



The Sin-Curing Beauty of Christ

(Growing in Marriage, Part 5)

Song of Solomon 5:9-16

THRIVE! Growing and Changing in the Christian Life

Prepared by: Matthew S. Black

Sunday, May 29, 2016, 10:30am at Living Hope Church of Roselle, Illinois

livinghopechurch.net

“Therefore such a soul also desires many kisses of the Word, so that she may be enlightened with the light of the knowledge of God. For this is the kiss of the Word, I mean the light of holy knowledge. God the Word kisses us, when he enlightens our heart.”

– **St. Ambrose**

1. No evening service
2. Men’s Retreat this Friday night. Please sign up! \$15 (men), \$7 (boys)
3. Trinity Christian Choir
4. Pastor Mike is out preaching at Christian Fellowship Church of Itasca.

If you don’t have a Bible, there should be one in the seat in front of you. Open your Bible to **Song of Solomon**. The title of our message this morning is “The Sin-Curing Beauty of Christ.” This is part 5 in our series “Growing in Marriage.” We are looking at Song of Solomon 5 today.

The Sliver in My Foot

When I was a child I had open heart surgery and I am very pleasant memories there even though I was stuck with needles. I’m told that I never cry during that time. Truthfully deal biggest things that I remember at children’s Memorial Hospital. Are putting and friends to play with.

It’s funny because one thing I do remember him from six years old after the surgery and I was healed, I remember getting a sliver in my foot and my dad and mom having to hold me down because I was screaming and crying because I did not want the sliver taken out of my foot with a needle.

In that moment I thought my mom and dad were going to hurt me, but they just wanted to help me. In that moment my world came crashing down because of how I viewed my parents didn’t last long. But it was scary.

Today I want to encourage you that God is good – when you think of him, you should never think of him as wanting to harm you or punish you or hurt you. Any harm it comes to you is only because God is getting sent out of you like a deep sliver.

Doctrine of Compatibilism

Theologians call this the doctrine of compatibilism. God does not cause evil, but He uses the evil acts of men for your good and His glory.

Examples: **Acts 2:23-24**, “This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.”

Outline

What should we do when our love for Christ falters? Realize...

- We are cured of sin by **languishing** for Christ, 5:8-10.
- We are cured of sin by **looking** to Christ, 5:11-16.
- We are cured of sin by **telling** of Christ, 6:1-3

I. We are cured of sin by **languishing** for Christ, 5:8-10.

The Bride's Need

Song 5:8, “I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I am sick with love.”

This earnest longing after Jesus has a blessing attending it: “Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness”; and therefore, supremely blessed are they who thirst after the Righteous One. Blessed is that hunger, since it comes from God.

But the blessing involves a promise. Such hungry ones "shall be filled" with what they are desiring. If Christ thus causes us to long after himself, he will certainly satisfy those longings; and when he does come to us, as come he will, oh, how sweet it will be!¹

What's So Special about Your King?

Daughters of Jerusalem

“9 What is your beloved more than another beloved,

O most beautiful among women?

What is your beloved more than another beloved,

that you thus adjure us?”

Or as the NIV says there, “How is your beloved better than others?” “What’s so special about him? There are lots of other men around here. If you’ve lost him, go find another one.” Find another? There is no one like her beloved!

And for the Christian there is no one that compares to Jesus! In response, the bride begins to think about what makes her beloved so special. What makes him stand out from all other men? She sets out to explain to the daughters of Jerusalem what it is that makes him unique from all others.

She Forgets Herself

J. Hudson Taylor, missionary to China says of Song 5:9, “This question, implying that her Beloved was no more than any other, **stirs her soul to its deepest depths; and, forgetting**

¹ Spurgeon, Charles H. . C.H. Spurgeon Devotions from the Song of Solomon: Derived from Morning and Evening (Kindle Locations 401-403). AudioInk Publishing. Kindle Edition.

herself, she pours out from the fullness of her heart a soul-ravishing description of the glory and beauty of her Lord.”² She is truly “sick with love” (5:8).

Are You Languishing (Sick with Love) for Christ?

To be sick with love for Christ is the only way to kill and cure sin in your life. She says, “I am sick with love” (5:8), and she gives the reasons why (vs. 11-16).

Are you love sick for Christ? He says to us as He said to Peter: “Do you love me more than these?” Do you love Christ more than this world? More than your sin? More than any earthly relationship?

You say, I want to, but my sin is so great. If you have sinned greatly, you should love Christ more, not less!

Are you love sick for Christ? This is the way to kill and cure sin in your life.

II. We are cured of sin by looking to Christ, 5:11-16.

Psalm 16:11, “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Psalm 16:11 teaches us we are going to be learning more and more about our Savior for all of eternity. Today were just barely scratching the surface.

In responding to the question of the daughters of Jerusalem, “What’s so special about your beloved?” she begins to remember what’s so special about him.

Greatness and Goodness: The Bride Praises Her Beloved

“10 My beloved is radiant and ruddy,
distinguished among ten thousand.”

The word “radiant” speaks of a brilliant, blinding white. It reminds me of the picture of Jesus in the gospels, when He’s on the mount of transfiguration, as His clothes were changed to dazzling white as His glory and His deity shone through. I think this description of “my beloved” as “white” is shining, it’s brilliant, it’s dazzling. It’s a picture of the deity of Christ, the glory of Christ.

A Description of Her Beloved

Then she also says he is ruddy. That has to do with a healthy complexion, a wholesome, manly appearance. We could say he has a “rosy” face. That often happens to us when we work hard or make a long journey by foot.

Christ was ruddy in His humanity. He took a long journey and did all the work for our salvation. He substituted Himself. He took our full punishment upon Himself for our sins. He propitiated the wrath of God for us.

² Taylor, James Hudson. *Union And Communion or Thoughts on the Song of Solomon* (p. 26). Kindle Edition.

Glorious in All His Parts

1. His Glorious Head

You look upon yourself and it's easy to be depressed. I want you to look upon Jesus and be cured of your sin. Look upon His glorious head. By the head of Jesus, we may understand his deity, "for the head of Christ is God."³

Jesus is a glorious bridegroom that will cure us of our sin. Look to Him. **Song 5:11a**, "His head is the finest gold." He is the Head of the Church. It was His wisdom that set His love upon you before the worlds began in spite of your sin. With His head of finest gold, He chose to set His love upon you. Before the counsels of all the worlds our glorious Head chose to display a mercy that is so astounding it cannot be comprehended.

You Will Not Continue in Sin Forever

Look upon His glorious head of gold, and you will realize that one-day sin will be forever wiped away from your nature, as it is right now from your record. You are justified, but one day you will be glorified. You will share in the glory that God gave Jesus.

The Lord will not have you continue in sin forever. One day you will be glorified with Him. You will share in the glory that was given to Him.

As our High Priest, our Head who represents us before God, Jesus prayed for you in the garden of Gethsemane in **Jn 17:5**, "Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." He prayed this **for you** as you will see.

You may be weary of your sin child of God, but you must know that the glorious One loves you, and that one day you will be glorified with Him.

Look again at **Jn 17:20-24**, "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 **The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.**"

Stop Being Ruled by Sin and Start Being Ruled by Jesus

You are best ruled when you are ruled by Him. Look at His head of finest gold, and you will realize that His counsels are trustworthy! He's never steered anything wrong. Stop being ruled by your sin and desires. Stop being ruled by your suspicions of Him. He is faithful and true. He's trustworthy. His head is of finest gold. His record is perfect. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (**Pro 3:5-6**).

"All things work after the counsel of His will" (Eph. 1:11). You may be struggling with evil that has been done to you. God is not the author of evil. "He is not tempted with evil, neither does He tempt any of us" (Jms 1).

³ Ibid.

God's Merciful Purposes

You can trust that though God does not create evil, He uses it to accomplish His purposes. This is because God is working out a greater glory with His mercy than He ever could with His mere justice.

Mercy is outside of justice. In order to have mercy, God must forgive sin. Look upon His head of finest gold, and realize that this is a Head that governs you in His mercy.

Christ is our treasure, "in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col. 2:9).

2. His Youthful Hair

Song 5:11b, "his locks are wavy [bushy], black as a raven." Most of us have hair that is either turning gray or turning lose! Christ's hair is youthful. Sometimes Christ's hair is represented as *white* (Rev. 1:14), denoting his eternity, that he is *the ancient of days*; but here as *black and bushy*, showing that he is always new and young and that there is in him no decay, nothing that grows old.⁴

His mercies are new, like His youthful hair. He is strong and able to save you from your sins. He never grows weary or worn of relentlessly pursuing you and me. He is never tired of saving you from your sins. Like a young man in his prime, so God has the zeal and enthusiasm to save His Bride.

You do not weary Him, even in your sin. He sees you struggle. But look to Him with His youthful hair, and "your youth will be renewed like the eagle's."

The black hair indicates youthful vigor and strength. Others grow lethargic with age, but Jesus is "a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." He never grows old or weary – "He is the same yesterday, today and forever." Others come and go, but Christ abides as God upon his throne, world without end.⁵

Look at Christ's youthful hair. It reminds us that He never grew weary of chasing after you. He is our relentless Redeemer. He never grows weary. He has chased you down. No one will pluck you out of His hand. He never grows weary of you. Christ's love for you never grows weary.

3. His Peaceful Eyes

Song 5:12, "His eyes are like doves beside streams of water, bathed in milk, sitting beside a full pool." He has doves eyes of peace – he is not angry with you any way. His anger no longer flashes at you. The brightness of his eyes are so filled with peace that they are described as "bathed in milk." In his eyes, she sees depicted gentleness, compassion, tenderness and grace.

Romans 8 Remedy

How does God see you? You may think He is against you? But no, He is for you. Sometimes we get confused at our cruel circumstances and think God is cruel. Romans 8 is the remedy for this.

Don't mistake your pain for God's displeasure. Rom 8:28-30 says for those who love God "He is working together all things for good" to conform you to Christ.

⁴ Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 1069). Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁵ Spurgeon, *ibid.*

Don't separation from earthly comfort for a separation from God's love. Rom. 8:35-39 says that nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ.

Rom 8:35, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?" Is this God's displeasure? Am I separated from his love? No! Rom 8:39, "[Nothing] in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

He loves you. He looks upon you with dove's eyes.

Uncle Lew

Let me help you grasp this with a story of my Uncle Lew Ahner. This memorial day weekend we are remembering war heroes, and my Uncle Lew was a great hero. His fighter plane was shot down by the Germans over France.

They took my Uncle Lew to a barn in a small village in France where the doctors were able to save his leg.

Now on the way over there, I'm sure he was in great pain! I'm sure being in a wheel barrow with a severely injured leg is no fun.

But the French villagers were not looking at my uncle with eyes of evil or eyes of war. They had doves eyes. They wanted to help him.

Many years later, my uncle got to go back and meet those people who saved him.

One day we are going to see our Savior face to face. And he will still have doves eyes for us.

4. His Cheerful Cheeks

His **cheeks**. 13 His cheeks are like beds of spices, mounds of sweet-smelling herbs. Here we see that God is not frowning upon you, but He is smiling.

The cheeks display the soul. His love is so great for you His cheeks turn red. In His cheeks there's the fragrance of his passion and His suffering and His death. Look upon Him. He is love is so fragrant, He will go through death for you!

The Cheeks Smitten

That cheek once so rudely smacked with a rod, and often wetted with tears of sympathy and then defiled with soldier's spit – Behold that cheek as it smiles with mercy upon you! His cheeks that reveal His smile upon you smell so good, "like beds of spices, mounds of sweet-smelling herbs like beds of spices, mounds of sweet-smelling herbs" (5:13).

God Smiles on You!

As the Levitic Blessing in Numbers says, Num 6:25-26, "The Lord bless you and keep you; 25 the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; 26 the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace."

God sees you through the Cross of Jesus. Before you were born, God chose you. He knew you would be a rebel and a sinner, yet He chose to lavish His love upon you.

Even then in eternity past, His cheerful cheeks were smiling upon you. Look over at **Ephesians 1:3-9**, "[God] has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has

blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ.”

5. His Loving Lips

His **lips**. 13b, “His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh.” Myrrh is a fragrance of passion. With His lips he tells you, “you are my perfect one.” “I have loved you with an everlasting love.” Don’t those words just drip with liquid myrrh? In His lips we see the **truth**, the power, the beauty of His words that counteract the ugliness of the deceptive words of our own heart.

Meditate on the Word to Counteract the Poison of our Hearts

You must meditate on the Word to counteract the poison of your own heart. You feel condemned. God says there is “no condemnation” (Rm 8:1). You feel alone. God says “I will never leave you” (Heb 13:5). You feel his hatred. God says, “I chasten only those who I love.”

You feel defeated and undone, a man of unclean lips. God says, “You are my perfect one.” “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Deut. 8:3; cf Mt 4:4).

6. His Secure Arms

His **arms**. 14 His arms are rods of gold, set with jewels. We see his strong arms, and with those arms He holds us safe and secure.

His arms are like “rods of gold.” This could be referring to a warrior’s amulet with jewels set in. Not just anyone gets to wear this gold amulet or “arm ring.” Only the most important one wore it. The king! The general.

I want you to understand that the most important being in all the universe is guiding you. He is with you. He will never leave you stranded in your problems. He’s working it all out for good.

Deuteronomy 33:26-27, “There is none like God...who rides through the heavens to your help, through the skies in his majesty. 27 The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Dear saint, the most important One with the bejeweled arm ring is the One who is guiding you, walking with you, and carrying you!

7. His Strong Chest

His **body**. Song 5:14b, “His body is polished ivory, bedecked with sapphires.” The word “body” has been translated “bowels.” It means the shaft of the body, the center part of our body that holds the vital organs.

The Hebrews used this to mean the center of thought and emotions. The bowels, or the shaft of the body of Christ – His heart, His love, His compassion – is made of “polished ivory, bedecked with sapphires.”

His Love for you is Pure

In other words, no one is going to put an end to Christ's love for you. It is like "polished ivory" – God sincerely loves you. His love for you is undefiled by pretence. It's not an act. He really, really loves you.

His Love for you is Glorious

And his heart for you is bejeweled with dazzling **blue sapphires!** You wonder why He loves you? Yes I do wonder that too! His love is like a dazzling sapphire in eternity. He should have judged us. Look at all our sin even since we've been saved. But His love stands out as extraordinary. It's unusual. Who loves like this? Only our Bridegroom!

8. His Foundational Legs

His **legs**. 15 His legs are alabaster columns, set on bases of gold. In His legs, we see the kingly strength, the ability to support His people.

We have so little time, but His legs are strong and foundational. Alabaster is very strong, like ancient concrete.

9. His Beautiful Appearance

His **appearance**. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars. Is there anyone that can compare to Him? We now see in a mirror dimly, but one day we will see Him face to face!

When we look upon Him we ought to see not our judge, but our Savior!

10. His Life-Giving Mouth

His **mouth**. 16 His mouth is most sweet, and he is altogether desirable. O to be kissed by the Word of His mouth.

ST. AMBROSE (333-397), "Therefore such a soul also desires many kisses of the Word, so that she may be enlightened with the light of the knowledge of God. For this is the kiss of the Word, I mean the light of holy knowledge. God the Word kisses us, when he enlightens our heart... It is with the kiss that lovers cleave to each other and gain possession of the sweetness of grace that is within, so to speak. Through such a kiss the soul cleaves to God the Word... She sought the kiss, God the Word poured himself into her wholly... that is, his teachings and the laws of the wisdom that is within, and was fragrant with the sweet fragrance of his ointments. Captive to these, the soul is saying that the enjoyment of the knowledge of God is richer than the joy of any bodily pleasure."⁶

⁶ St. Ambrose. *Isaac, or the Soul* 3.8–9 in *Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1947, 65:16–17.

His Friendship!

He is your friend. The Bride exclaims, “This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.” He has not called us slaves or servants, but friends. We share the most intimate things with Him, and He reveals the hidden things to us. Dear friend of Christ, dear lover of Christ, do you share the heavenly delights with Him in His **Word** and in **prayer**?

And as we see this Old Testament description of the Beloved One, I can’t help but think of the revelation of the ascended Christ that the apostle John saw on the Isle of Patmos.

Glorious Vision of Christ

We read it in **Revelation 1:13-17**, “And in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, 18 and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”

Both in this Old Testament picture, and in this New Testament description of Christ, we see that everything about Him surpasses and excels everyone else. Every detail is magnificent, and overall He is magnificent.

He is magnificent in the parts; He is magnificent in the whole.

In Times of Spiritual Dryness

It’s so important that in seasons of spiritual dryness or separation from our Beloved, we take time to recall what He is like, to verbalize His features . . . by faith to praise Him for what you’ve known to be true of Him in the past, even when you’re not feeling those things at the moment.

Christ is Precious

Turn your eyes upon Jesus! As we get our eyes off of ourselves and on to Him, in praise and worship, we find that God revives in our hearts an appreciation of Christ in the present. I think of that verse in **1 Peter 2:7**, “To you who believe, [Christ] is precious.” As you focus on Him, as you fix your eyes on Him, as you describe Him, as you praise Him, you find Him to be precious.

III. We should often fellowship with Christ, 6:1-3.

Daughters of Jerusalem- Most Beautiful Among Women

6:1a, “Where has your beloved gone,
O most beautiful among women?”

Consider what the daughters of Jerusalem call her, “O most fair, most beautiful among women.” This is what you are in Christ. You are the most fair. You are righteous in His sight.

We Want to Seek Him

6:1b, “Where has your beloved turned,
that we may seek him with you?”

Evangelism. The beauty of Christ is so great that others want to know Him. You don’t have to be a Bible scholar to be a good evangelist. You just need to know Him. More and more you will know His Word. Better to know Him than just cold facts about Him!

Fellowship. But it’s not just talking to lost people that makes an impact—it’s the value and importance of talking with other believers about Christ. What happens when we do that? It strengthens our own faith, but it also stirs up in others their affection and their passion for Him, and most important of all, it blesses the Lord when we praise Him.

I Belong to Him: Together in the Garden of Love She

“6:2 My beloved has gone down to his garden
to the beds of spices,
to graze in the gardens
and to gather lilies.
3 I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine;
he grazes among the lilies.”

What a joy to realize we can say, “I am His and He is mine!”

Acknowledging His Presence

She’s acknowledging His presence! She’s no longer enjoying him just because he’s satisfying her and blessing her. She’s now loving him, not for what he is to her, but for how she can bless him. There’s a difference there.

Now, God does give us good and gracious gifts that He wants us to enjoy: His presence, His peace, His joy—but He wants us to treasure Him above all of that. This leads me to say a word here about this whole issue of feelings and emotions in our relationship with the Lord.

Feelings

Can I just remind us that feelings have very little to do with reality. Feelings aren’t bad, necessarily. Now, if we let them run our lives, that’s another thing. But we have to learn to walk by faith when we cannot feel Him, and to trust when we cannot sense His presence.

There will be spiritually dry seasons in our lives, times when we don’t have these warm, great, tender feelings toward the Lord. Sometimes it’s maybe because of our lack of responsiveness in the past, and He’s wanting to woo our hearts, to realize how precious He is.

Conclusion

You belong to Him! Nothing will ever separate you from the love of Christ.