

## A Match Made in Heaven – Edition 2

### Song of Solomon

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11/11/18

Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

#### I. Introduction:

- A. When a man and woman fall in love, they experience a newfound happiness that in many cases is evident to others around them. And in describing how they seem to be such a perfect fit for one another, this cliché is often invoked. Someone inevitably will say that theirs is “a match made in heaven.”
- B. And the idea is to describe that which seems almost ideal, or perfect, just as everything pertaining to God and heaven is indeed perfect. And this morning, in the Song of Solomon, we will review some verses that describe a loving relationship that doesn't just seem ideal or perfect, but is in reality perfect in every way – literally “A Match Made in Heaven.”
- C. And from the onset, I want to remind you that there really are no degrees of perfection. I'm sure many of you are familiar with the opening words of the preamble to the United States Constitution as it begins, “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union...” I believe those words of that grand document were chosen to convey the framers' intent to improve upon the Articles of Confederation that had been previously adopted. But the truth is, we know that those two words “more perfect” do not belong together. If something is truly perfect, it can't get any better. It can't get more perfect. Perfect means unspoiled, flawless, faultless, ideal, etc.

#### II. Introduction to the Song of Solomon:

- A. Now the Song of Solomon is a beautiful love song which depicts such a perfect union. And credible theologians agree that the discourse found there between two lovers is not intended to direct our attention toward the carnal love that Solomon held for Pharaoh's daughter or some other woman as some speculate. Rather these words penned by King Solomon provide an intentional, Holy Spirit inspired metaphor of the love of Christ (the bridegroom) for the Church, His bride. The love of Jesus to His church is the subject of the entire book and it is set forth in a picture or in the type of Solomon and his bride, under a perfect state of marriage – a match made in heaven.

- B. As our Lord called out His sheep to form the church, in gracious condescension He was pleased to assume the endearing character of their Husband. And this compassionate designation of Christ as the bridegroom, loving His people (the church whom He collectively depicts as His bride) is how this entire book is to be understood.
- C. Now our confidence in understanding this metaphor correctly is derived by interpreting it in light of other clear scripture. Recall how in Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus, he wrote in chapter 5 of how husbands and wives were to treat one another. Look with me, beginning down at verse 30, where he concludes by writing, ***"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. <sup>31</sup>For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. <sup>32</sup>This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*** Here we see that this relationship, this union, is not just a parable or metaphor but a wonderful reality. The church of Jesus is truly His body. And each individual that makes up His church, His people, are members of His flesh, and of His bones. And while I can't fully comprehend all of this "great mystery", my limited understanding of it lets me know this is indeed a glorious truth.
- D. And then, as the scripture comes to a close in the book of Revelation, the Holy Spirit continues to use this same metaphor to communicate Christ's affection to all those for whom He lived and died, the church, those He redeemed. As we read in Revelation, chapter 21, He calls them the bride, the Lamb's wife. Look with me at that in verse 2 where it reads, ***"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*** And then again we read at the end of verse 9, ***"...Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."***
- E. So likewise, the entire loving discourse of the Song of Solomon concerns Christ and the church. This love song is rich with many glorious descriptions of Christ and His church by virtue of their union with Him; but given our time limitations, this morning I am going to focus on just one glorious description found in chapters 4, 5, and 6 that was impressed upon me in my study. And as you will see – I'm speaking of that which Christ and His church, this loving couple, have in common. And this commonality is not figurative. I'm speaking literally when I say there is a sense in which this relationship between Christ and His church is truly a perfect match made in heaven!

III. The aspect of this loving relationship which I would like us to consider today from the Song of Solomon is this: The perfection that is ascribed to both parties in this perfect union. First, we know it is a perfect union in that it is made in heaven. It is perfect in every way because it is God's work – God, who by definition is perfect, impeccable in every way.

But not only is this union between Christ and His church perfect due to it being the work of the holy and perfect triune Godhead, but 2ndly (and what we will concentrate on today), is how both parties to this marriage are declared to be perfect here in God's Word. Both Christ and His bride (the church made up of all believers) are described as spotless and undefiled – without flaw. Now that is a wonderful thing to discover, not only concerning Christ, but how that believers (sinners, such as you and I) are made one with the perfect God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, and thereby they are declared to be perfect in the sight of God – the only perspective that ultimately really matters as it pertains to our eternal acceptance into His presence.

A. First, let's consider the Christ, the bridegroom. Before we look into how He is pictured by metaphor in the Song of Solomon, let's consider the clear declarations of this perfection, the flawlessness of Christ, as He is explicitly described elsewhere in God's word. Referring to Christ, we read in Hebrews 7:26, ***"For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;"*** Here we see what sinners need – a Mediator, a high priest who is perfect just as God the Father is perfect. It took the incarnate Christ, God manifested in the flesh – Emmanuel, meaning God with us – to be the suitable go-between to reconcile sinners unto a holy God.

1. So Jesus Christ, as God, is indeed perfect in every way (1<sup>st</sup>) due to His very essence as Deity. But as the go-between, the Substitute for His people, for His bride, this man who is God (in other words the incarnate Christ, the God-man) is described as holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners – and that in His priestly work.
2. So, not only do we see perfection in His Person, but likewise in His work. In I Peter 1, we read, beginning in verse 18, ***"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; <sup>19</sup>But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"*** Similarly, in Hebrews 9:14 we read, ***"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*** So we see that in His work of redemption, He was without spot – perfect!

B. Well look with me now in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Song of Solomon, where we see Christ, the bridegroom so described by His bride. She, the bride, the church, recognizes Him as He is. First, a little background: In chapter 5, those outside of the church, referred to as the daughters of Jerusalem, become interested in the bride's loved one, Christ.

And they put forth this question to the bride, in chapter 5, beginning in verse 9, saying ***What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?*** <Speaking of the bride's request from the previous verse for them to tell Him of her love for Him. But here, they are asking of the bride, "Tell us about this beloved, about this Christ" and she answers...> <sup>10</sup>***My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.*** Now that's who He is and what we need – we need one who is so described, "white and ruddy." Let's examine just what is meant by this description!

1. My study of this phrase confirmed to me that there are 2 ways this might be interpreted and I believe both to be appropriate and perhaps both intended – for they both convey truths confirmed by more explicit scriptures elsewhere, such as those I just read from Hebrews. First, she, the bride, is describing the Person of Christ – who He is. He is both God and man. He is white, alluding to His purity as Deity – i.e. –referring to how He is spotless, pure, and holy in His very essence as God. And He is ruddy or red, alluding first to His human nature.
  - (a) Adam, the first created human, was of the earth – red or ruddy. Some of you may recall that when Samuel was looking for a king to replace King Saul, he went to Jesse and after reviewing all of his sons except the youngest he asked Jesse if he had seen all of his children. And Jesse replied no, his youngest, David, was out tending the sheep. So Samuel had Jesse send for him. And in I Samuel 16 when young David was brought in before Samuel (at which time the Lord revealed to Samuel that David was His choice to be king), it says of David, that ***"Now he was ruddy..."***
  - (b) In the next chapter, I Samuel 17, when David faced Goliath, the Philistine giant, it says that Goliath saw that David was "ruddy." He was a mere man of the earth. Remember in Luke's Gospel how Christ said to the scribes in Luke 20:41b, ***"How say they that Christ is David's son?"*** And then he quoted how David in the Psalms had called him Lord and so he then added in verse 44, ***"David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?"*** Christ's humanity can be traced to David's ancestral line, so He is David's son and yet He is David's Lord –man and God. ***"...Unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given!"*** (Isa. 9:6). As we read in I Timothy 3:14, ***"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh,..."*** (I Tim 3:14a). He is the God-man, white and ruddy!
2. But also, I believe that this reference to Christ as "white" refers not just to His Deity, but to the incarnate Christ – Christ in His human nature, a nature He had to take on for the execution of His redemptive work. That is, 'white' is indicative of the perfection and purity of His obedience under God's revealed will as He was made under the law in His humanity to redeem those He came to save out of fallen humanity.

He is white because God requires perfect obedience which He alone among all men rendered – a perfect obedience even unto the death of the cross, rendered as a Substitute for all those He saves – His bride, the church.

3. And in keeping with that understanding, the ruddy or red description is indicative of His bloody sacrifice and death – the shedding of His red blood in payment before the Father’s justice due unto the demerit of all the sins that were laid upon Him. As 2 Cor. 5:21 teaches us, God “... ***hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.***” God’s law and justice had to be satisfied both in precept and penalty. That is, perfect obedience is required for the law’s precepts to be complied with. But Christ rendered that obedience for law breakers and God’s justice also demands that a just penalty due to their sins be paid. And even the blood or death of a sinner, even that sinner’s eternal banishment from God, cannot pay the penalty due to this travesty of injustice against an infinitely Holy God. It took the infinitely valuable blood payment of the God-man. Oh – see the double cure – saved from wrath and made pure – ruddy and white!
4. Notice from the Song of Solomon, the great regard that the bride, the church, has for the glory of their Savior (the Groom) – valuing His redemptive glory. It is in this “white and ruddy” work of the “white and ruddy” Savior that this glory is savingly revealed to the church – how this God who is holy and just and cannot commune with sin, could graciously be reconciled to a sinner so that they, ungodly sinners in and of themselves, might be found holy and acceptable unto Him. They had to be made one with Christ so as to possess by God’s grace the very merit of His perfect obedience unto death, His perfect satisfaction to the justice of God made for them – i.e., His righteousness made to be theirs. They must be and are found accepted in their beloved (Eph 1), the Lord Jesus Christ – this One who was “white and ruddy” – satisfying God’s justice through His perfect “white” obedience to the Father’s will and likewise satisfying the strict justice of God by bearing the “ruddy,” bloody penalty due unto the sins of those very ones for whom His obedience was rendered. His righteousness is the merit of His obedience even unto the death of the cross – White and ruddy! Oh – you’re blessed if you can behold the beauty of this beloved Savior and the necessity of possessing the merits of His perfect work.

C. So there we have the perfection of the Bridegroom – of our Savior. But now let’s consider the bride. What does Christ, the Bridegroom, have to say about His bride here in the Song of Solomon? Let’s look at some of these descriptions...

1. First, look with me at chapter 4. As that chapter opens, we have Christ, the bridegroom saying of His love, the bride, ***“Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair;...”*** (Song of Solomon 4:1a). And He continues to describe her beauty with great affection and then down in verse 7, he says, ***“Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.”***
2. And then look at chapter 5, verse 2. It begins with the bride, the believer saying, ***“I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, <So here we have Christ, the beloved bridegroom saying to His bride, the church, the believer...> Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.”*** These are our Lord’s descriptions of the church. Who are they? As Romans 3 tells us, God justifies (declares righteous and not guilty in His sight) the ungodly. They are sinners and yet here Christ speaks of a reality in His sight of their being undefiled. And that phrase ***“...for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night”*** is an allusion to the agony He experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane as He sweated drops of blood in anticipation of the cross work He was about to endure – the very redemptive work whereby those for whom He lived and died are truly made to be “undefiled” in Him. Undefiled – Isn’t that the description we read earlier of Christ our High Priest – how He was holy, harmless undefiled? And yet here Christ tells us that we objects of His everlasting love are undefiled. That word, “undefiled” means ‘perfect one,’ guiltless, complete, blameless. This is a match made in heaven in that they have much in common. And included in that commonality is this truth: they are both spotless and undefiled.
3. Christ uses that same description again in chapter 6, verse 9 as that verse begins, ***“My dove, my undefiled...”***

#### D. The Truth of the Church’s Perfection:

1. Now I want to emphasize the importance that we see, that according to the truth of God’s word, the church is truly undefiled, perfect without spot. Remember, this union with Christ is real! Look back again with me at that passage on husbands and wives in Ephesians 5. Picking up in verse 25, we read, ***“<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; <sup>26</sup>That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup>That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”*** Do you see how His very white and ruddy work was a work of sanctification – of setting a people apart so that they would be without blame, without blemish, even holy?

2. And then picking back up in verse 30 we are again reminded that it is due to our union whereby we are made one, being members of His body: ***“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. <sup>31</sup>For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. <sup>32</sup>This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”***
3. I’m not sure that anyone this side of glory can grasp the depth and the glorious riches of this real union between Christ and His people? Certainly I don’t. But I love the glimpse of it that God has been pleased to reveal. What I can see of it is glorious far beyond my ability to describe it.
4. Consider these other passages that set forth this truth:
  - (a) In Colossians 1, beginning in verse 20, we read of Christ where it says: ***“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. <sup>21</sup>And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, <you sinners> yet now hath he reconciled <sup>22</sup>In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:”*** If you believe God’s word, then you know this is true. All who are saved are all fair, there is no spot in them!
  - (b) In Hebrews 10, verse 7, Christ is said to have come to do the will of the Father and in verse 10 we read, ***“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”*** We are made saints, set apart in Christ by His blood offering. As it continues in verse 14, ***“For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”*** So those for whom He made His ruddy, or bloody offering – they are sanctified and by that offering all those He set apart in accordance with the Father’s will, He hath perfected. It is so says God.

IV. Why is this so important? It is because this perfection is absolutely necessary for anyone to be accepted before a holy God. Remember how He is described as the “chiefest among ten thousand.” That means He is the standard bearer. His perfection is the perfection that one must have. They must be made holy to be accepted before the Father – that is, they must possess the merit of the very perfection that Christ rendered for them for there is none righteous in and of themselves – no not one. With respect to this necessity, consider these verses:

A. In the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord commanded as recorded in Matthew 5:48: ***“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”*** How perfect? As perfect as God Himself.

- B. And then see the command as recorded in I Peter 1:15-16: ***“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; <sup>16</sup>Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*** If we are to be accepted into the presence of a holy God, we must be found in compliance with this command – we must be holy as He is holy. It is a necessity! None but those made holy in Him shall enter into His holy presence in heaven’s glory.
- C. And as we read in Ephesians 5 it is Christ’s giving of Himself for the church whereby He is able to ***“...present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”*** Not only does the command of this perfection, this flawlessness in the sinner, reveal its necessity, but the white and ruddy work of the Savior provides it for a people who could in no way comply with that command for themselves.
- D. So the Savior we need must be white (pure, undefiled, holy, harmless) and ruddy (stand in our place in human nature and that, to render a bloody death) so that His bride might likewise be perfect, without spot, and undefiled. It is absolutely necessary for any who are saved that they have been made so. And that necessity made the work of Jesus on the cross a necessity in order for God to be just and still save otherwise ungodly sinners such as we.

#### V. Closing:

Now let’s look again at the Song of Solomon. I mentioned in passing how the church’s description of Christ as “white and ruddy” was prompted by a question posed to her from the daughters of Jerusalem as they are called in chapter 5, verse 8 and in preceding chapters. So look with me again in verse 9 at the question that was put to the church by those outside the church, ***“What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved...?”*** Here, they twice express their earnest desire to know who Christ is and so she gave the answer, ***“...white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.”***

Notice they call the church, the bride, the fairest among women. These folks saw that she had a beauty but it was not an inherent beauty for they knew her, the bride, to be sinners just like themselves. If folks look at me and you or any other believer and judge us outwardly, they would rightly say, who is he or she to talk to me about being spotless, holy, undefiled. He’s no better than me in his character and conduct (or certainly not in our self-centered motives) – and they would often be accurate in saying that. And yet the beauty these daughters of Jerusalem saw in her (the bride) was that which reflected the glory of their beloved, their Savior. Their testimony to them was one of everlasting joy, comfort, and peace all based upon the doing and the dying, the righteousness, (the beauty) of another.

The church's light that so shines before men is this gospel message of God's grace in Christ so that others might see that her goodness, her perfection is actually the goodness, the impeccable perfection of their Savior. That is what is meant in Matthew 5:16 when Christ said ***"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*** This is not speaking of a light that shines independently on their works but rather it is the light of the gospel message wherein Christ's righteousness – His perfection is revealed so that He is glorified – not the sinner. Their claim of good works, their very goodness redounds to His glory for it is His goodness, the merit of His works to which they lay claim.

Well, hearing of the necessity of possessing such a perfection, does that kindle an interest in you as it did these daughters of Jerusalem? In chapter 5, verses 10-16 the bride continues with her loving description of Christ, the bridegroom. And the chapter ends in verse 16 with the bride saying, ***"...This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."***

And chapter 6 then opens with an earnest inquiry from these daughters of Jerusalem. And in this question we see their sincere seeking of this Christ – a desire that the church's beauty might become theirs – that is, that Christ's beauty, His perfection, might likewise belong unto them. In verse 1, they ask, ***"Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee."*** It would appear that God's grace is being impressed upon them and they address the church again as the "fairest among women." Clearly, they considered the Lord Jesus Christ to be the whole cause of her loveliness and so they desired to be made partakers of the same. Does that interest someone you hearing of this lovely, glorious, white and ruddy Savior?

Recall back in chapter 5, they had essentially asked, "Who is this Christ?" and the church's answer, "white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand" apparently satisfied them. But here we see the inquiry of a soul awakened by the work of the Holy Spirit so as to desire this Christ to be their Savior. The question now put forth is essentially, "How shall I find him and join you in enjoying Him to my soul's eternal comfort?"

And so, as is characteristic of those so blessed in Christ, the church delights to tell others of the love of their life as she does in verse 2 in answer to these inquiring souls. She says, ***"My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies."*** Christ came down to His garden, to our earthly residence. And He visits the bed of spices when He visits an individual soul with the goodness of His grace – as He is gracious to reveal Himself to them in saving grace through this gospel message that declares who He is and what He has accomplished – this white and ruddy Savior, the chiefest among ten thousand.

And He feeds them with His grace whereby He feeds Himself with the fruits of grace, His bride, which He purchased and now plants Himself in their individual hearts by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. And it's believed that when she says that He gathers the lilies, it is referring to how He ultimately and most assuredly will bring them (each and every one of them) – these beautifully arrayed lilies, all fair and without spot – home to Himself, to heaven's glory.

So the answer given here to this question is essentially conveying, "Oh – if you've been drawn with chords of love by the Savior to desire Him and to know Him so as to see the absolute necessity of having the merit of His perfect obedience unto death made to be yours (put to your account) so that you might stand accepted in Him (and on that basis alone), seeing all of your worthiness, wrapped up in Him, this white and ruddy, worthy Lamb of God, then you are among those He has visited with His grace – those blessed in Him as objects of His great mercy, love, and grace." And He then likewise says of you, "my dove, my undefiled."

As I studied this, I couldn't help but think of what Christ said in His Sermon on the Mount about lilies. Granted, in that context Christ was speaking of our need to look only to Him, to cast aside our material concerns for food and clothing but I found it interesting that He mentioned the beauty of the lilies as he said in Matthew 6, beginning in the latter part of verse 28, ***"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: <sup>29</sup>And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*** And these lilies gathered by Christ in Song of Solomon are likewise arrayed in His beauty – clothed in the very robe of His imputed righteousness, all fair and without spot!

And then Christ continues in Matthew 6, down in verse 33 saying, ***"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*** In the very next chapter as Christ continues in this, His Sermon on the Mount, He says this in verse 7, ***"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; <Seek what? – Christ and His righteousness> knock, and it shall be opened unto you: <sup>8</sup>For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."***

Many seek to be blessed of God, to be among those who shall inhabit heaven's glory, but those who seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, are they who are brought to desire and see the necessity to be, as Paul put it in Philippians 3, ***"...found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith <or faithfulness> of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"*** (i.e. – received by the God-given gift of faith).

Well, do the desires expressed by this bride of Christ, His church, reflect your own desires? Have you been brought to have the same heartfelt longings for Christ and His work of righteousness to be made yours? Is that a vital necessity to you?

If you seek salvation based upon the Person and work (that white and ruddy work) of this white and ruddy God-man, and seek acceptance before God solely on that basis, to the exclusion of all else, then rejoice for that describes a people who love the true and living God, because He first loved them. It describes this God-glorifying, wonderful love affair between Christ and His church – “A Match Made in Heaven.”

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God's grace found in the only infallible source, God's word itself – the Bible.