

Christ, The Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley – as preached at Friendship Baptist Church
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Song 2:1 I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

People do not take it kindly when one boasts of themselves. In fact, Scripture says in Proverbs 27:2, “*Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips.*”

But here in the Song of Solomon, while there is much controversy concerning who is speaking the words in verse one, Solomon or Shulammitte, many Bible scholars believe it is Christ who speaks the words, “*I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.*”

Only one who is perfect can make these kinds of claims concerning himself and not be looked at as vain and proud. Thus here the Lord Jesus elegantly expresses His own excellencies, by comparing Himself unto a *rose*, the Rose of Sharon and a lily of the valley.

With the time I have, I would like for us to look at each of these flowers. It is my prayer that we will walk away from this sanctuary with praise on our lips and a greater love and appreciation the our Savior in our hearts.

Jesus says, “*I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.*”

The Root

If you have ever decided to plant some rose bushes you may have traveled to Home Depot or Lowes and entered their garden department looking for rose bushes only to come across some dried up looking roots wrapped in plastic.

This reminds me of Nathaniel’s question to Philip in John 1:46 “*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*” Can anything good come from a dried up root?

You just go ahead and plant that dried up root and out comes a robust plant that blossoms into a bush of beautiful flowers.

Just like that rose bush root, Jesus Christ, says the Bible, was “*the Root and Offspring of David; the rod out of the stem of Jesse.*” (Isaiah 11:1; Rev. 22:16).

The Colors

We find on a rose bush the mixture of colors, oftentimes intermixed together the colors of red and white. The Shulammitte (Song of Solomon 5:10) says of her beloved, “*My beloved is white and ruddy, Chief among ten thousand.*”

Some understand this to be referring to the two natures of Christ. By the *white* His divinity; by the *red* His humanity. The white denotes His natural purity and innocence; the red, His bloody agony and suffering for our sakes.

Isaiah 63:1-3 says, “*Who is this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This One who is glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength?; "I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? "I have trodden the winepress alone..."*”

Jesus Christ went to the Cross alone! He suffered, bled and died for our sins alone!

The Fragrance

But then there is that fragrant aroma that the rose exhibits. I must be honest and let you know that I can't get into the aroma of a rose but I have a wife and seven daughters that can!

I've seen their faces light up when presented a bouquet of roses and how they put them on display in a vase for all to see the beauty and admire the fragrance.

Have you received Jesus Christ, the Rose of Sharon, as your Savior and Lord? There is nothing so sweet and refreshing to the spiritual sense of the soul, as the mercies and graces and blessings that come to the one who places their trust in Christ!

The Beauty

Last, but not least, concerning the Rose of Sharon, let us consider its beauty. The Rose is called by plant-lovers, “The Queen of Flowers;” They say “There is none to be compared to it.”

The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ infinitely excels all...whether angels or men; none are to be compared to him. He is the Head, the flower, and glory of things in heaven, and of things on earth.

Psalms 45:2 says of Christ, “*Thou art fairer than the children of men.*” Song of Solomon 5:10 says, He is, “*Chief among ten thousand.*”

The roses that grew in Sharon were the best and greatest of roses. Thus Psalm 8:1 says, “*O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth...*”

The songwriter wrote these fitting words:

*You are beautiful beyond description; Too marvelous for words
Too wonderful of comprehension; Like nothing ever seen or heard
Who can grasp your infinite wisdom; Who can fathom the depth of your love
You are beautiful beyond description; Majesty enthroned above*

*And I stand, I stand in awe of you; I stand, I stand in awe of you
Holy God to whom all praise is due; I stand in awe of you.*

Of Christ, Paul writes in Ephesians 1:21 that He is “*far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*”

The letter to the Philippians tells us that “*God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*” (Phil. 2:9 -11)

The Rose of Sharon was a colorful flower; it was a fragrant flower; it was the most beautiful flower. But there was another characteristic of this rose that relates to our lovely Lord Jesus...

It was free!

The Roses of Sharon were free. The common person could have access to them when they did not have access to other flowers that were oftentimes found in private and exclusive gardens.

This lets us know that Jesus Christ was not planted by man—He left heavens glory and came to the earth having been sent by the Father to save us.

The Roses of Sharon were free and by the gruesome death of the Savior our salvation was purchased.

Christ the Lily of the Valley

Not only did Jesus say, “*I am the rose of Sharon;*” He said He was “*the lily of the valleys.*”

It represents holiness

A lily is white and very beautiful; within it are seven grains or seeds, of the color of gold. This plant is so well put together that our Lord said, “*That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*” I am told that the *White Lily* has a brighter whiteness than all flowers.

In the Bible, whiteness communicates *holiness*. In Revelation 1:14, Jesus is described this way: “*His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire*”

It is said of the bride, the Lamb’s wife, “*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.*” (Revelation 19:8)

Jesus admonishes the church in Sardis, in Revelation 3:4, that there were only a few among their number “*which have not defiled their garments...*” He says, “*and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.*”

Purity is essential, originally, perfectly, and absolutely inherent in Christ; He is holiness itself, His glory is infinite, within and without, every way glorious; the perfection of beauty.

It is fruitful

The lily is exceeding fruitful; one root puts forth fifty bulbs or scallions. Jesus Christ is beyond fruitful. We have already seen that he is “The Root!” From His death, burial and resurrection multitudes have been redeemed.

The Apostle John writes *“I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!””* (Rev 7:9-10)

It is the tallest of flowers

The lily is the tallest of flowers, yet hangs down its head.

We’ve already seen that Jesus Christ is exalted on high. Jesus Christ is higher than kings. He’s higher than the emperors of the earth. He is higher than heaven or angels but what we haven’t mentioned is that while He was high and lifted up, He was humble and lowly in heart.

Thus He is compared to the lily of the valley, in His exalted state, as God very high. But in His humiliations, He seems to hang down His head.

Some of you may remember a gospel song that was performed some years ago with the words,

*“They hung Him high, they stretched Him wide...
He hung His head for me He died...that's love...that's love.*

It serves as medicine

The lily is a flower that has many medicinal virtues.¹

Native Americans would use wood lily roots in order to make medicinal teas that would help to treat stomach disorders, coughs, tuberculosis, fevers, and child birth pains. These teas were used to wash swellings, bruises, wounds and sores and the flowers and roots were used in poultices for treating spider bites.

The prophet Jeremiah asked, “Is there no balm in Gilead, Is there no physician there?” (Jer. 8:22) We all should know the answer to that. Somebody called Jesus, *“The Great Physician who can heal the sin-sick soul.”*

He can cure spiritual blindness, He can soften a hard heart; He can cure your stubbornness—there is no sickness too hard for the Great Physician!

It is Fragrant

A lily is a sweet and a fragrant flower. The “Orania” lily has a fruity fragrance. I am told that the oriental “Rosario” lily smells like candy. Then there is the “Henry's Surprise” lily that smells like cream!

Many of the Oriental lilies have such a strong and odoriferous scent that many will not even take them into their homes as the fragrance is so overpowering.

¹ <http://www.pdrhealth.com/drugs/altmed/altmed-mono.aspx?contentFileName=ame0251.xml&contentName=Lily+of+the+Valley&contentId=411>

The Lord Jesus Christ is compared to the lily, whose aroma and spiritual sweetness very much excels and transcends the sweetest of any aromas that can be mentioned.

Mahalia Jackson used to sing a song with the words:

*He's sweet I know
He's sweet I know
Dark clouds may rise
And strong winds may blow
But, I can the world
Wherever I may go
That I have found a Savior
And He's sweet I know*

Now, I said earlier that I can't get into flowers and the aromas they give off but as a Christian, I can unashamedly tell you that Jesus Christ yields a most fragrant and lovely aroma.

This may not sound like a manly thing to say but you don't know what I've been through.

God watched over me as a tender sprout growing up without a father.

He protected me from seen and unseen danger.

God kept me from drugs and other kinds of addictions.

Then He sent someone to me with the message of the old, old story of Jesus and His love.

After that He saved me from sin as He cleansed me with the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

There are times in my life when I get discouraged and I cry out to Him for help and it is at these times that the most fragrant and lovely aroma of Jesus Christ ministers to my discouragement. It is at these times that the aroma of Christ calms my fears.

When my wife and I go to the market and when Debbie buys some Lysol or some other air freshener, she doesn't select the fragrance for her husband. Even if she says she does, she's fibbing—she is selecting a fragrance that *she* likes.

She puts those air fresheners in the bathroom. She strategically places the Plugins around the house where they are needed. When we need some instant air freshening we find a can of the stuff and use it.

Now eventually there comes a time when we need to reach for the spray—you can use your imagination—you know when you need to reach for the spray.

There have been times in my life when I needed to reach for Christ. I needed to needed to smell the fragrant aroma that the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley puts off.

The first time this occurred was when I first believed—when I was first saved. My life stank from the putrid odor of sin in my life. The prophet Isaiah said it this way, “*But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags...*”

In Philippians chapter three, the Apostle Paul wrote that before he became a Christian he hung on to thinking that he could score points with God by his education and his religious upbringing and his family line; but he came to the conclusion that all these things are but dung or manure when compared to the surpassing value of knowing Christ. Paul realized that he had to reach for the fragrance of Christ!

The commercials tell us that there are some air fresheners that just mask the odor and there are others that get to the root of what is causing the odor. Jesus Christ came not to deal with the symptoms of sin but the very sin itself.

There are some air fresheners have a built-in motion detector—they automatically spray when you enter the room. There is a sweet aroma that is sensed when one enters into the presence of Jesus Christ.

In Psalm 16:11 the Psalmist says, *“You (God) will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”*

Lastly, there are commercials running that advertise a new kind of air freshener. These air fresheners are loaded with two scents. It puts out one scent and then sometime later it cuts off the first scent and turns on the second scent.

The manufacturers say that the nose will get used to a certain fragrance until you no longer smell it. So they invented an air freshener that, for example, has apple spice and cranberry so at during one hour it puts off the apple spice scent and later in the day you will smell the cranberry.

The Bible tells us that the aroma of Christ stays fresh so that you will not get used to it!

Lamentations 3:22-23 says, *“Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.”*

*Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

*Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!*

*Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

Song 2:1 I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.