

# The Loveliness of Christ

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[ 0 : 00 ]     The message for today is the loveliness of Christ. The loveliness of Christ. Because we read there in God's word, he is altogether lovely.

Now, the Song of Songs was written many years before the coming of Christ. And it clearly speaks on one level about the love between a man and a woman.

A wonderfully deep, romantic love. And we hear their alternating voices and the voices of friends as well. As they speak about this beautiful courtship and the depths of love that are felt between the man and the woman.

And how they speak of each other in such affectionate and warm and touching terms. So it's clearly about love. The love that God has given his creatures, human beings, to share with one another between men and women.

In this way, chiefly displayed, of course, fulfilled in holy matrimony and marriage. But the church has long understood the Song of Solomon also.

[ 1 : 19 ]     And to be ultimately and to be chiefly talking about the love that exists between Jesus, the bridegroom, and the church, his bride.

And sometimes we can forget the deep, deep, deep, deep love. The love that is so deep that it goes down and it just keeps on going.

That Jesus had and has for his church. His church is his beloved. It is his bride. It's the church that he laid down his life for.

Because we read in Ephesians, the apostle Paul telling husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church.

And, of course, we see in Christ loving the church, he laid down his life for the church. He shed his blood to cleanse his bride from all sin so that she would be pure and blameless before him.

[ 2 : 24 ]     And so, in these words then, in the Song of Songs, the church has long seen that these words, he is altogether lovely, refer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's what I want to talk about for a few moments this morning is the loveliness of Christ. Now, we could go on, and we will go on, in that long white robe in eternity talking about the loveliness of Christ.

It's an inexhaustible subject. And so, the first thing I want to say at the outset is we can only really touch the tip of the iceberg today.

But we can look at some aspects of the loveliness of Christ. A lovely old 19th century divine wrote of this about Jesus.

There is, first, nothing unlovely in him. Nothing that the believer would desire to have removed. Men desire that the objects of their affections should be lovely.

[ 3 : 34 ]     They invest them with imaginary beauty. And their very blemishes they often admire and love. But Christ is altogether lovely. With nothing to be removed.

Nothing to be altered. Nothing unlovely. Men conceal and rightly cover the failings of their friends. But there is nothing in Jesus to conceal.

To disguise. To excuse. For he is altogether lovely. The bride, that is the church, glories in an object that could stand the utmost sifting.

So that is the fact that Christ is altogether lovely. There is no element of unloveliness in him. All in him is loveliness. All in him is attractive.

Is beautiful. It draws out the heart in love towards him. Because he is so lovely in every respect. And no one can say that of themselves.

[ 4 : 37 ] I am not altogether lovely. In many respects I am unlovely. And that could be said of everybody. But only Christ is altogether lovely.

Firstly let's think about the loveliness of Christ in his compassion. We read at the height of Jesus' ministry in Matthew chapter 9 and verse 36.

Jesus was being mobbed everywhere he went. People wanted a piece of him. People were pressing in to get to him. There was a great deal of excitement and even hysteria around Jesus at one stage.

But when Jesus saw these crowds. You can imagine how others might get upset with them. Or just get away from me. It says when Jesus saw the crowds he had compassion on them.

Because they were harassed and helpless. Like sheep without a shepherd. He saw that they were the state that they were in.

[ 5 : 42 ] Their condition harassed and helpless. And his heart went out to them. He has this perfect compassion. When at the death of his friend Lazarus.

Lazarus's sister Mary comes out to see Jesus. And we read this in John's Gospel. When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him. She fell at his feet and said.

Lord if you had been here. My brother would not have died. When Jesus saw her weeping. And the Jews who had come along with her also weeping.

He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. Where have you laid him? He asked. Come and see Lord. They replied.

Jesus wept. The shortest verse in the whole Bible is about Jesus' compassion. And Jesus' grief over someone close to him dying.

[ 6 : 50 ] Then the Jews said. See how he loved him. That's the loveliness of Christ in his compassion.

How comforting. How reassuring it is to know. That there is a saviour who is all compassion. And who has experienced grief and heartache and distress himself.

And therefore can sympathise with all those who will trust in him. We have a compassionate saviour.

Then there is his loveliness and his tenderness. Jesus is a tender saviour. Jesus it is said of him.

A bruised reed he will not break. Just imagine that. The fragility of a reed growing by the river. And it's bruised. It's dented.

[ 7 : 51 ] But it's not broken. This describes Jesus' gentleness. He wouldn't break that. And a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.

So imagine just a candle. And there is just that little red tip left at the end. You know and it's smouldering. The smoke's going up already.

Most people would maybe just go and put that out there and then wouldn't they. Or give it a final blow to put it out. No the picture there is of Jesus cupping his hand around that failing.

Just that glowing wick. And blowing on it and fanning it back into flame again. In his tenderness. We have a tender saviour.

A bruised reed he will not break. And a smouldering wick he will not snuff out. Till he has brought justice through victory. That is our tender saviour.

[ 8 : 52 ] And we see that again in his ministry. In Mark's gospel and in chapter 5. We hear of Jesus again being pressed upon.

A lot of people are asking for him to come and to heal and to help. And a synagogue leader's daughter is very ill.

And on the way to this synagogue leader's daughter. A lady who's had this issue of blood for years.

Just touches the hem of his cloak. And is healed. He turns around and says you touched me. And she says it was me Lord. And he says your faith has healed you.

Because he knew someone had touched him. But then when he comes to the home of the synagogue leader. Jesus saw a commotion it says. With people crying and wailing loudly.

[ 9 : 47 ] Because by this point people said the child had died. A little girl had died. There in the house. He went in and said to them. Why all this commotion and wailing?

The child is not dead but asleep. But they laughed at him. He put everybody outside the room. After he had put them all out.

He took the child's father and mother. And the disciples who were with him. And went in where the child was. He took her by the hand.

And said to her. Talitha kum. Which means little girl. I say to you get up. Immediately the girl stood up.

And began to walk around. She was 12 years old. At this time they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders. Not to let anyone know about this.

[ 10 : 41 ] And told them to give her something to eat. Do you see in that little detail. He told them to give her something to eat. He was still thinking about her. But these words.

Talitha kum. To this girl. That's Jesus saying. To paraphrase. Sweetie. Get up. Sweetie.

Rise up. That's the tenderness of Jesus. So we've seen his loveliness in his compassion. His loveliness in his tenderness. And his loveliness in his mercy.

We all need mercy. We all need mercy. And thankfully. Praise be to God. Jesus. Is the expression of God's mercy.

And that is part of his loveliness. When Jesus was near Jericho. He and his disciples. Again. There was just this large crowd.

[ 11 : 41 ] And they were leaving the city. And a blind man called Bartimaeus. Was sitting by the roadside begging. So there's a blind beggar. By the side of the road.

At Jericho. And he heard. That it was Jesus of Nazareth. Passing by. And he began to shout. Jesus. Son of David.

Have mercy on me. And many rebuked him. And told him to be quiet. But he shouted. You know. Don't bother the Messiah. You know. He won't want to hear from you.

Blind beggar. Many rebuked him. Told him to be quiet. But he shouted all the more. Son of David. Have mercy on me. And he said. Jesus stopped.

And said. Call him. Bring him over here. So they called to the blind man. Cheer up. On your feet. He's calling you. Throwing his cloak aside.

[ 12 : 37 ] He jumped to his feet. And came to Jesus. What do you want me to do for you? Jesus asked him. The blind man said. Rabbi.

That means teacher. I want to see. Go. Said Jesus. Your faith has healed you. Immediately. He received his sight. And followed Jesus.

Along the road. His mercy. If someone cries to Jesus. For mercy. Like blind Bartimaeus did. Someone who would have been. Viewed as.

By the. The people of the day. Who weren't compassionate. A worthless individual. He's not worthless. To Jesus. All. Bartimaeus. Had to do. Was say.

Son of David. Because he sees him as the Messiah. The son of the king. Have mercy on me. And Jesus shows his loveliness.

[ 13 : 32 ] In his mercy. He had mercy on him. So we see his loveliness. In his compassion. His tenderness. His mercy. And of course. In his selflessness.

His selflessness. In Philippians. In chapter 2. And verse 5 to 11. The apostle Paul. And he's encouraging.

The followers of Jesus. To follow in this. In this way. He says. In your relationships. With one another. Have the same mindset. As Christ Jesus. And then he says this.

About Jesus. Who being. In very nature. God. Did not consider. Equality. With God. Something to be used. To his own advantage.

Rather. He made himself. Nothing. By taking the very nature. Of a servant. By being made. In human likeness. And being found.

[ 14 : 32 ] In appearance. As a man. He humbled himself. By becoming. Obedient. To death. Even. Death. On a cross.

What Paul is saying here. Clearly is that. Jesus didn't have to do this. Jesus was enthroned in heaven. Yet Jesus was enjoying. Perfect fellowship.

As the son of God. With the father. And with the spirit. In a blessedness. And a blissfulness. We can't even. Begin to imagine.

Within the Godhead. Of the Trinity. And yet. He. Chose. To.

Come to earth. Take to himself. A human nature. Experience. All the. The sorrows. And the horrors. And the. The trials. And the afflictions.

[ 15 : 30 ] And the temptations. Of this life. And succeeded. In not sinning. But then also. Took upon himself.

The price. Of sin. God made him. Who knew no sin. To be sin. For us. To take our. Sins away. That's.

The loveliness. Of Christ. In his. Selflessness. And we read. What happened. Through that. Selflessness.

God. Exalted Jesus. To the highest. Place. And gave him. The name. That is above. Every name. That at the name. Of Jesus. Every knee. Should bow. In heaven. And on earth.

And under the earth. And every tongue. Acknowledge. That Jesus. Christ. Is Lord. To the glory. Of God. The father. Jesus.

[ 16 : 25 ] Is altogether. Lovely. Before. I became. A Christian. Which was. Only a few. Years ago. I'd been to church.

Plenty of times. Prior to that. And when I would hear. Things about. Just how. Wonderful. And how lovely. Jesus was. And Jesus is. That would almost be like.

Torture. To me. Because the more. I saw. Of Jesus's. Loveliness. And his. Perfection. And his. Beauty. The more.

Unlovely. I felt. In comparison. It made me. Want to shrink. Away. Almost. And hide. From this. Loveliness. In the shadows. Because.

I thought. You're too. Lovely. For me. Because. I am. Unlovely. But.

[ 17 : 24 ] The. Truly. Lovely. Truly. Lovely. Thing. About. Jesus. Is. He invites. The unlovely. To come. To him. He comes.

To make. The unlovely. Lovely. He loves. The unlovely. It's.

Sinners. He came. To save. He told. Everyone. When he came. And while. Our sins. Yes. Are as scarlet. And I think. Sometimes.

When we see. The beauty. Of God. And the purity. Of God. And the holiness. Of God. It does. Make us. Feel. Or. More sensible. To our own sin. By comparison. Our sins.

Are shown. To. Shown. To us. To be. As scarlet. That is. Bright red. But. He says. He can make them. As white. As snow. It is.

[ 18 : 19 ] The sick. Not the healthy. That need a doctor. And he is. The good. Physician. It is. Wayward.

And lost. Sheep. Who need to be. Led. And looked after. And he is. The good shepherd. Who lays down. His life. For. The sheep.

Do you know. This loveliness. Of Christ. You see. See. Christianity. Is not. Some. Arrangement.

Of rules. Which you follow. And you say. I follow. Christianity. Christianity. Is. Knowing.

The one. Who is. Altogether. Lovely. And. Knowing. That whilst. We are. Unlovely. He loves us. He laid down. His life.

[ 19 : 13 ] For us. And. In the end. He will. Restore us. To the loveliness. Which we were. Always. Meant to have.

Perfect images. Of God. Who will reflect. His glory. Out into his. New creation. It's very easy.

To forget. This loveliness. And. The church. In Ephesus. Was reminded. Of this. Ephesus. Had seen.

Great. The great works. Of God. In many respects. The apostles. Paul spent. Three years. In Ephesus. But in revelation. Jesus. Speaks. To the church.

In Ephesus. And says. I hold this. Against you. You've. Forsaken. The love. You had. At first. You've forgotten. Your first. Love.

[ 20 : 08 ] Me. The one who is. Altogether. Lovely. You've. Taken your eye. Off. Me. And you've become. Somehow. Involved. In other things. In other concerns.

Your desires. Are not rightly. Ordered. Because at the very top. Of them. I should be there. The altogether. Lovely one. Consider. How far. You have fallen. Repent.

And do the things. You did. At first. Is the altogether. Lovely one. Filling. Our hearts. And the eyes. Of faith.

With his splendor. And is that. What is. Driving. Our lives. You're. Invited. Back in. To see. The loveliness.

Of Christ. And to be. Captivated. By him. Afresh. To be. Consumed. By the loveliness. Of the one. That is. Altogether. Lovely.

[ 21 : 05 ] But maybe. You don't know. The one. That is. Altogether. Lovely. Yet. You've not. Placed. Your trust. In him. For your. Salvation. Well.

He is. Calling you. To. See. His loveliness. To partake. Of his. Loveliness. To be. Washed. Of.

All. Your sin. Everything. That. Separates. You. From God. At the moment. Christ. Says. He will. Take it. All away. And he makes.

An open invitation. To anyone. To come to him. Not those. Who have cleaned up. Their act. Or those. Who think. Finally. I'm now in a place. Where I can come. To Jesus. No.

No. He says. Just as you are. Just as you are. With empty hands. I've done everything. You just have to receive. The gift.

[ 21 : 59 ] The gift that is me. You just have to trust. Me. And come to me. The. Center. Of the Christian. Hope.

Is that we will see more. Of this loveliness. Yet. So. In our walk. In our discipleship. In our lives. We are seeking.

We are desiring. To know more. Of the loveliness. Of Christ. That's what will. Fuel our walk. And that's what will give it. That. That character.

Of grace. And of kindness. And of warmth. Because it will be overflowing. With an enjoyment. Of the loveliness. Of Christ. With the fragrance.

Of Christ. The one who is himself. Altogether lovely. People will see the loveliness. Of Christ. In us. In some measure. But what we are headed towards.

[ 22 : 54 ] At the end of that green tape. That's. What we will be taken up with. Is the loveliness. Of Christ. In Isaiah. Chapter 33.

In verse 17. The prophet says. Your eyes will behold. The king and his beauty. You will see a land. That stretches far. In that new country.

On that farther shore. What will be. Our. Chiefest joy. Is beholding the king. In his beauty. The apostle John says.

Dear friends. Now we're children of God. And what will be. Has not yet been made known. But we know. That when Christ appears. We shall be like him.

For we shall see him. As he is. We'll actually see him. In some way. In the most radiant. Glorious. Blissful. Unimaginably.

[ 23 : 49 ] Joyous way. We will see Jesus. As Paul says. For now. We see only a reflection. As in a mirror. We see something. Of the loveliness.

Of Christ. Now. We see it in his word. We see that in our daily. Walk with him. The more we learn of him. The more we love him. For to know him. Is to love him.

And so he becomes. More lovely to us. But only at now. As in a mirror. Then we shall see. Face. To face.

Now I know in part. He says. Then I shall know fully. Even as. I am fully. Known. That means that when we do.

Finally see the one. Who is altogether lovely. A great change will take place. In us. As well. It's not that we will.

[ 24 : 42 ] Simply see the one. Who is altogether lovely. We will be. Restored to the loveliness. That is God's plan. For us. The bride.

Will be presented. In her beauty. In her loveliness. Before the bridegroom. The one who is all. Together. Lovely.

I just want to close. With the words of. Alexander. Moody. Stewart. That. Gentleman. I quoted. At the start.

In his. Commentary. As we close. Together now. Thinking. Have you forgotten. Your first love. Do you need to be. Recaptured.

And fall in love again. With the altogether. Lovely one. Or. Or do you not know. This loveliness yet. Has Christ not been presented. To you in this way. Before. Or the one who invites you.

[ 25 : 37 ] Doesn't say stand far off. You're not lovely enough for me. I came for the unlovely. I came to restore you. Either way. Let us hear. These words.

Christ is altogether. Lovely in both his natures. In all his person. And in all his character. In all his words. In all his works. And in all his ways.

He is lovely in his birth. Lovely in his infancy. Lovely in his boyhood. Lovely in his youth. Lovely in his manhood. Lovely in his mourning. Lovely in his rejoicing.

Lovely in his feasting. Lovely in his fasting. Lovely in his speech. Lovely in his silence. Lovely as a prophet. As a priest. As a king.

Lovely as a shepherd. As a saviour. As a husband. Lovely sitting on the throne of grace. Lovely seated on the throne of judgment. Lovely as a son. lovely as a brother lovely as a servant christ is lovely when without a pillow whereon to lay his head and lovely in the mansions of his father lovely in his rebukes and lovely in his consolations lovely in his cross and lovely in his crown he is lovely in himself lovely in his ordinances lovely in his saints lovely yesterday lovely today lovely forever yea he is all together lovely