

**Song of Solomon 6: 10; “She Who Looks Forth”, Sermon # 54 in the series – “I am My Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

It will be good for us to begin by discovering who is speaking here in verse 10. In verse 4 Christ begins to speak to His Bride, and He declares His love for her by telling her of her beauty. “Oh my love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners.” He then goes on to describe mystically and metaphorically those who make up His Church. “There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins without number.” “My dove, my perfect one, is the only one, the only one of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her.”

We have learned from our previous study that Christ’s Church is one Church; but she is made up of many members, and not all members are on the same level of maturity. The reader then is continuing to view the things that are said in verse 9 through Christ’s holy eyes. We are told in verse 9b: “The daughters saw her (that is the Church) and called her blessed, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.” Then suddenly this question is asked: “Who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as an army with banners?”

We should now understand that Christ is observing the daughters of Jerusalem looking with wonder at the Church and asking this all important question, “Who is she who looks forth?” For Christ knows that unless people believe in Him, unless by faith they are saved and become a part of His Universal Church, they will perish in their sins. He sees that the queens and concubines seem to understand, for they praise the Church, and yet they wonder too, even so. This wondering is taking place because sometimes even those who love Christ the most do not understand quite as well as they should, the importance of God’s plans and purposes for the Church.

The daughters, it says, saw her beauty and greatness and glory; but they do not exactly understand quite yet, what they are looking at. They cannot really take it in. And so, it is because they want to understand the truly spiritual things related to Christ’s Bride, that both believers and unbelievers who are close to the kingdom ask this question. We all need to understand the greatness of the plans and the working of God concerning the building and progress of Christ’s Church.

It is this that I want to speak to you about this afternoon; the wonder that Christ’s Church is, to all who want to know. This wonder of the daughters, the queens, and the concubines is expressed in 4 similitudes or spiritual likenesses. She is described 1<sup>st</sup> of all as – Looking forth as the morning. 2<sup>ndly</sup>, she is described as fair as the moon. 3<sup>rd</sup> – Clear as the sun And 4<sup>th</sup> – Awesome as an army with banners. I have already spoken to you on the 4<sup>th</sup> description when I preached to you on Song of Solomon 6: 4, and so I will not speak on it here. But in the brief time that we have together, let us see if we can understand these first 3 similitudes of what the Church of Jesus Christ is like.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – The Church is to be wondered over, because she is described as looking forth as the morning.**

“Who is she who looks forth as the morning?” It needs to be better understood by all Christians that they are a people who look forth. To look forth in the context here is to look forth expectantly in faith to see what God has promised that He will do for His Church throughout the history of her spiritual betrothal and marriage to her Lord Jesus Christ, her heavenly Bridegroom. It is the looking forth of both Old Testament and New Testament saints. This holy expectation on the part of Christ’s Bride is described here as “looking forth as the morning.” It is not a looking forth as if all things continued as they were from the beginning of time. As it says in 2 Peter 3: 4, that is the looking forth of mockers; those who believe that God will never will accomplish His purposes; that His great purposes are somehow thwarted by the will of man.

But rather, this looking forth is a looking forth, believingly, to the fulfillment of all the promises of God; the fulfillment of all that He is intending to do according to what He has promised in His word the Bible. Unbelievers are not a people who are looking forth as the morning. But Christians are. Even Jeremiah in his lamentations over the desolation of the city of Jerusalem says this in

Lamentations 3: 23 – “The Lord’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail.” “They are new every morning, great is Your faithfulness.” The Lord’s people are dear to Him. And from the beginning of time, they have been a people who have looked forth to Him in faith. They have looked forth from their own humble and helpless position of dependence upon God, because of their own sinfulness, to see and to know what He will do for them in grace. Their motto is – “God has done great things for us, and we are glad.” (Psalm 126, verse 3)

What did Adam, in the beginning of the world, expect that God would do for him after he had sinned and plunged our whole race into sin and misery by eating of the fruit which he had been told that he should not eat from? He knew that he could only expect death and the judgment of eternal punishment; of his knowing the misery of being in hell forever, because of the folly of his disobedience. And yet, we find as the Lord God came walking in the cool of the day, that He was still seeking the highest, most lasting good of His disobedient creature man. God’s justice did have to be satisfied, and mankind would have to experience physical death because of their sin.

But the merciful and loving God caused them to understand that He had a greater plan than they could possibly conceive; to redeem them, to buy them back from their sin, to Himself. He would give them a sure hope through the promise of Christ. He would give them a hope to expect that they would receive grace and favor from Him, if they would believe in His promise. This eternal comfort and good hope is what God has promised from the beginning of the world. In Genesis 3: 15 He said: “And I will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

Here we find Adam and Eve, the first two persons of our race, being given a promise so that they would look forth as the morning. God had a greater plan. At the dawn of the world, man failed to obey God’s good commandment which He gave to them. And all the expectation which they had, before the promise was given, was of God’s judging them. Their expectation was based upon their fears. But with the Promise of Christ came the grace of faith to believe in that promise, and so the first pair were able to look forth as the morning upon the plan and purpose of God in redemption, with confidence that all that God promised, He was able to perform. Even though they had failed, God through the promised Seed would not fail.

Redemption has a history, and it did not begin when Jesus died on the cross. It began when God promised that His dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, would die on the cross. It was given at that very time when sin first made its entrance into the world, and when the Devil thought that he had overthrown God’s whole purpose in the creation of man. But believing mankind would have the victory over sin and death through the Lord Jesus Christ. Your salvation is based upon a promise dear Christian; not upon your own free will or your own strength, but upon the perfect work of Christ on your behalf. The Church of Jesus Christ is composed of those who look forth as the morning.

And what is the morning like? Well turn over with me to 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 23, verse 1. “Now these are the last words of David.” “Thus says David the son of Jesse; thus says the man raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel: The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue.” “The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me: ‘He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.’” “And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, like the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain.” “Although my house is not so with God, yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure.” “For this is all my salvation and all my desire; will He not make it increase?”

The purpose of this prophecy was not simply to tell us about David and His rule over men. It is to tell us about Jesus Christ and His most righteous and perfect rule over men. Its purpose is to encourage all people who believe in Jesus Christ to have the expectation that God will be everlastingly faithful to His covenant. David speaks here of himself, that God was the One who had raised him up to the throne over Israel. And it was God who had also raised him up to be a prophet. And he mentions also that it was by the spirit of prophecy that he spoke. That is, it was by the Rock of Israel,

the Lord Jesus Christ, that David would declare what a righteous rule over men looks like. It would be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, like the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain. In other words it would be a perfect time; it would be a time in which the way that people should live would be made clear and beautiful to them through the king's ruling over men, according to the eternally valuable principles of truth and righteousness.

Everything would be clear and shining in terms of truth, and righteousness and peace. The man who ruled over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. David had this fear of God before his eyes, and was like this in his rule over Israel to a certain extent. But he confesses that there had been trouble brought to his house because of his own sin with Bathsheba. His house was at times in great turmoil and trouble because of the consequences of his sins. And it affected the way that his sons Absalom, Amnon, and Adonijah acted toward him and others. They were selfish and cruel and rebellious men. And yet, even though his rule was not perfect, he also confesses that God had made an everlasting covenant with him, one that it was in all things ordered and secure.

This was the covenant of the promised Seed, the Messiah, the greater David, who was the King of Israel's Savior and Lord. And as a part of this wonderful covenant David makes it clear that all of his salvation rested upon the promises of God in that everlasting covenant. All of his salvation, and all of his desire to glorify God, and become holy and useful to Him, would God not make it increase? Would He not cause it to grow? This is the wonder of Christ's Church, that she has such a Savior and Lord, that she is able to look forth as the morning from the dawn of the world, all during the time waiting in the time of the Old Testament, until Christ came.

And even now in New Testament times it is the same. Christ has come, and the New Covenant has been made through our Lord Jesus Christ, on the basis of His blood and righteousness. And He is risen, and seated at the right hand of the Father. And what great expectation we should all have; that God through Christ will do great things in the building of the Church all through this age until Christ comes again.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> – The Church is to be wondered over because she is fair as the moon.**

Again, we need to remember that the Church of Jesus Christ is fair, both Old Testament and New because of the grace of her dear Savior. The heavenly Bridegroom Himself calls his Bride fair in Chapter 1, verse 15. "Behold, you are fair, my love!" "Behold, you are fair!" "You have dove's eyes." And He calls her "the fairest among women" in Chapter 1, verse 8. To be "fair as the moon" means that the Church reflects the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, even as this earth's moon is reflective of the sun's glory. The moon shines with the beauty and glory of a borrowed light. Even so, believers in both Old Testament and New Testament times shine and reflect the beauty and glory of Jesus Christ who is the Sun of Righteousness who rises with healing in His wings.

In Old Testament times, the Church was walking in the darkness of a heathen world; many nations around her, and in the land of Canaan, worshiped false gods. The Old Testament Church was given the great light of the written Scriptures which were the oracles of God. They were given the sacrificial system with its priests and Levites performing the prescribed sacrifices and rituals necessary for the ceremonial cleansing of the worshipers. They were given the written Scriptures of the Pentateuch and narrative history of Israel, and the Psalms of David and the wisdom literature of Solomon.

All of these portions of Scripture pointed to Christ who would eventually come, and the New Testament Church which would eventually be raised up by His labors. For it is very true that they could not be complete without us in the New Testament times; the believers which make up Christ's one true Bride. Turn with me over to the book of Hebrews Chapter 11, verse 39. After speaking of some of the most obvious men and women of faith in the Old Testament times, the writer to the Hebrews says this of them. "And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us." Notice how we in New Testament times are linked together with those heroes

and heroines of the Old Testament times, in that we have one Savior, and one Lord. And they will not be made perfect apart from us. They did not receive the promise of being able to see Christ, but they did see Him by faith and rejoiced to see that He was coming.

But they did not see the actual days of Christ's entrance into the world and His ministry in the land of Galilee. When Christ came, to those who sat in darkness, "a light shone upon them". Those before Christ's first coming had the promise of Christ, they had the working of God's Spirit in their hearts unto salvation. They were justified by faith alone even as we are, but they could not be made a perfect and complete Church without us. There must be a completed Bride who has made herself ready for her Savior. (Revelation 19: 7) That completed Bride is not made ready for the consummation of the wedding until Christ returns the second time.

In Christ's first coming He accomplished redemption. But after that God the Spirit came and worked in a greater way in the building of the Church, from the Day of Pentecost on, the Church progressively has moved to prepare herself as a Bride, for His coming, and the consummation of her spiritual marriage to her husband Christ. The New Testament Church is built upon the Old. The tabernacle of David which had fallen down, had to be rebuilt; and it was, but upon a much more spiritually substantial foundation of the New Covenant. In the Old Testament the Church was fair as the moon, but in the New she would be clear as the sun. This brings us to our next point.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> – The wonder of the Church of Jesus Christ is that she is clear as the sun.**

Turn with me over to Revelation Chapter 12, verse 1. "Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars." "Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth." The woman in this description is the New Testament Church. She is clothed with Christ, the Sun of righteousness. From the time of Christ's resurrection until now, she has been trying to bring forth Christ to all the nations. Let us understand that there were and there are stages in the preparation for Christ, in both His first coming and His Second Coming; that in the Old Testament times everything pointed forward to the promised Christ in dark shadows and types.

The moon of His reflective glory was seen in Old Testament Israel, in her ceremonial and sacrificial laws. Even before that, Christ was seen in Antediluvian times in Noah's building of the ark. Christ was seen in Israel's drinking from the rock that Moses struck. He was seen in the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness. And He was the ultimate fulfillment of the typical personages of Melchizedek, David and Solomon. He was the King of righteousness and Peace. He was the man after God's own heart. He was wisdom, truth, and grace personified. The wonder of the Old Testament Church was that she did reflect Christ's glory in this most definite way. Even though all the other nations of the world sat in darkness, yet the moon of the Old Testament dispensation was up, and it was fair.

Then Christ came and fulfilled the law. Then Christ came and fulfilled all righteousness. He broke down the barrier between Jew and Gentile and established one new Man in the laying of the foundation of the New Testament Church. The Lord Jesus rose from the dead. He appeared to His brethren and then ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high. Now the Apostles were given power to lay the foundations upon which every man would build upon for all eternity. They knew that the law was fulfilled and the moon was now under the Church's feet. It became clear as the sun to them what the truth was.

All things were to be summed up in Christ Jesus. He was the Heavenly Bridegroom of His Church and of each and every believer's soul. This they would preach beginning at Jerusalem, and having the great commission, they would begin to preach it to all the nations. Now generations later, we who believe, continue to preach Christ. We tell people the importance of believing in Him, and entering His Universal Church. We will have more to say about this in the next sermon. Suffice it to say, we who believe are a part of the body of those who are "looking forth as the morning", to our God, to see the great things which He will do in the future history of Christ's Church.