

Song of Solomon 4: 1-6; “Christ’s Love Language”, Sermon # 35
in the series – “I am my Beloved’s”, Delivered by
Pastor Paul Rendall on June 4th, 2011,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.

We saw in our last study that even though each and every believer is betrothed to Jesus; that is, that they are married to Him in a spiritual sense; they still must await the Day of His Second Coming for the spiritual marriage to be consummated. We do not see our heavenly Bridegroom face to face yet, but someday we shall. And what a day that will be. But for right now, we must be content with His love letter to us, which is found here in verses 1-15. All believers in Jesus in every generation, considered together, make up the mystical body of Christ. And here, the Bridegroom speaks to His Bride in His very own love language. King Solomon, in Old Testament times, was given revelation into this mystery which was not revealed to Old Testament saints as clearly as it came to be revealed in the New Testament writings of the Apostle Paul. In the book of Ephesians Chapter 5, verse 32, Paul calls this spiritual betrothal “a great mystery”. He is speaking of this Bridegroom and Bride relationship of Christ and the Church. He says in Ephesians 3: 1 – “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of the Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel...” Now, you notice that he says that this was a mystery, and that it had been made known to the sons of men in the Old Testament times, but not as it has now been revealed. It had been revealed to Solomon, but many people reading this book have not been able to understand it very well, either in his days or in ours. It is a spiritual book which has in it, spiritual love letters from Christ to His Church, both Old Testament and New. This chapter is one of those letters. What we are looking at is a description of the Church of Jesus Christ under the metaphor of a body. The Apostle Paul showed us something more of what this mystery means in Ephesians 1: 22, where it says, “And He (that is God the Father) put all things under Christ’s feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

What we have here in Song of Solomon 4 is Christ’s describing His Bride the Church in terms of how He lovingly sees her. He sees His Church as a new creation of His mighty grace; a body of believers. And as He looks at her He considers every aspect of what His grace has done to make her beautiful. The Old

King James heading over this chapter confirms this for us. It says, “Christ setteth forth the graces of the Church”. “He showeth His love for her.” So this afternoon we will look first at how Christ thinks of His Bride as He pens this love letter. 2ndly - the metaphors which Christ uses in His love letter to describe the beauty of His Bride’s graces. And then we will speak of where Christ tells her that He will be, when she reads this letter.

1st – Let’s think of how Christ thinks of His Bride as He pens this letter.

(Verse 1a)

“Behold, you are fair, my love!” “Behold, you are fair!” “You have dove’s eyes behind your veil.” Christ looks at His Church, all during this present age where His grace is making her beautiful and ready for the consummation; and He declares to her that she is fair. Indeed Christ sees each and every believer as fair; as being perfectly beautiful because of His grace even though they fail Him and fall short of the glory to which He is calling them, in so many ways. This is what the doctrine of justification by faith is all about. It is all about God declaring us righteous in His sight because of what Jesus has done for us. And it is about Christ declaring to His Church that she is fair. In fact, as He writes this letter, He thinks of her as what she will look like when He shall see her face to face and all of His work of grace will be completed in her, and for her. In verse 9 He calls her His sister, His spouse, and so His description of her will be as though He sees her already prepared for the wedding and the consummation of the marriage. He declares that she has “dove’s eyes”. This, I believe means that she has come to experientially realize that she has peace with God through her Lord Jesus Christ, and it shows in the way that she looks at Him. She has found rest for her soul in Him. You will recall that when John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the river Jordan that he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove upon Him.” “And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” The reason that the Bride has dove’s eyes is because the Holy Spirit has been given to the Church, and every believer in it. And then the Spirit enables Christians to be holy, harmless, and blameless because of the grace He gives to them. They become wise as serpents and as innocent as doves. They are content to pursue the “wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits., without partiality and without hypocrisy. Every believer who has the graces which the Holy Spirit gives to their heart, studies how to be a peacemaker in relation to others. They have the peace of God ruling in their heart themselves. And so they go about to implement the truth that the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. Believers have dove’s eyes. Christ sees His Bride as very fair. He sees her as complete and perfect in Himself.

2ndly – Let’s look at the metaphors which Christ uses in His love letter to describe the beauty of His Bride’s graces. (Verses 1-5)

We have mentioned the Bride's eyes. That is the first of the 7 metaphors used here. There are 6 more metaphors used in this first section of the letter. The first is her hair. Her hair is "like a flock of goats going down from Mt. Gilead". The hair of a woman is that which sets off her beauty. It is something which our Lord finds attractive in His Bride. Mount Gilead is the mountain where Jacob went when he and his wives fled from Laban, going back to the land of promise in Genesis 31. It was on that mountain that Jacob said to Laban, in verse 44, "Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I and let it be a witness between you and me." "So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar." And in verse 49 he said, "May the Lord watch between you and me when we are absent one from another." The meaning for us here today, in relation to Song of Solomon, is that Jesus Christ has said the same thing to us in His love language, until we see Him face to face. "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood." "This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." Let the Lord's Supper and the promises of God given to you, His believing people, be unto you a witness between you and Him that you will be faithful to love Him and do Him good by obeying His word; just as you know that He has promised that He will love you and do you good all your days, and bring you to heaven some day. Set up the memorial of this in your hearts.

John Gill says that "in some countries the hair of goats hangs down like the locks of women's plaited hair; and is thought to be most like human hair." And this is confirmed for us by 1 Samuel 19: 13 where it says that "Michal (David's wife) took an image and laid it in the bed, put a cover of goats' hair for his head, and covered it with clothes." The beauty of the Bride's hair is like the hair of such a flock of goats; long and sleek. A woman will oftentimes spend particular time and care brushing and combing her hair to make herself attractive to her husband. So the hair of Christ's Church, metaphorically speaking, is something that each believer should spend time combing so that they will be attractive to Christ. A woman's hair is given her for a covering, it says in 1 Corinthians 11: 15. It says, "But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering." "But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God." What is Paul driving at in that passage? He is saying that a woman ought to be submissive and outwardly indicate her submission to her husband by wearing her hair longer than his. Her hair is a covering which she grows out longer than a man's hair in order to show her modesty and her humility. And if she wears her hair shorter, then it would be good, Paul says, to outwardly wear a head-covering, over that shorter hair, to show her submission to her husband while he is engaging in prayer in church or when they are in a prayer in other social situations where both men and women are present. In other words, what is being said here in Song of Solomon is that Christ is attracted to meekness

and submission in relation to His word when He thinks about his Bride the Church.

It is evident that what He is attracted to is humility and submission to Himself and to His word. Look at 1 Peter 3: 1. “Wives, likewise be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.” “Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.” And the exhortation to men is found in verse 7 – “Husbands likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” This is the love language of Christ; that the marriage of Christians reflect His marriage to the Church. Prayers are hindered when the graces of meekness and humility are not seen in the body. When there is not a combing and brushing of the hair of the Church by thoughtful reflection in the mirror of the word of God, then Christ is not pleased. But because of His grace toward His Bride, He pictures her as having this beautiful hair.

The 2nd metaphor is that of the teeth. The teeth are described for us here as being “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.” What an unusual metaphor. The teeth are pictured here as a flock of sheep. The Church is pictured as a flock of sheep, under Christ’s tender care, in John 10. They are pictured as shorn here. So, too, the Church is shorn of her own righteousness, and her own ideas of what is true, and is given better food to eat than the world can give her. She feeds upon Christ’s word and promises. The teeth are that which tear the food up into smaller bits so that it can be swallowed and digested. The Church’s teeth are clean and white and orderly. So the Church of Jesus Christ is made clean and white and orderly by the preaching of the word; the washing of water with the word of God. We are already clean because of the word which has been spoken to us. (John 15: 2) The object of the Church’s using her teeth is to use them together, each one in their position; each one doing what they can, to accomplish the goal of building up the body through eating. This is how He sees us. But we still have a need to brush our teeth every day to keep them in that condition. We need to brush that which we use to partake of our food with; even our devotion to God and to Christ Himself. We need the fluoride of His grace so that our spiritual teeth will be clean and white and strong. This is pleasing to Him.

The 3rd metaphor regards the lips. It says in verse 3 that the Bride’s lips are like a strand of scarlet, and her mouth is lovely.” Christ is describing what His Bride’s lips are like ideally. They are like a strand of scarlet. This reminds one of what Rahab the harlot did back in Joshua Chapter 2. You will recall that she hid the spies who had come to spy out the land, especially Jericho, so that that Israel

would know better how to destroy it, in order to take possession of the land of promise. She wanted for herself and her family to escape the coming destruction of the city. She truly believed in God and the coming judgment upon this city in which she lived. So asked the spies to swear to her by the Lord, that since she had shown them kindness, that they would give her a true token and spare her family and mother and brothers and sisters and herself in the coming judgment. This they did, but as they were leaving her, they said to her, "We will blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, unless when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window..." So that is what she did, and she was spared. I think that this relates to our study in this way. The scarlet cord was placed in Rahab's window to show the sincerity of her faith in the God of Israel and her need to be saved from her sins. It is a token of her sincere belief that she needed to be saved by the blood of Christ, we would say, if she were a New Testament believer. Even so, the lips being a strand of scarlet here in our Song of Solomon show us; they picture for us, the need to have the blood of Christ applied to all that we speak in order that our speech might be beautiful. The mouth of the Bride is lovely because of grace. The things which she says to her Beloved; the words of her affection for Him are sincere. Her promises to forsake the old lifestyle of sin and selfishness and to live to Him are pleasing to Him. Her sacrifices of praise and her prayers to Him are welcomed by Him, because this is one of the great reasons that He laid down His life for her; so that their conversation with each other would be established, and her prayers to Him, and through Him to God would be favorably answered. Hebrews Chapter 13, verse 15 says, "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." "But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Your lips are a strand of scarlet to Christ. He sees all that you will say as covered by the precious sacrifice of His own life for you, dear believer. Will you not see that He died so that you might live to the praise of His glorious grace? Well, we do not have time to look at the other metaphors of our text this afternoon. But God willing, we will gather again next Sunday to take them up, and see once again, just how precious is the grace of Christ at work in the believer's heart.