

Song of Solomon

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[0 : 0 0] this is a form of self-commendation and self-commendation is something which at least among men has to be looked into very carefully among men self-commendation is a vanity a vanity multiplied by pride and divided only by the sum total of the human race it's universal that men think well of themselves and want everyone else to think well of them and we all know if we're honest with ourselves or with anyone else that that whole thing is a total fallacy because we are all ruined sinners we are all on the way to perdition left to ourselves and unless another intervenes such is our destination yet I say nevertheless here are words that are a form of self-commendation and in them and in the usage of them the Lord Jesus Christ rises above all this because he is not in that sad unhappy category that I have been describing he is entitled to that which he takes to himself while prophets and apostles commend the Lord Jesus Christ while believers and Christians and churches may commend the Lord Jesus Christ as the old Scots wifey said he's near so bonnie as when he commends himself and for the very way in which he does it so it is so it is because none but Christ can describe himself and can reveal himself to the human heart no lips can speak Christ's love to the soul till Christ himself speaks them the son reveals itself and the son of righteousness reveals himself self-manifestation and self-commendation on the part of the Lord Jesus Christ as to his person and his office and his work is indeed the one thing needful in this life to an awakened sinner if you know you are a sinner tonight the one thing you need is to know that Jesus Christ is precious your own mind may not tell you that the books you read may not tell you that what you see around you may not tell you that but Christ can tell you that and Christ in his own time and way will tell you that and when he does you will agree that he is never so bonnie as when he commends himself so my friends on this communion evening let us meditate together let us listen to this self-disclosure and commendation of the Son of God

the sinner's Saviour let us listen and let us trust that he may be pleased to draw near and show himself to us of a truth I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys I begin with a question why does our Lord so commend himself I have indicated the answer to that in a very general way but there must be a more substantial and a more varied answer to that question what are his motives for commending himself in this particular way

I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys well I take it that in this speech the Lord has designs and purposes of love toward his people he wants his people to be rich in high and happy thoughts of his person it is his good pleasure that those who are espoused to him should be delighted even ravished and satisfied with his beauty it is his desire and good pleasure that they should have an adoring admiration of him therefore I am asking the question what are his motives for so commending himself let us see if we can deduce something in reply to this question

I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys to begin with it seems to me that Christ commends himself because high thoughts of him will help Christians to act consistently with their relationship with him a Christian is espoused to Christ that is the theme of the psalm of Solomon that is the theme of the apostle Paul in the epistle to the Ephesians which we have just read that the church is the bride of Christ and a wife usually has high ideas of her husband and in the union of the soul and Christ this is highly necessary says the psalmist he is thy

Lord worship thou him Paul spells it out in words that we have already read when he says the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church and he is the savior of the body a husband despising wife confounds the order of nature and a soul that despises Christ no longer stands in its true relation to him the normal the instinctive relationship is one of respect adoration and admiration the higher we see Christ enthroned the lower we shall bow before him

[8 : 21] Christ commends himself to Christians so that they cheerfully submit to his authority so to be a better spouse to the best of all husbands then it seems to me is one motive on which he commends himself in this way to us another is this Christ knows that high thoughts of him on our part increase our love to him love and esteem go together and of all the many and varied forms of love the love to Christ of his spouse has to be the love of admiration the love of esteem

Christ ought we not to think highly of our saviour's superlative excellences think of his eternal glory before he had your nature think of the love that drew him from the throne of eternity to the cross of shame think of the utterly incomparable affection that made him stretch his hands to the nails of the cross and give his heart to the spear think of him in the conquering of weakness of hell and of sin think of him risen no more to die think of him crowned no more to be dishonoured think of him glorified no more to suffer there are plenty of justifiably high thoughts of Christ to occupy the mind the heart the spirit of a believer and I say the effect of high thoughts of Christ lead to a deepening love to Christ on the part of his people he knows that and for that reason but on this motive he so commends himself to his people as he does when he says

I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the balance but once again look at it like this surely a high esteem of Christ is very necessary to our comfort as Christians those of us who are Christians when you esteem Christ highly the things of the world become strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace if you find that you are so cast down by your trials that you cannot possibly rejoice even though you know that your name is written in heaven my friend there is something wrong with your love to the Lord Jesus Christ high views of

Christ help a soul when that soul is in the lowness of distress and sorrow and therefore I say our own comfort impinges upon our esteem our high esteem of Christ for the sweet love of Christ is the best balm for any wounded spirit and the higher you esteem him the more you will appreciate that balm you can survive you can survive in sorrow you can survive in distress you can survive even in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace if Christ walks the coals with you but you must know him first and you must esteem him highly first and that is why he commends himself to you the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys

I'm still looking at the motives endeavoring to deduce the motives for this self commendation and it seems to me in the next place that a high esteem of Christ will quicken the powers of a Christian's soul matter matters not what term you use whether you call it piety or godliness or whether you call it Christian character all these things are measurable by this barometer does Jesus Christ stand high or low with me if you think little of Christ if you care little for his honor day by day if you neglect his law your soul is sick but if the first thought of your spirit is how can I honor my

[14 : 37] Lord if the daily desire of your soul has been all that I knew where I might find him I say whatever your infirmities whatever your fears you are safe we pay so much attention to our wounds what thinkest thou tonight of Christ's wounds are they rubies and gems in your soul's view when you assess them when you think of what has flowed from them we worry about poverty what thinkest thou of the king in his beauty has he a glorious high throne in your heart would you raise him higher still if you could then

I say if so it is well with your soul whatever you think of yourself if Christ be great and much and high and holy to you you will dwell with him here and hereafter well it seems to me that these are some of the reasons or motives that lead our Lord to so commend himself to his people his bride his church I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys the self commendation has its motives and blessed be God they're good motives well then let me pass to a second question and that is this how is this commendation justified because motivation is one thing but accuracy is another thing how does our

Lord justify this self commendation reasons motives yes but on what does it rest I submit that what our blessed Lord says of himself here is strictly and perfectly true take him word by word and hear what he says I am that at once relates him to the great I am what mere man can say such a thing of himself man can only say I am for the split second in which he says it he's not sure of the next man can only say

I am for his little fleeting passing moment he may climb his self made peak and topple into the grave and then in perdition all he can say will be I was I was but these words I am on the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ claim for him the attributes of self existence and immutability he said I am in prophecy in the Old Testament dispensation he said I am in the days of his flesh when he was here on earth he says I am here and now in whatever particular relationship he stands to you or me his child yes and when heaven and earth shall pass away and there is no more sea

Christ will still say I am I submit that his self commendation is justified he says he may say I am in terms of the attributes of self existence and immutability but there's more than that let us take him word for word he says I am the rose the loveliest of flowers speaks the loveliest of persons whatsoever things are true whatsoever things are honest whatsoever things are just whatsoever things are pure whatsoever things are lovely whatsoever things are of good report all are found to be stored up in our well beloved whatever beauty there is in the natural world as symbolized by the loveliest of flowers

[20 : 33] Christ has in the spiritual world only in endless multiplication in the paradise of God and in the garden of the soul he is infinitely more beautiful than the queen of flowers in a garden of earth i am the rose let us follow him i am the rose of sharon which simply means i am the best and the rarest of the roses i am the best and the rarest of the best i am superlatively the loveliest of all none among the sons of men none among the heavenly train can with sharon's rose compare none so sweet and none so fair he is the fairest among ten thousand he is the son that hides the stars not with darkness but with light he is the son the loveliest the most beautiful of all his self commendation is absolutely justified but let us follow he goes on i am the lily one commendation is not enough double commendation is called for and surely sevenfold commendation would reach nearer his perfection the great thing about the lily is its whiteness is its purity and my friends christ christ is red as the rose red as the warrior against sin red as the sufferer on the cross and christ is white white as the lily as he ascended from earth to heaven in perfect holiness and righteousness having dispatched his people's sin where it will never be seen again not only was there no spot found in him in his days in the flesh after he had discharged the punishment on our sin neither was there any spot found in him he got rid of it for us he got rid of it for himself not because that it was his by nature but because it was his vicariously on our behalf red as the rose in his sacrifice and white as the lily in his perfect righteousness ascending to heaven to give gifts to men his perfections are manifold and the lily the lily is a symbol that justifies his commendation but he says I am the lily of the valleys the valleys a lily

Christ is a lily in his lowliest condition on earth and Christ is a lily to you and I my friends in our lowest state and case and condition in our worst sin in our deepest realization of our guilt and of our desert of punishment when he appeared and when he spoke he was as a lily you were black he was white you were filthy he was clean Christ in heaven is pure and Christ in the worst of sinners is as pure as pure can be our eyes in measure can see his beauty now for he is our savior our lord our example yet although although we have not yet seen the king in the fullness of his beauty there is that word that he spoke on earth which I will adapt yet I say unto you that

Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like Jesus Christ in the eyes of his children as they see him by faith in this life even though it be through a glass darkly the commendation is justified Christ's self commendation is rightly motivated and then being accurate it is completely justified he is near so bonnie as when he commends himself I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys by way of summary then we may learn a few things from this we may learn that Christ is lovely to all a Christian's spiritual senses the rose appeals to the eye and it also appeals to the nostril the lily is the same and Christ is both and more in a spiritual sense he appeals to all the senses and the sensitivities of a living soul so that they are ravished so that they are satisfied whether in taste or feeling or sight or hearing the senses of the soul are charmed by Christ then surely we must also learn that Christ is lovely to a

Christian in recollection by which I mean I mean if you have a blessed encounter with him you'll never forget it and every time you recollect it he will be lovely as a rose fills the house with perfume that lingers so times of refreshing in Christ and with Christ have a habit of coming back to the soul and they delight us as we reflect upon them we mark our spiritual pilgrimage very often by them once again I would put it like this and say surely we ought to learn that Christ is lovely to his people in the bud as much as in full bloom the rose in bud is beautiful the rose in full bloom is beautiful and Christ in the first flush of a

Christian's life of grace is no less sweet and glorious than he is now and Christ in the life of a Christian who has gone all his days in Christ Christ in full bloom is a in riper experience loses none of his excellence he's lovely in the bud he's lovely in full bloom but then surely we also ought to learn here that Christ is so lovely that he needs no beautifying the rose of Sharon needs no paint the lily of the valleys needs no enamel neither colonel language can improve him beauticians are unemployable in his presence the humblest of sinners and the roughest of saints speaking sincerely of him detract nothing of his love but then

[30 : 24] I would also remark that we should learn that Christ satisfies the highest spiritual taste the highest spiritual taste when a Christian by growth in grace ascends from one level to another not in himself but in Christ not in his effort but by the grace of God in Jesus Christ and when he reaches a higher level relatively speaking of spiritual maturity and sensitivity and perception he will still be content with Christ he will never reach such levels that he wants to reach out beyond Christ the highest taste meets the highest satisfaction in Christ Jesus oh my friends our blessed

Lord Jesus Christ has and deserves all that he says of himself I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys he deserves it in his divine glory he is God over all blessed forever ultimate excellence is found in God alone and Christ is God so much so that roses and lilies pale before him our blessed Lord deserves these praises in his perfect manhood in him was no sin and some who have denied the deity of the

Lord Jesus Christ have nevertheless been astounded and astonished at his amazing humanity he deserves his praises in his perfect manhood and our blessed Lord deserves these praises in his reigning in his mediatorial qualifications that is to say in his redeeming work upon the cross his blood out shines red roses and his purity is more spotless than lilies roses and lilies cannot redeem he can our blessed Lord deserves these praises in his reigning power and glory he has a glory given him by his father as a reward and in the power of that glory he sits at his father's right hand and he judges the world in righteousness and the people in equity what can we say of him what can we say of him my friends but that we are ashamed we have not gazed on him more than we have that we have not esteemed him more highly than we have and that we are guilty of ingratitude to him the altogether lovely one if you have no such confession to make

I envy you those of us who know that we have had our folly that we have had our slips that we have had our sins that we have had our shortcomings with regard to our respect and our love for the Lord Jesus tonight we may come humbly before him yet again he will readily forgive his bride he may use sharp words with her for her good that he will readily forgive his bride because his heart is true his heart is faithful and tender he will forgive the past and he will receive here and now when his child but opens the door he will come in and sup with you and you with him and in that moment surely you will say thou oh

Christ art all I want more than all in thee I find fight and ruddy is my beloved all his heavenly beauties shine nature can't produce an object nor so glorious so divine he hath wholly won my soul to realms above so says the heart that gazes on Christ that holds him in high esteem that agrees with him in his own self estimation and self commendation and knows that when he says I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys he speaks truth and our own hearts know that he speaks truth because the blood has been applied and the righteousness that is his has been accounted ours

[36 : 54] I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys Amen 19 God know the minute that they grow their how to