

A Look at our Worship of God

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Tonight I want to draw to a conclusion a series of talks on worship which I have been trying to give. And you know the text has been one from the old and one from the new. So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty. For he is thy Lord, worship thou him. Then, Peter's words in the tenth chapter of Acts. He is Lord of all. Tonight, I want to read from the Song of Solomon, Solomon's song, chapter five, verse eight and following. I charge you O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved that you tell him I am sick of love. That is, I'm lovesick. And they asked her, what is thy beloved more than another beloved O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved that thou does so charge us? She replies, my beloved is white and ruddy, chiefest among 10,000. His head is as the most fine gold. His locks are bushy and black as a raven. His eyes are the eyes of doves by the rivers of water washed with milk and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices and sweet flowers, his lips like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. His legs are as pillars of marble set with sockets of fine gold. His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is all together love. This is my beloved. And this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

Now, the Song of Solomon, sometimes called canticles, another word for song, is a song of love. It is the song of the shepherd and his fair young bride to be, and a rich and worldly rival is seeking to draw her away from her shepherd lover. And then after much dialogue in unutterably beautiful poetry, it is summed up in 8:7. It says many waters cannot quench love. Neither can the floods drown him. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contempt. That is the sum of it. The strong melody of love that runs through this is heard sounding all through to the climax.

Now, our Lord Jesus Christ is the Shepherd. This has been believed by the church from the beginning, and the redeemed church is the fair bride. And in an hour of distress, she tells the daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, tell him that I am sick of yearning for him. And of course, they asked her the question, why, why do you come to us like this? We we have boyfriends too. We know lots of fine young men. What is it about your beloved more than any other beloved, that you'd send us out over the country hunting him up to tell him the bride is sick of love. Then she answered, my beloved is white and ruddy. I've read it. And this is my beloved and he is all together lovely. This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

And to that question, what is thy beloved more than another? David also answers in the 45th Psalm. He says he's fairer than the children of men. Grace is poured forth from his lips. And he

rides forth in might and glory and majesty and prosperity and meekness and righteousness. And his throne is forever and ever. He goes on to describe him in what he calls a good matter touching the king. His pen is the pen or a ready writer; his tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Then Peter rises higher than all of them put together, this apostle, and simply says in one great broad sweep, He is Lord of all. Now, this is our beloved. This is the one that we have been born to worship. This is the one that God made us to worship. And let's talk a little bit about what He is the Lord of. I have already over the nights preceding this have talked about His being Lord of Life and Lord of Being and so on.

And now, I speak of His being Lord of wisdom, briefly. He is Lord of wisdom and in Him is hidden all wisdom, and all knowledge, and it's hidden away. And all the deep, eternal purposes are His. Because of His perfect wisdom, He is enabled to play the checkers across the board of the universe, and across the board of time and eternity, making everything work out right. I don't mind saying to you dear people that if all I knew of Christianity was what I'm hearing these days mostly, I don't think I'd be too interested. I don't think I'd be much interested in the Christ that we were always trying to get something out of. Always something and if you don't have it and he had it, you go to Him to get it. Well, now that is a part of the Bible of course. But it's rather, the lower side of it. The higher side of it is, who He is and who we're called to worship. What is thy beloved? Not a word was said there about what He had for, but just the fact that He was something. She described him in language that could be indelicate in her passionate out pouring. What is your beloved? Why she said, he's white and ruddy. He's chiefest among 10,000 and his eyes are like the eyes of doves by the rivers of water washed with milk, and fitly set. And his cheeks are a bed of spices and his lips like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His mouth is sweet, yay is all together lovely.

And she didn't say, why, don't you know why I love him? Because when I'm tired, he rescues me. And when I'm afraid, he takes my fear away. And when I want a job, he gets it for me. When I want a bigger car, I ask him. When I want to have health, he heals me. And now He helps His people, and I believe. And a young man here tonight who prayed a year for a car and God gave to him. I believe in that. I believe that God does those things for people. The first few years of my ministry, if I couldn't pray and ask God for things, I would have starved to death and not only that, but dragged my wife down with me.

So, I believe in answered prayer, alright. But then, that's not all. Certainly, that's not even, that's the lowest section of it. He is the Lord of all wisdom. And He is the Lord of the Father of the everlasting ages. Not the Everlasting Father as it says in our King James Version, the Father of the everlasting ages. He lays out the ages as an architect lays out his blueprint. He lays out the ages as a developed real estate development man lays out a small town and then builds as our friend Buckles did down here. He lays it out and then builds hundreds of houses on it. And so, He is not dealing with buildings and local developments. He's dealing with the ages. And He is the Lord of all

wisdom. And because He's perfect in wisdom, He is able to do this. And history is the slow development of His purposes you see.

You take a house that's being built, the architect has drawn it down to the last tiny little dot and the tiny little x. He knows everything about it, written his name at the bottom, and turned it over to the contractor. And he has farmed it out to the electrician and the plumber and all the rest. And you go down by there some time and you say casually, I wonder what that's going to be. It's a mess now. There it is. There's a steam shovel in there with its great ugly nose plowing out a hole and throwing it up on the bank or into trucks to haul away. And they're unloading bricks there. It's just a confused conglomeration of this and that. And you say, what's this? And then, you come back by their six or eight to ten months later and you see a charming house there. The landscapers have even been in and the trees, the evergreens are standing there with little green spikes beside the windows, and it's a beautiful thing. And a child playing on the lawn.

Well, we ask you to believe my friends that the Father of the everlasting ages, the Lord of all wisdom, has laid out His plans and He is working toward them. And you and I go by and we see a church all mixed up and we see her sore distressed by schisms rent asunder by heresy distress. We see her backslidden in one part of the world and we see confusion in another part of the world and we shrug our shoulders and say, what is thy beloved anyway? What is all this? And the answer is, He is the Lord of the wise ages and He's laying it all out. And what you're seeing now is only the steam shovel working. That's all, only the truck backed up with bricks. That's what you're seeing. You're only seeing workman in overalls going about killing time. That's all you're seeing. You're just seeing people, and people make you sick because of the way we do, the way we backslide and tumble around and get mixed up and run after will-o'-the-wisps and think it's the Shekinah glory. And hear an owl hoot and think it's the silver trumpet and take off in the wrong directions, and spend a century catching up on ourselves and backing out.

And history smiles at us, but don't be too sure brother. Come back in another millennium or so and see what the Lord of all wisdom has done with what He's got. See then what He's done. He's the Lord of all wisdom, and history is the slow development of His purposes. And He's the Lord of all righteousness. You know what? I'm glad I'm attached to something good. That there's something good somewhere in the universe. Now I couldn't possibly be, I couldn't possibly be a Pollyanna optimist. I was born wrong. I would have had to have a different father and mother and a different ancestral line back at least ten generations if I could for me to have been a Pollyanna, plum pudding philosopher that believed that everything was good. And I can't believe that. I don't think it's true. There's so much that isn't right everywhere and we might as well admit it. We just might as well admit it. If you don't believe it, leave your car unlocked out there and then go out and see you get a bigger sermon than I can preach to you, It will be gone.

Righteousness, then we imagine that we've got the Pharisees who think they're righteous and they're not. They're just self-righteous hypocrites. And we've got politicians that lie and make all kinds of promises which they don't intend to keep. And the only honest one that I've known of in my lifetime has been Wendell Wilkie. When somebody challenged him with a promise that he made during a campaign, he said those were just campaign promises. He was the only one that I know of honest enough to admit he lied to get elected. He didn't get elected, but he lied anyhow and admitted it, which was something. Righteousness is not found. If you think it is, get on a bus somewhere when there's a crowd, and you will find that no matter how old and feeble you are, you'll get the rib or two cracked or at least badly dinged by the elbow of some housewife on our way home. And we're just not good. People are just not good. Among the first things we learned to do is something bad and something mean. Sin is everywhere. I don't know whether Brother McAfee's song, I told him I never cared much for that song but he loves it and sings it and has other people singing it. And I have begun to like it myself. I want a principle within. To cry to God for a principle of holiness within us to make us strong against the world and the evil outside of us. I'm beginning to see John must have had something there.

And you know brother and sister that this is reformation Sunday? Well, you know that there's iniquity are everywhere and I want to be joined to something good. You say well, I'm an American, I'm an American too. I was born here didn't cost me a dime to become an American because my father little and my mother but didn't cost me a dime. I'm an American, and I'll never be anything else, but an American. And when they bury me, there'll be a little bit of America as the poet said, wherever I may be placed.

But you have got to be pretty much of a, you got to be an awful sissy to believe in the total righteousness of the United States of America. Don't you? You've got to be an awful fool, really an awful fool. That buzzard's nest up there at Washington. God bless them. It doesn't make any difference whether they're Democrats or Republicans are in there. They're a bunch, of a lot of them at least, a bunch of crooks. And they mean alright, but they're Adam's fallen brood doing the best they can. We'd probably do worse, so we can pray for them and ask God to have mercy on them, but that's about it.

But here we go and turn on the radio to try to get something educational, or something cultural and all you get is songs sung about automobiles and cigarettes. Well, it's not a good world we live in, it's a bad world. And you can become a Protestant, all right, that doesn't help much. You can become an American, or be an American and that doesn't help too much. But when you attach yourself to the Lord of Glory, you're connected with something righteous, something that's really righteous, not pollyannish, but something really righteous. He is Righteousness itself. The call of the concept of righteousness, and all the possibility of righteousness, are all summed up in Him. But unto the Lord, unto the Son he said, Thy throne, O God is forever and ever, a scepter of

righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore God, Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.

So, we have there a perfectly righteous Savior, a perfectly righteous Savior. They spied on Him. They sent the enemy to search into His life. Can you imagine if Jesus had made a mistake anywhere down the line. Can you imagine if Jesus' foot had slipped once, even once down the line? Can you imagine if Jesus had lost His temper once, or if Jesus had been selfish once? Can you imagine if Jesus had done one thing that you and I take for granted even once? Can you imagine that all the sharp, beady eyes of hell were following Him trying to catch something out of his mouth? And when the end of His days had almost come, He turned on them and said, which of you convicteth me of sin? Not a one of you.

Righteousness was His and He's the High Priest and if you go back to the Old Testament, you will find that when the high priest went into the holy place, he wore on his shoulders and on his breast, certain affairs that were prescribed. But upon his forehead, he wore a miter and who knows what was on that miter? Holiness unto the Lord. He was saying the best he could. Even that man had to have a sacrifice made for him. But he was trying to say in symbol what has been fulfilled in fact, that when He the High Priest of all high priests came, He would wear on His forehead, Holiness unto the Lord. And when they in mockery crashed down that crown of thorns upon His brow; if they'd had the eyes of a prophet, they could have seen a miter there, holiness unto the Lord. He is the Lord of all righteousness and the Lord of all mercy, because He establishes His kingdom of reclaimed rebels, Jesus does. He redeemed them and he won them and he renews the right spirit within them. But everybody in this kingdom is a redeemed rebel.

Do you know what we think about people that have betrayed our country? We scarcely forgive them. We forgive them, but we always look askance upon them, those who have fallen in as some have into communism, and have spied for the, or at least have helped the communistic scheme. And then they've gotten their eyes open, and have turned away from it and gone to the FBI, admitted it and straighten their lives out, and even them we look at with a bit of doubt.

But did you ever stop to think that Jesus Christ hasn't got a single member of His kingdom anywhere that wasn't a former spy and rebel for the enemy. Have you ever thought of it? If it's bad for a man in Washington, or Oak Hill or University of Chicago to get secrets, and take them and tell them to the enemy. If that is bad, and it is bad, and they hang him for it, why, how much worse to be over on the side of the enemy against the Lord of Glory as all sinners are. And don't forget, at all sinners are.

And that's why I smile when I see an old self-satisfied Deacon, sitting with his hands crossed looking like a statue of St. Francis. He is a very godly man indeed, and very conscious of it. All right, Deacon Jones, don't you know what you were? You were a rebel and a spy. And you sold out the

secrets of the kingdom of God and collaborated with the enemy and lived to overthrow the holy kingdom of God. And that's all of us. And there is not one of us it doesn't include, not a one of those. And if you don't like that, then you're no theologian. If you knew your Bible, you would agree with me. Because that's what we all were. But mercy, oh the mercy, Lord of all mercy.

Sometime, I want to preach a sermon on mercy. I don't think I ever have. Of course, I've woven it into all of my preaching. But think of the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, in utter mercy, utter mercy, mercy of our Lord. He is the Lord of all mercy. He is the Lord of all righteousness, and He sees how bad we are. But He's the Lord of all mercy, and he doesn't care. So, in His great kindness, He takes rebels and unrighteous persons, sinners, and makes them His own and establishes them in righteousness and renews a right spirit within them. And then we have a church. We have a cell; a company of believers meet together and He's their Lord. And he's the Lord of all power.

Now, here's some Scripture. Just let me give it to you. After these things, I heard a great voice a great voice of much people in heaven saying, and what do you suppose they were saying? All salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God. This isn't hysteria, but it's ecstasy. There's a difference. Hysteria is one thing, but ecstasy is another. And this was ecstasy. They said, alleluia and left the "H" off, and said, salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God. For true and righteous are His judgments. For He has judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth and with her fornication, and has avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again, they said, alleluia and their smoke rose up forever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshiped God that sat on the throne saying, amen, alleluia. Here we have it again, no hysteria, but a lot of ecstasy. And a voice came out of the throne saying, praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him both small and great, said John.

Do you know, it'll be worthwhile getting put in a salt mine on the Isle of Patmos to have a vision like that, wouldn't it? It really would. It would be better to get on to a salt mine and say they had him in a salt mine over there on the Isle of Patmos. That fella who'd lived out on the sea catching fish and walked the sandy shores and smelled the fresh air. Now he's in a mine, and it's dark in there and suddenly the Lord lifts him into the Spirit on the Lord's day. And he hears a voice saying, alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. Do you see, there's the Song of Solomon in New Testament garb.

To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And He said unto me, write, blessed are they which are called of the marriage supper of the Lamb. Blessed are they. And he said, these are the true sayings of God, and I fell on my feet to worship Him. And He said, don't you worship me. I am thy fellow servant of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God. I saw heaven open. I'm waiting around

brethren, I'm waiting around. I saw heaven open. Moses did and Isaiah did and Ezekiel did and John did, and I'm waiting around. Paul did. I saw heaven open and behold a white horse. And He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True. And in righteousness, He is the judge and will make war, and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and on His head where many crowns. And He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself. He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood and his name is called the Word of God.

There we have this victorious Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of all power. He is the Lord of all power. Do you know, sin has scarred the world. Back in the state of Pennsylvania, they do what they call strip mining. And I was angry in my heart when I saw what they have done to our lovely Pennsylvania hills. These greedy dogs had gone and with their great machinery, they had stripped away the foliage and gone down into the bowels of the beautiful hillsides and taken out a cheap coal; anything to get a little money. And the government says, when you take it and strip mine, you got to fill it up again or it will cost you \$100 an acre. And they grinned and said, it will cost us more than \$100 a acre to fill it up, so they pay their fine and leave it there. And when I was back this last summer, I drove up, they drove me up back past the old place, and I looked out for when I was there four to five years before. It had lain there like a wounded man. Lain there all gouged and ugly. Where in my boyhood days, it had been beautiful to see as the green trees met the blue sky above. But now, it was scarred and they paid their fine because it was cheaper than to fulfill their promise. And they left her there, that lovely hillside, all gouged and cut and bruised. And when I was back, I could have wept to see how kindly mother nature had gone to work. And where four or five years before it was just an ugly hole. Now the sun and the rain and the wind and the waves and the beautiful rain that God sent down in sheets upon that hillside as I've seen it fall many times, had begun to bring out the blossoms that I didn't know were there, and now nature is covering up her wounds, her scars, her ugliness.

God made the world beautiful and if you go out and make it ugly, God in five years will make it beautiful again. The human race is ugly, ugly though made in the image of God and the potentialities of beauty, ugly in its sin. I think my brethren that the ugliest place in the world is hell. The ugliest place in the universe is hell. And when a man says "ugly as hell," he's using a proper and valid comparison. For there is nothing as ugly as hell. But surely Hell is the ugliest place in the universe. It is that against which all other ugliness can be compared. And surely Heaven is the most beautiful place, the place of supreme beauty, with its power that knows no limit and wisdom free from bound, the beatific vision shall glad the saints around. And the peace of all the faithful in the calm of all the blessed inviolate and very divineness, sweetest best, it shall all be there.

So like hell is the ugliest place in the universe. Surely, the most beautiful place will be heaven, for all harmony will be there and all fragrance and all its charm. But between heaven, which is the epitome of all supreme beauty and hell which is the essence of all ugliness, there lies the poor

scarred world. The poor earth lies like a pitiful dying woman clothed in rags, that wants was a beauty that could have stood and been admired by the ages, now sin has cut her down and she's tattered and torn. And from the Nile to the Mississippi and from California to Bangkok, and from the North Pole to the South Pole, wherever human beings go, we find moral ugliness and sin and hatred and suspicion, name calling and all the rest. And the beautiful grace that the Lord made to be His bride, now in her pathetic ugliness, lies, dying, clothed in rags. But Jesus Christ, the Lord of mercy came to save here and took upon Himself her flesh, her own flesh, and was made in the likeness of man and for sin He gave Himself to die. And there's going to be a restoration and that poor, bruised, dying thing, that poor bruised, dying thing.

Years ago, I read that great book, that great book, I suppose that it's one of the greatest book ever written of its kind, *Les Misérables*, the great book by Victor Hugo. And in it, there was one of the most tender and pathetic passages that I think I have ever read in all literature. You would have to go to the Bible to find anything as deeply moving. Here was this young man one of the upper class, the nobles, and here was the woman that he was in love with, you know, they weave that all in. And here in the middle, was a pale-faced little urchin girl from the streets of Paris, who, with her poor rags and her pale, tubercular face, she also loved the nobleman, but didn't dare say so. So, he used her to carry notes. They used her to carry notes back and forth. And this great fellow never dreamed that this poor, sallow-faced girl dressed in rags, had lost her heart to him in his nobility. So, he went to find her and see what he could do to help her, and found her lying on the bed of rags in the tenement house in the low section of Paris. And this time she can't get up to greet him nor carry a note to his fiancé. So, he says to her, what can I do for you? And she said, well, I'm dying. I'll be gone in a moment. And he said, what can I do? Tell me, anything. And she said, would you do one thing for me before I close my eyes for the last time? And she said, would you, when I'm dead, would you kiss my forehead?

I don't know. I know it was only Victor Hugo brilliant imagination, but I know Victor Hugo had seen that in Paris. He'd gone through the sewers there and he had seen, and he knew about it. He knew that you can beat a girl down and you can beat her down and you can clothe her in rags, and you can fill her with tuberculosis and you can make her so thin that the wind will blow her off course when she walks down a dirty street. She can't take out of her heart that thing that makes her want to love a man. You can't take that out. God said, Adam, you can't be alone, it isn't right. And he made a woman meet for him. You can't take that out. And Victor Hugo knew it. And he wrote that thing in. I rarely quote from a fiction, but I thought that was worth it.

My dear friends, our Lord Jesus Christ came down and found, found the race like that, consumptive and long and pale-faced and died, and took on Himself all her death, and rose the third day and took all the pathos out, and all the pity out, and now she comes walking on the arm of her, leaning on the arm of her Beloved, walking into the presence of God and He presents her, not a poor, pitiful wreck who he kissed when she was dead. But His happy, bright-eyed bride meet to be a

partaker of the saints in light. Worthy to stand beside Him and be His bride in the glory yonder. What is her authority and what is her right and by what authority does she walk into the presence of the Father?

You remember back in that chapter in the book of Genesis where Abraham calls his servant and sends his servant to get a bride for Isaac his son. He goes to the well and finds Rebecca, and says to Rebecca. It makes me homesick just pronounce the name, but says to Rebecca, my master's son has sent me, and I've come for you if you will go. And she said, what are the terms? Well, that you go without waiting around. Now, go with me across the desert and be a bride for my master's son. She said, I'll go and when she said I'll go, he reached into the saddle bag of the great, old camel that he'd ridden out, that swaying ship of the desert. And he took out jewelry and he put it around her neck and put it on her arms and fingers and ankles and he decked her out after the time.

And when she arrived, it was a long trip back there across the desert, you know. The old servant, he wasn't fooling around. He'd been sent after a bride and he got her, and he was on his way back. And I imagine he was slapping the side of that old bobbing camel as they went across that desert. And Isaac was bothered, he was bothered. His father said, what's the matter Isaac? And he said, well, I don't know. I guess I just didn't get enough sleep last night. And his father winked at his mother and said that he's got it alright. He has it. And he went out it says in a kind of a nice, biblical, dignified way, half humorous, you know it says he was out walking in the twilight at the cool of the day. What was he out there for? He knew that he'd hear in the distance, the tinkling of camel bells. And he knows when he heard the tinkling of the camel bells, that there'd be a bride, and a worthy one. She had to be worthy. And he knew something else. How was he going to know her? He's going to know her by the jewelry she had on. He'd sent it. And when she came back with it. He said that this is her. She would have been English but heard what he probably said, this is her alright. And he knew his bride by the jewelry she wore.

And I don't know my friends. I don't want to go get too emotional, but I just think that maybe the Lord of Glory who sent the Holy Ghost of Pentecost to get a bride, I don't know but what sometimes He may get up from the throne and take a walk and say, I'm listening for the sound of the camel bells. For the bride is getting ready and He will know her. And how will He know her? We sing, we'll know Him by the prints of the nails. How will He know us? By the jewelry we wear. His, that He sent down. And what is it? The fruits of the Spirit. It's love and joy and peace, temperance and kindness and all that. We'll know Him and He'll know us. And so it says in brusque simplicity. And Isaac took Rebecca and she became his bride. None of this big show stuff, organ blowing. You know, and people walking lockstep down there. He just walked over and said, Honey, I know you by what you got on. Come on over here. And she went to be with him and became his bride. And our Lord Jesus Christ, He'll know who they are. Don't you worry. You say nobody knows me. I'm a Christian alright, but I've never been heard of out of my block. If you go beyond my block, I'm a stranger. I wouldn't worry about that. He knows you. He knows who you are and

He knows you by the jewelry of the Word. He is thy Lord and He shall greatly desire thy beauty.
Worship thou Him!