

Eph 5:27 The Church, Christ's Bride 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

5:27 in order that he might present the church to himself, glorious. This is a further purpose, besides salvation, and justification, of Christ's death. Paul mentioned that a reason that Christ died to purchase the Church by His blood is that He would sanctify her, or set us apart for service to Him, now the second purpose is to present her to himself a glorious church. So, Jesus gave Himself to set the Church apart (because he cleansed her), so that, by living our lives in service to Him, we might be further glorified in heaven, and so present ourselves to Jesus as His bride with glory, having served Him with our lives.

We are presented to Christ as His Bride. And, that means that we must keep ourselves pure, as a bride before her wedding, and be devoted to our bridegroom Jesus. 2 Cor 11:2-3 **2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. 3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his trickery, your minds will be led astray from sincere and pure devotion to Christ**

The word for glorious is the same word that is used of the miracles that Jesus did Luke 13:17 **17 And as He said this, all His opponents were being humiliated; and the entire crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him.** This part could also be translated "in order that he might present or render the church to himself, glorious." In other words the process of sanctification is also the process by which Jesus gets to present himself a more glorious Church than He would have, if the Church didn't cooperate as well with the Holy Spirit's process of sanctifying us individually, and as a Church. We see a similar process conducted by God the Father toward Israel in Ezek 16:9–14.

We are called to be a pure and blameless bride of Christ, eagerly anticipating the day when we will be presented to him in all our splendor. As we reflect on the fact that someday we will stand before our Bridegroom Jesus, it creates in us the desire to be radiant as we are presented before Him, in splendor, not ashamed, but in glory and splendor. And this makes us want to identify areas in our lives that may need purification and surrender to Christ. We must strive for holiness and righteousness, eagerly awaiting the day when we will stand before Christ, radiant and without blemish. We see a picture of this moment in Revelation 19:7-8 **Let's rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has prepared herself." 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.** We live our lives longing for that day, and striving to be as worthy of it as we can possibly be. And then, Christ will present those who are His Bride to God. Colossians 1:22-23 **22 yet He has now reconciled you in His body of flesh through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. not having a blemish or wrinkle or any such thing.**

Blemishes here refer not to physical imperfections, but to the stain of impurity in a person's character. Blemishes could not be erased by the bridal bath. But, praise God, the cleansing from Christ's death can cleanse any blemish caused by sin. We just have to want to be cleansed! The relevance of being presented "without stain or wrinkle" means that spiritually, there are no flaws, just as a bride puts on makeup to appear without wrinkle or blemish, Christ's holiness and righteousness covers us, as we pursue holiness and righteousness in our lives. It's not that we can achieve perfection, it's that the striving for purity and integrity both individually and within the community of believers changes us to be more Christlike.

To strive to be holy and blameless involves living a life that is set apart for God and without blemish or fault. This can be achieved by striving to reflect the character of Christ in all areas of life, maintaining a close relationship with God through prayer, studying His Word, and allowing the Holy Spirit to transform one's heart and mind. Walking in obedience to God's commands, being humble, showing love and grace to others, and living a life of integrity are key components of presenting oneself holy and blameless. While we on earth, we endeavor to walk as Jesus walked, in the light as He walked in the light, confessing shortcomings, and repenting of sins when we fall short, and miss the mark. These are crucial aspects of maintaining a blameless standing before God. It is also important to surround ourselves with a community of believers who can provide support, encouragement, and accountability in the journey towards becoming more Christ-like. Our pursuit of holiness ultimately requires us to depend on God's grace and strength to live a life that honors Him in all things as we continually grow and sanctify ourselves. Just as a devoted husband would not dream of abandoning his wife, Jesus will not forsake His bride or the promises He made to her. This assurance provides us with ample motivation to lead a holy life, knowing that God is actively working in us to conform us to His image (Philippians 2:13).

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Christ's love for the church demonstrated that the giving of himself was in order that he might sanctify it (v. 26) and that Christ sanctified the church in order that he might present it to himself (v. 27a). without blemish or wrinkle and "holy and blameless". Paul states that the church in her gloriousness does not have any imperfection whatsoever in order that she might be morally holy and blameless.

Paul said this back in Eph 1:4 that **God chose us in Christ before the foundations of the world that we might be holy and without blame before God** In chapter 1 believers are to be holy and blameless before God, whereas here the church is holy and blameless before Christ. "Holy" reflects God's character in its uniqueness, and "without blame" denotes absence of defects. This emphasizes our role as the Church. Whenever the Church in scripture is presented as The Bride of Christ, it is always looking forward to the future, when we will be married to Christ as His bride (e.g., Matt 22:1–10; 25:1–13; Rev 19:7–10; 21:9). Presently, the church is seen as the body of Christ but in the future she becomes the bride of Christ. The love that Christ has for His church and His commitment to cleanse her of spots and blemishes should serve as a model for our marriages, especially for husbands. The husband loves his wife with the aim of "sanctifying" her. He should care for her, keep her best interests in mind, and be genuinely concerned about her growth in all aspects, including her spiritual well-being as we discussed last week.