

Christ my Beloved – Song Series

Yearning for Christ's Love

Text: Song of Solomon 1:1-4

Introduction: Vs. 1

1. The Title – Song of songs
 - A. Similar expressions in Scripture: “King of kings”; “Lord of lords”; “Holy of holies”
 - B. Speaks of surpassing excellence and therefore of Christ.
2. The Author - Solomon
 - A. One of his 1,005 songs (I. Kings 4:32)
 - B. One of his 3 inspired Books in Scripture (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes & Song)
3. The Interpretation
 - A. The 3 main schools of thought
 1. Literal – Marital love/ideal marriage.
 2. Allegorical – No historical facts but a poetic composition to picture Christ's relationship to His people.
 3. Typical – Recognises the historical setting (Real places & real people) and understands it as pointing to Christ and the church.
 - B. Key verses on marriage as a picture of Christ and the church
 1. Eph. 5:32 *“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”*
 2. 2 Cor 11:2 *“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”*
 - C. Key principles for unlocking the message of the Song
 1. Seek to discern the main themes: To what does the passage point? Similar to parables, an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Not all points demand equal attention.
 2. Identify the speaker: Solomon and the Shulamite maiden. The bridegroom addresses her as “my love”; the bride addresses Him as “my beloved”. Look for the masculine and feminine pronouns (he, him, she, her)
4. The Character of the Book
 - A. Communion more than salvation.
 - B. Devotion more than doctrine.
 - C. Experience more than position.

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Exposition: Vs. 2-4

I. The Bridegroom's Love Desired (Vs. 2)

A. The Expression of her desire (2a)

1. 'kiss' – personal demonstration and affirmation of love
2. 'kisses' – repeated, frequent demonstrations of love
3. "of his mouth" – the highest and most intimate expression

B. The Estimation of His love (2b)

1. 'wine' – symbolic of the best of earthly pleasures and enjoyments. Speaks of temporary satisfaction.
2. "thy love" – the all-surpassing, incomparable love of Christ.
 - a. I. John 4:10 – "Herein is love..."
 - b. John 15:9 – "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you:"
 - c. Hymn: The Love of God

The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell; It goes beyond the highest star. And reaches to the lowest hell; The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win; His erring child He reconciled and pardoned from his sin.

Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the skies of parchment made; Were every stalk on earth a quill, and every man a scribe by trade; To write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry; nor could the scroll contain the whole, tho' stretched from sky to sky.

d. Hymn: Here is Love

Here is love vast as the ocean, loving kindness like the flood, when the Prince of life my ransom, shed for us His precious blood. Who his love will not remember? Who can cease to sing His praise? He can never be forgotten throughout heav'n's eternal days.

On the Mount of crucifixion, fountains opened deep and wide; through the floodgates of God's mercy flowed a vast and gracious tide. Grace and love, like mighty rivers, poured incessant from above, and heav'n's peace and perfect justice kissed a guilty world in love.

Let me all thy love accepting, love thee ever all my days; let me seek thy kingdom only and my life be to thy praise; Thou alone shalt be my glory, nothing in the world I see. Thou hast cleansed and sanctified me; Thou thyself hast set me free.

In thy truth thou dost direct me, by Thy Spirit through thy Word; and thy grace my need is meeting, as I trust in Thee my Lord. Of thy fullness thou art pouring Thy great love and power on me, without measure full and boundless, drawing out my heart to Thee.

II. The Bridegroom's Name Exalted (Vs. 3)

A. The Fragrance of His Attributes (3a)

1. 'savour' – smell, scent
2. 'good' – precious, sweet

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3. 'ointments' – anointing oil, perfume (E.g. the anointing oil described in Ex. 30:22-25)
 - a. Christ is the Messiah, the One anointed of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Christ's Divine graces are like sweet perfume to the believer (e.g. His holiness, purity, love, power, mercy, grace)
- B. The Fragrance of His Name (3b)
 1. The picture – perfume poured out. Illustration: Mary's anointing of Christ's feet. Jn 12:3 "...*the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.*"
 2. The Names of Christ: **Lord**, the sovereign Ruler and King; **Jesus**, the Saviour; **Christ**, the Anointed One and promised Messiah; **Emmanuel**, God revealed in human flesh; **Servant**, the humble and lowly One; **Advocate**, interceding for us before the throne; **Bread of Life**, satisfying our spiritual hunger; **Rose of Sharon**, shining forth the beauty of all the Divine attributes; **Door**, opening up our entrance to heaven and eternal life; **Shepherd**, watching over our lives with love and care; **High Priest**, bearing our names before the throne; **Lamb**, bearing our transgressions and our sins; **Prince of Peace**, reconciling us to God; **Redeemer**, purchasing us from sin's slavery; **True Vine**, releasing His life and freshness within us; **Word**, revealing God's mind and heart to us. **His Name is as ointment poured forth!**
- C. The Character of His Admirers (3c)
 1. 'virgins' – symbolic of purity. Only those who have been made clean by Christ's blood can fully appreciate the beauty of His Person.
 2. 'love' – the response of our hearts to the Revelation of His Person.

III. The Bridegroom's Fellowship Pursued (Vs. 4)

- A. The Plea/Prayer (4a)
 1. To be drawn to more intimate and close communion
 - a. Drawn to salvation (Jn. 6:44; 12:32)

Hosea 11:1-4 *"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. **I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.**"*

- b. Drawn in fellowship
 2. To pursue and follow after Christ

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- a. Our pursuit of him is dependent upon, and in proportion to His gracious wooing.
- b. Psalm 42:1-2 *“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?”*
- c. Psalm 63:8 *“My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.”*
- d. A.W. Tozer Pursuit of God (Pg. 15-17)

Christian theology teaches the doctrine of prevenient grace, which, briefly stated, means that before a man can seek God, God must first have sought the man. Before a sinful man can think a right thought of God, there must have been a work of enlightenment done within him. Imperfect it may be, but a true work nonetheless and the secret cause of all desiring and seeking and praying which may follow. We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit...The impulse to pursue God originates with God, but the outworking of that impulse is our following hard after Him. All the time we are pursuing Him we are already in His hand: ‘Thy right hand upholdeth me.’ In this divine ‘upholding’ and human ‘following’ there is no contradiction. All is of God...In practice, however, man must pursue God. On our part there must be positive reciprocation if this secret drawing of God is to eventuate in identifiable experience of the Divine.

The continuous and unembarrassed interchange of love and thought between God and the soul of the redeemed man is the throbbing heart of New Testament religion.

- e. The grand activity and focus of the Christian.
Illustration: Mary sitting at Christ’s feet.

B. The Answer (4b)

1. “the king” – recognition of His authority and position. Submission to His rule is a vital pre-requisite to intimate, living fellowship.
2. ‘chambers’ – the secret place (Psalm 91:1); the private rooms of the King in the Royal palace; the place of close communion and fellowship.
3. N.T. Invitation – Heb 10:19-22

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

C. The Activities (4c)

1. Rejoicing – the outflow of our relationship with Christ.

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2. Reflection – His love captivates our minds. N.T. Ordinance of the Lord's Table
- D. The Affirmation (4d)
1. The upright (righteous) desire this intimacy. The world finds no attraction in our Pure, Holy Bridegroom.
 2. See also 'virgins' of Verse 2

Conclusion

1. To the unsaved: Have you experienced His saving love, the kiss of salvation?
2. To the Individual: Are you pursuing a life of intimacy with Christ? What is the quality of your devotional life? Is Christ the object of your first love and affection?
3. To the church: Are we Christ-centred? What is our attitude to the services? Is the throb of our hearts to pursue Him and love Him?

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Lesson 2 – Black but Beautiful

Text: Song of Solomon 1:5-8

Introduction:

“There is no Book of the Bible which affords a better test of the depth of a man’s Christianity than the Song of Solomon. If a man’s religion be all in his head, - a well-set form of doctrines, built like mason work, stone above stone, - but exercising no influence upon his heart, this book cannot but offend him...” Robert Murray McCheyne

1. Review of correct interpretation
 - A. The 3 main schools of thought
 1. Literal – Marital love/ideal marriage. The problem with this interpretation is that the bride is not the only one pursuing the bridegroom (Refer 1:3, 4, 5:9 & 6:1)
 2. Allegorical – No historical facts but a poetic composition to picture Christ’s relationship to His people. The problem with this interpretation is that it ignores the clear references to actual people and places.
 3. Typical – Recognises the historical setting (Real places & real people) and understands it as pointing to Christ and the church.
 - B. Key N.T. Verses
 1. Eph. 5:32 *“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”*
 2. 2 Cor 11:2 *“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”*
 3. Luke 24:44 *“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”*
 - C. Key principles for unlocking the message of the Song
 1. Seek to discern the main themes: To what does the passage point? Similar to parables, an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Not all points demand equal attention.
 2. Identify the speaker: Solomon and the Shulamite maiden. The bridegroom addresses her as “my love”; the bride addresses Him as “my beloved”. Look for the masculine and feminine pronouns (he, him, she, her)

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I. A Humble Confession (Vs. 5-6)

A. Blackness (Vs. 5)

1. Confessed – ***“I am black”***

- a. The experience of being drawn into intimate fellowship with Christ as portrayed in Vs. 2-4 produces the confession in the Christian that comes in Vs. 5-6. Having seen the glorious wonder of her bridegroom and having tasted something of the sweetness of His fellowship, the bride now has a new understanding of her own imperfections. **A right view of Christ will produce a right view of self.**
- b. *“Every Christian, in proportion as he lives near to God, will feel this self-abasement, this lowliness of heart;”* C.H. Spurgeon
- c. *“Nothing humbles the soul like sacred and intimate communion with the LORD... Things once called “little negligences” are seen with new eyes in “the secret of His presence.”* Hudson Taylor
- d. Two further Biblical examples:
 - i. **The Prophet Isaiah:** *“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”* Isaiah 6:1-5
 - ii. **The Apostle John:** *“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me,*

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saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.”

Revelation 1:12-17

- e. Consider the example of Christ as revealed in Philippians 2
2. Discussed – **“daughters of Jerusalem”** – speaks of those who have an interest in the bridegroom but have not yet given themselves to him. Refer 5:8-9 & 6:1. This confession is the bride’s testimony and witness to those with an inquiring heart for the bridegroom. They could represent immature believers or seekers after the bridegroom.
3. Illustrated – **“as the tents of Kedar”**

Kedar was one of the firstborn sons of Ishmael (Gen 25:13; 1 Chr. 1:29). The Kedarites were a nomadic people who dwelt in tents made of rough, coarse goat’s hair in the area known as the wilderness of Shur (between Shur and Havilah) where Mt Sinai is located. These tents would be further blackened by the heat of the Eastern Sun and the blast of the desert winds.
4. Explained (Vs. 6)
 - a. She had Suffered
 - i. **“the sun hath looked upon me”** – the heat of the sun speaks of toil, labour and suffering. We bear the marks and imperfections that life imprints upon us.
 - ii. **“made me the keeper of the vineyards”**
 - b. She had Failed – **“mine own vineyard have I not kept”** = misplaced priorities; empty works. Busy in accomplishing the will of others but neglecting the will of her Lord. A vineyard speaks of fruitfulness (Jn 15). For a vineyard to produce, it needs watering, care and nurturing.
- B. Beauty (Vs. 5)
 1. Declared – **“I am comely”**
 - a. The paradox – a Christian is both a sinner and a saint. He is black but beautiful. Black in Adam but comely in Christ.
 - b. Psa 149:4 *“For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.”*
 2. Illustrated - **“curtains of Solomon”**
 - a. A contrast to the tents of Kedar. The curtains of Solomon’s palace would have been made of the finest material; finely woven and spotless.
 - b. They speak of the fine linen of the believer’s imputed righteousness.
 - i. Rev 19:7-8 *“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.**”*

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- ii. Isaiah 61:10 *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the **garments of salvation**, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”*
- iii. Illustration: Christ’s seamless robe (His robes for mine)
John 19:23 *“Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: **now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.**”*
- iv. **The wonderful exchange:** *“His robes for mine O wonderful exchange! Clothed in my sin, Christ suffered neath God’s rage. Draped in His righteousness, I’m justified. In Christ I live for in my place He died.”* My sin placed on Him; His salvation bestowed upon me. My corruption exchanged for His Perfection; my unloveliness for His holiness; my weakness for His strength; my ugliness for His beauty; my wrong for His righteousness; my filthy rags for His spotless robe.
- v. Illustration of Joshua the High Priest: Zec 3:1-5 *“And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was **clothed with filthy garments**, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, **Take away the filthy garments from him.** And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and **I will clothe thee with change of raiment.** And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and **clothed him with garments.** And the angel of the LORD stood by.”*
- vi. Christ, our beloved Bridegroom, sees us as pure and spotless. The bride is addressed as “the fairest among women” in Vs. 8. In Vs. 7 of chapter 4 He says, *“Thou art all fair, my love; there is **no spot** in thee.”*

II. A Fervent Desire (Vs. 7)

- A. Her expression of love – *“O thou whom my soul loveth”*
- B. Her expression of need
 1. She is hungry and weary.
 2. She seeks shade from the sun that has burnt her (Vs. 6). She seeks rest from her fruitless labours.
 3. The answer to our failures as believers is to seek out fellowship with our Shepherd.

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4. She seeks nourishment (feeds) and comfort (rest)

III. A Guiding Answer (Vs. 8)

* The first time the bridegroom speaks.

- A. Follow the Flock – Christ is found in the company of His sheep.
- B. Feed the Kids – ‘feed’ = shepherd. ‘kids’ = lambs. She is viewed as a shepherdess. She is not only to be concerned about her own desire for feeding and rest but to be careful to guide and help the young immature ones. In so doing, she will find herself in the company of the Shepherd. Illustration: Christ’s words of commission to Peter. Love for Christ will be expressed in love for His flock. She is commissioned to service that is close to the Shepherd’s heart in contrast with the empty works enforced upon her in Vs. 6 (keeping the vineyards).
- C. Shepherds Tents
 1. Refers to the Shepherd’s under-shepherds.
 2. “While sharing with the other under-shepherds in caring for His flock she will find the Chief Shepherd at her side, and enjoy the tokens of His approval.” Hudson Taylor Pg. 18
 3. “The Lord’s intention, then, is for her to be alongside His true under-shepherds, those who shepherd under the Lord’s direction.” Nee Pg. 37

Conclusion

Let him embrace my soul, and prove
Mine interest in his heav'nly love;
The voice that tells me, "Thou art mine,"
Exceeds the blessings of the vine.

On thee th' anointing Spirit came,
And spreads the savor of thy name;
That oil of gladness and of grace
Draws virgin souls to meet thy face.

Jesus, allure me by thy charms,
My soul shall fly into thine arms!
Our wand'ring feet thy favors bring
To the fair chambers of the King.

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Wonder and pleasure tune our voice
To speak thy praises and our joys;
Our memory keeps this love of thine
Beyond the taste of richest wine.

Though in ourselves deformed we are,
And black as Kedar's tents appear,
Yet, when we put thy beauties on,
Fair as the courts of Solomon.

While at his table sits the King,
He loves to see us smile and sing;
Our graces are our best perfume,
And breathe like spikenard round the room.

As myrrh new bleeding from the tree,
Such is a dying Christ to me
And while he makes my soul his guest,
My bosom, Lord, shall be thy rest.

No beams of cedar or of fir
Can with thy courts on earth compare;
And here we wait, until thy love
Raise us to nobler seats above.

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Lesson 3 – Refreshment and Rest

Text: Song of Solomon 1:7-8

Introduction:

1. C.H. Spurgeon on the Song:

Certain divines have doubted the inspiration of Solomon's Song; others have conceived it to be nothing more than a specimen of ancient love-songs and some have been afraid to preach from it because of its highly poetical character. The true reason for all this avoidance of one of the most heavenly portions of God's Word lies in the fact that the spirit of this Song is not easily attained. Its music belongs to the higher spiritual life, and has no charm in it for unspiritual ears. The Song occupies a sacred enclosure into which none may enter unprepared. 'Put off the shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground' is the warning voice from its secret tabernacles.

1. Review of Key N.T. Verses

A. Eph. 5:32 *"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

B. 2 Cor 11:2 *"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."*

C. Luke 24:44 *"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."*

2. **Purpose of this series:** Devotional rather than technical. To launch ourselves out upon the flow of the text and allow its Divine current to carry us nearer to our Saviour.

3. **The Scene:** Changes from the King's palace (Vs. 4) to the realm of the field, the flock and the shepherds. Christ is presented in the Song as the Shepherd-King. Christ is the King of kings but also the Great Shepherd and the Chief Shepherd of the sheep. He is both the sovereign Ruler over His people but also their tender Carer.

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I. A Fervent Supplication (Vs. 7a)

In this verse she expresses her desire for fellowship with her Beloved in another way. In verse 2 she said “kiss me”; in verse 4, “draw me”; now she says “tell me”. Her desire goes beyond the experience of intimate love to a desire to understand more of her Beloved’s ways. She desires His instruction. She wants to know where His presence can be found and enjoyed.

A. Her description of Him

1. Expression found 5 times in the Song
2. ‘soul’ = speaks of the inner most being. Speaks of a deep, abiding love.
3. ‘loveth’ = not a self-produced love.
 - a. A love that comes in response to the love of the Bridegroom. She was just a humble, Shulamite maiden. Yet she had become the object of the glorious king Solomon’s love.
 - b. Doctrine/application: A love that is Divine in its origin. 1 John 4:7-10 *“Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”* 19 *“We love him, because he first loved us.”*
 - c. Illustration: Wood fired by the sun’s rays. Hymn – “my heart restores its borrowed ray.”
 - d. God delights in our love. Illustration: A child’s expression of love to a parent.
 - e. Question: Do you take time to express your love to Christ? Do you take time to say “My Jesus I love thee”

B. Her expression of desire

1. A desire for unbroken fellowship – ‘where’. “Love would not be love if it did not desire to be continually with the object of its deepest affection.” J.B. Currie
2. A Desire for Refreshment and Rest – ‘feedest’; ‘rest’
 - a. **For Herself:** She is hungry and weary. She seeks shade from the sun that has burnt her (Vs. 6). She seeks rest from her fruitless labours (Vs. 6). The answer to our failures as believers is to seek out fellowship with our Shepherd. He leads us to pastures green and still waters (Psalm 23)
 - b. **For Others:** She is also a shepherdess, responsible for the care of little kids (Vs. 8)

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- c. Doctrine/Application: The total sufficiency of Christ to satisfy the believer's every need. Colossians 2:9-10 *"For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power."*

II. A Searching Question (7b)

- A. She is concerned about **Reputation**: She wants to be known as a wife who is faithful and loyal to her Shepherd-Bridegroom.
- B. She is concerned about **Distraction**. These companions and flocks are not evil as they are associated with the King. However, she is not content to simply be in their company, as blessed as that might be. She wants to be in His immediate presence.
- C. Application: Beware of distractions that rob us of time with our Saviour.

III. A Guiding Revelation (Vs. 8)

* The first time the bridegroom speaks. The pleading of our love will assuredly stir His heart to answer.

- A. The Description of the Bride
 - 1. Chapter 4:7 *"Thou art all fair my love; there is no spot in thee."*
 - 2. Doctrine/application: The imputed righteousness of Christ.
 - a. Romans 4 speaks much of this truth
 - b. 'impute' = means reckoned or counted. It is an accounting term which means "to put down on an account."
 - c. Illustration: Your life represented in a bank account. Before salvation we owe an unpayable debt to God because of our sins. Through salvation, Christ pays that debt with His precious blood; He wipes it clean. Then He credits to our account His own perfect righteousness. His righteousness covers our lives like a beautiful garment. Revelation 19:7-8 *"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.**"*

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3. C.H. Spurgeon:

‘O thou fairest among women,’ saith he. My soul, dost thou not feel love to Christ when thou rememberest that he thinks thee beautiful? I cannot see anything in myself to love, but he does, and calls me ‘all fair’. I think it must be that he looks into our eyes and sees, himself, or else this, that he knows what we are going to be, and judges us on that scale. As the artist, looking on the block of marble sees in the stone the statue which he means to fetch out of it with matchless skill, so the Lord Jesus sees the perfect image of himself in us, from which he means to chip away the imperfections and the sins until it stands out in all its splendour.

B. The Instruction to the Bride

1. Follow the Flock

- a. ‘follow’ – speaks of obedience. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” John 10:27
- b. ‘flock’ - Christ is found in the company of His sheep. There are times for intimate communion (the King’s chambers) but there are also times for fellowship in the company of others.
 - i. Matthew 18:20 *“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”*
 - ii. Christ walks in the midst of his churches (Rev 1:13 & 20)
 - iii. Christ appeared to the disciples when they were assembled together after His resurrection.
 - iv. “To be near to the Shepherd stay close to those who are closest to Him.” J.M. Flanigan

2. Feed the Young (Service)

- a. ‘feed’ = shepherd. She is commissioned to service that is close to the Shepherd’s heart in contrast with the empty works enforced upon her in Vs. 6 (keeping the vineyards). “She has taken character from the One whom her soul loves, and is engaged in the same kind of service of love.” C.A. Coates
- b. ‘kids’ = lambs. She is viewed as a shepherdess. She is not only to be concerned about her own desire for feeding and rest but to be careful to guide and help the young immature ones. In so doing, she will find herself in the company of the Shepherd.

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- c. Illustration: Christ's words of commission to Peter (John 21:15-17). Love for Christ will be expressed in love for His sheep, especially the young and tender. The way we treat God's sheep is a thermometer of our love for Christ.
 - d. Watchman Nee: "Our attention here focuses on service and warns that in seeking for Christ in fuller measure for herself, the duty to the younger and more immature ones must at the same time be met so as to avoid an exclusive attitude toward them. The mere betterment of oneself may become a peril to those pursuing higher states of spiritual affections."
3. Fellowship with the Shepherds
- a. Refers to the Shepherd's under-shepherds.
 - b. "While sharing with the other under-shepherds in caring for His flock she will find the Chief Shepherd at her side, and enjoy the tokens of His approval." Hudson Taylor Pg. 18
 - c. "The Lord's intention, then, is for her to be alongside His true under-shepherds, those who shepherd under the Lord's direction." Nee Pg. 37

Conclusion:

1. How is your love for Christ? Are you seeking intimate communion with Him?
2. To what or to whom are you looking for rest and comfort?
3. Are you following Him?
4. Are you serving Him?

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Lesson 4 – Admired and Adorned

Text: Song of Solomon 1:9-11

Introduction:

1. **Interpretation:** Key N.T. Verses
 - A. Eph. 5:32 *“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”*
 - B. 2 Cor 11:2 *“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”*
 - C. Luke 24:44 *“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”*
2. **Theme:** The Song presents the language of spiritual intimacy. It speaks to us of the affections of the heart.
3. **Challenge:** We should be both **Examined** and **Encouraged**. **Examined** as we read the bride’s words. What is the depth of our love and devotion for Christ? What is our estimation of Him? **Encouraged** as we read the Bridegroom’s words. How precious and comforting to be assured of how Christ views the believer through grace.

I. The Admiration of the Bride (Vs. 9)

- A. The Designation of the Bride (9a)
 1. “my love” = used 9 times in the Song to address the bride
 2. Doctrine: The believer is the object of Christ’s Divine love
 - a. Loved by the Father: John 17:22-23 *“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and **hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.**”*
 - i. **Question:** What are some of the qualities of the Father’s love for the Son?
 - ii. **Answer:** It is **everlasting**. Jn. 17:24 *“...for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”* God’s love for us is the same. Jer. 31:3 *“The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, **I have loved thee with an everlasting love:** therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”*
 - iii. **Answer:** It is **unchanging**. Mal. 3:6 *“For I am the LORD, I change not...”*

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- iv. **When I survey the Wondrous Cross:** See from his head his hands his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down, did ere such love and sorrow meet or thorns compose so rich a crown.
 - b. Loved by the Son: John 15:9 *“As the Father hath loved me, **so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.**”* Song 2:4 *“...his banner over me was love.”*
 - c. Loved by the Spirit: Romans 5:5 *“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is **shed abroad** in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”* “shed abroad” = poured out (bountifully)
- B. The Comparison of the Bride (9b)
- 1. Context & Background
 - a. The fame of Egypt’s horses – e.g. fast, well breed etc.
 - b. Solomon’s love for Egyptian horses: 2 Chronicles 1:16 *“And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt...”* 1 Kings 4:26 *“And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.”* Riding a horse was a sign of military rank in Solomon’s time (Unger)
 - 2. Lessons
 - a. The Believer is **Precious**
 - i. His chosen people: to be a special, distinct company of people: Ephesians 1:4 *“According as he hath **chosen us** in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”* 1 Peter 1:2 *“**Elect** according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...”*
 - ii. His prized possession: Titus 2:13-14 *“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and **purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.**”*
 - b. The Believer is **Purchased**
 - i. The price of an Egyptian horse: 1 Kings 10:29 *“And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for **an hundred and fifty...**”* A shekel of silver according to Unger was worth about 3.67 denarii in New Testament currency. 1 denarii was equivalent to a day’s wage. So one Egyptian horse was worth about 550 days labour.
 - ii. The high price paid for the believer: 1 Peter 1:18-19 *“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with*

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*corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with **the precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*

- c. The Believer is **Purposeful**
 - i. One objective of Pharaoh’s horses: To accomplish his purpose and do his bidding.
 - ii. Hudson Taylor “Those selected for Pharaoh’s own chariot would not only be of the purest blood and perfect in proportion and symmetry, but also perfect in training, docile and obedient; they would know no will be that of the charioteer, and **the only object of their existence would be to carry the king withersoever he would go.**” Pg. 19
 - iii. Challenge: Submission and Service. Are we totally yielded to him? Do we delight to serve Him? Are we motivated by what He sees or by what man sees?

II. The Adornment of the Bride (Vs. 10-11)

There are two aspects to the adornment of the Bride.

- A. Provided Adornment (Vs. 10)
 - 1. ‘rows’ = braids
 - 2. J.M. Flanigan: “Oriental women often wore several rows of pearls and jewels round the head, beginning on the forehead and descending down to the cheeks and neck, so that the face seemed to be almost framed in pearls.”
 - 3. Note: As a humble Shulamite maiden, it is unlikely she would have the ability to purchase such jewels. These have been graciously placed upon her by her king-lover.
 - 4. Lesson: The believer has been adorned through the work of salvation and the process of sanctification
 - a. Isaiah 61:10 *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath **clothed** me with the garments of salvation, he hath **covered** me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.”*
 - b. Ezekiel 16:10-14 *“I **clothed** thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers’ skin, and I **girded** thee about with fine linen, and I*

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covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus was thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God.”

c. Revelation 19:8 “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.”

B. Promised Adornment (Vs. 11)

1. ‘borders’ = same Hebrew word as ‘rows’ in Vs. 10.
2. Picture: A crown or wreath
3. Watchman Nee: “Gold stands for that which is divine in character...“studs of silver” bring redemption into view. To emboss this crown of divine work with silver studs or clasps points to the foundational work of all spiritual values in Calvary’s Cross.” Pg. 40
4. Lesson: Our Heavenly Bridegroom has not finished His Divine beautification of the believer. This process continues right through our lives until we go home to be with Him in His Royal Palace (sanctification).
 - a. Philippians 2:13 “*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*”
 - b. C.H. Spurgeon “Christ, who has begun with you, will never cease till He has perfected you.”

Conclusion:

1. How is your sense of worth? Do you realise just how precious you are to God?
2. Are you secure in His love?
3. What is our attitude to our King? Is He Lord? Is our passion to fulfil all His wishes for our lives?
4. What is our motive for service? Do we do it to be seen of Christ or men?
5. Are you cooperating with God in His work of sanctification in your life? Do you thank Him for what he has already done?

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Lesson 5 – The Incomparable Christ

Text: Song of Solomon 1:12-14

Introduction:

1. **Interpretation:** Key N.T. Verses
 - A. Eph. 5:32 *“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”*
 - B. 2 Cor 11:2 *“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”*
 - C. Luke 24:44 *“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”*
2. **Theme:** The Song presents the language of spiritual intimacy. It speaks to us of the affections of the heart.
3. **C.H. Spurgeon:** “The Song is a golden casket, of which love is the key rather than learning. Those who have not attained unto heights of affection, those who have not been educated by familiar intercourse with Jesus, cannot come near to this mine of treasure.” Pg. 104

I. The Presence of Christ (Vs. 12)

- A. The Place of His presence (12a)
 1. ‘king’ – Refer Vs. 4. Speaks of His exalted position as ruler and sovereign; His Lordship.
 2. ‘table’
 - a. **Provision:** Scripture speaks of the bounty of Solomon’s table. 1 Kings 4:22-23 *“And Solomon’s provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl.”* Everything we need for the Christian life is found in Christ.
 - b. **Position:** The table reminds us of the privilege we have as believer’s to be a part of the King’s royal family.
 - c. **Person:** It is the privilege of being in the King’s company at the table that is relished by the bride. This is what is most strongly in view.
 - d. **Application:** As we celebrate the ordinance of the Lord’s Table, we are reminded of the Provision of salvation that was made by the body and blood of Christ at Calvary. We also enjoy communion (fellowship) with Christ as a gathered company of believers (1 Cor 10:16).

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- B. The Response to His presence (12b)
 - 1. 'spikenard' = a precious perfume made from a plant that grows in the Himalaya Mountains. Represents our worshipful response to His Person & Provision. His presence produces spiritual sweetness in my life.
 - 2. N.T. Illustration: John 12:1-3 – The Fragrance of Mary's demonstration of sacrificial love.
 - 3. Hudson Taylor: "It is in His presence and through His grace that whatever of fragrance or beauty may be found in us comes forth. Of Him as its source, through Him as its instrument, and to Him at its end, is all that is gracious and divine." Pg. 21

II. The Preciousness of Christ (Vs. 13-14)

- A. The Symbol of Myrrh (Vs. 13a)
 - 1. The **Value** of Christ: Myrrh is spoken of in Scripture as a rich, rare and costly substance.
 - a. A gift of Jacob's to Joseph in Egypt (Gen 37:25)
 - b. An ingredient in the anointing oil for the tabernacle worship (Ex. 30:23-25)
 - c. It is mentioned 8 times in the Song
 - 2. The **Sacrifice** of Christ: Myrrh is sweet to smell but bitter to taste. The sufferings of the cross were a bitter cup our Lord drank but how sweet they are to the nostrils of the repentant sinner.
 - a. Myrrh was offered to Christ as a gift by the wise men (Matt. 2:11)
 - b. Christ was offered a wine/myrrh mixture at the cross (Mark 15:23)
 - c. Christ's body was embalmed in myrrh and aloes by Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus.
 - 3. Other applications from Spurgeon's Sermon: Myrrh also represents pleasantness, preserving qualities, a disinfectant, a cure and a beautifier.
- B. The Title of well-beloved (13b)
 - 1. First time title used in the Song. Used 33 times in the Song.
 - 2. Refers to one who is greatly & dearly loved. It's the Title used by God the Father of His Son (e.g. Matt. 3:17)
 - 3. Challenge: How precious is Christ to you? What place does He have in your deepest affections?
- C. The Picture of Communion (13c)
 - 1. Christ is cherished
 - 2. Spurgeon: "She desires to have him where she can see him, and near to her heart." Pg. 114
 - 3. Illustration: The Apostle John (Jn 13:23)

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III. The Peculiarity of Christ (Vs. 14)

The Symbol of Camphire

1. The Plant (14a)
 - a. 'cluster' = Hebrew word 'Eshkol' (Refer Num 13:23)
 - b. 'camphire' = A Henna flower that grows in this area. The shrub is from four to 6 feet high and produces highly fragrant, white flowers that grow in clusters.
2. The Place (14b)
 - a. 'vineyards' = place of grapevines
 - b. 'Engedi' = Located in the wilderness of Judea on the western shore of the Dead Sea. A flourishing oasis in the midst of desert conditions. It was a place full of rocks and caves. David hid here from Saul (1 Samuel 23:29)
3. The Principles
 - a. Christ is our **oasis** in the dry, barren wilderness of this world. He is found in a place of **refreshment** and **rest**. "Living in the wilderness of the world her Beloved is sweetness to her, a sweetness unknown in the moral desert all around her."
Flanigan
 - b. Christ is unique, He stands out to the spiritual eye. "The bouquet of henna-flowers in a place where flowers were not generally seen symbolizes the uniqueness of the Lord Jesus." Nee
 - c. Christ is **sweet/fragrant**. He satisfies the longing heart. Interestingly the word 'camphire' is translated elsewhere 'ransom' and 'satisfaction'

Conclusion:

1. Is your life fragrant for the Saviour?
2. How much do you value your Saviour? Is He precious to you?

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Lesson 6 – Love’s Fervent Praise

Text: Song of Solomon 1:15-17

Introduction:

1. **Interpretation:** Key N.T. Verses (Eph 5:32; 2 Cor. 11:2)
2. **Theme:** The Song presents the language of spiritual intimacy. It speaks to us of the affections of the heart. On a natural level, it teaches us something of the sacredness and specialness of the marriage union. On a spiritual level, it teaches us of the blessed relationship between Christ and His church, between Christ and the believer.
3. **This Lesson:** The chapter reaches a beautiful crescendo with the Bride and Bridegroom seeking to outdo each other in their passionate expressions of love.
4. **Tozer:** “The continuous and unembarrassed interchange of love and thought between God and the soul of the redeemed man is the throbbing heart of New Testament Religion.”

I. The Bridegroom’s Praise (Vs. 15)

A. The beauty of her appearance (15a)

1. He describes her as ‘fair’
 - a. Ezekiel 16:14 *“And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through **my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God.**”*
 - b. Revelation 19:7-8 *“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.**”*
 - c. Psalm 149:4 *“For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will **beautify the meek with salvation.**”*
2. He designates her “my love”
 - a. Jeremiah 31:3 *“The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, **I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.**”*
 - b. 1 John 3:1 *“Behold, what manner of **love** the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God...”*
 - c. 1 John 4:10 *“Herein is **love**, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”*

B. The beauty of her eyes (15b)

1. The emblem of the dove in Scripture
 - a. 3 times the Bridegroom refers to her in the song as “my dove” (2:14, 5:2, 6:9)

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- b. Symbol of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32)
 - c. Symbol of peace (Gen. 8:8-12)
 - d. Symbol of redemption (Gen 15:9, Lev. 5:7, 12:6, Luke 2:24)
2. The meaning of “doves eyes”
- a. **Pure Eyes:** She has eyes for Him and Him alone. Ezekiel 6:9
*“And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, **because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols:** and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.”*
 - b. **Pardoned Eyes:** She has been made fit for His presence through His provision of grace.
 - c. **Peaceful Eyes:** There is no enmity in her eyes. They are filled with love for Him. A dove is a gentle, peaceful creature.
 - d. **Perceptive Eyes:**
 - i. Immediate context: The bride has just expressed her estimation of the Bridegroom in Vs. 13-14. She likens Him to ‘myrrh’ and ‘camphire’
 - ii. Application: Christ’s heart is moved when our eyes are consumed with His attributes. This is truly attractive to Him.

II. The Bride’s Praise (Vs. 16-17)

- A. The praise of His Person (Vs. 16a-b)
 - 1. He is beautiful (16a)
 - a. Christ is the Lamb without spot or blemish: 1 Peter 1:19 *“...a **lamb without blemish and without spot.**”*
 - b. Christ is sinless: 1 John 3:5 *“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; **and in him is no sin.**”*
 - c. Christ is Holy: Revelation 4:8 *“And the four beasts had each of them six sings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, **Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.**”*
 - 2. He is delightful (16b)
 - a. ‘pleasant’ = delightful, sweet. Lovely & agreeable.
 - b. Same word used in Psalm 133:1 – *“Behold, how good and how **pleasant** it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”*
 - c. Websters 1828: ‘pleasant’ means pleasing, agreeable; grateful to the mind or the senses. Illustrations: Light is pleasant to the eye, an orange is pleasant to the taste, harmony is pleasant to the ear, a rose is pleasant to the smell.

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- d. Christ is pleasant to the heart and soul. He truly satisfies the longings of our spirit.
- e. Psalm 34:8 *“O **taste** and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.”*
- f. M’Cheyne: Excerpt from sermon on Song 2:2-3

“Some people think there is no joy in religion, - it is a gloomy thing. When a young person becomes a Christian, they would say, Alas! he must bid farewell to pleasure, - farewell to the joys of youth, farewell to a merry heart. He must exchange these pleasures for reading of the Bible and dry sermon books, - for a life of gravity and preciseness. This is what the world says. What does the Bible say? “I sat down under His shadow with great delight.” Ah! let God be true, and every man a liar. Yet no one can believe this except those who have tried it. Ah! be not deceived, my young friends; the world has many sensual and many sinful delights, - the delights of eating and drinking, and wearing gay clothes, - the delights of revelry and the dance. No man of wisdom will deny that these things are delightful to the natural heart; but on, they perish in the using, and they end in an eternal hell! **But to sit down under the shadow of Christ, wearied with God’s burning anger, wearied with seeking after vain saviours, at last to find rest under the shadow of Christ, ah! this is great delight. Lord, evermore may I sit under this shadow! Lord, evermore may I be filled with this joy!**”

B. The praise of His Provision (16c-17)

- 1. Provision of rest & fellowship (16c)
 - a. ‘bed’ = couch
 - b. ‘green’ = speaks of growth & fresh life (2:13)
 - c. Psalm 23:1-3 *“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. **He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.”***
- 2. Provision of a place of abode (16b)
 - a. Beams of Cedar: Cedar is mentioned 51 times in Scripture. Apart from its frequent use in construction (e.g. Solomon’s temple), it was associated with at least two O.T. rites of purification. 1. Associated with the laws of cleansing from leprosy (Lev. 14) 2. One of the ingredients of water of separation (burnt with red heifer) to cleanse from defilement (Num 19)
 - b. Rafters of Fir: Also used much in O.T. construction (e.g. Solomon’s temple). This could be a reference to Solomon’s house in the forest of Lebanon described in 1 Kings 7:2-7. It had beams of cedar.
 - c. Applications: We shelter under our Saviour’s provision of redemption. He has made His abode with us through the Spirit (John 14:23). Christ is preparing a place for us in glory (John 14). We share the riches of Christ. They are ‘ours’.

Conclusion: Do you know the satisfaction of salvation through Christ? Are your eyes faithful to Christ or are they lusting after worldly things? Do you praise your Saviour for His glorious attributes and for the redemption He has provided?

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Lesson 7 – Love’s Adoring Perspective

Text: Song of Solomon 2:1-3

Introduction:

1. **Interpretation:** Key N.T. Verses (Eph. 5:32; 2 Cor. 11:2)
2. **Theme:** The Song is like one of the N.T. parables; an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.
3. **This Lesson:** Loving dialogue between the Bride and Groom continues. Rich, symbolic word pictures are used to express the mutual admiration and love they both possess for each other.

I. Christ’s Revelation of Himself (Vs. 1)

A. The Symbol of the Rose (1a)

1. Christ is often likened to a plant in Scripture
 - a. “...I am the **root** and offspring of David...” Rev. 22:16
 - b. “For he shall grow up before him as a **tender plant**, and as a **root** out of a dry ground...” Isaiah 53:2
 - c. “And there shall come forth a **rod**, out of the **stem** of Jesse, and a **Branch** shall grow out of his **roots**.” Isaiah 11:1
 - d. “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous **Branch**, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” Jeremiah 23:5
2. The plain of Sharon - Likely refers to a dry region. (s. Isaiah 53:2)
3. The truths portrayed in the Rose
 - a. Christ is **First**: The Rose is the queen of flowers. Later she calls Him, “*the chiefest among ten thousand.*” (5:10)
 - b. Christ is **Fragrant**: The sweet odour of His Person attracts seeking hearts to Him. He provides delight and satisfaction.
 - c. Christ is **Fair**: How beautiful and attractive is the Rose to the eye. It captivates and holds the attention. Christ is altogether Lovely and Fair in His Person. There is no blemish or spot in Him.

B. The Symbol of the Lily (1b)

1. Christ’s **Beauty**: Christ Himself said that Solomon in all his glory did not compare to the glory of the lily (Luke 12:27)
2. Christ’s **Purity**: White speaks of that which is morally clean and pure.
3. Christ’s **Humility**: The locations of both plants speak of humility.

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II. Christ's Comparison of the Believer (Vs. 2)

A. Description of her environment – 'thorns'

1. A symbol of the curse: Genesis 3:17b-18a "*...cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee...*"
2. Christ bore a crown of thorns at His crucifixion: Matt 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2, 5
3. The thorns speak of evil and hostility, the stamp of the curse that is upon the unsaved and the world. In this verse it symbolises the unsaved – 'daughters'.

B. Estimation of her person – 'lily'

1. The believer **attracts** Christ's focus: We are precious in His sight in a world full of depravity and sin. She grows as a beautiful flower in an environment of ugliness (James B. Currie)
2. The believer **reflects** Christ's image
 - a. We have a new, distinct nature. Christ can turn thorns into lilies!
 - b. We have been made partakers of His likeness (s. Vs. 1).
 - i. Man was first created to display the image of God. With the fall, that image was marred but through redemption and God's work of sanctification in our lives, we again (though imperfectly) reflect His image (Rom 8:29).
 - ii. David Brainerd: "Oh, my Brother, pursue after holiness; press toward this blessed mark; and let your thirsty soul continually say, "I shall never be satisfied till I awake in Thy likeness." (Letter to his brother John just prior to his death"
3. The believer **displays** Christ's testimony
 - i. The believer should stand out in this world!
 - ii. Does the world see a difference in your life?
 - iii. Illustration: Eric Liddell in concentration camp. Japanese commander's testimony at his death. Last words were, "It's complete surrender"

III. The Believer's Estimation of Christ (Vs. 3)

A. Her Description of Him (3a)

1. Christ is **Unique**: In 5:10 she calls him, "*the chiefest among ten thousand*"
2. Christ is **Unrivalled**: He is above all. There is none like Him! He is far better than all this world can offer. "...the thought the bride expresses is this: You are so much more to me than any other can possibly be." (Ironsides)

B. Her Experience of Him (3b)

1. **Rest** – "sat down"

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2. Refuge – “shadow”

- a. Background: Hot eastern climate (refer Vs. 6-7)
- b. The sun’s heat is a picture of tribulation, affliction and persecution (Matt. 13:5-6; 20-21)
- c. Other verses that speak of God being our shade
 - i. Psalm 17:8 *“Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the **shadow** of thy wings.”*
 - ii. Psalm 36:7 *“How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the **shadow** of thy wings.”*
 - iii. Psalm 91:1-4 *“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the **shadow** of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.”*
- d. Beware of seeking refuge in the “trees of the wood”
- e. Question: To whom to we resort in times of distress?

3. Rapture – “great delight”

- a. M’Cheyne: Excerpt from sermon on Song 2:2-3

“Some people think there is no joy in religion, - it is a gloomy thing. When a young person becomes a Christian, they would say, Alas! he must bid farewell to pleasure, - farewell to the joys of youth, farewell to a merry heart. He must exchange these pleasures for reading of the Bible and dry sermon books, - for a life of gravity and preciseness. This is what the world says. What does the Bible say? “I sat down under His shadow with great delight.” Ah! let God be true, and every man a liar. Yet no one can believe this except those who have tried it. Ah! be not deceived, my young friends; the world has many sensual and many sinful delights, - the delights of eating and drinking, and wearing gay clothes, - the delights of revelry and the dance. No man of wisdom will deny that these things are delightful to the natural heart; but on, they perish in the using, and they end in an eternal hell! **But to sit down under the shadow of Christ, wearied with God’s burning anger, wearied with seeking after vain saviours, at last to find rest under the shadow of Christ, ah! this is great delight. Lord, evermore may I sit under this shadow! Lord, evermore may I be filled with this joy!”**

- b. True joy is found in Christ’s presence

4. Refreshment – “fruit was sweet to my taste”

- a. Provision: All the believer needs is found in Christ. *“According as his divine power hath given unto us **all things** that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”* 1 Peter 1:3
- b. Pleasure: Christ is sweet to the taste! *“O taste and see that the Lord is good...”* Psalm 34:8

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Lesson 8 – In Christ’s Banqueting Hall

Text: Song of Solomon 2:4-7

Introduction:

1. **Interpretation:** Christ is to be found in all the Scriptures. Luke 24:27 *“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”*
2. **Theme:** The Song is like one of the N.T. parables; an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.
3. **This Lesson:** The bride testifies of a further and deeper experience of her Beloved’s love. The scene moves to the King’s banqueting house.

I. The Experience of His Love (Vs. 4)

A. The Banquet (Vs. 4a)

1. Invitation – “He brought me”
 - a. Drawn in Salvation
 - i. Hosea 11:4 *“I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love.”*
 - ii. Jeremiah 31:3 *“...Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”*
 - iii. *My song is love unknown, my Saviour’s love to me, love to the loveless shown that they might lovely be, Lord who am I that for my sake, my Lord should take frail flesh and die? Here might I stay and sing of him my soul adores: never was love, dear king, never was grief like thine. This is my friend in whose sweet praise, I all my days would gladly spend. (Samuel Crossman)*
 - b. Drawn in Fellowship
 - i. As the bride pursues and adores the Groom, he responds by drawing her into deeper experiences of His love.
 - ii. James 4:8 *“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you...”*
2. Provision – “banqueting house”
 1. Solomon’s Banqueting house: Josephus, the Jewish historian, describes Solomon’s palace – “Constructed of white marble, cedar, gold and silver, it contained several great halls lined with columns. One hall was for public trials and judgments, and another for the king and his immense ivory throne. Another hall was designated for the queen, and yet another for feasts and banquets, in which all the utensils were made of gold.” (Antiquities 8.130)

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2. Psalm 23:5 “*Thou preparest a **table** before me in the presence of mine enemies...*”
3. Psalm 34:8 “*O **taste** and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*”
4. 2 Peter 1:3 “*According as his divine power hath given unto us **all things that pertain unto life and godliness**, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*”

B. The Banner (Vs. 4b)

1. “The word ‘banner’ is most often found in the book of Numbers where it refers to the ensigns marking out the individual encampments of each of Israel’s tribes.” (Currie)
 2. It’s position – “over me”
 - a. Christ is unashamed to declare His love for us.
 - b. He is not ashamed to call us brethren (Heb. 2:11)
 3. It’s message – “love”
 - a. Christ’s love in the light of His other attributes: It is unchangeable, everlasting, everywhere present, faithful
 - b. Consider the love of Christ: John 15:9 “*As the Father hath loved me, **so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.***”
- c.** Consider the love of the Father: John 17:23 “*...and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, **and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.***”

II. The Effect of His Love (Vs. 5)

A. Her Response – love sick

1. The bride is overwhelmed by the love of her Groom. So we as believers will be in awe when we take time to meditate on the love of our Saviour.
2. Even the queen of Sheba, a woman accustomed to royal palaces, was overwhelmed and overawed when she saw the glory of Solomon’s kingdom first hand. “*...there was no more spirit (breath) in her.*” 1 Kings 10:4-5
3. Consider our past before we knew Christ: We were in a miry pit, clothed in the filthy rags of our own righteousness’s. We were rebels against God and His righteous laws. But Christ’s love melted our hardened hearts and drew us to Himself. He cleansed us, took away our rags and clothes us in His perfect righteousness. He made us His sons and daughters, heirs and joint heirs with Christ.
4. Hymn excerpts:
 - a. “I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and wonder how he could love me a sinner condemned unclean”
 - b. “O perfect love, all human thought transcending”
 - c. “The love of God is greater far...”

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d. “Here is love, vast as the ocean...”

5. Illustration: D L Moody

B. Her prayer – For strengthening and comfort

1. ‘flagons’ = likely raisin cakes. “In ancient times a sweet wine was made and then concentrated by boiling. After which, other ingredients being added, a paste was made, pressed and allowed to harden into a form of cakes. These were then cut up and carried by travellers as a means of sustenance.” (James. B. Currie)
2. ‘apples’ = S. Vs. 3
3. Principle: Christ is the source of all spiritual strength for the Christian life. We are even dependent upon His grace for our close fellowship with Him.
4. John 6:57 *“As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.”*

III. The Embrace of His Love (Vs. 6-7)

A. The Groom’s Response (Vs. 6)

1. As the magnitude of His love dawns on her heart, she feels faint. She has a sense of inadequacy and unworthiness that she should be the object of such love. The Bridegroom responds to her cry for help and catches her in His arms.
2. The position of the bride is one of utter dependence. This is to be the posture of the Christian life. Song 8:5 *“Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, **leaning upon her beloved?**”*
3. Deut. 33:27 *“The **eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.**”*

B. The Bride’s Desire (Vs. 7)

1. She desires uninterrupted communion and fellowship.
2. “daughters of Jerusalem” = the ladies of the palace. Represent those who have a casual interest in the Groom but who do enjoy the same degree of closeness to the Groom. Understanding their potential to cause disruption to her communion, she adjures them not to interfere.
3. ‘roes’ & ‘hinds’ = sensitive creatures that are easily startled
4. “till he please” = submission to His will

Conclusion: Rest in Christ’s everlasting love!

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Lesson 9 – A Time of Spring Love

Text: Song of Solomon 2:8-13

Introduction:

1. **Interpretation:** Christ is to be found in all the Scriptures. Luke 24:27 *“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”*
2. **This Lesson:** The bride is in a winter dwelling, awaiting the return of her Beloved. He comes to woo her afresh, to lead her out of the winter season to enjoy the blessings of spring, and into a fresh experience of His love and blessing.
3. **The Scene:** The bride appears to be in a winter house, possibly that of King Solomon’s. It was common for kings to have both winter and summer houses. (Jeremiah 36:22; Judges 3:20; Amos 3:15)

I. His Approach (Vs. 8-9a)

A. The Sound of His voice (8a)

1. The bride is awakened by the voice of her Beloved.
2. A mark of a genuine believer
 - a. John 10:27 *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:”*
 - b. Jeremiah 15:16 *“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart:”*

B. The Swiftness of His coming (8b-9a)

1. ‘mountains’ & ‘hills’ = symbolize obstacles to be overcome
2. ‘roe’ or ‘young hart’ = speaks of swiftness. Christ easily overcomes all barriers to draw near to His bride

II. His Appearance (Vs. 9b)

A. His Presence – “standeth behind our wall”

B. His Gaze – “looketh forth at the windows” The bride is the object of His loving gaze

C. His Revelation – “shewing himself through the lattice”

1. ‘lattice’ = a hole or aperture in the wall
2. Openings to allow refreshing air to circulate freely in the house

III. His Announcement (Vs. 10-13)

A. His designation of her (Vs. 10a, 13b)

1. “my love” = we are the objects of our Saviour’s love and affection
2. “my fair one” = speaks of one who is beautiful, comely and pleasant
3. Same phrase repeated in 13b

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- B. His Invitation to her (Vs. 10b – 13a)
1. “rise up” = He seeks to arouse and awaken her from her despondency
 2. “come away” = He seeks to draw her into His fellowship
 3. “winter is past” = He seeks to draw her focus away from the darkness of winter to the arrival of spring
 4. The marks of spring
 - a. The Sights – flowers and green figs
 - b. The Sounds – singing birds and voice of the turtle dove. Note: Turtle doves leave for winter and come back in spring.
 - c. The Smells – vines with tender grapes

IV. The Application (lessons)

- A. **The Typical Lesson:** As the bride of Christ, we anticipate and await the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
1. Behold he cometh! – The bride awaits his coming with anticipation
 - a. Rev. 3:11 *“Behold, I come quickly;”*; Rev. 22:7 *“Behold, I come quickly;”*; Rev. 22:12 *“And, behold, I come quickly;”*
 - b. Rev. 22:20 *“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.”*
 2. Christ will personally come for His bride
 - a. 1 Thess. 4:16-18 *“For **the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout**, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and **so shall we ever be with the Lord**. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”*
 - b. John 14:1-3 *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again, and receive you unto myself**; that where I am, there ye may be also.”*
 3. Christ gives us glimpses of Himself that remind us His coming is near
 4. Christ will catch us away at the rapture – “Come up hither...” (Rev. 4:1)
 5. Christ will take us home to a place of joy and blessing, never more to experience the pain and sorrow of this world and its trials and tribulations.
 6. The celebration of the Lord’s Table involves looking forward to Christ’s return:

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- a. The backward look – *“this do in remembrance of me”*
 - b. The inward look – *“let a man examine himself”*
 - c. The forward look – *“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death **till he come.**”* (1 Cor. 11:26) Matt. 26:29 *“But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, **until that day** when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”*
- B. The Devotional Lesson:** Christ actively seeks our fellowship. He takes the initiative to draw near to us in times of trouble and tribulation (winter). He comes to draw us into deeper experiences of His love.
1. Christ’s voice through the Word fills our hearts with joy
 2. Christ easily overcomes any obstacle to draw near to us
 3. Christ reveals Himself to us afresh and calls us forth to follow Him and to experience His love and presence
 4. Similar scene in 5:2 – Are we indifferent to the overtures of His love?

Conclusion:

1. Are we anticipating our Bridegroom’s return?
2. Are you going through a winter season in your life? Christ calls you forth to experience His love and blessing
3. As we partake of the Lord’s Table, let us both look back and also forward as we look for our Lord’s return.

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Lesson 9 – From Winter to Spring

Text: Song of Solomon 2:8-13

Introduction:

1. **Interpretation:** Christ is to be found in all the Scriptures. Luke 24:27 *“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”* “There is no book of the Bible which affords a better test of the depth of a man’s Christianity than the Song of Solomon...it contains the tenderest breathings of the believer’s heart towards the Saviour, and the tenderest breathings of the Saviour’s heart again towards the believer.” (McCheyne)
2. **The Scene:** The bride appears to be in a winter house, possibly that of King Solomon’s. It was common for kings to have both winter and summer houses. (Jeremiah 36:22; Judges 3:20; Amos 3:15). There is a distinct change in the mood from Vs. 6-7. There is a sense of distance from the Groom. She is passing through a winter season.
3. **This Lesson:** The bride’s experiences in the winter season teach us of our own Christian experience. There are seasons in the Christian life and sometimes God, in His infinite wisdom, allows our souls to go through a wintry experience for our ultimate good. The winter experience could be trials, chastening or even the results of sin and backsliding.

I. His Approach (Vs. 8-9a)

A. The Sound of His voice (8a)

1. The bride is awakened by the voice of her Beloved.
2. A mark of a genuine believer
 - a. John 10:27 *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”*
 - b. Jeremiah 15:16 *“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.”*

B. The Swiftiness of His coming (8b-9a)

1. ‘mountains’ & ‘hills’ = symbolize obstacles to be overcome
2. ‘roe’ or ‘young hart’ = speaks of swiftiness. Christ easily overcomes all barriers to draw near to His bride
3. What are the barriers? Could represent a number of things. E.g. sin in the life of the believer; discouragement; trials etc... You may say, “This trial I am going through is such a hindrance to my spiritual life. It’s an insurmountable obstacle.” However, Christ can triumph over any obstacle that stands as an obstruction to our fellowship with Him.
4. The Groom takes the initiative. In this passage we see Him going to great efforts to awaken his bride and to draw her on to new

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experiences of His love. He comes to her in her times of trouble and tribulation.

II. His Appearance (Vs. 9b)

- A. His Presence – “standeth behind our wall”
- B. His Gaze – “looketh forth at the windows” The bride is the object of His loving gaze. He watches over her in all her distress.
- C. His Revelation – “shewing himself through the lattice”
 - 1. ‘lattice’ = a hole or aperture in the wall
 - 2. Purpose of the lattice was to allow refreshing air to circulate freely in the house
 - 3. The Groom comforts the bride with His presence

III. His Announcement (Vs. 10)

- A. His Endearment of her (Vs. 10a, 13b)
 - 1. “my love” = we are the objects of our Saviour’s love and affection
 - 2. “my fair one” = speaks of one who is beautiful, comely and pleasant. This is how Christ views the believer through Grace.
 - 3. Same phrase repeated in 13b
 - 4. Observe the personal pronoun ‘my’. A personal declaration of His love. She is His treasured possession
- B. His Invitation to her (Vs. 10b – 13a)
 - 1. “rise up” = He seeks to arouse and awaken her from her despondency
 - 2. “come away” = He seeks to draw her into His fellowship

IV. His Argument (Vs. 11-13)

- A. Winter is over
 - 1. She seems unaware of this fact. He reveals it to her. He now seeks to draw her focus away from the cold & darkness of winter to the warmth and light of spring.
 - 2. The winter season of necessity, must precede the spring. *“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.”* (Ecc. 3:1)
 - 3. Principle: Trials and tests are God’s preparations for a fresh spring time of blessing. John 15 teaches this principle. The Father cuts us back so that there might be new life and more fruit.
 - 4. Principle: Only the Lord can truly tell you when your winter season (trials & testings) is over.
- B. Spring has arrived
 - 1. Just as the aspects of the winter season have their counterpart in the spiritual realm, so also the spring.

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2. He speaks to here of the sights (flowers), sounds (birds) and smells (figs and grapes) of spring. Each of these teach us a spiritual lesson:
 - a. Flowers = represent beauty and fragrance. Speaks of the Christian graces. For example, growth in patience and longsuffering, the development of godly character, a deeper walk with God. These are the fragrant, beautiful things that come after the winter.
 - b. Singing birds = represents praise and joy. Turtle dove specifically mentioned. Turtle doves leave for winter and come back in spring.
 - c. Fruit (figs & grapes) = represent the fruit of the Spirit, the fruit that comes from the experiences of the winter season.
 - d. Robert Murray McCheyne: “Christ’s coming changes all things to the believer and His love is more tender than ever. We saw in the parable that when the bride sat desolate and alone, all nature was steeped in sadness. Her garden possessed no charms to draw her forth, for winter reigned without and within. But when her lord came so swiftly over the mountains, he brought the spring along with him. All nature is changed as he advances and his invitation is: “For the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.” Just so it is with the believer when Christ is away; all is winter to the soul. But when He comes again over the mountains of provocation, He brings a gladsome spring-time with Him.”
3. Prophetic picture: We can’t but also see a picture of the return of Christ in these verses. We walk through this life in a winter season in this world. One day Christ will come for his waiting bride and will usher in the eternal spring. We will hear his voice calling us, “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.”

Conclusion: Are you going through a winter season in your life? Christ calls you forth to experience His love and blessing afresh. Trust in Him and anticipate the spring time of blessing that is coming.

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Lesson 10 – Christ Pursues His Bride

Text: Song of Solomon 2:14

Introduction:

1. Comparison between Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon:
 - Ecclesiastes pictures the life unsatisfied with the things of this life - *“Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:”* (John 4:13)
 - Song of Solomon pictures the life satisfied in Christ - *“whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst”* (John 4:14)
2. **This Lesson:** The Bridegroom admires His bride and seeks fellowship and communion with her

I. Her Title – ‘dove’ (14a)

- A. The Groom has previously praised her for having “doves eyes.”
- B. The dove pictures the Holy Spirit - believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, thus they are precious and attractive to Christ.
- C. The dove pictures Purity
 - a. The dove is faithful to one mate and will grieve deeply when that mate is lost.
 - b. Doves love cleanliness, carefully cleaning all dung out of their nests. By choice they eat grain (rather than worms or rubbish) and are innocent and harmless. (Masters) The spiritual chastity of the believer is attractive to Christ.
- D. The dove pictures Peace – doves are simple, peaceful and restful (Matt. 10:16). They are not quarrelsome and contentious like some other birds. This is another distinguishing mark of the believer. He is restful and peaceful with other believers, possessed of an agreeable disposition, not giving in to fits of temper and passion.

II. Her Position (14b)

A. Safety & Security

1. The cleft rock – a picture of Christ, cleft for us on Calvary.
Illustration (Moses): Exodus 33:22 *“And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:”*
2. The hidden stairs – a picture of the believer’s life hidden in Christ.
Col. 3:3 *“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”*

B. Shade & Shelter

1. The cleft rock & hidden stairs speak of a place of comfort
2. Isaiah 32:2 *“And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”*

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3. John 10:27-28 *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.”*

III. Her Appeal (14c)

A. Her face is beautiful – He desires to see it

1. The beauty Christ sees in us is the beauty of salvation which He has bestowed upon us: Psalm 149:4 *“For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.”*
2. Does Christ occupy our focus and attention or are our eyes diverted to other things? Are we committing spiritual adultery? (James 4:4)
3. Ezekiel 6:9 *“And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and **with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols:** and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.”*

B. Her voice is sweet – He desires to hear it

1. Christ seeks the attention and fellowship of the bride - John 4:23 *“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.”*
2. Our Prayers are sweet to Christ: Rev. 5:8 *“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and **golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.**”*
3. Our Praise is sweet to Christ: Psalm 147:1 *“Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.”* Psalm 22:3 *...“O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.”*
4. Illustration: The importance of communication in a marriage (husband & wife)
5. Challenge: Do whole days go by where our Saviour does not hear our voice? Does He hear our voice regularly in our praises & prayers? Do we take the time to say, “My Jesus I love thee I know thou art mine, for Thee all the follies of sin I resign...”

Conclusion: How is our communion with Christ? Are we responding to His call to fellowship? Do we praise Him? Do we pray?

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Lesson 11 – Beware of Little Foxes

Text: Song of Solomon 2:15

Introduction:

1. The Song of Solomon can be said to be the second part of John 4:14
“Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.”
2. **Review of last lesson:** The Groom pursues his bride (Vs. 14)
 - Her Title – ‘dove’ (14a)
 - Her Position (14b)
 1. Safety & Security
 2. Shade & Shelter
 - Her Appeal (14c)
 1. Her face is beautiful – He desires to see it
 2. Her voice is sweet – He desires to hear it

I. **The Danger of little foxes – “*the foxes, the little foxes*”**

- A. “the vines” – symbolise the believer’s fruitfulness and fellowship with Christ. ‘our’ – both the Groom & bride share ownership of the vines
- B. “tender grapes” = blossoms
- C. “little foxes” = pose a threat to the vitality of the vineyard
 1. Foxes were numerous in Judea. Samson caught 300! (Judges 15:4)
 2. The fox’s nature: sly, subtle, cunning, concealed, predator
 3. Christ likened king Herod to a fox (Luke 12:32)
 4. What the little foxes represent?
 - a. The small, seemingly insignificant sins that creep into our lives, almost unnoticed – un-biblical thought patterns, emotional habits & strongholds (anger, taking up offenses, control) The sins of the self-life like self-love, self-promotion & self-defence
 - b. The things that may not be in and of themselves evil, but have the potential to cause destruction if spiritual vigilance and discernment is not exercised (i.e. the weights in the Christian life)
 - c. Ecclesiastes 10:1 *“Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth **a little folly** him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.”*
 - d. Hudson Taylor: “The enemies may be small, but the mischief done great. A little spray of blossom, so tiny as to be scarcely perceived, is easily spoiled, but thereby the fruitfulness of a whole branch may be for ever destroyed. And how numerous the little foxes are! Little compromises with the world; disobedience to the still small voice in little things; little indulgences of the flesh to the neglect of duty; little

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strokes of policy; doing evil in little things that good may come; and the beauty and the fruitfulness of the vine are sacrificed.”

II. The Damage of little foxes – “*that spoil the vines*”

- A. “spoil the vines” = foxes do this in many ways, as those who write of them have observed, by gnawing and breaking the little branches and leaves, and the bark, by digging holes in the vineyards, and so spoiling the roots, by eating the grapes, and other ways. (Poole)
- B. Why are little foxes so dangerous? Because little foxes don’t stay little, they grow up! “Little leopards become big leopards, and big leopards kill!”
- C. Bible Illustrations
 - 1. **David** indulged in a little fox called idleness that ended in adultery.
 - 2. **Moses** allowed the little fox of anger to creep into his life and it resulted in his being banned from entering the promised land.
 - 3. A little fox called pride and presumption crept into King **Saul’s** life one day, followed quickly by another little fox called partial obedience that resulted in the termination of Saul’s kingdom and found him seeking help from a witch at the end of his life.
 - 4. A little fox called temptation was entertained in **Eve’s** life one day. It seemed such a small and insignificant thing to take one bite of the forbidden fruit, but it brought devastating and deadly consequences.
 - 5. **Samson** allowed the little fox called lust to roam in the vineyard of his life. It seemed so small and manageable for quite some time but eventually that little fox stole his strength and power and left him blind and grinding at the mill.
 - 6. A little fox called “love for the world” crept subtly into **Demas’** life which eventually drew him away from a life of fruitful service for God.
 - 7. **Peter’s** little fox was called “self-confidence”. It almost seemed to be an honourable trait at first glance but it ended in his three-fold denial of the Saviour he loved.

III. The Destruction of little foxes – “*take us*”

- A. A sensitive spirit – listening to the voice of Christ
 - 1. We may ask, “how do I identify the little foxes in my life? I do not know what they are?” Ask your heavenly Bridegroom to show you by His Holy Spirit. In our text, He is the one who identifies these little foxes to the bride so she can deal with them. Christ will make them known to you if you ask Him to show you.
 - 2. This means we need to maintain a humble, teachable spirit.
- B. A watchful spirit – spiritual vigilance and alertness
 - 1. ‘take’ = to take hold of, seize, grasp.

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2. Other translations: Jacob “took hold” of Esau’s heel (Gen. 25:26); Samson “took” of the city gate (Judges 16:3); the ram ‘caught’ in a thicket (Gen 22:13)
3. The believer, is to mortify (put to death) the sins of the flesh (S. Rom. 6:11 & 8:13) “This is a charge to believers to mortify their own corruptions, their sinful appetites and passions, which are as foxes, little foxes, that destroy their graces and comforts, quash good motions, crush good beginnings, and prevent their coming to perfection.” (Matthew Henry)
4. The believer is to make no provision for the flesh. He is to remove the destructive influences from his life – Romans 13:14 *“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”*
 - a. ‘provision’ = Paul means that in the case of the evil nature, we are to take the attitude that we are under no obligations to obey it, and thus we will not provide for it in any part of our lives. (Wuest)
 - b. 1 Thess. 5:22 *“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”*
 - c. We are exhorted to keep ourselves **“unspotted from the world.”** (James 1:27)

Conclusion:

1. What is our attitude to the seemingly ‘small’ and ‘minor’ things in our lives? Are we being sensitive to the Holy Spirit?
2. As we approach the Lord’s table, do we do so harbouring little foxes we are unwilling to deal with?

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I Am His & He is Mine

Text: Song of Solomon 2:16-17

Introduction:

1. The Song of Solomon can said to be the second part of John 4:14 *“Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.”*
2. **Review of last lesson:** The Groom admonishes his bride to beware of little foxes (Vs. 15)
3. The bride now responds with words of assurance concerning the security of her union with her Bridegroom. She then pleads for His speedy return at the end of the night season. In these verses she both speaks of Him (Vs. 16) and to Him (Vs. 17)
4. There are several precious lessons we can learn from the bride’s words in these verses:

I. Our Security in Christ (Vs. 16a)

A. He is mine – “My beloved is mine”

1. Rev. 21:3 *“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and **they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.**”*
2. Rev. 21:7 *“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and **I will be his God, and he shall be my son.**”*
3. What a precious possession! Col. 1:27 *“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory:**”*
4. Remember that this Lord Jesus is the one who is equal with the Father, God manifest in the flesh, the one who created the universe and holds it together by the Word of His power; the one before whom angels bow and worship; the one whose Name is above every name; the one who is King of kings and Lord of lords.
5. We often speak of possessing eternal life. In actual fact, eternal life is simply a by-product of possessing Christ. 1 John 5:12 *“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*
6. Note: It is interesting to note how the bride’s love progresses and matures throughout the Book. In this verse, she mentions her possession of the Bridegroom before His possession of her. In 6:3 the order is reversed and then in 7:10 she makes mention only of the fact that she belongs to Him and that she is the object of His affection. The cry of the new born child of God is “Jesus is mine!” and it is a precious truth. But as we mature in our understanding of

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the magnitude of salvation, our focus becomes more Christ-centred and our heart cry becomes, “I am His.”

B. I am His – “and I am his”

1. Drawn by His love – I am His

- a. Deut. 7:7-8 *“The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But **because the LORD loved you,**”*
- b. Jer. 31:3 *“...I have loved thee with an **everlasting love:** therefore, with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”*
- c. 1 John 4:10 *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that **he loved us,** and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”*
- d. Revelation 1:5 *“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. **Unto him that loved us,** and washed us from our sins in his own blood,”*
- e. Loved with everlasting love, lead by grace that love to know, Spirit breathing from above thou hast taught me it is so, oh what full and perfect peace, oh what transport oh divine, in a love that cannot cease, I am His and He is mine.

2. Purchased by His blood – I am His

- a. 1 Peter 1:18-19 *“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; **But with the precious blood of Christ,** as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:”*
- b. Col. 1:14 *“In whom we have **redemption through his blood,** even the forgiveness of sins:”*
- c. Rev 5:9 *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and **hast redeemed us to God by thy blood** out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”*
- d. Redemption = to buy at the market place. Means to set someone free by the payment of a ransom. In the ancient world, the word was used to describe the ransoming of prisoners of war and the manumission (liberation) of slaves.” (Hiebert)
- e. Illustration: Hosea’s redemption of his unfaithful wife – Hosea 3:2-3 *“So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.”*
- f. Illustration: Scarred hands settled the issue

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An orphaned boy was living with his grandmother when their house caught fire. The grandmother, trying to get upstairs to rescue the boy, perished in the flames. The boy's cries for help were finally answered by a man who climbed an iron drainpipe and came back down with the boy hanging tightly to his neck.

Several weeks later, a public hearing was held to determine who would receive custody of the child. A farmer, a teacher, and the town's wealthiest citizen all gave the reasons they felt they should be chosen to give the boy a home. But as they talked, the lad's eyes remained focused on the floor. Then a stranger walked to the front and slowly took his hands from his pockets, revealing severe scars on them. As the crowd gasped, the boy cried out in recognition. This was the man who had saved his life. His hands had been burned when he climbed the hot pipe. With a leap the boy threw his arms around the man's neck and held on for dear life. The other men silently walked away, leaving the boy and his rescuer alone. Those scarred hands had settled the issue.

3. Sealed by His Spirit – I am His

- a. Eph 1:13-14 *"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."*
- b. 'sealed' = mark of ownership. When I believe on Jesus, I become God's possession. The Holy Spirit is the seal of this possession. This is like when a king seals something with his personal stamp.
- c. 'earnest' = the down payment, the guarantee of the believer's eternal salvation. It is like a man who gives a down payment for some land. The down payment is his promise to pay the rest.
4. Challenge: How differently would we live each day we lived with this truth before our eyes – **"I am His"** 1 Cor. 6:19-20 *"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."*
5. Challenge: We are to testify before a lost world of our union with Christ.

II. Our Sustaining from Christ (Vs. 16b)

A. The picture of the Shepherd – "he feedeth"

1. 'feedeth' = to tend a flock. Root word translated 'shepherd' numerous times in the O.T. Christ is pictured as a Shepherd feeding His flock.
2. Christ is the Good Shepherd (His Person): John 10:11 *"I am the **good shepherd**: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."* (Also Vs. 14)

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3. Christ is the Great Shepherd (His Power): Hebrews 13:20 *“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, **that great shepherd of the sheep...**”*
4. Christ is the Chief Shepherd (His Position): 1 Peter 5:4 *“And when **the chief Shepherd** shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that *fadeth not away.*”*
5. Psalm 23:1-3 *“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.”*

B. The place of the Shepherd – “among the lilies”

1. The lily pictures Christ in His beauty and purity (2:1)
2. The lily pictures the believer (2:2). We are precious in His sight in a world full of depravity and sin. She grows as a beautiful flower in an environment of ugliness (James B. Currie)
3. Principle: The pasture that Christ leads us to is a place of spiritual beauty and tranquillity (Luke 12:27). How much better than feeding in the dry and dusty plains of this world with its temporary, superficial joys.
4. Principle: Christ’s nurturing and shepherding ministry is experienced in the midst of His blood-washed, purified people – it is “among the lilies”.
 - a. Compare 1:7-8 where the bride is counselled on where to locate her Shepherd-lover. He is found amongst the flock and with His under shepherds. The Lord ministers in a special way to His people as they assemble together.
 - b. Matt. 18:20 *“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”*
 - c. Illustration: Thomas missed an encounter with the risen Christ when he skipped church on Sunday evening (John 20:19-24)

III. Our Seeking after Christ (Vs. 17)

A. The season – night (Vs. 17a)

1. She anticipates the dawning of a new day when the shadows of night will flee away. The shadows of night produce in her a longing for His presence.
2. This is a picture of the Christian’s life. We journey through this life with many shadows cast upon our pathway (e.g. trials, persecutions, hardships) but we anticipate the dawning of that eternal day when we will dwell in Christ’s eternal light.
3. Though she is secure in His undying love, at the same time she experiences a sense of distance from Him at certain points. “mountains of Bether” has the idea of “mountains of separation”, ‘Bether’ meaning crevice or ravine.

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4. Note: The Song of Solomon brings out this twofold experience of the believer. On the one hand, a conscious enjoyment of His presence. Christ dwells in us, closer than the breath we breathe by the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, at times, we have a sense of distance and a yearning to see him face to face.

B. The supplication – nearness (Vs. 17b)

1. 'turn' = to turn oneself around
2. "a roe or a young hart" = She has already experienced His speedy coming to her, overcoming the mountains that separate her from His presence (2:8-9)
3. Principle: The bride longs for a fresh visitation from her Groom, like she has experienced in the past. This is the heart cry of the church as she journeys through the dark shadows of this evil world.
 - a. Isaiah 64:1 *"Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,"*
 - b. Psalm 85:6 *"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?"*
4. Principle: The bride longs for her Beloved's speedy return. In like manner, we long for the return of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Rev. 22:20 *"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. **Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**"*

Conclusion:

1. Do you belong to Christ? Are you saved? Can you truly testify, "I am His and He is mine"?
2. Are we testifying to a lost world of our union with Christ? Do we seek the fellowship of Christ in the midst of His people? Are we pursuing His presence and blessing in our lives?

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Pursuing Christ

Text: Song of Solomon 3:1-5

Introduction:

1. The experience of the maiden in the Song experiences both a sense of **nearness** and at times a sense of **distance** from her Beloved. This parallels the experience of the N.T. believer. We are ever secure in the reality of His presence but our conscious fellowship with Him can vary.
2. Scene: The bride finds herself in a night season without the comfort of her Beloved's presence. She is moved to seek after Him afresh.
3. We will note four features of her seeking after her Beloved (Christ)

I. The Stimulation of her Quest (Vs. 1)

A. The Groom's Absence (Vs. 1a)

1. "by night" = the season where she experiences a sense of distance from her Beloved. This could picture a season of trial and test or a period of backslidden living.
2. "my bed" = contrast this with the communion and fellowship they shared in 1:13 & 16. 'myrrh' speaks of the sufferings of Christ. He is given a place in her inmost, heart affections because of His suffering love and she finds a place of rest in His presence. Now the scene has changed. She is seeking rest for herself without Him but begins to realize Christ's presence is not to be found there. She has taken her Beloved's presence in her life for granted and has become careless and occupied with self.
3. We should never doubt the fact (reality) of our Saviour's presence in our lives (Heb. 13:5; Matt. 28:20) but that is different to our conscious experience and enjoyment of His presence. She had not ceased to be His (2:16) but her fellowship with Him had waned.
4. Sometimes in wisdom, our Lord withdraws some of the comfort of His presence and allows us to go through a night season in order that we might be stirred to seek Him afresh; that we might be stirred to personal revival.
5. Samuel Rutherford: "But flowers need night's cool sweetness, The moonlight and the dew; So Christ from one who loved Him, His presence oft withdrew."

B. The Bride's Affection (Vs. 1b)

1. Each of these five verses contains a statement of the Bride's love for her Groom. In Vs. 1-4 we have the phrase "him whom my soul loveth" and in Vs. 5 the words "my love". Her passionate, heart-love drives her to seek after her Beloved.

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2. There is a loving impulse within the heart of the born again, blood washed believer to pursue the Lord.
 - a. 1 John 4:19 *“We love him, because he first loved us.”*
 - b. *“My soul followeth hard after thee; thy right hand upholdeth me.”*
(Ps. 63:8)

II. The Stages of her Quest (Vs. 2)

A. A Casual Seeking (Vs. 1)

1. She seeks him in her own place but does not find Him.
2. Her search results in failure – “I sought him, but found him not.” Her failure to find him does not lead to an abandonment of the search but rather strengthens her resolve to seek Him more fervently.

B. A Concentrated Seeking (Vs. 2)

1. The resolve – “I will rise now” She answers the call to awaken out of slumber. As believers we are exhorted to be spiritually awake (Rom. 13:11-14). She decides to leave the place of superficial rest.
2. The extent – “and go about the city” This is a fervent search but it again ends in failure. Christ is not to be found in the broad ways of this world – “I sought him, but I found him not.” The “broad ways” are “earthly remedies that do not reveal the Saviour.” (Masters)
3. He is found outside the city in the still and quiet place, the place of separation from the world (Vs. 4) Heb. 13:12-13 *“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.”*
4. Illustration: A young lady once said to a Christian whose face was beaming with peace and joy, “I would give all the world to have joy and peace like you have.” And the quiet answer was, “Well, that is just what you will have to give to have it.” (E.C. Hadley)

III. The Support of her Quest (Vs. 3-4a)

A. The Duty of the Watchmen (Vs. 3)

1. They were keepers and guardians of the city, watching from the city walls and patrolling the streets to ensure its safety.
2. Illustrations: Nehemiah’s watchmen on the wall
3. It speaks of the role of spiritual leaders appointed by God for the watch care of His people.
 - a. Ezekiel was a watchman to Israel (Ez. 3:17; 33:7)
 - b. N.T. pastors are watchman of God’s flock (Heb. 13:17; 2 Tim. 4:5)
4. The watchman find the wandering maiden; they come to her as helpers of her quest. 2 Cor. 1:24 *“Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are **helpers** of your joy: for by faith ye stand.”*

B. The Direction of the Watchmen (Vs. 4a)

1. There are no recorded words but they obviously assist her as she

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finds her Beloved a short distance from them. Believers are helped through the ministry of personal council and public preaching of spiritual watchmen.

2. Christ is found in the company of His under shepherds (1:7-8)
3. “A pastor cannot re-establish a believer in a close walk with Christ but he can point out the direction.” (Masters)

IV. The Success of her Quest (Vs. 4b-5)

Finally, her search is rewarded. Her Beloved was found of her. This produces spiritual revival and renewal in her life.

A. The Renewal of her Devotion (Vs. 4b)

1. “I held him, and would not let him go” = she clings to her beloved. She has a renewed appreciation and understanding of just how much His presence means to her.
2. “until I had brought him into my mother’s house”
 - a. she is determined to bring His presence back into the centre of her home life.
 - b. She takes His presence back to her family home. Our spiritual renewal can have a blessed influence upon others in the Christian family (church)

B. The Renewal of her Submission (Vs. 5)

1. Words found in 2:7 repeated. They are the “refrain of satisfied love.” “To know and enjoy the love of Christ is the believer’s treasured heritage and it must be jealously nourished and guarded.” (Flanigan)
2. “The bride has peace again and it is not to be disturbed for a time. It seems when Christ restores our joy and fellowship with Himself He preserves us from any fresh disturbance until we have grown in maturity and strength before the next trial or test.” (Masters)
3. “till he please” = her focus is upon the will of her Beloved and upon pleasing him. How much of our devotional lives are Christ-centred? Do we consciously seek to submit to His will and leading?

Conclusion:

1. Are you in a night season, struggling with a sense of a loss of Christ’s presence (e.g. trial & test)? Perhaps God in His wisdom is allowing this in order that you might be stirred to pursue Him with renewed passion and vigour.
2. Is the presence of Christ retracted in our lives due to unconfessed sin?
3. Are we seeking Christ in the right place (e.g. the Word, prayer, godly guidance etc...)?

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In Christ's Salvation Carriage

Text: Song of Solomon 3:6-11

Introduction:

1. The scene now abruptly changes to a picture of the bride home-bringing through the wilderness in her Beloved's (Solomon's) bridal carriage to the royal city. Note the words 'bed' (Vs. 7) and 'chariot' (Vs. 9) The king has made lavish provision for her journey through the wilderness to Jerusalem. She is in a place of rest and protection. So, Christ our King, has wondrously provided for our spiritual journey to heaven in the Gospel.
2. C.H. Spurgeon describes the picture: "Great princes in the east are in the habit of travelling in splendid palanquins (sedan chairs), which are at the same time chariots and beds. The person reclines within, screened by curtains from public view; a bodyguard protects the equipage from robbers, and blazing torches light up the path along which the travellers proceed."
3. We will meditate on this beautiful picture with the help of four words

I. Perfume (Vs. 6)

A. The Source of the Perfumes

1. The entourage is quickly recognised as Solomon's (Vs. 7). These perfumes are provided by the king.
2. These perfumes reveal something of the King Himself.

B. The Symbolism of the Perfumes

1. 'myrrh' = was extracted from a plant by crushing it and collecting the juice and was a very costly perfume. It was used as a perfume and thus speaks of the fragrance of Christ's life (Psalm 45:8). It was also used as an embalming agent and was used in the burial preparations of Christ's body (John 19:39-40) Hence, it speaks to us of the sweet bitterness of Christ's suffering death.
 - a. 'frankincense' = a fragrant odorous resin that oozed through the bark of certain trees. It was very costly. Speaks of the fragrance of the life of Christ. His life was a sweet savour to the Father. There was absolutely no trace of the smell of sin in His life. 1 John 3:5 "... ***in him is no sin.***"
2. "all the powders of the merchant" = sweet-smelling powders speaking of the multitude of Christ's sweet graces
3. The bride has been perfumed by her King so that she sends forth a fragrance that is a witness of Him. In like manner, believers send forth the sweet smell of Christlikeness as they cooperate with the inner workings of the Holy Spirit.

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II. Protection (Vs. 7-8)

A. The King's Vehicle (Vs. 7a)

1. 'bed' = a sofa, litter or bier (Strong's) The Eastern equivalent of a state coach (Flanigan)
2. 'bed' is "a difficult word meaning a covered litter. It is like a couch long enough for a rider to recline, covered with a canopy and resting on pillars at four corners. It is hung round with curtains to exclude the sun and has a door, sometimes of lattice work, on each side." (Ginsburg quoted by Rabbi Lehrman)
3. This is "a boxlike litter carried by staves resting on the shoulders of living men." (Nee)
4. Described in more specific detail in Vs. 9-10. It is rich in salvation pictures/symbolism.

B. The King's Valiant (Vs. 7b-8)

1. The Men
 - a. Strong men – 'valiant'
 - b. Sword bearing men – "the all hold swords"
 - c. Skilled men – "being expert in war"
 - d. Note: This was important due to the presence of evil enemies that would seek to plunder a wedding procession like this
2. The Meaning
 - a. Principle: The safety and security of the bride is provided for by the Groom. Christ saves us and He guarantees our security from the day of our salvation and into eternity. "Who are kept by the power of God..." (1 Peter. 1:5) No one can pluck us out of Christ's hand (John 10:27-28)
 - b. Principle: Christ provides valiant, spiritual men who are skilled in the use of the Spirit's sword (the truth) to guard His people from predators (e.g. false teachers and seducers)

III. Provision (Vs. 9-10)

A. The Designer of the Royal Carriage (Vs. 9)

1. This royal carriage was designed and constructed by the King Himself (Vs. 9). It reflected His wisdom and majesty. In like manner, God is the Author and Designer of the grand plan of salvation. It reveals the wisdom and majesty of God. The Gospel is "the gospel **of God**".
2. "Christ made his 'carriage' of grace and salvation (the Gospel) by His atoning death on Calvary." (Masters) "Symbolically it sets before us the beauty and glory of Christ's provision for His bride." (Flanigan)

B. The Description of the Royal Carriage (Vs. 10)

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1. Structure of cedar wood – cedar trees are tall, strong and beautiful with a unique scent. Cedar was used extensively by Solomon in the building of the temple. Speaks of the perfect Manhood (humanity) of Christ.
2. Pillars of silver – silver was the atonement money (Ex. 30:13 – half shekel of sanctuary) and therefore a symbol of the truth of redemption. Pillars of the chariot are of silver. The work of our Redeemer is our support and stay.
3. Base of gold – speaks of the Royalty and Deity of Christ. The bride's rest depends upon the Person of Christ – He is perfect God and perfect Man.
4. Covering of purple – the colour purple is made up of blue and red. Blue speaks of heaven and red of the blood of Christ. So, we shelter beneath the covering of Divine blood.
 - a. Purple mentioned 26 times in Exodus in connection with the drapings of the tabernacle and the garments of the High Priest.
 - b. Purple used to cover the brazen altar of sacrifice when Israel was on the move (Num. 4:13). "That which covered the great Altar of sacrifice covered Christ on that last sad morning with Calvary in view (John 19:2-5)
 - c. "Look up, Christian, and delight thyself in that blood-red canopy which shelters thee from the sun by day and from the moon by night! From hell and heaven, from time and from eternity, art thou secured by this covering which is of purple." (C.H. Spurgeon)
5. Embroidery of love – the midst of the chariot is paved like a mosaic with the king's love. God's plan of salvation has the love of God imprinted all over it. Eph. 5:25 "...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Rom. 5:8; John 3:16; 1 John 4:17)

IV. Praise (Vs. 11)

"At the close of the scene, the call now goes forth to the daughter of Zion to behold the king, who now shows himself to the object of his love and to the jubilant crowd, as the festal procession approaches." (Keil and Delitzsch)

A. The Call to Praise (Vs. 11a)

1. The bride's exhortation is to "behold king Solomon". Our message to the world is "behold King Jesus"!
2. This is the bride being a witness of her king. In like manner, we are to testify of our Saviour.

B. The Centrepiece of Praise (Vs. 11b)

1. "the crown" = The focus of the bride is upon the crowned king.

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2. “day of the gladness of his heart” = the day Solomon was espoused to the Shulamite maiden was a day of joy for him. In like manner, we have been espoused to Christ and it brings gladness to His heart that we are His.
3. 2 Cor. 11:2 *“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have **espoused** you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”*

Conclusion:

1. Do you know Christ as Saviour? Are you in His salvation carriage?
2. Are we sending forth the sweet savour of Christlikeness to a watching world?

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How Christ Sees Me

Text: Song of Solomon 4:1-7

Introduction:

1. In this chapter, the Bridegroom is speaker with the exception of Vs. 6 and Vs. 16. Her growth in maturity is revealed in her willingness to listen more than speak. It contains a heart-gripping love song revealing the deep admiration and affection the Groom has for His bride.
2. Considering this in light of the N.T. truth that we are Christ's bride, it reveals some heart-warming, encouraging truths concerning how our Saviour views us through grace.
3. These descriptions of the bride are not designed to vaunt outward physical beauty but the beauty of holiness" or the qualities Christ gives His people through the work of salvation. Christ admires His handiwork in the lives of His people. (Masters)
4. This chapter is "a most affectionate appraisal of the many and varied beauties of the Bride as seen through the eyes of Christ her Beloved." (Flanigan)
5. We will consider this song of praise under 4 divisions:

I. The Praise of her Beauty (Vs. 1; 7)

A. The Source of her Beauty (Vs. 1a)

1. She belongs to her Beloved ("my love") and He is the source of her beauty.
2. "The explanation of the fairness of the bride is found in her reflecting like a mirror the beauty of the Bridegroom." (Hudson Taylor)
3. Speaking of Israel's beauty, God said, "*And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.*" (Ex. 16:14)
4. As born again, blood washed believers, we have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ. This is why he views us 'fair'. Before salvation, our sins made us vile in his sight and we had only the filthy rags of our own attempted righteousness. But now through the work of redemption we are "*arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*" (Rev. 19:8)

B. The Scope of her Beauty (Vs. 7)

1. "all fair" = the word 'all' now added to the description. Her whole person is beautiful to Him.
2. "no spot in thee" = a 'spot' is a blemish or defect. The work of redemption is so complete that in Christ, I am without blemish or

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defect. God sees the end and the fulfilment of His Redemptive work. Truly these are words of unfathomable, unsearchable grace.

II. The Particulars of her Beauty (Vs. 1b-5)

The Bridegroom now moves from a general statement of her beauty to a seven-fold description of the particular features of her beauty. Considered through the lens of N.T. truth, they provide some wonderful thoughts on the specific spiritual qualities that bring joy to our Saviour's heart as His people.

A. Her Eyes (Vs. 1b)

1. He has already referred to her eyes in this way in Song 1:15. Both of these verses are a passionate outburst of praise for the fairness of the bride. In both cases, the first thing that captures the attention of the Groom are her eyes.
2. The eyes are the gateway to the soul, revealing much about one's inner life. Before salvation, our eyes are for that which is sinful and wicked. But now He fills our vision is the object of our affections.
3. The Bridegroom's eyes are also described as "the eyes of doves" (5:12). Her eyes have become like Christ's and hence His attraction to them.
4. He is attracted to her eyes on account of their dove-like qualities. The dove is a symbol of:
 - a. Peace – The flash of rebellion and resistance are no longer in her eyes from her former life of enmity against the Saviour.
 - b. Purity – the dove was the bird of sacrifice in the Old Testament. She has been cleansed by the blood and is pure. The taint of sin has been removed from her eyes.
 - c. The Holy Spirit – she is possessed of the Saviour's own Spirit making her attractive to him. The Holy Spirit is producing the beauty of holiness in our inner lives.
5. Challenge: Who has your eyes? Whoever has your eyes, has your heart. God said of Israel in Ezekiel 6:9 "...because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, **and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols:**" How does Christ feel when the eyes of God's people are trained on the television set night after night as they have an adulterous love affair with this world? How do you think Christ feels when your eyes are focused on a romance novel that doesn't honour Him rather than His Word?

B. Her Hair (Vs. 1c)

1. Her long hair, like the Nazarite, speaks of her separation and consecration unto Him.
2. To the world, separation and holiness is ugly and detestable but to Christ our Saviour, it is truly beautiful. Three times in the Bible we

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have the phrase, “*worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness*” (1 Chr. 16:29; Psalm 29:2; 96:9)

C. Her Teeth (Vs. 2)

1. The teeth are the instruments of the body used to receive food. Perhaps the teeth speak of her appetite for spiritual things (truth).
2. Her teeth reflect symmetry – they are even and balanced
3. Her teeth reflect purity – they are white and pure. What a contrast to the teeth of the ungodly described as “spears and arrows” (Psalm 57:4) and “swords and knives” (Prov. 30:14)

D. Her Speech (Vs. 3a)

1. The lips are the vehicle of speech and are scarlet, the colour of Redemption. Her lips are Redeemed lips!
2. He finds her words ‘comely’ meaning suitable, appropriate, proper and beautiful. Her lips have been transformed through the work of grace.
3. The Bridegroom expressed a passionate desire in Song 2:14 to hear the Bride’s voice. What a wonder that God should actually seek fellowship with us! (John 4:23)
4. Christ loves to hear the voice of His people in prayer and praise. Three times in the Book of Revelation the prayers of the saints are likened to sweet incense before the throne of God (Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4)
5. Challenge: Can you imagine a marriage where a wife virtually never spoke to her husband or a husband didn’t speak to his wife? Yet how often we go for hours, days or even weeks with barely uttering a word of prayer or praise to our Beloved.
6. Challenge: Are our lips used as a vehicle for words that are pure and proper or are, they used in the service of carnality and ungodliness? What sort of words does your Saviour hear coming out of your mouth? Are they beautiful and appropriate words?
 - a. James 1:26 *“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, **this man’s religion is vain.**”*
 - b. Eph. 4:29 *“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”*
 - c. Col. 4:6 *“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”*
7. Hudson Taylor: “The lips that speak only of Him are like a thread of scarlet; the mouth or speech which has no word of self, or for self, is comely in His sight.”

E. Her Temples (Vs. 3b)

1. The head is the “palace of the mind”. The Groom admires and loves the bride’s depth of understanding, insight and discernment. (Masters)
2. Are our minds filled with the beauty of holiness or the ugliness of carnality and impurity?

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F. Her Neck (Vs. 4)

1. The neck speaks of the man's will. The ungodly are often described as stiff necked in Scripture on account of their will be suborn and rebellious against the Lord (e.g. Acts 7:51). In contrast, her neck is submitted and surrendered to the will of God.
2. Her neck is likened to the tower of David which was an armoury (weapons storage) for a thousand shields. Her neck is set for the defence of the truth. She is willing to fight her Beloved's battles, holding the shield of faith. She is faithful and loyal to Him. Standing for truth and right is distasteful in the eyes of the world and the compromised believer, but in the eyes of Christ our Saviour, it is a beautiful and praiseworthy thing.

G. Her Heart (Vs. 5)

1. He praises the part of the bride's body that is nearest to her heart. The chest area is regarded as the seat of the emotions. Thus, her love for her Beloved is highlighted.
2. Both breasts are equal in proportion, revealing that her heart is undivided and singular.
3. The breasts are also the organs of nurture. She ministers the milk of the Word to newborn babes in Christ and this is pleasing to the Saviour.

III. The Practice of Her Beauty (Vs. 6)

It is likely that the Bride speaks these words as the language closely resembles her words in chapter 2:17. This is her response to the Bridegroom's words concerning her position through grace. She understands that her position in grace has practical implications for her until she experiences the consummation of her pilgrimage in glory.

A. She Pursues the Cross – The Mountain of Myrrh (Vs. 6a)

1. Myrrh speaks of Christ's suffering love. Truly, Calvary was the mountain of Myrrh where the fragrance of God's love was poured out on the cross.
2. The bride is conscious that the cross is the place where progress is to be made in the beauty of holiness. It is at the cross where her life will be beautified and perfumed for her earthly walk. The cross is central to her earthly walk "until the day break and the shadows flee away" She must walk the crucified life if she is going to live out the position she has in her Saviour.
3. The cross applied by the Holy Spirit is the only instrument powerful enough to hold in the place of death the hideous and ugly old man and to release the beauty of the life of Christ in us. Paul expressed this endeavour in Phil. 3:10.
4. Watchman Nee comments: "She freely admits that she has not arrived and that a deeper work of the cross was indispensable to her progress. From this brief statement, we observe that the maiden fully realized her present limited state of attainment and that spiritual features needed still more development. The future is taken up in these words: "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away." They point to a realization in her that she had not yet come to the climax of spiritual maturity."

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5. Her endeavour calls forth the passionate approval of her Beloved in Vs. 7.

B. She Pursues Christ's Life – The Hill of Frankincense (Vs. 6b)

1. 'Frankincense' speaks of the fragrance of the life of Christ, in particular His intercessory ministry.
2. The Hill of Frankincense is the hill of prayer. In prayer, I breathe the atmosphere of heaven and it perfumes my inner life.

Conclusion:

1. Are we living out the beauty we possess in Christ? Are we living with an endeavour to be pleasing to the Saviour?
2. Do we feel discouraged on account of our weaknesses and failures? Remember how Christ sees you; clothed in His perfect righteousness.

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Intimate Communion with Christ

Text: Song of Solomon 4:8-5:1

Introduction:

1. In this chapter, the Bridegroom is speaker with the exception of Vs. 6 and Vs. 16b. Her growth in maturity is revealed in her willingness to listen more than speak. It contains a heart-gripping love song revealing the deep admiration and affection the Groom has for His bride.
2. He has praised her beauty in very specific terms in the first 7 verses. Now, He calls her to deeper fellowship with Him (Vs. 8), speaks further words of commendation (Vs. 9-11) and then likens her to a flourishing garden. There are some precious truths for the church and the individual believer contained in these fervent expressions of the Bridegroom particularly emphasizing growth in spiritual intimacy and communion.
3. The text divides naturally into 3 divisions.

Look firstly at the Bridegroom's...

I. Invitation for Her Fellowship (Vs. 8)

A. A Call to Communion (Vs. 8a)

1. The call of salvation – Christ's first call to us was "come and take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). This is where our relationship with Christ began! He drew us to Himself in love and made us His very own.
2. The call of sanctification – now as His bride, Christ calls us to a life of communion and fellowship with Him.
3. The call of glorification – in the future Christ will call us to Himself when He returns for His children.

B. A Call to Elevation (Vs. 8b)

1. The Bridegroom calls his bride to a special place of communion, a mountain range from which she can see with clarity and perspective. Believers are seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6) and our Lord calls us "to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19)
2. The old hymn expresses the truth well – "Lord lift me up and let me stand; by faith on heavens table land; a higher plane than I have found; Lord plant my feet on higher ground."

Look secondly at the Bridegroom's...

II. Commendation of Her Fairness (Vs. 9-11)

A. The Praise of Her Love (Vs. 9-10)

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1. In this position of nearness, He communicates His love to her.
2. “ravished my heart” = strong words of affection meaning she had captured or stolen His heart.
3. “with one of thine eyes...one chain of thy neck” = her eyes capture his heart as they are towards Him.
4. “how fair is thy love” = the Groom loves her love! In Vs. 1-7 he is captivated by her beauty. Now he is taken with her love. In like manner, Christ loves our love. Therefore, we should seek to express (prayer and praise) and demonstrate (obedience and service) our love to Him often.
5. “the smell of thy ointments than all spices” = her fragrance is wonderful, surpassing the most precious of spices. He also compares the fragrance of her garments in Vs. 11 to “the smell of Lebanon.” Lebanon was famous for its scent producing trees (e.g. frankincense). Oriental women would perfume their garments by sprinkling them with precious fragrances or sometimes by sowing pieces of scented wood into them.
 - a. Her ointments picture the work of the Spirit in her life. Her life is sweetened by the Spirit’s presence and workings.
 - b. Her garments picture the work of salvation. Gone are the filthy, wretched garments of her self-righteousness that reeked with the scent of sin. Now she is clothed in His perfumed garment and is thereby acceptable in His sight.

B. The Praise of Her Lips (Vs. 11)

1. Her lips are likened to a fresh piece of honeycomb dripping with fresh honey. Honey and milk are under her tongue. Her mouth is a vehicle for praise, prayer and witness for her Beloved.
2. Before salvation our sin nature was manifested through our speech. “Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.” (Rom. 3:13-14)

Look thirdly at the Bridegroom’s...

III. Description of Her Fruitfulness (Vs. 12-5:1)

The Groom now describes His bride in terms of a garden. She is a fruitful, flourishing oasis in a dry place. Note several truths about this garden and how they apply to Christ and His church.

A. The Privacy of the Garden (Vs. 12)

This is a walled garden with a protected, guarded water source. We learn 2 principles from this:

1. Separation – the church (and the individual believer) is set apart from the world for Christ. We are marked out for Him and His purposes. The wall denotes ownership. We are his special treasure. “To a locked garden and spring no one has access but the rightful

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owner, and a sealed fountain is shut against all impurity. Thus, she is closed against the world, and inaccessible to all that would disturb her pure heart, or desecrate her pure person.” (Delitzsch)

2. Security – she is encircled by a wall and guarded with a covering and seal. She is kept from the defilement and damage an unwallled garden would be prone to (e.g. thieves and wild beasts). Our life is “hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3) and we are “sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. 1:13)

B. The Productivity of the Garden (Vs. 13-14)

Separation to God and fruitfulness for God are complimentary principles that work together. The saint who is separated unto Christ will flourish for His glory producing:

1. Fruit (13a)
 - a. ‘orchard’ = signifies the abundance of the fruit being produced. Not an isolated few trees but a whole orchard of trees! Interestingly the word translated ‘orchard’ is very similar to the Persian word ‘paradise’. What a picture! When our lives are fruitful for Christ, we become a paradise for Him to enjoy.
 - b. These fruits are the “fruits of righteousness” (Phil. 1:11) and the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22-23).
2. Fragrance (13b-14)
 - a. At least 8 precious spices are specifically mentioned but there are more as he mentions “with all chief spices” (Vs. 14)
 - b. These speak to us of the many graces that are produced in our lives by the life of Christ working in us.

C. The Provision for the Garden (Vs. 15)

The secret to the exceptional productivity of this garden is found in its water source. That is the only way it can flourish in the midst of a harsh and barren climate.

1. The spring – “living waters” This is not a stagnant reservoir but a well feed by an underground spring. There is a quiet, unseen and yet very real supply of water that keeps this well fresh and full.
2. The source – “streams from Lebanon” This spring finds its source in the snow topped mountains of Lebanon which release fresh, pure water down into the valley. “The picture is of the melted snow waters descending from the mountain range, sinking into the ground and then coming up in springs here and there bringing refreshment to thirsty soil.” (Ironside)
3. The significance – the work of the Holy Spirit is powerfully in view. When the Spirit of God floods our inner lives with the life of Christ, we become a flourishing, fruitful and fragrant oasis for His glory.
 - a. John 7:37-39 *“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, **out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.** (But this spake he of **the Spirit**, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.”*
 - b. Isaiah 27:2-3 *“In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. **I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest***

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any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.”

4. Challenge: The degree to which our lives are filled with God's Spirit will determine the measure of our fruitfulness. Is your life dry and barren as a believer? Where are the blockages that are hindering the nourishing work of the Spirit in your life? Are you filling the well with rubbish, thus hindering the outflow of the Spirit in your life? We can never lose the Spirit's indwelling but we can hinder His filling in our lives by quenching and grieving Him.
5. Ironside refers to these hindrances as the “great boulders of worldliness, selfishness, pride, carnality, sinful folly and covetousness.”

D. The Perfecting of the Garden (Vs. 16)

1. In wisdom, the Bridegroom summons the North and South winds to blow upon the garden to bring forth the sweet fragrances of the flowers. The North winds would be cold and frigid coming of the snow-capped mountains. The South winds would bring heat (Luke 12:55).
2. This trials and testings of the believer is in view. Our loving, all knowing Saviour, providentially and purposefully directs the winds of adversity into our lives so that we might grow in fragrance for Him.
3. Illustration: Charles Spurgeon told of a man who had the words, “God is love,” painted on his weather vane. Someone said, “That is a queer text to put there. Do you mean to say that God's love is as changeable as the wind?” “Oh, no,” said the other, “I mean that whichever way the wind blows, God is love.”

E. The Pleasure of the Garden (Vs. 5:1)

1. At the end of 4:16, the bride speaks, inviting her Groom to come and enjoy the fruit of the garden. His response as described in this verse is immediate.
2. The fruitfulness of the garden is first and foremost for the enjoyment of the Bridegroom but it also has a role in blessing others as revealed in the words “eat, O friends”. The best way to be a source of refreshment to others is to be wholly consecrated to Christ, workings of the life of Christ in our inner man. When we do this, there will be an outflow of blessing to others as well. “The consecration of all to our Master, far from lessening our power to impart, increases both our power and our joy in ministration.” (Hudson Taylor)

Conclusion:

1. Will we answer the call of Christ to deeper communion with Him?
2. Do we express our love to Him with our lives and our lips?
3. What is hindering your fruitfulness for the Lord? Is it a lack of separation? Is your heart wholly surrendered and committed to Christ? Are you sold out for Him? Or is the wall of separation down and your heart overrun with sin and temptation?

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The Backslidden Bride

Text: Song of Solomon 5:2-8

Introduction:

1. In this portion of the Song, the bride enters a state of spiritual slothfulness and her Beloved comes to awaken her out of that condition to a renewed place of devotion and revival. There are some heart stirring truths concerning the danger of backsliding and how we might recover from it.
2. “We have all experienced interrupted communion and it can almost immediately follow periods of delightful fellowship like the one described in the previous chapter.” (Ironsides)
3. This is an experience every child of God can identify with. It is the symptom of that internal war we encounter between the flesh and the Spirit. Gal. 5:17 *“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”*
4. In the Song we see weaknesses and inconsistencies in the Bride, but never in the Bridegroom. His love and faithfulness are never cast in a negative light. So it is with the relationship between Christ and the believer. Christ is faithful and unchanging but, on our end, we often fail and falter.
5. Let’s consider this challenge concerning the danger of backsliding under 4 headings.

I. The Apathy of the Bride (Vs. 2a; 3)

A. Slothfulness (Vs. 2a)

1. “I sleep” = speaks of a state of spiritual slumber. She is not alert, watchful and active. She has grown careless and comfortable.
2. “A spiritually sleepy believer takes more leisure and pleasure, turning increasingly to secular concerns, and looking to possessions and career advance to satisfy the longings of the heart.” (Masters)
3. Romans 13:11-12 *“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to **awake out of sleep**: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.”*

B. Stubbornness (Vs. 3)

1. She responds to the appeals of the Bridegroom with excuses. She has adopted a comfortable approach to her relationship with Him and is resistant to the idea of service and sacrifice. She is indulging the appetites of the flesh.
2. “I have put off my coat” = she has retired for the night and does not wish to get out of bed

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3. “I have washed my feet” = imagery based on Oriental custom of washing the feet before retiring for the night. In those days this was very necessary as the feet would get very dusty and dirty from the days activities with sandals being the typical footwear.
4. This is not a zeal for purity on the behalf of the bride but an unwillingness to get her feet dirty in service. The security of our salvation is a precious thing but should not lead us to spiritual laziness. We are to use our feet in the service of the Gospel (Rom. 10:15; Eph. 6:15).
5. Challenge: When Christ comes and desires fellowship with us, what excuses do we give Him? Are we like Martha, too busy with our own plan to make time for spiritual intimacy or are we like Mary, sensitive to seize the moment to sit at His feet?

II. The Awakening of the Bride (Vs. 2b; 4)

She was awakened by...

A. The Sound of His Voice (Vs. 2b)

In love, the Bridegroom comes to awaken her out of her slumber. He does not allow her to continue in her backslidden state without a visitation from Himself. He appeals to her on the basis of:

1. His Relationship to Her – note the four terms of endearment He uses of her each commencing with the possessive ‘my’
 - a. “My sister” = she is purchased. Christ is the firstborn among brethren.
 - b. “My love” = she is precious. She is the object of His heart’s devotion.
 - c. “My dove” = she is possessed (indwelt) of the Holy Spirit
 - d. “My undefiled” = she is pure. She has been washed and cleansed from the defilement of sin.
 - e. Illustration: Christ knocking on the door of the church of Laodicea (Rev. 3:20)
2. His Sacrifice for Her – He makes reference to His hair being dampened with the dew of the night revealing the fact He was weathering the conditions of the night season to come to her.
 - a. Illustration: Consider the night scenes in the earthly ministry of our Lord where He spent a night of prayer on a mountain (e.g. Luke 6:12) and his hair was dampened with the dew of night.
 - b. Illustration: Consider the night scene in Gethsemane where the sweat that bedewed His brow was “as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground.” (Luke 22:44) How did the disciples respond to the Saviour when He came to them with his head filled with bloody dew and his locks with the drops of the night? They slumbered and slept (Luke 22:45).

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- c. How hard our hearts can become in our backslidden condition to remain stubborn and unmoved by our Lord's suffering love.

B. The Sight of His Hand (Vs. 4)

1. She was aroused from sleep by His voice but it was the sight of His hand that really moved her deeply.
2. "the hole of the door" = "the lock was on the inside of the door, and there was an opening where the owner could, if he had the key, reach in and use the key from the inside to open the door."
(Ironside) Though the Bridegroom was the rightful owner of the door, yet he does not force Himself upon her. Rather, He entreats and pleads with her to rise from her slothful ease and to open to Him voluntarily.
3. "my bowels were moved" = the 'bowels' speak of the innermost feelings, the heart, the seat of the affections. In like manner, as we look at our Saviour's nail scarred hands, we cannot be stirred out of our backslidden slumber.
4. Illustration: Thomas revived at the sight of Christ's hands (Jn. 20:24-29)
5. "My name is graven on His hands, my name is written on His heart. I know that while in Heaven He stand, no tongue can bid me thence depart."

III. The Anguish of the Bride (Vs. 5-6)

A. The Withdrawal of His Presence (Vs. 5-6a)

1. "I rose up to open to my beloved" = finally after stubborn delay, she rises from her bed of ease to obey the call of her Groom
2. "my hands dropped with myrrh...upon the handles of the lock" = imagery is based on the Oriental custom of a lover anointing the handle of the door lock with myrrh as a token of the reality and depth of his love for her. (E.C. Hadley)
3. "but my beloved had withdrawn himself" = she had delayed her obedience too long. If only she had yielded when He called, she could have enjoyed His sweet fellowship! But her inaction and indifference has grieved Him.

B. The Withholding of His Presence (Vs. 6b)

1. She begins to seek after Him but her seeking will initially be met with silence and disappointment. She is not seeking to recover her salvation as she has not ceased to belong to Him but she is seeking to recover the enjoyment of His presence.
2. The purpose of the withdrawing and withholding of His presence is to chastise her for her disobedience and to stir in her a greater appreciation of His presence.

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3. “She must now be chastised for her ingratitude, lack of love, lightness, pride, self-concern, love of ease, and indifference to the voice of conscience.” (Masters)

IV. The Ambition of the Bride (Vs. 7-8)

A. A Persistent Seeking (Vs. 7)

1. Awakened and now aware of what she has lost, she will go on seeking until her fellowship with her Beloved is restored.
2. “For the backslidden saint the return into former communion is frequently difficult.” (Flanigan)
3. She encounters opposition from the watchmen during this quest. The watchmen are the keepers of the city and speak of the oversight of spiritual leaders. But sadly, instead of aiding the bride in her request for spiritual recovery, they wound her. What a picture of the damage spiritual leaders often do in hindering the Christian who is trying to get back in fellowship with the Lord.

B. A Passionate Saying (Vs. 8)

1. She begins to reach out and involve others in her quest and makes a bold declaration of her love.
2. “sick of love” = she was overwhelmed with this sense of love for her Beloved. The phrase does not have the sense of “I am sick of this” as we often use it today. Rather, it is an expression of her deep yearning after him.

Conclusion:

1. How often do we resist our Beloved’s invitations to fellowship? Are we indulging the impulses of the self-life and thus damaging our walk with Christ? Have we grown comfortable and complacent?
2. Are you seeking to recover from spiritual decline? Be encouraged and press on to full restoration. Do not lose heart or become discouraged if the Lord chastens you with silence for a time. In the end it will work in you the blessed effect of treasuring the Lord and His presence so much more.

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Christ is Altogether Lovely

Text: Song of Solomon 5:9-16; 6:1

Introduction:

1. Context: The bride has been awakened from spiritual slumber and sloth to a renewed seeking after her Bridegroom.
2. In her quest for spiritual revival, she issues a charge to the daughters of Jerusalem in Vs. 8. This provokes a question from them concerning her Beloved. In effect they ask, “how is your Beloved unique, what makes Him more special than other beloveds?”
3. In response to this question, words of praise and exaltation come pouring out of the bride like a river. She employs the riches of Oriental symbolism in an attempt to describe her Beloved’s unfathomable perfections climaxing in the phrase “yea, he is altogether lovely”. There is at least a 10-fold description of the Beloved in these verses each revealing a facet of His perfect loveliness.

Christ is altogether lovely in His...

I. Person (Vs. 10)

A. His Sinlessness – ‘white’ (Vs. 10a)

1. ‘white’ = dazzling white. Speaks of Christ’s absolute holiness and purity. He is totally without spot or blemish.
2. Illustration: The Mount of Transfiguration
 - a. Matt. 17:2 “*And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.*”
 - b. Mark 9:3 “*And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.*”

B. His Sacrifice – ‘ruddy’ (Vs. 10b)

1. The word ‘ruddy’ means red. David as a young shepherd was described as “...*ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance...*” (1 Sam. 16:12)
2. It speaks of Christ’s beauty but more importantly of His sinless blood which was shed for our sin.

C. His Supremacy – ‘chiefest’ (Vs. 10c)

1. Christ is not said to be equal to ten thousand others. He is said to be chiefest ‘among’ ten thousand. He is the “firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29).
2. There is none like Christ in all the universe. He is unique, unparalleled, unrivalled and unequalled. He is more important and significant than all angels, prophets and priests put together (Masters)

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3. See the glorified Christ in Revelation 5:11-12 as the chiefest among innumerable thousands as they cry “worthy is the Lamb that was slain.”

II. Position (Vs. 11)

A. Divinity – His head (Vs. 11a)

1. “most fine” = this is not ordinary gold but the very best gold again highlighting Christ’s matchless person. He is above all!
2. ‘gold’ = speaks of His Royalty and Deity. Jesus Christ is King! Jesus Christ is God!
3. The head is the location of the mind. Christ’s thoughts are far above ours. He is perfect in wisdom.
4. It was this Royal Head that was struck by a rod in the hands of evil men and crowned with thorns.

B. Humanity – His hair (Vs. 11b)

1. In Rev. 1:14 Christ’s hair is depicted as white in colour, speaking of His eternity.
2. The picture here in the Song focuses more on His perfect humanity. The black hair speaks of youthfulness. Christ never grows old or waxes faint.

III. Perception (Vs. 12)

A. Pure Vision – “eyes of doves”

1. The dove is a frequent symbol in the Song speaking of concepts such as purity, holiness, tenderness and beauty.
2. What a picture of the purity of Christ’s eyes, white as doves, washed with milk.
3. JFB Commentary: “Doves bathing in the rivers; so combining in their silver feathers the whiteness of milk with the sparkling brightness of the water trickling over them...vivacity, purity and love, are the three features typified.”
4. There is no lust, jealousy, hatred or any other evil in the eyes of Jesus. Only love, tenderness, compassion, wisdom, discernment and all things pure.
5. Hab. 1:13 “*Thou art* of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:”

B. Perfect Vision – “fitly set”

1. As a skilful gemmologist or lapidary would place a precious stone in the foil of a ring, so the eyes of Christ reflect perfect arrangement and symmetry.
2. Christ’s is Omniscient – He sees and knows all things. Nothing is hidden from His perfect eyes. He sees past the outward man to the innermost secrets of the heart. David could testify, “*thou hast searched me, and known me*” (Psalm 139:1)

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IV. Perfume (Vs. 13)

A. The Fragrance of His Face (Vs. 13a)

1. Christ's cheeks are likened to a bed of spices and sweet flowers. The face/countenance reveals the inner character of a person. Sin etches its lines into the faces of the unsaved but in Christ, we find nothing but goodness and beauty.
2. It was this precious face that was subjected to shameful buffeting and spitting. *"I gave my back to the smiters, and **my cheeks** to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."* (Isaiah 50:6) *"...his **visage** was so marred more than any man..."* (Isaiah 52:14) *"Then they did **spit in his face**, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands."* (Matt. 26:67)
3. The Saviour's smitten cheeks are fragrant to the Christian as it was from these smitten cheeks that the sweet scent of salvation poured forth. They are to the pardoned, "a bed of spices, as sweet flowers"
4. My Jesus! Who with spittle vile, profaned thy sacred brow? Or whose unpitying scourge has made thy precious blood to flow? Tis I have thus ungrateful been, Yet, Jesus, pity take! Oh, spare and pardon me, my Lord, for thy sweet mercy's sake!"

B. The Fragrance of His Words (Vs. 13b; 16a)

1. All that comes forth from His lips is fragrant and pure. *"neither was any deceit in his mouth"* (Isaiah 53:9). All Christ's words are truth. Psalm 45:2 speaking of Messiah said, *"...grace is poured into thy lips..."*
2. The officers of the Pharisees admitted, *"Never man spake like this man"* (John 7:46)
3. Psalm 119:103 *"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, **sweeter** than honey to my mouth!"*
4. Psalm 34:8 *"O **taste** and see that the LORD is good:"*

V. Passion (Vs. 14)

A. Love revealed through His Hands (Vs. 14a)

1. The hands of Christ are pure, royal hands. Think of all the wonderful things Christ did with His hands as recorded in the Gospels. His hands were never used once in the service of evil.
2. What wonder of wonders when we stop to consider that these precious, sinless hands were pierced for me.

B. Love revealed in His Heart (Vs. 14b)

1. The word 'belly' is also translated 'bowels' or 'heart'. The word refers to the whole abdominal region and speaks of the seat of the affections.
2. What a picture of the white ivory overlaid with shimmering, blue sapphires. No love is comparable to our dear Saviour's love.

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- a. Ivory is strong and durable – Christ’s love never fails
- b. Sapphires are blue and brilliant – Christ’s love is perfect, breathtaking and heavenly in origin and quality

VI. Posture (Vs. 15)

A. His Stature (Vs. 15a)

1. Marble speaks of tremendous strength. Christ is immutable, He stands the same yesterday, today and forever.
2. Hebrews 13:8 *“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.”*

B. His Stateliness (Vs. 15b)

1. Christ’s countenance is described as ‘Lebanon’. The word ‘Lebanon’ means “white mountain” referring to its snowy tops. How radiant and pure is our Lord’s countenance.
2. The cedars speak of strength, power, beauty and fragrance. Cedar wood used in connection with the cleansing of a leper in the O.T. (Lev. 14:4; 6, 49 & 51)

VII. Perfection (Vs. 16)

A. The Praise of His Perfection (Vs. 16a)

1. It is as if the bride is lost for words and ends her love anthem of praise in these words, “yea, He is altogether lovely”. The word ‘altogether’ means “wholly, entirely, completely and without exception.” (Webster)
2. R.G. Lee in his sermon, Christ Above All, said, “Jesus is heaven’s bread for earth’s hunger, heaven’s water for earth’s thirst, heaven’s light for earth’s guilt, heaven’s beauty for earth’s ugliness, heaven’s wisdom for earth’s folly, heaven’s peace for earth’s strife, heaven’s justification for earth’s condemnation, heaven’s salvation for earth’s damnation.”
3. Christ is Altogether Lovely!

He is Adam the second, the Anointed, the Author of our faith, the Amen, the Alpha, the Ancient of Days, the Almighty and our Advocate.

He is the Beginning, the Begotten, the Beloved, the Branch, the Bread of life, the Bridegroom, the Bright and Morning Star and the Brightness of the Father’s glory.

He is our Captain, our Consolation, the Chief Cornerstone, the Counsellor, the Chosen of God, the Chief Shepherd, the Chiefest among ten thousand and the Christ.

He is the Desire of all nations, the Door, the Dayspring, the Daystar and the Deliverer.

He is the Elect, the End, the Everlasting Father and Emmanuel.

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He is the Finisher of the faith, Friend, Friend of sinners, First Fruits, Faithful Witness, and the Fountain of life.

He is God, the Gift of God, Governor, Guide, the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, Greater than Jonah, Greater than Solomon and Glorious Lord.

He is Help, Hope, Horn of Salvation, Head of the church, Heir of all things, High Priest and Holy One.

He is the I AM, Inheritance and the Image of God.

He is the Just one, the Judge, Jehovah and Jesus.

He is the King – King of Israel, King of kings, King of glory and King everlasting

He is the Lord, the Life, Light, Love, Lily of the valleys, Lion, Lamb, Lawgiver, the Living Stone and the Lord of glory.

He is the Messiah, Mediator, Master and Mighty God.

He is a Nazarene.

He is the Offspring of David, Omega, Only Begotten of God, Offering and Offeror.

He is Passover, Potentate, Prophet, Priest, Propitiation, Physician, Prince of life and Prince of peace.

He is the Righteous, the Rabbi, Ransom, Rest, Root of Jesse, Root of David, Refiner, Refuge, Resurrection, the Rose of Sharon, Ruler, Redeemer and Rock of Ages.

He is the Stone, the Shepherd, the Son – Son of Abraham, Son of David, Son of man and Son of God; Shield, Servant, Seed of the woman, Sufferer, Saviour, Sinless Sacrifice the Same yesterday, today and forever.

He is Teacher, Truth, Tabernacle, Testator, Treasurer, Tree of life and the True Vine.

He is Witness, the Word, the Way, the Wisdom of God and He is Wonderful!

B. The Preciousness of His Perfection (Vs. 16b)

1. Notice the possessive pronoun 'my'. This One she has just described in such majestic language is HER BELOVED!
2. Blessed assurance Jesus is mine! I am His and He is mine! Blessed Lord Jesus!

Conclusion:

1. How is your love for Christ? Do you praise Him for Who He is and what He has done?
2. Do you testify of your Saviour unashamedly to others who ask you for a reason for the hope which lies within you?

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Recovery from Spiritual Decline

Text: Song of Solomon 6:1-13

Introduction:

1. Context: The bride has been awakened from spiritual slumber and sloth (backslidden state) (5:1-2) to a renewed seeking after her Bridegroom.
2. In her quest for spiritual revival, she issues a charge to the daughters of Jerusalem in Vs. 8. This provokes a question from them concerning her Beloved. In effect they ask, “how is your Beloved unique, what makes Him more special than other beloveds?” In response to this question, words of praise and exaltation come pouring out of the bride like a river (5:10-16).
3. In chapter 6, we see a restoration of full communion with her Beloved. She has recovered from her backslidings and has returned to a life of fruitfulness for Him. She has experienced personal revival/renewal in four key areas.

She has a...

I. Renewed Witness (Vs. 1)

A. Her Testimony of the Bridegroom (5:10-16)

1. In her fervent seeking after her Beloved, she had recovered the ability to witness freely of Him.
2. One of the first things a backslidden, defeated Christian loses is their witness for the Lord.
3. One of the first signs of spiritual recovery is that there is a renewed readiness to testify of Christ.

B. The Inquiry after the Bridegroom (Vs. 1)

1. The daughters of Jerusalem, representing those who are seekers of the Lord, respond to her powerful testimony of Christ with a desire to know Him also.
2. Burrowes: “Such a description of the beloved might well make the daughters of Jerusalem anxious to see him, and enquire where he might be found. A judicious holding forth of the character and loveliness of Christ has ever been the leading means of drawing sinners to the Cross, the salvation of souls is effected by preaching to them Christ crucified.”
3. It is of interest that she had asked help of the daughters of Jerusalem in finding her Beloved (5:8) but now they put the question back on her for her to answer (6:1).

She has a...

II. Renewed Assurance (Vs. 2-3)

She has renewed assurance of...

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A. His Presence in Her (Vs. 2)

1. Her meditation on the blessed Attributes of her Beloved (5:10-16) had the effect of reviving her heart and renewing her sense of His presence and faithfulness. The fact is, He has already told her where He was! (5:10)
2. The garden represents the Bride (See 4:12-16)
 - a. Christ is pictured as the Master Gardener, attending to the needs of her inner life. While she had temporarily lost the sense of His presence, He had not ceased in His labours for her perfection and wellbeing.
 - b. 'spices' = represent Christian graces
 - c. "to feed" = we are fed by Him. The language suggests a shepherd providing for the sheep.

B. His Possession of Her (Vs. 3)

1. Nee: "Though feelings change, the covenant between the Beloved and herself was of an unchangeable character and forever held steadfast."
2. "I am my beloved's" = she belongs to him and therefore has assurance that the enjoyment of His presence will be recovered. The truth that she belongs to Him is foremost in her mind. His claims now come first. Compare with her previous words in 2:16.
3. Masters: "She has matured in her love. She has a stronger sense of her obligation, putting first "I am his." One of the greatest lessons to learn in the Christian life is to say, "I am not my own." (See 1. Cor. 6:20).
4. "he feedeth among the lilies"
 - a. 'feedeth' = to tend a flock. Root word translated 'shepherd' numerous times in the O.T. Christ is pictured as a Shepherd feeding His flock.
 - b. The lily pictures the believer (2:2). We are precious in His sight in a world full of depravity and sin. She grows as a beautiful flower in an environment of ugliness (James B. Currie)
 - c. Principle: Christ's nurturing and shepherding ministry is experienced in the midst of His blood-washed, purified people – it is "among the lilies". Compare 1:7-8 where the bride is counselled on where to locate her Shepherd-lover. He is found amongst the flock and with His under shepherds. The Lord ministers in a special way to His people as they assemble together.
 - d. Christ's presence is to be experienced **both** in the quietness of personal communion **and** in the assembly of believers in collective worship.

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III. Renewed Communion (Vs. 4-9)

His voice which has been silent for some time now speaks again and the Beloved speaks to her of...

A. Her Beauty (Vs. 4-7)

1. New symbols (Vs. 4)

- a. “**beautiful** as Tirzah” = for many years Tirzah was the royal city of the Canaanites. It was the chief residence of the kings of Israel from Jeroboam to Omri, until Omri made Samaria his capital. A city frequently mentioned in 1 & 2 Kings. The word means delightful, pleasant, beautiful. Probably on account of its location on a hill surrounded by pleasing scenery. (Flanigan)
- b. “**comely** as Jerusalem” = special city and capital of the nation at this time under Solomon. This city is also set on a hill. Matt. 5:14 *“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.”*
- c. “terrible as an army with banners”
 - i. ‘terrible’ is not used in the sense of ‘horrible’ or ‘evil’ but in a positive sense as denoting something awe inspiring. The Bridegroom is pleased with her militancy for the truth.
 - ii. ‘banners’ = the symbolism is of an army with banners unfurled. Pictures the church that unashamedly proclaims the truth and is engaged in the battle against the enemy for Christ’s sake.
 - iii. While contending for the faith may be repulsive to the Laodicean church, it is still a praiseworthy quality so far as Christ is concerned.
 - iv. Nee:

“Here, therefore, the phrase signifies that the loved maiden was not only beautiful and comely but strong like a heavenly host. And though she was serene and quiet as a sanctuary, yet she could brandish the glory of complete victory before all the wicked powers of hell and of men. Her life within the veil was not meant to be lived only in the sanctuary of God’s presence but in the field of battle before the enemy.”

2. Repeated symbols (Vs. 5-7)

- a. He repeats similar virtues he has mentioned before in chapter 4. We need constant re-assurance and comfort as believers and our Lord provides that for us by His repeated words of love and assurance.
- b. It reveals that despite her failings, His love for her has remained constant and faithful and He still sees her beauty through salvation with the eyes of grace.

B. Her Exclusivity (Vs. 8-9)

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1. In these verses her uniqueness and specialness is highlighted. She is precious to Him, His one and only.
2. Masters explains: “Essentially the groom says: “You may assemble all the queens in the world together with all the concubines of their polygamous kings and all their unmarried daughters, but their combined beauty will not match the excellencies of my bride, who they will praise.”
3. The church is prized by Christ far above any institution in this world. Christ “loved the church, and gave himself for it.” (Eph. 5:25) He purchased the church “with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28)

IV. Renewed Power (Vs. 10-13)

A. Power of Testimony (Vs. 10)

Light is the prominent theme of this verse. She is likened to:

1. The dawn – “as the morning”
2. The moon – has a soft and gentle light. The moon does not produce light but simply reflects the greater light of the sun. So, in our lives, Christ is the light source for the believer and we reflect Him to a dark world.
3. “clear as the sun” – the suns rays. She shines brightly.
4. “terrible as an army with banners” – same as Vs. 4. Her boldness for the truth and involvement in the battle is precious to Him.
5. Masters: “It is a picture of a witnessing church of Christ from which Gospel truth – marvellous to the saved and uncontaminated as the sun – streams forth. She is the church militant with her banners.”

B. Power of Vitality (Vs. 11)

1. The garden picture comes into view again and in particular, the Bridegroom’s care of the garden.
2. Christ tends lovingly and patiently to our lives, ministering His life in us and through us.

C. The Power of Victory (Vs. 12-13)

1. In Vs. 12 we have reference to “the chariots of Amminadib” and in Vs. 13 the mention of “the company of two armies”. Her beloved will be with her, supplying her with the resources she needs for the battle.
2. “two armies” – “the same Hebrew word is used in Gen. 32:2 where Jacob gave a place the name ‘Mahanaim’ meaning two hosts or camps. Jacob was returning home in obedience to God with his small arm of family and servants. God gave him a glimpse of an army of angels to powerfully comfort and assure him. The church will be one army, but the other will be the host of God.” (Masters”

Conclusion: Are you backslidden? In need of a personal revival? The good news is that you CAN recover a place of spiritual blessing with Christ’s help.

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Pleasing to Christ

Text: Song of Solomon 7:1-13

Introduction:

1. In chapter 6, we saw a restoration of full communion between the Bride and her Beloved. She has recovered from her backslidings and has returned to a life of fruitfulness for Him. In her revived, spiritually quickened state, she draws forth the praise and admiration of her bridegroom. “These verses remind us of the pleasure Christ takes in His people, even though the characteristics He praises are those which He gave us Himself at conversion.” (Masters)
2. The chapter divides into two main parts – Vs. 1-8 (The Groom speaks); Vs. 9-13 (The Bride speaks).
3. This passage teaches us the joys of the surrendered and consecrated life. It is a life of intimate communion with Christ, knowing His blessing and being fruitful in His service.
4. We will divide the passage under three main headings for our study:

Observe firstly...

I. THE PRAISE OF THE BRIDE (VS. 1-8)

The Groom lovingly admires his bride, praising her qualities from her feet to her head (Vs. 1-5) and then finishes with some overall descriptions of praise (Vs. 6-8). Before, “from the sole of the foot even unto the head” was “wounds, and bruises and putrifying sores.” (Isaiah 1:6) This is the last description of the Bride and is by far the richest and fullest. (Hadley)

A. Specific Words of Praise (Vs. 1-5)

1. Her Service (Vs. 1)

- a. “thy feet with shoes” = she is active in the service of the Lord and that is pleasing to Him. As believers we have been equipped with Gospel shoes and it thrills our Saviour when we put them to use in order to reach others with the message of salvation.
 - i. Eph. 6:15 “And your **feet shod** with the preparation of the gospel of peace;”
 - ii. Rom. 10:15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, **How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!**”
 - iii. Remember, when you go soul-winning you go first and foremost for your Saviour. You are doing it to bring joy to His great heart! This is the highest motivation for soul-

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winning. And in His eyes, it is a truly beautiful thing when an individual, a church, are active for the Gospel.

- b. “O princes’ daughter” = she is now a part of the Royal family of the Redeemed. Her movements are now dignified and graceful as a princess.
- c. “thy thighs are like jewels” = the figure again suggests movement. Much of the strength for walking resides in the thighs. He likens them to the work of a “cunning workman”. This points to the truth of Eph. 2:10 – “For we are his **workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Christ is the cunning craftsman and she is the work of His hands.

2. Her Appetite (Vs. 2)

- a. She has a spiritual appetite. This is the part of the body that processes food. The picture is of her spiritual hunger for truth.
- b. She has a spiritual satisfaction. The phrase “thy naval” is the picture of a cup that is full. She is satisfied in the sufficiency of her Lord. John 7:38 “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, **out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.**”
- c. The picture of wheat set about with lilies conveys a picture of an abundant provision of spiritual food. It also pictures symmetry and balance. She has a balanced diet, loving the whole council of God.
- d. Challenge: How is your spiritual appetite? Do you have a love for the great doctrines of the faith? A love for the teaching and preaching of God’s Word? It pleases Christ when we cultivate spiritual digestion in our lives.

3. Her Nurturing (Vs. 3)

- a. New babes in Christ require nurture and nourishment. “Having matured in her relationship with Christ, she is capable of cherishing and nourishing the young, feeding them with the sincere milk of the word.” (Hadley) 1 Peter 2:2 “As newborn **babes**, desire the sincere **milk of the word**, that ye may grow thereby:”
- b. The church is to labour to see people birthed into God’s family (John 3:3) but then she must also labour in prayer and discipleship to see those new babes in Christ grow, start walking, and then go on to maturity in the Lord.
- c. Gal. 4:19 “**My little children**, of whom I travail in birth again **until Christ be formed in you,**”
- d. Acts 16:5 “And so were the churches **established in the faith**, and increased in number daily.”
- e. Col. 2:6-7 “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: **Rooted and built up in him, and stablished**

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in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”

4. Her Faithfulness (Vs. 4a)

- a. The neck speaks of the man’s will. The ungodly are often described as stiff necked in Scripture on account of their will be suborn and rebellious against the Lord (e.g. Acts 7:51). In contrast, her neck is submitted and surrendered to the will of God.
- b. Her neck is described as being “as a tower of ivory”. Ivory speaks of strength. She is “firm in her faith and strong in her loyalty to Christ” (Masters). Ivory is white, speaking of righteousness and purity.
- c. In Song 4:4 her neck is described as being “...like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.”
- d. Her neck is likened to the tower of David (Song 4:4) which was an armoury (weapons storage) for a thousand shields. Her neck is set for the defence of the truth. She is willing to fight her Beloved’s battles, holding the shield of faith. She is faithful and loyal to Him.

5. Her Refreshing (Vs. 4b)

- a. He likens her eyes to “the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim”
- b. Bible commentator J. M. Flanigan explains:
 - i. Heshbon was the capital city of Moab, the royal residence of Sihon, king of the Amorites, until taken by Moses and afterward held by Gad (Num. 21:26; Josh. 3:10; 13:17, 26). It is situated 20 miles east of the point where the Jordan enters the Dead Sea.
 - ii. Bathrabbim apparently was one of the gates of Heshbon, and nearby were the two pools referred to.
 - iii. “The soft glance of the eyes of the Shulamite seemed to suggest to the daughters of Jerusalem the peace and beauty of the quiet limpid waters of the Heshbon pools. There is hope, light, tenderness and joy that shines through the eyes of believers offering refreshment to a dry and thirsty world.”
- c. The fishpools “may refer to large and well-known ornamental pools by the entrance of a certain city, giving a visually refreshing welcome to hot and dusty travellers.”
- d. The eyes have been referred to as “the gateway to the soul.” As the Bridegroom looks into the Bride’s eyes, He can discern her love and affection for Him. Before salvation, her eyes revealed the inner animosity and enmity of an unregenerate heart. But

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now, there is tenderness, submission, hope, faith and love in her eyes.

6. Her Discernment (Vs. 4c)

- a. Her nose is described as “the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.” This tower was “evidently a watchtower, a border fortress watching over hostile Damascus. The imagery suggests watchfulness and constant alertness to danger.” (Flanigan)
- b. D. Kane: “The illustration here is of an inner well-developed sense, perceptive of danger. Like an elevated watchtower, looking out towards the capital of their restless, cruel foe, the exercise of this discerning ability can restrict potential effects of enemy activity.” E.C. Hadley writes, “If our spiritual senses are active, we should be able to distinguish at once between that which has a sweet savour and that which has a smell of corruption.”
- c. 1 Thess. 5:6 “Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us **watch** and be sober.”
- d. 1 Cor. 16:13 “**Watch** ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”

7. Her Wisdom (Vs. 5)

- a. The Groom likens her head to Carmel, a mountain renown for its beauty. “Carmel is that well known mount on the Western Mediterranean coast of Israel. It was the site of Elijah’s triumph over the prophets of Baal (1 Kings. 18:19-40). The name ‘carmel’ means fruitful and the mount was renowned for its fertility and for the trees and fragrant flowers which flourished there.” The head is the seat of the mind, hence the picture is that she is growing in her knowledge of her Beloved.
- b. He then describes her hair as being “like purple” which is the colour of royalty. 1 Cor. 11:15 “But if a woman have long hair, it is a **glory** to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering.” The ‘galleries’ may be a reference to the beautiful ringlets falling down and around her face. The hair is a symbol of submission (1. Cor. 11:3-5) and it is this submission to the His will that delights the heart of Christ.

B. General Words of Praise (Vs. 6-8)

1. She is Fair (Vs. 6). The Groom’s heart is moved when he sees the bride’s beauties.
 - a. The fairness and beauty of the Bride is a reoccurring theme in the Song (e.g. 1:15; 4:7). In fact, the Bridegroom calls her ‘fair’ 11 times in the Book. This is the last time.

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- b. She is fair because she is clothed in the garments He provided her, the garments of salvation. He has placed His own beauty upon her.
 - c. Ezekiel 16:10-16 “I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment *was of* fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: **for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee**, saith the Lord GOD.”
2. She is Fruitful (Vs. 7)
- a. The palm is tree is slender, stately, upright, and elegant, an emblem of “uprightness and fruitfulness.”
 - b. “thy stature” = “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto **the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:**” (Eph. 4:11-13)
 - a. The clusters of grapes also speak of fruitfulness. Hudson Taylor writes, “Abiding in Christ, the true source of fruitfulness, she brings forth clusters of grapes, luscious and refreshing, as well as sustaining – luscious and refreshing to Himself, the owner of the vineyard, as well as to the weary, thirsty world in which He has placed it.”
3. She is Fragrant (Vs. 8)
- a. In Song 2:3, the Beloved (Bridegroom) is likened to “the apple tree among the trees of the wood.” Now, he refers to the her as having the fragrance of apples. She has been feeding on Christ and his sweet fragrance is on her breath. Sadly, many Christians are feeding on the leaks and garlics of the world and therefore have the stench of the world on their breath.
 - b. Hudson Taylor writes, “Communion with Him has resulted in her carrying His fragrance. This is the outcome of that communion.”
 - c. Do you radiate the fragrance of Christ in your life? Or does your life carry the stench of the world? The more you walk with Christ and fellowship with Him, the more His fragrance will be discernible in your life.

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- d. The Groom speaks of embracing his bride and enjoying her love. We cannot yet see our Saviour, yet he draws very near to us by the Spirit, and embraces us in His loving arms, reassuring us that we are His and that He loves us.

Observe secondly...

II. THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE BRIDE (VS. 9-10)

A. She is His Sweet Pleasure (Vs. 9)

1. It appears the bride interrupts her beloved mid-sentence as the title 'Beloved' is always used by the bride in the Song as her affectionate title of the Groom.
2. Masters: "All her affections are for her groom, and when he praises her attributes she gives them all the more to him."
3. Rev. 4:11 "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and **for thy pleasure** they are and were created."
4. Col. 1:16 "...all things were created by him, and **for him:**"
5. Note: Our love and devotion for Christ flowers and blossoms in the environment of His love. We love Him because He first loved us.

B. She is His Special Treasure (Vs. 10)

1. As a young bride she had been more focused on her ownership of Him – "My beloved is mine, and I am his..." (2:16); "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine..." (6:3). Now she has grown and matured to where her own claims are no longer in focus and she is consumed with the fact that she is His special possession. "Now it is none of self or for self, but all of Thee and for Thee." (Taylor)
2. The word 'desire' is an intense word meaning "longing, craving." This is a place of total security for the believer. I am Christ's and I am His forever. Christ loves me with a passion.

Observe thirdly...

III. THE PLEA OF THE BRIDE (VS. 11-13)

The bride issues an impassioned invitation to her Beloved to...

A. Fellowship with Her (Vs. 11)

B. Participate in her Labours (Vs. 12)

1. She invites her Beloved into her labours, knowing that His presence, oversight and power are the key to her fruit bearing. His presence "sweetens her toil for him in the field of lost souls." (Masters) She understands that without him, she cannot and will not bear fruit (John 15). How we need to learn the lesson that it is not

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about us working **for** the Lord as much as it is us working **with** the Lord, yea, Him working **through** us.

2. His interests are now her interests. She is dedicated and devoted to serving in His vineyard. “Being delivered from thoughts of herself, she becomes deeply interested in the state of his vineyard.”
(Hadley)
3. It is in that place of service and labour that she is able to demonstrate her love for Him – “there will I give thee my loves.”

C. Partake of her Fruits (Vs. 13)

1. She has prepared fruit for her Beloved. We must always remember that our fruit bearing is for Christ, not ourselves. So often we are focused upon our own needs and satisfaction but forget that we were created for His pleasure.
2. The fruits she has prepared are described as “new and old”. She has born fruit in some areas in the past (old) but she hasn’t stopped growing as she also has new fruit for Him as well. She hasn’t just born fruit in the past and then stopped. She is bearing fruit in the present also.

Conclusion: Is your focus and passion on pleasing self or the Saviour?

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The Security of Christ's Love

Text: Song of Solomon 8:1-7

Introduction:

1. The chapter divides into two main parts. In Vs. 1-7 the Bride expresses the longings of her heart towards her Beloved. But her longings do not come from a spirit of hopelessness. Rather, they are the confident pursuit of one who is secure in the Groom's love and one desiring a deepening of fellowship. Then from that position of security in her Beloved's love, she is able to serve her Lord and others with a confident expectation of His return (Vs. 8-14).
2. In this message, we will focus on the first half of the chapter and the great theme of the security of Christ's love for us as His people.
3. We will divide this section into three parts for our study.

Consider firstly...

I. THE PASSION OF LOVING COMMUNION (VS. 1-4)

These verses are filled with a spirit of longing. She has walked with Him now for some time and enjoyed and experienced so much of His goodness but she longs to go on to a deeper and fuller experience of her Beloved's love.

She longs for:

A. Uninhibited Communion (Vs. 1-2)

There are two aspects to this in the bride's mind. Her desire is to...

1. Show Affection (Vs. 1)
 - a. "O that thou wert as my brother" = She expresses a wish that he was of the same mother so that she might be freer and more public with her displays of affection. Watchman Nee observes, "In ancient Israel public kissing between men and women, even by husband and wife, was considered a breach of the standards of decency. The only exception allowed was between blood-relatives, such as brother and sister."
 - b. "I should not be despised" = her inward fear is that if she is too bold and open about her passion for her Groom she will be despised and ridiculed.
 - c. Do we not feel the same in our relationship with Christ as we pass through this sinful world? We are often cowered by the fear of what others may think to be less passionate and open about our relationship with Christ. Consider the sharp criticism that Mary's act of devotion drew even from those who professed to be devoted to Christ. What a joy it will be to be in heaven one day and to be surrounded but glorified saints and holy angels, to praise Christ unhindered and unashamed in perfection.

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2. Receive Instruction (Vs. 2a)
 - a. “I would lead thee” = usually we think of the Lord leading us and that is true but there is a sense where we take the Lord with us wherever we go. Do our activities please Him? “In a sense we lead Christ into our affairs...We lead Him into our prayer agenda, our concerns, our devotions and our lives. How gracious is the everlasting Son of God to come into our affairs!” (Masters)
 - b. “into my mother’s house who would instruct me” = she desires instruction in her mother’s house in order that she might be a better bride to her husband. Perhaps the “mother’s house” could represent the church where the believer receives instruction from God’s Word on how to better please the Lord. Note that this instruction, while coming from the mother, is done in the Lord’s presence and He therefore is involved in the instruction.
 - c. Challenge: Do we come to God’s house with a sense that we have come with Christ within us to learn and grow that we might be a better bride for Him?
3. Provide Satisfaction (Vs. 2b)
 - a. “I would cause thee to drink” = she is focused on what she can give to Him. Bringing joy to her Saviour is the focus of her growth. As she learns of her Beloved and His ways, she is able to offer Him the sweet wine of service, prayer and worship.
 - b. “of spiced wine” = “The Orientals frequently put spices into their wines to increase their flavour. The spouse therefore, means to say that she would offer him the richest and most refreshing drink, her greatest delicacies.”
 - c. Challenge: Is our focus on doing the **best** for our Lord or the least?

She also longs for:

B. Uninterrupted Communion (Vs. 3-4)

She longs to be...

1. Embraced (held) in His Love (Vs. 3) How often do we experience this blessed sense of His embrace in God’s house (the mother’s house) where He draws near to us in love by His Spirit and ministers to us through the instruction we receive from God’s Word.
2. Abiding in His Love (Vs. 4a) She is zealous to guard her relationship with her Lord from external threats. The “daughters of Jerusalem” seem to represent either seekers of the Bridegroom or immature believers. As much as there is a place to minister to such (the daughters of Jerusalem are never far from the Bride in the Song), we must take care not to neglect communion with our Heavenly Beloved like Martha of old who was so busy serving, she

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failed to take time to sit at Jesus' feet. Remember, the carnal believer can represent a real threat to your spiritual walk.

3. Submitted in His Love (Vs. 4b) The phrase “until he please” reveals that she is surrendered to His will in their communion. When it comes to our communion with Christ, how much of it is in our control? Are we sensitive as to whether Christ might want us to stay in His presence a little longer?

Consider secondly...

II. THE POSTURE OF LOVING COMMUNION (VS. 5)

A. She Leans upon His Love (Vs. 5a)

1. “Who is this...from the wilderness” = a similar picture is presented as the one in 3:6. The bride is pictured as coming out of the wilderness. No doubt within the O.T. context, this pictures Israel as the bride of Jehovah being brought out of the wilderness and into the promised land.
 - a. What a beautiful picture of the church as Christ's bride and of each individual believer in his/her relationship to Christ. Her back is to the world. He purchased her, set her free and brought her out.
 - b. The ongoing work of sanctification is in view. She now belongs to Him and in that sense has left the wilderness but until she reaches the palace of the king, she walks through the wilderness of this world. But He is with her to sustain and sanctify her all the way on her journey.
2. “leaning upon her beloved” = what a precious picture of the bride's dependence upon her Saviour. There are some instructive lessons we can learn from this precious picture:
 - a. **The strength and power for our walk comes from Christ.**
The Christian life from start to finish is one of dependence upon Christ and His power. Remember that it is “God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:13)
 - b. **The rest of faith is in Christ.** She is walking in the wilderness and yet she rests as she walks. He is her sufficiency.
Remember Ephesians – Sit, Walk, Stand. Hudson Taylor writes, “In all the trustfulness of confiding love she is seen leaning upon her Beloved. He is her strength, her joy, her pride, and her prize; while she is His peculiar treasure, the object of His tenderest care. All His resources of wisdom and might are hers; thought journeying she is at rest, though in the wilderness she is satisfied, while leaning upon her Beloved.”

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- c. **The Christian walk is a moment by moment walk of fellowship.** None of our walk is to be of self in disconnection from our Saviour.
- d. **The presence of Christ is always with us in our walk.** C.H. Spurgeon comments, “Jesus suffers no pilgrim on the road to the New Jerusalem to travel unattended. He is with us. When we least perceive Him, He is often closest to us. When the howling tempest drowns His voice, still He is there.”
- e. **The ongoing sanctification of the believer is in view.** She is pictured as coming more and more out of the world and leaning closer and closer upon her Beloved.
- f. **The true walk of faith is a testimony to others.** Notice that that this truth is presented in the form of a question asked by onlookers. “It is through the bride that attention is drawn to the Bridegroom; their union and communion are now open and manifest.” (Hudson Taylor) Do others see anything different in our approach to life than the world that would cause them to ask of us concerning the hope within us (1 Pet. 3:15)?
- g. Isaac Watts: “Who is this loved one in distress, who travels from the wilderness, and pressed with sorrows and with sins, on her beloved Lord she leans? This is the bride of Christ our God, bought with the treasures of His blood; and all her supplications there, picture each saint in tender prayer.”

B. She Learns of His Love (Vs. 5b)

1. The second half of the verse is the Groom’s answer to the question that has just been asked. Interestingly, He does not answer the onlookers directly but directs His comments to His bride. When the world asks of our identity, it is important for us to remember that our identity is found in Christ and not ourselves. It is not about us or what we have done but about Him and what He has done. We are accepted in the beloved (Eph. 1:6).
2. It is in this posture of moment-by-moment dependence upon Christ that we learn much of the Saviour’s heart of love towards us.
3. “I raised thee up” = He reminds her of her origin and His work of grace in her life. He knew her before she knew Him.
4. “the apple tree” = the apple tree in the Song represents Christ (See 2:3). She was born under the gracious shadow of His grace and mercy and in time, He redeemed her and made her His own. This is your identity dear believer! You are Christ’s!
5. “they mother brought thee forth” = both Divine sovereignty and human instrumentality are in view in the verse. She was “brought forth” by her mother but ultimately it was He who “raised her up”. There is no contradiction between these two truths. God works through human instruments to bring lost souls to Himself.

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Consider thirdly...

III. THE PERMANENCE OF LOVING COMMUNION (VS. 6-7)

Christ's love for His bride is...

A. Unbreakable (Vs. 6)

1. The Unbreakable Seal of Christ's Love (Vs. 6a)
 - a. "Set me as a seal" The bride now replies, requesting a deeper assurance of the Beloved's love. "She does not doubt the constancy of His love but she has learned the inconstancy of her own heart." (Hudson Taylor)
 - b. The word 'seal' "appears 14 times in the Old Testament and nine of these are translated 'signet'. The signet was often in the form of a signet ring. Such a ring was used as an impress to indicate ownership, authenticity or genuineness." (Flanigan) Interestingly, six of the references to a 'seal' are in connection with the High Priest's breastplate and the onyx stones of the ephod on his shoulders.
 - i. **Exodus 28:9-12**

"And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: Six of their names on one stone, and *the other* six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth. With the work of an engraver in stone, **like the engravings of a signet**, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod *for* stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall **bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders** for a memorial."

- ii. **Exodus 28:15-21, 29**

"And thou shalt make **the breastplate** of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; *of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes. And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually."*

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- iii. Symbolically **the heart** is the seat of affection, love and emotions and **the shoulders** that of strength and security.
 - a. Praise God not only am I a seal upon His heart but He is a seal upon my heart also – “In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, **ye were sealed** with that holy Spirit of promise,” (Eph. 1:13) We are bound inseparably together in an everlasting union.
 - b. Hymn: “**Before the throne of God above**, I have a strong and perfect plea, A great High Priest whose name is Love, who ever lives and pleads for me. My name is graven on his hands, My name is written on his heart; I know that while in heav'n he stands, No tongue can bid me thence depart.”
2. The Unbreakable Strength of Christ’s Love (Vs. 6b)

She now makes two startling comparisons to emphasize the power and strength of her Saviour’s love. In Christ I am...

 1. Gripped by His Love – “love is strong as death.” Think of the strength of death. Who can stop death? Who can resist it? Death is so powerful it claims everyone, rich or poor, famous or of no reputation. Christ’s love is eternal, strong and enduring. His love was equal to and greater than my dead state in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1).
 2. Guarded by His Jealousy – “jealousy is cruel as the grave”. The KJV translators chose the word ‘cruel’ for poetic impact. The root word has the idea of that which is unyielding, obstinate and unrelenting. “The grave is inflexible, refusing to give up what it has claimed, holding jealously what it possesses. Love will not yield what it possesses.” (Flanigan)
 - a. Ex. 34:14 “For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name *is Jealous, is a jealous God:*”
 - b. Deut. 4:24 “For the LORD thy God *is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.*”
 - c. 2 Cor. 11:2 “For I am **jealous** over you with **godly jealousy**: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ.”
 - d. Illustration: The wholesome jealousy of a spouse.

Christ’s love for His bride is...

B. Unquenchable (Vs. 6c-7a)

1. “the coals thereof” = refers back to the love and jealousy just mentioned. The figure of fire is added to further illustrate the strength and power of this love. God’s love for us is likened to a burning fire.

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2. “a most vehement flame” = the word ‘vehement’ means “acting with great force; furious; very forcible; as a *vehement* wind; a *vehement* torrent; a *vehement* fire or heat.” (Webster) This speaks of the intensity and fervency of God’s love for us. What light, warmth, purity, passion and power there is in God’s fiery love!
3. “Many waters cannot quench love” = human love can be quenched but Divine love can never be extinguished. Neither the cold waters of trials nor the floods of persecutions can put out God’s eternal flame of love for us. The truth of Romans 8:35-39 comes to mind, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
4. Challenge: You can either experience the unquenchable love of God in salvation or the unquenchable fire of hell in damnation.
Christ’s love for His bride is...

C. Unmerited (Vs. 7b)

1. The true nature of love is further highlighted. True love cannot be purchased or earned, even if one gave all his earthly riches.
2. God’s love cannot be earned, it must be received by grace through faith. If we try and earn our salvation, it will be “utterly contemned” by God.
3. The question arises, “what then is the basis of God’s love for me if I cannot merit it?”
 - a. Answer: God loves us because He loves us. Deut. 7:7-8 “The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye *were* the fewest of all people: But **because the LORD loved you...**”
 - b. Answer: God loves us because love is one of His attributes. 1 John 4:16 “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. **God is love**; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

Conclusion:

1. Is your Christian life one of self-reliance or Christ reliance?
2. Are you alert to threats to your communion with Christ?
3. Do you know the joy of His assurance in your life?

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Longing for the Beloved's Return

Text: Song of Solomon 8:8-14

Introduction:

1. The chapter divides into two main parts. In Vs. 1-7 the Bride the longings of her heart towards her Beloved. But her longings do not come from a spirit of hopelessness. Rather, they are the confident pursuit of one who is secure in the Groom's love and one desiring a deepening of fellowship. Then from that position of security in her Beloved's love, she is able to serve her Lord and others with a confident expectation of His return (Vs. 8-14).
2. In this message, we will briefly review what we covered in the first half of the chapter and then go on to an overview of the second section.

I. THE PASSION OF LOVING COMMUNION (VS. 1-4)

She longs for:

- A. Uninhibited Communion (Vs. 1-2)**
- B. Uninterrupted Communion (Vs. 3-4)**

II. THE POSTURE OF LOVING COMMUNION (VS. 5)

- A. She Leans upon His Love (Vs. 5a)**
- B. She Learns of His Love (Vs. 5b)**

III. THE PERMANENCE OF LOVING COMMUNION (VS. 6-7)

His love for her is...

- A. Unbreakable (Vs. 6)**
- B. Unquenchable (Vs. 7a)**
- C. Unmerited (Vs. 7b)**

IV. THE PERSPECTIVES FROM LOVING COMMUNION (VS. 8-13)

From this position of security in her Beloved's love, she is able to serve her Lord and others with a confident expectation of His return. We note she has...

A. A Concern for Fledgling Believers (Vs. 8-10)

1. The Immaturity of the Younger Sister (Vs. 8)
 - a. **"We** have a little sister" = observe that the Bride does not see herself as working separate from her Beloved. She will only work in concert with Him. We need to remember that we are "laborers together with God" (1 Cor. 3:9).
 - b. Hudson Taylor writes, "She will not now make her own plans about her little sister, and ask His acquiescence in them; she will

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rather learn what his thoughts are, and have fellowship with Him in His plans. How much anxiety and care the children of God would be spared if they learned to act in this way! Is it not too common to make the best plans that we can, and to carry them out as best we may, feeling all the while a great burden of responsibility, and earnestly asking the LORD to help us? Whereas if we always let Him be our Instructor in service, and left the responsibility with Him, our strength would not be exhausted with worry and anxiety, but would all be at His disposal, and accomplish His ends.”

- c. “little sister” = a reference to one who is a part of the family and yet still immature and under developed.
 - d. “she hath no breasts” = the breasts are instruments of nurture and nourishment and speak of the capacity of the bride to minister the milk of the Word to those in need. The immature sister does not have this ability and that is of concern to the bride.
 - e. Watchman Nee: “This desire of the spouse for less developed believers was not at all motivated by any selfish interest, nor was it the exercise of a condescending spirit; but rather it was the pure expression of what was the united desire of both her Beloved and herself.”
 - f. Note: A true mark of spirituality and maturity is whether you are not only able to nurture your own spiritual life but also be a channel of blessing to the lives of others. Do you see your church as a place to attend or a place to serve?
2. The Remedy of the Beloved (Vs. 9)
 - a. “**we** will build” = observe the Beloved also recognizes His oneness with His Bride and will work with her. “He will not carry out His purposes of grace irrespective of His bride, but will work with and through her.” (Hudson Taylor)
 - b. “a wall” = speaks of separation
 - c. “a palace of silver” = the younger sister will be beautified and matured through the work of the Bridegroom through His Bride.
 - d. “a door” = an entrance. Perhaps this speaks of the Christian’s role to lead the unbeliever to Christ who is the door to eternal life.
 3. The Maturity of the Bride (Vs. 10)
 - a. These are not the words of prideful conceit but the quiet assurance of her standing before the Lord. Her capacity to nurture infants in the Lord was pleasing to Him.
 - b. Challenge: Are you growing into maturity in your Christian life? Do you have any concern to help younger believers develop in the things of Christ? If there is little or no desire to help nurture

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the young in Christ, then that is a sad commentary on your own maturity, no matter how long you have been a Christian for.

B. A Concern for Fruitfulness (Vs. 11-12)

1. The Beloved's Vineyard (Vs. 11)
 - a. Solomon entrusts this vineyard to keepers who are responsible to oversee its welfare and productivity.
 - b. They were to render to Solomon the proceeds of the vineyard (a thousand pieces of silver). The Bride's primary concern is that her Beloved receives the fruit that is due Him from these vineyards.
2. The Bride's Vineyard (Vs. 12)
 - a. This vineyard is said to belong to her and yet she views it as existing to produce for her Beloved – "thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand".
 - b. "She wants to give the groom the same rent as his tenants. She will deduct only the fair wages of her own vineyard tenders, and everything she produces will be for him" (Masters)
 - c. "Each ordinary keeper was under bond to turn in that increase to Solomon which was represented by the thousand pieces. Out of pure affection this maiden also met the claim. Her service was one of love, rather than just a conviction of duty." (Nee)
 - d. Those who labour in the vineyard also enjoy the rewards of faithful service – "those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred." Those who are faithful to serve the Lord are truly blessed.
 - e. The central thought in both verses is the bride's passion for fruitfulness. In John 15 Christ is likened to the vine, believers to the branches and the Father to the husbandman. Our desire should be that our Heavenly Father produces in our lives the fruit He desires by the power of the life of Christ.

C. A Concern for Fellowship (Vs. 13)

1. She longs to hear the voice of her Beloved in fellowship with her. The plural 'gardens' reveals that the Lord does not dwell exclusively in her garden. He dwells in many gardens since He is Lord in the hearts of all His people. (Nee)
2. This should be the plea upon our hearts when we come to read the Word of God or sit under the preaching of God's Word.

V. THE PLEA OF LOVING COMMUNION (VS. 14)

A. A Longing for His Return (Vs. 14a)

1. There are four descriptions of mountains in the Song:
 - a. The mountains of Bethel (2:17).
 - b. The mountain of myrrh (4:6) which is representative of Calvary with the sweet bitterness of His sufferings.

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- c. The mountains of the leopards (4:8) where she is protected from danger.
 - d. The mountains of spices (8:14) symbolic of the new millennial world of fragrance and beauty we anticipate.
2. This is the posture of the bride. She is eagerly awaiting the return of her Beloved. It reminds us of the closing words of the Bible in Revelation 22:20 “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. **Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**”
 3. Titus 2:13 “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”
 4. Jude 1:21 “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

B. A Longing for His Reign (Vs. 14b)

Conclusion: Are you looking and longing for Christ's return?