

Where Do You Find Your Identity?

Song of Solomon 6:5-9; Isaiah 49:23

April 26, 2020

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One of the most destructive doctrines promoted everywhere you turn is that your identity is to be found in your love and esteem for yourself. “You are number 1. In fact, you cannot love God or your neighbor until you first love yourself and esteem yourself above all.” In many churches today, people will gather to hear self-esteem pep talks from the pulpit.

This is a soul-destroying doctrine in which people are cast upon themselves for their own salvation, for their own joy, and for their own identity as to who they are. You are great, beautiful, and worthy simply because you are who you are. And being true to yourself is the greatest form of loyalty and love in this false religion.

This false religion is not new; it began in the Garden (Genesis 3:5). This false religion is condemned by the Lord in His Word, and leads to all manner of other sins (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Where do you find your identity as to who you are? For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23:7). If you are looking only within or are looking to others to tell you who you are, you will swing from one extreme to another depending upon how you feel about yourself or what someone has said about you on any given day: “I am great or I am a total failure.” The true religion of Jesus Christ teaches you (as Christians) to go to Jesus in the Scriptures to find your true identity—an identity that is the same from day to day regardless of what someone says about you, what you are facing, or how you feel. For, dear Christian, your identity in Jesus Christ is no more subject to change than is Jesus Himself (Hebrews 13:8). Your true identity is entirely based upon what Jesus says about you (His unchanging redemptive love for you), not what you think about yourself (or others think about you) which is as changeable as the wind.

Let us consider the identity of the elect bride of Christ in the words of the Lord Jesus Himself from our text. The main points are: (1) The Stunning Beauty of the Bride Rehearsed (Song 6:5-7); (2) The Stunning Beauty of the Bride Compared (Song 6:8-9).

I. The Stunning Beauty of the Bride Rehearsed (Song 6:5-7).

A. Having removed from her the blessed sense of His precious communion with her due to her pushing Him away, the Lord Jesus has graciously returned to His bride that she may once again enjoy that sweet communion with Him. Jesus makes clear to her that she is more beautiful than the beauty of cities renowned for their buildings, palaces, gardens, and temple. She is more awesome in Christ than a mighty army with banners, for in Christ you are more than conquerors (Song 6:4). Jesus is so overwhelmed by her eyes of faith and love to Him that He can hardly bear it—her faith in Him and in His Word, and her love for Him in obeying His commands ravishes His heart (Song 6:5). He is not apathetic to us.

B. The Lord Jesus continues to let the bride know how beautiful she is to Him (in Song 6:5-7) with a description that we have already heard from the lips of Jesus (Song 4:1-3).

1. The question arises as to why Jesus repeats nearly word for word His description of her? Isn't one time enough?

a. First, He repeats the description of her beauty in His eyes because we are so prone to forget it. You need to be reminded daily how Jesus sees you, regardless of what kind of a day you had. His love is eternal and unchangeable. His description of you is true, not flattery.

b. Second, the rehearsing of His redeeming, justifying, and sanctifying love gives

you hope to persevere even when you feel like you cannot take another step. If Jesus will never forsake you and even describes you as more beautiful than anyone or anything in His sight, you are renewed in faith and love to arise and fight to the finish for Him.

c. Third, He repeats this description because in Song 5:2ff, His bride had fallen into a spiritual sleep. She was lazy and indifferent to the Lord Jesus. She could not inconvenience herself to get out of her comfortable bed to open the door to Him and to commune with Him in prayer, in the Word, and in meditation. She was distracted, too busy, or faced too many trials. Jesus wants you to know that even your falls and failures do not alter in the least His love for you and your spiritual beauty in His sight. Your confession of sins and your sorrow over your failure so beautify you in His sight that He is overcome ravished. She is as beautiful to Him now (after her fall) as she was before her fall. We might think that though Jesus will not cast us off entirely, yet He will harbor some ill feelings toward us. But He dispels any such thought in these verses. Jesus not only tells you that He loves you, but He reminds you, His infinite love has not changed. Jesus is rehearsing His love in order to overcome your own doubts. Will you believe Him?

C. Jesus repeats three descriptions of her beauty from Song 4.

1. **Her hair is as a flock of goats (Song 6:5; Song 4:1).** Her hair is compared to a flock of goats covering the side of Mount Gilead, which from a distance resembled hair hanging down from the head. Paul teaches that the longer hair of the woman than that of the man is her glory, pointing to God's created order of man's headship and of woman's submission to him in that which is lawful (1 Corinthians 11:15). Dear Christian, as Christ's bride, your humble submission to His revealed will (commandments) and to His providential will (what He brings into your life by His sovereign power, wisdom, and love) is beautiful. It's easy to say that you love Jesus, but you show it by your loving obedience (Luke 6:46).

2. **Her teeth are like a flock of sheep (Song 6:6; Song 4:2).** Teeth are God's gift to us for the purpose of eating food that nourishes us. We are to eat what is spiritually clean like washed sheep. We are not to feed upon or look upon that which defiles us. Jesus says you are beautiful as you hunger and thirst for righteousness.

3. **Her temples are like a piece of pomegranate (Song 6:7; Song 4:3).** The temples include the cheeks on each side of the face. Just as the split pomegranate has red seeds in it, so this spiritual grace which Jesus finds so beautiful in the bride emphasizes that she blushes at that which is immodest, immoral, and filthy. Do you blush over your own pride, immorality, anger, worry, hypocrisy, lukewarmness? Shame is a part of our repentance, and it is beautiful to Jesus. Merely uttering words is not repentance. Blushing over sin and grieving over it is repentance.

II. The Stunning Beauty of the Bride Compared (Song 6:8-9).

A. The Lord Jesus now takes up language that would be familiar in the royal palaces of the ancient world (Song 6:8).

1. In palaces, there would have been queens, concubines, and virgins. They would be on display for their beauty for all who entered the palace to see (sadly such was the case even in the royal palaces of David, Solomon, 1 Kings 11:1-3—all is vanity). This description is not included here in order to endorse the sinful practice of having many wives (queens), or having concubines in addition to one's wife, (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:2).

2. It is as if King Jesus said, "Bring the most beautiful women in the kingdom and line them all up in front of me, they cannot compare in the least to the beauty of my one and only bride." The beauty of all creation placed on a scale cannot compare to your beauty, dear Christian, in the sight of Jesus. For what you have that is found in no other creature is His redeeming love and His sanctifying grace. Your faith in Him and love for Him ravishes His heart. Though there are degrees of growth within the same Christian (from infancy to maturity) and degrees of growth between one Christian and another, yet the same beautiful gift of

faith in Him and love for Him abides in all true Christians.

B. “My dove, my undefiled is but one” (Song 6:9).

1. Remember, this is the first time Jesus has spoken to her since she treated Him with such rudeness, disrespect, and lukewarmness, and yet He calls her **“my dove”**. She deserved to be called a vulture due to the way she treated Him, but Jesus does not come with a scornful and condemning frown. He comes with a face of love that melts the coldness and breaks the hardness of her heart. His unchangeable love draws you to Him rather than sending you from Him.

2. Jesus then calls His beloved bride: **“my undefiled.”** She had recently treated Him as if He was no more than a stranger at her door, and yet Jesus comes to her, calling her His undefiled one. Is Jesus trying to make her feel good with mere flattery? No, Jesus is appealing to the real and true identity of the bride. She is a disgraceful sinner in herself, but she is undefiled in Christ. Paul was the chief of sinners in himself (1 Timothy 1:15), but he was beloved and undefiled in Christ. You have an everlasting, unchangeable identity in Christ, for through faith in Christ you become the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21). The true Christian certainly struggles with sin and offends the Lord by transgressing His commandments. But it is in knowing your identity in Christ (that you are His dove and His undefiled one) that melts your heart and brings you to shame and repentance. Jesus says she is without spot before her fall (Song 4:7), and she is undefiled after her fall (Song 6:9). Whatever the struggles you face with remaining sin or whatever your weaknesses and failures you see in your life, your identity as a Christian is not in those failures. Your identity is in Christ and He says you are beautiful by His grace and undefiled by His righteousness: depraved, lost, condemned sinner in yourself, but a loved, beautiful, saint in Jesus Christ.

C. “She is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her” (Song 6:9).

1. Here is emphasized the unity of the bride and of Christ’s elect and chosen Church. Wherever she is throughout the world, she is united to Jesus Christ by faith alone and enjoys communion with Him and with all true believers.

2. We also have one mother (Galatians 4:26) that is the Universal Visible Church through whom the preaching of the gospel (and its ordinances) is the means by which God’s elect are brought to salvation. The only choice one that is brought forth is the bride of Christ—all others are false professors, hypocrites, and chaff. Though sadly many divisions separate Christ’s one church, we must ever pray for healing and not accept this as Christ’s revealed will (though it is His providential will). We must cherish Christ’s universal Church.

D. “The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and concubines, and they praised her” (Song 6:9).

1. There is coming a time in the future millennium in which the most powerful, the most beautiful, the most wealthy, and the most wise of the world will all see the glorious beauty of the bride and praise her and bless her and exalt her above all of the kingdoms of this world (Isaiah 49:23).

2. Dear Christian, you don’t find your identity within or in what others think of you, but in what Jesus declares about you. It is not self-esteem or the world’s esteem that will bring joy, happiness, true satisfaction, and peace. It is not stroking your ego or building yourself up that makes you worthy or beautiful. Self-esteem or the world’s esteem cannot set you free from past sins, present addictions, abuse by others, or hopelessness. Only Jesus can do all of that. Only His redeeming love can make you beautiful now and for all eternity. Only what Jesus thinks about you and says to you and has done for you—only that never fades, changes, or grows old. Your identity in Christ is not connected to your outward beauty, to your success in this world, to what anyone thinks about you (that is an ever changing identity for which you will become exhausted from trying to attain that identity before others and within yourself). Let Jesus tell you who you are, dear Christian. You are beautiful and undefiled in Christ, and there is none in all of the world as beautiful to

Him as you are. Your identity is in Christ.

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