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Giving His Life to Save Hers—P4

“We love, because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

Every Believer is joined to Jesus in a spiritual form of marriage: *“the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him”* (1 Cor. 6:17). The standards the New Testament gives husbands for marriage come directly from Jesus’ relationship to the Church: *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 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. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body”* (Eph. 5:25-30).

Jesus loved the Church more than Himself—laying down His “life” of position, glory, and honor to come “incognito” as a lowly mortal man to rescue her from her dire predicament, having sold herself into bondage. Leaving Heaven in pursuit of her, Jesus *“suffered in the flesh”* (1 Pt. 4:1b). *“Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself”* (Phil. 2:8a), having *“no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him”* (Is. 53:2b-3). Jesus knew we would disregard and mistreat Him, yet He did not waver in offering us His hand while laying His dignity down.

But this was just the beginning of the sacri-

fice He would be required to make for us—laying His actual life down for the Church in her place of judgment, execution, and separation from God: *“Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter”* (Is. 53:4-7a). *“By becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”* (Phil. 2:8b), Jesus *“gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age”* (Gal. 1:3b-4a). He did all this for the Church while she was still His enemy! And *“if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life”* (Rom. 5:10). We are saved from our sins and reconciled to God by our union to Jesus.

Rather than purchasing us as slaves or servants, as was His right, Jesus purchased us as His Bride by paying a costly bride-price to obtain us from out of the wicked “family of man.” No husband has ever shown the love to his wife that Jesus showed the Church. The depth of His sacrifice for her and the lengths He went to save her, while she was still His enemy are unfathomable. *“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:4-9). Praise His amazing love! Amen.

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