

## WEEKLY PRAYER GUIDE – PRAYING THE NAMES OF JESUS

### **Jesus: Bridegroom**

**Week 10 – January 30, 2011**

**Prayer Focus: The Church**

*He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice.* John 3:29

*Church.* What comes to mind when you think of church? Perhaps a warm feeling where you go to worship the Lord and are surrounded by a kind family of fellow believers. Maybe you think of division, schism, abuse, and pain. Or, holiness, complacency, prophesy, mediocrity. Church is all of these—and so much more.

People make Christ's Church what it is. You. Me. What we are to Jesus individually is what we are to Him collectively. Our single acts of worship, witness, prayer, submission, obedience, service, and humility, are cumulative. When such acts are present in a believer's life, they add to the perfection of His Church and bring glory to God. When acts are antithetical to His ways, His Church is weakened and glory to God is diminished.

One of the names for Jesus is Bridegroom. Because Jesus considers His Church His Bride, Jesus wants perfection. He wants a beautiful cohesion that is unsullied, undefiled, and undivided. If you or I experience or cause sadness and schism and there is a lack of unity, our melancholy is a slim insight to what the Father's heart feels when His Church is fractured. Still, the Bridegroom waits—for us.

The perfection Jesus wants can indeed come through us but not from us. Only Jesus can perfect anyone or anything with His perfect love. However, when we accept Jesus as Saviour, we are endowed with His Spirit and given supernatural power to do that which is righteous. Just as coming to Christ is a personal decision, surrendering our will to His will after a commitment to Jesus, is a life-long relinquishment of our will. This is a daily process; a momentary process. But when we make decisions for obedience in a split second, we hasten the perfection of His Church for we call upon His power to empower us to bring greater unity into being.

This week our prayers center on Christ's Church and unifying the Body of Christ for our Bridegroom, Jesus. Worship styles, denominational differences, musical preferences, doctrinal interpretations, and even wardrobe considerations, are among matters that can and do divide the Body of Christ. Other divisions come as a result of different personalities, spiritual gifts and the expression and sharing thereof, and financial distribution of resources. Discord is real. And when the people of God are not unified, Satan and His minions are. The Enemy enjoys minor spats and major problems among Christians. Satan is a constant and stealth power that seeks to destroy Christ's Church—Christ's people. Disharmony and imperfection are victories Satan relishes. However, as Christians we have THE greatest power—Jesus Christ Himself. We have the power of prayer and ever present Jesus to call on to counter Satan's attacks. Believers must unite around Christ's Word, power, and authority to combat evil and encourage harmony.

At weddings, eyes are often on the bride waiting to see her beautiful gown and radiant face. However, it is wonderful to look at the bridegroom who is looking at her; he waits for her with joyful anticipation (and sometimes tears) as she walks down the aisle and comes closer to him. Jesus the Bridegroom looks at His Church and He waits. Yes, with a joyful anticipation for He knows what we, His beloved people, are to Him and have yet to be. His eyes of love are fixed on each one of His own. We are beautiful in His eyes as Jesus is beautiful in our eyes. When all that love comes together, He sees a perfect Bride, a perfect Church. May we be mindful of our Bridegroom and the radiance than can be in The Church. This is possible because of something more important than personal preferences—a personal love for our Bridegroom.

*Lord Jesus, our beautiful and loving Bridegroom, we are an imperfect people with a belief in perfect You. Lord Jesus, we will continue to try to be sensitive to act in ways that bless Your heart and unify Your*

*Church. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for Your precious patience with us. May we be the same toward one another for the sake of Your Bride.*

*In Thee, Amen.*

**Weekly Faith Challenge** – Pray for unity in Christ’s Church. Commit time each day this week to pray to the Lord for unity—unity that begins with you.. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you so you can act in a way that will make a good difference. What the Spirit guides you to do may be uncomfortable and disagreeable. He who directs will also equip. Trust His grace to cover you and give to you all that is necessary to help bless Jesus’ heart by bringing unity to His Church.

Chris Ann Waters

Co-Chair of Prayer Committee – Monmouth County

Jersey Shore Will Graham Celebration – May 20-22, 2011, Ocean Grove, NJ