

15. If you were to take part as a bridesmaid or in “giving away” a bride who was a family member or friend how would you feel? How does this compare or help us to see the importance of leading people to Christ?

16. What does this picture used by Paul and Psalm 45 show us about your importance to Christ? How do you respond to that?

## Pray

Pray for marriage in our society and amongst Christians; that people would see that it is created by God and between a man and a woman; that marriage would be valued; and that we would work hard to preserve and support one another.

Pray for the work of bringing people to Christ through the message of the gospel. For opportunities to do this, and for those who have recently heard the message through the mission, through attending services, or through conversations.

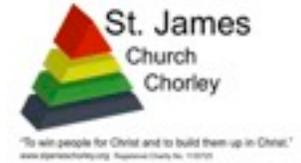
Pray that the church would conduct itself as a bride worthy of her Lord.

Pray for our forthcoming Lent Groups and Lent Courses, that they would be helpful in building us up in Christ and that they would attract people who don't normally attend home groups.

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# Songs of the Saviour

## Week 4 - The King and His Bride



*The Hebrew title tells us this Psalm is a love song and the Psalm itself shows us it was for a royal wedding. But, as verse 6 shows it also has a deeper significance.*

## The King

**Read Psalm 45 verse 1-9** but omitting for the moment the first line of verse 6.

1. How would you feel if you were called on to write a poem or song for a royal wedding? What did the writer of Psalm 45 feel about his charge? (v1)
2. Hands up if you watched the last royal wedding. Why do people like such pomp and circumstance?
3. How does the writer describe the king's appearance and qualities? Is this just the typical but unrealistic flattery of a courtier?

## The Bride

**Read Psalm 45 verses 10-17**

4. These verses describe the future Queen's bridal procession from her chamber to her husband's side. What parallels and differences are there to a traditional wedding in our own culture?

5. In verse 10 the bride is told to forget her people and father's house. How does this compare to what is said about the husband in Genesis 2.24. Why is this important for married couples?

## The Messiah

### Read Psalm 45 verses 6 to 7.

6. A few modern translations try to water down the significance of this verse, but our ESV follows the original Hebrew and pre-Christian translations. What do these verses imply about the identity of the King and His relationship to God?

7. In many ancient societies rulers were considered to be divine - but that was forbidden in Israel and there is no evidence for it from their history. How then can this Psalm be only about one of the Kings of Israel or Judah?

*The Jews traditionally understood the Psalm to be about God and His bride, Israel, a picture found elsewhere in the Old Testament.*

### Read Hebrews 1 verse 8 to 9

8. According to Hebrews who are verses 6 and 7 of the Psalm about? How does the writer describe the relationship between the King in the Psalm and God?

*It need not be "either-or", the Psalm can be about an actual royal couple and about the Christ, as we will see. Some parts of the Psalm seem to fit better with one and some with the other.*

### Read Ephesians 5.25-33

9. In verse 31 Paul quotes from Genesis 2.24 which was describing marriage, beginning with Adam and Eve. Jesus asserts that this is the basis of marriage (eg Mk 10.7). But what does Paul say the verse is also about?

10. A deep question for you: Does this mean that marriage is a helpful illustration of the relationship of Christ to His people - or is it rather that marriage was created by God to echo the relationship of Christ to His people?

11. Look at Psalm 45 again to see what it says about Christ and His bride. Reflecting on verses 1-9 in what ways do Christians show their adoration of Christ? Is this something you feel comfortable doing; does it come naturally, or do you find it awkward?

12. How does Paul use this the picture of the bride being brought to her husband in Ephesians 5 verse 26 and 27? How does Christ's role differ from a normal bridegroom?

13. But how does Paul also use this picture to describe his own ministry in 2 Corinthians 11 verse 2?

14. Is Paul contradicting himself in these two passages? If not what does it show about our work for Christ?