

A GLOIOUS CHURCH

PROVERBS 31 & EPHESIANS 5:21-32

Text: Proverbs 31:10, Ephesians 5:27

Proverbs 31:10

¹⁰ Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price *is* far above rubies.

Ephesians 5:27

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.

Introduction:

Christ, our Savior, instituted the Church over 2,000 years ago. The church is made up of believers or Christians. Although the Church has seen its good times and its bad times, it still continues on.

Matthew 16:18

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.

The Church has seen some peak times; and it has also seen some lean times. But there has always been and always will be a Church of the living God here on earth until Christ comes and takes it away in the rapture.

There is a growing trend in our Churches today toward laxity. Attendance has dropped, Evangelism has dwindled, Commitments are down and sad to say, Church splits and divisions are on the rise.

The problem is Churches have let too much of the world in and left God out! When Christ established His Church here on earth, He intended for it to be His earthly abode in this sinful world. The Church should be a sanctuary for the saints of God from Satan and his evil workers.

The Bible often refers to the church as the Bride of Christ.

Note:

Ephesians 5:32

³² This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Revelation 21:9

⁹ And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

Understanding the likening of the church to a bride I want us to consider and compare the Lady of Proverbs 31 to the church.

Note:

1. HER PRICE (VS. 10)

Proverbs 31:10

¹⁰ Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price *is* far above rubies.

The value of the church was very costly.

Ephesians 5:25

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

The Lord never said, “My home, or My family, or My child, or My house, or My business,” but He did say, “My church”!

Christ loves the church

A. His Love Is Unconditional

Romans 5:8

⁸ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 2:2

² And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.

B. His Love Is Intentional

Romans 5:10

¹⁰ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be

saved by his life.

John 15:13

¹³ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

When a couple comes together in marriage, they do so having made the choice to "lay down their lives" for one another. Up until that point, he has lived his life and she has lived hers. But now, they are choosing to live THEIR life, together. To do that, they lay down their individual lives so that they might give themselves to one another in their life together. They make this commitment, because they have come to the conviction that the life they might share together is far better than a life they might live on their own.

This is why the Lord gave Himself for us. He gave Himself for us so that He might give Himself to us. He is convinced that the life we can share together with Him is far better than the life we might live on our own. And if our church, you and me, are going to be the church we ought to be, then we must share our Savior's conviction.

Just as a marriage will not work without both parties sharing the conviction that the life they might share together is far better than a life they might live on their own. Our church will only be all Christ calls us to be when each of us shares this conviction with Him.

Notice not only Her Purity, but also:

2. HER PURITY (vs. 11-12)

Proverbs 31:10-11

¹⁰ Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price *is* far above rubies. ¹¹ The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

Ephesians 5:26

²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

2 Corinthians 11:2

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.

Christ has given Himself for us so that we might be changed eternally and internally. But he has also given Himself to us so that we might be changed externally! Through His presence in our lives by His Spirit and the guidance provided by His Word, He can change us from the inside out!

Like a bride anticipating her wedding day seeks to be as prepared as she can possibly be for that day when it comes, we, through applying God's Word to our lives should be seeking to be as prepared for life in Christ's eternal presence as we can possibly be by allowing Christ to make a difference externally.

In any healthy marriage relationship, the couple grows in their understanding and awareness of one another.

The same needs to be true of us if we are to a healthy congregation. We must each seek to grow in our understanding and awareness of Christ. As we do, we can become more like Him.

Have you ever noticed how couples, who have been married for some time, just seem to "go together?" You and I need to endeavor to spend enough time with the Lord that when people hear that we belong to Him, they might be able to look at us and say, "Yes, They go together."

Notice not only Her Price and Her Purity, but also:

3. HER PASSION – PASSION (VSS. 13-20)

Proverbs 31:13-20

¹³ She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. ¹⁴ She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. ¹⁵ She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. ¹⁶ She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. ¹⁷ She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. ¹⁸ She perceiveth that her merchandise *is* good: her candle goeth not out by night. ¹⁹ She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. ²⁰ She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

This lady serves faithfully.

A. It's a desired work (vs 13)

She willingly works with her hands

B. It's a devoted work (vs 15)

She rises before daylight, tending not to her needs but the needs of others.

C. It's a dedicated work (vs 19)

She is steadfast and persistent in her work.

We too should serve the Lord.

Psalm 2:11

¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Psalm 100:1-5

¹ Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. ² Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. ³ Know ye that the LORD he *is* God: *it is* he *that* hath made us, and not we ourselves; *we are* his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, *and* into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, *and* bless his name. ⁵ For the LORD *is* good; his mercy *is* everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations.

Romans 7:6

⁶ But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

We should serve:

- With Fear or and Awareness of His Presence
- With Gladness
- With Newness of Spirit – In other words we serve not because we have to but rather because we want to.

Note also not only Her Price, Her Purity, Her Passion, but also:

4. HER PERSISTENCE (VS. 15, 18)

Proverbs 31:15

¹⁵ She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

Proverbs 31:18

¹⁸ She perceiveth that her merchandise *is* good: her candle goeth not out by night.

Her work was

- Sacrificial – She gets up before daylight and works into the night.

She served when she was tired.

She served while others were sleeping.

- Shared

Proverbs 31:20

²⁰ She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

Our service should be done with persistence.

- Many today only serve when it is convenient.
- Many only serve if it cost them nothing.
- Many only serve if they get something out of it.

Close:

We should understand the Price of the Church.

We should be a pure bride as a church, loyal to the Lord.

We should have a passion to work for the Lord.

We should remain persistent.