

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2011**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
EXPERIENCING, ENJOYING, AND EXPRESSING CHRIST**

Message Thirty-Two

In Ephesians

(4)

The Husband of the Church

Scripture Reading: Eph. 5:22-32

- I. In Ephesians 5:22-32 we see that Christ is the Husband of the church; we may experience and enjoy Him as our Husband—Isa. 54:5; 62:5; Jer. 2:2; 3:1, 14; 31:32; Ezek. 16:8; 23:5; Hosea 2:7, 19; 2 Cor. 11:2:**
 - A. In Song of Songs the seeking one again and again speaks of her beloved, who is a type of Christ as our Beloved, our Husband—1:16; 2:3; 5:16; 8:14; Eph. 1:6.
 - B. The type of the beloved in Song of Songs is fulfilled in the New Testament, where Christ is revealed as our Husband and the believers are revealed as His counterpart, His wife—2 Cor. 11:2:
 1. Christ is the unique, universal Husband for us to love.
 2. He, the most lovely One, has attracted us, and now we should love Him, treasure Him, and care only for Him, allowing no one to replace Him in our hearts—Eph. 3:17-19.
 3. Our love for Him should be pure, and our whole being should be focused on Him, our Beloved, our Husband—Mark 12:30.
- II. Christ is the Head of the church and the Savior of the Body—Eph. 5:23:**
 - A. His being the Head is a matter of authority, and His being the Savior is a matter of love.
 - B. We should be subject to Him as our Head and love Him as our Savior—v. 23.
- III. In verse 25 we have the church coming into existence through Christ's loving her and giving Himself up for her; Christ's loving the church and giving Himself up for her was for redemption and the impartation of life—John 19:34.**
- IV. As the Husband of the church, Christ sanctifies her and cleanses her by the washing of the water in the word to present her to Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle and without blemish—Eph. 5:26-27:**
 - A. Although the process of sanctification includes separation, the main aspect of sanctification is saturation, which is accompanied by transformation, growth, and building—v. 26; 2:21-22; 4:15-16.

- B. Christ sanctifies the church by cleansing her through the washing of the water, the flowing life of God, in the word—5:26:
 - 1. This washing deals mainly with spots—something out of the natural life—and wrinkles—signs of oldness.
 - 2. The nourishment that we receive from the Word brings in an inner cleansing from the defects caused by the natural life and from the wrinkles caused by oldness; by means of such a washing, the church will be perfected and become glorious—v. 27.
- C. At His coming back, Christ will present to Himself a glorious church—v. 27:
 - 1. For the church to become glorious means that the church becomes the expression, the manifestation, of God—3:21a.
 - 2. The church will be the expression of God Himself mingled with a resurrected, uplifted, and transformed humanity—4:24.
 - 3. The church as Christ's bride must be beautiful:
 - a. In His bride Christ will behold nothing but beauty—S. S. 4:7.
 - b. Our beauty is Christ shining out of us; what Christ appreciates in us is the expression of Himself—6:4, 10.
 - c. Real beauty is the expression of the divine attributes through humanity.
 - d. By eating Jesus, we become a beautiful and glorious bride—John 6:57b.

V. As the Husband of the church, Christ nourishes and cherishes the church—Eph. 5:28-30:

- A. To be nourished by Christ is to be supplied with His riches—v. 29; 3:8:
 - 1. When we are nourished, something enters into our being to meet our need; by nourishing the church, Christ meets the inward need of the church.
 - 2. Christ nourishes us by feeding us with His living word—John 6:63.
 - 3. If we take Christ as our person, we will experience His nourishing; we all need to experience the nourishing that comes from taking Christ as our person—Eph. 3:17a.
- B. To be cherished by Christ is to be softened by being warmed by Him—5:29:
 - 1. The Lord Jesus warms us and softens us as we enjoy His tenderness, sweetness, and lovingness.
 - 2. He cherishes us with His tender warmth; His cherishing comforts us, soothes us, and calms us.
 - 3. The Lord's presence as the pneumatic Christ brings in an atmosphere of tenderness and warmth to cherish our being; we may experience such an atmosphere in the church life—v. 25; Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 1:2.
 - 4. Nourishing and cherishing go together; through the nourishing we enjoy the supply of life inwardly, and through the cherishing we experience the soothing, comforting atmosphere outwardly.
 - 5. A church that is nourished and cherished in this way will be strong and healthy—Rev. 3:7-13:
 - a. In the genuine church life we have the privilege of experiencing and enjoying the Lord in such a fine, tender, intimate, and real way.
 - b. We should praise the Lord for the way that He cares for the church.