

Session 5 The Beauty of the Bride (Song 1:15; 4:7)

I. THE KING DECLARED THE BRIDE’S BEAUTY (SONG 1:15)

- A. The King declared two foundational truths. First, His people are beautiful to Him. Second, He has great affection for His people, the ones He called “My love”—the ones He loves. Our beauty in Christ reaches the highest place of understanding in the implications of the Bride of Christ.

¹⁵ ***Behold, you are fair [beautiful], My love! Behold, you are fair [beautiful]! (Song 1:15)***

¹ ***Behold, you are fair [beautiful], My love! Behold, you are fair!...⁷ You are all fair [altogether beautiful; NASB], My love, and there is no spot in you. (Song 4:1, 7)***

- B. *Fair* is rendered “beautiful” in most translations. The Bride’s beauty is a main theme (1:8, 15 [x2], 16; 2:10, 13, 14; 4:1 [x2], 7, 10; 6:4 [x2], 10; 7:1, 6)—the Beloved calls her *beautiful* 16 times.
- C. God created the human spirit with deep longings that draw us to Him and reflect His glory in us. Our beautiful God created us in such a way that we long to possess beauty—external and internal.
- D. The beauty that God possesses is the very beauty that He imparts to His people (Isa. 61:3). One aspect of our salvation is realized when Jesus gives us His beauty for the ashes of our broken lives.

³ ***“...to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes.” (Isa. 61:3)***

⁴ ***For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation. (Ps. 149:4)***

- E. Moses prayed that the beauty of the Lord would be upon us.

¹⁷ ***And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us. (Ps. 90:17)***

- F. There is *physical* beauty and *spiritual* beauty; there is *temporal* beauty in this age, and *eternal* beauty in the age to come. Some of this beauty touches us physically when our heart is renewed in this age—a happy heart with a free spirit and a bright countenance beautifies a person physically. You will possess tremendous physical beauty forever in your body, soul, and spirit.

- G. We do not want merely to *see* beauty; we want to be united with and immersed in beauty. This involves being able to love, think, and feel as God does, and to rejoice in the seeds of beauty that are growing in us now, knowing that the fullness of beauty will flourish in us in the age to come.

⁴ ***Let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. (1 Pet. 3:4)***

- H. Our heart chases hard after beauty because humans feel unsettled when feeling ugly. Our culture is obsessed with the longing for physical beauty, but so often seeks it outside of God’s will.

- I. The Lord is the only one who can tell us who we are and why we are beautiful. A woman is not beautiful because men say she is; she is beautiful because God says so. How blessed is the one who knows that true and eternal beauty is sure to come in fullness and comes as a gift from our God!

II. THE FRAGRANCE OF CHRIST IN THE BRIDE

- A. Our devotion and love is an expression of Christ's fragrance to God (2 Cor. 2:15).
¹⁵*We are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved. (2 Cor. 2:15)*
- B. Throughout the Song, the fragrance of God is imparted to the Bride. His fragrance becomes hers. The King is described as having many fragrances (Song 1:3, 13-14; 3:6; 5:1, 13; 6:2). The Bride is described as possessing great fragrances (Song 1:12; 4:10-11, 13-14, 16; 5:5; 7:8, 13).
- C. In Song 1:12 the Bride speaks of the "fragrance of her worship" arising to God. Our worship is an expression of the "seeds" of God's beauty being manifest in our life. At His table, her worship ascends as the fragrance of God's beauty as she feeds on truths about the King and His salvation. Spikenard (also "nard") is a plant found in India; it grows in spikes, and its oil is used as a perfume.
¹²*While the King is at His table, my spikenard [perfume of worship] sends forth its fragrance. (Song 1:12)*

III. THE PARADOX OF GRACE: DARK, BUT LOVELY (SONG 1:5-6)

- A. The Bride's spiritual journey begins with what I refer to as the "paradox of grace," because, as she discovers her sin, she also sees that she is lovely to God. We see this in her twofold confession of faith. The tents in the fields of Kedar were dirty, and the curtains in Solomon's temple were lovely.
⁵*"I am dark [in my heart], but lovely [to God], O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon..."*⁶*"I am dark [in heart]...my own vineyard [heart] I have not kept." (Song 1:5-6)*
- B. Spiritual immaturity is not rebellion. They sometimes look the same, but they come from different heart responses. A sincere but immature believer shows their sincerity by quickly repenting and renewing their war against the sin they just stumbled in.
- C. One who genuinely loves God has a willing spirit—they are sincerely seeking to obey Him. Our obedience and love for God are sincere, even while weak and flawed; weak love is not false love. But *sincerely intending* to pursue full obedience is different from *attaining* it.
⁴¹*"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Mt. 26:41)*
- D. God enjoys and delights in His relationship with His people, even now in our spiritual immaturity (Lk. 15:4-5, 8-10, 20). A hypocrite is not one who says one thing and does another; rather, it is hypocritical to talk about obeying God without *seeking or intending* to obey Him.
- E. The beauty God gives deeply touches His people as they grow in understanding of this glorious gift. As we feel more and more beautiful in Christ, by His grace, we grow spiritually and in confidence in God. Many believers only see their sin, and thus they feel dirty and ashamed. A person who feels dirty will "live dirty." A believer who feels beautiful will run *to* God, not *from* Him.
- F. The Lord values His people as a great treasure. Jesus saw "jewels" as He walked on earth.
¹⁷*"They shall be Mine," says the LORD... "on the day that I make them My jewels." (Mal. 3:17)*

IV. WE ARE LOVELY BEFORE GOD: 4 REASONS

- A. **God's personality:** God has a loving and kind personality. Because of who God is—because of His great generosity of heart—He sees us as beautiful: “*Beauty is in the eyes of the Beholder.*”
- B. **The gift of righteousness:** We receive the beauty of Jesus' righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21).
¹⁰*He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness...as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. (Isa. 61:10)*
- C. **A willing spirit:** A willing spirit (Mt. 26:41), the sincere intention to obey God, is beautiful to Him. Any believer with a willing spirit will inevitably grow in the inward beauty of holiness (Ps. 29:2).
⁴*Let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. (1 Pet. 3:4)*
²*Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. (Ps. 29:2)*
- D. **Our eternal destiny:** In the resurrection we will respond to God in perfect love forever. God sees the end from the beginning; He sees us now, in the light of eternity's reality, as having perfect love.

V. A RESURRECTED BODY THAT EXPRESSES GOD'S BEAUTY AND GLORY

- A. You will enjoy great beauty physically, emotionally, and spiritually forever. We will have a resurrected body with the capacity to express the beauty and glory of God in great measure.
²¹*“who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body.” (Phil. 3:21)*
- B. The body that God custom designed for Jesus is the same type of body the Bride will have forever.
²*...when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (1 Jn. 3:2)*
- C. Our eternal body will have similar supernatural properties and abilities to Jesus' body.
⁴²*...the body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption...⁴³*It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. (1 Cor. 15:42-43)**
1. Supernatural beauty—eyes, hair, face, skin, fragrance, light, color, etc.
Supernatural voice—speech, musical, singing, etc.
Supernatural strength—speed, endurance, energy, flight, lifting objects, etc.
Supernatural health—no fatigue, injury, sickness, or death, etc.
 2. Beautified with supernatural abilities in our five senses:
 - Sight—seeing at a distance and at close range
 - Hearing—at distances, with great perception, perfect balance, etc.
 - Taste—enjoyment of food, etc.
 - Touch—to discern and feel perfectly, etc.
 - Smell—to enjoy and discern, etc.

VI. BRIDE'S IDENTITY AND LIFE PURPOSE (SONG 2:1-2)

- A. The Father promised to give Jesus an inheritance—an eternal companion (Bride) who loves Him.
¹⁷...that the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation...that you may know...what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. (Eph. 1:17-18)
- B. In poetic language, the Bride declares that her identity is in being Jesus' inheritance (2:1-2). The Bride is pictured as a *beautiful rose* and a *pure lily*, whose life purpose and spiritual identity is found in seeking to fully love (rose) and obey (lily) Jesus (2:1-2). The Bridegroom King declared that she was as a lily (2:2). The rose and the lily are the same person—identified as the Bride (2:2).
¹*I [the Bride] am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. ²*Like a lily among thorns, so is My love among the daughters*. (Song 2:1-2)*
1. **Rose:** The rose is the chief of flowers—it is symbolic of love—because of its beauty and fragrance. Thus it is used in our celebrations for weddings, wedding anniversaries, etc.
 2. **Lily:** The lily speaks of purity, of obeying God with all our heart. The valley speaks of the low and dark places in this fallen world. As a lily, she lives in purity in a fallen, dark world.
- C. Our identity is based on the way we define our value and measure our success. Our primary identity and success is to be found in our relationship with Jesus—in being desired by God and in loving and obeying Him, not in our recognition or accomplishments before people.
- D. We confess, “*I am loved by God, and I love God; therefore, I am successful.*” When our primary success comes from being desired by God and loving Him, we need not fear being a failure.
- E. Our primary identity is not in what we do with our hands, but in what we pursue with our hearts. Seeing that we are *His rose and lily* empowers us to see our true success and to overcome failure.
- F. The Bride's beauty is compared to two earthly cities (6:4) and two heavenly bodies (6:10).
⁴*O My love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners!* ⁵*Turn your eyes away from Me, for they have overcome Me...* ¹⁰*Who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair [beautiful] as the moon, clear [brilliant] as the sun...? (Song 6:4-5, 10)*
1. **Beautiful as Tirzah:** Tirzah was one of the most attractive cities in the ancient world.
 2. **Lovely as Jerusalem:** Jerusalem was the place God had chosen to establish His temple; thus, it was the only place on earth where God's presence was manifest in an ongoing way.
 3. **Turn your eyes away:** This is one of the great statements in the Song. The King was not asking her literally to look away from Him. He was speaking poetically of her love for Him.
 4. **Looks forth:** The Bride's life looks, or shines forth, like a morning light after a long night (6:10). She shines forth as beautiful as the moon, which gives light in the night (Gen. 1:14-19). It does not have its own light, but reflects the light of the sun. In the age to come, she will be as bright as the sun, reflecting Jesus' beautiful light in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:11, 23).