

Title: **HOW DO I LOOK?**

Text: Song of Solomon 4:1-15

Subject: *Perfection in Christ*

Date: Sunday Evening — March 27, 2011

Tape # AA-11

Reading: *Frank Hall and Merle Hart*

Introduction:

Suppose you and your wife have been invited to a very exclusive affair, a black tie diner with some world renowned dignitary. Your wife spends days shopping to find just the right dress, shoes, and purse. She spent the morning in the beauty shop. And she has just finished her final touches of make-up. You snap her necklace and help her with her bracelets, etc. Just before you step out the door, standing in front of that full length mirror in the hallway, she touches her hair one more time and smiles, and says, “Well, how do I look?”

That is the title of my message tonight. — **HOW DO I LOOK?** Let’s read the 4th chapter of the Song of Solomon together and see how we look.

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(Song of Songs 4:1-15) “Behold, thou *art* fair, my love; behold, thou *art* fair; thou *hast* doves’ eyes within thy locks: thy hair *is* as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead. (2) Thy teeth *are* like a flock *of sheep that are even* shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none *is* barren among them. (3) Thy lips *are* like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech *is* comely: thy temples *are* like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks. (4) Thy neck *is* like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. (5) Thy two breasts *are* like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies. (6) Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. (7) Thou *art* all fair, my love; *there is* no spot in thee. (8) Come with me from Lebanon, *my* Spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards. (9) Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, *my* Spouse; thou

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hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. (10) How fair is thy love, my Sister, *my Spouse!* how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! (11) Thy lips, O *my Spouse,* drop *as* the honeycomb: honey and milk *are* under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments *is* like the smell of Lebanon. (12) A garden enclosed *is* my Sister, *my Spouse;* a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. (13) Thy plants *are* an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, (14) Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: (15) A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.”

UNDERSTOOD SPIRITUALLY

The Song of Solomon is to be interpreted in a strictly spiritual sense. Any attempt to interpret the book literally is a gross mistake, and must lead to very great evil. This is a love song, not between a man

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and a woman, but between Christ and His Bride, the Church. It speaks of the intimate relationship and loving communion which exists between the Lord Jesus Christ and His believing people. This Song expresses the affection of the believing heart for Christ and the affection of Christ's heart for His chosen, redeemed people.

One proof of this spiritual interpretation is found in verse 9 of our text.

Song of Songs 4:9 “Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, *my* Spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.”

Here the Church is spoken of as both the Lord's Sister and His Spouse. It would be atrocious to think that Solomon had taken his sister to be his bride! But Christ's Church is to Him both a sister, and a spouse, and a mother (Matthew 12:50). Here the Church is called His Sister, because...

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- He took upon Himself our nature in the incarnation, and He makes us partakers of His nature in regeneration.
- He clothed Himself with a body (Hebrews 2:14), and He clothes the believer with His Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17).
- Christ owns His Church and loves us as His Sister, because we are the children of God His Father.
- Both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one (Hebrews 2:11).

There is also a marriage-covenant between the Lord Jesus Christ and every believing soul. All true believers are members of the Church which is His Bride.

- We are the Bride; He is the Bridegroom.
- We are espoused to Christ; and He is espoused to us. We are wed to Him; and He is wed to us.
- We are no more two, but one.
- We are bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh.
- We are members of Christ Himself.

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Nothing more beautifully describes our relationship with Christ and our love for Him than the love of bride for her husband. And nothing more beautifully describes our Savior's love for us than the love of a true husband to his bride.

In chapter 3, the Church, the Bride, spoke lovingly and admirably of Christ, expressing the love and esteem of every believing heart for the Lord Jesus Christ. **Here, in chapter 4:1-15**, the Lord Jesus Christ speaks lovingly and admirably of His Church, expressing His love and esteem for every true believer.

I do not pretend to understand every detail of the poetic imagery that is used in this chapter. Therefore, I will not try to thoroughly expound each verse. Perhaps when my own heart is more thoroughly acquainted with the experience of such intimate communion with Christ, I will be able to do so. There are heights and depths in these verses far beyond the scope of my experience and understanding. I am seeking them, but I have not yet attained them. I am

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pressing toward the mark, but I have not yet attained the prize of such blessed knowledge.

However, I do believe that the Lord has given me some understanding as to what the basic principle lessons of our text are. So we will simply walk along the shore of this vast ocean, delighting ourselves in that which we know, but not venturing into the unknown depths.

HOW DO I LOOK? — Here we are given **Christ's own estimate of His Church.** Here our dear Savior tells us exactly how He sees us. A loving wife does not find her joy and comfort in what her friends and neighbors may think of her. And she does not find joy and comfort in what she thinks of herself. If she truly loves and reverences her husband, she will always think herself to be an unworthy wife. But she finds all of her joy and all of her comfort, as a wife in her husband's high opinion of her. If her husband loves her and honors her above all women, in his thoughts, in his speech, and in his conduct, she will be happy. She desires no more than this.

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Even so, the true believer finds no joy and comfort in the opinions of others about him, or in his own opinions about himself. But if he can be persuaded that the Lord Jesus Christ holds him in the highest esteem of love and honor, there he finds all the comfort and joy his heart can crave.

Proposition: In our text, the Lord Jesus declares to every believer that He holds us in the highest possible esteem of perfect love.

If the Holy Spirit will graciously apply His Word to our hearts, I am sure that you who believe will find in these verses much to give your heart joy and comfort in the love of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, holds you in such great esteem and honor that His very heart is ravished by you! He says (v. 9), — **“Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck!”** What an amazing statement!

Divisions: I want you to see three things in this chapter. I believe that these are the three principle

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lessons to be learned from these verses. Oh, may God the Holy Spirit graciously and effectually apply them to your heart and mine as only He can! If He will be pleased to speak His Word through these lips of clay to your heart, you will leave here tonight worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ, rejoicing in him.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ declares that His Church is perfect in beauty (vv. 1-7).
2. Our Lord Jesus Christ calls for us to walk with Him in constant fellowship and communion (v. 8).
3. The very heart of Christ is ravished with love for His people (vv. 9-15).

PERFECT IN BEAUTY

Here is the first thing to be learned from our text. It is a lesson which we are all very reluctant to learn; but once learned, it is most comforting to our hearts. —

The Lord Jesus Christ declares that His Church is perfect in beauty (vv. 1-7).

(Song of Songs 4:1-7) “Behold, thou *art* fair, my love; behold, thou *art* fair; thou *hast* doves’ eyes

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within thy locks: thy hair *is* as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead. (2) Thy teeth *are* like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none *is* barren among them. (3) Thy lips *are* like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech *is* comely: thy temples *are* like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks. (4) Thy neck *is* like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. (5) Thy two breasts *are* like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies. (6) Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. (7) Thou *art* all fair, my love; *there is* no spot in thee.”

There is no beauty in us by nature. There is nothing about us to commend us to the love of God. We are all black, unclean, and corrupt by nature. Both at heart and in outward appearance, we are evil.

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In our own esteem, there is nothing beautiful in us. The more we know Christ, the more we know ourselves. And the more we know ourselves, the more hideous we appear in our own eyes. Who are we that the Lord of Glory should look upon us with favor?

But in the eyes of Christ we are perfect in beauty.
— Three times He declares — *“Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair...Thou art all fair, my love: there is no spot in thee!”* In Him and in His eyes, we are complete, we are beautiful, and we are perfect. Christ has made us perfect and beautiful in every detail (Ephesians 5:25-27).

(Ephesians 5:25-27) “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; (26) That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, (27) That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

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- He has thoroughly removed every spot of sin from us.
- He has implanted a new nature within us (1 John 3:5-9).

(1 John 3:5-9) “And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. (6) Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. (7) Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. (8) He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (9) Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

- He will present us in perfection to Himself (Colossians 1:21-22; Jude 24-25).

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(Colossians 1:21-22) “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled (22) In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight:”

(Jude 1:24-25) “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present [you] faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, [be] glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

SEVENFOLD BEAUTY

The Lord describes His Church as having a sevenfold beauty. In His eyes, everything about her is perfect!

“Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou *art* fair;

(1.) thou hast doves’ eyes within thy locks:

(2.) thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead.

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(3.) (2) **Thy teeth** are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.

(4.) (3) **Thy lips** are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely:

(5.) **thy temples** are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.

(6.) (4) **Thy neck** is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.

(7.) (5) **Thy two breasts** are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies. (6) Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense. (7) **Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.**”

Our blessed Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ is so pleased with the beauty of His Church that He has chosen her to be His Rest forever (v. 6).

(Song of Songs 4:6) “Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the

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mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.”

(Zephaniah 3:17) “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee *is* mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; **He will rest in His love**, He will joy over thee with singing.”

CALL FOR COMMUNION

Second, **our dear Savior calls for us to walk with Him in fellowship and sweet communion** (v. 8).

(Song of Songs 4:8) “Come with me from Lebanon, *my* Spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards.”

Here the Savior issues a gracious call to His own to come along with Him as a faithful Bride, to come away from our own people and our father’s house, and to cleave only to Him.

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This is a call we must obey. — “*Come with Me.*” — All who have come to Christ by faith must come with Christ in holy communion. Being joined to Him, we must walk with Him. — “This is Christ’s call to His Spouse to come off from the world, all its products, all its pleasures, to sit loose all the delights of sense. All those must do so that would come to Christ. They must take their affections off from present things.” (Matthew Henry)

Throughout this blessed love song, we see a constant fluctuation in the Bride, but not in the Bridegroom. The Bride varies greatly. Sometimes her heart burns with love for Him. Then it is as cold as ice. Sometimes she delights to have Him lie between her breasts. Then she bolts the door of her heart against him. But His love for her never changes! Though we harden our hearts against Him, He constantly calls, “**Come with me from Lebanon, my Spouse, with me from Lebanon!**” Is that not the way things are with you? Does your heart not ache and pine for a closer walk with Christ? Does not your heart cry out with Cowper...

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“Oh for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A Light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus in His Word?

What peaceful hours I then enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still!
But now I find an aching void
The world can never fill.

Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet Messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn
And drove Thee from my breast.

The Song of Solomon is an inspired record of the constant languishings and revivings we experience in this world, the languishings of our hearts because of

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sin and the sweet revivings of our souls by our Savior's unfailing grace.

Let us come with Christ away from all the pleasant mountains of this world. My friends, we who belong to Christ must look beyond this world. We must live above the perishing things of time. We must set our hearts upon Christ (2 Corinthians 4:18; Colossians 3:1-3).

(2 Corinthians 4:18) “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.”

(Colossians 3:1-3) “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (2) Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. (3) For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

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We who belong to the Son of God live above the dangers of this world, let us also live above the cares of this world.

But this eighth verse is much more than a call for us to obey... — This is also a promise we should enjoy.

- Christ's Church shall be brought home with Him to heaven.
- We shall be delivered in due time from all the dangers and difficulties of this world.
- Soon, the lions of hell and the leopards of darkness will torment us no more!

(Romans 16:20) “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.....Amen.”

CHRIST RAVISHED

Third, I want you to see that — the very heart of our Lord Jesus Christ is ravished with love for His people (vv. 9-15).

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(Song of Songs 4:9-15)“Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, *my Spouse*; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. (10) How fair is thy love, my Sister, *my Spouse*! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! (11) Thy lips, O *my Spouse*, drop *as* the honeycomb: honey and milk *are* under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments *is* like the smell of Lebanon. (12) A garden enclosed *is* my Sister, *my Spouse*; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. (13) Thy plants *are* an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, (14) Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: (15) A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.”

The Lord Jesus Christ has made us so perfectly beautiful in His sight that He is ravished with love for us! The love of Christ for us is the real affection of His heart. The God-man loves us! The Son of God so loves us that He delights in us.

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The Lord Jesus Christ is ravished with our love for Him (1 John 4:19). The love we have for Him is a love He has created and given us. Yet, it is truly ours. “We love Him because He first loved us!” But we do love Him! We did not, would not, and could not love Him by nature. But now He has put such a love in our hearts for Himself that He is ravished by it.

- He caused us to love Him.
- Our love for Him was preceded by His love for us.
- Our love for Him, though it is not yet perfect, is sincere.

When our Savior says, “*Thou hast ravished My heart,*” He is using strong, passionate language. He is saying, “You have taken My heart captive and make it beat feverishly.” Our dear Savior here speaks as a man utterly overcome by the beauty of a woman, a man completely smitten by the beauty of his wife. — Now, watch this...

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The Lord Jesus, our all-glorious Christ is ravished by His own grace which He has put upon us. — “*The smell of thine ointments*” (Galatians 5:22-23; Ezekiel 16:9-14).

(Galatians 5:22-23) “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

(Ezekiel 16:9-14) “Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. (10) I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers’ skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. (11) I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. (12) And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. (13) Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment *was of* fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast

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exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. (14) And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it *was* perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.”

Our blessed Savior is ravished by our speech, because it is all about him. — “*Thy lips.*” The most delightful and most constant theme of a loving Bride is her Husband. And the believer’s most joyful speech is about Christ. Those who know Christ love to speak of Him.

- Who He is.
- What He has done.
- Why He has done it.
- Where He is now.
- What He is doing.
- When He shall return.

Looking into our hearts, the Lord Jesus Christ is ravished by our thoughts of Him. — “*Honey and milk are under thy tongue.*” He hears our thoughts. He knows those precious thoughts we have of Him which words can never express.

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Knowing the sincerity of our hearts, the Lord Jesus Christ is ravished by our works performed for Him. — *“The smell of thy garments.”* Without question, these garments are the garments of salvation which He has wrought and bought for us, which He brought to us, and put upon us.

- Garments of Salvation — Imputed Righteousness and Imparted Righteousness.
- Garments of Grace and Holiness.

A GARDEN ENCLOSED

The Church of Christ is a garden flourishing with good works, works done for Him, works He has created in us (vv. 12-15). She is a garden planted by His grace and watered by His Spirit, so thoroughly and effectually watered that she has become herself a fragrant, fruitful fountain of gardens and living waters, with streams flowing out of her into all the world to refresh the earth. See if you don't get that out of verses 12-15.

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(Song of Songs 4:12-15) “A garden enclosed *is* my Sister, *my* Spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. (13) Thy plants *are* an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, (14) Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: (15) A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.”

Our works, the works of God’s Church, those works performed for Christ are never counted by us as being worthy of anything. We know that if we did all things perfectly, we would only have done what we should have done. Believers are constantly made to repent even of our best, noblest, most righteous works, because “*all our righteousnesses are filthy rags*” before the holy Lord God. **But He whom we love and serve, looks upon our puny works as HIS pleasant fruits. They are rich, sweet fragrances, the smell of which ravishes His heart!**

- They are works of faith.
- They are works of love.

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- They are works produced by Him, performed for Him, and honored by Him.

That which is done by faith in Christ, arising from a heart of love for Christ, will be honored and accepted by Christ.

Illustration: *The Preacher and The Businessman*

Amen.