**The Bride of Christ**

**Text**

**Ephesians 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 [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=EPHESIANS+5%3A25-32&version=NASB#fen-NASB-29319a)]in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. **28**So husbands also ought 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 parts of His body. **31**For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and 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.

**Overview**

Christ compares the church to a bride, a symbol of a pure love. He desires that we, as Christians, would come to Him in the same way that a bride comes to her groom, *"holy and without blemish"* (verse 27). Our proper response to our Groom (Jesus Christ) is to love Him in return for His action of love on Calvary.

**Lesson Theme**

Christ, our groom, continually showers us with His all­ encompassing love. As His bride, we must prepare ourselves for His coming by *"not having spot, or wrinkle."* We must keep ourselves holy while awaiting His return.

**Lesson Objectives**

At the conclusion of the lesson, each student should:

1. Surrender to the work of the Groom in their lives in preparation for His return.
2. Understand the need for inner purity that honors the Groom with external manifestations of purity.
3. Look expectantly toward Christ's return with patience and trust.

**Teaching Outline**

* Preparation
	+ Of heart
	+ Of self
* Purity
	+ Outward
	+ Inward
* Patience
	+ In waiting for Christ
	+ Toward all men
	+ In tribulation

**Romans 5:8 -** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Certain characteristics come to the forefront as we look at a bride.

**Romans 12:1-2** - Therefore I urge you, brothers *and sisters*, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS+12%3A1-2&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28235a)]acceptable to God, *which is* your [[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS+12%3A1-2&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28235b)]spiritual service of worship. **2**And do not be conformed to this [[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS+12%3A1-2&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28236c)]world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may [[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ROMANS+12%3A1-2&version=NASB#fen-NASB-28236d)]prove what the will of God is, that

But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?”*"* (Exodus 3:11).

David asked, *"*“Who *am* I, Lord [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+7%3A18&version=NASB#fen-NASB-8199a)]God, and who *are the members of* my household, that You have brought me this far?*"* (2 Samuel 7:18).

Solomon asked, *"*But who am I and who are my people that we should [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Chronicles+29%3A14&version=NASB#fen-NASB-11179a)]be able to offer as generously as this?*"* (1 Chronicles 29:14).

So, who am I?

* 1. **A unique creation of God** (Psalm 139:14-16)
	2. **A sinner by nature and by choice (**Romans 5:12)
	3. **Valuable to God** (John 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 6:20)
	4. **Someone God wants to use** (1Corinthians 15:10; Philippians 2:13)

**Matthew 25:1-13 -** Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the groom. **2**Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. **3**For when the foolish took their lamps, they did not take *extra* oil with them; **4**but the prudent ones took oil in flasks with their lamps. **5**Now while the groom was delaying, they all became drowsy and *began* to sleep. **6**But at midnight [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=MATTHEW+25%3A1-13&version=NASB#fen-NASB-24012a)]there finally was a shout: ‘Behold, the groom! Come out to meet *him*.’ **7**Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. **8**But the foolish *virgins* said to the prudent ones, ‘Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.’ **9**However, the prudent ones answered, ‘*No*, there most certainly would not be enough for us and you *too*; go instead to the merchants and buy *some* for yourselves.’ **10**But while they were [[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=MATTHEW+25%3A1-13&version=NASB#fen-NASB-24016b)]on their way to buy *the oil*, the groom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. **11**Yet 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, because you do not know the day nor the hour.

**Deuteronomy4:29 -** But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find *Him* if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.

**1 John 2:28 -** Now, little children, remain in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+JOHN+2%3A28&version=NASB#fen-NASB-30566a)]draw back from Him in shame [[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+JOHN+2%3A28&version=NASB#fen-NASB-30566b)]at His coming.

**Luke 12:40** You too, be ready; because the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not think *He will*.”

In Psalm 51, David repented of his sin and pied with God for cleansing and purity:

*"* Wash me thoroughly from my guilt And cleanse me from my sin.(verse 2).

*"* Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean; [[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+51&version=NASB#fen-NASB-14699g)]Cleanse me, and I will be whiter than snow.*"* (verse 7).

*"Create in me a clean heart,* 0 *God; and renew a right spirit within me"* (verse 10).

**Leviticus 13:45-46** *-* “As for the person who has the leprous infection, his clothes shall be torn and *the hair of* his head shall be [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=LEVITICUS+13%3A45-46&version=NASB#fen-NASB-3098a)]uncovered, and he shall cover his [[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=LEVITICUS+13%3A45-46&version=NASB#fen-NASB-3098b)]mustache and call out, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ **46**He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection; he is unclean. He shall live alone; he shall live outside the camp.*.*

**James 4:8 -** …Cleanse *your* hands, you sinners; and purify *your* hearts, you [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=JAMES+4%3A8&version=NASB#fen-NASB-30333a)]double-minded.

**Proverbs 4:23 -** Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it *flow* the springs of life.

**Matthew 15:18-20** Jesus said, "... But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and those things defile the person. **19**For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, *acts of* adultery, *other* immoral sexual acts, thefts, false testimonies, *and* [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3A18-20+&version=NASB#fen-NASB-23653a)]slanderous statements. **20**These are the things that defile the person; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the person.”

**Romans 2:6-7 -** who will repay each person according to his deeds: **7**to those who by perseverance in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, *He will give* eternal life;

**Galatians 6:8-9 -** For the one who sows to his own flesh will reap destruction from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit. **9**Let’s not become discouraged in doing good, for in due time we will reap, if we do not become weary.

**2 Thessalonians 3:13 -** But as for you, brothers *and sisters*, do not grow weary of doing good.

1 **Corinthians 15:58 -** Therefore, my beloved brothers *and sisters*, be firm, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not *in* vain in the Lord.

**2 Thessalonians 3:5 -** May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the perseverance of Christ.

**James 5:7-8 -** Therefore be patient, brothers *and sisters*, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+5%3A7-8&version=NASB#fen-NASB-30349a)]it gets the early and late rains. **8**You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

**1 Thessalonians 5:14 -** We urge you, brothers *and sisters*, admonish the [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+THESSALONIANS+5%3A14&version=NASB#fen-NASB-29623a)]unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

**Matthew 5:44 -** But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

**1 Peter 2:19-20 -** For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person endures [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+PETER+2%3A19-20&version=NASB#fen-NASB-30406a)]grief when suffering unjustly. **20**For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God.

**James 1:19** You know *this*, my beloved brothers *and sisters*. Now everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, *and* slow to anger;

**Romans 12:12 -** rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer

**Revelation 14:12 -** Here is the [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=REVELATION+14%3A12&version=NASB#fen-NASB-30927a)]perseverance of the [[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=REVELATION+14%3A12&version=NASB#fen-NASB-30927b)]saints who keep the commandments of God and [[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=REVELATION+14%3A12&version=NASB#fen-NASB-30927c)]their faith in Jesus

**Job**

God specially pointed out Job, as the godliest man in the whole world, to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.”*"* (Job 1:8). God permitted Satan to take away just about everything Job had except for his life, and Job said, "... *the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD"* (Job 1:21). Job's faithfulness was tested, but he kept the faith during his trials and tribulations.

**Joseph**

Sold as a slave into Egypt by his own brothers, Joseph, after being falsely accused, was thrown into jail. In every situation, Joseph remained faithful. God used him to preserve his family and the lineage of Christ. Joseph said to his brothers, *"*As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+50%3A20&version=NASB#fen-NASB-1527a)]this present result, to keep many people alive.*"* (Genesis 50:20).

**Paul**

Familiar with frequent, intense tribulation; Paul faithfully continued in ministry. He summarized the obstacles he faced and the burdens he carried in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28: "... Are they servants of Christ?—I am speaking as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+11%3A23-28&version=NASB#fen-NASB-29000a)]beaten times without number, often in *danger of* death. **24**Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. **25**Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent *adrift* at sea. **26***I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers at sea, dangers among false brothers; **27***I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and [[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+11%3A23-28&version=NASB#fen-NASB-29004b)]exposure. **28**Apart from *such* [[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+11%3A23-28&version=NASB#fen-NASB-29005c)]external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches.

**Philippians 3:14** *''press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"*

**Study Questions**

1. In what three ways are we to emulate a bride?

2. What parable in Matthew 5 teaches that we must prepare our hearts for Christ?

3. What disease, prevalent in Bible times, portrays the damage of sin in a person's life?

4. Which fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 s exemplified by patience?

5. If Christ were to return right now, would you have reason to be ashamed? What can you do this week to prepare for His coming?

*6.* Has the Lord convicted you of an area of inner impurity that you· may be masking with outer purity? What steps of action should you take to have both inner and outer purity?

7. Describe a difficult situation in your life (possibly occurring currently) in which you need to trust God's timing. What are some practical ways you can remind yourself that His way is best when you are tempted toward impatience?

8. Do you give to those around you the same patience you appreciate in others toward you?

**Memory Verse**

*And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be*

*ashamed before him at his coming.*

**1 John 2:28**