

Song of Solomon 5: 14; “The Precious Works of Christ”, Sermon # 48 in the Series -“I am my Beloved’s” delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on February 24th, 2013, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

In verses 10-16 of this Chapter, the Bride of Christ is giving her description of her beloved to the Daughters of Jerusalem; those persons who are curious to know more about Him. They want to know how her Beloved is different from another beloved; why she is charging them that if they find Him, that they would tell Him that she is love-sick. The reason why every true Christian becomes love-sick at various points, in their journey through this life, is because they long to experience more in their relationship with their Lord. Although they are thankful for all the blessings of this life, they cannot be satisfied simply with the material things of this present world.

They are only truly and really satisfied with the love of Christ and knowing that He is presently at work in their hearts. They long to experience more of the work of His grace, there in their own heart. They long to see His wonderful and powerful work in the hearts of those people who need Him, or want to know more of Him themselves. This is what is represented by the metaphorical imagery of our text; the precious works of Christ. May this examination of these things satisfy the hungry soul, and may it strengthen the weary soul.

1st of all – Let us think together of the precious works of the hands of Christ.

“His hands are rods of gold set with beryl,” it says here. In the King James translation it is rendered “His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl”. In the ESV it says, “His arms are rods of gold, set with jewels.” Rods of gold represents Christ’s power to accomplish all that God has purposed, to the praise of His glory. And the term “gold rings” sets forth the beauty and preciousness of Christ’s working in His Providence and grace. That is how, I believe, we should understand this. The rods or rings are set with beryl. Beryl is a very precious stone; a stone which was set in the breastplate of the high priest. The setting of all of the stones in the high priest’s breastplate were in 4 rows.

Exodus 28, verse 20 says, “And in the fourth row, a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper.” “They shall be set in gold settings.” In the margin it says that it was a yellow jasper or a carnelian. But John Gill says that the word in the Hebrew – “Tarshish” is sometimes used for the sea and naturalists tell us that the best beryl is that which most resembles the color of the sea.” Henry Ainsworth says that it is a golden sea color. In Daniel 10, verse 5 it says this: “I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz!” “His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.”

Daniel was beholding in a vision the glory and power of Christ; the very thing being communicated to us by our text in Song of Solomon, in a gentler manner, of course. In attempting to put all of these things together, what is being communicated to us is that our Lord Jesus Christ was full of kindness and goodness toward people in His earthly ministry while He walked the earth. With His hands He blessed men; with His hands He healed men, and with His hands He suffered on behalf of sinners.

Let’s look at these things for a few minutes and then apply them to ourselves. Turn with me over to Matthew Chapter 19, verse 13. “Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.” “But Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.’” “And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.” You can see here, the wisdom of the parents in bringing their children to Jesus so that He might lay His hands upon them. They wanted their children to be blessed by the Lord of Glory. They wanted their children to prosper in

spiritual things. They wanted their children to be given the wisdom and grace that would lead them to salvation.

All this comes through the hands of Christ. If the Lord laid His hands upon these children to bless them then, then you, dear parents, ought to bring your children to the throne of grace in prayer. You should be praying that He would lay His hands spiritually upon them while they are young. His hands are rods of gold set with beryl. He has all power in heaven and earth. He is sovereign over all people and all situations; over everything in heaven and earth. His hands are wearing rings of gold, set with beryl. He can command the blessing of life forevermore for them. He can lead them and guide them into the good pastures of grace, and by rivers of living waters. He can save their souls, and restore their sin-sick souls, and yours as well if you need it.

Children who would come to Christ and have Him save their souls, should not be forbidden by parents and others, simply because they are young. Let them not think that they have to walk an aisle, or accept an altar call. Let them know that if they would but call upon the Lord and have serious dealings with Him over all of their sins, that when they ask, He will lay His spiritual hands upon their soul. If they are old enough to understand that they need to be saved and changed by the grace of Christ, then let them come by faith to Him. There is nothing of infant baptism in this passage, but there is much of Christ's touch, the laying on of His hands.

Now turn over with me over to Mark 8: 22. "Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to him, and begged Him to touch him." "So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town." "And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything." "And he looked up and said, 'I see men like trees, walking.'" "Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up." "And he was restored and saw everyone clearly." You need to see and understand this further lesson about Christ's laying His powerful spiritual hands on you. You are blind spiritually, as you were born in Adam. But in your coming to Christ, that blindness is taken away, and you are given the gift of spiritual sight. You are now able to discern all things from that spiritual vantage point of knowing Christ, as you look to the Scriptures to guide you.

But you need to understand that there may need to be further corrections made to your spiritual sight, even following conversion, so that you do not see men as trees walking. If you are spiritually seeing things correctly, you should not see men any bigger than they really are. Many Christians are like this when they are babes spiritually. They will become more involved with great popular movements within Christianity led by men who will tickle their ears with doctrinal compromise. They will tickle their ears with truths of how the church can be built by the strategies of men.

Rather than following Christ by developing a prayer life in relation to how they can help in the local church, they look to find their spiritual satisfactions coming to them from boasting in the great personalities of Christian men who are popular at any given time. They think that ministers who have been given great public speaking gifts and have attained to great popularity on the national or world-class level are to be followed implicitly in their teaching; so much so that they come to be seen by them as "men like trees walking". Certainly they ought to be listened to if they are preaching the truth of the Bible. But the reason for all this exaggerated view of men is because they trust in the gifts and abilities of men too much.

But the surpassing greatness of the power and wisdom and strength that they have is from God. It is not them, but Christ in them, who you should boast in. You can never trust in Christ too much, but trusting in men is a different story. "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in men." (Psalm 118: 9) To come to this may take Christ laying his hands on them again, so that they can see things more clearly.

Let us see that being a Christian is not joining a popular movement. It is committing yourself to the local church. If you have placed yourself under the teaching of a minister who is

trying to be faithful to God's word, Christ through Him will be faithfully teaching you the principles of truth from the Bible. Pray and ask the Lord that you will not have an exaggerated view of what men can do. Be sure to show brotherly kindness and Christian love to all in the church. Ask Christ to spiritually lay His hands upon you, and your pastor if necessary, so that both of you would have right views of the power of God versus the power of what men try to do by their own fleshly wisdom and power. And as you receive the truth of God's word, pray that you will not become enamored so much with ministers or programs developed by men in the church as much as you will interact with Christ Himself and His word.

A mature Christian wants to help Christ and their pastor in the building of the local church. That is how the kingdom of God goes forward; when the hand of the Lord is upon you and your pastor, and His hand is with everyone in the church bringing united discernment of what is important. Acts 11: 19 – “Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.” “But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus.” “And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.” The names of these men who preached are not even named, but they preached the Lord Jesus, and the hand of the Lord was with them. This is what we want to see here in our church as well.

Now turn with me over to Luke Chapter 24, verse 34. Jesus had been crucified, just 3 days before. As Psalm 22, verse 16 says, “The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.” “They pierced My hands and My feet.” Here in this passage, the 11 disciples were gathered together in Jerusalem and 2 other disciples came to them saying in verse 34, “The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” “And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.” “Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, ‘Peace to you.’” “But they were terrified and frightened, and supposing they had seen a spirit.” “And He said to them ‘Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?’” “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself.” “Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.” “When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.”

When these disciples looked at Jesus' hands and His feet their doubts about His really having been raised from the dead vanished. To them, spiritually speaking, His hands were rods of gold set with beryl. He had been crucified for them so that they could be given not only the gift of eternal life, but also the power to become His witnesses and do the work which He had called them to do. What about you? Do you have doubts about whether the Lord Jesus can really change you to be the kind of Christian that you want to be? Then look at His hands which have been crucified for you, and let your doubts flee away. The Apostles probably thought, as Jesus left them to ascend to heaven, that they would never be able to preach like He did, or do the good works for other people that He did, or suffer for the sake of righteousness as He did, or help in the work of building Christ's Church.

But look over at verse 50. After Jesus gave them the commission to preach the gospel to all the nations, it says: “And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.” This is all that you need to become a more fervent and holy Christian; to look with faith upon the hands of Christ crucified, and to look by faith upon the hands of the risen Christ raised in blessing after His resurrection from the dead. Then you, looking for this same blessing, coming to you now from heaven, will receive it as you remember that the same hands which were crucified for you, are the same hands which are now raised in blessing over your head.

Now 2nd – I want you to think with me of the precious body of Christ in relation to His works.

“His body is carved ivory inlaid with sapphires.” The word “body” or “belly”, I am told is the same word which is translated “affections” or “heart” in certain other Scriptures. For instance in Isaiah 63, verse 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?” It is this same Hebrew word, “the yearning of the heart” that relates to the word “body” in our text. Let it be understood by all of us here this afternoon, that our Christ is full of affection and love and compassion towards all who trust in Him. The affections of His heart are carved ivory inlaid with sapphires. It is of great value to the Christian’s growth and development to know that Christ has a spiritual affection for them.

In 1st Kings 10: 18 we read that “the king (that is Solomon, who is a type of Christ in regard to His kingdom) made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold.” This throne of ivory shows us the wisdom and the kingly glory of king Solomon’s rule, and the glory of His works which were on display for all to see who visited Him. When the Queen of Sheba came from the ends of the earth to behold the glory of Solomon’s kingdom, she saw the wisdom that had been given to him in the way that the house of the Lord and his own house were built. When she saw, “the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the Lord, there was no spirit left in her,” it says in 1 Kings 10: 5.

“Then she said to the king: ‘It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom.’ “However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me.” “Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard.” This was very impressive to her. But one who is greater than Solomon is here. The greater Solomon, our Lord Jesus Christ, rules in righteousness and justice toward all men, and with great love and care over all of His people. Someday He shall return and judge the world righteously while sitting on His great white throne it says in Revelation 20, verse 11.

But I am saying to you here today that there is more to knowing Christ than seeing His wisdom and knowing that He has spiritual riches for you as a part of His Bride the Church. If you are a true believer, He also has a real affection for you. He really wants you to realize this as you walk through this fallen, sinful world each and every day. He really wants you to understand how precious a thing it is to rest satisfied with His love for you; because when you are satisfied with His love, you will be in a much better position to show love to others around you and to give support to your pastor as he preaches and teaches you.

Christ does not want you to stumble over the way that He does things in His kingdom. He does not want you to stumble in regard to the way that He goes about to do things in your life and in the life of others in the church. Philippians Chapter 2, verse 1 says, “Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind but also for the interests of others.” “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.” “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

This is how the local church flourishes and grows. This is how glory is brought to Christ in the way that we live our lives. It all flows out of your perceiving the great love and affection that Christ has for you personally, and then you learn to rest in His love. His heart and affections are carved ivory. They are inlaid with sapphires, which are stones of sea-blue, or a heavenly color. You have, perhaps, sometimes have seen things carved out of ivory. Christ has a hearty affection for you because you are a part of His spiritual body. He has heavenly affections, true love, perfect discernment of what you need and how you can be useful to Him. He loves you so very much that He will carved your life into something that will glorify God if you will walk closely in love with Him.

Each Christian life that He carves is distinctively unique. Will you not believe this, and strive to live your Christian life cultivating this relationship of love with Him, to Him, and for Him? For it says in Malachi 3: 17 – “They shall be Mine”, says the Lord of hosts, on the day that I make them My jewels.”