

Week Beginning: 20th October 2019

Worship Series: ICRTT #4

living sharing growing



lifegroups
live life abundantly

Theme Verse

I will make you my wife forever, showing you righteousness and justice, unending love and compassion. I will be faithful to you and make you mine, and you will finally know me as the Lord. *Hosea 2:19-20 (NLT)*

Remember This Week

God is emotionally, mightily, passionately and whole heartedly into you. He woos you tenderly for all he desires is to have the most intimate and pleasure-filled relationship with you eternally. Today, he renews his vow and gives you again his Son, saying 'Receive my Son as proof of my promise of love and faithfulness.'



Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure"—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are true words of God." - Revelation 19:6-9

Almighty God, you love us and have done everything to make us yours. Through Jesus, you have given us a new family, a new identity and a new life. As we gather around your word bring us to a deeper understanding of the fullness of our new life in you. Amen.

1. *Share your highs and lows since you last met with one another.*
2. *Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *Can you remember you own wedding or the last wedding you attended? What was the feeling like in the room at that wedding? Who was there?*
4. *What is the biggest/hardest promise you ever made? Were you able to keep it?*
5. *Talk about a time you have really felt the love of God present and active in your life.*

Everyone loves a good wedding. The moment the bride walks down the aisle. The face of the groom as he sees his bride. But beyond the pageantry or the spectacle, is the enormous promise that they make to each other - "as long as we both shall live. This is my solemn vow." These vows are huge. They are also hard. For anything we set our lives on "until death parts us" is just going to test us, stretch us and expose the strengths and especially the weaknesses of our hearts. Today we hear God's vow to us - a vow he is faithful to day after day and a promise that not even death can separate us from. So come, as the Holy God invites us to relate to him as a Bride to a Groom. Hear him renew his vow of love for you; to forgive, to protect, to preserve and to be intimately with us forever. There is no more beautiful moment.

Read Hosea 2:16-20

6. *What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?*
7. *Verse 16 refers to the name Baal. Roughly translated this name means 'my master'. What is the difference between having a master or lord, and having a husband?*
8. *Why do you think the image of a married couple is being used here? What aspect of God's character does it highlight for you?*

Marriage has been used for a lot of different functions throughout human history. Apart from providing opportunity for the bride and groom to establish promises of fidelity to each other, weddings and marriages were often arranged to solidify alliances between family groups and later in history even between entire nations. And, while we might not continue this practice in



most western cultures today, many other cultures still view marriage as a transaction, in which a dowry or bride price is paid for the bride before the marriage can take place.

9. *Does it change the way you think about your relationship with God when you think of the price he paid (his only son) to make you his own? In what way?*
10. *In what ways does being united with Christ as a bride to a groom, change your allegiances or your identity? Think about your baptism.*

Genesis 2:24 says, "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh". When we talk about marriage this verse is often one we go to. This is part of God's intent for the marriage relationship, that the two people might become as one.

11. *How does this understanding of marriage reflect the nature of our relationship with Jesus? How do you perceive the unity between yourself and Jesus on a daily basis?*

This idea of unity is one that Jesus was deeply concerned about. As he was preparing to be handed over to be crucified, John's Gospel records Jesus' words as he prayed.

Read John 17:20-23...

12. *What does it mean to you, to be one with Jesus, just as he was one with the Father?*
13. *How do you reconcile the fact that you are completely united with Jesus, in his death and resurrection (Romans 6:5) yet so often live apart from him?*

Part of the joy of our relationship with Jesus the groom, is that it is a relationship of restoration and redemption. Our reading from Hosea actually follows a rather long passage (ch 2:1-15) consisting of a list of the bride's infidelities and unfaithfulness to her husband; a metaphor for Israel's continual rejection of God. God knows we have strayed from him, been unfaithful to him, but like a devoted, loving husband, Jesus comes to us; to lay down his life for us, to redeem us from our unfaithfulness, and take us back for himself. Hosea 2:19-20 says "And I will take you for my wife forever; I will take you for my wife in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will take you for my wife in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord". God Loves you, he wants you as his own forever, even in your sinful state, he wants nothing more than to be with you.

14. *The people of God, ie. Israel, had been anything but righteous, just, loving or merciful. Thy had certainly not been faithful to God. How then can God take them as a wife in righteousness, justice, steadfast love, mercy and faithfulness?*
15. *If our righteousness, and all those other things come from our union with Jesus, then what is our role in the bride/groom, husband/wife relationship?*



One of the things that our western society and culture seems to have forgotten about marriage, is that it is a commitment to live not just *with* each other but more importantly, *for* each other. This is one of the reasons (among many others) that divorce rates are so high. Jesus is the only perfect example of what it means to live for someone else. It is in our union with him that we are empowered to live our lives with concern for others before concern for ourselves. He enables us to do this because we can trust that we do not need to be worried about ourselves or look out for number one, because we have Jesus looking out for us.

16. *How might you or your LifeGroup be able to live a little bit more for others this week?*
17. *Think about your own relationships. Are there relationships that you have where Jesus might be asking you to allow him to bring healing and restoration, perhaps even forgiveness and reconciliation? What can you do to begin that process?*



- * Thank Jesus for showing his love for us, that while we were still sinners he died for us!
- * Pray for those who are struggling with unhealthy relationships and marriages. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring healing and reconciliation to broken relationships.
- * Pray for those who are reluctant to trust because they have had their trust broken in the past. May they come to see Jesus as a faithful and righteous friend and helper.
- * Pray for each other - that you would continue to develop your 'oneness' with Jesus by the power of His Word and Spirit.



Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:
Name, you are the precious and loved bride of Christ.