

## **Beauty Is in the Eyes of the Divine Beholder**

Song of Solomon 7:1-5; Psalm 45:13

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If beauty is in the eyes of the beholder, then when the beholder is the Lord Jesus Christ, whose credentials as a perfect judge of beauty are impeccable, we cannot question His evaluation without questioning Him and who He is. There can be no judge of true beauty that could compare to Him who created all things and has beautified all that He created. The Christian who trusts alone in Christ alone for his/her eternal salvation must also trust Him when He says that you, His beautiful bride, ravish His heart with His beauty that is in you. It is not a natural or physical beauty in you, but is rather a supernatural and moral beauty of His grace that He has freely given to you that is beautiful to Him. In Adam, you were ugly due to your depravity and sin. In Christ, you have become beautiful due to His righteousness, forgiveness, and love freely given to you.

We often just see ourselves in this process and struggle with temptation and sin. He sees not only the beginning of the process, but also the end of the process when we will be perfectly conformed to His image in the glories of heaven. The process of sanctification in overcoming sin is absolutely necessary, but as you struggle, your growth in Christ depends upon having Christ's view of your beauty in Him and from Him.

The main points from our text are: (1) A New Name for the Bride (Song 7:1); (2) A Repeated Description of the Bride (Song 7:1-5); (3) A Repeated Reaction from Christ (Song 7:5).

### **I. A New Name for the Bride (Song 7:1).**

A. The Lord Jesus continues to give to His elect bride every incentive for her to return to Him and to abide in that blessed communion with Him (Song 6:13). The extolling of His love for His beautiful bride began in Song 6:11 and continues through Song 7:9.

B. We have heard various, loving names given to the bride in this Divine Love Song, all which describe in some beautiful way how Jesus views you, His bride: fairest among women, my love, my beloved, my fair one, my dove, my sister, my spouse, a garden, my undefiled, O Shulamite. What you call your wife or what you call your husband matters: old man or old lady; jerk or hussy, and names that descend to far lower levels of vulgarity. Even when the bride fell away and failed Him, Jesus did not resort to name-calling, except to use names that continually reassured His bride of His everlasting love for her. It is a sin for us to do so. Our heart will be revealed in our words, and our words will reinforce what is in our heart. We cannot excuse our name calling, it is a sin. Let the names we use reveal to others our love, not betrayal.

C. Here in Song 7:1, we find a new name for the bride that Jesus has not used up to this point, "O prince's daughter."

1. This speaks of your royalty in the Kingdom of Christ. You may be viewed as scum by those who hate the Lord Jesus (as was true of Paul, 1 Corinthians 4:13), but according to Jesus (whose judgment is all that really counts), you are the "prince's daughter" (Psalm 45:13). Jesus is the "the prince of the kings of the earth" (Revelation 1:5).

2. How is the elect bride of Christ also His daughter? Just as when the Lord Jesus called His elect bride, His "sister" (Song 4:9), that was meant to convey that spiritually she is a member of Christ's family, so likewise when she is called His "daughter". This is why this Love Song must not be interpreted literally, for that would be incest. Spiritually and really, you have the nature of Jesus Christ (not His divine nature, but His spiritual DNA). The fruit of the Spirit that is in Him is in you through regeneration. You are now being conformed to His moral image and you will reach full conformity in body and spirit at His coming (1 John 3:2).

3. And yet in another sense, you are united to Jesus in a marital covenant by faith in the gospel. Therefore, spiritually you are both His daughter and His bride. This is who you are, not because you deserve it, but because He freely set His love upon you.

## II. A Repeated Description of the Bride (Song 7:1-5).

A. We come once again to Christ's description of the unsurpassing beauty of His beloved bride—His elect Church—in terms of various parts of her body (a similar description is in Song 4:1-7). This list is similar to the other list, but not exactly the same. One noticeable difference is that Jesus begins this time from the bottom up (from the soles of her feet to the crown of her head her beauty dazzles Him).

1. We may get somewhat embarrassed with such descriptions because we are unfamiliar with biblical poetry, which this Love Song is. Remember this description is not a literal, physical description of a woman, but each body part represents a spiritual grace given to her by Christ. All true Christians have these graces in regeneration. He is ravished by the beauty of His grace given to her.

2. Why does Jesus repeat His description of her beauty?

a. Because He reassures you that you are as beautiful to Him after a fall as before a fall. Not that He delights in your sin, but His grace is greater than your sin (especially as He draws you to repent).

b. Because He does not want you to forget this truth.

c. Because you are given to doubt this truth. "How could He love me and call me by all of those wonderful names even after my failure and sin?" Believe it. It is true (Hebrews 6:18).

B. Let us briefly consider these beautiful features of the bride.

1. **Her feet (Song 7:1).** Feet are for walking and walking with the shoes of a queen, not barefoot like slaves (Isaiah 20:4). Jesus revels in the walk (the practice) of a Christian that walks in the narrow path of the gospel and His commandments that leads to life (Psalm 37:23; Ephesians 6:15). When it is your chief delight to please Him through your love, submission, and obedience, your feet are beautiful.

2. **Her joints on her thighs (Song 7:1).** These are as it were the couplings that allow the feet to move. These joints that move the feet are the truths of God's Word which the Christian loves and upon which he/she meditates both day and night. The feet are your works, and the joints are Christ's commandments that guide you in the way you are to walk. Do you fill your spare time with your pleasures and leave little to no time to cleanse your life with His Word (John 17:17; 2 Timothy 2:15). How do you expect to know Jesus if you do not know, love, obey, and meditate upon His Word (in personal or family worship, or in sermons)? Are your joints beautiful like jewels in loving His truth?

3. **Her navel (Song 7:2) and belly (Song 7:2).** Both emphasize the reproduction and nourishment of life within the womb of a mother. In other words, Jesus says that the beauty of His bride is found in her fruitfulness in her own life and in the life of others. A true Christian is a living and growing Christian (Revelation 3:1). This is a dead formalism. You must evidence you are alive by the fruit of the Spirit. Both the goblet of liquor and sheaves of wheat with lilies are symbols of that which refreshes and nourishes the life within you. They mean nothing to the dead. Your growth and fruitfulness in Him is beautiful to Him.

4. **Her breasts (Song 7:3).** She delights to nourish others with the strengthening milk of the Word (1 Peter 2:2-3). Jesus delights in your beauty as a Christian when you nourish others with the pure gospel (Christ-centered), worship (Christ-centered), and commandments (Christ-centered). This beauty is seen in both the home and the church.

5. **Her neck (Song 7:4).** It is the neck that connects the body to the head. What is it that unites the body of Christ (the Church) to the Head of the Church (Jesus Christ)? It is faith. That faith in the truth and promises of Christ are like an ivory tower that protects you from the attacks of the enemy in temptations to fear, to indulge the lusts of the flesh, to compromise the truth, and to follow the world. It is

not the size of your faith (even the faith of a mustard seed, Matthew 17:20), but in whom your faith is placed that can move mountains. Memorize the promises and rest in them (Psalm 34:10). Faith grows only as you exercise it and rest in God's promises. This is true beauty.

6. **Her eyes (Song 7:4).** The eyes are for seeing and understanding what way we should take in our life. The eyes speak of the Christian's understanding and knowledge which is pure and clear as the fishpools of Heshbon (one of the chief cities of the Amorites that was conquered by Israel, Numbers 21:26). It is beautiful to Jesus that you earnestly desire wisdom in making decisions that glorify Him. But in order to do so, you must first understand clearly God's will in His Word; for knowledge of God's truth is the foundation of wisdom, and wisdom is the practical application of the knowledge of Scripture to circumstances.

7. **Her nose (Song 7:4).** This may not seem like a praise of her beauty to have a nose like the tower of Lebanon. It speaks not of the nose by way of appearance, but rather the use of the nose to smell, to sniff out danger (smelling natural gas escaping from a stove) or delights (smelling fresh-baked bread coming from the oven). The beauty of the bride's nose is found in protecting her from the enemies in Damascus, Syria (who were perennial enemies of Israel). The Christian smells in the gospel that it is a savor unto life. This is not a call to be snooping into whatever is happening in other families. A busybody is not beautiful (1 Peter 4:15). Some people have to know what is going on in everyone's family, and usually that information ends up in a discussion with others. We are to sniff out needs that others share with us in bearing one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. That is a beautiful.

8. **Her head and her hair (Song 7:5).** The body submits to the head (just as the church submits to Christ). There is a government (headship, eldership) that Jesus has given to the church to rule on His behalf—not to lord it over the body by way of its own commands, but to govern in love the body by way of scriptural teaching (as summarized in our Terms of Communion), loving the members of the body, and leading them (follow me as I follow Christ). Just as the hair is the glory of the woman in submitting to her husband (1 Corinthians 11:15), so the hair here points to the submission of those who rule in the family, church, and state in submitting to the authority of Christ. The submission of those who lead is a royal (like purple) submission to Christ the Head and King of His Church. Do you love to lead in submission to Christ? Do you love to submit in Christ to those who lawfully lead you? That is beautiful to Jesus.

### III. **A Repeated Reaction from Christ (Song 7:5).**

A. Finally, we see once again the reaction of Jesus to the beauty of all of these glorious works of grace in you, His beloved bride. Jesus had previously expressed His being overcome by her beauty (Song 4:9). As King Jesus beholds you, His elect bride, in all of the beauty with which He has beautified you, He is "held in the galleries" (i.e. he is bound, held captive by your beauty as if He cannot release Himself and leave the galleries from where He beholds you). Jesus cannot stop gazing in love upon you. He cannot take His eyes off of you—not because of your physical beauty which is vanity, changeable, and passing away; but because of your spiritual beauty which is found only in Him and is freely bestowed upon you out of His mere love, mercy, and grace. Your beauty before Christ is not a reason to boast in yourself (that is sinful ugliness), but is a reason to boast now and forever in Christ. This is a beauty that shines even in our repentance, shame, and sorrow over our sins, ever looking to the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. This is a beauty that will be more and more visible the nearer you are to Christ in delighting to commune with Him in His Word and prayer (and ultimately in glory).

B. Jesus sees you, His elect bride, as beautiful. Do you see one another as beautiful? Are we so fixed upon finding fault and being critical with one another that we cannot and do not even desire to see that which is beautiful and Christ-like in one another? If so, we are not looking with the eyes of Christ, or we are so fixed upon our own beauty in pride that we cannot see the beauty in one another. This is a grievous sin against the Lord Jesus who sees His beauty in us with all our faults. Yet we do not want to see His beauty in fellow

brothers and sisters with all their faults. God help us to see Christ's beauty in ourselves, but also in our fellow brothers and sisters, and to rejoice with thankfulness in the beauty of Christ that we see in one another.

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