

Song of Solomon 5v9 – 6v9

He is the best of the best

Welcome back to the Song of Solomon. I don't know if you have re-read it since the last time I spoke on it back in January or not. Before we continue, I am sure there is at least one person here who is wondering how Solomon could have written this and also have had 700 wives and 300 mistresses, I would like to suggest that this Shulamite woman is quite probably Naamah, his first love and bride (2 Chronicles 12v13). This obviously is before he went astray and committed idolatry – both in a physical and spiritual sense.

Song of Solomon, is the book the Jews called "The Greatest Song of All Songs," and people under the age of 30 were expressly forbidden from reading it due to its suggestive content. In the Jewish year, it belonged to the group of books that were read at Passover. Martin Luther, we know called it the noblest of all songs! Perhaps it was the inspiration behind what he said when inviting a friend to the public ceremony of his wedding: "*I feel neither passionate love nor burning for my spouse, but I cherish her.*" I am sure you will agree that was not the most romantic thing ever written but then Martin Luther and Katherine von Bora did get engaged and married on the same day! It's also a little known fact that Katie used to brew beer in the bathtub! I don't know of course if they ever bathed and drank it at the same time!

I also don't know where you are at tonight. You may well be a mature Christian who has been cultivating spiritual intimacy with Jesus Christ for many years. You may well be just a new born Christian – this very day or week. You may indeed simply be seeking out Jesus Christ and do not yet know Him personally.

You may have been happily married for many years. I am also aware that there will be people here who are having marriage difficulties, or are divorced, estranged or widowed. Where ever you are at, whatever emotions you are feeling or trials undergoing, allow the Holy Spirit to counsel you as we look at this passage of Scripture together. I am glad you are here – it's the best place to be tonight.

How & why is this lover the best? (v9)

The context for this passage is that the lover has gone! He is missing! So, we start off with that amazing question! "How is he the best?" I don't know about you, but almost every day I am either asked or I read "How is your Jesus the best?" Perhaps the people you meet ask you the same question. Certainly the media ask it – a media that equates all religions as equal, valid but mostly silly. You may well be asking that very question tonight. So let us look together firstly at teasing out this portrait of the lover. Secondly, we will look at the response of the lover to His beloved.

1. Portrait of The Lover

Other Biblical portraits are not too dissimilar - Daniel 7v9 talking about the "Ancient of Days" or Revelation 1v12-18 showing us a portrait of the ascended and glorified Jesus Christ.

I wonder if I was to ask you how you would describe Jesus Christ and what one thing about Him you consider special, what would you say? Think about it for a minute. Perhaps it is His constant faithfulness or His compelling love? Perhaps it is that He is your friend. Perhaps, your only friend. Where ever you and I are at, our vision of Jesus is bound to be too small. We need to be constantly growing and cultivating our vision and experience of Jesus Christ. That is what we will be doing in Heaven - getting to know Him more and more. Is your vision of Jesus too small and limited? Let us take a quick look through these next 7 verses. I can see at least eight things about this person, this lover, who we now know as Jesus Christ.

a. Radiant! (v10)

He glows! The man glows! His face shines! Humanly speaking He is a picture of full health. This man shines brightly - He radiates! Shining brightly signifies holiness that radiates from Him. It reminds me of Moses, when he came down from the mountain after meeting with God in Exodus 34. His face was radiant because it reflected the holiness of God! Our saviour Jesus Christ is portrayed as radiant because He is God and it radiates because of His holiness and purity.

b. Unique! (v10)

He is outstanding among ten thousand! In Biblical Hebrew, ten thousand was the largest number, so this lover, this person is unique! In all of history, Jesus Christ is incomparable. Yet in human form, we read that during his earthly ministry he had no physical beauty that would draw people to him. We read that Jesus' body on the cross was so disfigured and tortured beyond that of any man and beyond human likeness. His work on the cross was what makes Jesus Christ unique.

c. Majestic (v11)

His head is made of the finest gold, and He is not simply a king with a crown. His hair is shining black to symbolize His eternal ageless character. This Jesus Christ did not decay in the grave - He overcame death in the grave and was raised again in a new and resurrected body! Paul writes in Colossians 2v3, that in Jesus Christ all the majestic treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. Jesus Christ the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who with unparalleled majesty is the head of the church. He is to be our Lord, our King and our Saviour, but will only be if we allow Him to be. Jesus Christ is majestic in power, authority, wisdom and knowledge!

d. Tender (v12)

Now she describes his eyes! His eyes are shining white and his pupils pierce the darkness. Surely this signifies that Jesus looks upon people with love, adoration, tenderness and compassion. The water streams referring to the tears of love and compassion that He exhibits. This lover, this Jesus is kind and sympathetic to all - his look of love on a world that is separated from God, and to whom God is calling back into relationship. The love Jesus had when he wept in the garden as he sweated drops of blood, before he was betrayed and crucified. The eyes that sweep the earth looking for those who are eager to return into relationship with Him.

e. Wise (v13)

We recall when Jesus spoke words during the three years of his earthbound ministry, people were amazed and astounded. They were astounded that He spoke with elegance and yet with authority, unlike the religious leaders of the day. They had never heard anyone speak like He did – with both grace and authority. The same is true today, if we are listening. That is why we read the Bible to find out what He would say to us. That is why we seek to hear Him speak to us and why we speak to Him.

f. Almighty v14

This would seem to give the impression that the lover's arms are rippling with muscles. This man is strong, and is willing to protect and help his beloved. Jesus has overcome the world, will protect those who are in relationship with Him and He has given help in the form of the Holy Spirit, who lives inside each believer and is the seal of the relationship between Jesus and His followers. Whatever you are going through now, Jesus will protect and guide you.

g. Strong v15

His legs are like pillars of marble, which portrays this man as strong and able to carry any burden that is laid upon Him. Jesus Christ is able to carry any burden you lay on his back. While the marble conveys a sense of strength, gold conveys a meaning of imperishability and of a solid foundation. If something has a solid foundation, it will not fall easily. Indeed Jesus Christ will never fall, such is His imperishability as the everlasting God. He is solid and strong, nobody and nothing can stand against Him, and if we are His and under his protection, then we ought not to fear anything.

h. Lovely v16

The final phrase in this chapter "He is altogether lovely" gives the sense of exultation He gives out. He is without peer and nobody can match Him. He is beyond compare for the things He has done and the things He will do are matchless. He is lovely in regard to his person, birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, exultation, glorification, grace, protection, tenderness, power, wisdom, vengeance, judgment, redemption and pardon.

That is my Jesus, whom I seek to serve and seek to have contact with every minute of every day. Frequently I forget who I am as a Christian believer and fall back into old ways. Then I remember that I can go running to Him at any time to ask forgiveness and be forgiven. This Jesus who died on a Roman cross two thousand years ago. This Jesus who was raised from the dead, without decay, into newness of life and ascended to the right hand of the Father. The bride at the end of 5v16 states "*This is my lover, this my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.*"

2. How do we respond?

What is your response to this Jesus? Is it the same as the bride's response to the lover we see in 6v3: "I am my lover's and my lover is mine; he browses among the lilies." In other words, Are you His and is He yours? The idea and concept of browsing gives a sense of intimate contact. As the fellowship bond between Jesus and His people grows, so does spiritual intimacy.

Paul wrote equating the marriage between a man and a woman as a reflection of Jesus Christ's love for the Church. Perhaps he had the Song of Solomon in mind when writing such things. Sexual union, between a man and a woman in a committed married relationship, is a picture of the union of God and His people – Jesus Christ and His people. We can see that here in this book. That's why adultery and any form of sexual behavior outside the confines of a monogamous, committed marriage between one man and one woman is also idolatry.

This book speaks not only on a physical level about the importance of human love and intimacy between a man and a woman, but also the intimacy that exists, blossoms and grows between a person and Jesus Christ.

This holy, radiant lover – Jesus Christ calls you and calls you by name into His bride, the church. In the first part of Chapter 6, we see a bride that is also beautiful, glorious, radiant and unique.

If your view of Jesus is too small, then perhaps so is your view of His bride, the Church! The chapter starts off with the group of friends saying "Where has He gone?" Not only, how is your Jesus the best but also where has he gone, we can't see him! Isn't that what people today say also? Or am I alone in having people say that to me.

I will let you in on a mystery! When people see us as the Church, they should be seeing the risen radiant Jesus and not somebody just going through the motions! That is the sense of intimacy that her response in verse 3 describes. Here in the lover's response, the beloved, the Church, reflects the lover, Jesus Christ. When the lover responds, He describes her as beautiful, glorious, radiant and unique! This is not as the Church is now, but as the Church will be! The Church is being perfected for a King who is unique, all-knowing, Wise, Almighty, Altogether Lovely and Strong... The Church is being prepared as a Bride being beautifully prepared for her husband! This is a picture of a Church that has beauty in holiness, is strong in her faith, radiating holiness and is totally unique. Unique because there is only one Church!

We know the Church has faults now – the media love to report it when the Church is perceived to have done something wrong. But the worldwide, universal church is being constantly changed into the very image, a reflection, of Jesus Christ, the head of the church! Each individual member of the church is being transformed into the very image of Jesus Christ by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. The more we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, mould us, change us and guide us, the more we will be transformed into the very image of Jesus Christ. Where ever you go, the Church is there. Your workplace, your school – the church is there, because Jesus Christ is there with you. Church is not just on Sunday, but every other day of the week. That does not mean however we stop attending on Sundays, because we are also commanded not to give up meeting together to worship God, coming around His word and engaging in fellowship and Holy Communion together.

As Jesus Christ's bride, the church, we are to be seen as living a life that is free from disobedience to God and His commands. People outside the church watch to see how and what we do as the Church and are waiting for us to fall – both as a community and individually. We are to live a life that is blameless so that nobody can accuse us of being hypocritical. When we live a life that is holy and fully on fire for Jesus Christ, people will inevitably ask is the reason for the hope that we have. This bride, the Church is unique, and there is only one of her!

Not only is there one universal Church, but that Church is to be radiant – radiant in holiness. The church is being made holy, through the combination of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and the Holy Spirit's transforming work within individual believers. The church is holy, in that it is God's separated people living in the community, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and through a perfecting faith in Jesus Christ.

The church is also holy, in that every Christian believer is declared holy and righteous through a living relationship with Jesus Christ. The bride reflects the lover! This means that the church has imputed holiness and is seen as spotless and sinless. Despite being deemed holy, the New Testament church we know was also subject to much doctrinal error (1 Timothy 6v3), immorality (Revelation 2v14) and division (1 Corinthians 11v18). Dare I say, that churches today, are the same!

The lover was and is holy, and so is His beloved, His bride. Augustine said that Jesus Christ's holiness is the reason for His bride the church being holy, and the church will be made perfect on the last day. To that we can say Amen!

Recap!

How is this lover the best of all lovers? How is this Jesus the best of all? We have seen that this lover is Jesus Christ. We saw together these things about him: Glorious in Holiness, Uniqueness, Majesty, Tenderness; Wisdom; Almighty; Strength and Loveliness.

We have seen that the bride, the Church, reflects the head, Jesus Christ and is to be beautiful, holy, unique and glorious! Therefore we, as His church, are to reflect Jesus Christ in every aspect of our life as we counter people who don't know this Jesus, and who think that Jesus is merely a swear word or an insignificant, charismatic yet enigmatic anti-hero on the dusty pages of history.

Conclusion!

So how do we finish up?

You may not be yet a follower, so I would urge you most strongly to accept His call upon you. You may not get another chance. This same Jesus Christ said he was coming back again. Not as a baby next time, but in full glory, power and majesty. He will be coming back to gather those who are in relationship with Him and to wipe the tears of suffering and joy from their eyes. Those who are found not to be in relationship with Him, will spend eternity without Him. He gives each of us, innumerable opportunities to enter into relationship with Him. This Jesus wants to connect with you in an intimate, spiritual relationship – His eyes wander the earth looking for those willing to submit themselves to His authority. If that is you, then please do see Pastor Adam, one of the leaders or the person that brought you here tonight, to find out how you can start this relationship with the Living God, Jesus Christ. He calls you by name.

Lastly, if you are already in a relationship with Him, no matter if it is one hour, one day, one year or several decades, He wants to give you freedom to live a life worthy of Him. Is Jesus your life and your life in Jesus, just as the beloved and lover of this book are?

That means He wants to have authority over every aspect of your life as you seek intimacy with Him. Cast your cares upon Him – He can take it. Perhaps you are caught in a trap of habitual sin. Maybe you are feeling the desolation and loneliness because of decisions made in the past. You may be happily married, struggling in your marriage, separated, divorced or single. Where ever you are at, call out to your God, expressing your fears, your worries and concerns, as well as telling Him your joys and excitements. He is the Almighty God, radiating in holiness, speaking words of wisdom and tenderness to you. Whatever you are going through, give it to Him. Jesus already has all authority – on heaven and on earth. People are scared by the word authority, but that is because they usually confuse it with the word authoritarian. By authority, I do not mean authoritarian, because Jesus will not force you to give anything up until you willingly want to give up those things that are holding you back from serving Him in freedom and fullness. Forcing as authoritarians do; would mean going against God's loving principle of free-will. By authority, I mean power. Authority to forgive sins, conquer His enemies and authority to love and care for His people, His bride. He has Authority to love and loves to show His power and majesty to those who are in a dynamic relationship with Him. His love is compelling, and is always calling you and wanting to help you, in your relationship with Him.

How is Jesus better than all the rest? He is that tremendous almighty person who radiates loveliness and yearns to be in and develop an intimate relationship with you. Who do you say this Jesus is?