

Together by Design: God's Plan for His Church

The church is where
the Holy Spirit brings together
believers in Jesus
according to God's design.

The six metaphors of church in the NT



Where do we find the “Bride of Christ” in Scripture?

bride

bridegroom

wedding



Ephesians 5

Ezekiel 16

Matthew 9

Song of Songs 4

Hosea 2

Isaiah 61

Matthew 22 & 25

Psalms 45

John 3

2 Corinthians 11

Revelation 19 & 21 & 22

The bride-church word picture is too feminine



What is the point of preaching about
the metaphor of the church as a bride?

The bride-church's relationship to Christ (from Ephesians 5:21-33)

1. Exclusive devotion to Christ (22-24)

Ephesians 5:22-24

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.



You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband!
(Ezekiel 16:32)

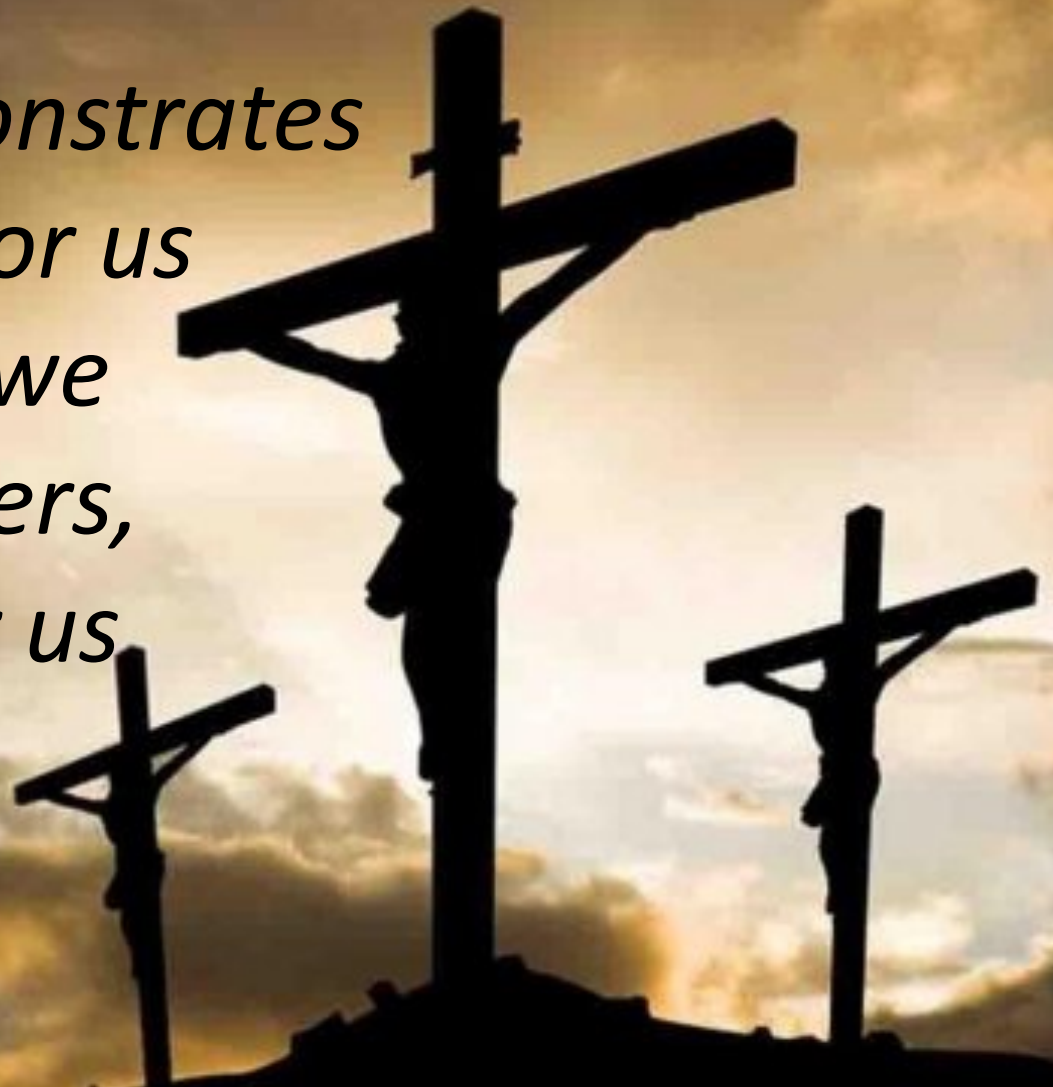
The bride-church's relationship to Christ (from Ephesians 5:21-33)

1. Exclusive devotion to Christ (21-24)
2. Sacrificial love of Christ (25)

Ephesians 5:25

*Husbands,
love your wives,
just as Christ loved the church
and gave himself up
for her*

*But God demonstrates
his own love for us
in this: While we
were still sinners,
Christ died for us
(Rom. 5:8)*



The bride-church's relationship to Christ (from Ephesians 5:21-33)

1. Exclusive devotion to Christ (21-24)
2. Sacrificial love of Christ (25)
3. Purifying attention by Christ (26-27)

*To make her
holy cleansing
her by the
washing
with water
through
the word . . .*



*and to
present her
to himself as
a radiant
church,*



*without stain
or wrinkle or
any other
blemish,*



*but
holy
and
blameless.*

(Eph. 5:26-27)



Titus 2:14 and 3:5

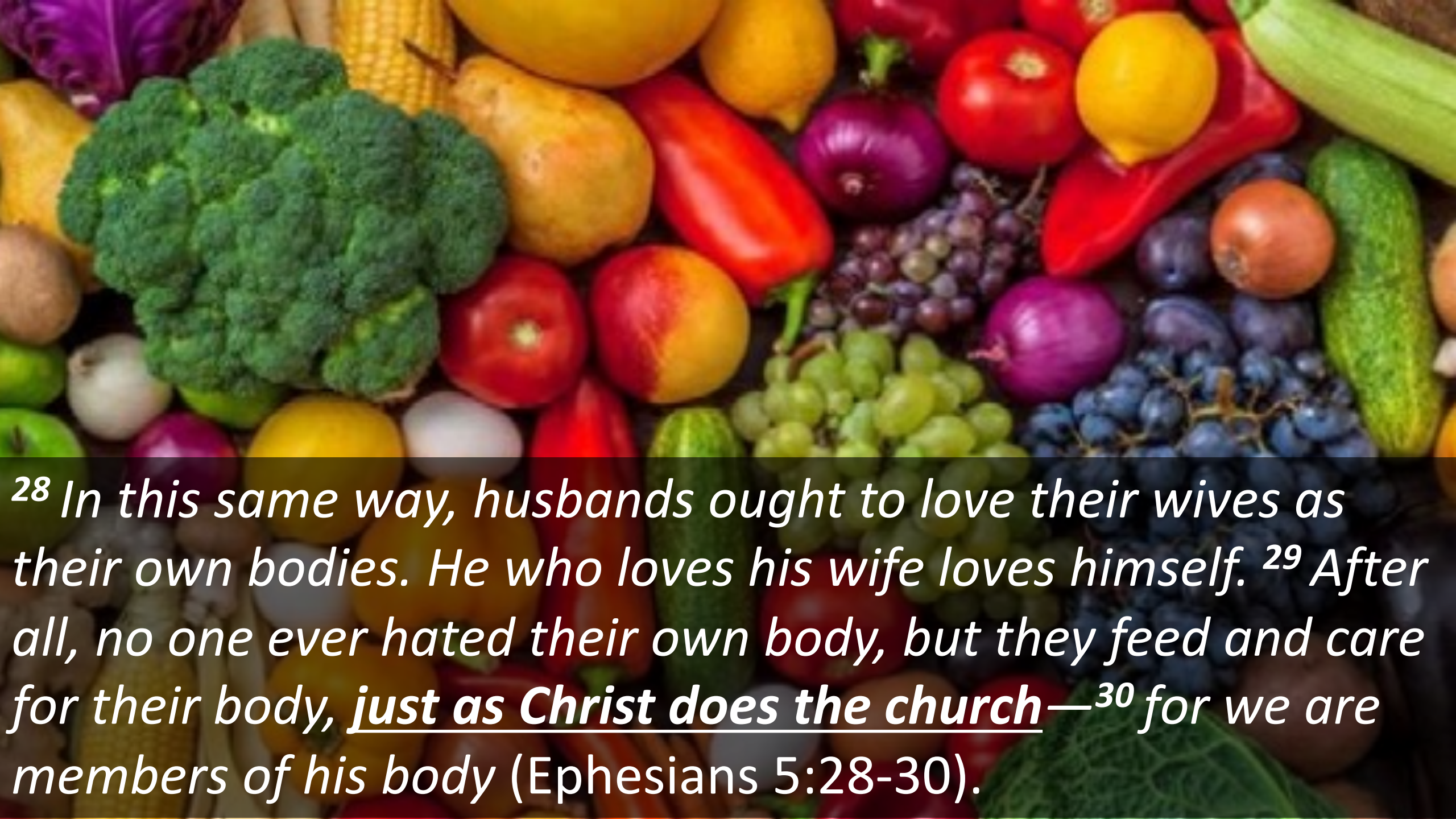
[Jesus Christ] who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,



The bride-church's relationship to Christ (from Ephesians 5:21-33)

1. Exclusive devotion to Christ (21-24)
2. Sacrificial love of Christ (25)
3. Purifying attention by Christ (26-27)
4. Generous provision from Christ (28-30)



²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—³⁰ for we are members of his body (Ephesians 5:28-30).



He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Rom. 8:32)

The bride-church's relationship to Christ (from Ephesians 5:21-33)

1. Exclusive devotion to Christ (21-24)
2. Sacrificial love of Christ (25)
3. Purifying attention by Christ (26-27)
4. Generous provision from Christ (28-30)
5. Joyful hope with Christ (31-33)

Ephesians 5:31-33

³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.



Revelation 19:7-8

*⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad
and give him glory!*

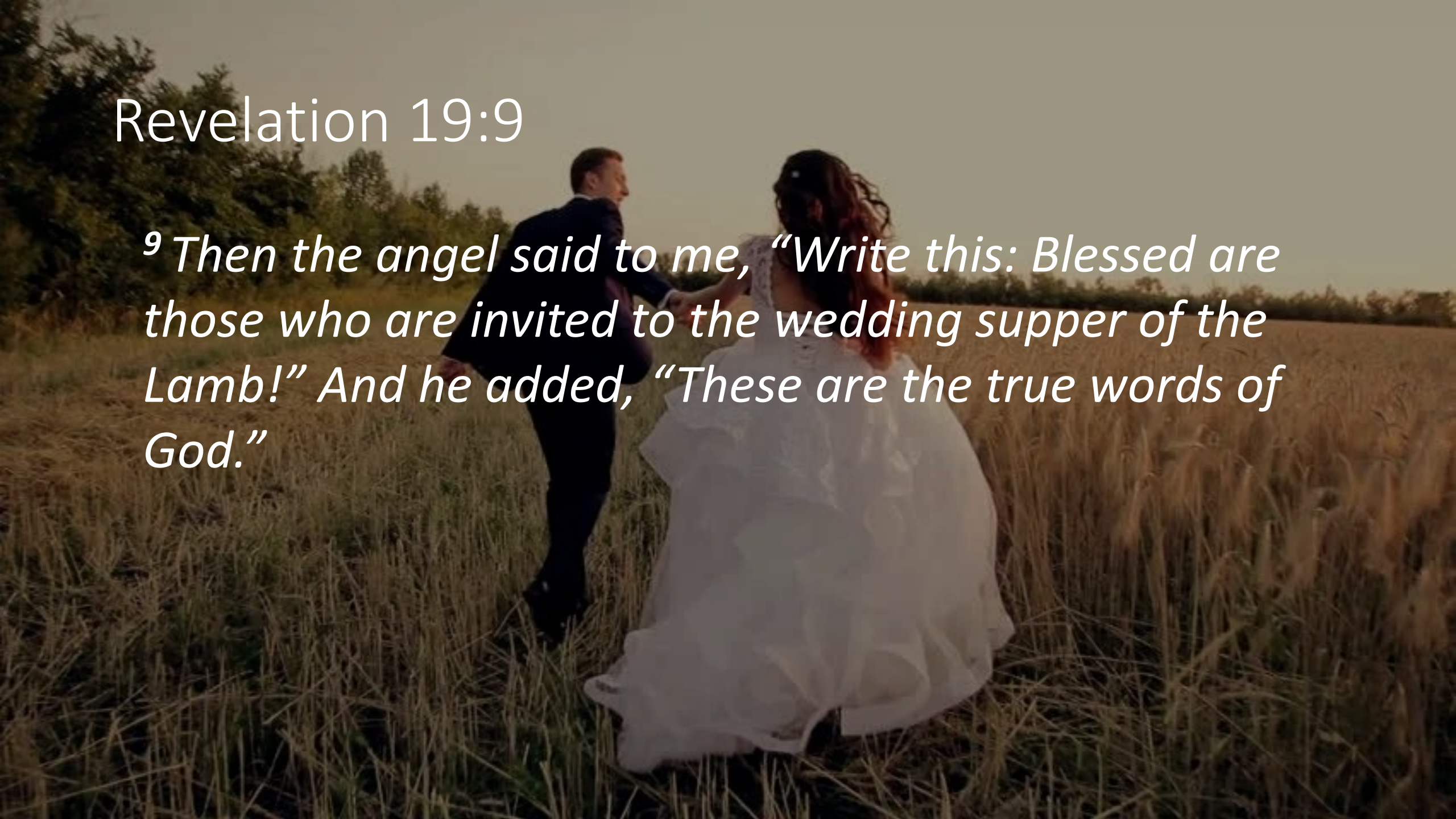
*For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready.*

*⁸ Fine linen, bright and clean,
was given her to wear.”*

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

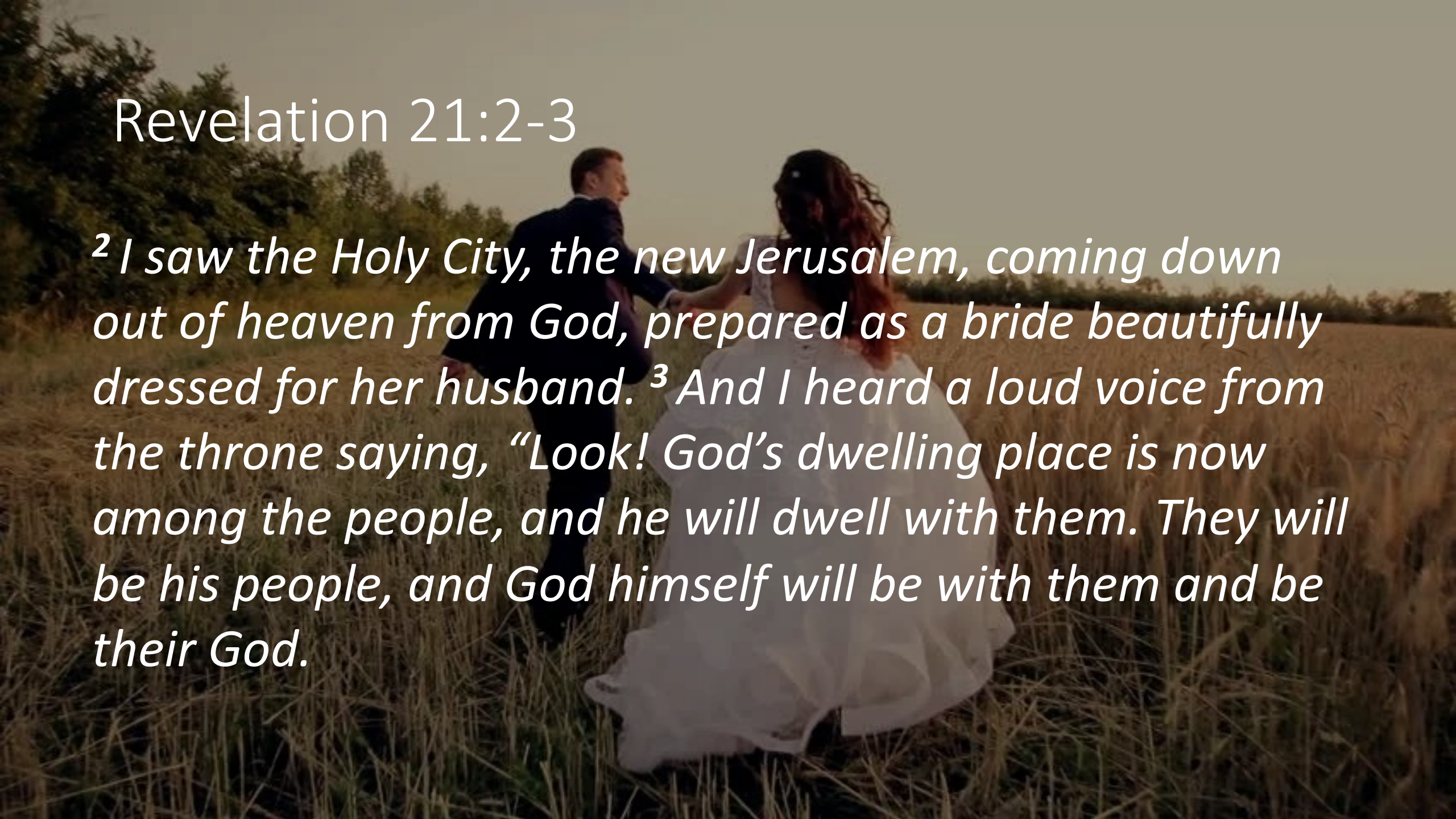
Revelation 19:9

⁹ Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God."



Revelation 21:2-3

² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

A romantic scene of a bride and groom walking away from the camera through a field of tall, golden grass. The groom is on the left, wearing a dark suit, and the bride is on the right, wearing a white wedding dress. They are holding hands and looking towards the horizon where the sun is setting, creating a warm, golden glow. The background shows a line of trees under a soft, hazy sky.

Do you love the church
as Christ loves His bride?

“We are the church. We *get* to be the church. And the glory of our collective story is sufficient to cause us to love Jesus’s bride, however broken she may yet be. Because, by God’s grace, he is making her beautiful.”

Adam Mabry

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/for-the-bride-set-before-him>

Do you love the church
as Christ loves His bride?

“The church is the bride of Christ, particularly loved by him, saved by his sacrificial work on the cross, exclusively devoted to him, and increasingly adorned in beauty for him, the Bridegroom.”

Christopher Morgan

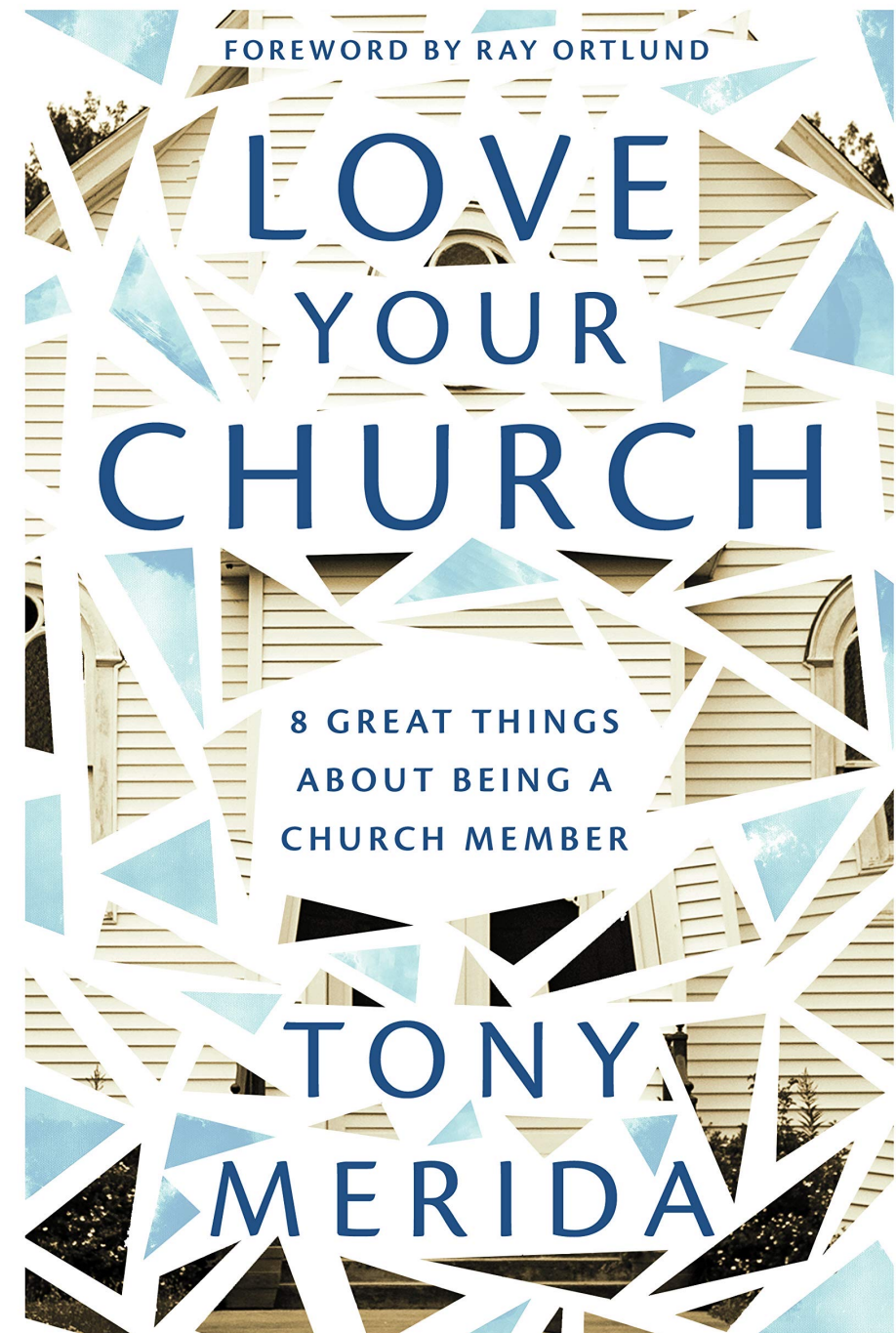
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/origin-nature-church/>

Do you love the church
as Christ loves His bride?

Loving the
church as
Christ does

Exclusive devotion—are you submitting
to Christ in His church above all else?

Do you love **your** church
as Christ loves His bride?



Loving your
church as
Christ does

Exclusive devotion—are you submitting
to Christ in His church above all else?

Sacrificial love—are you laying down your
life for Him and others in His church?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer from “Life Together”

“The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community.”

Loving your
church as
Christ does

Exclusive devotion—are you submitting
to Christ in His church above all else?

Sacrificial love—are you laying down your
life for Him and others in His church?

Purifying attention—are you willing to be
cleansed and help others in His church?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer from “Life Together”

“If my sinfulness appears to me to be in any way smaller or less detestable in comparison with the sins of others, I am still not recognizing my sinfulness at all . . . How can I possibly serve another person in unfeigned humility if I seriously regard his sinfulness as worse than my own?”

Loving your church as Christ does

Exclusive devotion—are you submitting to Christ in His church above all else?

Sacrificial love—are you laying down your life for Him and others in His church?

Purifying attention—are you willing to be cleansed and help others in His church?

Generous provision—are you enjoying His goodness with others in His church?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer from “Life Together”

“If we do not give thanks daily for the Christian fellowship in which we have been placed, even where there is no great experience, no discoverable riches, but much weakness, small faith, and difficulty; if on the contrary, we only keep complaining to God that everything is so paltry and petty, so far from what we expected, then we hinder God from letting our fellowship grow according to the measure and riches which are there for us all in Jesus Christ.”

Loving your church as Christ does

Exclusive devotion—are you submitting to Christ in His church above all else?

Sacrificial love—are you laying down your life for Him and others in His church?

Purifying attention—are you willing to be cleansed and help others in His church?

Generous provision—are you enjoying His goodness with others in His church?

Joyful hope--are you eagerly anticipating the consummation of all things in Christ?

