

A King and His Daughter

Ps. 45:13-15

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On the evening before Judy died, I glanced through the hospital window to the west. “Oh, my goodness!” I exclaimed. “Look at that!” Floating above the dark horizon, silver, full, and fair, rose a glorious moon. I remarked to those around me, “That’s my favorite image in nature!” The others agreed; that moon was indeed “a thing of beauty” and “a joy forever.”¹

On the morning after Judy died, as I thought again upon that lovely full moon, I remembered not only the beautiful moon but also a simple but forgotten truth: yes, the moon was beautiful, but what made her so beautiful was the sun. Without the sun, the moon would be just a dull, cold piece of pummeled stone wandering aimlessly in the ether. But in the radiance and under the influence of the sun, the moon is transfigured into heaven’s second brightest orb. In fact, looking at the moon, I was actually seeing the sun, for it is only by sunlight that we see moonlight. Every glory of the silver moon must witness to, must pay homage to the surpassing glory of the golden sun. This is my sermon today. I shall speak of Judy’s moonlight glories, but I must remember, and I must remind you as well, of another Light brighter and more beautiful than Judy, another Light from Whose radiance, and under Whose influence Judy shone so brightly and so beautifully, Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. And thus our text today,

“The King’s daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold;
she shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework. . . .
With gladness and rejoicing [she] shall enter the King’s palace.”

Right preaching begins with the King, and thus begins the Psalmist. Before David tells us of the king’s daughter, he will tell us of her Father, the King. David’s heart contemplates a good matter, “My tongue,” says he, “is the pen of a ready writer. I shall speak of things . . . touching the king.”

The first motion of David’s heart, the first note of his song, and the first stroke of his pen tell us that the King is beautiful, “fairer than the children of men.” To the eyes of mortal men, “King Jesus hath neither form nor comeliness, and no beauty that we should desire him,” and thus He is “despised and rejected of men.” But to the quickened eye of faith,

[The King] is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent

¹Keats, John: “A Thing of Beauty is a Joy Forever”

as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

Indeed, the King is beautiful.

The Psalmist also teaches us that King Jesus is gracious: "Grace," said David, "is poured into thy lips." Heaven poured grace into the King's lips at the lowly manger when angels heralded his birth; grace was poured into His lips when, as a child, He confounded the doctors and lawyers; grace was poured into His lips in the streets of Jerusalem and along the dusty roads of Nazareth, by the Sea of Galilee, in the homes of sinners, by the bedsides of the sick and dying, and at the tombs and coffins of the dead. Grace was poured into His precious lips with every word He spake, and from those grace-filled lips, King Jesus spoke peace to the tormented, hope to the troubled, healing to the sick, and love to the brokenhearted. Even upon Golgotha's dark brow, grace was poured into His lips when He said to the dying thief, "This day, thou shalt be with me in paradise." We would be amiss not to say to every one of you here today, whether you be tormented, troubled, sick, sorrowful, or brokenhearted, that the grace poured into His lips can at this moment be poured into your heart if you will but believe His words, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Drink my water, and you shall never thirst; eat my bread and you shall never hunger; take my yoke, and you shall find rest for your soul."

But as beautiful and gracious as King Jesus is to the saints of God, He is fierce and terrible to His enemies. In majesty He girds His glittering sword upon His thigh; one day He shall unsheathe that sword and teach His enemies terrible things; His arrows shall will be sharp to their hearts, and they shall fall under Him, defeated and destroyed. To the righteous, Jesus Christ is the Golden Sun of Righteousness, risen with healing in His wings, but to the wicked and unbelieving, He is the brazen and blazing Sun of Judgment, and that day shall come when He shall burn like an oven, and all the proud, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble, and He shall burn them up, says the LORD of hosts.

King Jesus is also the eternal, sovereign, and righteous God of Heaven, as the Psalmist says, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of thy kingdom is a righteous scepter; thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity."

Perhaps prophesying of King Jesus' death at Calvary, the Psalmist says, "All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia." After Jesus' disciples and family took His precious body from the cross, Nicodemus brought a hundred pounds of ointment and spices, very costly, to anoint the King after the manner of the Jews. How tender must those moments have been, when mother Mary and the two sisters, Mary and Martha, touched the King's impeccable flesh, washed His blue wounds, anointed Him with oil and spices, and wrapped Him in fine linen white and clean. What fragrance must have filled that tomb! Do we not smell that fragrance still when we think upon the death of King Jesus, "a sweet smelling savour, a sacrifice well pleasing unto God," and unto us as well?

Indeed, King Jesus is fairer than the children of men, lips full of grace, and a terror to His enemies. He is the eternal, righteous, and sovereign God of heaven. But the Psalmist also speaks of the King's

daughter, and as the sun gives radiance to the moon, the King's glories have shone upon His daughter's brow.

Judy was, indeed, the King's daughter. Ironically, she knew her earthly father only until the tender age of three, when he died suddenly of a heart attack. "Where's the baby?" Mrs. Mollie asked, as she took Judy up in her arms.

The Gibson household was poor as men measure wealth. Mrs. Mollie eked out a meager living as a seamstress. On the day of Judy's death, I found this passage from her journal,

Mother was ingenious in "making do." She never wasted anything or threw away anything that might be useful. She was a creative recycler before recycling became popular. She would send us to the feed store where we would pick out the colorful sacks from which she would make our dresses. Then when they had been worn and handed down and worn again until they were worn out, mother took any useful pieces and sewed them into a quilt. She even took the boys' old blue jeans and made them into a quilt. It was so heavy that, once you crawled under it, you couldn't turn over, but you didn't get cold."

Hardly the attire of a King's daughter, but not even earth's finest silk can rival heaven's fabric, and no Calvin Kline or Vera Wang can design and weave the wardrobe of the King's Daughter. "The King's daughter," says the Psalmist, "is all glorious within," not without, but "within"; "her clothing is wrought of gold, and she shall be brought to the king in raiment of needlework."

Before I met Judy, God had already done the needlework and woven her golden attire, making her all glorious within. Interwoven in Judy's personality, like the golden strands in the garments of the high priest, the graces of heaven threaded every fiber and stitch of Judy's character. We all saw the golden weave within her: the golden thread of love, the golden thread of joy, the golden thread of peace, the golden thread of gentleness, the golden thread of goodness, the golden thread of longsuffering, the golden thread of faith, the golden thread of meekness, and the golden thread of a Spirit-controlled life. I saw those golden threads on the day I met her, and every day thereafter for thirty-four years. I saw the golden weave in her life, I heard the golden weave in her voice, and I felt the golden weave in her hands. Rather than dulling and weakening with time, I saw those golden strands become purer and purer, brighter and brighter, and stronger and stronger even in the refining fire of adversity. As a child without an earthly father, Judy was brought to the King's palace, and He said to her, "Daughter, adorn thyself with this fine needlework, this golden raiment from the King's palace. Wear it like a princess of heaven, for you are the King's own Daughter." Judy heard her Father's voice, even the voice of the King, and she adorned herself, within and without, in that golden raiment He had woven for her.

Now Heaven has spoken once again to our beloved Judy, "Come to the King's palace, for the King greatly desires thy beauty. With joy and rejoicing shall you be brought to the palace of the King. He will make your name to be remembered in all generations, and all the people shall praise you for ever and

ever.” Your husband shall praise you in the gates, and your children shall rise up and call you blessed. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.”

King Solomon contemplated, even adored his beloved and said, “Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, and clear as the sun?” That full moon upon which I gazed was a glorious vision, but not as glorious as the heavenly vision I have seen in my darling wife. Heaven’s graces and glories have hovered about her “as a guard angelic placed,”² and the light of God has shone so brightly upon Judy as to imparadise my soul³ by showing me a true reflection of God. But even a virtuous woman like Judy, though radiant in her life like the silver moon full and fair, must wane before our eyes until the only light we see is the Sun. And thus we must say, “Good night, lovely moon; good night, beloved sister; good night, cherished friend; good night, dear mother; good night, darling wife; good night, King’s daughter; good night, precious Judy, fair as the moon, and clear as the sun. Thank you for shining so brightly, and for showing us the sunlight. Your radiance shall forever remain a silver impress upon our memory, and a constant reminder of the source of your beauty and light, the golden Sun of Righteousness, Jesus Christ, who has now risen upon you with healing in His wings.

² John Milton from *Paradise Lost*

³ Dante Alighieri from *The Divine Comedy*