

Westboro Baptist Church
August 24, 2014

Beloved, I ended last week talking about the great love Christ has for the Church and I was getting ready to expound the following verse

Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners? (Song of Solomon 6:10.)

Please begin with this great comfort and promise and assurance to rest on:

For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. (1Peter 3:12.)

The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous. (Proverbs 15:29.)

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; (Revelation 2:1.)

But I have to set a little context now. *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 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. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. **This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.** (Eph. 5:25-32.)*

Gill: *The man cleaving to the wife very aptly expresses the strong affection of Christ to His church, and the near communion there is between them; and their*

being one flesh denotes the union of them; and indeed, the marriage of Adam and Eve was a type of Christ and His church; ... Adam was before Eve, so Christ was before his church; God thought it not proper that man should be alone, so neither Christ, but that he should have some fellows and companions with him: the formation of Eve from Adam was typical of the church's formation from Christ; she was made of him while he was asleep, which sleep was from the Lord, and it was not an ordinary one; which may resemble the sufferings and death of Christ, which were from the Lord, and were not common; and which are the redemption of his church and people; and which secure their comfort and happiness, and wellbeing: she was taken out of his side, and built up a woman of one of his ribs; as such the justification and sanctification of the church are from Christ, from the water and the blood which issued out of his side, when on the cross... Adam's consent and acknowledgment of Eve to be his wife, shadow forth Christ's hearty reception and acknowledgment of the saints, as being of him, and his, when they are brought unto him under the influences of His grace and Spirit.

Beloved, superlatives cease to have meaning on this subject. When the Holy Spirit says *this is a great mystery*, he means it. This is a profound and amazing spiritual union that has its roots in the Godhead and which we cannot understand except as God shows it. Christ has an enormous love for his bride has evidenced by the many wonderful characteristics he sees in her as listed in the Proverbs 31 virtuous woman. This virtuous woman is none other than the Church.

Matthew Henry –

The love of Christ to the church ...a sincere, a pure, an ardent, and constant affection, and that notwithstanding the imperfections and failures that she is guilty of. The greatness of His love to the church appeared in His giving himself unto the death for it. Observe, as the church's subjection to Christ is proposed as an exemplar to wives, so the love of Christ to his church is proposed as a pattern to husbands. The Lord nourishes and cherishes the church, which He furnishes with all things that He sees needful or good for her, with whatever conduces to her everlasting happiness and welfare. The apostle adds, For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones, #Eph 5:30. He assigns this as a reason why Christ nourishes and cherishes his church—because all who belong to it are members of his body, that is, of his mystical body.

There are many verses in the New Testament that describe charity, which is love. These verses describe the love of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Church and how we should treat each other. This is the absolute love the Lord Jesus Christ has to his people and whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. It is absolute devotion. This is what you are a part of.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.... Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. (1 Cor. 13:1, 4-10.)

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. (John 13:34-35.)

When I talk to people that are happy about their jobs, I ask them what they like about their jobs, they usually say that the best thing is the people they are around. I am convinced beloved that the best thing about heaven will be the love and affection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love and affection that binds those citizens together toward a single purpose to fulfill the purpose of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ who God the Father has put all things under.

Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners? (Song of Solomon 6:10.)

This is a rhetorical question. Christ knows the answer – it is His bride – the Church whom he has described in detail just before.

Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners. Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me [her

eyes, this is the Church, have pierced His heart and taken away His strength He is so in love with her and infatuated with her] *thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead. Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them. As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks. There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number* [Kings at that time had queens and concubines and virgins in waiting, but His love is reserved for one and only one]. *My dove, my undefiled is but one* [there are many false churches, but only she has His heart; this is why the doctrine of adultery is so pernicious –it destroys the sanctity and loyalty of the marriage between Christ and the church] *she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.* (Song of Solomon 6:4-9.)

I'm telling you, look out when you mess with a man's wife! When someone besmirches her good character, makes a false claim against her, rails against her, threatens her, abuses her, says every manner of lie about her and generally mistreats her, you will eventually have to deal with that man. The Lord Jesus Christ takes all of these claims against his Bride personally, for they are one.

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned. (Song of Solomon 8:7, 8.)

Gill: *The church's desire is, that she might be affectionately loved by Christ, be deeply fixed in his heart, be ever in his view, owned and acknowledged by him, and protected by the arm of his power.*

***Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?* (Song of Solomon 6:10.)**

The first three things that Christ has to say about his bride in this verse are related to light. *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.* (Mat. 5:14.) Light is an amazing work of God.

A. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning (dawn):

What is more beautiful in all the world than a sunrise that parts the darkness and blackness of night and banishes it until another day is gone? That is how utterly beautiful you are to Christ. The light of the morning, the dayspring is breathtaking. It is also when the created things of God are the most fresh and vibrant. There is a renewing quality that the morning brings. Christ himself appears as the sun, so it is all together proper that his wife should appear as He does.

There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. (Matthew 17:2.)

In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. (Rev. 1:16.)

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. (Rev. 22:16.)

A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. (Rev. 12:1.)

Barnes: The glorious beauty of the bride bursts upon them/him like a second dawn, as she comes forth to meet them at the commencement of another day.

B. Fair (beautiful) as the moon:

There is a pristine, illuminating quality of beautifulness related to the light of the moon. It is of course; just reflected light from the Sun, but it is subtle and mysterious. This is romantic talk, the talk of poetry, simple but powerful. *And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. (Re 12:1.)* No matter what disparaging and awful things the whole world says about the Church, Christ sees his bride as completely fair and beautiful. *Beautiful for situation, the*

joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King (Psalm 48:2).

Matthew Henry Concise Commentary - *As to sanctification, they (the Church) are fair as the moon, deriving all their light, grace, and holiness from Christ.*

Pulpit Commentary - *The moon is ... pale and sweet, as the lesser light, with true womanly delicacy and fairness; but the rest of the description, which plainly is added for the sake of the symbolical suggestiveness of the figures, removes all idea of mere weakness.*

C. Clear as the sun:

There is no lukewarm, hazy, ambiguity or uncertainty to the Sun or the Church. The Church, is crystal clear on all spiritual matters. What is more spectacular than the sun in all its blinding glory? The sun is instantly and unmistakably present to all the earth and it can be clearly seen by all and its bright light cuts through the darkness. Beloved, there are a lot of social clubs claiming to be churches, but the light of the true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is unmistakable and its unique light signature cannot be counterfeited because that light is so clear and so perfect. *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Mat. 5:14-16).*

Beloved, the sun itself never dims and it never takes a day off. You can't negotiate with the sun, it just shines all the time. And, if you want to do things in the secret and in the dark, do not hang around the sun; it has no interest in those things. *And what communion hath light with darkness? (2 Cor 6:14.) Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. (Mt 13:43.)* Beloved, the sun is so bright and clear to look straight at it, would cause you to go blind. That is what the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ must be. If you do not

want to be in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ which is clear as the sun, then find a church of Satan that deals in darkness, there are lots of them.

Pulpit Commentary - Clear (or, bright) as the sun. And the word for "sun" is not, as usual, shemesh, but chammah, "heat," the warming light. The fierce rays of the Eastern sun are terrible to those who encounter them. The glory of the Church is a glory overwhelming as against all that opposes it. The description is pure hyperbole as applied to a fair bride, referring to the blazing beauty of her face and adornments.

Matthew Henry – She shall shine in inexpressible glory, and that which is perfect will then come; there shall be no darkness, no spots. 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 (Eph. 5:27).

D. Terrible as an army with banners:

Gill: The Church is terrible as [an army] with banners to her enemies, though so lovely to Christ. By comparing her to an army it shows a collective body is intended here. The church on earth is militant. It is a well-disciplined army, in good order, and provided with proper officers and suitable armour, and is in a posture of defense, and ready to fight when attacked; and so "terrible" to her enemies, Satan and his principalities, wicked men and false teachers; who are terrified by their having such a General at the head of them as Christ, and being under such banners as his, and provided with such good weapons of warfare, as are mighty through God; by their close union to one another; and by the constancy, undauntedness, and invincibleness of their faith; and are awed by their pious conversation and good examples. Perhaps some respect may be had by Christ to the church's courage and constancy in seeking after him; the force of whose faith and love he felt, and which he could not withstand. Troops with banners flying have not sustained defeat; they are victorious.

Matthew Henry: The church, in this world, is as an army, as the camp of Israel in the wilderness; its state is militant; it is in the midst of enemies, and is engaged in a constant conflict with them. Believers are soldiers in this army. It has its banners; the gospel of Christ is an ensign and the love of Christ. It is marshalled, and kept in

order and under discipline. It is terrible to its enemies as Israel in the wilderness was. When Balaam saw Israel encamped according to their tribes, by their standards, with colours displayed, he said, How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! #Nu 24:5. When the church preserves her purity she secures her honour and victory; when she is fair as the moon, and clear as the sun, she is truly great and formidable.

Beloved, this is the time of the Church militant. This is the time of the wars of the Lord. (Nu. 21:14.) If the Church is not hated and not engaged in open and notorious warfare with Satan, you are on the wrong side. Said another way, if the church is restful... if the church is at peace... if the church is calm and uneventful... if the church is well respected and loved in the community then it is one with Satan - you fight for Satan. Beloved, you only need the breastplate of righteousness (Eph. 6:14), the shield of faith (Eph. 6:16), the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit (Eph. 6:17) if you are in a spiritual battle. And then, the time of heaviness will be over and we will rejoice!

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And 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 saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. (Rev. 19:6-9.)

I love you all! Amen.