

North Weekly Devotional

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Song: [*How Deep the Father's Love For Us*](#)

Prayer: *Thank you Lord, for this opportunity to worship and focus on you. Help us to open our hearts fully to you and to always seek and follow your guidance.*

Text: Revelation 21:2 & Ephesians 5:25-30

Explanation: What does it mean to be the Church? We are all very familiar with the idea that we are all supposed to be one big family, love and help each other, and that we are all members of the same body with different roles, strengths, weaknesses, talents and abilities. We all know we are supposed to work together to be united in our love for Christ and in doing His will. But what if it is more than that? Because it is. Being the church is more than the here and the now. It is more than this moment in time together. It is more than those great leaders, teachers, missionaries, and preachers who have gone before like Corrie Ten Boom, Lottie Moon, Billy Graham and Charles Spurgeon. It is more than getting together once or twice a week and learning about our Lord. A big part of being the Church is being loved by Christ.

One day, when all is said and done, we – all of us who are now, who ever were and who ever will be- will be presented, as one, a united object of God's love, to Christ Jesus. Revelation 21:2 says that we will be a new and holy Jerusalem, a new and holy city! Cities are busy and bustling, loud, and full; that is what we will be, loud with songs of praise and joyfully busy doing whatever task He has assigned us. Joy will abound and His Glory will overflow. We will be different than the cities we know here on earth, full of smog and clutter. Ephesians says the Church, the bride of Christ, will be presented without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, that we will be holy and without blemish. We will be full of splendor. We, as the Church, get to be loved by Christ! Not just loved as an emotion, but as an action! Jesus, in obedience to the Father, through the work of the Holy Spirit is refining us and making us perfectly His. His love for us is not about us, but what He can and wants to do through us, to us, with us and for us!!

The Point: *Being the Church is getting to be the Bride of Christ!*

Application: *Explanation leads to application. Now we know what the text means, but how does it apply to each listener. The text will likely have a general application, but will apply a bit differently with specific demographics.*

Pre-K & Elementary Age: How many young children dream about their wedding day and the beautiful white gowns? I imagine a lot of little girls do, and a lot of little boys probably think about the home and land they will get to provide. Check out the

description of the city/home Jesus is preparing for us found in Revelation 21:10-27. [Heaven is a wonderful place!](#) Try to draw what you read.

Middle & High School Students: *The world says that love is an emotion, a feeling. The world says that we can love those who are nice to us and good. The world says that when we feel something we need to go after our desire. Our scriptures today show us that true love is about action and patience and what you can do for the other person. Real love does not rush; think about how long Jesus has been patiently waiting and giving to his future bride. Take some time to think about the things and people you love. In what ways are you loving like the world and how can you love more like Jesus? How can you just live with joy in this moment without rushing to the next stage?*

Young Adult: *We can spend a lot of time trying hard to better ourselves and prepare ourselves for the future. Rightfully so. Building a life takes a lot of planning and effort and doing so is a wise thing to do. However, it is easy to get lost in our own abilities and our own visions for our future. Remember that God has a plan for you and your life, and it may not match up exactly with your own. His goals for you will always be better than your goals for you. Spend time with the Lord and seek His will for your life. [Patiently try to follow His lead](#) and He will make your path clear. You can bet that it will lead straight to Him!*

Adult: *Day in and day out, the same pile of laundry, the same squeaky hinge that needs oil, the same arguments from children and co-workers. Life gets tiring and heavy. Sometimes it seems as if it will never end and we wonder if it even really matters. I mean seriously, how many times has this same long sleeve sweatshirt, no one has worn gone through the wash this summer or how many times have you had to look for, find and put back in its prepper place that thing at work. Though it may seem unending and pointless at time, [everything does matter](#). He is using this season to refine us and make us into His perfect Bride. Take some time to reflect on how you have grown through the mundane and challenging things the season presents.*

Empty Nesters: *Do you feel the joy of a young and energetic, excited newlywed? Does each new day feel like a gift? Are you still seeking and growing in Christ? When we look around us and see all the wonder, it is easy to share in the joys. But what about all the hurt? When we see those we love struggling, it can be hard to know when to step in and help and when to let them work through the process and situations on their own. One thing we can [trust](#) is that God is using every single part of this for their betterment and ours because He wants [all of us](#) to be His and He does love each of us. Take some time to be grateful for the process He is using to make us, and those we love, His bride.*

Song Options: [My God, O Happy Day, There was Jesus, How Can It Be](#)

Prayer: Lord, help me/us to realize that you are in control of all things and that you will use all things to the good of those that love you for your glory. Lord, you love us and use all things to mold us into your perfect bride. Help us to rest in that love and walk confidently towards you in it.