

# **The Church We Honor**

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## Eph. 5:27

Eph. 5:27, *“That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”*

### **The church of Jesus Christ is greater than all human institutions.**

#### **Because God is its author.**

Eph. 3:10-11, *“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

#### **Because Christ is its builder.**

- Matt. 16:18, *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*
- Psalms 127:1, *“Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.”*

#### **Because Christ is its head.**

Col. 1:18, *“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”*

#### **Because Christ is its Saviour.**

Eph. 5:23, *“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”*

Hence, we need to have a true conception of, and a lofty appreciation for, the church.

Several metaphors are used in the New Testament to present the church. Let us examine some of them.

## The church as a building.

1 Cor. 3:9, *“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.”*

Here we see its stability.

**It has a strong and immovable foundation.**

1 Cor. 3:11, *“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*

**Against it the gates of hell shall never prevail.**

Matt. 16:18, *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*

**It is formed of various and many materials.**

Divine grace and truth brought them out of the quarry of the world.

Col. 1:13-14, *“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”*

**These materials are “fitly framed together.”**

Eph. 2:21, *“In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.”*

**It is the true habitation of God.**

Eph. 2:22, *“In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”*

**Therefore the church is a spiritual house.**

1 Pet. 2:5, *“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”*

Today there are too many churches that are nothing like that established by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

## The church as a body.

Here we see its unity and fellowship.

**The relation of Christ to the church — He is its true head.**

Col. 1:18, *“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”*

**The relation of Christ to Christians — He is the Saviour of the body.**

Eph. 5:23, “*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*”

**The relation of Christians to one another — they are “every one members one of another.”**

Rom. 12:5, “*So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*”

**The unity of the body.**

1 Cor. 12:12, “*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.*”

In this chapter we are reminded that gifts and talents among the members of Christ’s body operate as members in a physical body.

“*So also is Christ.*” Hence we are united with Christ when we become members of His body, and we function through Christ when we function in His body.

**The entrance into the body.**

- 1 Cor. 12:13, “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*”
- John 3:3-5, “*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*”

By the teachings of one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.

**The harmony of the body.**

1 Cor. 12:25-27, “*That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*”

**Each member has its particular form, place, and use. Even the humblest member makes a part of the body.**

1 Cor. 12:15, “*If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*”

## The church as a vineyard.

Matt. 20:1, *“For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.”*

Here we see its works. Let us note here four things which Jesus said:

### **The householder went out “*early in the morning.*”**

This implies the importance of the work. There is nothing as important as the Lord’s work.

Matt. 6:33, *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

### **The householder went out “*to hire.*”**

He did not try to force them into his vineyard; neither should we try to get people into the church by coercion. He is calling for volunteers; he drafts no one into His service.

### **The householder went out “*to hire laborers.*”**

He did not want loafers or shirkers; they are to be laborers. He does not want His laborers to be lazy.

The householder went out *“to hire laborers into his vineyard.”*

It makes a difference where the work is done; many are doing good work, but in the wrong place. Some think that it makes no difference, but if our work for God is to count to our eternal credit, it must be done in His kingdom.

- Matt. 7:21, *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”*
- Col. 3:17, *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”*
- Eph. 3:21, *“Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”*

## The church as a bride.

Here we see its purity.

### **The steps in being married to Christ.**

When you think of the church as a kingdom, in the matter of conversion, you think of becoming a citizen in the kingdom of God.

When you think of the church as a family, in conversion, you think of being born again, of being a child of God.

So, likewise, when you think of the church as the bride of Christ, in the process of conversion, you think of a marriage.

**You must first believe in Jesus Christ.**

- John 8:24, *“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”*
- Heb. 11:6, *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”*

**Then you must turn in repentance from the old life.**

- Luke 13:3, *“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”*
- Acts 17:30, *“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.”*

**Then you must make a vow of your faith in Jesus Christ.**

Acts 8:36-37, *“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”*

**Then the act of baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit completes the marriage ceremony. The marriage is not complete until after the ceremony of baptism.**

## **Christ has but one bride — the church.**

**Jesus condemned polygamy.**

Matt. 19:9, *“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”*

**Did Jesus preach one thing and practice another? Did He have a plurality of wives?**

- Acts 4:10-12, *“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.*

*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."*

- Acts 20:28, *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."*

As the bride forsakes all others and keeps herself unto her husband, and unto him alone, so should the church keep herself unto Christ and to Him alone.

**Hence, the church should keep herself ever apart from the world.**

- Rom. 12:2, *"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*
- 2 Cor. 6:14-17, *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"*

**She should not become a part of the world, or flirt with the world.**

1 John 2:15, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."*

**Here in this metaphor we especially see portrayed the purity of the church.**

Eph. 5:27, *"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."*

The church should be pure because the very nature and character of the church demands its purity.

**Every person that comes into the church is made pure in the blood of the Lamb.**

- 1 Pet. 1:18-19, *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the*



*precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*

- Rev. 1:5, “*And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,*”

**The church should be pure because of the purchase price of the church.**

- Acts 20:28, “*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*”
- Eph. 5:25, “*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it,*”

**The church should be pure because the salvation of the lost demands it.**

Matt. 5:13-16, “*Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*”

**Influence is something that we all have.**

Rom. 14:7, “*For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.*”

**Our influence is either good or bad, but not both.**

Matt. 12:30, “*He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.*”

The church should be pure because of the church’s oneness with Christ.

**We are united with Christ.**

- 1 Cor. 12:27, “*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*”
- Eph. 5:30, “*For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*”

**It would be ridiculous to take the members of Christ and dedicate them to sinful purposes.**

1 Cor. 6:15-16, *“Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.”*

Since we are the bride of Christ, branches in the vine, disciples of the Master, this relationship imposes separation from the world.

**The church should be pure because the destiny of the church demands it.**

- Rev. 19:7-9, *“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”*
- Rev. 21:27, *“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”*

In heaven there shall be no envy, malice, backbiting, pride, vanity, or worldliness.

## Conclusion.

Our text declares that Christ is coming to receive those who have lived pure and holy lives.

His bride will not be made up of sinful, worldly, unclean, and unholy people.

This thought should cause each one of us to determine anew that he will live so that the Lord will be pleased to own him when He shall come again.

**To each Christian Paul would say, “Keep thyself pure.”**

1 Tim. 5:22, *“Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.”*

**To each congregation Paul would say,**

2 Cor. 11:2, *“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”*



