

## THE CHURCH - THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

**Ephesians 5:22-23   Revelation 19:7-9**

**Introduction:** Hearing the Wedding March brings many emotions and memories for many people. We choose one another for marriage and have the ceremony that visibly and audibly unites us to one another. In the eyes of God marriage is for the human lifetime of the two getting married. They are considered to be only ONE in God's eyes after they are married. Not two, but ONE.

Jesus and His Church are referred to as Bride (Church) and Groom, (Jesus). The vows exchanged are similar to the ones we make, "will you take this man, Jesus, to love, trust, stay with, etc. all your life?" Jesus exchanged His vows when He said "...I love you and I have died for you and I will never forsake you." So, if you are a Christian, you have exchanged vows with Jesus and have "sworn" to live one another forever and will be true to one another. Just think for a moment and compare our wedding vows to one another and then to those we have made to Jesus as believers in Him.

### I. WE, THE CHURCH, ARE TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST

1. Ask any couple why they want to get married and the reply will be: "We're in love."
  - Remember when Jesus asked Peter about his love?
  - **Revelation 2:1-5** is about a church (Ephesus) that left it's first love.
2. Love is the foundation of the Church.
  - It is not friendship, nor social issues.
  - It is a common, shared LOVE for Jesus Christ.
  - Jesus loved us first, came to WIN us. (Remember, it is the man who asks the woman).
3. Love Christ for WHO He is:
  - the Lamb that takes away our sins.
  - the Bread of Life that feeds our souls.
  - the Good Shepherd who guides us.
  - the Great Physician who heals our hearts and hurts.
  - the Door into God's presence.
  - the High Priest who intercedes for us.
  - the First Fruits of new beings with us following.
  - the First and the Last and all in between.
  - the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

### II. WE, THE CHURCH, ARE TO BE HAPPY IN CHRIST

1. Ever see a SAD bride? NO! Brides are happy, excited and aglow.
2. The Church is the BRIDE of Christ, not pallbearers at a funeral.
3. The surest mark of a genuine Christian is - JOY

### **III. WE, THE CHURCH, ARE TO BE INTIMATE WITH CHRIST**

1. *Genesis 2:24* speaks of two becoming one flesh. Everything is shared, one goal, one life that is lived together.
2. We are to have a deep, abiding relationship with Jesus Christ, as married people have with each other, not like two people who are only dating.
3. We are to be so close, intimate with Christ that we begin to look like Christ. We are to pick up His habits, styles, behavior, even His thoughts.

### **IV. WE, THE CHURCH, ARE TO BE TRUE TO CHRIST ONLY**

1. Once again go back to our wedding vows. We tell each other that we will remain loyal, true, faithful, etc. to each other till death do us part. *Hebrews 13:4*
2. Infidelity (unfaithfulness) destroys a marriage.
  - Seemingly others know when one spouse cheats on the other before the cheated on spouse knows about it.
3. There are many worthwhile, wonderful organizations that make calls and demands upon us, BUT, Jesus Christ our GROOM, must be our first love. It is to Him that we owe our first devotion, fidelity, love, time, energy, etc. our lives.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. All of us have three names:
  - Our name given to us by our parents at our birth.
  - The name we have made for ourselves as we have lived.
  - The name we call ourselves.
  - At marriage, the bride receives her groom's name - thus we, believers, receive Christ's Name - "CHRIST - ians."
2. As the bride of Christ, we, the Church, bear His Name.
3. Let us not dishonor Christ's Name in any way at any time.