

Daily Devotions

Day 1: The Bride of Christ

Reading: *Ephesians 5:22-33*

As we begin this journey, let's reflect on the profound mystery of Christ's love for the church. Just as a groom cherishes his bride, Jesus demonstrates an unwavering commitment to us. This passage reveals the depth of His sacrificial love - He "gave himself up for her." Today, consider how this divine love transforms your understanding of God's care for you. How does knowing you are part of Christ's beloved bride change your perspective on your worth and purpose? Take a moment to express gratitude for this unconditional love and consider how you can reflect it in your relationships with others.

Day 2: Christ's Leadership and Nourishment

Reading: *Ephesians 4:11-16*

Today's passage highlights Christ's role as the head of the church, guiding and nurturing His people. Just as Jesus leads the church with wisdom and care, He desires to lead us individually. Reflect on areas of your life where you may be resisting His leadership. Are there decisions or challenges you're facing where you need His guidance? Remember that Christ not only leads but also nourishes us, providing exactly what we need for spiritual growth. How can you open yourself more fully to His nourishment today? Consider practical steps you can take to align yourself more closely with His direction in your life.

Day 3: The Church's Glorious Future

Reading: *Revelation 19:6-9, 21:1-4*

These passages paint a vivid picture of the church's future glory. Despite our current imperfections, Christ is preparing us for an eternity of radiant beauty in His presence. This promise of transformation should fill us with hope and anticipation. How does this eternal perspective change the way you view your current struggles or the imperfections you see in the church? Take time to imagine the joy of the wedding feast of the Lamb, where all tears will be wiped away. Let this vision inspire you to live today with greater faith and purpose, knowing that your ultimate destiny is secure in Christ.

Day 4: Unity in the Body of Christ

Reading: *1 Corinthians 12:12-27*

Today we focus on the unity and diversity within the church as the body of Christ. Each member has a unique role to play, yet we are all interconnected and essential. Reflect on your place within this body. What gifts has God given you to contribute to the whole? Are there ways you've undervalued your role or the roles of others? Consider how you can more fully embrace your part in the body while also appreciating and encouraging the contributions of those around you. Pray for a deeper sense of unity with your fellow believers and for opportunities to build up the body of Christ.

Day 5: Loving What Christ Loves

Reading: *John 13:34-35, 1 John 4:7-12*

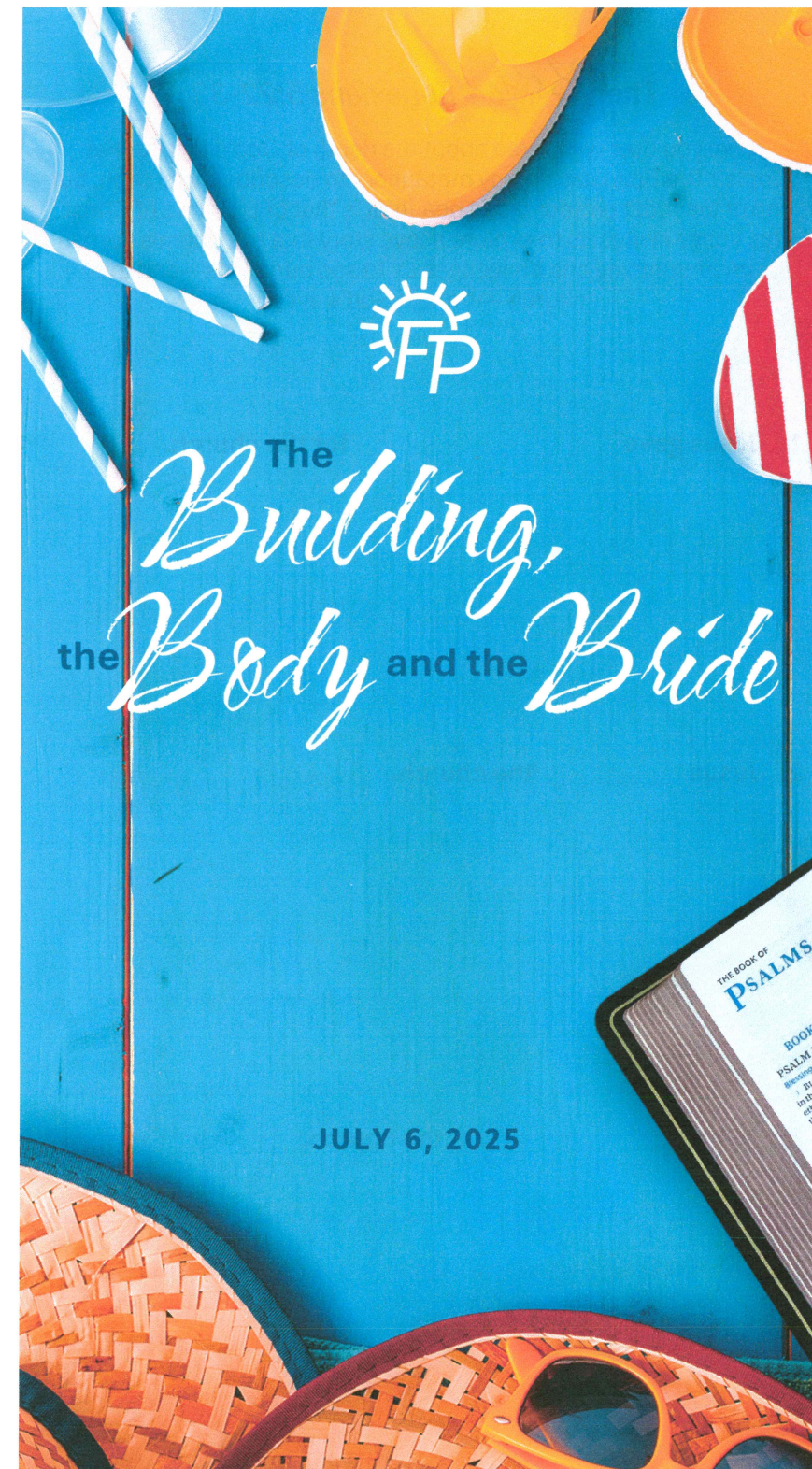
As we conclude our reflection, let's focus on Christ's command to love one another. If we truly love Jesus, we will love what He loves - His church. This love is not just a feeling, but an action demonstrated through our words, time, service, and resources. Examine your own life: How well do your actions reflect love for Christ's bride, the church? Are there areas where you need to grow in demonstrating this love more fully? Challenge yourself to take one concrete step today to show love to a fellow believer or to serve your local church community. Remember, as we love one another, we make Christ's love visible to the world..

Deacons on Call

- Brad Friesen and Archie Harris

Scheduled Events

- **WORSHIP:** Sundays at 9:45 AM
- **SMALL GROUPS:** Sundays at 11 AM
- **DEEP DIVE:** Next Session: **AUGUST 6**
- **FIRST KIDS:** Coming in August
- **FIRST YOUTH:** See firstplainsyouth.com for more info



The *Bride* / Ephesians 5:22-33

Have you ever wondered about the depth of God's love for His people? The Bible uses many metaphors to describe the church, but one of the most profound and beautiful is that of the bride of Christ. This image invites us to explore a love story that transcends human understanding and challenges us to see ourselves—and the church—through God's eyes.

1. Jesus gave _____ for the church.

2. Jesus _____ the church.

3. Jesus _____ the church.

4. Jesus will _____ the church to Himself.

What you do to the bride you do to the _____.

Love the Church with the 5 Love Languages

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Scripture References (in order of use): Revelation 19:6-9; Acts 9:4
Referenced Works: Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott (The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge); The Disciple Making Church (Bill Hull); the Unstoppable Force (Erwin McManus); Doing Church as a Team (Wayne Cordeiro); Breakout Churches (Thom Rainer); Ephesians (John Stott); Paul Bound, the Gospel Unbound (Bob Utley); Ephesians (Curtis Vaughn)

First Groups Discussion Questions

- 1. What do you remember most about your wedding?
- 2. Read **Ephesians 5:22-33**. Is there anything from the sermon you would like to discuss?
- 3. Patrick mentions that God uses multiple images to describe the church. Why do you think this is, and how does the image of the church as Christ's bride impact your understanding of our relationship with Jesus?
- 4. How does Christ's love for the church serve as a model for husbands in their marriages? What challenges might this present?
- 5. The sermon outlines four ways Jesus loves the church. Which one resonates with you most and why?
- 6. Discuss the analogy of the church as "Cinderella with amnesia." How might we sometimes forget our true identity and destiny as the bride of Christ?
- 7. How does understanding the church as Christ's bride affect your view of para-church organizations and ministries? How have those ministries interfered with church commitment?
- 8. Reflect on the five love languages as applied to loving the church. Which one(s) do you feel you express well, and which one(s) might you need to work on?

Practical Applications

- Evaluate your schedule and commitment to the local church. Are there areas where you can increase your "quality time" with the bride of Christ?
- Choose one of the five love languages and commit to expressing love for your local church in that way this week.
- Reflect on your spiritual gifts. How can you use them more effectively to serve and build up the church?
- If you've been critical of the church, spend time in prayer asking God to help you see and love the church as Christ does.