

“The Beauty of the Church Extolled” (Song 4:1–7)
GCC, 9/19/21, morning worship

Extolling the Beauty of the Body on the Second Horizon

- I. The appropriateness of the ‘Body’ metaphor
 - A. The body, here, is the body of the church and the praise of the bridegroom is the praise of Christ of the church (vv. 4, 7)
 1. Christ commending the universal (catholic) church
 2. It should not surprise us to think of the church being described as a body (See 1 Cor 12:12–31)
- II. The Beauty as *both* the Christ-imputed and Spirit-Wrought Righteousness *in* the Church
 - A. The inclusio (bookends) says, “you are beautiful” (v. 1)//you are beautiful, **there is no flaw** in you” (4:7)
 - B. The beauty as the **imputed righteousness** of Christ (cf. Rom 4:3–8)
 - C. Our forensic standing is the foundation for our Spirit-led, grace-fueled, Christ-honoring works that we faithfully carry out (**Matt. 25:21, 34–36**)
 - D. **Principle:** Our goal and desire as Christians is to **strike symmetry** between our forensic *standing* in Christ, and our pursuit of the imitation of Christ in our sanctification.
 - E. If you are to criticize the church, do it like Jeremiah, with tears in your eyes
- III. Her Virtues Extolled
 - A. Dove as Spirit-filled Church (4:1a)
 - B. Hair like a flock of goats as beauty of the church (4:1b)
 - C. Teeth as ministers of the Word of God (4:2)
 - D. Lips as the mouthpiece of the church as it speaks of the gospel of Christ (4:3a)
 - E. Blushing cheeks as humility of church (4:3b)
 - F. Neck as Defenders of Truth (4:4)
 - G. Two Breasts as Nourishing Discipleship of the Church (4:5)
- IV. The Price and Purchase of this Beauty (4:6)

Forensic beauty is possible because Christ went

 - A. to the mountain of **myrrh** (death/calvary) and
 - B. then went to the hill of **frankincense** (deity),
i.e., he resurrected and ascended to heaven so that we might be saved

Questions for Application and Discussion:

1. Read Song 4:1–7. Reading this passage on the second horizon, who is praising the body and who is the body being praised?
2. Is it a foreign idea in scripture to think of the church as a body? Why or why not?
3. In what way is the beauty of the church a description of the imputation of the active obedience of Christ to the account of the believer through faith?
4. What does it mean that the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the account of the believer is a *forensic* declaration? (see Rom 4:3–8)
5. Does God only see beauty in Christ’s righteousness imputed to us? Or is there a sense in which God sees beauty in the Spirit-wrought righteousness of the saints (i.e., their imperfect, broken obedience)?
6. Read Matt 25:21 and 25:34–36. How do these two declarations of Christ to the believe on the day of judgment prove that God takes pleasure in our works, even if they are not for the purpose of justification?
7. What does this mean?: “Our goal and desire as Christians is to **strike symmetry** between our forensic *standing* in Christ, and our Spirit-led *pursuit* of the imitation of Christ in our sanctification.
8. If we would criticize the church, how should we do it?