

Ravished by Us

Song of Solomon 4:1-11

18 July 2021

11:00 AM (Halifax); 3:00 PM (Glenholme & Livestream)

Introduction:

Today we will continue our sermon series from the Song of Solomon.

- This book beautifully presents to us the relationship that Christ has with His church under the figure of marriage.
 - Marriage is frequently used in the Bible to illustrate the relationship of Christ with His people.
 - All who trust in Jesus for salvation (or who will trust in Him) are His bride, and He is our husband.
 - The truth is, God instituted marriage with this very thing in mind—
 - It was designed and patterned after the relationship that our Lord had determined from before the foundation of the world to establish with His people where God the Son would marry us and where we would be God's sons, redeemed from the fall.
- That means that this connection is one that is very helpful for us in both directions.
 - On the one hand, light is cast on our relationship with Christ by marriage...
 - On the other hand, light is cast on our marriages by looking at our relationship with Christ.
- My prayer is that all of you will be able to benefit from this analogy because it is an analogy that God has given us in His word.
 - And it is quite detrimental to your walk with Him if you are unable to receive the kind of lessons He teaches us in this way.

Last week, we saw how we who belong to Christ by faith were brought out of the wilderness of this world, as it were, to be His wife.

- We, who are so unworthy of Him, came up like pillars of smoke (representing the sacrifice of Christ), and with incense (representing the intercession of Christ), both of which make us acceptable to God and to Christ.
 - And we saw how we were conveyed to Him through this world in His very own palanquin (a litter) with soldiers surrounding us to ensure our safety.
 - We are His betrothed, and He will bring us safely through this world to Himself.
 - At the Last Day, we will be presented to Him for marriage to live with Him forever.
 - Perhaps the most encouraging thing of all was to see that our wedding day was called the day of the gladness of His heart! The King of glory delights in us!

Today that picture seems to go on with Christ doing what grooms often did at their weddings in those days.

- They prepared a *wasf* which was a poem of praise for the beauty of their bride.
- It was a part of their preparation for the consummation of their marriage.

So today, we are going to look at this *wasf* in which Christ reveals to us what He thinks of us as His bride.

- Let's turn now to our scripture reading. Song of Solomon 4:1-11.
- This is the word of God.

Song of Solomon 4:1-11: Behold, you *are* fair, my love! Behold, you *are* fair! You *have* dove's eyes behind your veil. Your hair *is* like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead. ² Your teeth *are* like a flock of shorn *sheep* which have come up from the washing, every one of which bears twins, and none *is* barren among them. ³ Your lips *are* like a strand of scarlet, and your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil *are* like a piece of pomegranate. ⁴ Your neck *is* like the tower of David, built for an armory, on which hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. ⁵ Your two breasts *are* like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies. ⁶ Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh

and to the hill of frankincense. ⁷ You *are* all fair, my love, and *there is* no spot in you. ⁸ Come with me from Lebanon, *my* spouse, with me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards. ⁹ You have ravished my heart, my sister, *my* spouse; you have ravished my heart with one *look* of your eyes, with one link of your necklace. ¹⁰ How fair is your love, my sister, *my* spouse! How much better than wine is your love, and the scent of your perfumes than all spices! ¹¹ Your lips, O *my* spouse, drip as the honeycomb; honey and milk *are* under your tongue; and the fragrance of your garments *is* like the fragrance of Lebanon.

May the Lord bless the reading of His holy and infallible word.

- Indeed, there is much to encourage us here!

I. Here our Lord tells us that He thinks we are fair (or beautiful).

A. He declares it directly and emphatically.

1. Verse 1 opens with these words in praise of us: **“Behold, you are fair, my love, behold you are fair.”**
 - We have seen these words before—back in chapter 1, verse 15.
 - I explained to you then that the word *fair* means *beautiful, lovely, charming, pleasant*—all of that.
 - This declaration of our beauty is strengthened in multiple ways.
 - In the Hebrew, it has a particle that intensifies it, causing it to say: you are very fair or very beautiful.
 - And not only that, but it is also strengthened in the way Hebrews strengthen a statement—by repeating it...
 - You see that it says it twice. “Behold, you are fair, behold you are fair.”
 - And then to make it even stronger, it has the word *behold* added, a word that calls us to attend and take notice.
 - Behold—look—look and see!
 - And to make it even sweeter, we are addressed by Him as “my love.”
 - He tells us as His bride that we are the one that He loves.
2. But be it known that He is only saying this of His true bride—not to all people.
 - His bride is made up only of those He has rescued by His grace.
 - When He found her, she was polluted and defiled by sin—an object of loathing and disgust.
 - She is made up the ones that He came from heaven to redeem.
 - She was dead in her sins, cut off from God, sentenced to everlasting punishment in hell; and that not because God is severe, but because nothing else was fitting for us... for we have all rejected the living God as our God.

- He cannot be so grossly dishonoured by His creatures without repercussions, for He is God, and as God must have the glory which He is due.
- Yet in His unfathomable mercy, He sent His only Son to redeem us.
 - He sent Him to take us as His bride so that He would become responsible for our sin against God and might then bear our punishment.
 - We owed this great debt to justice that we could not pay, so He, the Son of God, came to pay it for us.
 - He came to pay that debt by suffering the pains of everlasting hell on the cross.
 - As the Son of God, He alone could do that, and only by becoming flesh.
 - False religion, like liberalism or the Jehovah's Witnesses cult that deny that He is truly God, always rely on works because they don't have a Saviour who is able to bear their sins.
 - They make forgiveness cheap enough that we can pay it ourselves.
- But the true bride of Christ are those whose eyes have been opened by the Holy Spirit of God.
 - We are able to see enough of the depth of our sin and the height of God's glory to realise that we could never pay the penalty of our sin.
 - The true bride consists of those who see that only Jesus by His death on the cross could pay for their sins, and that only He by the working of His Spirit could draw them to Himself.
- And so the true bride about which Jesus says: "Behold you are fair, my love, behold you are fair," is made up of no one other than those who are trusting in Jesus for their salvation.
 - They rely on Him alone to save them.
 - They have put themselves entirely into His hands, recognising how utterly futile it is for anyone to try to save himself.
- So let me say it as strongly as I possibly can.
 - If you are not trusting in Jesus, you need to do so at once.
 - Like everyone else, you are defiled and you will perish in your sins and your guilt unless you trust in Jesus and His saving work.
 - Can you not see how guilty we all are?
 - Can you not see how wrong it was for us to reject God as our God?
 - Can you not see that no one but the Son of God can save you?
 - God named Him Jesus because He came to save His people from their sins. No one else can do it.
 - Without Him, you are exactly the opposite of fair in His eyes.
 - You are defiled, you are unclean, you are guilty, and you will be cast into the lake of fire forever that justice may prevail and that God's glory might stand.
 - But if you will come to Jesus, you will be saved.

- God will be glorified for His mercy in redeeming you by His Son, and the debt of justice will be covered for you by Jesus.
 - Once you come to Jesus in faith, you are His betrothed bride. Immediately, you are forgiven because He pays your debt.
 - And immediately, you will be numbered with those who make up His bride of whom He says, “Behold, you are fair my love, behold, you are fair!”
- That is what He thinks of all of you who are betrothed to Him—who have come to Him to be saved by Him.
- B. Having declared how fair you are, look at how He describes your fairness, your beauty.
1. First, He says (still verse 1) that you have dove’s eyes behind your veil.
 - We have seen this before too. Do you remember?
 - Dove’s eyes are eyes that are turned to Jesus—they are eyes for Him.
 - When a girl is said to have dove’s eyes, it means that she is devoted to one man—she has eyes only for him.
 - That is how those who have trusted in Jesus are.
 - Yes, we may struggle sometimes with temptation, but if we are truly born again, we have a seed of faith, we have faith at our core, that can never be destroyed.
 - And Jesus judges us with a judgement of charity because He looks at us the way a sculptor looks at his stone when he has taken it in hand to make something beautiful.
 - He sees what is in the stone before all the corruption is chipped away.
 - He has already put beautiful new life in us and He knows what we will be.
 - That judgement of charity can be seen in the scripture we read today from the New Testament—Hebrews 11.
 - It speaks of all those people that are listed there as if they had perfect faith, even though we know that they didn’t.
 - Take Sarah, Abraham’s wife, as an example.
 - Do you remember what she did when God said she would have a son even though she was barren?
 - She convinced her husband to see if he could get an heir by taking her maid, Hagar as another wife. A child was born, but he was not the one.
 - God insisted that Sarah would have a child, even though by then she was way past the age to conceive.
 - Sarah actually laughed—then lied and said she didn’t laugh.
 - Yet, listen to what the LORD says about her faith in Hebrews 11:11: **By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.**
 - We see Sarah’s lack of faith.

- We see her looking to Hagar and then doubting how she could have a child in old age...
 - But Jesus sees beautiful dove's eyes in her that trust in Him... eyes that look to Him with trust and devotion—
 - Because those are the eyes that He has given her forever—the doubting eyes and the eyes looking to other things are gone now.
- What else does Jesus say about our beauty—the beauty of His bride?
2. Next, at the end of verse 1, He says describes our hair.
 - **Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead.**
 - Hair is given to us as an adorning—something of glory and beauty in a woman.
 - Here, our hair is compared to goats on the slopes of Mount Gilead—a beautiful picture of these angora goats on the side of the mountain like locks of hair.
 - In both Timothy and Peter, women are told that before the Lord, their adorning, the hair He delights in, is beautiful works.
 - Jesus has redeemed us to do good works and we have begun, albeit imperfectly, but again, He sees in the beginning the finished product and He says, “behold, you are fair, my love, behold your are fair.”
 3. In verse 2, He describes our teeth in away that strikes us as a little strange.
 - **Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing, every one of which bears twins, and none is barren among them.**
 - The idea is clear enough—they are teeth that are uniform, where none are missing, and they are clean and white—beautiful teeth.
 - When we think of this is spiritually, we may think of how we are said to receive Christ by eating—as the bread of life.
 - As His bride, we chew His word, we meditate on His revealed truth, and we take it in bit by bit and digest it so that it gives us spiritual health, strength, and vitality.
 4. In verse 3, He moves on to describe the beauty of our mouth, with lips like a scarlet thread.
 - The detailed interpretation is not the point—it is that everything about us is beautiful—very beautiful to Him.
 - Surely, when think of a lovely mouth on the bride of Christ, we think of the words that are spoken—words of love, words that edify, words of praise to our Saviour.
 - He thinks we are beautiful because He has put a new song in our mouth, a song to praise our God.
 5. At the end of verse 3, the beauty of our temples is described as like a pomegranate.
 - The temple refers to the side of the bride's face including her cheeks—a beautiful part of any woman.

- Here perhaps, we think of the blush that is so attractive—the pomegranate was red and was a feature often found in the decorations used in God’s appointed worship—for example, on the hem of the priests’ garments.
 - This part of the face is expressive, blushing in His presence because of His glory and our unworthiness, being in awe of Him.
 - The beautiful curve of the face with its colour and softness delights Him.
6. The sixth thing He praises about us is our neck.
- In verse 4, He compares His bride’s neck to the tower of David—a white tower erected as an armoury with shields hanging on it.
 - In the neck He sees the beauty of our strength as those who are committed to Him. A neck can show resistance to one and commitment to another.
 - Many suggest that the tower with shields is depicting a necklace, perhaps the one that we saw in chapter 1 that He fashioned for her to adorn her.
 - That is, those graces that are now part of her life in Jesus—the fruits of the new life, love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, gentleness, self-control—these are the beauty of the bride with which her neck is adorned.
7. And then the seventh thing He praises about us, His bride, is our breasts.
- Verse 5 says: **Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies.**
 - What a beautiful image of the breasts that are given to satisfy our husband—for love, for affection, for tenderness—Proverbs 5 tells husbands to let their wives’ breasts satisfy them—not looking to another, but their wife alone.
 - Here is our intimacy with Christ—not sexually, but in what corresponds to it spiritually.
 - Like twin fawns among lilies feeding—remember that the lilies are seen representing the church—
 - Here the bride of Christ is nourished and here she also nourishes her young—feeding and being fed, to the delight of her husband.
- There is much here that is hard to understand, no matter how you interpret the Song of Solomon, but the point is very clear that the husband is praising His bride.
- Marriage is a picture of our relationship with Christ, and He praises us as His bride.
 - Be encouraged that He has this charitable judgement of us—that He delights in us.

II. He goes on to tell us how much He wants to be with us.

A. He tells us where He can be found until the end of the age.

1. In verse 6, He promises that he will be at the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense.
 - What is that?
 - Myrrh and frankincense were used in ceremonial worship at the throne of grace where God’s people go to meet with Him.

- It is in the church, the house of prayer where His people are commanded to assemble before Him.
 - In the Old Testament, it was at the temple where incense was burned and sacrifices were offered.
 - Even when the temple was in ruins during the exile, Daniel turned there at the time when the morning and evening offering would have been made.
 - Now, in the New Testament, the church assembles at the command of God in every place where the elders call God's people together for worship by means of word sacraments, and prayer.
 - Now that Jesus has come, we trust in His finished work and that He is reigning at God's right hand where He prays for us—He has replaced the ceremonial offerings and incense at the temple.
 - But the point of verse six is that He promises to be with us at the house of prayer—when we come to Him as His bride to praise Him, to give thanks to Him, to lift up our supplications, to receive His sacraments, and hear the gospel and receive His counsel.
 - This is where we can always find Him.
2. Verse 6 is an answer to our prayer in chapter 2, verse 17.
- Do you remember that prayer?
 - He had come to visit us with springtime love—adding new growth to our relationship with Him, and we asked Him to keep up these visits until the end when we at last get to be with Him forever where He is.
 - We said, Song of Solomon 2:17: **“Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bether.”**
 - Keep on running to us like a gazelle until the day breaks—the dawning of the eternal state, and the shadows flee away—we are together face to face.
 - And you see here in Song of Solomon 4:6 how He answers our request, picking up our words to Him and saying:
 - **“Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.”**
 - He will be at the throne of grace. We will meet Him there—there where we pray in His name, remembering His offering for our sin that reconciles to Him and to His Father.
- B. He tells us in verse 7 & 8 how much He wants us to come to Him there.
1. Lest we have already forgotten, He reassures us that we are indeed the desire of His eyes.
- In verse 7, He uses similar words that He used in verse 1, saying: **“You are all fair, my love, and there is no spot in you.”**
 - You will notice that He has added the word all—to say, you are *all* fair, and He has added, “there is no spot in you.”

- Here is His charitable judgment again—seeing not our remaining faults, but the new life that He has given us that will prevail.
 - He sees us at those He has redeemed and who are therefore the delight of His eyes...
2. And then we have His invitation to come to be with Him.
- To come away from where we are to be with Him at the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense—that place where He can be found until the day breaks and the shadows flee away:
 - Verse 8 is His gracious call: **“Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards.”**
 - He calls us from some of the most lofty and lovely places of the world to be with Him—you see how it is repeated...
 - Come *with me* from there, *with me* from there.
 - He also tells us to look from these places—to look from them to Him.
 - As His bride, our treasure is not found in the hills of this world—in beautiful Lebanon, Amana, Senir and Hermon.
 - In these places are ravenous beasts that bite and devour—the lion and leopard.
 - He has redeemed us from the world that we might be with Him forever, which is far better.
 - Don’t look to riches, honours, pleasures—to wine, women, song.
 - Look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen—go with Christ. Live for Him. Live for His pleasure.
 - He is not hard to please—He is a redeemer who saves and transforms those who come to Him, not a judge who condemns.
 - His invitation is to the throne of grace, not to the throne of judgment.
 - He will summon the world to the throne of judgment, but until that day, He invites us to the throne of grace.
 - Come away with Him, then, from the hills of the world.
 - He has freed us from the lion and the leopard, and we are to meet Christ each day and each week at the throne of grace.
 - Not just as a duty, but to present ourselves to Him and to find our joy and our delight in our fellowship with Him!
 - Brothers and sisters, it is so important to come to church to praise Him and to thank Him.
 - Don’t sit at home and do livestream unless you have very good reasons for doing so. You need to be in the place where He is praised and where you can eat the bread and drink the wine—
 - You need to participate.
 - You need to find Him at the mountain of myrrh where He offered Himself and at the hill of frankincense where He intercedes for us. He has called us together to be with Him.

TRANS> Is His call not compelling?

- The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords calls you to come and be with Him.
 - He has told you that you are beautiful and that He wants to be with you.
- And still He does not stop.

III. He goes on to tell you how much He delights in your love.

- He not only delights in your beauty, but He delights in your love.
 - And not just a little bit—He speaks with the strongest language.

A. He says, “**You have ravished my heart.**”

1. In the Hebrew, He makes up a word—this is the only time it has been found, ever.
 - He takes the word heart and changes it into a verb and then puts a negative prefix in front of it.
 - It is almost as if to say, you have unhearted me, or dehearted me, or taken my heart away.
2. It is hard to believe that the Lord of glory should speak to us like this, but He does.
 - How could He be enraptured with us?
 - Twice He says that He is ravished, just to make sure we get it...
 - Verse 9: “**You have ravished my heart, my sister, *my* spouse; you have ravished my heart with one *look* of your eyes, with one link of your necklace.**”
 - All it takes is one look of interest from our eyes—a single glance of love and desire is enough to ravish His heart.
 - Just catching a glimpse of one of the links in the necklace that He has given to us to adorn us... just one is all it takes to ravish His heart—to eat out His heart with desire for us.
 - Notice that added touch of endearment—how He here calls us both His sister and His spouse, “My sister, My spouse.”
 - We are both His sister and His spouse.
 - This is not incest—this is spiritual relationship illustrated with earthly...
 - He is committed to us in every way that a faithful brother is committed to his sister, and in every way that a faithful husband is committed to his wife.
 - He is ravished by even the tiniest response of love from us, for it is the fruit of the new life that He gives to those He has redeemed.

B. He tells us in verse 10 & 11 how much He loves our love.

1. He says that our love itself is fair, or beautiful.
 - Verse 10: **How fair is your love, my sister, *my* spouse!**
 - Our love is the thing He loves the most, and our love for Him is the love that He most delights in.
 - We love Him because He first loved us.

- Not only that we responded to Him because His love constrained a response, but also that He gave us His Spirit who worked love in us for Him that could never have otherwise been.
 - Just as He delighted in His image that He put in us at creation,
 - But He delights much more in the love and other graces that He recreates in us when He redeems us.
 - He finds this love to Him to be the most beautiful thing of all—and His view of what is excellent is always right.
2. He says that it is much better than wine and all perfumes.
 - Verse 10 continues: **How much better than wine is your love, and the scent of your perfumes than all spices!**
 - The best things of this world, created by Him to make the heart of man glad, pale in comparison to our love for Him.
 - Here again, His judgment is always right—it is much better than wine and the best spices.
 - Give to Him your best love—that is what He wants more than wine.
 3. He says that our lips (by which we express our love to Him) are sweeter than the honeycomb.
 - Verse 11: **Your lips, O my spouse, drip as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue;**
 - What is under the tongue cannot be seen—there can be poison or there can be honey and milk.
 - Words can be empty, they can be deceptive, or they can be true—and in His redeemed bride, our expressions of love to Him, our kisses, are dripping with beauty and sweet sincerity.
 - He wants these praises from you, brothers and sisters—come away with Him from Lebanon. Get your heart off the world and onto Him.
 4. He says that the fragrance of our very garments is delightful to Him.
 - Verse 11 continued: **And the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.**
 - Here Lebanon is no longer a symbol of the world, but of pleasing fragrance.
 - He is indicating that we are so pleasing to Him that even the things we wear are delightful to Him.
 - He is telling us in every way how much He loves us.

Conclusion: Bride of Christ, don't you see?

- The King of glory is calling for you. He wants you.
 - He finds you very beautiful and very desirable.
- Do not hold yourself back.
 - Give yourself wholly to Him (the subject to which we shall turn next time, DV).