

2020 Embracing a New Vision
Seeing the Beauty of the Bride- Week #8
Small Group Notes
May 28 and 31

Main Point: A part of embracing a new vision is to understand the love Jesus has for the church.

Introduction:

What are some of the differences between how men and women view weddings?

What has been the most memorable wedding you have been to? What made the wedding a special celebration?

Have you ever thought about the church being a bride before? Why or why not? Why do you think God chose this particular picture for the church?

While there can be different perspectives regarding weddings, they are intended to be a celebration as well as a reflection of the love that Christ has for His bride, the church.

Discuss:

1. Read Acts 2:42

Explain: The phrase “devoted themselves” (2:42) indicates commitment and passion. For these believers, discipleship was a priority, an imperative, not an option. It involved regularly hearing “the apostles’ teaching” (Bible study), “fellowship” (building community) “breaking of bread” (fellowship and ministry), and “prayer” (as individuals and in groups).

- When we see the church through a gospel lens:
 - o We see it as something worth being part of
 - o We see the gathering of it as necessary and life-giving.

What are ways that you have experienced the value of the church in your life? How has it encouraged you to live for the Lord?

Are you investing an appropriate amount of time, energy, and money in this spiritual wedding? What needs to change about your lifestyle to be more “devoted: to the bride?”

2. Read Hebrews 10:24-25 and Ephesians 4:2

Explain: As Christians we have a corporate responsibility. We must help others who stumble and falter. We must concentrate on the needs of others and not on our individual salvation only. To spur other believers forward in the Christian life, followers of Christ must meet together. And when we gather together we learn how to relate to one another in the context of the love that Christ has shown us (Ephesians 4:2).

- We see the beauty and the sharpening of the fellowship.
- We see prayers as the brick and mortar.

What does it look like practically to “promote love and good works” (vv. 24-25)? Why do we need encouragement from others to do this?

What are some practical ways that we might demonstrate generosity in the way we live in community with one another? Who is someone that you can pray for today in the church?

3. Read Acts 2:43-47

Explain: The unity of the church was a testimony to God’s presence, and “every day the Lord added to them those who were being saved” (v. 47). The early church was a growing church. They first had a reverent fear for God that guided them in their daily living (see v. 43). Next, they made loving other believers as themselves a priority for their fellowship, even to the point of selling private property in order to provide for members in need (vv. 44-45). They followed Jesus’ great commandment to a “t.” And God honored them for that by blessing them with new members every day.

- We see the church as a conduit of the Spirit of God.

- We see the church as something that brings us awe.

What has been something you have been in awe of in the church?

How can this help you to share Christ with others?

What are some of the unique challenges for our church we face as we practice biblical community?

How can the way that we love one another as a church bring the lost to hear the gospel?

Do:

What was surprising in what you heard and read today about the church?

How has today's discussion changed the way that you viewed the church?

Would people outside of our church say we model the characteristics of the Acts 2 church? Where do we excel, and where might there be room for improvement? What can our group do to help?