

Our passage for today is the answer to the leading question with which we ended last week's message. 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?* Song of Songs 5:9 Twice the virgins ask, "What is your beloved more than another beloved?" She had asked for their help in finding her beloved, and if they did, to deliver a message to him that she is lovesick. She did not open the door when he came home late, so he left to find shelter from the damp night. Realizing she had waited too long before rising and opening the door, she panicked and ran to look for him. After being roughed up by the night watchmen, she crossed paths with the virgins and asked for their help.

We saw how this can be a spiritual parallel for times when we ignore the Lord's invitation to meet Him in prayer. We may have hesitated because of disappointment that He did not intervene in the way we hoped He would. We cannot understand why He would let us go through a heart-rending experience, so we avoid opening the door to our heart. And then we find when we do pray, we do not sense His presence. We realize how much we miss those intimate times in prayer, and we set out to search for how we might restore the relationship. Guilt or disappointment is what separates us. The only way to rid ourselves of guilt or disappointment is to repent of our hard hearts and lack of trust in Him.

We must always be prepared to give an answer to those who inquire about our love for the Lord (1 Peter 3:15ⁱ). This fallen pagan world may mock us, but we must boldly tell of our love for our Savior. He displayed the greatest love for us that ever could be by hanging naked in agony on a cross and suffered until He bore all our sins' punishment and then gave up His spirit into His Father's hands (Ephesians 5:2ⁱⁱ). He was not embarrassed to do that for us. We should not be ashamed to boldly declare our love for Him (Romans 1:16ⁱⁱⁱ). Who cares what people think? We should be more concerned about what the lover of our soul thinks. Remember Peter's remorse when he denied the Lord (Matthew 26:75^{iv}). We too should weep bitterly if we do not speak up when our beloved is mocked or our faith fails. Speak the name of Jesus. It is powerful and like no other, drawing some people and repelling others (2 Corinthians 2:15,16^v). The woman in our passage was not ashamed to call Him "my beloved," nor should we be ashamed to do the same.

She answers their question as to why she would adjure them to convey her message, and why she sees him as superior to all other men. Her answer addresses his physical features. We will consider each one. But how are we to relate this to our Savior of whom the prophet Isaiah said, ^{2b} *He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.* Isaiah 53:2, and yet the psalmist wrote Psalm 45:2a ^{2a} *You are the most handsome of the sons of men;* Is this a contradiction?

If we take the Shroud of Turin as authentic, and recent scientific evidence leads me to that conclusion, Jesus' face was quite long and not really handsome in any way, which would concur with Isaiah's description. But then we have the best description in Scripture of the resurrected Lord in Revelation 1:13-16 ¹³ *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.* I would say that describes majesty which is more than our view of what is handsome. For these reasons I believe when we make a parallel to what Jesus means to us today, we should not think of beauty in the way a woman might consider a man to be handsome, but rather His majestic beauty and the glory of His perfect nature, or as the woman says in verse 16, *altogether desirable*.

¹⁰ *My beloved is radiant and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand.* Song of Songs 5:10 Solomon had described her beauty in 4:1-7. Now she just as eloquently describes the beauty she sees in him. She again uses the possessive expression, “my beloved,” whom she describes as radiant, ruddy, standing out among ten-thousand men. Radiant is also translated as white or shining and ruddy means reddish. Again, we see the oriental impression that the whiter the more beautiful. Reddish may mean the blush on his cheeks. It is possible that instead of reddish she means manly as the Hebrew word is a form of *Adam*. Standing out among ten thousand implies that his achievements and character are superior and noticeable to all.

Of Christ’s whiteness Spurgeon writes, *Our Lord is, first of all, in himself white; that is, he has immaculate perfection of character. God in him is light and no darkness at all — perfect purity without a trace of sin. He is very God of very God, the Holy One of Israel. In his Godhead, Jesus Christ is perfection itself. As to his manhood, the term whiteness well describes him who was born without natural corruption, or taint of hereditary depravity — “that holy thing” (Lk. 1:35^{vi}), the Christ of God, who became incarnate, yet without sin. He is the pure white, spotless lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29^{vii}).*

If we take white for purity and use the definition manly instead of ruddy, we could say the same for Jesus. Only the third description falls way short for our Savior. He is outstanding among ten billion, or we could say outstanding among all of humanity. No guru descended from the throne of heaven, lived a sinless life, healed *all* forms of sickness, cast out demons with a word, raised the dead, walked on water, commanded nature, nor spoke like this man. And most of all, no other human was able to take our sins and die in our place that we might become their sinless, spotless bride (2 Corinthians 5:21^{viii}; Ephesians 5:25-27^{ix}). There is not a human being who ever lived whose life comes close to that of Jesus. I read the biographies of great men of God, and though their lives are far superior to mine, they are honest about their weaknesses and failures. But no one compares to Jesus! That is because we are all born with Adam’s fallen nature. Jesus is the Creator, and we are creation. The gap is immeasurable. He is Lord of lords and King of kings, the first and the last (Revelation 1:17^x)! O come let us adore Him!

The Hebrew word translated here as “distinguished” can also be translated as “banner.” Armies were led and signaled to with banners. Jesus is the One we follow. He is our leader. He knows where to go and how to get there. We follow his banner which is described in this letter as love (2:4^{xi}). What an honor it is to follow such a glorious standard bearer into spiritual battle for the souls of men.

¹¹ *His head is the finest gold; his locks are wavy, black as a raven.* Song of Songs 5:11 The head is the center of senses and thought. Gold represents holiness. It is obviously not literal but symbolic. She may simply mean very precious. As we believe

the Word is inspired by the Holy Spirit, we can see it as Jesus' thought life and interpretation of His senses always being holy.

We can see that golden head in things that Jesus said in the Gospels. His every word was inspired (John 12:49^{xii}). His every action was holy (John 5:19^{xiii}). He asked if anyone could convince Him of sin and no one responded (John 8:46^{xiv}). As Hebrews 4:15 declares, ¹⁵ *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.* He was completely holy in thought, words, and deed.

Next, she described him as having black wavy hair. When in Israel, I often see hair that is thick, black, and wavy. It must be a common Jewish trait. A raven in sunlight is shimmering black. It is quite stunning.

¹² *His eyes are like doves beside streams of water, bathed in milk, sitting beside a full pool.* Song of Songs 5:12 The Shulamite describes her beloved's eyes in similar way in which he described hers (1:15^{xv}; 4:1^{xvi}), but she adds what seems to indicate he has blue or green eyes surrounded by the whitest of whites. She goes on and on from his head to his feet describing his beauty.

Do you think we could ever say enough about our Savior? Would it be possible to exaggerate his love and grace? Could we overstate His goodness to us? It is as if she is trying to get the virgins to admire Solomon by describing him in detail. And could we not do the same in describing our Lord, telling the wonders of nature and the goodness we have received at His hand, the grace that has been so freely given and the peace He shares with us (John 14:27^{xvii})? **Could we speak too highly of Him? I think not!** And when we find opportunities to do so, will it not be an invitation to the listener to consider His beauty and perhaps grow to love Him as well? Spurgeon told his congregation, *I wish, dear friends, that we had many more of those people about, who study Christ from head to foot that they may learn all that can be learned about him, those who would be able, with the spouse, to talk of his charms and beauties in detail, and describe them as she does with rapturous delight.*

¹³ *His cheeks are like beds of spices, mounds of sweet-smelling herbs. His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh.* Song of Songs 5:13 Just as he delighted in her cheeks accented with ornaments (1:10^{xviii}), now she delights in his cheeks. Those cheeks were smitten for our sake (Micah 5:1^{xix}). The beard hairs on his cheeks yanked out as they prepared to crucify Him (Isaiah 50:6^{xx}). That face so filled with love and grace was spit upon as Jesus put Himself in the hands of men so that we might become His bride. That is why His cheeks are so precious to us.

Spurgeon expanded on her simile, *There is sweetness to the nostrils and beauty to the eye, spice for its fragrance and flowers for their loveliness. In Christ, there is something for every spiritual sense, and for every spiritual sense there is a complete satisfaction and delight in him. Look at him, and he is to your sight as sweet flowers.*

Some people have seen the manifest presence of the Lord. He is always with us. He walks among the churches (Revelation 2:1^{xxi}). He is here among us this morning. He and the Father make their home in each believer by the Holy Spirit (John 14:23^{xxii}), but there are times when Jesus appears to individuals. It happened to the Apostle Paul (Acts 9:3-5^{xxiii}). I have met descendants of Abraham, Jew and Arab, who have seen the Lord and were converted at the mere sight of Him. I asked how they knew it was Jesus. His presence conveys His identity. It comes with conviction and grace and love. There are

those people who have been resuscitated who tell us that they left their body and went to His presence which overwhelmed them with love and peace. They did not want to leave but had to return to their body. Those of us who love Him desire such a revelation of His glory. However, Jesus told the disciples, blessed are those who have not seen but believe (John 20:29^{xxiv}). If faith pleases Him, as the writer of Hebrews tells us (Hebrews 11:6^{xxv}), we desire to please Him more than we desire to see Him. Our eyes of faith will suffice. And what we see written in the Word tells us He is altogether glorious! When the Apostle John saw Him, he fell at His feet as though dead but then was touched by His right hand which enabled John to write down what was being spoken to him (Revelation 1:17^{xxvi}).

That brings us to the last half of verse 13. *His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh.* Every Word of God is pure (Proverbs 30:5^{xxvii}). That is because He is holy, so it cannot be otherwise. Every word from His lips is consistent with His perfect nature. More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold and sweeter than drippings from the honeycomb (Psalm 19:10^{xxviii}). We need to remember that when we read the inspired Word of God in our Bibles, which are His love letter to us. I once thought it strange that Charles Spurgeon would write most of his sermons on one verse, until I realized that it is because he saw so much in each verse.

The concept of which John informs us, that Jesus is the Word made flesh, is a difficult one for us to understand (John 1:14^{xxix}). He only said what the Father told Him to say. Jesus declared, *⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.* John 12:49,50 And in John 5:19^{xxx} Jesus said He only does what the Father does. That is why He could say that to see Him was to see the Father (John 14:9^{xxxi}). The Word of God is just as consistent as the incarnate Christ in revealing God to us, dripping liquid myrrh. It is so precious. But do we value it as such? If we do, we will be living in it, reading it often, meditating on it, memorizing it. It enlightens our path. It keeps us from sin (Psalm 119:9^{xxxii}, 105^{xxxiii}) and renews our minds (Romans 12:2^{xxxiv}).

¹⁴ His arms are rods of gold, set with jewels. His body is polished ivory, bedecked with sapphires. ¹⁵ His legs are alabaster columns, set on bases of gold. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars. Song of Songs 5:14,15 Watchman Nee describes verse 14 and 15 as follows: *His hands are rods of gold:* “The strength of His hands to establish firmly and bring to completion the purposes of God.” *His body is carved ivory:* “The Lord Jesus, too, was a Person rich with the deepest sensibilities, that He was moved with great feelings of love for His people.” *His legs are pillars of marble:* “They signify His power to stand ... as having immovable stability.” *His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars:* “Shows something of His elevated character. Though a Man, yet He was now a Man glorified in the heights of heaven.”^{xxxv}

¹⁶ His mouth is most sweet, and he is altogether desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. Song of Songs 5:16 Spurgeon comments on this verse, *She proceeds in due order; commencing at the head, and proceeding with the different parts of the person of the Beloved, but she warms, she glows, she flames, and, at last, the heat which had for a while been repressed is like fire within her bones, and she bursts out in flaming words. Here is the live coal from off the altar of her heart:* “Yea, he is altogether lovely.” *It is the utterance of a soul that is altogether overcome with admiration, and therefore feels that, in attempting to describe the Well-beloved, it has*

undertaken a task beyond its power. Lost in adoring wonder, the gracious mind desists from description, and cries with rapture, "Yea, he is altogether lovely." It has often been thus with true saints; they feel the love of Jesus to be overpowering and inebriating. CHS

Her final description returns to his mouth. This is what we too find most sweet. When God speaks to our hearts, we rarely forget it. It is through His words that we experience His love. The extent to which we love Jesus now is evident in our love for His words, which are the kisses from His mouth.

We all know that reading the Bible through we find those parts which we wish to rush through, such as laws, numbers, and genealogies. But the more mature saints whose knowledge of the rest of the Bible find in even those parts we avoid are hidden gems they take as kisses from His mouth. Get to know Jesus and His sayings in the Gospels first. That is a baby Christian's courtship with the Word and the foundation for the more mature. There is plenty of help in our day for the more difficult to understand passages.

The true account is told of a young man who was being mentored by an older gentleman. They would spend time together in the Scriptures. The young man was so impressed with the truths and wisdom the older man brought out in each text. He asked his mentor which Bible College or Seminary he had attended. The older man answered he had his insights from being alone on his knees before his open Bible. In other words, he reverentially took time in the Word, asking God to speak to his heart. He knew that Jesus' mouth is most sweet. His heart caught the drippings of liquid myrrh.

Then our text says that he is altogether desirable. There is no flaw in Jesus. Just as this woman has described Solomon's beauty from head to toe and found no flaws, even more so can we say of our Lord, "He is altogether desirable. There is no flaw in Him." Every attribute of our Savior is perfect and held in perfect balance with all the others. He alone is the perfect One our soul is hungering for.

And how would you describe our Beloved. When you begin your prayers with adoration, what do you say to Him? Whatever I say or write is not nearly sufficient to describe the wonder of our Beloved. He is love, the very definition of it, pure love, unselfish love, love that expects nothing in return, love that extends to the heavens, poured out without measure. **He is gracious like no other. He is the source of grace, for we owe all to Him and yet fail miserably every day to give Him His due.** But grace covers us again and again like waves of the ocean. Wonderful cleansing grace of forgiveness that washes the grime of sin from us again and again and leaves us overflowing with joy and gratitude. His eyes are full of grace. His hands are dripping with grace. He is perfect peace for He is all-powerful and all-knowing. Nothing can disturb Him. He directs the movement of trillions of stars and every one of the billions of lives in this world. Nothing escapes Him. And He offers His own peace, unflappable and secure peace to us creatures who are so unworthy. I could go on and on, but that is for you to do in your prayer time. And to top it all off, this glorious, all-mighty, perfect one is our friend whom we can claim as *our* Beloved (John 15:15^{xxxvi}; Proverbs 18:24^{xxxvii}).

Let Him hold you and look into His eyes and tell Him how much you adore His beautiful attributes before you share the burdens on your heart. Let Him kiss you with His words. Claim Him as your Beloved and your friend. If you were a friend of movie star or governor or even a president of a nation, it would not compare in the least with being a friend of the King of kings, the Eternal One, the One who is before all things and who

holds all things together (Colossians 1:17^{xxxviii}). And the greatest marvel of all is that He desires for us to be His beloved and His friend.

Questions:

- 1 What questions are presented and why?
- 2 What is the conflict within Scripture of His description? Resolution?
- 3 Where does the description in verse 10 fall short of Jesus?
- 4 What may “head of finest gold” represent?
- 5 What is the other translation of distinguished and the implications?
- 6 Why do you think many of her descriptions sound like the way he describes her?
- 7 Can we speak too highly of Him?
- 8 What did Spurgeon write about the description of His cheeks?
- 9 Does your heart catch the drippings of liquid myrrh?
- 10 Discuss the concept of the Word made flesh.
- 11 Is He altogether beautiful to you?

ⁱ **1 Peter 3:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

ⁱⁱ **Ephesians 5:2 (ESV)**

² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Romans 1:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

^{iv} **Matthew 26:75 (ESV)**

⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

^v **2 Corinthians 2:15-16 (ESV)**

¹⁵ For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,

¹⁶ to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?

^{vi} **Luke 1:35 (ESV)**

³⁵ And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

^{vii} **John 1:29 (ESV)**

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

^{viii} **2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)**

²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{ix} **Ephesians 5:25-27 (ESV)**

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

^x **Revelation 1:17 (ESV)**

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,

^{xi} **Song of Songs 2:4 (ESV)**

⁴ He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

^{xii} **John 12:49 (ESV)**

⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.

^{xiii} **John 5:19 (ESV)**

¹⁹ So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

^{xiv} **John 8:46 (ESV)**

⁴⁶ Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?

^{xv} **Song of Songs 1:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ Behold, you are beautiful, my love; behold, you are beautiful; your eyes are doves.

^{xvi} **Song of Songs 4:1 (ESV)**

¹ Behold, you are beautiful, my love, behold, you are beautiful! Your eyes are doves behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats leaping down the slopes of Gilead.

^{xvii} **John 14:27 (ESV)**

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

^{xviii} **Song of Songs 1:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, your neck with strings of jewels.

^{xix} **Micah 5:1 (ESV)**

¹ Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek.

^{xx} **Isaiah 50:6 (ESV)**

⁶ I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting.

^{xxi} **Revelation 2:1 (ESV)**

¹ “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

^{xxii} **John 14:23 (ESV)**

²³ Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

^{xxiii} **Acts 9:3-5 (ESV)**

³ Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him.

⁴ And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” ⁵ And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

^{xxiv} **John 20:29 (ESV)**

²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

^{xxv} **Hebrews 11:6 (ESV)**

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

^{xxvi} **Revelation 1:17 (ESV)**

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,

^{xxvii} **Proverbs 30:5 (ESV)**

⁵ Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

^{xxviii} **Psalms 19:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

^{xxix} **John 1:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

^{xxx} **John 5:19 (ESV)**

¹⁹ So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

^{xxxi} **John 14:9 (ESV)**

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

^{xxxii} **Psalm 119:9 (ESV)**

⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.

^{xxxiii} **Psalm 119:105 (ESV)**

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

^{xxxiv} **Romans 12:2 (ESV)**

² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

^{xxxv} David Guzik, *Song of Solomon*, David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible (Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik, 2013), So 5:10–16.

^{xxxvi} **John 15:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

^{xxxvii} **Proverbs 18:24 (ESV)**

²⁴ A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

^{xxxviii} **Colossians 1:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.