

I. Introduction:

- A. Last Wednesday we spent a few minutes in an exposition of this paragraph.
1. I gave our thoughts the very obvious title – *“The Virtuous Woman.”*
  2. I also said that we’d come back here this evening.
  3. You may have thought that we’d take 3 or 4 verses & lay into them more fully, but that was not my intention
  4. What I’d like to do is go back over all 22 verses with a different pair of glasses.
  5. You might be tempted to say, I’ve taken my glasses off entirely.
- B. Let’s *allegorize* these verses, making them apply to something the writer never intended – a *virtual* wife.
1. Some Old Testament prophet might have preached that this virtuous woman was the wife *of God – Israel*.
  2. And then someone today might take these words & apply them to *the Lord’s church* – the Bride of Christ.
  3. But me? I’d like to re-read these verses with the thought that you and I, as individuals, are this woman.
  4. Let’s give these thoughts the title *“The Virtuous Christian Woman”* and apply it to men as well as women.
  5. I’ll have to stretch some of these verses almost to the breaking point, but I believe that each point will be scriptural in and of themselves.

II. The virtuous Christian woman.

- A. *“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.”*
1. The Hebrew word *“virtuous”* is rooted in *“strength,”* so let’s apply this to a spiritually strong Christian person.
    - a. **But** how many truly strong saints are there in these days of laxity and compromise?
    - b. When we get to the end of this chapter tonight, how many will be able to say, *“This describes me”*?
    - c. Our proverbist implies that this person is rare – and our hearts and experiences agree.
  2. And as a rare and beautiful commodity, *“Her price is far above rubies.”*
    - a. What is the value of child of God, whether truly virtuous or just mediocre?
    - b. The Lord has said, she is worth more than the combined wealth of the entire world.
    - c. But, to God, the price of **this** woman – the value of **this** woman – **exceeds everything**.
  3. *“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*
  4. This whole paragraph could be highlighted with **I Corinthians 6:20** – *“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*
- B. *“The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.”*
1. What ties Christ to His saint?
    - a. We might talk about His eternal degree to save, ie. His will – or His deity, or His righteousness.
    - b. But somewhere in the equation is His love – His heart.
    - c. *“For God so loved the world....”* *“but God commendeth his love toward US...”*
    - d. *“God is rich in mercy and great love wherewith he loved us.”*
  2. And yes, we have no merit in ourselves, but what we have in Christ, is enough to satisfy the Lord for ever.
  3. **WE** are His spoil; He has conquered us with His love, and He has no need for anyone or anything beyond those whose names are written in His book – the Lamb’s Book of Life.
  4. But why should He love us so? Or why should He trust us?
  5. Perhaps, just perhaps, we could say that Christ’s trust in us is based on the fact that by His grace we are new creatures – *“old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.”*
- C. *“She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.”*
1. Let’s argue from the end results back to the beginning –
    - a. What if the Christian could somehow sin so horribly – what if we could do something evil enough to earn a divorce from the Lord?
    - b. By the promise of the God who cannot lie, it cannot be done – a divorce is impossible.
    - c. We may sin against our Saviour, but no saint of God will ever be characterized by wickedness.

2. Because we are covered by the blood and righteousness of our husband, He sees nothing in us but “good.”
3. We know ourselves to be far less than “good,” but it’s not our perspective which is important here.
4. What does our blessed “Husband” see? He sees us dressed in His own righteousness.
5. And from that position, we need to “do him good...all the days of our lives” – thoroughly and consistently.
6. “After all He’s done for me.... how can I do less than give him my best and live for him completely....”

*D. “She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.”*

1. The ideal Christian **looks** for opportunities to be of service to the Lord.
2. Yes, we need to be submissive to His will, willing to follow His leadership.
3. But we need to be **actively seeking** that leadership.
4. And not just in so-called “spiritual” things, like preaching, praying & counsel, but in practical things as well.
5. That “cup of cold water given in the Lord’s name” can be a part of the ministry as much as any sermon.

*E. “She is like the merchants’ ships; she bringeth her food from afar.”*

1. I know that I am turning this verse inside out – backwards – but please bear with me.
2. Monday I put a love offering from this church in a Western Union merchant ship and sent it to Russia to help a missionary pastor spread the good news of Jesus Christ.
  - a. Very sadly, there are Baptist churches which are anti-missionary – against missions.
  - b. There are Christians who care nothing about the spiritual needs of people in other lands.
3. It is not so with this virtuous Christian woman – she has spiritual trade with people on the other side of the world.

*F. “She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.”*

1. We are all living in the last days, and some of us are living in our last hours – relatively speaking.
2. It is human nature to take it easy, and judging from some of Solomon’s proverbs there is a tendency in many people to be lazy. But there is work to be done.
3. There are not enough hours when there is the strength and energy to work.
4. If it means rising while it is yet night in order to properly serve the Lord, then we need to set our alarm clocks.
5. For the pastor, there is the feeding of the sheep – the household – & there is the feeding of the goats, too.

*G. “She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.”*

1. Sometimes it is the Lord who says, “consider that field over there.”
2. Sometimes our husband must point and say, “Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, & look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest
3. Sometimes there isn’t much more we can do but scatter a few seeds, or transplant a small seedling.
4. But what’s done in faith & in the family name will be recognized by our heavenly Husband, & it will be blessed.

*H. “She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.”*

1. How essential it is that we take care of ourselves in order to be of service to our Saviour.
2. We need to spend time in His Word every day, strengthening our limbs, and more importantly, our hearts.
3. The virtuous Christian woman knows that her true virtue and strength come from her Husband.
4. And she wants to use all that borrowed strength to glorify His name.

*I. “She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.”*

1. The other day we observed the Lord’s Supper. Part of the communion service is self-examination.
2. In that examination, every true saint should be able to see some good fruit amidst the bad.
3. Remember, “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.”
4. This virtuous Christian woman will see that her merchandise is good.
5. And when necessary she will burn the mid-night candle to produce it.

*J. "She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff."*

1. She knows that it is the little things which are woven into more important things.
2. Using her drop spindle, she makes yarn, which she might make into a sweater for another family member.
3. Or she might use that yarn in a loom for something even larger and more important.
4. She's not so focused on the big things that she forgets the important little things.

*K. "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy."*

1. We can apply – we should apply – this verse in the obvious and literal way.
  - a. We are surrounded by people who are poor and needy – caused by all kinds of things.
  - b. And we are so filled with wealth.
  - c. I am convinced that our Husband rejoices to see us being generous and helpful.
2. But remember, we are talking here about the virtuous **Christian** woman.
3. She knows there is no one more needy – there is no one more poor – than the person who is without Christ.
4. When she sees people in need whom she can help, she stretches out her open hand with the gospel in it.

*L. "She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet."*

1. Why is all her household clothed with scarlet? Because she has seen to it that they are covered.
2. She isn't afraid of the cold and snow for her family, because she *"riseth while it is yet night,"* and she has been in prayer for them.
3. Is she afraid of fire and brimstone?
4. She might be, but she keeps praying that all in her household are clothed with the scarlet of her Saviour.
5. She keeps praying, and praying, and praying.

*M. "She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple."*

1. There are groups of professing Christians who like to appear as drab and dowdy as possible.
  - a. For whatever reason, they wouldn't wear silk or purple to save their lives.
  - b. I'm not sure that is scriptural.
2. Without dressing like a self-pleasing worldling, we should be attired in such a way to please our Husband.
3. We should not only **be** joyful, but we should **look** joyful, and blessed, and rich in Christ Jesus.
4. Like a silk, purple shirt, a genuine smile and a twinkling eye should highlight our countenance.

*N. "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land."*

1. Our Husband is the King of kings and Lord of lords; yes, He is known in the places of honor.
2. In the Hebrew culture, the city gate was the county court house.
  - a. It was there that legal transactions were witnessed and approved.
  - b. It was there that crimes were adjudicated and villains were sentenced.
3. Our Husband, Christ Jesus, sitteth among, and above, the most elite in the land.
4. And we make sure that we do nothing to tarnish His good name.

*O. "She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant."*

1. Again there is a reference to her industry and resourcefulness in helping to provide for her family.
2. She's not doing anything to which she hasn't been called; but she's doing whatever she can for the glory of her Husband the benefit of their family.

*P. "Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come."*

1. For her own clothing, this woman is girded foremostly in honesty, modesty and godliness.
2. And, oh, how she shall rejoice in time to come.
3. Throughout eternity she shall be at the front of the crowd praising her Saviour/Husband.
4. He has been preparing a mansion home for her, and she shall live like the Queen of Sheba, but not in self-pride. Her rejoicing shall be in Him.

Q. *“She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.”*

1. Today, she is still awaiting her Husband’s voice and invitation to join Him.
2. Today, she is still serving Him and serving the rest of her family.
3. She has filled her heart with the wisdom of her Spouse, and it flows out of her mouth on a tongue controlled by the Holy Spirit.
4. She not only knows the truth – the wisdom of God – but she shares it with kindness and grace.

R. *“She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.”*

1. Again, this woman thinks more of others than she does of herself.
2. She knows that she has little more than three score and ten years in this world, she can’t afford to eat the bread of her past service – there is still more work to be done, until she is called home.

S. *“Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.”*

1. Is there a better statement to put on a woman’s tombstone than this?
2. Paul said of the Thessalonians that they were his glory and joy.
  - a. *“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?”*
  - b. I have no doubt but that many of those Thessalonians said essentially the same thing about Paul
  - c. He called them *“blessed.”*
3. But more importantly, *“her husband also, and HE praiseth her.”*
4. I wonder how many saints will reach heaven by the skin of their teeth – saved, yet so as by fire.
5. How many of us will our divine Husband actually and publically praise?

T. In that regard *“many daughters have done virtuously, but THOU excellest them all.”*

1. **This** virtuous Christian woman **will have** that divine praise.
2. Of course, not one for whom Christ died will be lost or forsaken, but not all will be praised for having spent their lives as they should have for the glory of their Husband.
3. All God’s elect will be saved, but not all will have spent their lives as usefully as they should.
4. Those that truly virtuous and useful have shall receive the greater reward.

U. *“Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.”*

1. The praise which the world heaps upon us might sound pleasant when we first hear it.
2. But remember that it is deceitful and empty.
3. That sports figure or movie producer may win earthly MVP awards and Hollywood Oscars, but they will eventually be forgotten or even end up in prison.
4. On the other hand, those who worship the Lord, and who submit to Him as their Husband will have praise for eternity.

V. *“Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.”*

1. **II Corinthians 5:10** is a general statement and absolutely true – *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”*
2. But the person of this chapter in **Proverbs** is above the Christian norm – she is a truly virtuous Christian woman.
3. And the things which she has done can be generally described as *“good”* – *“She perceiveth that her merchandise is good.”*
4. In the gates of the eternal city, she shall be praised for her service of her Divine Husband.