

Song of Solomon 1: 16; "Behold, You are Handsome; Yes Pleasant!"
Sermon # 17 in the series - "I am my Beloved's", Delivered on
October 18th, 2009, In the Afternoon Worship Service.

Such a rich book, this Song of Solomon is; rich in the treasures of spiritual truth; rich with the spiritual riches of Christ, which are presented to us in the pictures that are given. The person who possesses Christ has a rich husband. If they receive of His riches they shall be well-provided for spiritually. They will never regret taking the time to meditate upon each picture carefully, even as a miser would count his gold. These riches of Christ are more to be desired than gold; yea than much fine gold. The riches of His truth and grace; are more valuable by far, than any earthly riches. With earthly riches there is great uncertainty as to the future. But if a person has Christ's spiritual and heavenly riches they can be truly and everlastingly happy, no matter what is happening upon this earth; no matter how bad things get financially in this country, or in the world. A Christian shares in Christ's wealth because he or she is a part of His Church which is His Bride. And the more that His riches are stored up in the believer's heart, the more useful and fruitful and happy they will be, because they know that in having Christ they have all things. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust corrupts and where thieves cannot break in and steal." "For where your treasure is; there will your heart will be also." (Matthew 6: 19-21) But let us also understand that the Bride of Christ not only has a rich spiritual husband, but she has a handsome spiritual husband. In fact it is not His wealth that she extols in this verse; but it is His handsomeness that she praises. "Behold, you are handsome, my Beloved!" This she proudly proclaims to Him in the verse that I just read to you. This afternoon we want to ask the question; why does the church think that her Husband is handsome? And then, Secondly, we will ask what she means by saying that He is pleasant? And then finally we will ask why she says that their bed is green?

1st of all - Why does the Church think that her Husband Christ is Handsome?

"Behold, you are handsome, my Beloved!" "Yes, pleasant!" These are words of exclamation and they are words of rejoinder. Her Bridegroom Husband has already complimented her as being fair, and He repeated it twice. He did this, I believe, so that she would really be convinced of His sincerity. When you look up the word "handsome" in the 1800 Webster's Dictionary you find a number of different meanings all the way from "easily manageable with the hand", to "dexterous and skillful", "agreeable to the eye or correct to the taste"; "having a pleasing appearance or expression", "comely, beautiful, or nice"; suitable or fit in action". The Lord Jesus Christ is certainly all of these except "easily manageable with the hand." The word "handsome can also mean "pretty" although there is a

distinction. "Pretty applies to things comparatively small, which please by their delicacy and grace; as a pretty girl, a pretty flower, a pretty cottage." "Handsome rises higher, and is applied to objects on a larger scale." "We admire what is handsome, we are pleased with what is pretty. "The word is connected with *hand* and has thus acquired the idea of training, cultivation, symmetry, and proportion, which enters greatly into our conception of handsome." Our Lord Jesus is inherently handsome in His nature and His character which are flawless and beautiful. Whatever is beautiful in a believer has its source in the beauty of Christ. Christ is handsome beyond compare. James Durham says, "The great esteem which the believer has for Christ is; that it is based upon what Christ is in Himself, and because of what Christ is to him." (Paraphrased) When Christ Jesus is seen, (when He is beheld by faith) it puts a wonderful stamp of love upon the hearts of his people; he hath a very amiable aspect that cannot but obtain the love of the beholders; as they said that heard Him; never did a man speak as He speaks." "So they who have seen Him will say, never did a man's countenance look like His; amongst all the sons of men." "He bears the standard, and has a loveliness wherein He is beyond them all: no wonder He is this way; being the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person." "This also shows us whence all the Bride's beauty was derived; it was from His beauty; if I be fair (saith she) it is because Thou art fair." "It is Thy beauty that puts beauty upon me." (Also paraphrased)

As we look at these two declarations of loving admiration we find that the Bride is very reverently and very lovingly giving back to Christ this same compliment as He had given to her before in verse 15; except in her case; she understands the difference between the two of them. He is the King and she is the shepherd girl. She has been brought up brought up from this lowly position of a commoner, into Royalty. She realizes that it was only because He chose her to come into this position of favor that she has this ability to hear such words spoken to her, and for her to speak them back to Him from her heart. She has been betrothed to the King. This is the same way that it is with every believer spiritually. How we ought to praise our Lord and our King for taking us to Himself; for raising us up from our lowly position, and making us Royalty. Turn with me to Psalm 113 which conveys this very thought. Here we find the reasons given to us as to why you ought to praise your Lord. "Praise the Lord!" "Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord!" "Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore!" "From the rising of the sun to its going down the Lord's name is to be praised." "The Lord is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens." (In other words; praise God and His Son Jesus Christ for their inherent perfections) Continuing: "Who is like the Lord our God, who dwells on high, who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth?" "He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the ash heap, that He may seat him with the princes--with the princes of His people." This is what He has done for us who are unworthy of the least of His

mercies. You see the same truth if you will turn over to Job Chapter 36. Here Elihu is defending God's permitting this intense and awful trial which had come to him. In verse 5 he says, "Behold, God is mighty, but despises no one; He is mighty in strength of understanding." "He does not preserve the life of the wicked, but gives justice to the oppressed." "He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; but they are on the throne with kings, for He has seated them forever."

If we think about this difference between ourselves and our Lord Christ we ought to be deeply humbled and full of gratitude. We ought to remember to express our love to Him each and every day. "Behold how handsome You are Lord Jesus; how fair; how beautiful. I realize, dear Lord Jesus, as one of those who is spiritually married to you; the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords that there is a very great difference between myself and You; between my heart and Yours. You are beautiful, You are fair, You are Handsome in a perfect sense. Your infinite beauty is due to your inherent spiritual purity and holiness; whereas my spiritual beauty, as a part of Your Bride, Your Church, comes only from You and not from anything naturally residing in my heart. This is how your praise ought to be expressed to Him. Your relationship with Him is all of grace. He is the One who is truly fair and beautiful. He is the Only One who has been perfectly holy among the sons of men. He is the Sun of righteousness and we who believe in Him are the Moon which reflects His glory. "Fair is the sunshine, fair is the moonlight, and all the twinkling starry host: Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer than all the angels heaven can boast." And yet we also need to remember and to understand what the cost was to our Lord Jesus, to make us His Royal Bride, and to make us rich in grace and heirs together with Him in His eternal kingdom. Turn with me to Isaiah 53. Our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, when He was born into this world and grew up and began His ministry to fulfill all righteousness, did not have the kind of physical beauty that we might imagine that He had. Verse 1 - "Who has believed our report?" "And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root of dry ground, He has no beauty that we should desire Him." "He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." "And we hid our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him." In other words, as people looked at our Lord, they did not see physical beauty, and they were not impressed with Him as a physical man. But that there was the most profound beauty and glory to His soul in regard to the way that He thought and spoke and lived; of this there can be no doubt. "And we beheld His glory; glory as of the only begotten of the Father; full of grace and truth." (John 1: 14) But look back at Isaiah Chapter 52, verse 13. "Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high." That is how we see Him now by faith. But look at how He came to that exalted position. Verse 14: "Just as many were astonished at you (My people), so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men; so shall He sprinkle many nations." (That is; sprinkle them with the efficacy of His shed blood so that many would be saved.) But notice the cost to Christ the

heavenly Bridegroom in order to purchase His Bride; it was being "marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." No beauty here as you look at it in terms of the sufferings which He underwent. He was marred more than any man; not only the sufferings to His body; but also the suffers of His bearing the wrath of God. But He was looking beyond those sufferings to the people who would make up His Bride. It was for the Joy that was set before Him that He endured the cross and despised the shame, and then sat down at the right hand of God in the heavenly places. He was dying out of His great love for her. It cost Him everything as a man. "Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her...." "So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies...." So; how thankful every believer ought to be is evident. And how readily a husband ought to learn to give himself for His wife. And how readily a wife should be able to express to her husband how handsome he is, if his soul is beautiful with the beauty of Christ.

Now 2ndly - We want to ask what the Bride means here when she says that her husband-King is pleasant?

This word "pleasant" is a word which goes beyond "fair". As Thomas Robinson says, "The most beautiful are not always the most pleasant." "Christ is not only beautiful, but He is pleasant." So what we have here is perfect moral character, which is desirable to be around; wonderful to be with. It is a very special thing to be around a pleasant person. It would be easy for any person who has perfect spiritual discernment and the power to always do what is right, to make others who are not perfect in many ways, to feel uncomfortable in their presence. It is very easy for people who have superior discernment to act in a self-righteous way toward those who have many things to learn to do well or to do right in living their life. But the Bride says that Christ is pleasant to be around. She takes pleasure in being in His presence because of the way that He thinks about her and the way that He looks at her. Robinson again says, "Being pleasant is that quality which renders a man amiable, agreeable, and enjoyable to those around him. It is that quality in an individual that affords pleasure and delight in his presence and society. It has special reference to one's spirit and temper, manners and deportment--a person's looks and the tone of his voice, as well as his words and actions." John Gill says, "The person of Christ is pleasant to a believer." "He looks pleasantly upon believers with an eye of love and grace; His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of water, washed with milk, and fitly set upon them; He does not look upon them in a frowning, furious and angry manner, but as having the greatest respect for, and taking the greatest delight in them."

Now I do not know about you; but this is a wonderful thing to consider; that because Jesus Christ has laid down His life for His people; that He does not feel the need to always be making His Bride feel uncomfortable because of her imperfections. I am not speaking about unrepentant believers now; the Lord Jesus is described for us in the book of Revelation as having eyes like a flame of fire and as fighting against those who would not repent, "with the sword of His

mouth." But we are rather here talking about how Christ sees those who are trying to know Him better and walk with Him closely. To them; He is pleasant. It is pleasant for a believer to know that "they can cast all their cares upon the Lord Jesus, for He cares for them." (1 Peter 5: 7) It is pleasant for them to realize that "all the promises of God are 'Yes' and 'Amen' to the glory of God, for those who are trying to be faithful." (2 Corinthians 1: 20) It is so good to know that there is comfort in Christ; the comfort that He is One who sympathizes with our weaknesses; One who has been tempted in all points as we; yet without sin. Do you see Christ in this important way this afternoon? It is very important that you see that there is the real comfort of Christ's love toward you which will keep you from having to fight and quarrel with others around you because you are not getting what you want out of life. Listen to Philippians 2, verse 1. "Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, (and there are all of those comforts of Christ's love coming to directly to us in Christ) fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." This is how peace reigns in your heart and in the church that you attend. This is also one of the things that will promote growth in the church; both in character and if God so blesses; in numbers. This then leads us to our final question.

3rdly - Why does the Bride describe their bed as green?

It doesn't sound so good to us, does it? But really it was. In the times that this book was written the color green was a definite indication of a flourishing believer. Listen to the indications of blessing in the words of David concerning himself. Psalm 52: 8 says, "I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever." So then when we think of what it would mean for their bed to be green, it would mean that their sexual relationship as a couple was flourishing and fruitful. It is very important if you are going to have children that you have a good comfortable relationship with your husband. Only God can bless you with children, but how important is comfortable love. Elkanah says to Hannah when she could not have children, "Am I not better to you than ten sons?" And it is the same in the Christian life. That comfortable relationship which exists because of those believers who are able to trust in Christ and rest upon His bosom; these are the ones who are able then to abide in Him. "I am the vine, you are the branches." "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you." "By this is My Father glorified that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." "As the father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love." It is when you can abide in Christ's love that the spiritual marriage bed of the love of Jesus Christ bears fruit. People are added to a church when, of course, they trust in Christ, believing in the gospel. But they will feel more comfortable in joining the church when they can see the love of

Christ which exists between the believers in that church. And especially when they are able to see that there are many people in that church who are satisfied in their relationship with Jesus Christ. Let us see to it that by God's grace we are like a green olive tree in the house of God. Let us see to it that we let Christ lead us in the green pastures of His Word and that He is restoring our soul. Let us lean comfortably upon His breast as John did at the Supper. Let us rest in His loving arms and know the reality of His great love for us. And let us declare to Him how handsome He is.