

**Song of Solomon 7: 1b and 2; “The Beauty of Devotion to Christ”, Sermon # 59
in the series – “I am My Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on March 26th, 2017, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

Here in these verses we find the Shepherd-King, our Lord Jesus Christ, exclaiming over the beauty of His Bride, the Church. It must be a stunning beauty that can bring exclamations from the lips of the One who is perfect. But the King of Kings sees the beauty of His Bride, the Church in relation to the grace which He has given her. He sees that the working of His grace has produced the beauty of virtue in her life; her learning to keep His commandments because she loves Him. And He sees every aspect of this beauty more clearly, and He examines it more closely, than any human personage possibly could. This beauty, which He sees His Bride as having, is first of all, the beauty of her devotion to Himself.

That is what I believe that these 2 verses that we are studying, are telling us. This spiritual beauty which Christ beholds, is described for us from His vantage point, in the following ways: 1st of all – Christ wants us to see, spiritually speaking, that the curves of His Bride’s thighs are like jewels to Him. 2nd – Christ wants us to see, spiritually speaking, that His Bride’s navel is a source of pleasant refreshment to Him. 3rd – He wants us to see spiritually speaking that His Bride’s waist or belly being like a heap of wheat shows forth her desire to be spiritually fruitful to Him.

1st of all – The Lord Jesus wants us to see, spiritually speaking, that the curves of His Bride’s thighs are like jewels to Him.

Verse 1b of chapter 7 says: “O prince’s daughter!” “The curves of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a skillful workman.” Now, I hope that you will understand that this kind of descriptive love language is being used by Solomon to point us on to the most exalted of spiritual realities: the spiritual intimacy between Christ and His Church. The reality of the spiritual intimacy which He intends to have with you, dear believer, is graphically portrayed here. It is the kind of spiritual intimacy which will most surely lead you to delight yourself in Him, and to His being delighted in you, and in your love for Him. The exquisite word pictures of the literal physical love of a man and a woman who are now married to each other, should be applied to our own spiritual relationship with Christ.

In these pictures of the physical love which is found in marriage, we will hopefully learn more about the literal spiritual realities of union and communion with Christ. It is not without cause that the apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 32 says: “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” This mystery which Paul speaks about, is the glory of Christ’s spiritual marital relationship with His Church; the spiritual intimacy which excites the heart of our Lord Jesus, and it should excite yours as well, O believer. It should be understood by all of us here today that the romantic interest between a husband and his wife is nothing to be ashamed of. Even the interest of a godly man in the woman who he is interested in marrying will consider what she looks like in her physical appearance as well as appreciating her personality and thoughts.

There will be attraction. There will be holy desires in relation to her physical attractiveness which he will consider in the one who he hopes will someday become his wife. Listen to what it says in Genesis chapter 29:17 – “Leah’s eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance.” The King James translation says: “Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favored.” John Gill in his comment on this says: “Rachel was beautiful and well favoured; in all parts, in the form of her countenance, in her shape and stature, and in her complexion, her hair black, her flesh white and ruddy, as Ben Melech observes.” (end of quote)

The words of our text may be embarrassing to some, but we should understand that the Lord Himself has created the body, and the attractiveness of a woman’s form; He is the One who has given it to her. It is nothing to be ashamed of, if properly attired for every occasion. Needless to say, Jacob was attracted to Rachel, and one of the reasons was her beauty of her face and her form.

Now in thinking about our text, we find our Lord taking pleasure in the beauty of His Church. And we must understand, that Solomon by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is not describing a sexual attraction, but he is using these metaphors to describe something which is like it in its power and strength of influence; only much, much, greater, as it is found in our Lord. In our Majestic Prince, the Lord of Glory, it is a pure and holy spiritual attraction which actually excels any literal physical sexual attraction and experience by an infinite degree. God has created sex and the physical sexual experience to be the highest expression of love between a man and his wife, and these words of our text are meant to convey to us a picture of the grander and greater love of Christ for His Bride the Church.

Christ never physically married while He was here upon the earth. But each one believing in Him is espoused to Him spiritually. You are betrothed to Him spiritually. You are legally married to Him in justification, and united to Him spiritually by adoption and the New Birth. You have been chosen by the Father of your Beloved to have all of the privileges of salvation bestowed upon you. But we must also understand that since we are already in spiritual union with Christ now, as believers, there is a beauty which He has imparted to our hearts by the sending of His Holy Spirit into our hearts, and His bringing about a New Creation in us. This is the work of the hands of a skillful workman. This is the work of the hands of an artist.

It is true that when we were unbelievers, walking according to the flesh and following the lusts and pleasures of the flesh, that we were not attractive to Him at all. There was nothing desirable in us. But as our good husband-to-be, He gave Himself for us. While we were yet sinners, He died for us. *“From heaven He came and sought us to be His holy Bride. With His own love He bought us, and for our life He died.”* When we first believe in Christ, He comes into our heart and changes the bent of it, and the direction of it, so that we learn to do what is right and walk in the way of His commandments.

This is the time when we, as the recipients of His love and grace, begin to be attractive to Him. Oh, yes, He loved us before this; long before this, with an everlasting love. But there was nothing attractive in the sin which He saw in us. But once your heart had been changed to love Him, and once you began to walk with Him in uprightness of heart by His grace, and once you began growing up into maturity, then this holy way of walking before Him, this word picture of “the curves of the thighs” is fulfilled, and you becoming attractive to Him becomes a reality. What does this mean for us? I think that as a believer that you should remember that spiritually speaking you are a Prince’s daughter.

The Lord Jesus Christ is your Prince; the Prince of Life, who died so that you might walk before God in holiness and righteousness all of your days. You are now a part of the nobility, the royal priesthood of believers. The curves of the thighs of your heart are attractive to Him. God would have you grow up to be wise and discerning and noble-minded; searching the Scriptures day by day, to confirm the things which are preached to you Sunday by Sunday. As Christ looks at you and sees your walk, He will be looking to see if you are well-favored by His grace. He will be looking to see whether you have both the form of godliness and the power of it. He will know whether you are faithful to come to church and worship Him, and whether day by day you are looking to Him for grace and strength to do His will. He will be looking at you to know and to prove your love for Him.

Will He look and be attracted? If He is attracted to you in this way of beholding what His grace is doing for you, then He will draw nearer yet to you, to impart to you His spiritual affection. It is not as though He has not loved you all along, but now He draws near to you in a special way. “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height – to know the love of Christ which passes

knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.” “Amen.”

Now 2nd – Christ wants us to see, spiritually speaking, that His Bride’s navel is a source of pleasant refreshment to Him.

Verse 2 says: “Your navel is a rounded goblet; it lacks no blended beverage.” The navel is that small little indentation in your belly which shows that you were once connected to your mother. In our text the reference is to the fact that you are no longer living in the realm of sin, but you are now living in the realm of the Spirit. The umbilical cord has been cut so that you are no longer of this world even though you are still in the world. You belong to Christ. You, as a Christian have been born from above by the Holy Spirit. You have been given new desires for communion with God because you are in union with Christ. If you were an unbeliever you would be described in this way, as it says in Ezekiel 16: 4 – “As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you.”

But here in these verses we find that it is a mature believer who is being described when it says that their navel is as a rounded goblet which “never lacks mixed wine” it says in the New American Standard. It never lacks “liquor” it says in the King James. You as a believer now partake of the new wine of gospel grace. It is the wine of spiritual devotion brought about by the Holy Spirit’s working, and this is poured into the new wineskin of your changed heart. The picture here is of mixed wine being prepared by the Bride for her husband who is the King of Grace and Glory.

It is apparent to me that Christ, when He looks at the beauty of His Church, He is looking to see whether His Church is ready to offer to Him the sacrifices of praise for all that He has done for her, and whether she has something prepared in her devotions to Him which will excite His love and satisfy His holy heart. Psalm 104: 15 says that wine “makes glad the heart of a man”. Dear believer, is your navel as a rounded goblet; full of devotions to Christ, because His grace excites your heart? Do your private devotions please the King of Kings? When you are in private prayer and worship, are there desires of devotion which have been carefully prepared, thoughts of love and affection poured out by you, even as mixed wine is poured into a rounded goblet for your King? You are the King’s cupbearer.

Are there desires which you desire to communicate to Christ, to satisfy His great and loving heart? Are you bringing Christ joy and refreshment in your communion with Him? Are there desires in your heart for greater holiness? Are there thoughts and feelings which express your desire for the advancement of truth and righteousness in your own life, and that His kingdom would come to prevail over many hearts, now that you have come to personally know Him? Are there times when you can’t wait to get alone with God?

Let me open this up further by having you turn to Job chapter 32, verse 17. “I also will answer my part, I too will declare my opinion.” “For I am full of words; the spirit within me compels me.” “Indeed my belly is like wine that has no vent; it is ready to burst like new wineskins.” “I will speak, that I may find relief.” Now, Elihu, the younger man, is speaking here in the presence of Job and his three friends. Job’s three friends have not been able to help him at all for they had misdiagnosed the reason for his having to go through this awful trial that he was going through. They thought that he was a hypocrite. They did not realize that God was proving a great point to Satan behind the scenes; that Job would hold fast to Him, that he would be refined like gold in the fire and come forth as a righteous man, even though Satan had tried to say that he would curse God to his face.

Elihu was now going to speak on God’s behalf, but I want you to notice what his heart was like, for it pertains to our study. He was very eager to speak because he was zealous to defend God in His dealings with Job, and he was eager to see Job vindicated and brought back from this great trial that he had gone through. He had waited and deliberately stored up the things that he would say until this time. And so, now that he was able to speak he says that he is “full of words”, that his

spirit within him compelled him, that his belly was like wine that has no vent; it was ready to burst like new wineskins.” This was right for him in that situation.

But in the situation that we are studying this afternoon, it is right for us, as believers in Christ to have a belly which is like wine which does have a vent; that we ought to be able to pour out the wine of our holy and loving desires of greater fellowship and communion with Christ, to the King of Kings. In our times of devotion we ought to be ready to give Him praise; to take the cup of salvation and call upon His name, and then to come to church and pay our vows to the Lord in the presence of all His people.

And then 3rd – Christ wants us to see, spiritually speaking, that His Bride’s waist or belly, being like a heap of wheat shows forth her desire to be spiritually fruitful to Him.

Verse 2b says: “Your waist is a heap of wheat set about with lilies.” The waist or the belly of the Church is a heap of wheat. Wheat is the grain which is ground to make bread. And bread is what keeps us alive and one of the main staples of our life. But man does not live by physical bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God. Since that is the case, what is being spoken of here is the Bride’s storing up within her heart all of the word of God that she can; literally heaps of it, in order to come to a greater fruitfulness to Christ Himself. These heaps are set about with lilies, which I take to mean the promises of what Christ has done and will do for the believer who abides in Him. They will specifically surround themselves with these promises, so that they will come to bear fruit for Him.

John 12: 24 – “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.” (much fruit) “He who loves His life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” “If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also.” Psalm 81, verse 16, the Lord says to Israel – “But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.” I cannot help but think of that tender and beautiful scene in the book of Ruth chapter 3 when Naomi was seeking to find security for her daughter-in-law Ruth.

Ruth had lost her husband and Naomi had lost her husband, and Ruth decided to move back with Naomi to the land of Israel, because they had heard that there was bread there. Ruth made this profession of her faith in the true and living God to Naomi – “Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.” When they came back to the land of Israel, they providentially found the help of a man named Boaz who let Ruth glean in his barley field so they would have grain to keep them alive.

As time went by, Naomi, hoped to find a husband for Ruth, and so, realizing that Boaz was a near relative, she thought that he might be able to become a Kinsman-Redeemer to them she sends her down to the threshing floor in the night to secretly make known to Boaz, her and Ruth’s desire that Boaz would take up and fulfill the role of being a kinsman-redeemer to them, by taking Ruth to be his wife. It says in chapter 3, verse 6 – “So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her.” “And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.”

“Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet.” “And he said, ‘Who are you?’” “So she answered, I am Ruth, your maidservant.” “Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.” “Then he said, ‘Blessed are you of the Lord, my daughter!’” “For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich.” “And now, my daughter, do not fear.” “I will do for you all that you request for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman.” How much is Boaz a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. You will remember that Ruth had lain down next to him til morning and then he said: “Bring me your shawl

that is on you, and hold it.” “And when she held it, he measured six ephahs of barley and laid it on her.

He negotiated the transaction in becoming her kinsman-redeemer, and she became his wife. And the Lord gave her conception and her belly became, as it were “a heap of wheat set about by lilies”. She brought forth a son who they named Obed. And he was the father of Jesse, who was the father of King David. The lesson for us is this: that only Christ can give you these new desires to want to serve Him and be faithful to Him. Only He cause you to be fruitful in His service. But I hope that you will also see the importance of your devotion to Him; seeing Him as your Redeemer and the One whom you are to love more than anyone else.