride is the rapture.

(Jn 14:2–3) “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. {3} If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.”

In Revelation 21, John saw in his vision the new heaven and the new earth. He saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. What has Jesus been preparing during this time of separation? He has been preparing a place for His bride, and when He comes to get the church and take her back, He will reveal the new Jerusalem to her.

(Re 21:1–2) “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. {2} And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.”

The Jewish brides did not know exactly when the groom was coming back. It was a surprise, and it would be announced by the groom’s friend, the shoshbin. He would normally come with a loud shout and blow the trumpets to announce the coming of the groom. We find that when Jesus comes back for His bride, His coming will be announced with a shout, and the sound of trumpets. In 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul said that the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God. Then, the church, beginning with those are dead in Christ, will rise up and meet the Lord in the air, which is the rapture of the church. This follows the concept of the Jewish marriage and the groom coming for His bride.

(1 Th 4:16–17) “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. {17} Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.”

(Mt 24:30–31) “And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. {31} And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.”

In Ephesians 5, a great passage about husbands loving their wives, Paul tells husbands to love their wives just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. We are the bride of Christ and Jesus loves us so much that He gave His life for you and I. Second, we see that Christ sanctified His bride. You and I have been sanctified, set apart, and made holy by Christ. Third, He washed us with the water of the word, so that He could present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing. His desire is for us to be holy and blameless.

(Eph 5:25–32) “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, {26} so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, {27} that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. {28} So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; {29} for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, {30} because we are members of His body. {31} FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. {32} This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.”

So far, everything has been done by the groom. However, in Revelation 19:7-8, at the marriage of the Lamb, we find that the bride has made herself ready. When the groom went away, there was preparation to be made by the bride. The Jewish women would sew their wedding garments, so that they would be ready when the bridegroom showed up. They also went through a mikveh, a spiritual cleansing, to prepare for His return. The washing of the water of the word in Ephesians 5 represents that spiritual cleansing and washing.

(Re 19:7–8) “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” {8} It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”

The bride was to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean, and the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. We are clothed with righteousness by the blood of Christ. Paul wrote that our righteousness is like filthy rags, so we have the righteousness of Christ by faith. But, the fine linen mentioned here is the righteous acts of the saints. We prepare for our marriage with Christ by living righteous lives and doing righteous acts. Since we have been sanctified, we are to live holy lives; we are to be holy and blameless.

Another area of preparation is our faithfulness. In the parable of the talents, we are to be faithful stewards of the talents or minas that He has entrusted to us. (See Mt 25:19-21 and Lk 19:11-27.) Similarly, we are to be faithful and sensible stewards, doing God’s will. (See Lk 12:41-48 and Mt 24:45-51.)

Another area of preparation is our gentle, quiet, and submissive heart. In the passage in Ephesians 5, where Paul wrote for husbands to love their wives, he exhorted wives to be subject

to their own husbands. He wants us to have submissive hearts to the Lord. Similarly, in 1 Peter 3, Peter exhorts wives to be submissive to their husbands, and to live chaste and respectful lives. Our adornment is not to be merely external, but the hidden person of the heart, the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit. As the bride of Christ, we need to be gentle, chaste, respectful, and submissive. These are qualities that are precious in God's sight.

(Eph 5:22) “Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”

(1 Pe 3:1–4) “In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, {2} as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. {3} Your adornment must not be *merely* external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; {4} but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.”

I mentioned that marriage is the most intimate relationship we have on earth. Our relationship with Christ is also intended to be intimate. Therefore, we need to be cultivating our relationship with Christ. Like Mary, we need to sit at Jesus' feet, listening to Him. We need to spend time worshipping Him, talking with Him, and enjoying Him. We don't wait for the wedding to get to know our Lord; we should be developing an intimate relationship with Him now.

We are to be looking alertly for the return of our groom. We should be alert and on the watch for His return. In Mark 13, we are exhorted four times to keep on the alert, for we do not know when the appointed time will come. We do not want the Lord to come and find us asleep; therefore, we are to be on the alert.

(Mk 13:33–37) “Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come. {34} It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. {35} Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— {36} in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. {37} What I say to you I say to all, ‘Be on the alert!’”

In Matthew 25:1-13, Jesus gave the parable of the ten virgins. Five of them were foolish and five were prudent. When the bridegroom came, they all went out to meet Him. However, five of them did not have oil and were not ready. At midnight there was a shout “Behold, the bridegroom! Come out and meet Him.” Those without oil had to go purchase some, and they missed out on the coming of the bridegroom. The oil can represent the Holy Spirit and the presence of the Lord. Many say that the oil represents our relationship with the Lord. We are to be alert, and ready when He shows up, and part of that readiness is being filled with the Holy Spirit, and having an intimate relationship with Him.

(Mt 25:1–13) “Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. {2} Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. {3} For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, {4} but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. {5} Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. {6} But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ {7} Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. {8} The foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our

lamps are going out.’ {9} But the prudent answered, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ {10} And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. {11} Later the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ {12} But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’ {13} Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”

3. The marriage of the Lamb

After the announcement that the bridegroom is coming, which was with a shout and sound of the trumpet, the bridegroom arrives. The bride goes out to meet him, and he takes the bride back to his house, where the wedding will take place. On the first day, the marriage was consummated, and then the marriage feast and celebration lasted another one to seven days.

One of the things that the bridegroom made in preparation for the wedding was a chuppah, or canopy. The bride and bridegroom would stand under the chuppah, where the marriage ceremony took place. The chuppah symbolized the groom’s covering, protection, and covenant commitment. In Psalm 19, David wrote about the magnificence of God’s creation. He said the heavens and their expanses are declaring the work of His hands. In verse five, he wrote that it was like a “bridegroom coming out of his chamber (huppa, Strong’s H2946); it rejoices as a strong man to run his course.” That suggests a tremendous joy expressed by creation, because a bridegroom coming out of his chamber is full of joy and excitement.

(Ps 19:5) “Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.”

In Song of Solomon 2:4, the bride stated, “He has brought me to his banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.” The wife was brought under the chuppah and formally received as his wife.

(So 2:4) “He has brought me to *his* banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.”

In Genesis 2:24, when a man left his father and mother and cleaved to his wife, and the two became one, it established a new household. The chuppah represents the new household formed by this marriage.

(Ge 2:24) “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”

Under the chuppah, bride and groom exchanged vows. This is also where the groom would present the bride with a gift, like a ring. This is where our present practice of giving a ring comes from. Often a cup of wine was shared as a sign of the covenant. The covenant contract, that was created at betrothal, is read, and then benedictions were given to complete the ceremony.

After the ceremony, the bride and groom went to a bridal chamber or heder, where the marriage was consummated, completing the union. Then, the marriage supper and celebration took place, which lasted one to seven days. If we think that marriage celebrations with one dinner cost a lot today, imagine having seven days of feasting with wine. At the wedding in Cana, they ran out of wine, and Jesus turned water into wine, saving the groom and his family embarrassment. I ran the calculations, and the amount of water that Jesus turned into excellent wine was around 180 gallons.

Conclusion and Applications

What is the significance of knowing and being the bride of Christ? What are the take-aways that we have from learning that we are the bride of Christ? Hopefully, this gives us a better picture of Christ's return, and what we have to look forward to. It should also remind us of how we are to live our lives while we are waiting for His return. It should also help us see what kind of relationship we have with the Lord. Let's look at some of these take-aways.

The first take-away is that God has brought us into a covenantal marriage relationship with Christ. We are to be completely devoted to Him. All of our love and affection is to be towards him. He is a jealous God, and we are to have no other gods before Him. We should spend time with the Lord. We are to be open, transparent, and unashamed before the Lord. We are to be intimate with Him. We must spend time with Him, and it is only natural for us to have a desire to spend time with Him.

Second, we have been sanctified and made holy. We are to live holy and sanctified lives. We are to be a pure and holy. We are to be clothed with righteousness and righteous acts. At the same time, it should make us grateful for the forgiveness, justification, and cleansing in our lives that Jesus has done for us.

Third, as wives are to be submitted to their husbands in all things, we are to be submitted to Christ as our husband. We are to seek His will in everything that we do. We are to seek His kingdom, His righteousness, and His will.

Fourth, we should be ready, alert and expectant of His return for us. We should be faithfully serving Him, so that when He returns, we will be found faithful. We should be alert, because we do not know the day or the hour that He is coming.

There may be someone listening today that has not received Christ. In Revelation 19:9, John wrote, "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." You are being given an invitation to the marriage supper today. In Revelation 22:17, the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost." Jesus is offering you the water of life. Are you thirsty? Will you accept His invitation to be His bride today? Will you receive Him as your Lord today?

(Re 19:9) "Then he said to me, 'Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' " And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

(Re 22:17) "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."

If you believe that Jesus came and died for our sins, was raised from the dead, and would like to receive Jesus this morning, I encourage you to pray something like this. "Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God and that You came and died for our sins and were raised from the dead. I ask You to come into my life and forgive me of my sins. I turn my life over to You today, and confess You as Lord. It is in Jesus' name I pray."

Closing Prayer

Jesus, we thank You for choosing us to be Your bride. Thank You for loving us, and for laying Your life down for us. Thank You for washing us with the water of the word. Thank You for

cherishing us, and for putting the banner of love over us. Thank You for entering into a covenant with us. Thank You for going to prepare a place for us. We look forward to Your return and to take us with You to the place that You have prepared. Help us to be alert, looking for Your return. Help us to be faithful to You, and faithful in the things that You have given us to do while we await Your return. We pray for our love for You to grow stronger each day. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- How does knowing more about the steps in a Jewish marriage helpful in understanding our marriage with Christ?
- Is there anything in particular that has stood out to you from this teaching?
- As a man, it is sometimes difficult to picture myself as a bride. Are there any pictures or concepts in this that are difficult for you to picture for yourself?
- As we look at the church today, what do you think that the bridegroom would want to say to His beloved bride?
- What are some things that we do in the natural to grow in our relationship with our wives or husbands? Similarly, what are things that we can do in our relationship with Christ to grow more intimate with Him?
- When I became a Christian, I received Jesus as Lord of my life. I had not heard that it was a marriage covenant, or that I was becoming the bride of Christ. It was also something that I did not hear much about in church. Is this something that should be more emphasized in our teaching today? How important is it for believers to know that they are the bride of Christ?

Who is the bride?

Introduction (Re 19:7–8, 2 Co 11:2)

- 1. The betrothal to Christ** (Re 19:7, 1 Sa 18:20–27, Ho 2:19-20, 2 Co 11:2, 1 Co 6:19-20, Re 5:9, Ge 24:53, Eph 1:13-14)
 - Ketubah (legal covenant document)
 - Shoshbin (friend of the groom)
 - Mohar (dowry)
 - Mattan (gift(s) to bride)

- 2. The preparation for the marriage** (1 Co 1:2, Eph 5:25-32, Jn 14:2–3, Re 21:1-2, 1 Th 4:16-17, Mt 24:30–31, Re 19:7-8, Mt 25:19-21, Lk 19:11-27, 12:41-43, Mt 24:45-51, Eph 5:22, 1 Pe 3:1-4, Mk 13:33–37, Mt 25:1-13)
 - Kiddushim (sanctification, time of separation)
 - Mikveh (spiritual cleansing)

- 3. The marriage of the Lamb** (Ps 19:5, So 2:4, Ge 2:24)
 - Chuppah (canopy)
 - Heder (bridal chamber)

Conclusion and Applications

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.