Session 10 – The Beauty of the King – 5:10-6:3

[10] My beloved is radiant and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand. 11 His head is the finest gold; his locks are wavy, black as a raven. [12] His eyes are like doves beside streams of water, bathed in milk, sitting beside a full pool. [13] His cheeks are like beds of spices, mounds of sweet-smelling herbs. His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh. [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.[16] His mouth is most sweet, and he is altogether desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

[1]Where has your beloved gone, O most beautiful among women? Where has your beloved turned, that we may seek him with you?

[2] My beloved has gone down to his garden to the beds of spices, to graze[a] in the gardens and to gather lilies. [3] I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine; he grazes among the lilies.

A. INTRODUCTION

In all the Scripture there is perhaps no more beautiful passage than the one we will consider in this session. The passion of the Holy Spirit to exalt and honour the person of Jesus is evident here, and we are given a list of attributes that are intended to be points of meditation for the lovesick worshipper. This is the fruit of her experience. We need to take time to meditate on these descriptions of our Beloved for in them is great revelation of our Bridegroom King. This can just be considered as a love poem from the Shulamite to the King but there is so much more as we allow Holy Spirit to give us deep revelation of the One we love.

It is a great tragedy in our time that in the Body of Christ so little time is given to the consideration of the person of Jesus. We tend to be far more focused on our personal needs and desires than we are on the task of comprehending the beauty of the Son of God. We need to focus more on revelation of the glory of Jesus than self-help strategies and endless how tos. We don't need self-help we need to gain revelation of the One who is the solution to everything and who can give us revelation and understanding about how our life works. If we will make Him our obsession, all other issues will come into line, and we will find ourselves changed by His glory into His own image.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

B. THE DUAL IDENTITY OF THE KING

1. ***My beloved is radiant:*** The Hebrew word here is *tsachach (tsaw-khakh')* which means dazzling meaning He is dazzling white, glowing. This speaks of Jesus' divinity and transcendence. He is the image of the invisible God (Heb.1:3; Col 1:15-18). He is the primary manifestation of the Father of Lights (James 1:17)

Revelation 21:23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

2. ***and ruddy:*** The Hebrew word here is *'adam (aw-dam')* which means to show blood (in the face), i.e. flush or turn rosy. This is the name given to the first man and it speaks of Jesus' humanity. It is so important that we understand the importance of Jesus' humanity.

Hebrews 2:14–18 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, *15* ***and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*** *16* ***For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.*** *17* ***Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*** *18* ***For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.***

3. This is so massively important, because as a man Jesus is proven in every area of obedience. His heart is tested, His will is tested, His Spirit is tested – He becomes the reference point for all human experience.

C. THE FAIREST OF TEN THOUSAND

1. Jesus is the Forerunner, the first-fruits of a new kind of humanity. His humanity is fully grounded in the identity that comes from the Father, and in therefore fully at rest. There is no striving toward the realisation of a destiny; rather, there is a determined posture of rest in which He receives that which the Father has spoken and is eternally speaking. He is the God-Man, and is the first of a new race.

2. He is a Man filled with all the fullness of God, with all the divine attributes

Colossians 2:9-10 … all the fulness of the Godhead in bodily form.

3. Jesus lives out of His divine nature in such a complete way that it is tempting to marginalise Him, to declare that He is unreachable. And yet, His life is so thoroughly human that something calls to each of us and beckons us to live like that; we know instinctively that we ought to be like Him. Jesus as a man is what God had in mind when he created Adam and Eve and we're being transformed back to normal. His humanity shows us what is possible.

D. HIS HEAD IS LIKE THE FINEST GOLD

1. The issue of confidence in leadership is one of the great trouble spots of contemporary culture. Human leaders have frequently fallen to the temptation of building their own kingdoms, and the subsequent erosion of confidence in the hearts of followers is inevitable. The people of God long to know that there is a leader whose heart can be trusted, whose single focus is the glory of God revealed through His glorious people. This section is focused on the leadership of Jesus, who perfectly fulfils this desire that lives in our hearts.
2. Head speaks of leadership and authority as in 1 Cor. 11:3 *But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ.* His head is like finest gold which means gold that has been fully refined bringing forth purity and beauty.
3. Jesus is the perfect leader.
    a. His leadership is formed in the crucible of obedience – Hebrews 5:5-10
    b. He has a full understanding of God's ways and means – Hebrews 6:13-20
    c. He modelled full submission to the Father's strategies – 1 Peter 2:23
4. As He fully lives out the Father's calling so he calls us to be yoked with Him and, because He is the perfect leader, we can trust Him. Not just because of His divinity but because He has walked through His humanity. He carries us with Him in the journey (Rom. 5:6-19) We learn to love His ways and embrace every event as a

gift of love. We are trained through warfare and are willing to enter into the fellowship of suffering. We are able to live without offense because we can trust His perfect leadership and in this journey we discover who we really are.

Eph. 3:17-19 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, [18] may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, [19] and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God

E. HIS LOCKS ARE WAVY, BLACK AS A RAVEN

1. This metaphor speaks of two dimensions of Jesus' character – His dedication to the Father and to the task of fulfilling the Father's pleasure, and the complexity of His plans and processes as He orchestrates the Father's will on the earth.

2. The "hair" in the Scripture often speaks of the dedication of the Nazirite, one who is fully set apart for the pleasure and purposes of God. Jesus was fully set apart to do the Father's will. This was about fulfilling the Law as a man so that He would be qualified to bring us into the Father's family.

3. They are wavy" and "black". Thick black wavy hair speaks of youthfulness and Jesus' zeal and vigour (in contrast to grey and balding). Jesus is forever young, energetic and zealous in His devotion to God and people. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

F. HIS EYES ARE LIKE DOVES

[12] His eyes are like doves beside streams of water, bathed in milk, sitting beside a full pool (fitly set NKJV)

1. One of the great issues we face is the ongoing, constant influence of impure, unholy desire. The atmosphere is thick with it, but we're accustomed to it, so we just blank out and cope. Jesus is not like that. His gaze is pure, and heals us even as we sit before Him.

2. The purity of His gaze gives us confidence to rest in Him (beside streams of water) knowing He sees everything perfectly (bathed in milk) including our heart attitude towards Him. They are perfect in every way (fitly set)

3. All this speaks of His perfect vision which is empowered by love. He looks on us with great devotion and perfect insight. He sees everything as it truly is. He can see the sincerity of our hearts even when our deeds are immature.

   When we realize that His eyes are full of understanding and revelation, knowing the very deep places of our heart and being, then we don't have to always set the record straight or insist that others understand us. We do this because we know that He understands and knows the full story. We won't feel the compulsion tomtell

our glory stories or exaggerate what God has helped us accomplish. Knowing that we are in His gaze day after day is enough. ("The Sacred Journey –Brian & Candice Simmons)

G. HIS CHEEKS LIKE SPICES AND HERBS

His cheeks are like beds of spices, mounds of sweet-smelling herbs

The cheeks speak of emotions which are outwardly expressed through the cheeks. . The emotions of Jesus are like a garden filled with delightful fragrances, diverse and refreshing.

a. The Hebrew word for cheeks (gesenius) comes from a root word that means soft indicating that His heart is tender and gentle
b. Beds of spices is the Hebrew word *bosem* which means creating desire – his emotions towards us awakens desire within us to know Him more.

H. THE BEAUTY AND POWER OF HIS WORDS

His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh.

His lips are His words which are always life giving and encouraging, always pure and without offence or condemnation. His words are Spirit and life, every word as pure as a lily (John 6:63) The affirming words of Jesus are tender and sweet but myrrh is the secret of His anointing. The myrrh on Jesus' speech brings people into the revelation of the cross. His words will always draw us into embracing the cross and die to self. His words are *sharper than any two edged sword* piercing through our excuses and going deeper than any other. Both sweetness and conviction are found on the lips of our King.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

I. THE KING'S DIVINE ACTIVITY

His arms are rods of gold, set with jewels

In the Hebrew this is his hand rings are as gold set with beryl. The Shulamite is here describing his actions- that which He sets His hands to do. This is the hand of a King adorned with precious rings. Beryl is an adornment of a precious nature; adding of beauty to the value and precious reality of His works.

all the instances of his power, the works of his hands, all the performances of his providence and grace, are all rich, and pure, and precious, as gold, as the precious onyx and the sapphire, all fitted to the purpose for which they were designed as gold rings to the finger, and all beautiful and very becoming, as rings set with beryl. His hands, which are stretched forth both to receive his people and to give to them, are thus rich and comely. (Matthew Henry)

a. **Gold** –The works of God in our lives are full of beauty, perfectly designed to accomplish His purposes with us. He perfectly understands what is needed to produce maximum beauty in us, and designs His strategies with the minimum stress required to bring about that beauty.

b. Beryl –Like with many precious stones, the craft that releases the most beauty is often done with seemingly violent encounters. When the precious gem is finished and polished, it becomes a rare jewel, more perfectly reflecting the light. God's craftsmanship in our lives is lovingly exercised to bring us to maximum glory, the most perfect reflection of Jesus.

J. THE KING'S TENDER COMPASSION

His body is polished ivory, bedecked with sapphires.

1. In Hebrew the word for body is better translated belly not body speaking of the seat of the carnal affections (Titus 1:12 ; Phil 3:19 ; Romans 16:18). The word is often used symbolically for the heart (Proverbs 18:8 ; 20:27 ; 22:18) It speaks of Jesus' longings and desires – the yearnings of His heart.

Is. 63:15 Look down from heaven, and see from Your habitation, holy and glorious. Where* are *Your zeal and Your strength, the yearning of Your heart and Your mercies toward me? Are they restrained?

2. *Polished ivory* speaks of the beauty of His sufferings. This yearning led Him to make the ultimate sacrifice so that He could bring forth our beauty. His mercy embraces us and causes us to radiate His glory.

3. *Sapphires* are frequently mentioned in scripture. They adorned Aaron's breastplate and they are one of the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem.
    a. The name Simeon was engraved on the sapphire stone which means "he who hears". On the innermost being of Jesus is engraved "he who hears" – the One who always hears what the Father is saying.
    b. The Bride (the city) is spoken of as having foundation stones of sapphire. His love polishes us until we look like sapphires. The jewels are His people redeemed and made beautiful in the process (Malachi 4:16-17). The redemption of these jewels is the chief expression of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 13:45-46). Inlaid sapphires speak of intimate identification and oneness between the Bridegroom and His Beloved (Song of Solomon 8:5-6).

K. HIS BEAUTIFUL FOUNDATIONS

His legs are alabaster columns, set on bases of gold

This imagery speaks of Jesus' perfect ability to walk out His Father's ways and strategies. His ways are always executed with strength and dignity *(alabaster columns)* and nothing can stop Him when He acts. He bases everything He does on truth and holiness *(bases of gold)*. He does not fail or draw back under pressure – the dependable ways of Jesus are like marble rock pillars established on righteousness.

L. HIS EXCELLENT COUNTENANCE

His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars

To gaze on Jesus is truly awe inspiring. Like the majestic cedars of Lebanon every feature of His appearance, every facet of His wisdom and ways is beautiful and inspiring. The light of Jesus' countenance transforms us into His likeness. The central reality of the priestly blessing in the Old Testament was the shining of God's countenance upon the people, who would then be blessed with the power of His Name and identity.

Numbers 6:25–26 The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; [26] ***The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.***

As we gaze into the face of Jesus (meditate on and consider His attributes, His interactions with people), His countenance shines on us, and we become transformed into His likeness, becoming more and more alive by the power of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

M. THE SWEETNESS OF INTIMACY

His mouth is most sweet

His mouth speaks of the intimate communication she longed for – the kisses of the mouth. The touch of God's affections upon the human heart is the sweetest experience available to human beings. This was defined at the very beginning of the book as related to the kisses of intimacy. This is a statement of her desire for intimacy with Him as the greatest possible pleasure. The touch of His affections is the most precious reality to the human soul.

Psalm 19:10 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

N. THE COMPREHENSIVE BEAUTY OF JESUS

…and he is altogether desirable. . This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

1. This is who Jesus is in reality. Only those who stand in a relationship of bridal intimacy can see Him for who He really is. We will be stunned by His beauty for all eternity. Jesus is the fulfilment of our journey; this sacred intimacy is sweetness to our soul. Every pleasure, every source of entertainment and temporary joy fade away when we gaze on and encounter our Bridegroom King.

2. We desire to see all of Jesus' different attributes. The Daughters had asked the question, "Who is your Beloved more than any other?", and so the Shulamite gives her answer here in these ten attributes. This is her summary statement:

    a. My Beloved is dazzling, He is outstanding. He is totally balanced. His leadership is like finest gold. His dedication is eternally vigorous. His knowledge is perfect with no distortion. His emotions are beautiful and varied. His word is sweet like lilies, even when He calls me out of my self-absorbed carnality. His actions are golden. His tender yearnings are like carved ivory, rare and expensive. His ways of operating His plan are stable, beautiful, and just. His countenance releases the impartation of God's character. And above all else, nothing is as sweet as communion with Him. This is my Beloved. This is why I want Him. This is why I'm lovesick and won't settle for anything less than Him. No substitute will satisfy the cry of my heart.

b. "And this is my Friend." Jesus is not only magnificent as the God-man, but loves to embrace us as His friends. How blessed is the one whose Lover and Friend is the Son of God.

O. THE MAIDENS' SEARCH FOR HIS PRESENCE

[1]Where has your beloved gone, O most beautiful among women? Where has your beloved turned, that we may seek him with you?

1. The Shulamite's journey has caused their hearts to long for relationship with the King. The Daughters desire is to seek Him in relationship with her. They have recognized the power of His beauty in sustaining the Shulamite through the difficulties of her journey. The presence of such a sustaining love is attractive and compelling to those who observe the Bride's experience.

2. They recognize the beauty of the Bride. They see her now as the most beautiful, the fairest among women because her attachment to the King has completely transformed her character. No longer is she fearful or filled with self-hatred. She has become consumed with her Beloved, and as a result everything about her has been transformed into beauty.

3. The Bride's testing resulted in the lives of others being dramatically changed. We never know who is watching us as we love and trust Jesus in our difficulties, or how our loving obedience may inspire them to find grace and blessing in Him. The Holy Spirit is raising up lovesick worshipers who know Jesus in a way that will deeply impact others and bring His blessing upon their lives.

P. THE SHULAMITE'S RESPONSE

My beloved has gone down to his garden to the beds of spices, to graze[a] in the gardens and to gather lilies.

1. The King has gone to His garden, now dwelling in the place of extravagant worship. The beds of spices speak of the costly worship that has arisen during the season of darkness and loneliness. This is a profound reality, for His garden is the Bride's heart. He has entered into partnership with her, and has now clothed Himself with her, operating in and through her as His bridal partner.

2. He is feeding His flock in partnership with His Bride. The Bride's part is to love and worship Him; the King's life and ministry is now expressed through her. We must allow the Holy Spirit to teach us that Christ operates in us as we give ourselves to Him in love. The King is gathering His beautiful ones to Himself in partnership with her. As the Bride is conformed to His image through the journey, the joy of Jesus' heart is to gather His people to Himself as He expresses His life through the Bride. This is the secret of effective ministry in partnership with Jesus. This is clearly expressed in the life of John the Baptist:

John 3:29–30 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. [30] He must increase, but I must decrease.

3. The Shulamite's growing understanding of their relationship

[3] I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine; he grazes among the lilies.

a. Her first statement reflects a shift in her heart. The King's ownership of her life now has first place in her understanding. She has given Him control, and her life is no longer centred on her or the meeting of her felt needs, but on serving His priorities.

b. She then declares that this shift releases Him to be fully hers, for she is now trusting Him to be her inheritance. Before this, she maintained control over the meeting of her needs, and therefore could never fully enjoy His provision. Now she is fully His, and therefore His resources can be fully hers.

c. She is coming to the amazing revelation that the King is at work in her to minister to His people. He is moving, not separate from her, but *in her, through her, as her*.

To be His bride is to understand that our existence on earth is for Him. We are not to spend life on our self, but being poured out for Him, for His glory, for His purpose. Her one desire is to be His inheritance. No one else has any claims on her. She is His and His alone, shared by none other.

The truth of the matter is that her story is our story, a transition from self-centred life to a life that is only His. All of us begin our journey into the heart of Jesus with the desire to please ourselves. Our own enjoyment of Jesus is the focus, not His enjoyment of us. We talk about what Jesus has done for us and what He is to us, which is the wonderful joy of knowing Him, and it is legitimate pleasure. But in time, we must mature in love, acknowledging His rights to enjoy us. We are Jesus' inheritance. He died to have us. (The Sacred Journey - Brian and Candice Simmons)