

Deacon's Lesson
Centennial Celebration - Prayer Theme
November 2021

Special Prayer Theme for November: That Tabernacle will be the kind of church that Christ will be pleased with now and upon His return.

²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. [Ephesians 5:27]

Ephesians 5:27 is from Paul's discourse regarding the relationship of husbands and wives paralleling the relationship between Christ and the church. Christ "***gave up his life for [the church] to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's Word***", (Ephesians 5:26). Scripture relate that the Word and God contribute to the process of being born again. (John 1:13, 1 Peter 1:23)

¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)

²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; (1Peter 1:23)

The aim is to present the church to himself as his beloved - as his bride. He has pledged and poured out his very life to embrace and abide with the church, (i.e., all faithful believers), forever.

Notice that it is Christ who is doing the work and sacrifice to transform his beloved bride and make her ready. The result is a complete, gloriously radiant, beautifully adorned, holy, sanctified and perfect church.

If we honestly look at things and think them over carefully, I think we can conclude that He is definitely not finished with the church yet. She is by no means ready for the wedding! But she will be someday, for it says in **Philippians 1:6 English Standard Version (ESV)**: "***And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.***"

Our prayers need to be for our sanctification, for our perfecting, for our being brought to completion so that we truly emulate His glorious possession - His pride and joy. Again, this is ***His*** work, not ours. Our responsibility is to obey His Word and remain answerable to Him.

However, we need to look in the mirror and see what is disheveled, what is smudged, what is out of place. How is the church's spiritual hygiene right now?

Discord, lack of love, division, apathy, timidity, unfamiliarity with the truth, immaturity, etc., need to be called out for what they are. We have to agree that we need a bath, a makeover and a better fragrance. We are betrothed to Christ, who is the "**Great Physician**." But right now, we need the Holy Ghost to be our "**Great Beautician**."

⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, (Titus 3:5)

After all, our wedding day - Our Day - is soon to arrive. We cannot appear as a hot mess to our Beloved Groom and all the wedding guests.

Let the makeover begin....

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. ⁹ And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." [Revelation 19:7-9a. ESV]

Prayer:

Dear heavenly Father, we know that you are going to give us away to Christ, our Royal Groom, soon and very soon. Christ has spared no expense for our makeover and has paid the bride price many times over. He has made provision for our immaculate adornment. So please allow the Holy Spirit to cleanse us by Your Word that we may be pleasing and desirable in Christ's sight on the day we see him - on the day He comes for us.

It is in the Name of our Anointed Groom - Jesus - that we pray.

Amen!