

# PATRICK WALTON

# **OVERVIEW**

Growing in passion for Jesus is mostly about understanding Jesus' passion for us. In my reading of the Bible and in my opinion there is no other book like the Song of Songs when it comes to line upon line truths about growing in Passion for Jesus. This book is unlike any other book in the Bible because it doesn't tell us about how to grow ministries, how to acquire wealth or how to heal the sick directly. But for eight chapters and verse after verse it tells us of what God feels for us and what happens when that love touches our hearts in a real, experiential way.

Many people in the Church talk about loving God and about one day growing in passion for Him, but few actually set out on the journey to actually do it. This eight chapter Song walks us through in narrative form the journey of this young maiden as she becomes the thriving bride that the king seen in her from the beginning. Themes like, God loving us in our weakness, that God really sees you and is watching you, that God delights in you while your maturing and that God not only loves you but He also likes you, fill this eight Chapter love Song. If you have ever wondered about Jesus' feelings towards you, if He has a plan for you and if your heart can really enjoy God, then this series is for you.

This book is laid out with 19 total chapters. Each chapter has two primary sections. The first section includes sermon notes that were used in the preaching of this series. And the second section is a written chapter that directly corresponds with the sermon notes, but is written in a narrative fashion and with much more added information. My challenge to you is that you would take 19 weeks to get acquainted with the Song of Songs from the Old Testament and ask the Holy Spirit to unlock His Word and awaken your heart. Alongside this book that you currently have, I have also written a 19 week daily devotional that goes along with the chapters in this book. You can have a devotional reading, 6 days a week for 19 weeks as you work through the information in this book.

My prayer is that your heart would be awakened to the beauty, majesty and worth of Christ. But I also pray you find yourself lost in the tension of the two commandments, loving God and loving people through the journey of the bride.



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# **Chapter One Introduction To The Song Of Songs**

# I) How I Started Reading The Song Of Songs

- A) My first contact with the Song of Songs outside the Bible came from a CD that I listened to by Mike Bickle around 2005 where I heard him talk about how this book of the Bible deeply impacted his life. Because I was hungry, I started reading the Song of Songs one chapter a day for many months.
- B) Then I got a hold of a series that Mike did called "The Song of Songs" that's 20, 1hr messages and 500 pages of notes that I listened to about 5 times through. After listening to that and reading my Bible, I gathered up a few books on the Song of Songs and my journey is still going today through the depths of this eight chapter love song.
- C) What was so profound about this CD series and the books I was reading was that it gave me language for something I felt deep inside, but could never address. This book awakened love deep within me and has changed my life in immeasurable ways.

# II) Introduction To The Song Of Songs

- A) In this session my target is to impact your mind as I cover the history of the Song; different approaches to its interpretation; who is the bride of Christ; and lay a foundation from which we will spring into the rest of this series.
- B) Solomon wrote the Song of Songs around 900-950 B.C., he was David's son. Solomon is quoted in the Bible as writing 1,050 songs and uttering 3,000 proverbs (1st Kings 4:29-34).
- C) This book is called by the Holy Spirit "The Song of all Songs or The Song Above All Songs" (Song of Songs 1:1) in the same way that Jesus is called "the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords." (Revelation 19:16). This is used as a superlative. Most of the songs in the Bible speak about deliverance from oppression; victory in battle; or the justice of God. But Solomon had no need for such a song.
- D) Solomon was a man who had everything, but was overtaken in love by a young, peasant farm girl. From this we also see our story in the Passion of the Christ. A God who has everything and needs nothing, longed for weak, angry, rebellious humans to be near Him. So He came, and was crushed by the wrath of God and won our hearts, because of love.
- E) It's important that we view this book primarily as a Song and not just a letter. It's a story in song form.
- F) The setting of this book takes place in Jerusalem, which is called the "City of the Great King" (Psalm 48:1-2).
- G) The Song of Songs has only eight chapters and 117 verses and is often overlooked by most of Christianity in general.

- H) Bernard of Clairvaux is noted for writing 86 sermons from Song of Songs 1 and 2 **(34 verses)** and was followed by his scholar, Gilbert Von Holyland, who wrote 58 discourses from another section of the Song.
  - 1) John Wesley said of the Song of Songs, "This book breathes forth the hottest flames of love between Christ and His people."
  - The Song of Songs was a beloved book by D.L. Moody, C.H. Spurgeon, St. John of the Cross and John Gill, who was a puritan preacher that developed 122 sermons from the Song of Songs.
- I) The Song is broken into two parts.
  - 1) The first part is Song of Songs chapters 1-4. This section focuses mainly on the Shulamite. She is immature, easily distracted, weak and selfish. She's still a lover; feels His love towards her; but she is mainly focused on her inheritance in Christ.
  - 2) The second part of the Song of Songs is chapters 5-8. This focuses on the Shulamite becoming the bride of Christ. She is becoming mature and is now serving God on His terms and placing her life under His Lordship, because she is seeing that He also has an inheritance in her.
- J) The Shulamite was the poor farm girl, who tended sheep and didn't live in the palace, but was often outside. She is the young immature maiden who becomes the mature bride. The Song is her progressive journey from immaturity to full bridal maturity.
- K) The Shulamite represents every <u>sincere</u> believer in Christ, male or female, young or old. We are just like the Shulamite: we have deep internal struggles that hinder us; weakness and fears; and in the middle of all of that, we are also reaching for Christ, though we often fall.
- L) One of the powerful truths in this Song is that God doesn't define her by where she is at, but rather what she is longing for on the inside. Though she is weak and neglected on the outside, she longs to be cherished, loved and sought out. He sees this in her and calls out what's inside.

# **III) How To Interpret The Song Of Songs**

- A) There are three primary schools of thought when it comes to interpreting the Song of Songs.
- B) This isn't a book created for arguing, but for awakening love deep in the human heart.

#### 1) The allegorical view

- (i) This school sees the Song of Songs as being mystical and figurative. This group sees the facts within this book as only a framework to base the story on deeper truths, mainly Christ and His Church. The allegorical interpretation has been the most popular view of the Song in the past 1,900 years of Church history and for about 900 years of Jewish history.
  - (a) For us to see this book as an allegory, we must first see it as being a grounded concrete historical work. If this book has no solid foundation, then it must be thrown out as a cloud that changes based on the atmosphere of human opinion.

- (b) **1**<sup>st</sup> **Corinthians 15:46** "However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual."
- (c) This is the safest way to view any and all books of the Bible. We see them first as real, literal, historical works and stories. From that solid concrete foundation we find spiritual truths that we can apply to our lives and the lives of others.
- (d) To view the book of Revelation as first symbolic, or allegorical would be wrong. It is not an allegory, it's a real, solid, concrete experience that John had with, and about Christ. And from that solid foundation we can then see some spiritual truths that help us and others in our Christian walk.
- (e) There are 3 main allegorical views of this Song.
  - (i) The allegory between God as the bridegroom and ethnic Israel as His bride.
  - (ii) The allegory of Jesus and the corporate Church throughout history.
  - (iii) The allegory of relationship between Jesus and the individual believer. This view gives us spiritual principles to help us grow in passion for Jesus.

#### 2) The Naturalistic View

(i) This school of thought sees it being mainly, and often only, as a literal love Song. The natural view sees this book as instruction in real love between two people, male and female and married. This view has become very popular only in the past 100 years.

### 3) The Typical/Spiritual view

- (i) This school of thought works to build a bridge between the allegorical view and the naturalistic view. It says that the Song is truth and contains facts, but it can also be viewed as being spiritual and having allegorical content.
- (ii) This is the primary way that we will view the Song of Songs. We are taking our spiritual application of this story, from the foundation that this is a real love Song between King Solomon and the Shulamite. It is first real ,and second, spiritual.
- (iii) We want to see this book as being historical, literal, and that it has a spiritual meaning, mainly that of bride and groom, Christ and His Church.
- C) It's important that we don't view this book as being better than the other 65 books in the Bible. We can view it differently than the other 65 books, but not better. As Christians, we are called to love all the scriptures, and all of the Word of God.
- D) What makes this book different is that it doesn't speak about how to obtain ministry influence; how to gain wealth; how to make friends; how to heal the sick; or to receive apostolic authority. It tells us how to grow in love for Christ and how to receive love from Him.
- E) There is no other book in the Bible that is line upon line, word upon word, about personal growth in passion for Jesus. These eight chapters are line upon line, thought upon thought, and chapter upon chapter, about both the first and second commandment working together.

F) And lastly, seeing Solomon as the Bridegroom Jesus has been hard for some. And to those I want to ask if it's hard to see Hosea as God and Gomer the Church? Do you struggle seeing Abraham as a picture of Jesus? Isaac as a picture of Jesus? Moses as a picture of Jesus? Joseph as a picture of Jesus? David as a picture of Jesus? Then why would we struggle to see the wisest man that has ever lived as being a shadow of Jesus, who was yet to come?

# IV) Bride Of Christ Theology

- A) Theologically, all believers on earth are betrothed (engaged) to Jesus. In Hebrew tradition, an engaged couple was legally married and needed to be divorced if they broke their engagement.
  - 1) **2**<sup>nd</sup> **Corinthians 11:2** <u>"For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband that I might present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."</u>
- B) The consummation of the marriage relationship occurs in the age which is yet to come.
  - 1) Revelation 19:7 <u>"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."</u>
- C) Though the fullness of our marriage to the Lamb doesn't take place till the age to come, that doesn't mean that we shouldn't live as the bride right now.
- D) We can call ourselves many things, but God has defined us as His eternal bride, whom He purchased with His own blood.
  - 1) Revelation 19:9 <u>"Then he said to me, write blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me, these are the true sayings of God."</u>
  - 2) Isaiah 62:4-5 ...But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah, for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married...And as a bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you." (Hephzibah = My delight is in her. Beulah = Literally Married).
  - 3) Romans 7:4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit."
- E) Being the bride of Christ isn't about being male or female, but rather a position of nearness and privilege to Jesus' heart. This is the fuel and motivation for everything we do. It flows out of an intimate encounter with Christ Jesus.
- F) Genesis chapter 1 and 2 tell us about a physical, natural wedding between Adam and Eve. Revelation chapters 21 and 22 speak about the spiritual marriage between Christ and His Church. We know that at the end of this age, God will be raising up a bride, not an army, a family or a workforce, but a bride.
  - 1) Revelation 22:17 "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come!"

# V) Two Prophetic Words I Received About The Bride Of Christ

- A) On May 25<sup>th</sup> 2010 at 8:50 am I had a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit in my office. First I started weeping and my weeping turned into deep sobbing and then into groaning. Then I heard the Holy Spirit say that He was going to re-build the tabernacle of David in our midst, and in it He would marry worship and intersession. I kept seeing a white tent and I knew there was a wedding taking place inside, and it was the preparation of the bride for her wedding day. The Lord said that the Song of Songs and the life and times of Jesus Christ would be the central theme for this movement as we endeavor to build a house of prayer on Willapa Harbor. I kept seeing this white tent and I knew in it was worship and intersession that was creating the context for understanding of the great end time trouble of Jesus' return. It was the five wise virgins and the dress rehearsal for the age to come. I saw this white tent too many times to count in this encounter.
  - God is using this message and this theme to equip us as fully yoked partners with Him.
- B) In November of 2005 I was traveling over the Snoqualmie Pass to preach for the weekend, and I had a several hour encounter with the Lord while driving. This is what the Lord said to me;
  - 1) Son, My bride isn't ready to walk into the Church right now. If she were to come in right now for the wedding day, the Church wouldn't stand to their feet because there's nothing adorning her to capture the attention of the nations. He said that her makeup wasn't done, her dress is short, torn, trashy and dirty. She's wearing no perfume, no jewelry and she looks like she hasn't showered in days. Her hair is not done and she's barefooted.
  - 2) Then He said to me, in fact right now she's in bed with other lovers and won't even answer the door for Me. Behold, I am standing at the door knocking, but she won't come. She's too ashamed, and covered in guilt and doesn't even understand that I will heal her if she will only open the door. He said that when she is unfaithful to Me, I am faithful to her because I can't deny Myself. I will stand at the door and keep knocking, but I won't force My way in. Over time, My strong love will win her over, but this is where she is right now.

# **Chapter One Extra Reading**

# **How I Became Acquainted With The Song Of Songs**

Hidden in the middle of the Old Testament is a dusty gem, a Bible book that many within the Church have overlooked and relegated to the women's ministry. I have found it a good indicator that when leaders in the body of Christ stay away from certain books of the bible you might want to check them out and work to understand why. When Paul tells us in one of his epistles 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:16, that "All Scripture is inspired by God, and it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..." He wasn't saying that just a few books of the Bible are inspired by the Holy Spirit, but all of them. This means that as a Christian, though there are some books in the Bible that we don't understand, we aren't afforded the luxury to neglect them as being for us or not for us. They are all for us. The Song of Songs which was Solomon's seems to be just that kind of book.

The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's, has been a book that God the Holy Spirit has used to awaken love deep within me both for God and others. I would be lying if I could tell you the measurable reality that this book has had on me, but I can't. It has literally changed so many parts of my life that I honestly don't know how to describe it impact on me.

I first became interested in the Song of Songs after listening to a random teaching CD by Mike Bickle from the International House Of Prayer in Kansas City, MO. In this CD Mike talked about how deeply the Song of Songs had touched both him and other great men and women of God throughout Church history. This sparked something within me and caused me to start reading the Song of Songs a chapter a day for several months. After reading for a while, I didn't have any real revelation from within the book itself but it helped me get a grid for understanding some of the major phrases within it. From this I picked up the CD series that Mike Bickle did on the Song of Songs which is a total of 20 one hour sessions with over 500 pages of notes and I listened to that series over 4 times through over a period of several years. From this series I continued to read my Bible but I also bought several commentaries on the Song of Songs and some books that have been written by different people throughout history. These books, along with CD's, some music and most importantly the Bible have helped me gain a little bit of understanding about what this book is about and I'm excited to share it with you.

# **Introduction to The Song Of Songs**

In this chapter I am aiming mainly for your mind. As we continue on our study of the Song of Songs we will be primarily targeting the heart, but for this first chapter I am targeting your mind. Our hearts are impacted when we fill our minds with truth. But when we only fill our minds with truth and never allow that truth to impact our hearts we end up with dead religion. It is my passion to never become only passionate about the mind or only passionate about the heart. We must be those whose minds are full and whose hearts are deeply impacted by what is in our minds. We want both, not one or the other and as an entrance into the heart, I am aiming now to impact the mind.

Solomon wrote the Song of Songs around 900-950 B.C. He was also David's son. The Song of Songs wasn't the only song that King Solomon wrote. In fact he is quoted in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 4:29-34 as writing 1,050 songs. What makes this Song different from all the rest is that the Holy Spirit titled this one "The Song above all Songs" or "The Song of Songs." The Holy Spirit is drawing attention to this passage and letting

us know that it's a superlative or a statement of highest degree. This book is titled in the same way that Jesus is called "The King of Kings" or "The Lord of Lord's."

When the storyline of this book touches our hearts and we start to see the characters of this book as representing our personal lives before the Lord our hearts begin to soar in Christ. And on that note, it's important that we see this book primarily as a Song and not just a story. I would say it this way, "it's a story in song form." The story is a story that we are familiar with. We might not be familiar with the specific story of Solomon and the Shulamite, but after looking at this story for a while we begin to see the life of the Shulamite and the life of King Solomon are both figurative of our lives with Jesus Christ. See, the Shulamite represents the sincere and King Solomon represents King Jesus. Don't worry about how to see all of it right now, because later on in this chapter we will discuss the different methods of interpretation so that we are looking through a Biblical lens to make such a claim. But right now, allow your heart to be wrapped up in the love story between God and you, King Solomon and the Shulamite.

See the Shulamite is the young farm girl, the peasant girl who's not living in the palace but outside the capital city working in the fields, shepherding and living outside under the heat of the Sun. And King Solomon is one of the richest, if not the richest king to have ever lived, with the most wisdom and has need of nothing. But when King Solomon lays his eyes on this young peasant girl, something happens to him internally and he realizes that he must have her. At whatever cost, at whatever expense, he must make her his own. Beloved, this is our story. We are that peasant, who has, as Paul said, been alienated from the common wealth of God but now has been brought near by the blood of Christ. We are the Shulamite, living outside the Kingdom, unable to pay the cost to be transported on our own from the small village to the upper-class Kingdom lifestyle.

For some reason God was so moved over His creation being with Him forever, or at least giving them the option of being with Him forever that He sent His only Son, to become a Man, be rejected by His own family and the religious leaders of His day, be tried illegally, sentenced to death, be crushed by the wrath of God, laid in a tomb, risen from death and ascend into heaven so that those who say yes to Jesus can have everlasting life. Do you understand that Jesus did this for you, not for Himself? Jesus didn't benefit from His own death in the slightest. Paul said that He who knew no sin became sin for us. We have caught the attention of heaven, and God came for us, paid our debt, wiped our slate clean and invites us to sit with Him in heavenly places. Wow! This is our story, and the Shulamite represents us before both God and man.

It's best if we see the Song of Songs as having two major parts. Though so much takes place within the Song and we will cover a ton of it, it's best if we see the Song as having two major sections. The first section takes place in Song of Songs chapters 1-4. In these 4 chapters we see the bride as being focused mainly on her inheritance in Christ and what she can receive in the Godhead. Though this isn't a bad thing to pursue, it's only half of the story. The other half is Song of Songs chapters 5-8. And in these chapters we see the bride make the shift from seeing her life as being primarily her own, to belonging to Jesus. In the last half of the book we see the bride no longer referring to her life as her own, but belonging to Jesus as His bride forever. What gives the bride so much strength to receive this twofold inheritance is the way that Jesus expresses His love for her throughout the entire Song.

Something that I have learned being around healthy prophetic ministry is that God doesn't need to point out all of our sin and short comings, specifically in public, or really at all when He is speaking through a prophetic vessel. The reason for this is because God the Holy Spirit has been at work in the heart of the receiver for months and years prior to the prophetic voice speaking into them. So what God does is He

comes and offers something better than where we are at, so that we let go of the lesser and grab the greater. This doesn't mean that God excuses sin, but rather it just means that He doesn't motivate us by telling us how worthless we are and how messed up we are. He motivates us by telling us what He has for us. In doing this He clearly understands that we will most likely say no to sin and yes to serving Him and being in partnership with God. This principle is so powerfully seen in the life of the bride through her entire journey into full bridal maturity in Christ. God sees that she's weak, scared, sinful and uncomfortable but He doesn't address any of those things. He only addresses her according to what she is longing for at the heart level. Many of you identify yourself based on what's taking place in your life externally, but this isn't the main way how God address us. God understands that our external is the fruit of the internal, so instead of changing the external He goes after the internal. The bride had so many longings to be loved, to feel beautiful and to be adorned. Jesus is going to come and address all those causing passion and fervency to arise.

# **How To Interpret The Song Of Songs**

I would in no way call myself a scholar on the Song of Songs, but I have studied the Bible, prayed it through, looked at several books and a couple of commentaries to gather up some understanding on the subject. One of the big questions that comes up when you talk about the Song of Songs is the principles of interpretation. This might be the most important part in this entire chapter. It's also critical to state that this book hasn't been given so that Christians can argue with other Christians about what this book "really" means. This is a book to enhance love and there are several ways to view and one way is not more right than the other. We want to bless people as they see something in this book that awakens love in them either for a spouse or for King Jesus.

Generally, there are three schools of thought when it comes to interpreting the Song of Songs which is Solomon's. The first school of thought is called "The allegorical view." Those that adhere to this viewpoint see the Song as being mystical and figurative. They see the facts and points of the Song as a framework to spring off into deeper truths about Christ and His Church. This viewpoint has been the most popular for the past 1,900 years of Church history and more than 900 years before that. What is important is that when we seek to make something allegorical in the Bible that we first approach the text or the book with the clear understanding that what we are looking at was and is literal, factual and historical. In 1st Corinthians 15:46 Paul tells us "However, the spiritual was not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual." What Paul is telling us here is that when we approach the Bible we must understand that we don't first spiritualize it, but rather take it as being literal. And from that reality we can then make spiritual application. First natural and then spiritual.

The second school of thought is called "The Naturalistic view." The Naturalistic view sees the Song of Songs being mainly and often only a literal love Song between Solomon and the Shulamite. The natural view sees this book as instruction in real love, between two people that are married. This view has only become really popular in the past 100 years.

And lastly there is the "Typical/Spiritual View." This view seeks to build a bridge between the allegorical view and the naturalistic view. It sees the Song as truth that contains facts but that it can also be viewed as being spiritual and having allegorical content. This is the primary school of thought that we will be working from during our study of the Song of Songs. This book has been inspired by the Holy Spirit, to demonstrate both the sacred love in marriage and the holy love that God has for His people. Because we are looking at this mainly as an allegory between Christ and His bride doesn't mean that we are

taking away from the natural love Song that is actually being told. Sometimes the different groups that stand on one side or the other of this book fight and argue about what it should mean. This is foolishness and we are not interested in getting into any conversations like that. If this book touches you through the natural school of thought, receive it and if it touches you in an allegorical style, than receive it that way. One doesn't have to take from the other and in fact we can only take the allegorical approach from the Song because of the natural story that is first told. Remember, the natural first and then the spiritual. This is a holy book, anointed and inspired by the Holy Spirit to awaken love in us for Christ.

It's also very important to note that this book isn't better than the other books of the Bible. We are not exalting the Song of Songs outside the cannon that God has inspired. This is one book of 65 other books that have been given to us to instruct us in all things concerning doctrine, reproof and edification. What makes this book different from the other 65 books of the Bible is because of what it teaches from start to finish. From chapter one and verse one all the way to the eighth chapter and final verse, it's all about love and really the first and second commandment. What makes this book different from the others is that it speaks mainly of love. The other books of the Bible have much to say about many different topics including love, not solely about love. We don't want some sort of off balance approach to the scriptures, but we also want to understand the specifics directions in which the Holy Spirit was leading when He inspired certain books of the Bible.

# What Is Bride Of Christ Theology?

When I start talking about the bride of Christ in Church and around Christians, lots of questions come up. It's important that we remain very Biblical in our approach to understanding both our role as the bride of Christ and Jesus' role as the Bridegroom God. The Bible has much to say about the bride of Christ and Jesus as the Bridegroom. Whether we like the idea of being a bride and Jesus a Bridegroom, we don't get a say. This is actually how Jesus has set up His Kingdom and we have been invited into this reality with Him. It's also important that we understand Jesus isn't only a Bridegroom, but also a King, a Judge, a Prophet and a Priest among other things. Jesus is like a diamond with not just one facet but many. We must spin this Diamond all the way around to fully understand what's alive in the heart of God for us. With all that being said, I believe that one of the best paradigm's for us to use when looking at Jesus is through the lens of a bride and Groom. The reason for this is because we see the God who gave up all for the sake of love. When we see the extravagant love that God has displayed to us through Christ, it causes the same extravagant love to arise in us for Him. It's the wholehearted abandonment that's known best through bride and Groom.

If you have given your life to Christ, you have actually been betrothed to Christ. What this means is that you aren't actually married to the Lamb yet, but in the engagement process. What's powerful about this process is that when Jews were engaged if they were to break it off during that period it was considered a divorce. A great example of this was with Mary and Joseph when Mary became pregnant with Jesus. Joseph realized what would happen to both of their reputations if word was leaked to others because of what the Holy Spirit was doing in Mary. The reason this matters for you is because you don't want to wait until the wedding supper to live like the bride, you want to enter into that identity right now, in this age. When I put the ring on my wife's finger I was saying no to every other woman and yes to her. That means that I now live my life different, even though I'm not yet married. I am living like a married man even though I am only engaged, and so it is in our current relationship with Jesus. We are to live like the bride now, not just in the age to come.

Being the bride of Christ isn't about being male or female but rather a position of nearness and privilege to Jesus' heart. If you're a man don't worry, I'm not asking you to put a dress on and high heels, far from it. What I am asking you to do, is see Jesus as the God who gave up everything for love and respond to Him in the way that He has loved you. For men, being the bride of Christ doesn't take away from your masculinity, it actually adds to it. If you're a man, God is calling you to be tough, but also tender. Men must be gentle with women, able to listen, apologetic but also strong, willing to work hard, get dirty and do whatever needs to be done to make things in life work. And just because you're a woman, it doesn't mean that you have better understanding than men about being the bride of Christ. Being the bride is about loving God in the way that He loves you. It's whole hearted, fiery love that says yes to Jesus and no to everything else.

The Bible starts with a natural wedding taking place in Genesis one and two between Adam and Eve and it ends in Revelation 21 and 22 with a spiritual wedding between Christ and His Church. In **Revelation 22:17** John has this to say about God's end time people "And the Spirit and the bride say come!". John doesn't see an army, a family or a workforce arise at the end of this age when Jesus returns, but a bride. This is where life is headed and I encourage you to buckle up your seatbelt, sit back and enjoy the journey as we venture deep into the heart of God for answers about His life and love for us and our life and love for Him.

# **Chapter Two Overview of The Song Of Songs (1-4)**

# I) Introduction

A) Through this session my purpose is to give an overview of the first half of the Song of Songs, to help us understand the story as a whole, not just parts, which will be the majority of this series.

# II) The Divine Kiss and the Bride's life vision (SOS 1:1-4)

- A) The entire theme of the Song of Solomon is the brides two-fold life vision of being drawn away in intimacy and running with others in ministry. And all of this is driven by hunger.
- B) Song of Songs 1:2,4 <u>"Let Him kiss me with the Kisses of His Word (Hunger)...Draw me</u> away(Intimacy)! We will run after You(ministry)..."
  - 1) This is the bride's thesis. This is what I call the bride's two-fold life vision. She understands that intimacy is **primarily** something that is done on her own, and ministry is something that is **always done in community**.
  - 2) She is saying, before I am able to run in ministry I must be drawn in intimacy with You.
  - 3) She knew, like so many of us, that before she was able to run with a message, she had to sit with Christ in the place of intimacy.
    - (i) Mark 12:30-31 "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this; You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no greater commandment than these."

# III) Being Dark and Lovely (SOS 1:5-11)

- A) The bride steps out of the Groom's chamber and runs directly into her own weakness and sin nature. His holy presence caused both the light and dark in her to surface.
- B) Song Of Songs 1:5<u>"I am dark but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon."</u>
  - 1) She realizes that she is both dark in Adam and light in Christ. This isn't a moment, but the revelation of her sin nature. But she doesn't see only her sin, she also sees her new life in Christ. The truth of God's presence must cause both to surface in us like it did her.
- C) Song Of Songs 1:6 "My mother's sons were anary with me; they made me the keeper of the

### vineyards, but my own vineyard I haven't kept."

- Because she is passionate about loving God she says yes to everything and the Church works her into the ground. Not only are the vineyards that she was overseeing neglected, but her own vineyard becomes barren as well.
- D) Song of Songs 1:8 "If you do not know O fairest among women..."
  - 1) In this place of great confusion and brokenness He breaks in and declares His love for her and gives her wisdom about what to do in her situation.

# IV) The Bride Begins To Understand Her Beauty In Christ (SOS 2:1-7)

- A) Song of Songs 2:1-2 "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. Like a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."
  - 1) She is being awakened to the reality that among the billions of the earth that don't love God, she does, and He sees that. She is saying, my love for you, though it's weak, it's like a lily among thorns. It's precious to God.
- B) Song of Songs 2:3 "I sat down under His shade with great delight..."
- C) Psalm 121:5-6 <u>"The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day...</u>
  - 1) Here she is sitting in the finished work of the Cross, realizing that she is unable to produce the shade of God for her life. Neither she nor us can produce, on our own, the rest that comes through Christ and the Cross.

# V) Challenging The Comfort Zone (SOS 2:8-17)

- A) Song of Songs 2:8-9 "The voice of my beloved! Behold He comes, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills...My Beloved spoke, and said to me; rise up My love, My fair one, and come away."
  - 1) At this point in the Song the bride has recovered from being overworked by the brothers, and she is now enjoying the presence of the Lord. She is enjoying personal intimacy with Him. His plan is not to have her only in the chamber of love, but also upon the mountains with Him, as an equally yoked bridal partner doing the work of the ministry in nations.
  - 2) This really surprises her, as she sees a new face of Christ. It's disruptive to her quiet life.
    - (i) Colossians 2:15 "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them."

- B) Song of Songs 2:17 "Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn my Beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bether (Separation)."
  - 1) Because of fear of the unknown, and not wanting to lose her quiet intimacy with Him, she says no to His call to go up to the mountains and partner in ministry with Him.
  - 2) What she doesn't realize, is that He is going to move on from her, withdrawing His manifest presence off her life to motivate her to get up and move towards Him.

# VI) The Bride Experiences God's Loving Discipline(SOS 3:1-11)

- A) Song of Songs 3:1-3 "By night on my bed I sought the One I love, I sought Him, but couldn't find Him...I will seek the One I love...have you seen the One I love?"
  - 1) The bride is on her bed when He called her up to the mountains. In just 3 verses she says 7 times that she is seeking Him, or the One I love. He has withdrawn His presence from her life to get her out of the bridal chamber and up to the mountains with Him.
  - 2) Her seeking is all about love. She isn't looking for the God of anointed ministry; the God of prosperity; or the God of glory. She's seeking the One whom she loved. Her seeking is about love and passion for Him.
  - 3) In **Song of Songs 3:4** she finds Him and discovers Him to be a safe Savior, One whom she can trust. This chapter closes with the bride being transported from Shunem to Jerusalem by the King Himself.

# VII) The Prophetic Heart Of the Bridegroom God (SOS 4:1-8)

- A) Song of Songs 4:1a "Behold you are all fair My love! Behold, you are fair..."
  - 1) Song of Songs 4:1b "You have doves eyes behind your veil."
  - 2) It's here that King Jesus speaks to the heart of the bride with prophetic passion. In **Song of Songs 4:1-5** He speaks about 8 virtues that she is longing for internally, but hasn't manifested externally. These are the hidden longings internally that He is addressing her by. He's not speaking about her external, but her internal.
  - 3) When she hears this from Him, it evokes holy passion within her and causes her to respond with a resounding "yes" to follow Him up to the mountains, where He had originally called her in Chapter 2.
- B) Song of Songs 4:6 "Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense."
  - 1) Luke 9:23 "If anyone wants to follow Me, let Him deny Himself, take up his cross daily and follow Me."

2) The bride is saying that she will follow Jesus "until". This is "the until" of God. This is a yes to the daily pursuit of loving Jesus through the highs and lows. Until the shadows flee away.

# VIII) The Ravished Heart Of God (SOS 4:9-15)

- A) Song of Songs 4:9 <u>"You have ravished My heart, My sister, My spouse; You have ravished My heart with one look of your eyes, with one link of your necklace."</u>
  - This is the uncreated God, ravished over a simple yes. The bride hasn't done anything, only said yes. This word, ravished, means (overwhelmed with emotion; undone; held spellbound). God's heart is ravished over the weak "yes" of fallen humanity.
- B) Song of Songs 4:16 <u>"Awake, O north wind, and come O south! Blow upon my garden, that it's spices may flow out. Let my Beloved come to His garden and eat it's pleasant fruits."</u>
  - 1) This is the great shift of the Song of Songs. The north wind was a cold bitter wind and the south wind was a warm refreshing wind.
    - (i) **Job 37:9** <u>"From the chamber of the south comes a whirlwind, and cold from the scattering winds of the north."</u>
    - (ii) Luke 12:55 <u>"And when you see the south wind blow, you say, there will be hot weather; and there is."</u>
  - 2) She is saying to God: come what may, send pressure, send blessing, do whatever you have to do; because if You're really ravished over me, if You're really held spellbound by my weak yes; then I say, "do whatever You have to do! Come what may, I am Yours."

# **Chapter Two Extra Reading**

In 2006 Jennifer and I (Patrick Walton) had a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit at City Bible Church in Portland, OR. During this encounter the Holy Spirit wrote the first and second commandments upon our hearts in a sovereign way. What I mean by sovereign, is that God did something in our hearts, joining us together that we had never intended for. This was my first understanding that Jesus had labeled something in the Bible as the first and second commandment. It's not that what I received from the Lord was new, it was just new to me. Now that I have looked at those two commandments, I can see that God not only placed them into the cannon (the Bible), but He has also unlocked them with many of His servants throughout world history. In my personal opinion, the Song of Songs is split, literally in the exact middle of the book, between the first commandment and the second commandment. When I seen the two commandments in the Song, I was blown away because of the life mandate that God gave Jennifer and I in those two commandments.

As I mentioned in Chapter one, the Song of Songs is a very special book (not the best book), but a very special book because of the way it lays out Passion for Jesus. This book covers what Isaiah called line upon line, precept upon precept and thought upon thought on the subject of how Jesus feels about us, and what happens when that truth touches our heart. When we feel loved from Jesus we live like a lover, not a beggar. The power of the Song of Songs is that it's an eight chapter love story of both Natural and Spiritual love first between Solomon and then from Jesus to His bride. In this Chapter we are going to look at an overview of Song of Songs chapters 1-4. In this overview I am going to be sharing with you an overview of the storyline of the Song of Songs, not a commentary. It's very important that you see the eight chapter love Song as a story, and not just random encounters with Christ. For the rest of the series, starting with session 4 we will be looking at the Song of Songs in a verse by verse study, but for Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 we will be looking at an overview of the storyline as a whole. I will be doing both Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 in narrative fashion, working to paint the overall picture and it's my passion that you encounter the heart of the Bridegroom God as you read and study this marvelous progression of Holy Passion, called the Song of Songs.

# The Brides Two-Fold Life Vision And Her Personal Discovery (SOS1:1-14)

The Song of Songs opens up in **SOS** (Song of Songs) 1:1-2 with her stating her passion for God to speak to her. She uses the words "kiss me with the kisses of Your mouth" but it's best if we translate that word "mouth" with the "words." She was calling out to Him who has authority over her life and asking for Him to speak to her the tender words of the great Uncreated God. He journey is starting with hunger for God because she sees the fragrance of Him being good. A fragrance that draws her near Him, as opposed to a fragrance that repels her. Its only when see smells the good fragrance of His name that she starts to understand why the Church (virgins) have loved Him. As she gets close first to Him and then to the Church, see is going to now state what I call her two-fold life vision. In **SOS** 1:4 she is calling out to Him and asking that before she runs in the place of ministry that He first draws her away. This is the first glimpse that we get into her passion for the first and second commandment, and even they are even in the right order, the first, first and the second, second. Simply amazing.

The bride realizes that she's not just speaking into the open air, but to the heart of Him who loves her. See she's a listening God. We know this because in the same verse (SOS 1:4) the King answers her and takes her into His chamber. The chamber was a place of intimacy, something like what we would call the

secret place with God. It's here in this very encounter that the bride emerges with a clear understanding that the virgins (Church) has rightly loves Him. This was a huge Aha moment for her. Because As she steps out of His presence in **SOS 1:5** she's says "I am dark but lovely." Because she is so excited about her new found romance and the house in which He dwells (the Church) she starts serving and saying yes to everything. This serving quickly leads her to a place of burnout and separation from the One she originally signed up for in **SOS 1:4.** In her place of desperation and separation she calls out to Him **in SOS 1:7** and ask Him for help to be reunited with the one whom she loves. Ministry isn't her passion or first love, Jesus is.

Because He is a tender Shepherd He speaks to her in **SOS 1:8** and gives her wonderful instruction in her place of brokenness. He challenges her to not pull away from the other sheep, to only do the things that He has for (not all the other things the Church would love to put on her) and to remain under authority, under the shepherds tents. As she listens to Him, she becomes reunited with Him and the passion between them starts to take off.

It's in **SOS 1:12** that she is now being pictured as sitting at the Kings table. It's here at His table, that she sees Him as He really is and it causes worship in her to arise, nearly effortlessly. She says "my spikenard sends forth it's fragrance." Not only does she worship Him, but she also sees Calvary in Him. She says in **SOS 1:13** "a bundle of Myrrh is my Beloved unto me, that weighs heavy upon my breasts (heart)." It's here that she is starting to get a glimpse into what He endured to make her His own. It's not that He went through a little sacrifice, but He's a bundle of Myrrh. This encounter would start what I like to call the "Divine Interchange." He is going to start this one off by speaking over her and telling her that He loves, He likes her and that she's beautiful to Him in **SOS 1:15**. This of course causes a deep response to the same level of passion from her towards Him. In SOS 1:16 she says "Behold, You are handsome..." He tells her how He feels about her, and it causes her to respond, describing how she feels about Him. As SOS 1 is coming to an end, it's clear that the two of them are walking in deep, and growing place of intimacy.

# The Bride's Identity And The Divine Disruption And Separation (SOS 2:1-17)

**SOS 2** starts out with her speaking her new identity in Him over herself, almost as if she is understanding it as she is speaking it. She says in **SOS 2:1-2** "I am the lily of the valleys." She is discovering that in a world of so many, so few have said yes to Him. But she has, and that makes her beautiful in such a dirty world that's filled with such personal passions and a lack of regard for the Knowledge of the Holy. In **SOS 2:3** She sits down under His shade tree and finds great delight. She is starting to understand the importance of sitting with Him under the finished work of the Cross, because it's only in this place that she finds real rest for her soul. The encounter underneath His shade leads her into what's called the Banqueting house, or the house of wine **(SOS 2:4).** 

Lovesickness has now laid hold of her in such a way that she is overcome with emotion because of His emotions for her. It's here, in the secret place that she is so enjoying the sweet communion that they are sharing. She was overworked, burnout, separated from Him and she has now been rejoined with the One whom her soul loved. She is drinking in the sweet water of unbroken fellowship with the Shepherd who loves her. But this isn't going to last forever as it is right now. In **SOS 2:8** He comes to her in a new way. She sees Him leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills. She sees Him as being boundless, the Great Conquering Stag of the ages, who is bound by nothing, held by no one and answers nobody. This is a new face of her Beloved. She is seeing the God who stands on the top of the difficult

places in life, and is skipping over them, leaping upon them. It's here that He calls out to her and bids her to come away with Him to the tops of the mountains **SOS 2:10-13.** 

Though the young maiden loves Him, would never want to be separated from Him, she also has deep internal fears of losing what she has gained in the close of **SOS 1** and in the start of **SOS 2**. The mountain tops represent the public life she has in God. It's the place of ministry, the challenge that being in front of people and the demonic world as we partner with Christ reaching the nations presents to us. It's not that she doesn't want to go on with Him, she truly does, but she's fearful of losing what she has already lost and now regained, intimacy with Him. She is going to ultimately answer no in **SOS 2:17** to His request to come out of the secret place and with join Him on top of the mountains. See, Jesus can't only have His Church in the chamber of encounter and not also doing the work of the ministry. Jesus is calling her away because He longs for a bride that He can fully empower with the Holy Spirit so that she not only loves Him well, but partners with Him. Chapter two comes to a close with the bride staying in the chamber of encounter and the Beloved moving on, back to the mountains from which He was calling out to her.

# The Bride Experiences God's Loving Discipline And His Passion For Her (SOS 3:1-11)

The maiden is about to learn a powerful and painful lesson; it's safer to be with God on the mountain tops if He is there, then to stay in the chamber if He has moved on. Remember He called out for her and she said no. She said "I'm staying here, but You my Beloved, You move on." And move on He did. Know we understand that God never, ever forsakes us, but often times we lose His manifest presence, and this is exactly what happens in **SOS 3:1.** It's here that she says "By night on my bed I sought the One I love, I <u>sought Him but couldn't find Him…"</u> The young maiden was hooked on His presence, and He is going to use that reality to motivate her to get off her bed and come after Him. Well it works perfectly. The bride get's off her bed and heads out into the streets, looking for other Christians, Church leaders or anyone who can help her find her Beloved. She is not seeking power, fortune or fame, but the One whom she loves. Finally, in SOS 3:4 He allows her to find Him and they are reunited, in the streets. It's not the mountain, but that's not important to Him right now, because at least He got her moving and now He will be able to continue leading her. When they are reunited she sees another new face of her Beloved that takes her back. In SOS 3:6 she sees Him as the risen Savior who suffered but overcame. This is the Jesus that the Bible calls "Scented Savior." She sees Him "coming up from the wilderness." He is not only being pictured as the God who ascended from the grave, but He is also coming for her with a royal procession.

He is coming to Shunem from Jerusalem with a giant chariot to take her to where He is. What's so powerful about this Chariot is that Solomon himself made it. Now, Solomon had many wives and many weddings and had many chariots built to transport brides later on in his life, but this one is special. In SOS 3:9 it says that "Solomon himself built a palanquin (chariot)." The many chariots that Solomon had built, he didn't actually build them, but this he personally built it. He didn't just "have" it built. Because the maiden is just a poor peasant girl, she could've never paid her way to get into the Palace so she needed someone to pay the price for her. She needed something to take up her case and make a way for her to be there and this is exactly what Solomon has done. The idea is that God couldn't redeem us from a distance. He had to become a Man, endure the punishment of wicked men, be hung up on a Cross, suffer the wrath of God and be raised from the dead to convert our hearts. Here, the bride is seeing that God has paid the price for her and gotten personal involved in the transportation of her life from earth to eternity with Him through a wooden Palanquin called the Cross. SOS 3 end with the bride

challenging the daughters of Jerusalem (Christians living at a distance from God). She is telling the ones around her to <u>"go forth and see the King"</u> (SOS 3:11). She sees that this wedding that He is preparing for her is the <u>"day of the gladness of His heart"</u> (SOS 3:11). She's understanding that it's not the wedding ceremony that He's jazzed about, or the food, or the cake or all the decorations, but it's the bride that He is longing for. The bride is the gladness of His heart. This awakens her to how He feels not only about all people, but about her as an individual.

### The Prophetic Heart Of God And The Winds Of Testing And Blessing (SOS 4:1-16)

In **SOS 2 and 3** we see mainly the bride speaking but **SOS 4** starts out with the voice of the Bridegroom. In **SOS 4:1-5** He is going to share with her 8 budding virtues that she is reaching for internally, but doesn't possess externally. He is showing Himself as the great Prophet who sees beyond the exterior and fully knows the interior of His creation. These things that He is going to share with her are going to cause such a fountain of passion for Him to arise from deep within. It's important to remember that He is telling her these things even though she still hasn't said yes to the call to join Him on the mountain tops when He called to her in **SOS 2.** She has at least got off her bed and went into the street, but she hasn't yet agreed to go to the mountains with Him. But these five verses **(SOS 4:1-5)** will change all that.

After she hears from Him how He feels about her, that He sees such passion and a vibrant inner life she can't help but say yes to His invitation to the mountains. And in **SOS 4:6** she says "Until the day breaks, and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh, and the hill of frankincense." This is her surrendered yes to Him to go and be with Him on the mountain tops. She says that she will go her way. She realizes that she can't go someone else's way, but she has to go her own way, the unique way that God has laid out for her. What happens right here during what I call "The divine interchange" is going to blow your mind. In **SOS 4:9-10** the heart of God is unveiled and we get a glimpse into how He feels when the bride says yes to Him. His response to her yes is "you have ravished My heart." The heart of God is ravished over her weak but sincere yes. That word ravished means to be undone, conquered, and overcome with emotion. The heart of the uncreated God is overcome with emotion when the weak and struggling bride only says yes to Him. Remember she hasn't actually gone to the mountain yet and she won't until **SOS 5**, but right here we get a glimpse into what happens in the heart of God when we simply say yes to Him. Her yes, to His leadership and His safe track record over her life and the lives of others leave uncreated God totally undone.

What follows the after the ravished heart of the great Bridegroom God in **SOS 4:9** is another series of truths about the brides secret inward life that's progressively growing. From **SOS 4:10-15** Jesus speaks over her different things that are alive within her and that she's reaching for in Him. In **SOS 4:11** He praises her for her speech and the depth of truths that are within her yet at bay, underneath the tongue. He says to her here "...honey and milk are under your tongue..." What He is saying is that she has the ability to feed the older ones in the Lord and the younger ones in the Lord but it's all underneath her tongue. The Lord knows how hard it is to tame the tongue and He is praising her that she isn't a babbling brook of information, revelation and personal experiences in Him. He is telling her that there is great depth within her but it's under control and at the will of the Holy Spirit to use it as He sees fit. He also praises her for her purity and her passion to keep her garden (heart) in order through a vibrant life in the Holy Spirit.

It's here in this chapter that the entire song takes a shift from one thing and into another thing. It's here that the bride comes to a powerful revelation about her life and what Jesus is looking for in her. And her

response to Him is just that, a response. Remember she hasn't actually gone up to the mountain yet, but only said yes. But after she sees His ravished heart from SOS 4:9 and the other things that follow from SOS 4:10-15 it cause her to respond with SOS 4:16. SOS 4:16 is the exact middle of the Song of Songs for both chapter and verse. It's here that the bride says "Awake, O north wind, and come O south! Blow upon my garden...let my Beloved come to His garden..." This may not seem like anything great to you, but you mine out the truths that are locked up inside, it becomes a well of eternal depth. You must understand that the north winds were a very bitter, cold wind and the south winds were warm, refreshing winds. After the bride heard from Jesus' heart how He felt about her, it caused her to arise and say to Him "Come what may. Do whatever You have to do in me, through me or around me, I want to be fully Yours. I will go anywhere, I will do anything, just don't leave me the way that I am. I know Your fire can hurt, but I would be worse off here without You. Come!" This is the great cry from the bride to fully belong to Christ. I call this the brides Galatians 2:20 moment because it's the first time in the Song that she no longer refers to her life as her own. Paul said in Galatians 2:20 that he had be crucified with Christ and it was no longer he that lived, but Christ that lived in him. The bride was making the same statement.

#### Conclusion

Wow, what a cliffhanger to bring this chapter to a close. When you venture into the depths of this book and the Bible as a whole you will find yourself longing to see more, read more and understand more. This book along with the other 65 books that God the Holy Spirit has inspired are considered a treasure chest that's been given for us to search out. In the following chapter I will cover what happens to the bride based on her cry to fully belong to Jesus and we will see how Jesus responds to her. I encourage you to take time and read the Song of Songs from the Bible and get acquainted with it so that you can start to get an understanding of the book as a whole, not just parts. It's a very short 8 chapter love story between God and man and I believe that if you spend time reading, writing, praying and turning what you read into dialog with God that your heart will be encountered and you will never be the same again.

# **Chapter Three Overview of The Song Of Songs (5-8)**

# I) Introduction

- A) In the last session I covered and overview of Song of Songs chapters 1-4 to see the bride start her journey. She started in hunger, asking for God to speak to her, and she ended in Song of Songs 4:16 saying to Jesus, "do whatever you have too; in me; through me or around me; I want to be fully Yours."
- B) In Session Three we will look at His response to her cry for the winds to come; the great two fold test that she will endure; her description of His beauty in the midst of testing; His description of her beauty in the midst of testing; their fruitful ministry together; the bridal seal of fire; and the bride's final intersession.
- C) The flame of love doesn't diminish in this book from start to finish, it only burns brighter.

# II) The Ownership Of God Over The Bride (5:1)

- A) Song of Songs 5:1 "I have come to My garden, My sister, My spouse, I have gathered My myrrh, with My spice, I have eaten My honeycomb with My honey, I have drunk My wine with My milk..."
  - 1) It's important to remember that this response from Jesus follows the bride's cry for Him to come, and do in her what He must, so that she would fully belong to Him.
  - 2) It's also noteworthy to point out that He says 9 times to her, you are Mine!
    - (i) Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."
  - 3) She is realizing that her life is no longer her own, but His.

# III) The Bride's Two-Fold Test (5:2-7)

- A) Song of Songs 5:2-7 "It is the voice of my Beloved! He knocks, saying, open for Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My perfect one; for My head is covered with dew, My locks with the drops of the night...I opened for my Beloved but my Beloved had turned away and was gone...I sought Him, but couldn't find Him...the watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me..."
- B) He is coming to her as the suffering Servant of Gethsemane. He's the Servant who was faithful unto death, enduring the long, lonely night in the Garden of Gethsemane, and He is inviting her to share in His sufferings.

- 1) Philippians 3:10-11 "...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death..."
- C) He is testing the bride to see if she is using Him as a stepping stone to her own agenda, or if she really belongs to Him, through the pain, trials and hardships of serving Him among others.
- D) This would be the greatest two-fold test of her life, as she is going to lose both His presence and her place of ministry within the Church.
- E) Song of Songs 5:6 "I opened for my beloved, but my Beloved had turned away and was gone...I sought Him, but He gave no answer..."
  - 1) It's clear that she has lost His manifest presence, even though she is responding in 100% obedience.
- F) Song of Songs 5:7 "The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me..."
  - 1) It's also clear that she has lost her place among the body as the spiritual leaders have struck her, wounded her and taken her mantel away from her. She has lost both His presence and her place of ministry among the community.

# IV) The Bride's Response To Jesus' Leadership Over Her In The Testing (5:8-16)

- A) Song of Songs 5:8 <u>"I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell Him I am lovesick."</u>
  - 1) This is the heart of an un-offended bride. She's not offended at Jesus' leadership, she's trusting Him.
- B) Song of Songs 5:9 "What is your Beloved more than another beloved, O fairest among women? what is your Beloved more than another beloved, that you so charge us?"
  - 1) The daughters ask her why she is still trusting Jesus when He is seems to be neglecting her so severely. She's lost His manifest presence and her place in ministry. But she's lovesick.
  - 2) Why do you love Him so much? Why aren't you offended at Him and His leadership over you? Look what's He's doing to you.
- C) Song of Songs 5:10-16 "My Beloved is white...Chief among ten thousand. His head is like the finest gold; His locks are wavy...and black as a raven. His eyes are like doves by the rivers of water...His cheeks are like a bed of spices...His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh. His hands are rods of gold...His body is carved ivory...His legs are pillars of marble...His countenance...His mouth is most sweet...He is altogether lovely...This is my Beloved, and this is my friend..."

D) Here in the midst of the greatest two-fold test of her life, she gives one of the most stunning descriptions of Jesus in all of the Bible. Within those four verses she lists 10 descriptions of His physical body and His leadership.

# V) Jesus' Response To The Faithful Bride In The Midst Of Testing (6:1-13)

- A) Song of Songs 6:4-5 <u>"O My love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners! Turn your eyes away from Me, for they have overcome Me."</u>
  - 1) Jesus hasn't spoken to the bride since Song of Songs 5:2. As she emerges from this season of testing, we see what her faithfulness to Jesus under difficult pressures and barrenness does to His heart. It leaves Him totally undone!
- B) Song of Songs 6:12 "Before I was even aware of, my soul had made me as the chariots of my noble people."
  - As the bride has sought Jesus in love, suddenly, without even knowing it, her heart has been deeply impacted for others. From her pursuit of the first commandment, she finds herself suddenly serving others in the second commandment. But this time it's with Him and in partnership with Him.

# VI) The Bride's Vindication From The Daughters Of Jerusalem And Jesus (7:1-5)

- A) Song of Songs 7:1-5 "How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter!..."
  - 1) Prior to this verse, the Watchmen express their envy and jealousy over the bride. What follows from Song of Songs 7:1-5 are 9-10 descriptions of the beauty of the bride from the mouth of discerning saints.
- B) Song of Songs 7:6-9 "How fair and how pleasant you are O love, with your delights!.."
  - 1) After the discerning saints describe her beauty, Jesus breaks in and speaks up. He loves her, and can't help but to raise His voice publicly.
- C) Song of Songs 7:10-8:4 This is speaking of the Bride's fruitful ministry with Jesus.

# VII) The Victorious Bride And The Bridal Seal Of Fire (8:5-7)

- A) Song of Songs 8:5 "Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?"
  - 1) Here the brothers and the daughters of Jerusalem see the bride ascending from the wilderness, fully empowered, but fully leaning. She is being pictured as the victorious bride, the bride who has said no to life in this fallen age and yes to the age to come. She's operating in the power of the Holy Spirit, but fully leaning upon Christ.
    - (i) Ephesians 5:27 <u>"That He might present her to Himself a glorious church not having spot</u> or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."

- 2) The bride is pictured towards the end of her days, fully in love, fully empowered, fully leaning upon Christ. She has victory over both her own sin and a sinful culture.
- B) Song of Songs 8:6 <u>"Set Me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as</u> strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; it's flames are flames of fire...many waters can't quench love...if a man were to give all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised."
  - 1) This is a call from Jesus into the first and second commandment. The seal upon the heart is the first commandment, and the seal upon the arm is the second commandment.
  - 2) His love is like a fire that cannot be quenched. No devil, no trouble and no human! It's strong.

# VIII) The Brides Identify In Christ And Her Final Intersession (8:8-14)

- A) Song of Songs 8:12 "My own vineyard is before me."
  - 1) If you remember in Song of Songs 1:6, she was overworked in other people's vineyards and had lost her own. Now she's in full maturity with Christ, serving in other people's vineyards in a huge way, but she hasn't lost her own vineyard. The commandments are in their right order!
- B) Song of Songs 8:14 "Make haste, My beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices."
  - 1) The mountains of Myrrh have become mountains of spices. This is her longing for Jesus to be near her.
  - 2) Revelation 22:17,20 "And the Spirit and the bride say come!...Even so, come quickly."
  - 3) This book is progressive, because it starts in hunger and it ends in even greater hunger.

# **Chapter Three Extra Reading**

In this Chapter we are going to look at the second half of the bride's journey in Song of Songs chapters 5 through 8. It's here in this chapter that the bride starts to understand that not only does she have an inheritance in Christ, but that He also has one in her. This truth for the bride is something that much of the Church and most of Christianity has yet to really connect the dots between. What I mean by connecting the dots is that I have heard lots of conversation about my personal inheritance in Christ, but have heard so little about Christ' inheritance in me. The truth about us having an inheritance in Christ is the reality that everything I need is in Him. This isn't a bad message; in fact it's the first most amazing message. But it's only half of the message. The other half of the message is that Christ also has an inheritance in me. Now, His inheritance in me is that He is looking for an equally yoked partner to share the vast expanse of His Father's Kingdom.

The story of the bride is just that kind of a story. Here, as we discuss the second half of the Song of Songs which is chapters 5-8, we see the bride making the shift from life being all about her, to understanding that Jesus is also looking for something in her. Here in Chapter 3 we are going to discuss God's ownership over the bride, the great two-fold test of the bride, His response to her great two-fold test, their fruitful ministry together, the bridal seal of fire and the bride's final intersession. Once again, I am going to be writing this specific chapter just like I did the pervious chapter, in narrative form. It's very important for us to see the story as a whole, and not just the parts. We will look at the parts in the following chapters, but for Chapter 2 and 3 we are looking at the narrative storyline of the bride.

# The Ownership of God Over The Bride and Her Two-Fold Test (5:1-16)

At the close of Song of Songs 4:16 we seen the bride calling out for the north and the south winds to come and blow upon her life. Song of Songs 4:16 is the close of what I call the first half of the Song of Songs. When we open up into Song of Songs 5:1 the book is going to take a wild turn as God is going to assert His ownership over the bride. This may sound strange to you to think about Jesus having ownership over Christians, but it is totally Biblical and totally Christian. When you were forgiven by Jesus that forgiveness came at the exchange of our life for His. We gave up our rights and gave them over to Jesus. This is what it means to be bondservant or a slave of Christ. But who wouldn't want to be a slave of the only true God that became a Man, was crucified by His creation for the sake of redeeming those that say yes to Him?

In **Song of Songs 5:1** Jesus breaks in on behalf of the brides request for the north and south winds to come and He tells us 9 times in one verse, you're Mine! Seriously, in just one verse He boldly declares that the bride fully belongs to Him and it's this ownership over her that is going to lead her into the darkest night of her soul. He comes to her in Song of **Songs 5:2** as she is asleep and calls out to her to join Him in the place of suffering. He is coming to her as the Suffering Servant of Gethsemane, who endured the long night of prayer until His sweet became like great drops of blood. That verse says that "His head is covered with dew, with the drops of the night." That is a shadow of what Jesus would endure during that long night of His trial. What He is doing is calling out the bride to once again get off her bed and go out into the city and join Him in the stigma of belonging to Him. Many people don't think about the stigma that comes along with belonging to Christ. There is a certain stigma that we carry when we connect ourselves with Christ. As amazing as He is, as loving, as truthful and

compassionate as He is, most have no need for a Savior. This is something that you might have touched a little bit in your lifetime, but it is something that many of us will touch to a much higher degree in the weeks and months to come.

Her first response to Him was 100% obedience but there was a slight hesitation in her voice. Now that hesitation in her voice to get off her bed and join Him in the place of suffering wasn't a hesitation because she didn't want to obey Him, but rather a little bit of confusion as to why He would call her out into this kind of a place. In **SOS 5:3** she says "I have taken off my robe; how can I put it on again?" Some commentators assume that the bride is in sin right here, but this isn't at all what's taking place. The bride, just like us, is struggling to understand why Jesus would be calling her outside to join Him in the place of suffering. She had already been there, she had already taken that robe off, and why would He be having her put it back on again? She is confused, not in sin or rebellion. We too, find ourselves in the same place when we are in such a circumstance. Things happen suddenly with God and others, and it's there that we struggle to make sense of the hardship in our lives. We can't connect the dots very well to our present hardship and the safe leadership of Jesus. Though this test for the bride is going to be most trying, she is going to come forth as gold, but not without pain and injury.

As the bride rises up immediately to go after Him she is unable to find Him anywhere. She heard Him, felt Him and smelled Him, but now as she is up and moving at His call she can't find Him anywhere. SOS 5:6 tells us this reality when she says "I opened for my Beloved, but my Beloved had turned away and was gone." She has now lost His manifest presence and this in itself is going to be a huge opportunity for personal growth. Though she doesn't understand now, she will fully understand that though she loses His manifest presence upon her heart, she never loses Him. Just because she can't feel Him doesn't mean that He's not with her, for He has promised to never leave us nor forsake her. After losing His presence upon her heart she is then wounded by the Saul watchmen (Leaders in the body of Christ) that are around her. You can feel the pain in SOS 5:7 when she says "The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me..."

The reason this two-fold test is so great for the young maturing bride is because all the way back in **SOS** 1:4 she made clear what she was looking for in her relationship with Jesus, to be drawn away in intimacy with Him and to run with others in ministry. What is happening with her in SOS 5 is actually the outworking of that very prayer. In fact the entire Song of Songs, in my personal opinion, is the attaining of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment. So, the great two fold test the Lord is taking her through is for the purpose of finding out if the bride is really in it for Him, or just using Jesus as a stepping stone for ministry. And it's her place of utter brokenness that she asks for help from the daughters of Jerusalem who represent the luke warm believers around her that love God, but just serve Him at a distance. In SOS 5:8 she tells the daughters that she is lovesick and they respond in SOS 5:9 by asking her why she loves Him so much. Her response to the daughters gives us insight of what an un-offended bride, who is trusting Jesus in the midst of great difficulty, looks like. What follows their question to her in SOS 5:10-16 is a power packed 6 verse response about the beauty of Jesus' physical body and His leadership specifically over her life. On a side note, I would encourage you to take time reading through SOS 5:10-16 and asking the Holy Spirit to open it up to you and help you understand what He wrote and why He inspired it. As Chapter 5 in the Song of Songs comes to a close, the bride is still in her place of hardship and her Beloved hasn't spoken to her since **SOS 5:2.** 

Jesus' Response to The Bride's Faithfulness In Testing and Her Heart Change (6:1-13)

As the bride enters into the first 3 verses of **SOS 6** she is still in the midst of testing and without His manifest presence or His voice in her life. But through it all she has come to the understanding that He has never left her, but actually comes and goes from the hearts of those that have fully loved Him. Those who have known God the best have also known the darkest nights of the soul when His manifest presence lifts from their hearts. But it's also in the **SOS 6**:**4** that Jesus is going to break His silence between Him and bride and once again unveil His heart towards her and let her know how this past season has conquered His heart. It is here in this passage that He says "O My loved, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners! Turn your eyes away from Me, for they have overcome me." This is poetry at its highest form. Some commentators have taken this phrase from Solomon (Jesus) to the bride to be that He doesn't want to look at her because of disappointment, but it couldn't be further from the truth. He is telling her to turn her eyes away, because they have overcome Him. The uncreated, eternal, all powerful, all knowing God isn't conquered by anything in hell, or in natural creation, but the heart of a human who trusts His leadership over their lives in the midst of great testing, leaves Him undone.

It's so important that we catch these large glimpses of how God feels about us in the place of testing. What we must come to see is that what's true for the bride is also true for us. So if this is how God feels about the bride in the midst of testing, then it's also true of us in the same situation. God is no respecter of person's, only principle. And when we walk through the trials of life and uphold the same principles that the bride did, or any other Bible figure for that matter, we can receive what they received. God's words over the bride are profoundly stunning. What a picture into the heart of God that we see. The bride must have been overcome with such emotion as God would declare over her that she has conquered His heart! What are the implications of humans conquering the heart of the eternal uncreated God? As you can tell, I am having a hard time wrapping my head around this reality. But if I am not ever fully able to understand it, I will believe it and leave it at that.

It's here in the midst of the divine interchange that is taking place through **SOS 6** that the bride is going to raise her voice and talk about the internal, personal transformation that has now taken place. In **SOS 6:12** the bride says "Before I was even aware of it, my soul had made me like the swift moving chariots of my most noble people." You can clearly see by the words the bride is using that this is happening suddenly and with great surprise to even her who is saying it. The bride is saying that as she gave herself to loving God with all of her heart, to be drawn away in to the secret place of intimacy with Him, suddenly her soul has become impassioned to serve her fellow man. The chariot was the best way to move in her day. It was much more comfortable to be transported by Chariot as opposed to a horse, or a camel. The bride understands that when she touched the Chief Intercessor, she also touched the Chief evangelist. As she gave herself to the first commandment she ended up fully committed to the great commission. The bride has thrown herself first in the great commandment and as she has done that, she got seriously caught up in the great commission. This is and always will be the Kingdom pattern. We are to do the great commandment first for the purpose of doing the great commission second and with full maturity we do both at the same time. Chapter 6 comes to a close with bride overcoming the dark night of her soul and also finding her identity as a lover first and a worker second.

# The Brides Vindication From The Daughters Of Jerusalem and Jesus (7:1-13)

As we are nearing the end of the Song of Songs the bride is now being pictured as progressing into full bridal partnership with Jesus and starting to enter into fruitful ministry with Him. The Song of Songs paints a clear picture that in order for us to sustain longevity in fruitful, dynamic ministry we spend the

first part of our life in Christ with Him and in Christian community for the purpose of filling ourselves with both present relationship with Jesus and a history of trusting Him. It's the law of sowing many years for often a short time of fruitful reaping. The bride, again, is in just that kind of a place. At the close of SOS 6:13 the daughters call out for her to stay with them, much like the people who were healed by Jesus longed for Him to stay with them instead of going to the next village. But when the Saul watchmen in the Church of her day hear of the daughters request for the bride to stay they respond in **SOS 6:13b** with "What would you see in the Shulamite—as it were the, the dance of two camps?" This is pointed question, a mockery of the life that the bride is now living with her Beloved. They aren't really inquiring, but rather allowing their own envy and jealousy to seep from their hearts and lives with this rhetorical statement/question. But in **SOS 7:1-5** the bride is going to be vindicated by the watching daughters. Because of the brides faithfulness to Jesus and the call that He has placed upon her life, the bride has been empowered to trudge through 6 pervious chapters of personal growth, pain, perplexity and promotion and come through the dark night of her soul un-offended at His leadership over her and more in love with Him then when she first started. The entire Song pictures the daughters as being around the bride, watching the bride and asking questions of the growing and progressing bride. And it's here in SOS 7:1-5 that the bride is vindicated before the Saul watchmen for the life of faith that she has lived.

Though many of you might struggle with the language that is spoken when describing the bride, it's important that you put into context when this was written. Solomon is using lots of agricultural analogies that we are thousands of years disconnected from. With that being said, it takes a little bit of study into these many terms that are used, but once you have looked at those terms, the phrases themselves will come alive in your hearing and cause your heart to soar. So it's here that the bride is vindicated for her life of faith by the luke warm Church that has observed her life, but hasn't chased the Beloved in the same fashion as the bride. It's not that the bride was better than them, or that Jesus loved her more than them, it was just that the bride didn't quit when things were hard and difficult and she stayed the course through the many up's and downs of Christianity.

At the close of **SOS 7** we see the bride entering into fruitful ministry with her Beloved as they are working in His many vineyards building up His community of faith that we call the Church. She is expressing diligence in her labor of love with the Lord. It's also here in SOS 7:11-13 that we see the bride no longer referring to what she is doing in the grace of God as her work, but as their work. This is another very important transition that the bride has made during this journey of loving God first and others second. The reality is that anyone who has labored in God's vineyard fully understands the foolishness of attempting to do it without Christ. It's a sure key to future burnout, attempting to serve in the vineyard of God without Him, or more in you than by His Spirit. The bride is very clear, that she wants to do it with Him, in Him and through Him. Oh, the joys of a heart that's fully alive in the grace of God, loving Him first and working with Him second producing the life of God in others.

### The Victorious Bride's Ascension Of The Wilderness and Her Final Intersession (8:1-14)

We have come to the climatic closing of the Song of Songs. What I have come to enjoy so much about this book that the Holy Spirit has given to us, is that the flame of love that's burning in the heart of the bride doesn't diminish from chapter 1 to chapter 8, but it rather grows and burns brighter and brighter. Again, what's true of the bride is also true of us. Meaning that our lives should also be burning brighter and brighter the more we go and the more we grow, increasing brightness from our lives as we get closer and closer to Christ.

Well it's here that bride is being pictured as longing to fully enjoy her Beloved, in public like she does in private. In **SOS 8:1-3** she is described as desiring to follow Him and fully trust Him and show affection to Him in public like she does in the private of her secret place. She is seeing that not everyone love's Jesus in the same way that she does and it's causing her some personal separation in the public place. **In SOS 8:3-4** the bride repeats a phrase that she has spoken several times saying "His left hand is under my head and His right hand embraces me..." She is saying that His left which represents the unseen work of God in our lives has deeply impacted her and she's eternally grateful for it. She thanking Him for the little things that He has done for her and through her that she has never seen. I have often found joy-unspeakable in telling the Holy Spirit thanks for all His unseen work in my life. The many things that He has done through me and done for me that I have never known about. And then she says that His right hand embrace's her. The right hand represents the visible work, the divine empowerment that God gives us in Him.

It's here in **SOS** 8:5 that the daughters and the brothers around her see her coming up from the wilderness leaning upon her Beloved. When they look at the bride walking with her Beloved, they can't tell if it's two or if it's one. The two have become one flesh. The bride is in full sync with the Beloved and they are pictured as a team. Now it's important that note that this isn't an equal team. It's not like the bride is contributing to the team equal of that as the Beloved is giving. You might ask how I would know that. Because it says that she is leaning upon her Beloved. Though she is coming up from the wilderness, though she is being pictured as victorious over her sin and the lives of others, she isn't doing it on her own, but rather because she is leaning upon her Beloved. This is what I call a loving and a leaning heart.

Jesus then breaks in over her and asks her to place Him as a seal upon her heart and as a seal upon her arm (SOS 8:6-7). Jesus is calling out to the bride and asking first for the place of preeminence upon her heart and then upon her arm. This is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to walk out the first and second commandment in a real way. This is the burning heart that the disciples encountered in Luke 24 as Jesus both talked to them and opened up the scriptures. This is the burning heart that Jesus talked about when He mentioned John the Baptist, who was a burning and shining lamp. This is the Matthew 25 reality and the burning bush that Moses experienced. What a well of truth to mine out when we think about God asking for us to set Him as the seal upon our hearts and the seal upon our arm. It's one thing to ask something of God, but it's another thing to be asked something of God. Sheesh!

The bride then walks through another short season of vindication, but this time it's not through the daughters but from the brothers. In **SOS 8:8-9** they come to the bride and ask her for help in the raising up of a new covert. They don't have anything to give her, and they have witnessed the bride's life of love towards God and they are asking her for help. Talk about going full circle. The brothers who gave her such a hard time and overworked her in **SOS 1:6** are now asking her for help. Oh the vindication of God. Something that we must remember is that when the bride is vindicated it's not until chapters 7 and 8. It took many years to hear the apology and the brokenness of those who were so hard on her in the start. It takes a life time to develop a Joseph's heart. To be able to emerge from a dungeon that your brothers have sold you into and forgive them and help them, takes time. But this is exactly what she has done. She offers help to them, from her own personal experience in the Gospel and what help it is.

This causes the bride to make one of my favorite statements in this entire Song and it's here in SOS 8:12.

Here, in this one verse, she says "My own vineyard is before me." If you remember it was at the hand of the brothers in SOS 1:6 that she had become overworked serving other people's vineyards and she lost her own heart in the process. Now, at the tail end of her life and ministry she is able to say with such passion and confidence that her own vineyard is now before her. She is saying that she is serving other people, tending the flock of God but it's not being done in such a way that it's causing her personal burnout. There is a way to serve the people of God in a powerful, busy and dynamic way and still have a deep, vibrant inner life with Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and this is where the bride is. She's not burnt out, or looking for a break. She's fully alive living out through the joy of having the first commandment first and the second, second. This is truly a pleasant life in the Godhead! This is what Jesus experienced in John 4 when He said that His food was the do the will of Him who sent Me.

As we approach the final verse in the Song we can see the ever living flame of Love burning brighter and brighter in the life of the bride. Here in **SOS 8:14** the bride makes her final petition of intersession to her Beloved. She says "Make haste My beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices." The mountains from SOS 4:6 which were mountains of hardship, pain and trial have now become the mountains of spices. That place which she was so afraid to originally go with Him in **SOS 2:8-17** is now the place of spice. Those things that were so bitter and hard for her to swallow, have now become the place of her delight as she has been trained through discipline to overcome those obstacles that stand before her. And the bride calls out for her Beloved to come to her. Can you hear Revelation 22:17 in her prayer? The prayer that John heard from the "Spirit and the bride asking for Jesus to come?" Can you hear that in her tone? And lastly, remember, that in the first chapter and the second verse the bride expressed her hunger for God to come and speak to her. And now in the final chapter and the final verse she is once again calling out to Him, asking for Him to come to her. What this shows is that our passion for Jesus should never be fading, but only growing more and more. We should be shining and shining until we are taken from life in this age and transported into the age to come.

### Conclusion

It's my prayer and labor of love for this chapter and the entire series that you would first see the complete storyline of the bride and then that you would find yourself in the story making the same journey form a place of immaturity to maturity. I hope that this chapter has deeply impacted you and that it impassions you to sign up once again for wholeheartedness with your Beloved. Jesus is using you to write the story of His heart, so that through you He can feed the cities of the earth with truth, goodness, love and compassion. Take time right now and sign up to love Him in the way that He has loved you. The Holy Spirit is at work in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Enjoy your journey with Christ and we will pick up in the following chapters with a verse by verse study of the Song of Songs which is Solomon's.

# **Chapter Four Song of Songs 1:1-6**

# I) Introduction

- A) The power of the Song of Songs is that it pictures a young bride moving from a place of immaturity to full bridal maturity. She is weak in the start and strong in the end. And it's not that God loves her more in the end, but rather that He enjoys her throughout the process of growth.
- B) What's true for the bride is also true for us. Her experiences become our experiences, and her struggles represent our struggles as we are moving from a place of immaturity into full maturity in Christ.
- C) When I say what's true for her is also true for us, I am saying that in the same way we use the life of David to get understanding about how God raises up and promotes His leaders.

# II) The divine kiss and the fragrance of Christ (Song of Songs 1:1-3)

- A) Song of Songs 1:1-3 "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's. Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth (Word)—for Your love is better than wine. Because of the fragrance of Your good ointments, Your name is ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love you."
- B) ...Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His Word.
  - 1) Many things are going to happen in the life of the bride including: empowerment; deep love; maturity; success in ministry; and many hardships. But it's all because of her hunger for God.
  - 2) The bride is appealing to the One who has authority over her life. Even in the start of her journey, she is rightly calling out for Jesus to speak to her. It was a common phrase for those waiting the incarnation of God to say "How long will You speak through Moses and Elijah and the Torah? We want to hear from You. We want You to come and kiss us."
  - 3) All of our spiritual encounters and personal growth, start and stem from our hunger for God. If you aren't hungry, you will go empty.
  - 4) Many people in the body of Christ, and even in our own ministry here, are starving spiritually, and it's not because the preaching is poor, but because there is limited hunger.
  - Hunger, and the ache of love deep within, is a gift from God to us and it must be cultivated.
- C) "...for Your love is better than wine."

- The bride isn't speaking specifically of the wine of sin, but more so the things that come from God. She is saying that loving You is better than even the things that come from Your hand. We are to love God more than we love what God does for us.
- 2) Abram (Abraham) encountered this reality when God called him out of his tent in **Genesis 15:1-6.**
- 3) The Church of Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7), Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6) and Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22) had become known for ministry, and had received blessings, but had also done it without intimacy with Jesus. The bride is saying, loving You is better than what You do.
- D) <u>"Because of the fragrance of Your good ointments, Your name is ointment poured forth;</u> therefore the virgins love You."
  - 1) The bride is pointing out the reality of why those in the Church (virgins) love Him so much, because of the fragrance of His good ointments. It's not that what He does is great, or just what He says, but rather who He is. His name is a good ointment.
  - 2) Most of our culture sees God as stanch, stoic and disconnected from humans. The Church oftentimes has the stench of religious striving that doesn't attract people to Christ, but rather repels them. Here the bride is speaking about the fragrance of His good name. It's healing, attractive and enjoyable.
    - (i) 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 2:15 "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and to those who are perishing."
  - 3) <u>"Therefore the virgins (Church) have loved you."</u> The bride understands that the Church loves Him, because of who He is! "Aha, this is why they love You!"

# III) The Brides Two-fold Cry For Both Intimacy And Ministry (1:4)

- A) Song of Songs 1:4 <u>"Draw me away! We will run after you. The King brought me into His</u> chambers. We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember Your love more than wine."
- B) Draw me away!
  - 1) The bride is calling out to Jesus for intimacy with Him. She rightly sees that this is personal for her. It's something that she must do in the secret of her heart with Him.
  - 2) Matthew 6:6 "...Go into your room...shut the door...and pray in secret."
  - 3) This is the call to the first and greatest commandment.
    - (i) Matthew 22:36-40 <u>"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it; you shall also love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."</u>

4) Jesus said that loving Him with our whole heart was the <u>first</u> and <u>greatest</u> commandment. We are to do the first, first, and the second, second.

(i) Matthew 10:1	<u>"called to Him and given power"</u>
(ii) Revelation 1:5-7	"now to Him who loved us, washed us and made us kings"
(iii) 1 <sup>st</sup> Samuel 2:26	"Samuel grew in favor with both God and men"
(iv) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Chronicles	"now serve the Lord your God and His people"
(v) Psalms 78:72	"he shepherded them by his heart and his hand"
(vi) Matthew 6:33	"seek first the Kingdom and all these things will be added"
(vii) Luke 2:52	"Jesus increased in favor with God and man"

- 5) I have met many people who want to run in ministry, but they won't sit in intimacy. Before you can run in ministry you must sit with God in the place of intimacy. And even as you run in ministry, you must still make time to sit in intimacy.
- 6) I work to tell the Lord often "I will sit with You before I stand before men."
- 7) The bride is rightly stating these two commandments, not just in importance, but specifically in priority. We must do the first commandment first, and the second commandment second.
- C) We will run after you.
- D) The bride rightly understood that when we sit in the first commandment, it empowers us to run in the place of ministry. Though we primarily do intimacy on our own, we always run in ministry together, in community, with others and never in solitude.
- E) She said draw <u>me</u> and <u>we</u> will run after You.
- F) Ministry/serving is often at a running pace and it can only be sustained if we are privately being drawn by God in the place of intimacy.
- G) My Grandpa use to say that he "would rather burn out than rust out for Jesus." Though this sounds really cool and noble, it's an upside down pyramid. We sit (rust) with Jesus so that we can run (burn) in ministry. This divine pattern is going to sustain the bride for her entire journey.
- H) The King brought me into His chambers. We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will remember Your love more than wine."

## IV) The Bride's Revelation Of Her Dark And Lovely Heart (1:5-6)

- A) Song of Songs 1:5-6 "...The king brought me into His chamber...rightly do they love You. I am dark but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon..."
- B) The bride leaves the king's chamber after having a true encounter with the clear reality that she is dark in Adam (sin), but light in Christ (lovely). This is her first crisis of faith.

- C) God loves her sincerity, even though she is still struggling with sin. God's not dismissing her sin, but rather empowering her through how He feels about her, as the main way to break her free.
- D) If you only see your dark heart before God, you will live in constant condemnation, shame and guilt. But if you only see your new life in Christ you will live presumptuously, as if sin doesn't matter to God. You must see that your heart is dark, but have a willing spirit to serve Him.
- E) The tents of Kedar were blackened goat skins that were stretched out under the sun. They represent her external life before others. She felt the shame of her old life from those around her.
- F) The curtains of Solomon were the white curtains in the holy place that only the priest saw. They represent her new life in God that's mainly internal, that people on the outside can't see. It's often hard for others to see the change in us when we meet Christ. It's often our old life that they see.
- G) The Church seems to go either really heavy on hell, and light on heaven. Or really heavy on heaven, and light on hell. Just like the bride, we must stand in the middle of the road and speak on both sin and righteousness.
- H) We too must have an encounter with Jesus like the bride where we see both our sinful nature and our new loveliness to God through Christ.
- Many of us have focused mainly on our dark heart, but haven't really entertained the idea that we could be lovely to God even as we struggle. Sin must be dealt with and repented of. But what if God loved you and enjoyed you not only when you become totally free, but in the process of freedom? Not just in maturity, but in the process of maturity?

# **Chapter Four Extra Reading**

In the previous three Chapters we have spent ample time looking at both an overview of the entire Song of Songs and also the history of the Song of Songs. If you haven't looked at those yet, I would challenge you to start with the first three chapters before you seek to jump into the life of the Shulamite and her journey in Christ. Those three chapters create the context for what our verse by verse study will unearth. In this chapter (Chapter four), we are going to take a look at the start of the young maiden's journey in Song of Songs 1:1-6. We will cover several major road-marks in the life of the Shulamite. We will see her hunger for God, the reason why people are attracted to Jesus, her two-fold life vision and her first crisis of faith. The Shulamite's journey start's in Chapter one and much of what takes place throughout the entire Song finds its root system from this very Chapter.

#### The Divine Kiss and The Fragrance Of Christ (Song of Songs 1:1-3)

The first three verse's in the Song of Songs start with the Shulamite saying "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth (Word)—for Your love is better than wine. Because of the fragrance of Your good ointments, Your name is ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love you." Inside these short three verses there is a library of revelation to be obtained. Here the Shulamite is at the start of her journey and she is rightly calling out to Jesus for Him to speak to her His word. I have translated the word from "mouth" to "words, scriptures or voice." The reason I have translated that word from mouth to word, is so that you don't get the idea that Jesus is kissing us on the lips, or that we are kissing Jesus on the lips. Though this is a natural love story, we are looking at is as an allegory and it's important for this entire series that we don't get off into strange romance with Jesus. Though He is a Bridegroom, we don't date Jesus, kiss Jesus or share other strange romantic encounters with Him.

The Bride is clearly appealing to the One that has authority over her life. This isn't just anyone that she is asking to speak to her, but rather One who actually has power over her and the ability to not only speak to her, but to awaken her with love. It's clear that in the Church many people are starving spiritually, even though there is everything that's needed to eat prepared at the table. It's not because of poor preaching that people aren't fed, or off key worship, or small dumpy buildings, but because there is a general lack of hunger in the body of Christ today for more of Jesus. Proverbs 27:7 says "A <u>satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb, but to the hunger even the bitter things are sweet."</u> Solomon is telling us that to those who are hungry, even the bitter things in life become something sweet. It's not that bitter things are actually sweet; it's that the hungry find something good in nearly everything. The bride, here, is expressing her hunger for God to speak to her. She is asking for the Word of God to come from Him to her. The bride has no idea where a little bit of her hunger mixed with His voice is actually going to take her. She is a small kite about to be caught up in a hurricane. Hunger will take you places you have only dreamed about in the Godhead. The bride makes it clear that loving God is better than the things that even come from His hand. Many times we can end up loving what God does for us, but have no interest in actually coming to know Him as a Person. Loving God and being loved by God is the best wine that life in both this age and in the age to come can offer.

As she is moving closer to her Beloved, she catches the fragrance of Christ. She says"...because of the fragrance of Your good ointments, Your name is ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love you."

It's because of His good fragrance that she is attracted to Him and it's the reason why others have loved Him so much. For most of our non-Christian culture that we live among, their view of God is very stoic,

staunch and super disconnected not only from their personal lives but life on earth all together. Our culture often says things like "why would a good God kill people." Or "I could never serve a God that you can't see and doesn't care about me." The reason that many repeat these exact phrases and many others is because of how the Church of Jesus Christ has represented Jesus to the culture in which we live. Remember, a local Church is the reflection of individual Christians and the leadership of that Church who leads that ministry will be a direct reflection of how those individuals in that ministry represent Christ to the culture in which they live. Simply said, as it goes with the leaders so it will go with the people. Now that isn't always true, but often times it is and if it's not totally true for everyone, it's true for most. Most people will also turn out like their leaders or whoever they are following, for the good and the bad. So because Christians often have the stench of religious striving, we send off that fragrance to others and it doesn't attract them to us and it totally repels them from the Church as a whole. If they see individuals Christians that have this stench, most assume that not only is the whole Church just like that, but so also is God.

The bride is smelling and experiencing a totally, altogether different type of fragrance when she touches the real Jesus, as opposed to the Jesus we often present to others. When she experiences this kind, tender, truthful, compassionate, caring Creator she responds and says "this is why the Church has loved you so much." Often times before we were Christians we struggled with understanding why people would spend so much time at Church, giving their money, their time and their gifts to the Church. But after Jesus touches our hearts with the same fragrance the bride experienced, we become just like the other ones we didn't understand. The reason for this is because until it becomes personal for you, until you experience Jesus for yourself, the dedication and discipline of others doesn't make sense. Here the bride is having an eye opening moment. It's clear why others have loved Him. It's because of how kind He is. Paul has this to say about the fragrance of Christ in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 2:15 "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and to those who are perishing." Have you ever though that God has called you to smell like Christ in the midst of your culture, so that others will see the Christ in you, and respond to love Him in the same way that you do?

## The Bride's Two-Fold Life Vision For Intimacy And Ministry (1:4)

Because the bride is being exposed to something totally different than she has ever encountered it is causing her to draw closer to Him. You can sense in the start of the Song a passion to know Him, but also a little bit of a hesitation, but when she comes a little closer to Him, she is struck with the reality that internally she longs to know this Man. It's here in **Song of Songs 1:4** that the bride speaks out what I call her two-fold life vision. She first says "Draw me away!" The bride is being awakened with really solid Theology and Bible doctrine as she is making the first part of her cry known to God. She first and rightly says "Draw me away!" The bride has a passion to enter into the first and second commandment in a powerful way, but she also understands that they are called the first and second for a reason. She sees that before she can run in the place of ministry with God and other's she first must be drawn away with Him in the place of intimacy. Before she can be empowered to be fruitful in the many vineyards of God throughout the earth, she must first be drawn to Him in the place of personal encounter.

Often times the servants of God become so busy in the second commandment (ministry) that they forget the first and the great commandment of loving God with everything. So often we can be doing the second commandment and say this is how we show our love for God, by working for Him. But this is a really broken pattern. This pattern creates an ideal that I am somehow earning the affections of God

by what I do, and not by who I am. You aren't looking to have a short impact in the kingdom of God because you worked hard but became burnt out. You are looking to live your whole living serving God and that can only happen as we make the first commandment first and the second commandment second. Look how she uses the word "draw ME away." The reason she says this is because intimacy is always something that we do on our own with Jesus. Unlike ministry, we always do that in the place of community, or with others.

When I say that the bride has good Theology, that's because she is making the first things first and the second things second. It's not that intimacy is better than ministry; it's just a matter of priority. The bride follows the first part of her cry for intimacy in **Song of Songs 1:4** with the cry for ministry as she says "We will run after You." She understood that when we run in the place of ministry we always do it in community and never on our own. Now that doesn't mean that as we serve others if won't feel lonely. It means that when we are serving others; don't act as lone rangers attempting to do the work of the ministry on our own without a team. Team work is the way of the Kingdom. The bride sees that ministry is often at a running pace and she doesn't want to be running off on our own because we really, deeply need each-other. Community is where God does most of His work on us as individuals. Not only does God work on us in community but He also uses us to work on others. It's a beautiful give and take.

For you to be able to run effectively and have longevity in the ministry that God calls you into, you will have to balance the first and the second commandment so that they are married to each other not separated like most tend to do. When you look at most Christians they are usually either people who love God really well but don't reach out to people, or they love others so much they are so busy helping them that they don't have time to love God. You don't have to choose one or the other because you have been called to do both in an equally powerful way.

#### The Bride's Revelation Of Her Dark and Lovely Heart (1:4-6)

As you read through the Song of Songs and become familiar with the storyline as a whole, you will start to notice who is taking, how quickly they respond to one another and the many things which are said several times throughout the entire Song. This verse is one of those quick responses from Jesus to the bride. In **SOS 1:4** the bride asked that He would draw her away into the place of intimacy with Him and He answers her prayer in the very verse that she prayed it in. In **SOS 1:4c** she says "The King brought me into His chamber..." Within the very verse that she asked Him to draw her away with Him, He answers her and takes her into His chamber. Now the chamber was the place of intimate encounter between Groom and Bride. She is being pictured as one who was taken into the place where He is. He has taken her into the place that she couldn't go on her own.

You and I are unable to go into God's presence on our own. It takes the Holy Spirit to escort us into the place where God dwells and the bride clearly understands this because she is appealing to Him to help her. What I love about this scenario is that as soon as she asks He answers. So often we live our lives as if God doesn't really hear us or even care about us, but this isn't true at all. Not only does God hear us, but He always hears us. You must translate her experience with God listening to her and responding, to our relationship with God. You don't have to wonder any more if He hears you, you can take courage that God is listening and even responding to that which you are asking of Him or talking to Him about. Beloved, He is listening.

The young immature bride steps out of the King's chamber and has another huge Aha moment. In SOS

1:4f she says "...rightly do they love You." As she leaves His presence she can see why everyone loves Him so much. The more she is touching Him and being touched by Him the clearer the passion of others towards Him is right. We can see this best in the following verse in SOS 1:5 when the bride says "I am dark but lovely, O daughter's of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon." Because of her personal encounter with Him, in the way that He views her life in this immature state, it's clear to her why the others around her in the Church have wasted their lives on Him also. It's only in the place of divine encounter with God Himself that we too come to the same understanding that the young maturing bride comes to. It's right that these others have loved Him, because of the fragrance of His Person and His good name but specifically because of how He views me when I am in His presence. As soon as she walks out of His presence she says "I am dark but lovely." This is what I call an authentic encounter with Christ. It's authentic because the bride saw both her dark and lovely heart. That is a big word and many of us overlook. The bride didn't see only her dark heart, but she also seen that she was lovely to God.

Many of you are so struggling with loving God because of the way that God was presented to in the Church. Many of you have heard a very harsh message of justice and truth and that God doesn't tolerate sin, which is true, but it's also only one side to a two sided coin. When we only get exposed to one side of a coin, we miss out on the other half, which is an equally important half. See the other half of the coin is that God is also a God of love, compassion and tenderness. This doesn't mean that He's not truthful and just, but rather that He is truthful and compassionate at the same time. If you leave God's presence only seeing your darkness you will fail to grow in Christ to your full potential. But if you only see you're lovely to God and no dark heart you will live presumptuously as if you have no sin when you do. We must see both realities of our dark and lovely heart in order to grow in both confidence and humility.

Our confidence in God comes from the fact that even though I have a dark heart, He see's my love for Him as real. Our humility before God and others comes from the reality that though I am loved by God I have a dark and sinful heart that often takes me to places I never intended to go. My dark heart allows me to see my great need for God, but His love for me empowers me to keep pressing into Him. My lovely heart allows me to see a God who is happy with me, not disappointed with me.

Most of us have no problem seeing that our hearts are weak and dark. That's not our problem, but our problem is seeing that even though our hearts are dark, if you are sincere before God, you are lovely to Him. Now it's important that I state, if you are in blatant sin, rebellion or defiance, God is not over looking your sin. You must repent; apologize to Him and others in order to be restored. The message of the Song of Songs is to the sincere that are repenting and asking for help and working in partnership with the Holy Spirit to become free. If you're asking for help, repenting of sin and working to press into God; be encouraged that your heart is dark, but it's also lovely. Don't focus so much on your dark heart as must as you are lovely to God. When we see yourself as being clean before God, you will also live clean before Him. He knows that you heart is dark and so do you. But what you don't know is that you are lovely to God and He desires you, right where you are at. You can't do anything more or less for Him to love you more or less. He loves you right where you are at. Take time today to allow that truth to wash you and empower you to rise up as a weak, but sincere lover of God. If you have repented of sin, it's gone and it will never be brought up again. So press delete on the sin, and say yes to your new loveliness to God.

# **Chapter Five Song of Songs 1:6-17**

#### I) Introduction

- A) In the first half of Song of Songs chapter one we looked at the bride's hunger for Jesus to speak to her (SOS 1:2-3); her two-fold life vision of loving God and working with others (SOS 1:4); and Jesus' response to the brides prayer which led to her going into the King's chamber and seeing her dark, but lovely heart (SOS 1:5).
- B) Here, as we look at the second half of Song of Songs chapter one, we will see the shame-covered and overworked bride become reunited with her Beloved, and their pleasant life together.

#### II) The Brides Spiritual Crisis Of Rejection And Shame (1:6-7)

- A) Song of Songs 1:6-7 "Do not look upon me because I am dark, because the sun has tanned me.

  My mother's sons were angry with me; they made me the keepers of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept. Tell me O You whom I love. Where do You feed Your flock, where you make it rest at noon. For why should I be as one who veils herself by the flocks of Your companions?"
- B) <u>"Do not look upon me because I am dark, because the sun has tanned me. My mother's sons</u> were angry with me..."
  - 1) The bride is encountering personal shame from the public rejection of the brothers. These brothers represent other believers in the family of God. The mother represents the Church from which they have all come from (Gal. 4:19, 26; 1st Thess. 2:6-7; Matt.12:46-50).
    - (i) It was John Calvin who said "If God is our father, then the Church is our mother."
  - 2) The young bride was a peasant who worked in the field, using her hands and working under the heat of the sun. The brothers on the other hand, have lived in the palace, never needing to work outside.
  - 3) Because her passion for Jesus is great and her background is different, she doesn't fit in with the brothers. Instead of helping her, listening to her and befriending her, they put her to work. Because work is all they know, it's all they can give to her.
  - 4) This exact situation is where much of the body of Christ is today. Because Church leadership knows so little about the place of personal devotion to Jesus, we end up giving others what we do know, work.
- C) "...they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept."

- 1) The bride has been made by the Church a keeper of many vineyards, but in the process she has lost her own. The diligent pursuit of Jesus in her personal vineyard has been lost in service to other people's vineyards. Because the Church had misplaced the two commandments, what they handed to the bride was a faulty structure that led her into burnout.
- 2) Many of God's people are at just this place. They are busy doing many things, but have lost the one thing that's needed. They are helping others, but they have lost their own vineyard in the process.
- 3) Across the earth today, God is raising up lovers who work from a paradigm of love and not those that love from a paradigm of work. We are lovers of God first and workers with God second. Lovers far out work workers, because their reward is in Christ (Rev. 22:12).
  - (i) Matthew 25:1-13 "Then the Kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps...at midnight a cry was heard; behold, the bridegroom is coming...and the foolish said to the wise, give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out."
- D) Tell me O You whom I love. Where do You feed Your flock, where you make it rest at noon. For why should I be as one who veils herself by the flocks of Your companions?"
  - 1) Because the bride has lost her own personal life with Jesus, she is now covered in shame, like a veiled woman and serving God at a distance, beside the flocks.
  - She's calling out to the good Shepherd of her soul, the One that she loves, for help. She's
    overworked by the Church, living at a distance from God and covered in shame looking for
    rest at noon.

## III) Jesus' Response To Her Cry And The Bride's Revelation Of Jesus (1:8,12-14)

- A) Song of Songs 1:8,12-14 "If you do not know, O fairest among women, follow in the footsteps of the flock, and feed your little goats beside the shepherds tents...While the King sat at His table, My spikenard sends forth it's fragrance. A bundle of Myrrh is my Beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts."
- B) <u>"If you do not know, O fairest among women, follow in the footsteps of the flock, and feed your little goats beside the shepherds tents..."</u>
  - 1) Jesus is responding to the question and overall situation of the young bride. His response to her is most stunning. The bride is covered in shame, overworked and living at a distance, but He responds to her with such tenderness.
  - 2) If you don't know, O fairest among women.
  - 3) Jesus is now going to give her 3 action items to ensure that this doesn't happen to her again.

(i) First He tells her;

"...Follow in the footsteps of the flock..."

Community Ministry

(ii) Secondly He tells her;

<mark>"...feed your little goats..."</mark>

iviiiisti y

(iii) Thirdly He tells her;

"...besides the shepherds tents."

**Submission** 

- 4) It's important for us to see that before Jesus gave her any instruction, He first told her that she was the fairest among women and that He loved her. His words of affirmation always proceeds His words of instruction or correction.
- 5) Jesus is so tender in how He handles us in our weakness. The interaction between the bride and her Beloved give us a glimpse of the tender Shepherd of <u>our</u> souls.
- C) "While the King sat at His table, My spikenard sends forth it's fragrance. A bundle of Myrrh is my Beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts."
  - 1) The bride is pictured as being seated at the King's table starting to understand the sacrifice that He has made to be with her.
    - (i) 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 4:22-23, 27; 10:5 tells us that at King Solomon's table for a daily meal were thirty measures of fine flour, threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, twenty oxen out of the pastures, a hundred sheep, harts, roebucks, fallow deer and fatted fowl.
    - (ii) The idea is that she is seated in a place she most certainly does not belong, but has been invited too by the King. It's a picture of our new position, through Christ's death, being seated in heavenly places with Him.
  - 2) As the bride sees Him for who He is, sitting at His table, her spikenard sends forth its fragrance. Her worship is flowing effortlessly as she catches a revelation of His death and resurrection.
    - (i) Mark 14:3-9 "And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He (Jesus) sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. But there were some there who were indignant among themselves..."
  - 3) When we are seated at His table and we see what He has done for us, not just in our minds, but in our hearts, that revelation causes worship to ascend effortless to Jesus.
- D) "A bundle of Myrrh is my Beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts."
  - 1) The bride says that He is a <u>bundle of Myrrh</u> to her that lies all night between her breasts. It's not that Jesus' sacrifice was a little, but it was a bundle.
  - 2) Myrrh is a much more costly spice than spikenard. Which tells us that it's more costly for God to become a man, then for man to be resurrected in Christ.
    - (i) Ephesians 1:17-18 "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened..."
  - 3) We must receive a revelation of Jesus at the heart level in order to sustain worship over the long haul. Not just for a moment, but for a lifetime.

#### IV) The Divine Interchange Between Jesus And The Bride (1:15-17)

- A) Song of Songs 1:15-17 <u>"Behold, you are fair My love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove eyes."</u>
  Behold, You are handsome, my Beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also our bed is green. The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir."
- B) "Behold, you are fair My love! Behold, you are fair! You have doves eyes."
  - 1) These words from Jesus were so unexpected in the bride's weak state, as she is just in chapter one of her journey in Christ. She is now being restored to Him from this recent season of shame and separation.
  - 2) He tells her, in the early stages, when she had just become preoccupied with the many vineyards around her, that she has a single eye for Him. This statement from Him sparks what I call the divine interchange.
- C) <u>Behold, You are handsome, my Beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also our bed is green. The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir."</u>
  - 1) The bride first speaks about the Lord of the house, before she speaks about the house of the Lord. Sometimes the Church is more concerned with the streets of Gold and mansions in heaven, than Jesus who will be the only light in the New Jerusalem (Heaven).
  - 2) She sees her relationship with Jesus as <u>pleasant</u> (enjoyable), <u>green</u> (fresh), and <u>strong</u> (cedars).

# **Chapter Five Extra Reading**

The road to maturity in Christ is often a much bumpier road than most people plan for. This isn't because Jesus is difficult to follow, but because there is so much inside of us that Jesus is working out so that He can work in His kingdom. The goal in Christianity is to get over you as fast as humanly possible. Because once you get over you, there is something much more powerful waiting to be discovered and His name is Jesus. The young bride is being taken through a key hole backwards. Or in another words, she is being taken through a series of circumstances that the Lord is using to bring her from a place of immaturity to maturity. As we are looking at the second half of Chapter one in the Song of Songs we are going to see how the bride encountered such shame from her brothers, her passionate cry of longing for her Beloved, the position of influence that she receives in Him, the divine interchange of love and their fresh and pleasant life together. Though there are many challenges awaiting us as we press on into the high calling of God, this life in Christ is most pleasant. The bride starts the second half of Chapter one in a very dark place, but she also ends chapter one in a wonderful place. This is the ups and downs of being in relationship with an all consuming fire.

#### The Bride's Spiritual Crisis Of Rejection and Shame (1:6-7)

In the previous chapter we left off with the bride walking out of God's chamber having encountered both her dark and lovely heart before Him. This was such a powerful revelation to her that gave her great insight into the reason why others have loved Him so much. But as she moves forward in her new life in Christ she encounters the others (brothers) inside the body of Christ (the mother) that have been there longer than she and they aren't nearly as interested in the Beloved as she is. This creates internal conflict that's actually been divinely designed by her Beloved. You can feel the tension building.

Song of Songs 1:6-7 "Do not look upon me because I am dark, because the sun has tanned me. My mother's sons were angry with me; they made me the keepers of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept. Tell me O You whom I love. Where do You feed Your flock, where you make it rest at noon. For why should I be as one who veils herself by the flocks of Your companions?"

The bride is now pictured as being inside the palace, or at least walking out from His chamber and working alongside what the Bible calls her brothers or the sons of her mother. The easy interpretation on these two thoughts about the mother and brothers is that "her mother" or "the mother" is speaking of the Church. It was John Calvin that rightly said "If God is our Father then the Church is our mother." The Church is here being likened to that which gives new birth. Everyone who has come to know Christ has been birthed into the Kingdom of God through the Church. And her brothers are speaking of those other ones in the Body of Christ. They aren't Pastors and leaders, but people who are a part of the Church and are also serving the King. The young bride was formerly a shepherdess and had worked for a living under the heat of the son. Her brothers on the other hand have lived inside the palace and haven't needed to work outside. This means that her skin is darker than theirs and her cultural experiences are much different from there's as well. Because these things are so contrasted between her life and theirs, her experience is very negative within the Church as she quickly finds herself in a place of burn out.

The young bride is at a place many Christians have both personally encountered and have witnessed other's encounter. Because the life that she lived outside the Church is so different from the life that

they have lived within the Church, they don't know how to relate to her. Not to mention her intense passion for the Beloved. And because all the brothers that she encounters don't have a vibrant love life with the Beloved, they are only able to give her what they have, not what they want her to have. So instead of teaching her how to love Jesus and pursue the first commandment first, they put her to work. This work soon overcomes her and leaves her in a place of burnout. The work of the ministry is exhausting, tiring and often draining. But with a vibrant, progressive and daily life with Christ we are able to endure over the many seasons of life and serve with Jesus. We know that she is overworked and separated from Christ because of what she says in **Song of Songs 1:6-7** "...they made me the keeper of the vineyards but my own vineyard I have not kept...Tell me O You whom I love..." She says that she was made an overseer of many vineyards but her own she has not kept. She is at the classic place of burnout. Burnout isn't the result of being busy; it's the result of overseeing other's vineyards and neglecting your own. Here the bride is at a place where she is working in many other places, and has become so busy that she's neglecting her own heart before God.

Jesus tells us a story in **Matthew 25** about 10 virgins, of which 5 were wise and five were foolish. This is what Jesus has to say in **Matthew 25:1-13**, "Then the Kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps...at midnight a cry was heard; behold, the bridegroom is coming...and the foolish said to the wise, give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out."

If you look at this story closely you can see that the foolish took their lamps but took no oil with them. The wise, on the other hand, took both their lamps and oil. And under the pressure of the hour, when the Bridegroom is delayed in the middle of the night, the foolish start running out of oil and ask for some from the wise. In this story Jesus considers the foolish those that spend all their energy on the brightness of their lamps, but spend no emphasis on gathering oil for the lamp. And the wise, Jesus says, are those that take both oil and the lamp. This story is exactly what happened with the young bride. She has been made, by her fellow brothers in Christ, a keeper of many vineyards (bright lamp) but she has neglected her own vineyard in the process (personal oil). We must never get so busy working for God and that we don't keep the first commandment in first place.

It's here at this place of burnout, shame and rejection that the bride calls out to her Beloved and asks for help. This is what she says, "Tell me O You whom I love. Where do You feed Your flock, where you make it rest at noon. For why should I be as one who veils herself by the flocks of Your companions?" In her shame and brokenness she calls out to the lover of her soul. This is the face of Christ as the good Shepherd that lays His life down for the sheep. It's important to note that in her place of shame and brokenness she doesn't go looking here and there for help from this and that, but she actually calls out to Him whom her soul loves. So often we can be in the same place as her, but instead of going to the right place for the right thing, we go to the wrong place and get the wrong thing. It's not more work that she needs; it's Jesus and Him alone. Her life is out of balance and He is the only one who can help her get back to a place of balance in Him. You must call out to the right person when you're in a rough spot in life if you're ever going to get out of it and get moving forward again. Sometimes in this place, it's not the pastor that I need to talk to, it's not ministry friends and it's not other Christians, but it's God and God alone. I need Him. And this is what she's doing. She's calling out to the One that her soul loves.

Jesus' Response To Her Cry and The Bride's Revelation Of Jesus (1:8,12-14)

Jesus really hears us. So often when we are searching hard after Christ it seems as if the heavens are like brass, but that doesn't mean that His ears or His heart is. It just means that the heavens feel like brass. What's challenging is to not assume that God's heart and ears are like brass when we feel like the heavens are. God is listening to the bride and He is going to answer her right here, in the following verse where she just called out to Him. In **Song of Songs 1:8** He says, "If you do not know, O fairest among women, follow in the footsteps of the flock, and feed your little goats beside the shepherds tents..."

When we keep in context that the bride is at a place of separation from Him, she's covered in shame and guilt and she's lost her communion with Him and He still defines her as the one that He loves. This should cause your heart to come alive. He is saying to her "If you don't know already. If I haven't made it clear enough, then I will do it again. I like you! You look good to me. I so enjoy you and you're weak, but so sincere passion for Me!" Jesus' words must have surprised the bride beyond what is written in the actual book. How could a God with such power and wisdom, speak so tenderly to those who so struggle to love Him in the way that He loves them. This is beyond understanding.

Jesus' words of affirmation always precede His word of correction and instruction. Jesus has three things that He needs the young bride to do to ensure that she doesn't end up in the same place again. He first tells us to get back in the way of flock. Because of the pain that she had endured from life inside the Church she had pulled herself outside of the community of God. Many of God's servants have done just this thing. Instead of seeing the trouble that she endured in the Church as a tool that God was using to shape her, she sees it as a weapon that was wounding her. Jesus doesn't have any servants that are moving into the fullness of Him disconnected from the Body of Christ and Christianity community. This is why He calls her back into the way of the sheep. Then He tells her to feed her little goats. Jesus is telling her, "Don't do all the things that everyone else asks you to do, but rather just do the things that I ask you to do." It's easy in our passion for Jesus to say yes to everything others ask us to do, but there are a couple things that Jesus would have us to do, and it's those that we want to say yes to. And lastly, Jesus tells us to do both of these things (following the way of the sheep and feeding her little goats) besides the shepherd's tents. We have a saying at New Life "that if you aren't under authority, you don't have authority." Jesus also understands that He has set up an order and all those who are great in Him must follow that order, and it's an order of authority. She has been hurt by the leaders that didn't know how to handle her, but He is calling her back underneath them and to serve them.

The instruction that Jesus has to give her is something many of you would do well to heed. Listen, I have been hurt in the Church, I've been overlooked, I've have been neglected and mistreated. And although it's painful at the moment, what I have come to understand is that God uses all of those situations to shape me. It's like marriage. I tell people that if you want to grow, get married. Why? Because in marriage you have ample opportunities to work on yourself and you get hands on experience of resolving conflict without running away. What often happens when we get hurt in Church and in relationships in life in general, as Christians we close off our hearts to people because we don't want to get hurt again. But what often happens is that we also close off our hearts to Jesus at the same time. And when we close our hearts off to Jesus, we end up stuck and are no longer able to move forward with Him and in our ministry calling. Take time to inspect your heart and ask the Holy Spirit if those relational wounds from the past or the present have caused you to close off your heart to Jesus and others. He's able to break you free and He's speaking tenderly to you right now, but you must respond and ask Him for help just like the young bride did when she called out to Him.

## The Divine Interchange Between Jesus and The Bride (1:15-17)

After the bride sees that God has seated her at His table, she is overcome with passion for Him and passion for herself. That might sound odd to you to think about having passion for yourself. But when the bride is seated at His table, she starts to think about what it cost to send the Son to the earth and die for her redemption. When you see the death of Christ and the cost behind it, you must start to connect the dots to how much you are worth to God. God is passionate about humans and especially, not only, but especially you. He loves you, is ravished over you and longs to be together with you forever.

As the bride is seated at the table of the Lord, He speaks over her even more stunning words. In **Song of Songs 1:15** he says "Behold, you are fair, My love! Behold, you are fair! You have doves eyes." Again, the bride has only been reconnected with Him for a little while and she surly hasn't done anything for Him to receive such gracious words from Him. He tells her that He loves her and that she has dove's eyes. We will see the theme of doves and doves eyes continue to build throughout the Song, but here it's the first time that it's used. Something noteworthy about doves is that they don't have any peripheral vision and when they mate, they mate for life. So if their mate dies, they won't mate again. So the translation that we can easily make is that God is saying to the young, immature bride, that she has a single eye for Him and she's focused on one thing.

When the bride hears these words from her Beloved to her in such a weak state, it causes what I call the divine interchange between He and her. He speaks and it sparks off passion in her and she is forced to respond to Him. In **Song of Songs 1:16-17** the bride says to Him "Behold, You are handsome, my Beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also our bed is green. The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir." It's important that we slow down a little bit when we look at this phrase to see all the truths that she shares with Him. She first has something wonderful to say about Him and then she speaks about their house. Often times in the Church and as Christians we can speak more about the House of the Lord than we do the Lord of the house. We tell people about all the great things our Church does, all the outreaches and kids ministries, but we tell them very little about Jesus. Who's greater? Jesus or the house that Jesus is building? This is something that all of us are guilty of and it must be corrected. The bride states first that Jesus is beautiful and her Beloved and then she talks about their house. It's important for us to move the first commandment into first place so that the second commandment can have its proper place among the body of Christ.

The bride speaks about the house that they dwell in as being pleasant, green and strong. It's true that the house that God calls us into is a pleasant house, a green house and strong house. Many assuming that being with Christ is a burden and a struggle but it's not that at all. It's a pleasant life in Him as He leads us so tenderly! The greenness about His house is that the place of divine encounter between God and us is fresh and flourishing and coming alive. It's not dead and decaying but growing and increasing.

God is calling His bride out from a place of working for Him to working with Him. This is why we are called the bride of Christ and not the workforce of Christ. He is looking for someone that is bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. Jesus is calling out a bride that stands alongside Him and not ahead of Him or behind Him, but alongside Him. If you're tired of living the Christian life apart from a vibrant encounter with Christ, then call out to the great Shepherd of your soul and be restored to Him. This is your inheritance in Christ, to be fully alive at the heart level and knee deep in partnership with Him.

# Chapter Six<br/>Song of Songs 2:1-7

#### I) Introduction

- A) In the last session we looked at the brides shame and rejection (1:6); her cry to be restored to the One she loved (1:7); His feelings toward her in her place of brokenness (1:8-11); her revelation of His sacrifice (1:12-14); and the fresh, intimate interchange between them both (1:15-17).
- B) In Session Six we are going to look at the bride's personal revelation of herself; her personal revelation of Him; the love that He has for her and the love that she has for Him. The first half of Song of Songs chapter two is what I refer to as the "Divine Romance."

#### II) The Bride's Personal Revelation Of Herself (2:1-2)

- A) Song of Songs 2:1-2 <u>"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. Like a lily among thorns,</u> so is my love among the daughters."
  - 1) The divine interchange at the close of Chapter one is what led to the bride's personal revelation of herself in Christ. She sees herself as being beautiful, both to God and among fallen humanity.
  - 2) The rose and the lily are both describing the bride. She is both a rose and a lily. The rose represents love, and the lily represents purity. She is seeing that her love for Jesus and her purity in Him make her lovely.
  - 3) Personal revelation of our beauty in Christ is the foundation that must be internally laid if we are going to grow in our revelation of God. If you feel dirty, you live dirty; and if you feel clean, you live clean.
    - (i) Luke 12:27-28 "Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith."
  - 4) Just like the bride, we too must receive a <u>personal</u> revelation of our beauty and worth to God among things around us that are fallen. Without this we will live at a distance. Most of us have no problem seeing Jesus' beauty, but can't imagine ourselves as beautiful.
- B) "... the lily of the valleys. Like a lily among thorns..."
  - 1) The valleys speak of those things that are dark, and the thorns speak of those things that are sinful and separated from Christ (Psalm 23; Gen. 3:17-18; Heb 6:8).

#### III) The Bride's Personal Revelation Of Jesus' Beauty (2:3a)

- A) Song of Songs 2:3a "Like an apple tree among the tress of the woods, so is my Beloved among the sons."
  - 1) It's not only a personal revelation of her beauty that the bride sees, but a personal revelation of His beauty among the many other things of life in this age. He is like an apple tree among the other tress of the woods.
  - 2) In the Eastern landscape, men and women would walk all day along the waters and cities, passing tall cedars and the oaks of their region without seeing any trees that possessed edible fruit. Finding an apple tree among many other trees was like a meal from heaven.
    - (i) Mark 11:12-14 "Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany He was hungry. And seeing from afar a fig having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, let no one eat fruit from you ever again."
  - 3) Our hearts become awakened in love when we see the two-fold reality of our beauty before God, and His beauty among every other thing. It takes this two-fold reality to make our hearts alive in Christ.
    - (i) Our beauty His beauty-confidence in ourselves but arrogance towards God
    - (ii) His beauty our beauty=humility towards Christ but no confidence in ourselves
    - (iii) Our beauty + His beauty=humility towards Christ and confidence in ourselves

#### IV) The Bride's Rest In The Shade Of The Cross (2:3b,c)

- A) Song of Songs 2:3b,c "I sat down in His shade with great delight and His fruit was sweet to my taste."
  - 1) The bride is being pictured as sitting underneath the shade of God, or the finished work of the Cross. It's here in His shade that the bride finds a place of rest and delight in the heart of her Beloved.
  - 2) The kind of shade that you and I need cannot come from ourselves. It can only come from Christ. It's only in the finished work of the Cross that we find true rest for our weary souls.
  - 3) Many of us relate to God based on what kind of day we're having. If it's a good day, then we have confidence before Him, but if it's a bad day then we have shame before Him.
  - 4) When we live like this, we are trying to do for ourselves what only the cross can do. It's only through Jesus' cross that I can find the rest that my soul longs for.

- (i) Romans 6:13 "And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."
- 5) When I rest in the finished work of the Cross (His shade), I can come before Him on my good days and my bad days with the same amount of confidence: as one who is alive from the dead.
  - (i) Luke 10:38-42 "...and Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving...And Jesus answered and said to her, Martha, Martha you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."
- 6) Often in the Church there is much activity, but little life being produced within us and those that we lead. Running hard doesn't mean we're growing in love.
- 7) You will never go deep in God and experience the revelation of His heart on the run. You must make time for Him. You must sit before Him in order to experience the delight of being with Him.
- 8) Many of us say that God is boring, dull and disconnected from our lives. While our Bible's are covered in dust and sitting on shelves, and as we're moving at a sprint car pace through life hoping that, by chance, our hearts will become alive in Christ. It's a pipe dream.
- 9) Our delight in Christ comes as we sit underneath His shade tree and eat His pleasant fruit.

### V) Jesus' Banner Of Love Over The Bride And Her Lovesickness (2:4-5)

- A) Song of Songs 2:4-5 <u>"He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love."</u>
  Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick."
  - 1) The bride has been taken into the house of wine, the banqueting house or the house of celebration. He has taken her into His house of wine and He is refreshing her with His wine of celebration and flying a banner of love over her.
    - (i) We didn't chose God, but He chose us (John 15:16). Our love for Him is always a response of His love towards us. We love Him because He first loved us (1<sup>st</sup> John 4:19).
    - (ii) Of the many houses He could take her into, it's the house of abundance that He has chosen. John 20:17 "...I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."
    - (iii) And in the creative genius of God, He could have flown many banners over her, but He has chosen to fly a banner of love.
  - 2) It's important that we keep in context that the bride is still immature and struggling with great weakness, but it's in this current state that He is flying a banner of love over her.

- (i) Luke 15:20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."
- 3) Many of us think that when we finally have all things together and receive freedom from our struggles, God will love us. Most of us struggle to see a God who enjoys us in the process of freedom not only when we receive it.
- 4) Beloved, right now, today, in the process of being saved, God has brought you into the banqueting house, given all things to you and is flying a banner of love over you! Right now, today, not tomorrow or next year, but today.
- 5) Have you seen your beauty before God? Have you seen His beauty as being totally other than everything else around? Do you feel loved in the process of growing in Christ, even while you're still struggling with sin?
- 6) Take yourself out of probation, enjoy the love of God, repent of sin and present yourself to Christ as one who is alive from the dead. Shame, guilt and condemnation aren't helping you grow in Christ, they're holding you back!

# **Chapter Six Extra Reading**

It's one thing to see the beauty of Jesus Christ, but it's an entirely different thing to see your personal beauty in the grace of God. In the Church, our problem isn't mostly that we don't believe Jesus is beautiful, awesome and glorious, but that we don't see ourselves as beautiful, awesome and glorious in the grace of God. In the previous chapter we looked at the bride being taken from a place of shame and condemnation to being joined back again with Christ in their pleasant life together. In this chapter, we are going to continue on where the bride left at the close of chapter 1. In the first half of Song of Songs, chapter 2, we will look at the bride's personal revelation of herself, of Jesus, her rest under His shade and the celebration of lovesickness that she enters into. I have labeled Song of Songs chapter 2 the chapter of "Two Divines." The first half is what I call "The Divine Romance" and I'll share with you the second "Divine" in the next chapter.

#### The Brides Personal Revelation Of Herself (2:1-2)

Here in Song of Songs chapter 2, the bride is continuing to feed on her newly rekindled romance with the Lover of her soul. Though she was separated from Him for a little while in the middle of Chapter one, at the close she is reconnected with Him and enjoying every minute of it. The enjoyment of His presence and their life together spills right on into the start of Song of Songs chapter two. It's here in this place of intimate encounter that the bride starts to see herself before Him. The bride opens up **Song of Songs Chapter 2** by saying "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. Like a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." This phrase is a much talked about phrase in the Song of Songs when you start looking at the commentaries. Some commentators say that this is Jesus speaking while others have the bride speaking here. Either way, I don't believe it takes away from what's being said overall. But for the sake of our study, I am going to assume that the bride is speaking here. There are many reasons why I believe it's the bride speaking here but more than focusing our time on that, I want to focus on what's actually happening.

It's here that the bride is starting to receive a personal revelation of who she is before God and among others. She says "I am the rose...and I am a lily..." She is using the rose to talk about her love for God and the lily speaks of her personal purity before God and through Christ. Our purity isn't our own personal purity but that which the Lord imputes to us through the Cross. The valleys speak of those times and areas that are dark around us, those long nights living in a fallen world (Psalm 23). The thorns that she is also speaking of are considered to be things that are sinful, dark and separated from Christ (Genesis 3:17; Hebrews 6:8). To sum up what the bride is saying, it's that "her love and purity in God and through God is something beautiful to Him in the midst of a fallen world where most people have rejected God and said no to Him." He sees her as being beautiful and this revelation is becoming personal to the bride as she is speaking it out loud now.

You and I must receive a personal revelation of our beauty before God as we have given up our lives for the sake of Christ. This revelation is the foundation that must be laid if we are going to grow in the knowledge of God. Without the revelation of our personal beauty before God in Christ, we will find ourselves living a distance towards God when we have been invited to share with Him in His most intimate secrets. There is saying that says "If you feel dirty you will live dirty. And if you feel clean you will live clean." I find so much truth in that statement. Because the bride is starting to experience her

personal beauty before Christ, it is going to empower her to live clean before Him, as opposed to living at a distance and never feeling excepted in the presence of God. I do believe there are many Christians, who are saved and headed to heaven, but live at a distance to God because they don't feel desired by Him. When we don't see ourselves rightly when we are in Christ, we end up living at a distance to Him, even though He has brought us as close as we could possibly come. It's here in the personal revelation of herself that the bride also receives a personal revelation of His beauty among the many things around her.

#### The Brides Personal Revelation Of Jesus' Beauty (2:3a)

As the bride is pierced in her own heart with her beauty before God, she is at the same time deeply touched with Jesus' beauty among the many things around her. It's here in **Song of Songs 2:3a** that she says "Like an apple tree among the tree's of the woods, so is my Beloved among the sons." The bride is stating that He is totally different from everything around her. Though many trees might be taller than Him, they might look equally as glorious, it's only from the apple tree of Christ that my heart is impacted. It was common in Bible times that people would spend hours walking along rivers, bodies of water and the cities of their day passing tall cedars and strong oaks without seeing a tree from which they could gather fruit. But when they would come across one, it was like heavenly manna sent from God Himself. Jesus is, to her, like a tree that doesn't just look amazing, but is also refreshing and life giving.

In the pattern of the bride's life, she is setting forth something that's vitally important for us to follow as well. Just like her, we too must receive a revelation of both our beauty among things that are fallen and His beauty among the other things of life in this age. It's upon this twofold revelation that our hearts become awakened. If you only see your beauty before Christ, but you don't see His beauty you will end up being confident in yourself but arrogant before God. If you only see His beauty but you don't see your own beauty you will have humility before God but no confidence in yourself. But if you see your beauty before God and His beauty among the nations you will have confidence in yourself and humility towards God and these two realties, combined, will cause your heart to be awakened. I would go as far as to say this is base one for you to start at if you have yet to see either your beauty or His beauty or both combined. You must receive this twofold revelation if you are going to progress further into the knowledge of God just like the bride does. This can't be someone else's revelation of Jesus that you work to make your own. As the heading states, this must be a personal revelation that you receive.

## The Brides Rest In The Cross (2:3b,c)

It's here, in the experience and enjoyment of the twofold revelation of our beauty and His beauty, that we are able to rest and cease from striving to find fulfillment in our own lives. Here the bride speaks in **Song of Songs 2:3b,c** of her rest in Christ. She says "I sat down in His shade with great delight and His fruit was sweet to my taste." Because we are looking at this entire book as an allegory we are going to use the shade that she is sitting underneath as the Cross of Christ. Jesus' Cross was made out of wood and it's from this Cross that you and I find our true rest, in Him and through Him. So, it's here that the bride is pictured as sitting underneath His shade tree, eating sweet fruit and resting in Him. This rest isn't a rest of lethargy or complacency but a rest in which the bride isn't striving to make something happen on her own. In Luke 5:4-5 Jesus steps into Peter's boat and gives him some instruction about fishing and asks Peter to do something that he had been doing all night but catching nothing. Here, Jesus says "...let down your nets for a catch. But Simon answered and said to Him, Master, we have

toiled all night and caught nothing..." That word toiled that Peter uses actually means "striving in your own strength, or doing something on your own." Peter had worked hard on his own but didn't catch anything. Jesus on the other hand, was asking Him to work in the strength of Christ and not in his own strength.

It's here that the young bride is starting to see the same revelation that Peter received. She is resting under His shade and taking in the sweet fruit of being with Christ. So many times I try to create shade for my own life but end up with no rest, only more stress. The reason for this is because we can't create the shade of God for our lives. It's only through the Cross of Christ that we find the rest that our souls need. Often times when we have had a good day we have confidence in God but when we have a bad day we are covered with shame, guilt and condemnation. The reason for this up and down feeling is because we are trying to relate to God based on our own strength instead of resting underneath His shade and taking great delight in Him.

Something else that the bride's life tells us is that we can't go deep in the revelation of Jesus Christ on the run. It's simply not a reality to think that we will encounter the depth of God's heart on the run. Many are running to and fro in their days, busy to do this and that, while all along God is left on the backburner. The ministry and jobs, family and life in general are busy, but that excuse won't work for Jesus when you stand before Him as to why you wasted so much energy doing things that didn't matter in the end. The bride is pictured as sitting before Him, and in her sitting she tastes the sweet fruit that comes from Him. So few that I meet, in the body of Christ, reflect such a life as hers. When I meet those in the body of Christ that put a premium on sitting before Jesus I am usually more apt to give my ear to what they have to say and when I do, it seems as if they have the sweetest fruit to share with me.

#### Jesus' Banner Of Love Over The Bride and Her Lovesickness (2:4-5)

As the bride is experiencing the "Divine Romance" she quickly finds herself in the banqueting house of God. **Song of Songs 2:4-5** says "He brought me into the banqueting, and His banner over me is love.

Sustains me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick."

This banqueting house is also called the house of wine, the house of celebration or the house of abundance. It's here, in this house that God is rejoicing over the bride in the way that a husband would rejoice over his spouse or that a Father would rejoice over his son or daughter. The bride is being pictured as seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). This is a place that she doesn't belong and that she could never get to on her own merits.

The banqueting house tells us three specific things when it comes to Jesus Christ and us. First, it tells us that we didn't choose God, but He chose us (John 15:16). Our love is always a response to His great love for us. We love Him because He first loved us (1<sup>st</sup> John 4:19). The verse that we are looking at states that God (or He) brought her to the banqueting house. It's God that has brought her to the place where He is. How wonderful is our life in Christ when we realize that He Himself has seated us in heavenly places, where we mostly certainly do not belong on our own. Second, this verse tells us that though God could bring us into any number of His houses, He has chosen to take us into the house of celebration and abundance. How grateful I am and forever will be that God has taken me into His house of royal provision and made me a son among such royalty. It's God Himself who has seated me at His table of provision and invited me to indulge. God is a God of opulence, and it's through this eternal opulence that I am empowered to be generous in this present evil age. And last, it's a banner of love that He is flying over me in this house of celebration. Just like the many houses that God possess, He

also possess an infinite amount of banners and could chose to fly whichever one He wishes. But it's here that we see He has chosen to fly a banner of love over me. Not only Has He sought me out, love me, seated and given me all things, but He tells me that He loves me in the process.

It's my belief that the reason I struggle to give my life wholly to Him is because I have seen so little, and I understand so little when it comes to what I have been invited into. What I am saying is that if I could see more I would give more. When we finally stand before Christ, it's a great fear of mine that I will have regret about how much I could've given to Him and how much more I could've trusted Him with my life, family, money, future and so on. I have often said "If you would let me see what Paul saw, I could endure what Paul endured." When we see that God has seated us at the table with Him, all shame, guilt and condemnation is broken off and we are empowered to love Him in the way that He has loved us.

And even as we are moving through the life of the bride into the future that God has for her, it's most important that we keep in context where she is at personally in the moment. Right here, in **Song of Songs chapter 2** she is being pictured as just recently being reunited with the lover of her soul. She had been separated from Him for a season because of shame, guilt and condemnation from the brothers, but is now being pictured as reconnected with the Shepherd of her soul. And it's also right here at this point that God is bringing her into the banqueting house and lavishing such great love over her.

Many of us don't struggle with seeing a God who will love us fully when we totally become free from all the things that we struggle with. But when it comes to seeing a God who loves us while we are in process is a painfully difficult thing to do. Unfortunately the Church doesn't help us when it comes to this truth. For some reason we preach a message that says "When you get totally free and receive the complete breakthrough from your sin, then God will fully enjoy you." It's not that we come out right and say that, but we say it by the way we preach and teach. This is a false message and when we buy into it our hearts shrivel up before God and others. We lose our confidence in His love and the reality that if we have repented of sin then we are clean before Him. See, God is a God who loves us while we are in the process not just in the finished product. The finished product to God is a product of the process of reaching for Him yet failing again and again and again. If you don't see that God has invited you into the banqueting house while you're in the process of freedom, then you won't feel accepted at His table. And just like we said in the start of this chapter, if you feel dirty you will live dirty. But if you feel clean, you will live clean.

Beloved, have you seen your unique beauty before God? Have you seen His beauty as being totally other than everything else around? Do you feel loved in the process of your salvation, or condemned? Right now, in the process of being saved, God has brought you into the banqueting house, given you all things and is flying a banner of love over you. It's not tomorrow, or when you read your Bible more, of what you don't miss so much Church, or when you help your neighbor, but right now! Take yourself out of probation and enjoy the grace of God which empowers you to become free from sin and compromise. Shame, guilt and condemnation aren't helping you grow, but in fact they are tearing you down and burning you out. Break your agreement with shame, guilt and condemnation and reach for the high, upward call in Christ Jesus. This is your inheritance and don't settle for anything less. You belong before God, dressed in the garments of Christ Jesus!

# **Chapter Seven Song of Songs 2:8-17**

#### I) Introduction

- A) In the previous session we looked at the bride's personal revelation of herself (2:1-2); her personal revelation of Jesus Christ (2:3a); her rest under the shade of His finished work on the Cross (2:3b); her invitation from Him to the banqueting house (2:4); and the lovesickness that this entire experience created in her (2:5-7).
- B) Song of Songs chapter two has what I call "Two Divines" in it. In **Song of Songs 2:1-7** there is the "Divine Romance" and in **Song of Songs 2:8-17** there is what I call "The Divine Disruption." In Session Seven we are going to look at the "Divine Disruption" of God in the life of the bride, as He is calling her to the top of the mountains with Him.

#### II) The Divine Disruption (2:8-10)

- A) Song of Songs 2:8-10 <u>"The voice of my Beloved! Behold He comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, He stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, gazing through the lattice."</u>
- B) "The voice of my Beloved...!"
  - 1) It's here, as the bride is in the place of intimate communion with Jesus, that He breaks into her quiet place with a loud voice of great disruption. As she is in solitude with Him, He speaks to her in such an unusual way.
  - 2) Though the bride is hearing many voices around her, she knows there is one that trumps them all and it's the voice of her Beloved (John 10:4-5). Though this voice is very disruptive, she rightly declares that "it's the voice of her Beloved."
  - 3) All of God's servants have heard Jesus' voice come to them in a disruptive way. But even though His voice comes with such momentary disruption, if we will follow it and heed it, it will always lead to infinite satisfaction.
- C) <u>"Behold, He comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag."</u>
  - 1) It's not only His voice that disrupts her, but also this new face of Christ that she sees. It's not a new Jesus, but a different facet of the same Jesus that she had never seen before.
  - 2) In Chapter One she encountered the facet of Christ that is like a Shepherd (1:7), but now she is encountering the King of all kings. She is seeing the boundless King who conquers all things earthly and demonic. He is bound by nothing.
  - 3) This is a "mount of Transfiguration" moment for her (Luke 9:27-36).

- (i) Revelation 19:11 "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war."
- (ii) Colossians 2:15 "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."
- 4) Jesus isn't only a great romantic, He's also a King who possesses all power and might. This means He can enforce the implications of His love.
- 5) The mountains and hills speak of those areas that are difficult, scary and perplexing. It's the challenging areas of ministry and service to others. And it's here we see God in youthful zeal "...like a gazelle or a young stag" skipping and leaping, moving effortlessly and unhindered.
  - (i) Gazelles are known to move at speeds of 50 MPH for long periods of time and are able to climb steep hillsides and leap with grace.

#### III) The Call to Come Away Into Fruitful Partnership With Jesus (2:10-14)

- A) Song of Songs 2:10-14 "My beloved spoke, and said to me; rise up my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away! O My dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff let Me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely."
- B) "My Beloved spoke, and said to me; rise up my love, my fair one and come away..."
  - 1) God has spoken to the bride in a disruptive way, but now He is calling her away with Him into the high places where He is dwelling. She is seeing Him not only being in the secret place with her, but also in the high places of ministry to others and before the devil (Matt.4).
  - 2) God is raising up a people that don't only live within the Church and in the secret place, but also live in the midst of a dying culture sharing both Christ's life and our own with others.
  - 3) God is calling the bride to come with Him into the place of partnership as He is taking the Gospel to the nations of the earth. He can't have her only in the secret place. He needs her on the tops of mountains with Him.
  - 4) His voice is disruptive, but do you see Him first appealing to her from the foundation of love for her and His view of her? "Rise up My love, My fair one and come away..."
- C) <u>"For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone...the fig tree puts forth her green figs...rise up, my love, my fair one and come away...!"</u>
  - 1) Jesus is appealing to her from their past season in which He has kept her safe in the midst of pressures and difficulties. When she had lost His nearness in chapter one, He restored her and joined her back to Himself, and it's from this season that He is appealing to her.

- (i) Jesus is saying to her "When you lost My presence, I came to you in your shame and helped you. I have been faithful to you in the past and this is your confidence that I will be faithful to your in the future. Therefore My love, My dove, My perfect one, come away with Me!"
- 2) Winter is a dark and stormy time in which very few things remain alive. It's a time when the trees are stripped bare, leaves fall, and only a skeleton is left remaining. The fig tree is a winter fruit that hangs on until spring time. It's a fruit that survives the winter of death and persists through the dark season.
- 3) In the natural, we know that spring follows winter; but in our spiritual life we easily forget that these dark, wintery seasons eventually come to an end.
- 4) Right now in your life, Jesus is trying to build a spiritual and natural history in Him. Without a history in God we don't have confidence to move into our future.
  - (i) Matthew 25:6-9 "And at midnight a cry was heard, Behold, the bridegroom is coming, go out to meet him! Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, give us some of your oil for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell and buy for yourselves."
- 5) Nobody else can build your personal history in God but you. You can't buy this from a ministry line; receive it in a prophetic word; read it in a book; learn about it in school; or hear about it at a conference. You must embrace the private and very personal walk with Jesus.

## IV) Praying For Deliverance From Compromise (2:15-16)

- A) Song of Songs 2:15-16 <u>"Catch us the little foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines</u> have tender grapes. My beloved is mine, and I am His. He feeds His flock among the lilies."
  - 1) Because the bride is fearful of going with Jesus back into the place of ministry, on the mountain, she realizes that this fear is a little area that will hinder her future growth.
  - 2) She is rightly asking God to catch her little foxes. She is asking because her grapes are tender, "... vines, for our vines have tender grapes...." This small, budding fruit in her life is precious to her and the Lord. It's not mature fruit in her life, but rather small, budding immature fruit, because it's only chapter two of His eight chapter love song.
  - 3) She calls the foxes small. Small foxes are different from the lion's and the bear's. These small foxes come at night, in the early morning when we're not watching. They represent areas like money; time management; our private lives; our thought lives; and the condition of our hearts. It's the stuff most people never see, only the Lord.
    - (i) Psalm 139:23 "Search me O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting."

- 4) In order to protect the budding fruit in our lives, we must call out to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to catch those little areas that will spoil our immature fruit, hindering it from ever growing into maturity.
  - (i) Remember, this is a progression of holy passion. We are moving forward from a place of immaturity to full maturity in Christ.

#### V) The Bride's Painful Compromise (2:17)

- A) Song of Songs 2:17 "Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bether (Separation)."
  - 1) It's here that a little fox spoils some of her fruit. It's not large, public, scandalous sin that catches her up; it's just fear of the unknown. This fear causes her to tell Him no.
  - 2) She is telling Him, "until these shadow areas of fear in my heart are dealt with, I am going to stay here, even though You're calling me away. I can't go, but I know that You must move on, so go. Until the day breaks and I have greater victory, I am staying here."
  - 3) Most of the time our fear of going without, or doing what Jesus has asked us to do, is actually greater than going without, or actually doing it. That fear grips our hearts and paralyzes us.
  - 4) When God asks us to do something, He never leaves us without the grace to do it. When He asked Peter to walk on water He helped Him (Matt. 14:28-30). When He asked Peter to cast his net to the other side, He helped him (Luke 5).
  - 5) The safest place with God is in 100% obedience. It's safer on the mountain tops where great pressure is, than it is in the secret place if Jesus isn't there. It's safer on the water, than it is in the boat if Jesus isn't there.

# **Chapter Seven Extra Reading**

When looking at Song of Songs chapter two, there are what I have already labeled in the past chapter "Two Divines." The first "Divine" is "The Divine Romance" where the bride sees both her unique beauty and His (Jesus Christ's) beauty, among the many other things around them. But the second "Divine" is what I call the "Divine Romance." You won't find these terms written in the Bible, but they are summaries of the two main parts within Chapter two that I have given them. It seems that the Divine Romance and the Divine Disruption go hand in hand. Divine Romance always leads us into some Divine Disruption and this is exactly what's taking place in the life of the Shulamite in **Song of Songs 2:8-17**. As she is encountering beauty, banquets and bountiful love He is coming to her as the conquering King and inviting her to be with Him in a most disruptive way. In this Chapter we are going to look at His disruptive call, the invitation into partnership, the small foxes and the bride's painful compromise. Many of the commentaries are divided on the spirit of the bride throughout this chapter. Instead of seeing a struggling, young, immature bride, they see a rebellious, self-indulgent bride who has slept all the way through winter. In this chapter we will look at the heart of the matter for the young bride and her progression into holy passion.

#### The Divine Disruption (2:8-10)

When you look at the Divine Disruption of **Song of Songs** chapter two and verses **8-17** it's critical that you keep the context of the overall story in view. Currently, at the start of Chapter two, the bride is in a place of intimate encounter with Jesus. She is in the modern day equivalent of the secret place. This is a sweet place of worship and prayer, adoration and exaltation. She is enjoying the glorious fellowship of being joined with her Beloved in the place of divine romance. Because she had become separated from Him in chapter one, being joined back together with Him is something that's not only dear to the young bride, but also to us. It's here that Jesus enters into the scene and works to break her free from being only in the place of intimacy, and to move her into a place of fruitful ministry with Him. The passage reads in **Song of Songs 2:8-10** "The voice of my Beloved! Behold He comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, He stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, gazing through the lattice." We will start by looking at the first phrase in this passage, "The voice of my Beloved!"

It's here in the place of solitude that Jesus breaks in and speaks to her in a most disruptive way. You can see from the punctuation that the bride is using to state the way in which He is speaking to her by adding the exclamation point. As the bride is in the secret place, she hears "The voice of her Beloved" speak to her and it really disrupts her current state with Him. Though she is enjoying His presence, Jesus isn't longing to have a bride who lives only in the chamber of encounter, but also in the fields of harvest with Him. The bride is hearing many voices that have much to say, but in the midst of the many other voices she hears One that trumps them all, and it's rightly stated as "The voice of her Beloved." I personally have found it true that often when I am in the place of solitude with Jesus that He breaks in and speaks to me in a very disruptive way. It's not disruptive because it's mean, or harsh, but because He is usually coming to me in a way that I haven't known before. And it's what He asks of me that's often most disruptive. I wish that I could say that I rise up instantly when He speaks to me, but most of the time it takes me a little bit of time to process what's He's saying/asking and then to respond.

All of God's servants have heard God's disruptive voice break into their time of intimacy with Him, and

just like it's disruptive for us; it's also disruptive for them. It's often disruptive to us because He is asking/calling us into places that are scary, humbling, time consuming and often downright painful. The preacher once said, "The same God that planned His own Son's crucifixion, is also planning ours." God's voice is disruptive to us, because most of us are more connected to life in this age than we are to the age to come. So, letting go of where we currently are with God is challenging in light of laying a hold of that which is unseen before us, that which He is calling us into. I also know from personal experience and from listening to many of God's servants telling their stories, that when we follow the voice that at first is so disruptive, we end up having internal satisfaction that can't be purchased with all the wealth of this world. Though it comes in a disruptive way, if we follow it and trust it we end up with deep satisfaction.

It wasn't only that Jesus' voice was disruptive, but it was also the way that He came to her. **Song of Songs 2:8** says "...behold, He comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag." Unfortunately for those of us who have grown up in Church, we have been accustomed to a flannel graph Jesus that presents a sweet little man, who's little less than one of those 60's peace loving hippies that eat granola, and is striving for world peace through diplomacy. But when we read the Bible and encounter a Jesus who is Just, altogether righteous and true, who is patient but never tolerant of our sinful lifestyles, we are forced to either choose our flannel graph Jesus or the Jesus of the Bible. This is what's taking place with the Bride here in this passage of scripture. She has known Jesus only as a tender Shepherd from Song of Songs Chapter One and half of Chapter two, but the Man she is now encountering is much different than a quaint Shepherd. It's not that the bride is seeing a new Jesus, but rather a different facet of the same Jesus.

While she is in the secret place, or the chamber of encounter, she first hears His voice and secondly she sees Him. The way she sees Him is like that of a Gazelle or a young stag and He's skipping over the hills and leaping upon the mountains. The mountains in this allegory and also throughout the Bible represent the high places in God and the places of great difficulty. Not only did Jesus die on a mountain, but He was challenged in His ministry on the mountain. It's not that Jesus is being pictured as weak upon these mountains, but strong, able and graceful as He leaps and skips over them. She sees Him who is boundless, held by nothing and unhindered in His passion to conquer all things earthly and demonic. Paul says of Jesus in Colossians 2:15 "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it." The vision and picture that Paul paints of Jesus is anything but a peace-loving hippie. Jesus is a Man who has conquered not only the devil, but all principalities and powers and not only conquered them, but triumphed over them. You can almost replace that word "triumphed" with the words "leaping and skipping."

This Jesus that she has known mainly in the secret place is currently spinning the diamond on her and revealing a new facet to her, and it's blowing her mind. Gazelle's are known to move at speeds of 50 MPH for long periods of time and are to climb steep hillsides with grace and ease. The Holy Spirit is showing the young maturing bride that Jesus is all powerful and that nothing stands in His way. He is doing this because what He's about to ask her in the following verse is challenging and frightful. She will need this revelation of Jesus for the task that's at hand. The different Revelations and experiences we have in the grace of God are important to our history in Christ but also our present and our future.

The Call to Come Away Into Fruitful Partnership with Jesus (2:10-14)

It's here as she has heard His voice and seen Him in a new way that His voice comes to her again, but this time with a request. In **Song of Songs 2:10-14** He says to her "My Beloved spoke, and said to me, rise up My love, My fair one and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away. O My dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff let Me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely."

Though this voice is very disruptive to the young maturing bride, it's also coming across with ample love. Love first for her as His beloved, and then secondly as His partner in the Gospel. Before He asks her to get up and get moving with Him in the harvest He first defines her as His bride, His loving companion. Jesus isn't just looking for a workforce, but a faithful bride that works with Him because of love, not for love. On the other side of the coin, Jesus isn't just trying to raise up people who live in the secret place of encounter but also on the mountains of partnership with Him. He is working to break her from only being in the secret place and to come away with Him in ministry partnerships upon the mountains.

Jesus is mindful of His tender leadership over our lives through the many seasons that we go through. Just like our natural world has four main seasons every year, so also our spiritual lives have corresponding seasons. The spring season is a time when things are thawing out and getting ready to blossom in the midst of the summer sun. It's just this cycle that the Lord calls out to the bride and reminds her of His tender leadership over her in the past season. In **Song of Songs 2:11-13** He says to her "For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our lands. The fig tree puts forth her green figs and the vines with the tender grapes..." According to the Lord her winter season is behind her (which is a glorious thing). He is appealing to her as the One who has kept her safe through the past winter season of her life in Chapter One when she lost His presence due to being overworked and separated from Him in guilt and shame. He is the One who oversees our lives in the midst of trouble and blessing. The God of summer is also the God of winter. And His faithfulness in one season is a testimony to His faithfulness in the next season. If He kept me through the dark night of winter, then He will keep me through the bright day of summer.

Winter is a month where everything dies and dries up. Winter is a time when bitter winds tear the leaves from the trees and freeze the ground making it hard for plants and shrub life to survive. But the fig tree is a winter fruit that hangs on until spring time. It's a fruit that survives the winter of death and persists through the dark season. He is telling her "Beloved, I kept you through the dark seasons of your life, and the time of spring has come. I was faithful to you in the past and I will be faithful to you in the future. You can trust me. I kept you like the fig tree and now I need you to trust Me." In the natural we know that spring follows winter, but it's easy to forget that when applying it to our spiritual lives.

When we get into those winter seasons we feel as if they are never going to come to an end. Depression has settled over my life more times than I could count, when in the midst of those seasons. The Lord feels distant, things are dark and my progression in the Gospel seems limited. But it's in these seasons that God creates in us what's needed for us to encounter His beauty and partner with Him in the Gospel. Nobody else can build a personal history in God for you. It's something that you have to do on your own with God. We can listen to teaching about how to endure that winter season, read books, attend conferences and travel to Churches but at the end of the day I have to walk out in my own personal life what God has worked in. The winter seasons help me to build a personal history in God so that I have

confidence going into the subsequent following seasons. This is exactly what's happening in the life of the bride.

#### **Praying For Deliverance from Compromise (2:15-16)**

What God is asking of the bride is case and point to the evidence that His voice is often disruptive. For the bride it's disruptive because He is asking her to go somewhere she is fearful of going. She lost His presence once before due to being overworked within the Church and that fear is currently driving her ship behind the scenes. But because Jesus is relentless in the way that He chases us down, He's not going to allow the bride to maintain those fears about His leadership without challenging them, and that is what He's doing. The young bride is being forced to look at her fears and address them, and in His eyes He is hopeful that she will respond and overcome them, not be subjected to them. Jesus is really good at helping us overturn the rocks in our lives when we don't care to see what's underneath. Many commentators speculate over the situation of the bride and what's going on in her life. Some see a bride who is in sin, self-indulgent and rebellious, but I believe this is far from what's actually happening. It's my opinion from the overall storyline in the Song of Songs that the bride is fearful of losing what she has already lost and has now regained. It's not sin, it's fear that's going to cause her disobedience to His request.

His request of her causes her to see that she has a little area of fear in her life that's going to hold her back from following Him to the mountains. In **Song of Songs 2:15** she prays to Him and says <u>"Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes."</u> His challenge to her, to rise up and come away with Him, causes her to see that though her vines are tender and just starting to bud, she also sees little foxes that are loose within her vineyard that are working to destroy her budding crop from ever being full grown. These foxes and this specific small fox of fear is not only currently hindering her, but it's also going to hinder her ability to respond to His request to come.

She does two very powerful things when looking at the issue of areas of hindrance in her life. First she calls out to Jesus to catch the foxes. She has rightly seen that these areas in her life are beyond her fixing and taking control over one her own. Unfortunately we don't always respond like the maturing bride and ask for help. We often spend most of our time working to subdue the sin areas in our lives in our own strength and will power, and it's to no avail. We need Christ and His help to deliver us from sin and compromise. Secondly, she calls them small foxes. It's not like she was sticking a hypodermic needle in her arm and shooting people she was mad at with a gun. It's just fear. It's just a little bit of fear in her life. Many today in the Church would encourage her in such a way, saying that those fears are okay and they're normal and she shouldn't be worried about them. Something that I have witnessed many Christian's miss is the reality that it's the little sin areas that do the most damage. Just because it's small doesn't mean that it's not wreaking havoc in both her life and ours. This area of fear is going to lead her into disobedience in the following verse. So this fear that many Christians would encourage her to keep and not let go of, is the same fear that Jesus is working to address and deliver the bride from. It's not just an issue of fear that the Lord is addressing in the life of the bride; it is a fear connected to His safe leadership over her. Because He's a good Shepherd He hates us to allow lies about our security in Him to fill our hearts and minds. So He challenges those areas, those 'little' areas with His mercy and grace and He works to free us from them.

#### The Bride's Painful Compromise (2:17)

It's awesome that the bride is seeing these "little foxes" but unfortunately she is not going to be able to master this area in her life; instead she is going to be mastered by it. The passage reads in **Song of Songs 2:17** "Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bether (Separation)." The bride has come to the conclusion, that the mountains have activity going on in them that she doesn't know about, and that fear of the unknown is going to paralyze her from moving on with Him. She is not rebellious or indifferent towards the Lord but rather fearful. It's important for us to see the difference in the life of the bride. It's easy for us to call people who are sincere, "rebellious." We do great damage to their spirits when we miss-label them. Many people look at the bride in this very passage and see her rebellion and write her off. It's my understanding through the whole of the text that she is not rebellious, but scared and fearful of both what the mountains entail and the possibility of losing His presence again.

The statement "until the day breaks and the shadows flee away" means that she is going to stay in the chamber of encounter until all the little shadow areas of her life are worked out. Instead of working on her life as she is moving with the Lord, she felt it would be better to stay where she is and work on her private life before she goes into the public place. She is saying "until all these little foxes, these little shadow areas of my life are dealt with and I am more perfect before you, I am going to stay here." Just like the bride, often times our fear of going without something can be greater than the reality of going with it. She was fearful over something that she didn't need to be fearful over. He has been faithful to her in the past and this is her confidence that He will again be faithful to her in the future. But because her present fear was greater than her confidence in Him and His leadership over her, she told Him to go on without her and that she was going to stay where she was.

Something else that is important for us to understand through the life of this young maturing bride is that whatever God asks us to do; He also gives us the grace to do it. It doesn't matter what it is that He is asking us to do, if He's asking, He will give the grace needed to help us pull it off. The story of Peter getting out of the boat in **Matthew 14:28-30** and walking on water is exactly what I am talking about. Jesus asks Peter to get out of the boat, which means if Jesus is asking him, Jesus will also empower Peter to do what He has asked. The Bride doesn't realize that God will give her strength to do what He is asking of her. If God is calling her to come to the mountains of great difficulty He will also empower her to stand upon them and not be defeated.

The safest place to be with God is in 100% obedience. It's safer to be with God on the water then to be in the boat without Him. It's safer to be with God on mountains than to be in the chamber without Him. God calls us into risky places but He also equips us, protects us and empowers us with the proper grace to do what's been asked. Beloved, He remembers that we are but dust. As this chapter closes it's important that we look at our own lives and take inventory of the little foxes that would work to spoil our grapes before they bud and become full grown. It would pain me to see how many grapes I have lost over the years to the little foxes that I have allowed to run unchallenged in my vineyard. I need the Holy Spirit to help me and to deliver me from that which I can't free myself. Ask Him to search you and reveal anything in you that would hinder His activity and the high calling of God in your life. You were made to dwell in the place of encounter AND on the mountains with Him in the place of ministry. We move from encounter to ministry, from the monastic to missions, from intimacy to harvest. It's time to climb the mountains with God in full bridal partnership with Him.

# Chapter Eight Song of Songs 3:1-5

#### I) Introduction

- A) In week seven we looked at the "Divine Disruption" of God, as He came to her like a young stag or a Gazelle leaping and skipping upon the mountains (SOS 2:8-9,) and calling her to come away with Him (SOS 2:10-14). We looked at the bride's realization that she had some small foxes that were going to spoil her vineyard (SOS 2:15). Although she understood that she belonged to Jesus, she refused to go with Him to the mountains because of fear (SOS 2:16-17).
- B) Here in Session Eight we are going to look at the Divine correction of God in the life of the bride; the withdrawing of His manifest presence off her heart; her search for Him in love; and her obedience that leads to finding Him.

#### II) Divine Correction And The Withdrawal Of His Presence (3:1)

- A) Song of Songs 3:1 "By night on my bed I sought the one I love; I sought Him but I did not find Him."
- B) "...I sought Him but I did not find Him."
  - In SOS chapter two, Jesus had called the bride to the mountains with Him, but because of her fear, she said no and told Him to go onto the mountains of separation, or go on without her.
  - 2) It's clear from **SOS 3:1** that He has lifted His manifest presence off her heart. She is now on what she calls "her" bed and in her search for Him, she doesn't feel Him or find Him yet. He has moved on.
    - (i) Song of Songs 1:16 "Behold, You are handsome, my Beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also "our" bed is green..."
    - (ii) Song of Songs 3:1 "By night on "my" bed..."
  - 3) The bride has lost her intimacy with her Beloved because she has said no to His emphatic command to move from the place of intimacy in the chamber, and to the place of partnership in ministry with Him on the tops of the mountains.
  - 4) When she said no to Him in **SOS 2:17** she had no idea how much she would miss His presence when it lifted off her heart! She assumed things would stay the same.
  - 5) The bride is under the divine correction of God. She is not in a place of total obedience with Him because she just said no to His request of her. He called her to the mountains and she said no. She said "until the day breaks" or "until these shadow areas of my life are gone, I'm staying here."

- 6) Divine correction isn't the same thing as divine rejection. Just because God's correcting her, it doesn't mean that He has rejected her. This is often true with humans, but it's not true of God.
- 7) It's dangerous for us when we start relating to God in the same way that we relate to humans. God is totally other than.
  - (i) Hebrews 12:3-11 "...if you endure chastening God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father doesn't chasten?...Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness..."
    - (a) His correction of us is actually His acceptance of us. No correction, no acceptance.
- 8) The Lord has withdrawn His "manifest" (tangible, discernible and felt) presence from her heart because He has won her with that very presence.
  - (i) There is a difference between God's manifest presence and His omnipresence. His manifest presence is that presence we feel, and His omnipresence is the reality that He will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb 13:5; Matt. 28:20).
- 9) It's here that the bride realizes that it's not the chamber of encounter that she loved, but her Beloved.

### III) The Bride's Earnest Search For Her Beloved (3:2-4)

- A) Song of Songs 3:2-4 "I will rise now, I said, and go about the city; in the streets and in the squares I will seek the one I love. I sought Him, but I did not find Him. The watchmen who go about the city found me; I said, have you seen the One I love? Scarcely had I passed by them, when I found the One I love. I held Him and would not let Him go, until I had brought him to the house of my mother, and into the chamber of her who conceived me."
- B) Song of Songs 3:2-3 "I will rise now, I said, and go about the city; in the streets and in the squares I will seek the one I love. I sought Him, but I did not find Him. The watchmen who go about the city found me; I said, have you seen the One I love?
  - The bride is in a place of missing that manifest presence that she had come to love and it's
    that missing that's going to drive her from her bed and into the streets to look for Him
    whom she loves.
  - Because Jesus has given us a free will to love Him, He won't force us to follow Him. But He
    also knows how much we love His presence and He uses it as a motivator to get both her
    and us moving.
  - 3) Here are 4 things that I see as special in the Bride's seeking to obey God.

- (i) In her place of disobedience she's still seeking Him.
  - (a) She is pictured as being on "her" bed when He had called her to mountains. Even in her compromise and disobedience she doesn't give into guilt and shame and throw in the towel. She starts seeking God.
  - (b) **Song of Songs 3:1** <u>"By night..."</u> That word in the Hebrew is actually the word "nights."
- (ii) Though she is seeking, she's not finding Him.
  - (a) SOS 3:1-3 "...but I did not find Him...but I did not find Him..."
  - (b) There are times when we seek hard after God, but we don't find Him. We, just like the bride, must remember that all who search for God find God. All who knock, have the door opened (Matt 7:7-11).
- (iii) She passes others by in search for Him.
  - (a) **SOS 3:4** "Scarcely had I passed by them..."
  - (b) She asks the watchmen for help, but realizes that they can't seek God for her. She must do it on her own. The same thing is true for us. Nobody else can seek God for us; we must do it on our own in the midst of community.
  - (c) Galatians 6:7 <u>"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."</u>
- (iv) She eventually finds Him.
  - (a) SOS 3:4 "...Scarcely had I passed by them, when I found the One I love..."
  - (b) Often times when we don't feel His presence and we start seeking Him, but don't find anything we give up and throw in the towel. This wasn't true for the bride and it must not be true for us.
  - (c) All seeking of God ends up finding God, so we must never quit.
- 4) The bride's seeking isn't about finding the God of anointed ministry or the God of healing and prosperity; but for her it was the One whom she loved.
- 5) In **Song of Songs 3:1-4** she is seeking Him hard. 6 times she says <u>"...I sought Him...I sought Him...I sought Him...I sought Him...I found Him...I</u> Then she says another four times <u>"...the One I love...the One I love...the One I love...the One I love...the One I love...I love...the One I love...the One I love...the One I love...I love...I love...I love...I love...I love...II love...I love...II love...I </u>
- 6) She is searching hard and it's for the One she loves.
- C) Song of Songs 3:2 "I will rise now I said, and go about the city; in the streets and in the squares I will seek the One I love. I sought Him, but I did not find Him."

- 1) "Good resolution isn't a pillow to sleep on, but a horse which we should instantly mount."
- 2) Lots of people talk about going deep in God, and that's good, but there seems to be few that actually do it. Lots of people dream that one day they will be fully in love with Jesus, but for many that day never comes.
- 3) The only way that I can ensure that one day I am fully in love with Jesus, is to chase Him day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute and second by second. If I do that, I will be sure that eventually not only will I find Him, but my heart will become fully alive in Him.

#### IV) The Bride's Plea To The Daughters Of Jerusalem

- A) Song of Songs 3:5 "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.
  - The bride is speaking here to the daughters of Jerusalem (lukewarm believers), and charging them to make sure they are ready to be awakened in love; because of what it costs to please that love.
  - 2) Loving God wholeheartedly will cost you everything. To satisfy the love of an all consuming fire, will cause you to leave everything in fulfillment of that awakened hunger. Make sure you're ready, because you have no idea where your "yes" to Jesus will take you.
    - (i) Luke 14:25-33 "Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned to them and said...whoever does not bear "his" cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost whether he has enough to finish it...lest after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him..."

## **Chapter Eight Extra Reading**

As with any well written narrative, whether in the Bible, fictional, or factual from our life on earth, there is always great excitement and great disappointment. Some have called these exciting and disappointing experiences the valleys of hardship and the mountains of exceeding joy. This narrative reality we have defined is nothing different from that which is taking place in the life of the Shulamite and her Beloved. It's through many valleys and mountains that she will finally enter into the fullness of her destiny at the close of Chapter 8. The close of Song of Songs chapter 2, which I have covered in the previous chapter, ends with a separation (valley) between the Shulamite and her Beloved as she refuses to go with Him up into the mountains. But the experience of their separation (valley) isn't fully realized until the start of Song of Songs chapter 3, when she comes to understand that He really moved on. This is the topic of discussion for this chapter. As we look at Chapter 8, I am going to cover 3 things: the divine correction and withdrawal of His presence from her heart; the bride's earnest search for her Beloved; and the bride's plea to the daughters of Jerusalem. As I have already mentioned about valleys and mountains, this Chapter is a perfect mixture of these two realties, as she has lost His presence, she will also find Him within this very chapter.

#### Divine Correction and the Withdrawal of His Presence (Song of Songs 3:1)

It's here at the start of **Song of Songs chapter 3 and verse 1** that the bride is on her bed and missing the manifest presence of her Beloved. The verse reads like this; "By night on my bed I sought the one I love; I sought Him but I did not find Him." As I have already mentioned this is the verse that follows Song of Songs 2:17, where she refuses to respond to His call to arise from the chamber and start ascending the mountains with Him. In SOS 2:17 she tells Him, "No." And it's here in SOS 3:1 that we can see the effects of her unwise request for Him to move on without her because she was staying and not going with Him. It's clear from this verse that He has indeed moved on and she is no longer feeling His manifest presence. The bride is currently under the discipline of God for her lack of obedience to His voice. He has asked her to rise up and come away with Him (SOS 2:10-14).

When the bride, out of fear, responded to His request to come away with Him by saying no, she had no idea what the implications of His actually moving on would be. There are times in our lives when our fears, sins and lack of understanding actually enable us to answer in an unwise way to Him who knows all things. These subtle things in our lives cause us to back out of 100% obedience. But because the Lord is relentless in the personal development of His bride becoming fully mature, He disciplines us in order to empower us. The bride assumed that things would stay the same when she said *no*, but that was a false reality. Jesus is not nearly as concerned about our comfort as He is our holiness. This is why He often leads us in such a way that our lives become very uncomfortable for the purpose of bringing forth a mature lover that is holy even as He is holy.

Because of her lack of obedience to His request, He has withdrawn His manifest presence from her heart in a form of divine discipline. Although the bride doesn't realize right now that divine correction/discipline isn't the same thing as divine rejection, she will in due time. This is often a much different story when we are dealing with humans. When we are corrected by man, most of the time they are also rejecting us. This happens because although we are like God in some ways, we are totally other than Him in many other ways. He possesses the ability in His nature to correct us while not rejecting us. God is capable of being angry with humans, while deeply loving them at the very same time. Like I have already said, this isn't true for most humans. Many of you have felt the deep rejection from others while they were correcting/disciplining you. It's dangerous for us to relate to God in the

same way that we relate to humans. It doesn't matter how good or how bad your earthly father is, God is totally unlike them. The powerful truth about this reality is that it puts all of us on the same page when we come before God. Some fathers have done a better job displaying the love of the Father, but either way, all good fathers and all bad fathers fall terribly short of our Heavenly Father.

God's correction of us is actually His acceptance of us (Hebrews 12:3-11). That passage in Hebrews tells us that if we don't endure the chastening of the Lord, then God doesn't deal with us as sons. One translation uses the word "bastard." What's meant by that word is that, if we don't allow God to chasten us, then we aren't called the sons of God and we are children without a heavenly Father because everyone that God loves He corrects. The bride is in the place of divine correction here in SOS 3:1 it's not because He hates her and is excited about punishing her. He's doing this because He loves her and He wants her with Him where He is. She has rough edges in her heart that must be worked through, and this is exactly what He's doing.

It's critical for us to also understand that when God has removed His manifest presence from her heart, it's not the same thing as God leaving her in the permanent sense. There is a difference between God's manifest presence and His omnipotence. God's manifest presence is that discernible/felt presence of God upon our hearts that we feel when God comes near us. And His omnipresence is the reality that God will never leave us nor forsake us. As a fellow Christian I have lost the manifest presence of the Lord in my life many times, and it's in those times that I often feel as if God has permanently left me. This is a lie that both our unrenewed souls and the devil work to reinforce during these seasons when the Lord's manifest presence isn't near. We must fight to resist this lie because it erodes the reality of God's leadership over our lives. God has promised many times within His Word that He would never leave us nor forsake us and that means that He is with us always, even if we don't feel Him. So, even though the bride can't currently feel Him, as she did just a few verses ago, it doesn't mean that He has abandoned her. Remember, God has pledged Himself both to her and to us in such a way that He will wait always for us. These seasons of losing His manifest presence should force us to get up and start moving towards Him in a diligent search which is exactly what the Shulamite does.

#### The Bride's Earnest Search for Her Beloved (Song of Songs 3:2-4)

It's here on her bed, as she lost His manifest presence that she rises up and starts making forward progress to find Him. When she realizes that He has really moved on, it forces her to get up and start looking for Him. God has given you freewill and He refuses to violate it. The reason He doesn't violate our freewill is because He loves the sincerity of our devotion to Him when it's voluntary. God only extends an invitation to us and it's up to us if we respond to Him or not. But, God also knows how to get us moving without violating our freewill and He loves to do it. This is exactly what He is doing with her right now in **Song of Songs chapter 3.** You read in **Song of Songs 2:5** where the young maturing bride said that she was lovesick. Well this wasn't just a cute phrase that she uttered because she had nothing else to say. This was her true experience as He was touching her heart in a deep way. His great love for her had awakened deep passion in her for the enjoyment of His presence. So when she refuses to go with Him to the mountains, what does He do to get her to rise up off her bed and start moving towards Him? He removes His manifest presence from her heart.

In **Song of Songs 3:2-4** this is what she says and does, "I will rise now, I said and go about the city; in the streets and in the squares I will seek the one I love. I sought Him but I didn't find Him. The watchmen who go about the city found me; I said, have you seen the One I love? Scarcely had I passed by them, when I found the One I love. I held Him and wouldn't let Him go, until I had brought Him into the house of my

mother, and into the chamber of her who conceived me." The bride is in a place of missing that manifest presence that she had come to love and enjoy and it's this missing that's causing her to get up off her bed and go after Him. Sadly the case for many of us, when we are in the same place as the young maturing bride, instead of responding to the withdrawing of God's presence by getting up and searching Him out we rather stay in bed and move away from the Lord. Thank God this wasn't the story for the young bride, because it gives us hope in our time of discipline from the Lord that we shouldn't stay where we are in separation from Him, but we should get up, like her, and start searching.

When looking at these 3 verses (SOS 3:2-4) I see 4 powerful truths that about seeking God. Firstly, it's in her place of disobedience that she starts seeking for Him (SOS 3:1). It wasn't on her bed that He wanted her to be, but in the mountain. Because she said *no* to Him, she's now on her bed alone, without His presence. But this doesn't stop her from seeking. Even in the place of her compromise and disobedience she starts looking for Him. So often when we are in the same place as her, instead of rising up and searching for Him, we give in to shame and guilt and throw in the towel. Her story gives us great hope that we too, in our sin and disobedience to God, should get up, and start seeking. Secondly, though she is seeking Him, she doesn't find Him right away (SOS 3:1-3). There are times in our relationship with Jesus that though we have lost His manifest presence on our heart and we are seeking Him diligently, we don't find Him right away. This is her story. She's up off her bed and starting to look for Him. Even though she doesn't find Him, we can tell by her earnest seeking that she's not going to give up. She is embodying Matthew 7:7-8 which says "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds and to him who knocks it will be opened." She has taken to heart that He is good, He loves her, and He hasn't abandoned her forever. This resolve is going to empower to keep pressing on through negative results.

Thirdly, she passes others by in her search for Him **(SOS 3:4).** She reaches out to the watchmen who represent the Shepherds of her day or Pastors and leaders in the body of Christ for our day. She sees them in her searching and talks to them, asking if they had seen her Beloved. Her asking is showing her humility in searching for Him. She's not afraid to ask anyone for help, or for anyone to point her in the right direction. But she doesn't stop there with their response. She's not satisfied serving Him at a distance, she wants to see Him and be with Him. She rightly understands that nobody else can do her seeking for her. She must do it herself. And fourthly, she eventually finds Him **(SOS 3:4).** It's more common than not for us to give up in our searching for our Beloved, but not for the bride. She doesn't stop short of finding Him who her soul loves. She pressed past the many things that stood in her way, including her own disobedience, and others who couldn't help her find Him. All seeking of God will lead to finding God. This must be the posture of our hearts as we set out to find Him. Though He's not close, He's not far.

The bride's seeking of God isn't to find the Jesus of anointed ministry, or the Lord of healing and prosperity, but rather the One whom her soul loved. She was looking for the Lover of her soul, not the God who would do something for her. We love all facets of God whether it's the facet of His hand or the facet of His face, we love them all. But beyond everything else He does, we love God because of who He is not because of what He does. To have God is to have all things, but it's the kisses of His word that we love the most (SOS 1:2). In just 4 verses she says 4 times "...the One I love...the One I love...the

without God's face and His heart if they could continue receiving from His hand. Beloved, it's okay to receive from His hand. In fact we can't do what He has asked us to do without receiving from His hand, but better than His hand is His wide open and wonderful heart. His compassion for us, His tenderness towards us and His awesome glory that causes us to tremble are truly the best parts of the Godhead.

Someone once said "Good resolution isn't a pillow to sleep on; but a horse which we should instantly mount." Now that I have served in Church leadership for about 8 years in a fulltime capacity I have heard lots of people talk about one day having a deep life in God. But it seems that for many, if not most, that day never comes. It's a day that's always around the next corner, always around the next season of life or after another new year's resolution. Beloved, that quote is powerful and oh so true. Don't sleep on the pillow of resolution, but rather get out of bed, put on the whole armor of God and start searching for your Beloved. You will surely find Him if you only get up and start searching. But if you stay where you are, if you stay sitting in guilt, shame and condemnation you will never rise up to see Him again. That day of a deep life in God will never come. In fact the only way to ensure that one day I have a deep life in God, is to make a conscious decision second by second, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day and year by year. If I do that, it will ensure that one day my heart will be fully alive in Christ.

#### The Bride's Plea to the Daughters of Jerusalem (SOS 3:5)

Personally in this portion of the Song of Songs I love how God allows Himself to be found by the searching bride. In all reality, she isn't supposed to be in the streets and public squares or on her bed, but on the mountains. But God in His vast mercy knows that we can only endure so much separation from His manifest presence and He allows Himself to be found by her. Who really found whom? Did she find God, or did God allow Himself to be found (Let the reader decide). Either way, she is now reunited with Him at her mother's house (Church), and she is holding Him ever so tightly to make sure that she doesn't lose Him again. But again I ask who's holding who? It's here that the bride has a sober word to share with the daughters of Jerusalem. By way of reminder, the daughters of Jerusalem in the Song of Songs represent the lukewarm believers within the body of Christ who have said yes to Jesus, but haven't committed to love Him in the way that He has loved them. In Song of Songs 3:5 she calls out to them and says "I charge you daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases." There are several interpretations of this short phrase, and it's my belief that it's the Shulamite speaking to them. The bride is calling out to the daughters who are standing on the perimeter of loving God and watching her but not entering in themselves. She is in essence saying to them "make sure you are ready to respond to the love that He will awaken in you. This isn't a fire to play around with, because it will fully consume your life and cause you do many things to satisfy the love that He will awaken." It's here that the bride is starting to understand how much she loves Him and that she was willing to join herself fully to Him in order to experience Him in fullness.

Loving God wholeheartedly will cost you everything. When love from God is awakened internally, brace yourself, because it's going to be a wild ride. It will cause you to change your priorities, how you spend your money, how you treat others, what you love and what you hate, and where you aim your life for the future. It's not just one thing that the love of God will touch, but it will rather consume all things without burning it up. Jesus isn't like a fire, beloved; He's an all consuming fire. It would be better to have never awakened love, then to have awakened it and then to turn away from it, or refuse to satisfy it. If you awaken this love for God internally, be ready to satisfy it.

# **Chapter Nine Song of Songs 3:6-11**

#### I) Introduction

- A) In the last session we looked at the divine correction of God in the life of the bride as He withdrew His presence from her heart due to her disobedience to Him (SOS 2:17-3:1). We also looked at the bride's passionate seeking of the One whom her soul loved (SOS 3:2-3); their reunion together (SOS 3:4); and her strong commission to the daughters of Jerusalem to make sure they were ready to satisfy the love that He awakens within them (SOS 3:5).
- B) Here in Session Nine we are going to look at the ascension of Jesus from the wilderness; the protection of God in our lives through the activity of the Holy Spirit; Jesus' loving salvation; and the call from the Bride to the daughters to encounter the beauty of the Bridegroom God which is their inheritance.

#### II) The Ascension Of Jesus From The Wilderness In Power (3:6)

- A) Song of Songs 3:6 "Who is this coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchants' fragrant powders?"
- B) "Who is this coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke..."
  - 1) The young maturing bride is seeing King Solomon (Jesus) ascending up from the wilderness and coming towards her. It's not that He was still in the wilderness, but He is being pictured as coming out of the wilderness. He's ascending from.
  - 2) The wilderness can speak of several things such as Israel's long journey into the Promised Land, a season of intense testing or life in this fallen age. Its best seen here as overcoming life in this fallen age.
  - 3) She sees Jesus as the One who overcame death, hell and the grave and ascended victoriously. Jesus wasn't overcome in the wilderness of this fallen age; rather He overcame all things earthly and demonic.
  - 4) Who better to lead His people though this wilderness (life in this fallen age) than Him who overcame it Himself.
    - (i) John 16:33 "...In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world."
    - (ii) Hebrews 4:15-16 "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly..."

- C) "...perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchants fragrant powders?"
  - She smells the fragrance of Christ as He is coming for her and it's the smell of myrrh (death) and frankincense (Worship). Myrrh was a costly burial spice that was given prophetically to Jesus at His birth along with frankincense and gold (Matthew 1:11).
    - (i) John 19:39 "...Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds."
  - 2) Jesus is here answering her fears to go with Him, by showing Himself to her as the Safe Savior who gave up everything for her. He's the Merchant who gave up other pearls (Heaven), so that He could have the pearl of great price (you and I) (Matt.13:45-46).

#### III) The Protection Of God Through The Activity Of The Holy Spirit (3:7-8)

- A) Song of Songs 3:7-8 "Behold, it is Solomon's couch (palanquin), with sixty valiant men around it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being expert in war. Every man has his sword on his thigh because of fear in the night."
- B) <u>"Behold, it is Solomon's couch (palanquin), with sixty valiant men around it, of the valiant of Israel.</u>
  - 1) The bride sees (behold) that not only was Solomon (Jesus) coming for her, but he was bringing with Him a palanquin. A Palanquin is a chariot, and in the eastern world it was carried upon the shoulders of men so that the bride could sit alongside her companion while they traveled.
    - (i) The Bible doesn't picture us as standing with the Lamb, but rather being seated with Him (Eph. 2:6). This is the gospel chariot that He has sent for us.
  - 2) The wedding procession has come to transport the bride from her mother's house (Church) to the Palace (The heavenly city). He is ensuring her safety with Him.
  - 3) There are sixty valiant men around this chariot, and even more so they are the valiant of Israel. These aren't hirelings, or just valiant men, but they are the valiant of Israel.
  - 4) Often times when kings would use hired servants, they would turn on the king if they were paid more from someone else. These men are not only loyal to the King, but also loyal to the nation.
  - 5) This is symbolic of the ministry and activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Solomon could have sent 20 or even 30 men to protect her, but he sent 60. She was fearful of trusting Him fully, and He is answering her fear by letting her know how safe He is.
    - (i) John 10:28-29 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My, Father who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."

- (ii) Though our physical body isn't guaranteed total protection that which we have committed to God is safe until we arrive at the heavenly city. 400+ Christians die every day from persecution.
- C) They all hold swords, being expert in war. Every man has his sword on his thigh because of fear in the night."
  - 1) This is speaking to God's commitment to Shepherd us. He's not negligent in His leadership over us. He's vigilant, steadfast and thorough. The Book of Revelation is our great vindication.

#### IV) Jesus' Loving Plan Of Salvation (3:9-10)

- A) Song of Songs 3:9-10 "Of the wood of Lebanon Solomon the King made himself a palanquin; he made it's pillars of silver, it's support of gold, it's seat of purple, it's interior paved with love by( for) the daughters of Jerusalem."
- B) <u>"Of the wood of Lebanon Solomon the King made himself a palanguin..."</u>
  - 1) The bride has no ability to transport and or pay for the transportation of herself from her city to Solomon's Palace. So Solomon has sent a chariot that's lavish and totally protected to take her from where she is to be with him.
  - 2) This palanquin is speaking of the Cross that Jesus Himself fashioned that ensures our safe arrival into the eternal age. Beloved, the Cross wasn't accomplished by a distant God, but by a God who personally became involved in our redemption.
  - 3) Solomon had many wives that were only political arrangements and his hands would have had nothing to do with building their palanquin. But this young, weak, immature, struggling yet sincere peasant girl so captured his heart that he became personally involved in making her chariot (1st Kings 3:1).
  - 4) The Cross profited Jesus nothing. We are the sole beneficiaries of His agony and crucifixion. His reward is that we will be with Him forever, but the pain was for us.
  - 5) This is screaming of the great lengths that Jesus has made to have relationship with both her and us.
- C) <u>He made its pillars of silver, its support of gold, its seat of purple, its interior paved with love by</u> (for) the daughters of Jerusalem."
  - 1) The pillars being made of silver speak of redemption (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:18-19). The support of Gold speaks of the sure foundation built on Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:10-11). Its seat of purple speaks of the royalty that we have been invited to sit on (Eph. 2:4-6). And the interior paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem speaks to the motive behind all that God has done. He's done this because love compelled Him.

#### V) The Brides Call To The Daughters To Encounter The Bridegroom God (3:11)

- - 1) The bride is calling out to the daughters of Zion (Jerusalem) to move from a place of distance with the King to a place of intimacy. Zion is their prophetic name. It's what they were created to be.
  - 2) Because of what the bride has just witnessed it has caused her to rise up and challenge the others around her to not delay in pursuing the King. The beauty of this Safe Savior, touched her fear, and she tells them to gaze on Him also.
  - 3) The more we go the more we see. If we don't go, we don't see. And our current lack of going is directly connected to our lack of seeing.
- B) <u>See King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding.</u>

  The day of the gladness of his heart."
  - 1) All of the Christian life is headed to a wedding. Your destiny is to marry the Lamb forever (Rev. 19).
  - 2) In the Revelation John seen that there were many crowns that Jesus wore. But there is one crown that the Church (the mother) crowns Jesus with and it's the crown of voluntary love.
  - 3) Acts 9:1-6 Paul wasn't forced to serve Jesus, he chose to. He chose to crown Christ with his love. Before salvation we were crowning ourselves but after It's our great joy to give our love to Jesus.
  - 4) Jesus isn't excited about the food, the decorations, the music or the angels but His bride and her dress. It's you that He is excited about. His gladness is about you!

## **Chapter Nine Extra Reading**

In the previous chapter I mentioned the valley and mountain top experiences that we have in the Gospel. This chapter fits into the mountain top (exciting) category. The bride is on a progressive journey to encounter God and to grow into the full inheritance of being the bride whom Jesus has chosen. Though she lost his presence from the end of SOS 2 through the start of SOS 3, by the middle of SOS 3 she was reunited with Him. Here in this chapter she is about to experience a new facet of the man Christ Jesus. It's been helpful to me to think about Jesus as a Diamond with many facets. A Diamond when it is shaped comes out with many sides; to the casual onlooker those sides don't mean anything. But to the trained eye, those facets reveal something different about the same diamond. It's key that you see it's not a new diamond, just different facets of the same diamond. The same thing is true with Jesus. It's not that we are looking for a new Jesus, just different facets of the same Jesus. Here in Song of Songs 3:5-11 you will see Jesus' ascension from the wilderness; our protection in God through the activity of the Holy Spirit; Jesus' loving plan of salvation; and the bride's call to the daughters to encounter the Bridegroom God. It's true of the Holy Spirit that He loves to exalt Jesus in the human heart. He does so by continually spinning the diamond to reveal another facet that either we haven't yet seen, or haven't fully experienced. Just as in the rest of the chapter of the Song of Songs, there is a major revelation of Jesus Christ to be obtained.

#### The Ascension of Jesus from the Wilderness in Power (SOS 3:6)

The bride is now within her mother's house (Church) having been reunited with her Beloved (SOS 3:4). And it's here that she sees something that's most shocking. It's so shocking that it actually causes her to use strong punctuation to emphasize what she is looking at. In Song of Songs 3:6 this is what she has to say "who is this coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchants fragrant powders?" As she is in the house of her mother she sees a massive caravan of people and glory coming towards her little city, Shunem. We know from the following passage that this person she is seeing is Solomon. He is being pictured as coming out of the wilderness, not still in it or still struggling with it, but coming out of it. He is ascending from the wilderness and he's coming towards her.

The wilderness can speak of many things including Israel's long journey into the Promised Land, a season of intense testing or life in this fallen age. It's best if we see Solomon's (Jesus for our allegory) ascension from the wilderness as his ascension from life in this fallen age. When looking at life here on earth, it's truly a wilderness. Many Christians are duped into thinking that Christianity is all about enjoying the pleasures of life in this age, as opposed to becoming delivered from this age and attaching ourselves to the age to come. We call life here on earth a wilderness because of sickness, death, decay, depression, demonic activity and the darkness that settles over God's creation. It's not until Jesus returns for the second time that this desolate wilderness will once again become a garden, yea even a garden city. And it's from this wilderness that the weak struggling Shulamite sees Jesus ascending from it, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

When she looks on Jesus she sees Him walking and ascending <u>"in pillars of smoke"</u> and <u>"perfumed with myrrh and frankincense and all the merchants fragrant powders."</u> The pillar of fire speaks of the power of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament the Children of Israel were lead by a pillar of fire at night and a cloud by day **(Ex. 13:21).** And in **Luke 4** we see Jesus coming out of the 40-day in the wilderness fast

where He encountered satan "in the power of the Holy Spirit." Beloved, if Jesus needed the power of the Holy Spirit to ascend from the wilderness how much more so you and me? She then sees and smells that He is scented with myrrh and frankincense. Throughout the scriptures and specifically within this Song myrrh speaks of death, sacrifice and hardship while frankincense speaks of praise, worship and joy. The bride is seeing both the death and life that emanates from the resurrected Christ. It's important that we understand Jesus will forever bear the marks of the Cross even though He has conquered it and totally come through it. This is why John in Revelation 5 when He sees Jesus, sees a Lamb standing as though He had been slain. Jesus carries the dual nature of both humanity and divinity dwelling in perfect harmony.

It's here in the way that He is showing her how He ascended from the wilderness that He is actually addressing her fears about fully trusting Him. It wasn't rebellion that caused her to say *no* to Him in **SOS 2:17**, but fear. And it's here in **SOS 3:6** that He is starting to show her that He is totally safe, powerful and the One who overcame all things. Who better to lead His people than Him who overcame all things earthly and demonic? Jesus is the only One fit for the role of leading human history and He is showing her that He is safe. This strategy of the Lord is going to bear much fruit in her life and it actually sets forth a pattern for our lives. The pattern is that when we see Jesus has ascended the wilderness of this fallen age we become empowered with faith that we also can ascend, as well. Jesus' ascension gives us hope for our ascension.

#### The Protection of God through the Activity of the Holy Spirit (SOS 3:7-8)

As the bride is looking upon King Jesus as the ascending One, she also sees something else that's being carried by a rather large group of men coming toward her. In **Song of Songs 3:7-8** she describes what she sees. It's here that she says, "Behold, it is Solomon's couch (palanquin), with sixty valiant men around it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being expert in war. Every man has his sword on his thigh because of fear in the night." She not only sees Solomon (Jesus) coming towards her, but also Solomon's couch and it's being carried by 60 men. What these men were carrying is a couch or a chariot. This was the wedding chariot that was used to transport the king's bride from her city to the royal palace. This was a wonderful way to travel for a long period of time. But before we get into what this chariot represents and how it was made, I want to first look at these 60 men who are carrying this chariot. And we must not forget that this royal wedding procession is actually coming for the young, weak and maturing bride. It's for her that this procession has come.

She sees that there are 60 valiant men around it, but even more so than just valiant men, they are the valiant of Israel. The reason why the Holy Spirit has inspired these specific words is very important. Often times when a King would transport something from one place to another, he would use hirelings or hired servants. The only problem with these hirelings is that if they were offered a larger sum of money from someone else, they would betray the king and hand over the delivery because their loyalty wasn't to the king or the nation, but to the highest bidder. So when the Holy Spirit lets us know that these aren't just valiant men, but the valiant of Israel, He wants us to know that they would never hand over the delivery of the King, because more than money they are loyal to the nation. We here in America have something called the "Espionage Act." It has serious penalties when someone from our own country turns against us and tries to destroy us or sell our information to others. It's a most heinous crime when your own countrymen turn on their country and this is true here in America. They are also "holding their swords on their thighs because of the fire in the night."

The reason their swords are on their thighs is so that they can be ready at a moment's notice to strike and fight as the cover of night

falls. They aren't being pictured as sleeping or lazy, but diligent, ready and attentive to whatever might come their way.

The reason all of this symbolism is important for you and I to see is because though it's the story of the bride, it's also our story. Jesus wants to show the young, weak and maturing bride that she is totally safe with Him. If you remember, it wasn't rebellion that caused her to say *no* to Him, but fear. And what is He addressing with this royal procession coming to get her? Her safety. He demonstrates her safety through the activity of the Holy Spirit. A Person asked the preacher once, how safe are we? His response was "he sent His Son for you." This is as safe as it gets. Jesus left all things with His Father including His dignity as the Divine Son of God and took on flesh for the sake of redeeming lost, fallen, separated and hateful humans to Himself. Beloved, He is safe.

If we are not careful we can buy into the rhetoric that the Church preaches about the complete safety of our physical bodies in this age. This is not fully true. God does protect us and keep us from many things, but our safety is not primarily about our physical bodies, but our souls which we have committed to God. Our bodies may be killed in this age, but our souls are not only safe in this age, but also into the age to come. This is our great hope, not that our bodies will never decay, but that our souls, the part of us which we have committed to Him, He is able to keep. Not only keep, but keep in power with 60 of Israel's valiant (Holy Spirit) around it. God is making clear to both the bride and you, that He is safe and He is to be trusted. Every day over 400 people die as martyrs for the Gospel around the world. Surely righteous people die under the leadership of Jesus, just look at **Revelation 6:9-11.** 

#### Jesus' Loving Plan of Salvation (SOS 3:9-10)

As I said at the beginning of this chapter, the Holy Spirit loves to spin the diamond of Christ to reveal the different facets of His personhood. It's here that the bride first sees Him ascending from the wilderness; then, her safety through the power of the Holy Spirit; and now His loving plan of salvation for her. You were redeemed by a God who became *up close and personal* with His creation. It's here in these two verses that the Holy Spirit is going to show her this very reality. **Song of Songs 3:9-10** states "Of the wood of Lebanon Solomon the King made himself a palanquin; he made it's pillars of silver, it's support of gold, it's seat of purple, it's interior paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem." This couch or chariot that Solomon has sent is most wonderfully put together and constructed.

Such a beautiful truth being played out in real time as Jesus is coming for her. The bride has nothing for which to pay for her own transportation to the king's palace. She is fully dependent upon Him and His kingdom wealth to transport her. He is coming for her; she's not coming to Him. In our own nature, we resist God and fight against Him, but in His humility He has come once at the incarnation and through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit He continually comes to us providing our transportation from here to Him. It's through Him, by Him and for Him. Solomon has come to Shunem, or for our allegory, God in the person of Christ Jesus has come to you. He hasn't made you try to figure out how to reach Him on your own, but in your sin, in your trespasses He has come to you and made the way for you. This is His loving plan of salvation that He Himself has worked out for us, on our behalf, as our great Substitutionary Lamb.

When we look at the specific features of this Chariot that the King sent for the young maturing bride we gather much insight into the Cross of Jesus Christ. Remember what took place in the Old Testament, though it was real for them, it was only a shadow of things to come, the foretaste of that which would

come in fullness through Jesus Christ. It says "Of the wood of Lebanon Solomon the King made himself a palanquin..." Solomon was a man who ended up marrying not just one woman but many. In fact, many of his marriages were strictly political arrangements which created a truce or peace treaty for lands, tribes and areas (1st kings 3:1). For these marriages Solomon would have had nothing to do with the building of their Chariots, but this one is much different. For this one Solomon himself, the wealthiest and wisest king in human history became personally involved in the building of the Shulamite's chariot. This is speaking to the incarnation, or the fact that God couldn't redeem us from heaven, but He had to become personally involved in our redemption by becoming a Man and being crushed by the wrath of God, drinking that cup that the Father offered Him. This was stunning to the Shulamite and it's equally stunning to us. For eternity we will look upon Him who was pierced asking "Why?" When we see Him in His uncreated glory with a resurrected Body, we will marvel that He left His home and endured so much for people who hated Him. It will never make sense to us that He Himself made a Cross of wood and then climbed up on it for our redemption. Stunning!

She also sees that "it's support of gold, it's seat of purple, it's interior paved with love for the daughters <u>of Jerusalem."</u> Gold in the Bible usually always speaks of Divinity or God Himself. For instance when you walked through Moses' tabernacle there were different elements in the outer-court and the inner-court but once you got into the holy of holies or the place where God dwelt, everything was made of solid gold to represent God and His divinity. The support of our Chariot is made on the sure foundation of God Himself (1st Cor. 3). The seat was made with fabric that was the color of purple speaking of the royalty we possess in the grace of God. Prior to the Cross we were clothed in the filthy rags of our sin and humanity, but after and through the Cross we are now clothed in the royalty of Christ and His Kingdom, no longer citizens of life in this age, but now representatives of the age which is yet to come. This is the purple seat that God Himself has invited us to sit upon. We are seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). And lastly it was paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem. At the end of the day, though God has done much, said much, and given much, we must understand above all else that it's been done in the love of God. Because God loves so much, He gives so much. Our salvation and redemption hasn't been paid for by an angry, disappointed and distant God, but by a God who in extreme love paid our way. He has paved everything with love. He has paved it all in love, for us and by Him.

#### The Bride's Call to the Daughters to Encounter the Bridegroom God (3:11)

With all this revelation coming to the young, weak but maturing bride it causes much emotion to arise within her as she makes this passionate plea to the daughters of Jerusalem. Here in **Song of Songs 3:11** she says "Go forth, O daughters of Zion and see King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding. The day of the gladness of his heart." In our allegory the daughters of Jerusalem represent the lukewarm believers of their day. They are the ones who have said to God, that they love God but don't take the step to enter into the fullness of what's available to them. And it's here, as the bride is receiving the revelation of her safety in the Gospel, that she calls out to them to get off the sideline and stop standing idly by; to abandon themselves to Him in the way that He has given Himself to them. I love that the bride doesn't wait until she is fully mature to call others into the fullness of the Gospel. At this point the only thing that the bride has done is get up off her bed and search for Him whom she had just said no to a few verses ago. But as she sees her own safety, she challenges the others around her to enjoy their safety in the Gospel also.

The bride sets forth a powerful kingdom principle in this verse. Her challenge for the daughters "to go forth and see" is something we can learn much from. The idea is that the more you go the more you see. And the more you see the more you go. This is true in the natural and in the supernatural. When we travel further down the road in our natural lives, we see more. If what we see is awesome we're forced to travel more, so that we can fully see the object in view. The same thing is true in the Godhead. To see Jesus rightly is to love Jesus. The more closely we move to Jesus the more of Him we see. When we see more of Him, it forces us to go further. And since Jesus is a never-ending ocean of wisdom and revelation we can never fully exhaust Him. So, as much as we can see is as much we can obtain. In all reality, for those of you who struggle moving towards the Lord, it's not a problem of moving, it's a problem of sight. Because you're not seeing much you're not going much. Your movement forward in the Kingdom isn't a moving problem, it's a sight problem. Because if you saw more you would go more and in your going you would see more which would cause you to go more. Thus you're moving forward, but because you don't see anything, you aren't empowered to move forward. This is a simple, but deeply profound truth about seeking God and the way that Jesus has set up His kingdom.

It's from this place of movement that the bride is calling the daughters to see King Solomon (Jesus). She says to them "...King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding. The day of the gladness of his heart." In Revelation 19 Jesus is pictured as wearing many crowns. But I believe that there is one crown that Jesus longs to wear most, and it's the crown of voluntary love. See, Jesus doesn't force us to love Him; He only reveals Himself to us and gives us the opportunity to either choose Him or reject Him. But when we accept Him, we then take off that crown which we have previously been crowning ourselves and we place it on Him. It's the "crown with which his mother crowned Him." The mother represents the Church or that place from which all those that love Jesus have been born again. And it's the Church that crowns Jesus with our voluntary love. He can't demand that we give Him our crown, but He invites us to partner with Him and in that partnership we freely give up all things that we have.

And lastly, the bride says that "...on the day of his wedding. The day of the gladness of his heart." It's awesome that the bride calls out to the daughters of Jerusalem to enjoy the wedding of God, because that's what is happening with her at the current moment. The wedding chariot has come for her, and in its coming, she then turns and calls the daughters to encounter this same Man. The day of Jesus' wedding, when He will marry her to whom He has betrothed Himself from the Cross, is the day of the gladness of His heart. It's not that Jesus is excited about the angels who will attend the wedding. It's not the food that He is excited about and it's not the decorations or the temple décor that He's excited about. It's you who He's excited about. Your presence at the wedding is the gladness of His heart. He is longing for that day when His promise to marry you will have fully come to pass. He is longing to marry you forever and never be separated from His creation again. You are the gladness of His heart. What does this do to you internally? For me, it causes my heart to be undone and a little skeptical. If I'm being honest, it's hard to receive such a mind-blowing statement as gospel truth when I so often don't feel loveable at this level. But over time, as I continue to look at statements like this I start to agree with them in my heart and it's only a matter of time until I see it manifest itself in the way I live my life. I just agree with it and let Him rejoice over me. If this is what He says then let it be, in Jesus' name.

Beloved, don't shrink back from that which you were called into. To reject God's plan of salvation, His tenderness to us and His loving plan, is to hurt His heart. It's okay to struggle with understanding why and what He is doing, but don't let that struggle separate you from Him. Reach for Him in your struggle, look at the Word of God, and if it says what it says, just agree with it. This is your hope and your inheritance.

# Chapter Ten Song of Songs 4:1-6

#### I) Introduction

- A) In the Last Session we looked at Jesus' ascension from the wilderness in victory through the power of the Holy Spirit (3:6), and Jesus' safe protection of that which we commit to Him, again through the activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives (3:7-8). We also looked at Jesus' loving plan of salvation through the Gospel palanquin or the Cross that He Himself fashioned for us (3:9-10). And we closed with the bride's call to the daughters of Jerusalem to encounter the Bridegroom God on the day of His wedding (3:11).
- B) Here in Session Ten we are going to look first at the tender way in which Jesus first affirms her before He says anything about her (4:1a). Then we will look at the eight budding virtues that Jesus identifies living deep within the bride's heart (4:1-5). We are also going to see the bride say yes to Jesus and start her own personal ascension up the mountain to be with Him (4:6).

#### II) Jesus' Affirmation Of The Weak But Maturing Bride (4:1a)

- A) Song of Songs 4:1-5 "Behold, you are fair, My love! Behold, you are fair!
  - 1) If you remember in Song of Song 1:5 she expressed that she was dark but lovely. This would be the 7<sup>th</sup> time that He has called her fair. Being dark wasn't beautiful in ancient Israel. It meant that you worked outside for your living, unlike those who lived indoors and worked indoors. She sees herself as being dark, but He sees her as being fair.
  - 2) The word fair is translated as 'Beautiful.' Deep within every human we have an internal longing to be called beautiful by someone whose opinion matters and that we value.
  - 3) This is why it's so damaging for children growing up in a home where they are ridiculed by parents, called names and unprotected from cruel words of loved ones. Or husbands and wives who demean each other with hurtful words. Sometimes the damage done can last a lifetime.
  - 4) Jesus isn't defining her as beautiful from pity or from have to, but from a want to. He loves this weak, broken and struggling bride.
  - 5) Prior to Jesus saying anything to her either affirming or corrective, He first tells her, I love you, I like you and you look good to Me.

#### III) Jesus Identifies 8 Budding Virtues Within The Life Of The Weak Bride (4:1-5)

- A) Song of Songs 4:1b-5 "...have dove's eyes behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing, every one of which bears twins, and none is barren among them. Your lips are like a strand of scarlet, and your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like a piece of pomegranate. Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory, on which hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies."
- B) "...have dove's eyes behind your veil..."
  - 1) The bride is encountering the prophetic nature of Jesus much like Gideon did in **Judges**6:11-24 when Jesus said to Gideon "...the Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor...go in this might of yours...you shall save Israel...Oh Lord, how can I save Israel...?"
  - 2) The prophetic nature of Jesus speaks to us about what's alive internally, not only what we possess externally. Many who have much externally are considered broke before God (Rev. 3:14-22). And many have little externally are considered rich before God (Rev. 2:8-11). He defines us by what we're reaching for internally, not just what we possess externally.
- C) (1) "...have dove's eyes behind your veil..."
  - 1) Doves represent purity (Matt. 3:16). Doves only mate one time in their life and if their mate dies they will remain single. They also have no peripheral vision, so they don't look side to side, but rather straight ahead. Jesus was telling her that she has a single eye for Him and she's faithful.
- D) (2) "...Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead..."
  - In ancient Israel hair was a symbol of dedication and consecration to God. In Numbers 6
    Moses is instructed by God on what a Nazirite was to do during the time of his consecration
    to God and it included among other things, not cutting his hair.
  - 2) This illustration is clearly seen with the life of Samson in **Judges 13:5** where God instructs his mother not to allow anyone to cut his hair.
  - 3) Also on the side of Mount Gilead you were able to see the goats on the hillside feeding in plush areas, waiting to be broken and used for sacrifices in the temple.
- E) (3) "Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing, every one of which bears twins, and none is barren among them."
  - 1) God has made it clear in His word that there is an abundance of spiritual food to be consumed by those that love Him. So the question is not 'is' there food in His word, but are those that read it able to receive from it?

- 2) Teeth in the Bible speak of our ability to chew up the meat of God's word and not only drink from the milk (1<sup>st</sup> Cor.3:1-2; Heb 5:12-14). It's not only that she has a longing to eat from the deep things of God, but her eating is also producing life. Many people eat and listen to God's word but do nothing with it (James 1:22-25).
- F) (4)-(5) "Your lips are like a strand of scarlet...and your mouth is lovely."
  - 1) Her lips speak of her speech and it being seasoned with redemption. Rahab was saved, or redeemed when she hung the scarlet thread from her window (Josh. 2:21). Jesus was praising her because what she was reading was affecting her and changing her speech.
  - 2) Her mouth here speaks of the words she shares with Him in communion. She first asked for Him to kiss her with His words, but now He is praising her for her words of intimacy towards Him (1:2). We love His words, but beloved, He loves our words.
- G) (6) "...Your temples behind your veil are like a piece of pomegranate."
  - 1) The NLT translates the word temples to the word *cheeks*. A persons cheeks tell us about what's going on internally. You can see if a person is happy or sad based on their cheeks. And her cheeks are red like a pomegranate and full of life. She has a happy countenance, because of what's going on internally.
  - 2) She's still wearing a veil and this lets us know that He sees her inner life, not only her outer life. He's the **Hebrews 4:13** God that sees all things.
- H) **(7)** "Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory, on which hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men."
  - 1) The neck throughout the Bible and within this Song speaks of the will **(Ex. 32:9; Acts 7:51).** This is why God often called His people stiff-necked. It typically speaks of a resting will.
  - 2) Many times in battle when a king would conquer his enemy, he would put his foot on his neck forcing the defeated party to submit (Josh. 10:24-26).
  - 3) In her case, this is speaking about her broken will to serve Him. She's not being pictured as rebellious, or resisting Him. Bucklers were small shields that fastened to the armor made for close combat. Submission to God and others keeps us safe in battle (James. 4:7; Matt.5:5).
- I) **(8)** "Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies."
  - 1) Her breasts here are being spoken of as the double portion that she possesses in the grace of God. She possesses both the meat of His word and the milk of His word.
    - (i) 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:2 <u>"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word that you may grow</u> thereby..."
  - 2) The Church of the past and of the present has mostly possessed a single portion anointing.

3) We either have the meat of God's word or the milk of God's Word. God is praising her for her ability to feed the young ones as well as the old ones. She's passionate about going deep in God, but she's also passionate about taking that message to new believers and the lost.

#### IV) The Bride's Agreement To Go Her Way Up The Mountain (4:6)

- A) Song of Songs 4:6 "Until the day breaks and the shadow's flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense."
  - 1) This is the great transitional 'YES' of the young maturing bride. After hearing How Jesus feels about her and the reality that He sees beyond the external to what she's longing for internally, it causes her to rise up and answer him with a huge "yes, I will go with You."
  - 2) We must hear how Jesus feels about us in order to ascend the mountain.
    - (i) Song of Songs 2:17 "Until the day breaks and the shadow's flee away turn My beloved and be like a gazelle of a young stag upon the mountains of Bether (Separation)."
  - 3) She is saying the same phrase, but it means something totally different. Before she said to His call, "I'm staying here 'until' the shadow areas of my life are gone." But now she is saying "I will go with You to the mountains, and I will follow You until all the shadow areas of my life are gone. I won't sit and wait for them to be gone, I will follow and work them out as I go."
    - (i) Proverbs 4:18 <u>"But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter</u> unto the perfect day."
  - 4) She rightly perceives that it's a mountain of myrrh (trials, relational conflict) and a hill of frankincense (worship, prayer). A little bit of worship and prayer goes a long way.
  - 5) She is agreeing to go with Him 'until.' She wasn't committing for the one month plan, but 'until.'
  - 6) There is a tailor-made destiny by God for you. Some parts of your destiny are universal, but much of it is unique, special and made specifically for you.
  - 7) Luke 9:23 "...let him take up his cross daily and follow Me..."

## **Chapter Ten Extra Reading**

In the storyline of the bride, here in **Song of Songs 4:1-6** she is at a really good place in the grace of God. Leading up to this point in the story of God that He is writing with her life, the bride encountered the tender presence of God, she had lost His presence and was reunited with Him in Chapter one. In Chapter two she was enjoying His presence until He came to her in the secret place, calling her out and up to the mountains with Him in the place of ministry. This is the place to which she refused to go, when she decided to stay in the secret place. Chapter three had her on her bed, separated from her Beloved, because of her disobedience to ascend up the mountain where He was calling her. But half way through, after seeking for Him, she found Him and they were reunited once again. Then in the middle of Chapter three, she received another mind-blowing revelation as she saw her Beloved having ascended from the wilderness, fully able to protect that which she had committed to Him and His loving plan of salvation that He has made for her. This revelation empowered and strengthened her to call out to those lukewarm believers around her, who were serving Jesus at a distance, to close the gap with the present reach of intimacy. It's here, in her present condition, that the bride experience's yet another stunning series of revelations about His love for her.

Chapter four starts with the weak, struggling, yet maturing bride having done nothing more than get up off her bed and start searching for the One that she recently said *no* to. And it's here in this current state of struggling, yet reaching, that Jesus is going to share secret information about what she is internally longing for. In this chapter I will cover Jesus' affirmation of the bride in her current condition, eight budding virtues that she is reaching for internally, but doesn't possess externally, and her agreement to go her way and start the ascension up the mountain of God. Song of Songs chapter 4 is such a dramatic portion of the Song as it sets the stage for expedited growth in the bride's journey of maturity in Christ. Buckle up, because what He has to say about her in her current condition of weakness and personal struggle is not what I expect Jesus to tell me when I'm stumbling.

#### Jesus' Affirmation of the Weak but Maturing Bride (SOS 4:1a)

In **Song of Songs 1:5**, the bride said that <u>"she was dark but lovely."</u> Being dark in ancient Israel wasn't something beautiful like it is considered today. Being dark on the outside meant that you worked outdoors for a living and were among the "blue collar" workers of the day. The opposite of being dark would be to be "fair" which meant that you worked and lived your life indoors, in the palace or somewhere of affluence. But here in **Song of Songs 4:1a** Jesus says to her <u>"behold, you are fair, my love!"</u> <u>Behold, you are fair."</u> That word that He uses there is a word that's translated into the word "beautiful." Jesus was speaking to her and telling her something about herself that she didn't personally see. This is the truth in our relationship with Jesus; we are in constant need of Him telling us things about our lives that we ourselves don't know. Although she considered herself to be dark, He considered her to be fair. This would be the 7<sup>th</sup> time He has called her "fair" in the past three chapters.

Jesus is about to blow her mind with His deep prophetic insight about what she is currently longing for internally, but prior to Him saying anything to her, He first says "you are beautiful...you're the one I love...did I already tell you you're beautiful, because if I haven't yet, I will say it again, you are beautiful to Me." All of us as humans have a deep longing to be called beautiful by someone whose opinion matters and we value. A total stranger could say that you are beautiful, but it doesn't mean nearly as much as when your parents, or your loved one, or a close friend says it about you. Many children that

are now adults have been deeply wounded and damaged by words that were said to them from their parents. As children we so value our parents or those raising us, that hearing negative words from them about us does more damage than we could ever know. Before Jesus shares anything with the young bride, He first tells her what He thinks about her and how He feels towards her. This is a fascinating study to follow throughout the **Song of Songs** as He does it every single time. It doesn't matter if it's an affirming word, a challenging word or a corrective word, He first tells her what He thinks about her and how He feels towards her.

#### Jesus Identifies Eight Budding Virtues within the Life of the Weak Bride (SOS 4:1-5)

After Jesus first tells her how He sees her and what He feels about her, He then goes into a stunning description of what she is internally longing for and begins to touch her heart in a way that nobody else can. Jesus is a Prophet which means that He knows all things about us. In **Revelation 2:23** He comes to the Church of Thyatira as "...the One who searches the minds and hearts..." Jesus is going to start talking to her about what she is reaching for internally even though she hasn't possessed any of it externally. At the close of **Song of Songs 4:5**, you will see the powerful impact that His recognition of her internal longing has on the weak, but reaching, bride.

Jesus is addressing her here in these five verses much in the same way that He visited Gideon in Judges 6:11-24. In this passage of scripture Gideon is hiding out from the Midianites, threshing wheat down in a hole so that he isn't seen by the enemy. It's here, in this hole, that Jesus visits Gideon as the "Angel of the Lord." As soon as Jesus stands before Gideon He says to him "the Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor...go in this might of yours...you shall save Israel..." This phrase really throws ole Gideon off because he's not feeling all that valiant or like someone who is going to deliver the children of Israel. Gideon responds to Him by saying "Oh Lord, how can I save Israel." Gideon continues in this chapter by stating all the reasons why he isn't the one to be used as a deliver. Gideon's problem is much like both our problem and the brides problem, what we possess externally isn't anything great. But thanks be to God that He doesn't look at us and address us only by what we possess externally, but what we are longing for internally. God knows that deep down within Gideon's heart he longs to be courageous, filled with passion, and used by the God of heaven and earth. And because God knows this (remember He's a Prophet) He comes to us and calls out what we're reaching for internally, and in due time it manifests itself externally. He is calling out what Gideon is longing for internally, even though Gideon is far from possessing it externally, because Jesus knows that the external possession will be the fruit of his internal longing. This is exactly how Jesus is approaching the bride in this passage of the Song.

In **Song of Songs 4:1b-5**, Jesus starting identifying these eight budding virtues that He sees within the life of the young struggling, but reaching bride. Firstly, Jesus says to her "...you have dove's eyes behind your veil." Doves represent purity in the Bible and that's seen specifically with Jesus' baptism as He came up from the Jordan River in **Matthew 3:16**. In the natural world doves have some special qualities that help us also understand this metaphor that Jesus is currently using. Doves have no peripheral vision so they have to turn their entire neck to see from side to side. They also will only mate one time and if their mate dies with will remain single until death. For our allegory it's clear to see the three main things that Jesus was saying to her; you possess an internal cry for purity, you have a single eye for Me and you are faithful to Me. Wow. What powerful truths about a young, weak bride who has recently disobeyed Him.

Secondly Jesus says to her in **Songs of Songs 4:1c** <u>"Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead."</u> In ancient Israel for the Nazirite's long hair was a symbol of dedication and consecration

to God. In Numbers 6, Moses was instructed by God to make something called a Nazirite vow which they would take as a season of consecration and in it they were required to not cut their hair. This is best seen in the life of Sampson which you can read about in Judges 13:5. And on the side of Mount Gilead you were able to see the goats on the hillside feeding in plush areas, and awaiting to be broken and used for the temple sacrifices. God is clearly praising her for her internal longing to fully belong to Him. Thirdly, He says to her in **Song of Songs 4:2** "Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing, every one of which bears twins, and none is barren among them." This may seem like a funny way to compliment someone, but once we look through clear Bible interpretation we will see how powerful this word of affirmation is. The Bible most often uses teeth in reference to one's ability to chew up the Word of God (Bible). The question isn't "is there meat in the word of God?" But rather "have you developed teeth to receive from it?" There is ample meat within the Bible but due to most people's lack of spiritual exercise they haven't developed teeth and therefore they don't receive much from the Bible (1st Cor. 3:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14). Jesus is praising her for her ability to not only chew up the Word of God but she is also putting it into practice and it is producing life within her. Many also read the Bible and hear sermons preached, but because they fail to personally apply it to their lives, it doesn't produce any life within them. Her teeth are internally developing and He not only sees it, but He also praises her for it.

It's important as we continue to look at these eight budding virtues within the life of the young bride that we keep in mind all of these are just budding virtues. They aren't full grown grapes, but rather, as she said in **Song of Songs 2:15**, "there tender, budding and growing grapes." We must keep in context where the bride is at, because if we lose track of that, we miss out on the reality that God is talking to her in a place of weakness, not in a place of strength. Beloved, God has much to say about you in your darkest moments, not mainly when the sun is shining in your summer seasons. It's His words of affirmation in her dark spot that's going to cause passion and resolve to arise within her and empower to move on with Him. He surely knows what He is doing!

Okay, back to the budding virtues. Fourth and fifthly He says to her in **Song of Songs 4:3a-b**, "your lips are like a strand of scarlet...and your mouth is lovely."

When He makes the statement about her lips being like a strand of scarlet, it is a reference to the words of redemption that are flowing from her lips. In **Joshua 2:21**, we see the story of how Rahab the harlot was kept alive because of the strand of scarlet that she hung from her window. This was a type of Christ's blood (Scarlet) which was a shadow of that which was yet to come. We are redeemed by the blood of Jesus and the bride's words, because of what she is reading and reaching for internally, she is speaking words of redemption. Her mouth on the other hand speaks of the words that she is sharing with Him in their communion. In **Song of Songs 1:2**, she asked for "the kisses of His Word" and it's here that He is now telling her that He enjoys the words from her mouth that she speaks to Him. Though she first asked for the kisses of His word and said that His love is better than wine (**SOS 1:2**) later on in the Song, and even more than right here in **Song of Songs 4:3**, He is going to turn and tell her what she originally told Him. Moving through the Song of Songs is such a powerful journey of maturity in Christ.

Sixthly here in **Song of Songs 4:3b** He says to her <u>"your temples behind your veil are like a piece of pomegranate."</u> That word "Temples" is translated much better in the NLT and various other translations as the word "Cheeks." If you think for a moment about another person's facial cheeks you can tell so much about what they are feeling. You can tell if that person is happy or mad based on what's taking place with their cheeks. Her cheeks were starting show the internal life of the Holy Spirit through her. He uses a pomegranate as the illustration for two reasons. First, because pomegranates are bright red and

secondly because they are one of the only fruits that you can eat the seeds. Deep within her, through the life of God inside she is producing much joy on her face, it's showing externally what God is doing internally. Oh the joys of growing in the grace of God. Seventhly He says to her in Song of Songs 4:4, your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory, on which hang a thousand bucklers, all shields" <u>of might men.</u> The neck throughout the Bible speaks of our will in both a positive and negative way. God often referred to His people as being "stiff-necked" (Exodus 32:9; Acts 7:51). They were stiff-necked because they would fight against Him, resist Him and refuse to go with Him. The neck speaks of submission both to God and to others. The way we posture our neck is speaking of how we are going to follow those that God has set over us and even more so, how we are following God Himself. Many people I meet have serious rope burn around their necks because of how hard they fight and go against the grain of where God wants to lead them. The tower of David was a large tower set up to see if an enemy was coming, and because it stood tall they could see into the far distance, helping them better prepare for the battle that was coming. God is able to use us in a much greater degree when our necks are in agreement with His leadership over us. We become strong warriors who are able to endure much difficulty and hardship as good soldiers of the cross. This was speaking to her internal longing to fully follow Him wherever He lead her.

And lastly He says to her in **Song of Songs 4:5**, "Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle," which feed among the lilies." For us men this is a hard one to swallow because we can't relate with the historical terminology that God the Holy Spirit was using to describe what was going on within the life of the bride. But once again, basic Bible interpretation helps us understand that her breasts are speaking about her ability to feed others, much like they do in the life of a new mom with her child. 1st Peter 2:2 says "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby." Although the commentators have a few different thoughts about what's being said here, I think it's safe to see this in our allegory as the double portion of God. Frank Damazio in his series "Receiving the Mantel of God" speaks about the double portion ministry throughout Church history. What he says is that we have usually only seen a ministry possess a single portion. Meaning that they are either deep in God's word, or they are powerful in the Spirit. But rarely have we seen the solid Bible teaching group simultaneously possess a grace to move in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Church is in need of ministries that possess both a depth in the sure Word of God, while moving in the power of the Holy Spirit. And I believe that's what's going on in the life of the bride through this metaphor. She possess both the milk of the word to feed those who are far from God and the new ones, but she also possess the meat of His word and is able to feed the mature ones also. It's not a milk or meat ministry, but a milk and meat ministry that God is looking for.

Jesus has just broken in and shared things deep within the internal life of the young, struggling, yet reaching bride that just caused her head to spin. I so love the prophetic nature of God and the prophetic ministry of the Church. Good, healthy prophetic ministry in the New Testament Church era is a prophetic that's not so much directional as it is conformational. If you have ever been underneath a healthy prophetic ministry, then you have felt your heart leap when the prophecy over you speaks beyond your external circumstances and touches the deep places of your heart that you have no words for. In my personal opinion, having experienced healthy prophetic ministry, this is exactly what's happening in the life of the young maturing bride. The reason I am so confident to say this, is because of what we see her do in the following verse. These words in **Song of Songs 4:1-5** have set off something so powerful within the young bride that it's actually going to cause her to abandon all things to Him who knows her better than she knows herself. Okay, let's look at **Song of Songs 4:6**, before I get ahead of myself.

#### The Bride's Agreement to Go Her Way up the Mountain (SOS 4:6)

I must say, that this verse is one (among many) of my favorite verses within the entire Song of Songs. What happens here is so powerful and life changing, not only for the bride, but also for you if you also follow this same pattern into the destiny of God for your own life. Here, in Song of Songs 4:6, after hearing these previous five verses and eight internal budding virtues that were emerging within here she says this to Him "Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way up the mountain of Myrrh and to the hill of frankincense." Now if you'll remember, this is the second time she has said nearly these exact words. In **Song of Songs 2:17** she said "Until the day breaks and the shadows flee" away, turn my Beloved and be like a gazelle or a young stand upon the mountains of Bether (Separation). In Song of Songs 2:17, she was answering His emphatic request to come away with Him up to the mountains when she told Him no. She basically said, "Until all these shadow areas of my life are worked through and the light of day comes to me, I am going to stay here, in the secret place. But You my Beloved, turn and go do what you must without me, in the mountains of separation." Now coming back to Song of Songs 4:6, though it sounds like the same statement as Song of Songs 2:17 it's totally different. In fact it's a complete 180 degree turn from Song of Songs 2:17. What she is saying here in Song of Songs 4:6 is "I won't stay here and be separated from You again. I am going to get up and start ascending the mountain to be with You where You are. I'm not going to ascend for only a little while, but I am going to climb until all these shadow areas of my life are worked through and the light of day comes to me. I am going my way up the mountain." This is the introductory turn that the bride makes to ensure that come chapter eight her heart will be fully engaged with her Beloved and they will be in full bridal partnership.

As we have covered already through this Song of Songs series, Myrrh speaks of death or difficulty or that which is challenging, and frankincense speaks of that which is lovely, praiseworthy or full or worship (Jn. 19:38-39; Rev. 5:8). The mountain that she is finally agreeing to start ascending is a mountain of difficulty (Myrrh). The reason it's called a mountain, as opposed to the hill of frankincense, is because it's larger, more challenging and filled with lots of difficulty. The mountain that God calls you to ascend is not small thing. It's a time where we lose the comfort of our secret place and the things that we have come to know. It's the place of serving others, where we encounter those who are happy with us and those who are downright angry with us, as we work to Shepherd them in the same way that Jesus is shepherding us. It's the glass house idea where the eyes of many are turned from themselves and placed on you. It's difficult and perplexing. But what's so amazing about this mountain is that although it's challenging and rugged, when we worship just a little bit, or go up the hill of frankincense we are empowered to endure anything that would come our way. Mike Bickle often says "If I could see what Paul saw, I could endure what Paul endured." He is right. Because Paul saw the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ in his spiritual encounters, he was well equipped to endure such hostility. Beloved, just a glimpse of Jesus will empower you to ascend an entire mountain of difficulty.

The other thing I find interesting about this mountain and the hill is that we often choose one or the other. We either choose to be with that group of people who learn to love relational conflict, difficult decision making and high <u>caliber</u> leadership situations which are all things involved with ascending the mountain of Myrrh. But so often this group who loves the difficultly of the mountain doesn't invest much time into the hill of frankincense by going deep into the place of prayer, worship, Bible study and the other spiritual disciplines. And the like can also be said. The group who embrace the hill of frankincense can often be a people who don't know how to handle relationships or possess any people/leadership skills to advance the ministry in a healthy fashion. What we need are people who see

the importance of first clinging to the hill of frankincense or putting the first commandment into first place, as we like to say, and then also work to start ascending up the mountain Myrrh which is done through leadership, working through relational conflict, or putting the second commandment into second place. We must do both. We must ascend the mountain and the hill, not separately, but at the same time. Loving God and loving people as we move forward under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Again, it's obvious that what Jesus said to her in **Song of Songs 4:1-5** had such a dramatic impact upon the life of the bride that it caused her to rise up and say "I'll go with You...I'm saying yes to You...I know that there is great difficulty ahead, but I am going both my way and with You up hard places!" Beloved, just like the young maturing bride, there is a tailor-made plan for you, a way that God has specifically created for you. Though this path has hardship, it's only for a moment and then for all of eternity we will enter into the rest of faith and reap the reward of following Jesus in faith here in this present evil age. You must hear what Jesus feels about you and then know that He sees what you're reaching for internally. If you hear how He feels and know that He sees what you're reaching for internally, it will empower you to follow wherever He goes. Don't shrink back from following Him up the mountain of Myrrh because it's filled with difficulty. Send forth a little worship and some prayer on the hill of frankincense and you will be startled how far it will send you up the mountain. He is waiting for you to engage Him, don't delay!

# **Chapter Eleven Song of Songs 4:7-16**

#### I) Introduction

- A) In the previous session we looked at the tender way in which Jesus first called the weak and struggling bride beautiful prior to calling out what was alive within her (4:1a). Then we talked about the prophetic nature of Christ as He calls out the 8 budding virtues that she was internally reaching for (4:1b-5). We closed by looking at the bride's agreement to ascend up the mountain of Myrrh by going her way in Christ (4:6).
- B) In this session, Session Eleven we are going to look at Jesus' tender words of affirmation for the bride (4:7), and His invitation for her to be with Him where He is (4:8). We're also going to see the ravished heart of the Bridegroom God concerning the weak, yet real love of the bride (4:9-11); the bride's extravagant devotion to God (4:12-15); and the bride's cry to fully belong to Jesus (4:16).

#### II) Jesus' Tender Words Of Affirmation Over The Bride (SOS 4:7)

- A) Song of Songs 4:7 "You are all fair, my love, and there is no spot in you."
  - 1) This is the first thing Jesus says in response to the bride's agreement to start ascending the mountain of Myrrh. He declares her to be "all-together fair" or "beautiful" and without spot. Remember, the bride hasn't done anything yet, she's only agreed to go up the mountain.
  - 2) Jesus has a flood of information about the bride and how He feels about her behind this quick phrase. He is following His pattern to first tell her how He feels about her and what He thinks about her prior to sharing anything else.
  - 3) Beloved, most Christians understand that when we're with Christ in the age to come we will be beautiful, but what about today? What about right now while we're struggling with life in this fallen age, yet still reaching for Christ? Don't wait until death to be spotless before Christ, enjoy it today, right now!
    - (i) Prior to Jesus' second coming there will be a people set apart, holy and without spot, enjoying clean fellowship with Christ in this age (Eph 5:27).

#### III) Jesus' invitation For The Bride To Come Away With Him (SOS 4:8)

- A) Song of Songs 4:8 "Come with Me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and from Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of leopards."
  - In response to the bride's agreement to ascend up the mountain, He invites her again to come away with Him and then goes into a description of what these mountains entail.
     Remember that these are the mountains of Myrrh (hardship, difficulty and challenges).

- 2) Many of us spend the majority of our Christianity wondering if God wants us near Him. We know that God is love, so He must love us, but what about right now. Beloved, He longs, and has extended an eternal invitation for you to be with Him, right now. He has called you to COME!
  - (i) Revelation 4:1 "After these things I looked and behold, a door standing open in heaven.

    And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying COME up here, and I will show you thing which must take place after this."
  - (ii) Matthew 11:27-28 "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son WILLS to reveal Him. COME to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest..."
- 3) This is also the first time that He refers to her as His spouse within the Song, which will continue now throughout the rest of the Song.
- 4) There are three different mountain tops that Jesus calls her into here;
  - (i) <u>Look from Amana</u>=It's the word confirmation, or amen, so be it. From this mountain we see the all inclusive Christ. Him who conquered all things (Revelation 1:12-18)
  - (ii) <u>From the top of Senir</u>=This is the word summit, or peak. It speaks of our elevated place in Christ in our Spiritual warfare. When we're up higher, we see clearer (Eph. 6:10-18).
  - (iii) <u>From Hermon</u>=This is the word destruction, appointed for destruction or something accursed. It's speaking of the Crucified Christ and our marriage with Him. When we are joined with Christ through His cross we see that the lower parts of the earth belong to Him (Rev. 11:15).
- 5) The reason He first calls her to look from these mountain tops, prior to telling her about the wild animals, is so her perspective of Him and His authority is in correct view.
- B) "...from the lions' dens, from the mountains of leopards."
  - 1) James tells us that our enemy the devil walks about like a roaring lion (1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 5:8); and when John sees the Anti-Christ he sees <u>A BEAST</u> that's like a leopard, a bear and a lion (Rev. 13:2).

#### IV) The Ravished Heart Of The Bridegroom God (SOS 4:9-11)

A) Song of Songs 4:9-11 "You have ravished My heart, My sister My spouse; You have ravished My heart. With one look from your eyes, with one link from your necklace. How fair is your love, My sister, My spouse! How much better than wine is your love, and the scent of your perfumes than all spices! Your lips, O my spouse, drip as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue; and the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

- 1) This is one of the most stunning verses in the entire Bible. Here we get a glimpse into what the uncreated God feels when we say yes to Him and trust His leadership over our lives.
- 2) The great Bridegroom God is ravished over our weak yes! Ravished means to be undone, totally overcome with emotion or held spellbound. Did you know that your yes to Jesus holds Him spell bound?
- 3) It's not her ministry that ravished Him, or her bank account, or her mailing list; but her alone. Her weak yes totally ravished the heart of the uncreated God.

#### B) "...My sister My spouse..."

- 1) He is telling her that He knows her in the way that a brother knows a sister in all the good and in all the bad. And knowing everything, He has still chosen her to be His eternal spouse.
  - (i) Hebrews 2:11-12 "For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."
- 2) Beloved, He knew what He was getting into when He called your name.
- C) "...With one look from your eyes, with one link from your necklace..."
  - 1) The heart of God is ravished with just one look (glance) from the weak bride, and with just one link from her necklace.
    - (i) **Eyes=**Prayer, trusting Him and looking unto God (**Hebrews 12:2**).
    - (ii) One link from her necklace=This speaks of the works of redemption that she is doing in the King's name. Just one of them ravishes His heart (SOS 1:10; Matt. 10:42).
- D) "... Your lips, O my spouse, drip as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue..."
  - 1) Honeycomb isn't something that's easily gathered, but collected over time. He is praising her for the reservoir that's within her. What's within is coming out slowly. God is raising up a people who are swift like the rapids, but also deep like the slow moving waters.
- E) "...honey and milk are under your tongue..."
  - 1) Again, He is praising her for what's deep within her and how it's not a babbling brook. Honey represents depth or weight; and milk represents introductory truths (James 3:7-8).

#### V) The Bride's Extravagant And Fruitful Devotion To God (SOS 4:12-15)

A) Song of Songs 4:12-15 "A garden enclosed is My sister, My spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard, spikenard and saffron, Calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, Myrrh and aloes, with all chief spices—A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and streams from

#### Lebanon."

- B) "A garden enclosed is My sister, My spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed...
  - 1) Jesus has three things to say about her devotion to Him and Him alone;
    - (i) <u>A garden enclosed</u> = In ancient times and even in modern times, Kings' had gardens that were meticulously maintained by experts. These gardens weren't for the public, but for the King and anyone he wanted to share it with. He is telling her that she has kept the garden of her heart enclosed for Him and Him alone.
    - (ii) <u>A spring shut up</u>=The water within her garden was shut up for Him and Him alone. It wasn't spilling out into the streets and all over, but rather it was for Him and Him alone.
    - (iii) <u>A fountain sealed</u>=Fountains were often used for bathing and washing animals in, but not this one. Her water had been kept free from the debris of life in this age. Her water wasn't mixed with other things, but it was clean and for Him. He is praising her diligence in maintaining the garden of her heart!
      - (a) Proverbs 5:15-18 "Drink water from your own cistern and running water from your own well. Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the street? Let them be only your own, and not for strangers. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth..."

#### VI) The Bride's Cry To Fully Belong To Jesus (SOS 4:16)

- A) Song of Songs 4:16 <u>"Awake, O north wind, and come, O south! Blow upon my garden that its spices may flow out. Let my Beloved come to His garden, and eat its pleasant fruits."</u>
  - 1) After the bride sees her: safety in the Gospel (3:6-10); the way He sees her and feels about her in her weakness (4:1a); the reality that He has seen eight budding virtues deep within her (4:1b-5); that her weak yes (4:6) has ravished His heart (4:7-15); she then arises with great passion and cries out to fully belong to Him (4:16).
  - 2) This is the bride's Galatians 2:20 moment. She first says "blow upon my garden" but then turns around and says "let my Beloved come to HIS garden." She is saying to Him "Come whatever may, if this is really how You feel about me, then I want to fully belong to You. Send the north winds (cold bitter winds; Job 37:9) and send the south winds (warm and refreshing winds; Luke 12:55). You know the right the perfect mixture in every season.

## **Chapter Eleven Extra Reading**

We are now approaching what I believe to be the most pivotal verses in all of the Song of Songs. It's here in the second half of Song of Songs chapter 4 that everything will change for the life of the bride. There are two key places in Song of Songs chapter 4. The first one is Song of Songs 4:6 and the second one is Song of Songs 4:16. Some commentators believe that Song of Songs 4:6 is the pivotal change within the Song, but I believe it to be Song of Songs 4:16 as we will look at in this chapter. In Song of Songs 4:6 the bride made both the verbal and physical declaration that she would start ascending the mountain of Myrrh. This decision was huge. But in Song of Songs 4:16 she makes an even more stunning declaration about who she belongs to and what she is willing to do to be completely united with her Beloved. So much has happened in the life of the bride that you could nearly close the book and meditate only on chapter's 1-4; but God in His creative genius decided to write 3 more chapters. In this Chapter I am going cover Jesus' tender words of affirmation for the bride and His invitation for her to be with Him where He is. I will also cover the ravished heart of the bridegroom God and the bride's cry to fully belong to Jesus. It would be a lie to say that these are my favorite verses within the Song, but they are certainly among my top 5.

#### Jesus' Tender Words of Affirmation over the Bride (SOS 4:7)

Jesus has set forth a pattern within the Song of Songs that's not unique only to the Song of Songs, but it is seen rather clearly in this very special book. That pattern is this: before God says anything to the bride either corrective or affirming, He first tells her how He sees her and then how He feels about her. Jesus does this every time He speaks with her, without fail. This is so important for you and me to see. So many of us see an angry God, a frustrated and disappointed heavenly Father. When we have a wrong paradigm of God it affects how we relate to God. But when we have a right paradigm of God it empowers to relate to Him in a right way. If you remember from **Song of Songs 4:6**, the weak and struggling bride agreed to follow the Lamb up the mountain of Myrrh and to go her way in Christ. Because a couple of chapters back the bride had said *no*, and here she is saying *yes* to Him, it leaves Him totally undone.

In **Song of Songs 4:7** Jesus responds to the young, struggling bride and says "You are all fair, My love, and there is no spot in you." This statement from Jesus to the weak bride is preceding what He is going to say to her and ask her in the very following verse. But before Jesus shares any information with her, He first tells her that she beautiful (fair) and that there is no spot in her. Most Christians agree that one day they will be beautiful before God, without piles of sin and compromise. But what we forget is that the process of sanctification is moving us towards Christ-likeness and as long as the sin we have had pointed out to us is repented of, then we are pure and spotless before the Lord. What most Christians don't know, and aren't taught through the Church, is that prior to the end of this age, Jesus will have a Church on the earth that is walking in a level purity that will be second only to the first century Church. We know this from the prophecy that Paul made in **Ephesians 5:27** that Jesus would have a Church without spot, wrinkle or blemish. Jesus is speaking over the bride in a place of weakness, not a place of strength. She is becoming strong, but isn't strong yet, and it's in this place that He declares to her she is all together beautiful and without spot.

Jesus is currently raising up a Church, or a global bride, that will look like He does. Paul also said in **Ephesians 4:12-16** that the purpose of the five-fold gifts in the Church is to bring the people of God to

the full measure, even the stature of the Man Christ Jesus. God's purpose in our lives isn't to make us comfortable but rather to make us holy. God's enjoyment over us is not only about Him enjoying us in the age to come, but that He enjoys pure fellowship with us right now, in this age.

#### Jesus' Invitation for the Bride to Come Away with Him (SOS 4:8)

Jesus has now affirmed her, or told her how He feels about her. Following these word's of affirmation He extends again an invitation for her to be with Him where He is. **Song of Songs 4:8**, <u>Jesus says to her</u> "Come away with Me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and from Hermon, from the Lion's dens, from the mountains of leopards." In this invitation to the bride to be with Him where He is, He also reminds her of what's on top of the mountains. I believe this to be the reason why she doesn't ascend the mountain in the first place. It's not because of rebellion that she doesn't ascend, but rather fear. There are lions and leopards on the tops of the mountains.

It seems that many Christians spend the majority of their lives wondering if Jesus wants them near Him. Most Christians know that God is love, so that must mean He loves me, but what about right now? What about when I'm in a broken state and I'm in a place of utter weakness? This is something that I see many Christians struggling with, and it's not helping them grow in either their relationship with God or the destiny that He has called them into. It actually renders us helpless and we don't end up moving forward at all.

There are two key passages that speak to the reality that Jesus longs for us to be with Him where He is. In **Revelation 4:1** the Bible says "After these things I looked and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this." Here, John sees a door standing open and it's in heaven. Jesus couldn't be clearer about how He feels about us being with Him. Beloved, He's left a door standing open in heaven. But what's more, John then hears a voice extending an invitation for him to come up. Not just a door is standing open in heaven, but also an invitation for both him and us to come up and be with Him where He is. And in **Matthew 11:27-28** Jesus says "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest..."

Jesus makes is very clear through this verse that nobody knows the Father but the Son and the person to whom the Son reveals Him. And then in the following breath (verse) Jesus says, COME TO ME! Nobody knows the Father except the Son and the one to whom I will to reveal Him, COME TO ME! Jesus couldn't have been clearer about His passion for us to be with Him where He is.

Jesus is extending an invitation to the bride that all of us have received as well. It's an invitation for us to be with Him where He is. Jesus longs to have His bride along side, in both the secret place and in the place of ministry to the nations. Jesus isn't going to work the harvest alone. He is working hard to raise up a worthy partner that He can share His kingdom with, so that He can thrust in His sickle and reap the harvest.

As I mentioned a few paragraphs back, this mountain that she has been called up to is a mountain of difficulty, challenges and adversity. It's a mountain of Lions and Leopard's dens. Peter tells us in **1**<sup>st</sup> **Peter 5:8** that our enemy the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. And when John sees the anti-Christ rising up out of the sea, in **Revelation 13:2**, he sees four realities about the

antichrist that describe his reign. John sees that he's like a leopard, a bear and a lion. And then He goes on to describe that he's a beast. The reason why John calls him a beast is because he's not like any one animal, but rather a combination of several different animals. He is beast-like. The place that Jesus is calling her up to on the mountains is a place of difficulty and a place of spiritual warfare. We are not fighting against people, but against spirits and principalities in heavenly places. And this is amplified when we step out in the place of public ministry on the tops of mountains, because we are working to take ground the devil has previously claimed. It's a fight. But if we respond rightly in the midst of it, Jesus will make sure that we do not stumble. He is able to keep us, and what a great Keeper He is!

#### The Ravished Heart of the Bridegroom God (SOS 4:9-11)

The power of our weak *yes* to Jesus is something that I don't know if we will ever fully understand. When you and I say *yes* to Jesus' invitation to be with Him wherever He might be in our individual lives, it moves His heart in way that doesn't make sense to us. Because the bride agreed to start ascending the mountain of Myrrh Jesus becomes undone by her decision. It is here in **Song of Songs 4:9-11** that Jesus says to her "You have ravished my heart, My sister My spouse; you have ravished My heart. With one look from your eyes, with one line from your necklace. How fair is your love, My sister, My spouse! How much better than wine is your love, and the scent of your perfumes than all spices! Your lips, O my spouse, drip as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue; and the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon." Let's take a few paragraphs and break this down.

Jesus is allowing His emotions to be seen by the young bride, to let her know what her weak *yes* to Him means. I define her "*yes*" by her willingness to follow Him wherever He leads. Her *yes* is her agreement with His leadership over her life, even though she doesn't know the outcome of where she is going. It's this kind of obedience that moves the heart of God. It's very critical to also understand for our allegory; Solomon is a type and shadow of Jesus. So that means that the uncreated God is totally undone by the weak *yes* of His bride, when she trusts His leadership over their lives. The Creator becoming undone by His creation is something that doesn't make sense.

This is the first time in the entire **Song** that Jesus refers to her as His spouse. The phrase "My sister, my spouse" really used to mystify me. I understand that Jesus is my Bridegroom, so that makes me His spouse, but how am I also His sister, and how can those two be used in the same sentence? After looking at this passage for some time and getting some different perspectives I have come to understand what this means in an introductory way. If you think about the relationship between brothers and sisters and how they know nearly everything about one another, this phrase makes much more sense. Jesus is saying to the bride "I know you in the way that a brother knows his sister: in all the good and in all the bad. But, I still choose to make you My spouse." When I saw this passage in that light, it changed everything for me.

Jesus knows me in the way a brother knows his sister. He knows my strengths and my weaknesses, but that doesn't stop Him from marrying me forever. Most people are worried about showing their real personalities to their loved ones for fear of losing their love. So we hide and create all sorts of different masks that we wear when were around them. But with Jesus there's no such thing as a mask. All things are laid bare before Him and He sees all. So this means, that when He sees me, He see the good and the bad, but still chooses me as His partner, someone that He wants to share His kingdom with. And it's not her ministry, her bank account or her mailing list that has so moved His heart, but it is she alone who has caused Him to be ravished. This is why the Bible says, "Who is like the Lord?"

I love that Jesus says to her, "with one look from your eyes, with one link from your necklace, you have ravished My heart." If we just take that at its plain meaning, Jesus is ravished by just one look from her eyes. If He's ravished over just one look from her eyes, what would a steady gaze or a locked stare do to Him? Beloved, I assume that you have no idea how much your weak look moves His heart. We spend so much time wondering if God is for us, wondering if He's mad at us, wondering what He thinks of us but that's only because our view of Him is skewed. If we had any idea how much just one look moved Him, we would spend hours gazing into the heavens asking, looking for information about the God Man!

#### The Bride's Cry to Fully Belong to Jesus (SOS 4:16)

It's here that the most important declaration to God is made from the bride in the entire **Song of Songs.** It's my opinion that everything that has taken place in the life of the bride has been setting the stage for this incredibly key moment. It's here that the bride is going to verbally say to God that she wants to fully belong to Him, no matter what the cost is. Here in **Song of Songs** 4:6 the bride says to Jesus "Awake, O north wind and come, O south! Blow upon my qarden, that it's spices may flow out. Let my Beloved come to His qarden, and eat it's pleasant fruits." Now, you might be reading this passage and thinking to yourself "what's so special about this verse?" Well, it's what's being said by the bride in context to what has already been said. What I mean is that God has shared much information about the bride during Song of Songs chapter 4. In fact the bride is only quoted for having two verses within this entire chapter. The rest are all from God to her.

If you remember, the bride was really fearful at the close of **Song of Songs chapter 2** and refused to go with Jesus up the mountain. In the following two chapters **3-4** Jesus worked to prove His safe leadership over her and her protection with Him. He shared deep internal longings that the bride was reaching for but didn't possess externally and the way that her weak *yes* moved His heart so deeply. It was after finding Him in (**SOS 3:4**), seeing her safety in the gospel (**SOS 3:6-10**) and the deep internal longings of her heart (**SOS 4:1-15**) that she finally responds with this one verse here in **Song of Songs 4:16**. Here in **Song of Songs 4:16** she is calling out to both the north and south winds, that they would come and blow upon her garden. In **Job 37:9** we clearly see that the north winds were a very cold and bitter wind. And from **Luke 12:55** you can see that the south winds were very warm and refreshing winds.

The reality is, it's going to take both the pressure of God and the blessing of God upon us and in our lives to produce the life of God not only in us but through us. The bride was here calling for Jesus to send whatever He willed to send, because after she heard how He felt about her, she was willing to do anything. She was saying "Come hardship, come blessing, let them both crash upon my heart and when they do, it will produce the life of God through me. So many people look only for the blessings, only for the good things that come from God and not the tough, difficult things as well. It takes both pressure and blessing to produce the life of God in us and through us. It would be awesome to be able to only move ahead with blessing winds blowing upon our hearts, but that's not a reality. We need both.

This is the first time the bride no longer refers to her life as her own. In **Song of Songs 4:16** she says "...Let My beloved come to His qarden, and eat it's pleasant fruits." This is what I like to call the bride's **Galatians 2:20** moment. In **Galatians 2:20**, Paul says "it's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me..." Paul is rightly speaking that his life is no longer his own. At one point Paul's life was his own. God has given our lives to us as a gift and we are free to do with them whatever we would like. But, when you become a Christian you no longer have the rights over your own life. The reason for this is because

our salvation came at the expense of the Son, so though it's free and you can't earn it, it's also something that you must trade for. We give Jesus our lives and He gives us His. This is great exchange and you can't have it both ways. To give Him our lives means our lives are no longer our own, but His. Because of what the bride has heard from Him, she makes this verbal declaration to Him. It's so important that you hear God's voice speaking over you how He feels about you. If you don't hear His voice saying the right things, you will become passive and complacent in your walk with Him. But when you hear His voice it causes you, just like the bride, to rise up and tell Him "I will do anything, go anywhere, change anything to fully belong to You!" Do you hear His voice of affirmation over you? And if so, what is it causing you to do about it?

## **Chapter Twelve Song of Songs 5:1-5**

#### I) Introduction

A) In Session Twelve we're going to look at both Jesus' inheritance in the bride (5:1) and Jesus' call to the bride to join Him in the fellowship of His sufferings (5:2). We will also look at the bride's obedient response to follow Jesus into the place of shame, rejection and suffering in God (5:3-5).

#### II) Jesus Enjoys His Inheritance In The Bride (SOS 5:1)

- A) Song of Songs 5:1 <u>"I have come to my garden, my sister, my spouse, I have gathered my myrrh</u> with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends! Drink, yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones!"
  - 1) Jesus is responding to the cry of the bride in **Song of Songs 4:16** to fully belong to Him with this declaration of ownership. In one verse, Jesus tells her 9 times that she belongs to Him.
  - 2) It's important that we understand everything we have belongs to God. It comes from Him and is going back to Him. Remember "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control" are the fruit of His Spirit, not ours (Gal. 5:22-23).

1)	My garden	SOS 4:16
2)	My sister	SOS 4:9
3)	My spouse	SOS 4:9
4)	My myrrh	SOS 4:14
5)	My spice	SOS 4:16
6)	My honeycomb	SOS 4:11
7)	My honey	SOS 4:11
8)	My wine	SOS 4:10
9)	My milk	SOS 4:11

- 3) Jesus opens with the phrase <u>"I have come to My garden"</u> which is based on her invitation to Him when she said in **Song of Songs 4:16** <u>"Let My beloved come to His garden."</u> Beloved, He answers our prayers; but what are we praying for? We are currently reaping what we are sowing **(Gal. 6:7-10).** Do you love your harvest?
- 4) Many of us understand that we have an inheritance in Christ (Rom. 8:17); but most of us don't understand that Jesus also has an inheritance in us (Eph. 1:18). The first half of Song of Songs is about her inheritance in Christ and the second half is about His inheritance in her.
- 5) Jesus is also following His pattern of telling her how He feels about her and how He sees her prior to asking anything from her. In the following verse, Jesus is going to call her into the greatest two-fold test of her life. It's the dark night of her soul.

#### III) Jesus Calls The Bride Into The Fellowship Of His Sufferings (SOS 5:2)

- A) Song of Songs 5:2 "I sleep, but my heart is awake; it is the voice of My beloved! He knocks, saying open for me, my sister my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night."
- B) "...I sleep but my heart is awake; It is the voice of my Beloved!..."
  - 1) The bride is sleeping or resting the rest of faith. She's resting, or enjoying the place she is at in Christ, yet longing for so much more. This is very different from where she was in **Song of Songs 3:1** as she was separated from Him at night on her bed.
  - 2) She is in the stirring of lovesickness, even in the night. As she's doing something that we're all accustomed too, sleeping, she says that her heart is awake.
  - 3) Once again His voice is coming in a disruptive way that totally surprises her and catches her off guard just like in **Song of Songs 2:8.** But even in God's great disruptive voice, she rightly discerns it's her Beloved.
- C) "...He knocks, saying open for me, my sister my love, my dove, my perfect one..."
  - 1) Jesus is pictured as knocking at the door of her heart, not a room, but her heart. He's asking for her to open to Him at the deepest level of who she is.
  - 2) In **Revelation 3:20-22** He is also pictured as the God who knocks on the heart of His people, asking for them to open. It's not enough to hear His knock; you must open up to Him! "If anyone hears my voice and opens..."
  - 3) His knock and voice is an invitation for the bride to share in the fellowship of His sufferings. This is why He's not knocking only on a room, but her whole heart.
    - (i) Philippians 3:10 "...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death..."
  - 4) Even as they are currently sharing intimacy, the Lord still entreats her through a knock and not a demand. It's voluntary love that He's committed to preserving.
  - 5) Jesus then shares four aspects or four different facets of their relationship together;
    - (i) <u>My sister</u>= This is speaking about Jesus' humanity in relationship to His Church. Jesus is our Brother as well as our God (**Hebrews 2:11-12**).
    - (ii) <u>My love</u>= Because Jesus is calling her into a dark time of suffering and hardship, He is appealing to her obedience from His affection for her.
    - (iii) My Dove = Previously He said she was like a dove; now He is declaring her to be His dove.

- (iv) <u>My perfect one</u>=Being perfected or perfect in Christ isn't so much about being 'perfect' as it is about being mature. He's calling her a mature bride.
- D) "... for my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night."
  - 1) Jesus is once again spinning the diamond on her and showing another facet of His personality and it's that of the Suffering Servant. She is seeing the Jesus of Gethsemane, the Jesus who endured the long agonizing night of prayer in the garden.
  - 2) His hair is wet from *being* outside through the night and into the morning in prayer awaiting His betrayal and crucifixion. She has now seen Jesus as Shepherd (1:7); King (2:8-9); safe Savior (3:6-10); bridegroom (4:9); and now as the Suffering Servant.

#### IV) The Bride Responds With 100% Obedience (SOS 5:3-5)

- A) Song of Songs 5:3-5 "I have taken off my robe; how can I put it on again? I have washed my feet; how can I defile them? My Beloved put his hand by the latch of the door, and my heart yearned for Him. I arose to open for my Beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh on the handles of the lock."
  - 1) Many assume the bride is in a place of compromise right here and in disobedience. I believe she is working through His invitation in her mind and trying to understand why He's asking her to join Him in suffering.
  - 2) Most of us struggle with seeing the connection between our suffering and intimacy with Jesus, and it's no different with the bride. The Cross doesn't only have the power to remove the negative in our lives, but it also empowers us to join with Jesus in the place of suffering, being proven in a furnace of affliction (Col. 1:24).
  - 3) The Church, in times past and at the end of this age, will be proven in a furnace of affliction and it will all be under Jesus' leadership. He will try the Church by fire and she will come forth as gold (Job 23:10).
- B) "...I have washed my feet; how can I defile them?
  - 1) Again, she is trying to reason why He would call her back into the place of suffering and hardship, because she's worked on so many little areas in her life. She's clean, as opposed to dirty.
  - 2) This is a much different bride than we saw in **Song of Songs 2:15** where He called her, but she asked Him to catch the little foxes in her life instead of following.
  - 3) Jesus is calling her into a place of suffering and misunderstanding among those she's serving underneath. It's shameful for her, and this confuses her as to why He would be leading her this way. She calls it defilement but He calls it the mountain of Myrrh, of His way!

- C) My Beloved put his hand by the latch of the door, and my heart yearned for Him.
  - 1) It's here that we see Jesus' hand coming upon the bride in such a way that it causes her to yearn for Him!
  - 2) It's one thing to feel drawn by good preaching, but it's something totally different to feel drawn by God Himself. It's here that though the request is difficult, the bride feels God Himself drawing and touching her heart.
- D) <u>I arose to open for my Beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the lock."</u>
  - 1) The maturing bride rises up and embraces the call of suffering, shame and the rejection of man, all under Jesus' loving leadership.
    - (i) Hebrews 13:12-14 "Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the camp bearing His reproach. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp bearing His reproach."
  - 2) It's important to note that our crisis of faith in Christ often comes suddenly. No sooner had she arisen to go after her Beloved than she was suddenly covered in Myrrh, yes even liquid Myrrh.
  - 3) Some of us have known the power of the Cross to destroy the Old man, but few have embraced the Cross of suffering and shame. The Cross that we are called to bear in this age, is a Cross of the rejection and shame from man. There's a stigma in bearing the Cross and being associated with Jesus.
  - 4) Right now the Holy Spirit is beckoning a people to embrace the stigma attached to following Christ so that we trust His leadership more than being approved by man.

# **Chapter Twelve Extra Reading**

Within **Song of Songs chapter 5** you are going to see the bride walk through the "greatest two-fold test" of her life, as she will be tried by fire and all under Jesus' leadership. One preacher said, "If you're walking through hell, don't stop!" Though this is a funny one-liner, it's exactly what the bride will do. Many things will come her way, but through Christ and His great love for her she is going to be more than an overcomer in the end. It's important that we remember, when reading the story of the Shulamite, we are looking at a divine pattern of how God raises up His friends. What I mean by this is that her life experience into maturity in Christ is the same story that God is writing with *our* lives. So what's true for the bride is also true for you. Her experiences become our experiences.

It's common when studying the Song of Songs that many people find themselves in the story and often in more places than one. For instance, when I am reading through and looking at different parts of the Song, I might find myself in chapter one but also in chapter eight. I might feel like I am "dark but lovely" (SOS 1:5) but I also might see myself as coming up from the wilderness leaning upon my beloved (SOS 8:5). In this chapter we are going to cover several very important topics as we look at the bride's maturity in Christ. We will see how Jesus enjoys His inheritance in the bride (SOS 5:1); Jesus' invitation for the bride to join Him in the fellowship of His sufferings (SOS 5:2); and the bride's response of 100% obedience to His difficult request (SOS 5:3-5).

#### Jesus Enjoys His Inheritance in the Bride (SOS 5:1)

Here in the start of **Song of Songs 5** we see Jesus has much to say about whom the bride belongs to. If you remember what the bride prayed in the previous verse, **Song of Songs 4:16**, what He has to say to her will make much more sense. In **Song of Song 4:16** the bride said to Him "Let my Beloved come to His garden and eat its pleasant fruits." So here in **Song of Songs 5:1** the Lord is responding to her prayer from the previous verse and this is what He has to say to her, "I have come to my garden, my sister, my spouse, I have gathered my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends! Drink, yes drink deeply, O beloved ones." Wow, what a powerfully packaged response from Jesus to the bride. Within this one verse Jesus says 9 times to the bride "you're Mine!" He is making it clear to Whom she belongs.

When we talk about Jesus coming to our lives, much as He did with the bride, it's common for us to assume that the things we have, we have generated on our own. The bride realized in **Song of Songs 4:16** that her life was no longer hers, which meant that the fruit she had acquired in her own life wasn't actually hers but His. The bride, because of her passion to follow the Lamb wherever He goes, had reached a certain level of maturity in Him, but even in her growth she rightly understands that everything she had attained was actually a gift from Him. Remember "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control" are the fruit of His Spirit, not ours (Gal. **5:22-23)**. Now, with all that being said, it's important that you live in the dichotomy of being diligent to produce something more with what you have been given, while always understanding that everything we have been given and everything we receive in this age is a gift from God. It's easy to get caught up in the false truth that it's because you have worked hard that you have what you have. When in reality although you have worked hard and produced something more with what you have been given, it's still a gift from God to you.

Many of us are praying for things all day, every day, and we are also reaping the harvest of those prayers. The question is: *Do you love your harvest?* Beloved, Jesus is listening to you and even more than listening He is the One who searches the minds and the hearts (Rev. 2:23). My assumption is that many of you have never made the connection between the current harvest in your life and the seeds that you have sown. Think about it this way, your prayers are seeds and your harvest is the fruit of those seeds coming to fruition. Do you love your harvest? If you're just now making the connection between the many things that you say in your mind (and the meditations of your heart) with your current harvest, this could be either really good or really depressing. Many people don't realize that our prayers aren't just the few things we say to God in our secret place, but the many things we think about all day. For people who spend the majority of their time stewing over offense, bitterness and anger; the harvest of their lives is evident. Now, the good thing about all of this is: if you don't like your harvest you can change it. Change it by changing what you think about and what you say in the majority of your life. Just as here in **Song of Songs 5:1**, where Jesus says "I have come to My garden" so He also does with our lives. He answers our prayers whether we want Him to, or not.

The first half of the **Song of Songs (SOS 1-4)** is all about the bride's inheritance in God, but the second half of the **Song of Songs (SOS 5-8)** is all about God's inheritance in the bride. Many Christians know they have an inheritance in Christ (**Romans 8:17**) but I find few Christians who understand Jesus also has an inheritance in them (**Ephesians 1:18)**. It's not either or, but both. It is both the reality that I have an inheritance in Christ, and that He also has one in me. This means that what Jesus has belongs to me, and what I have and am also belongs to Jesus. Just like a marriage. The Bible says that my wife no longer has authority over her own body because I do, and I no longer have authority over my body because my wife does (1<sup>st</sup> **Cor. 7:4)**. This is what it means to be in a marriage covenant with someone, just as our relationship with Christ is likened to. If we fail to understand this, our life in Christ becomes selfish and self-centered. Just as much as I am called to enjoy my inheritance in Him, so also is Christ looking to enjoy His in me. As much as I am looking for something in Him, He is also looking for something in me. The bride is starting to understand that He is coming to take ownership over her life and have the bride as an equally yoked partner with Him in the Gospel mission throughout the nations.

# Jesus Calls the Bride into the Fellowship of His Sufferings (SOS 5:2)

It's here in this sweet interchange of intimacy between the Shulamite (bride) and Solomon (Jesus) that He comes to her in a most surprising way. In **Song of Songs 5:2** the bride says this "I sleep, but my heart is awake; it is the voice of my Beloved! He knocks, saying open for Me, my sister my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night." As the bride is asleep in the rest of faith, she hears a knock at her door. This knock isn't just a knock; it's also accompanied with a voice that is calling for action on behalf of the bride.

Some commentators see the bride here as sleeping the sleep of death and that she's disengaged with the Lord, but I don't see that to be true. The reason for that isn't from these few verses but the entire context of the story. I believe that though the bride might be sleeping deeply, she is in the rest of faith. She's doing something that is common for all of us, sleeping, but even in her sleep she is awake at the heart level. This is clearly very different from where the bride was in **Song of Songs 3:1** when she was on her bed at night separated from Him. In **Song of Songs 3:1** she was separated from Him because of her disobedience to Him in **Song of Songs 2:17**; but here in **Song of Songs 5:2** she is joined together with Him in the most powerful communion. I mean she has just prayed in **Song of Songs 4:16** that He would

do whatever He needed to do in her life, so that she would become fully His. This isn't a place of separation and compromise but rather, in my opinion, it is the rest of faith. She's sleeping but her heart is awake, or as I like to say it, "She's satisfied with being unsatisfied." She is content to be where she is, yet all the while longing for more of Him. It's the tension of every hungry disciple. We enjoy our present moment without neglecting our future depth in Christ.

I love that even though this voice is very disruptive, challenging and different; she recognizes that it's the voice of her Beloved. Often times, as we discussed from **Song of Songs 2:8**, the voice of the Lord comes to us in very disruptive ways. It is not disruptive because it's mean or rude, but because it most often catches us off guard and unaware. And it's also disruptive because of what He asks of us, or says to us when He comes. But as we sort through the difficulty of His request or statement we are unable to shake the reality that what we have heard is the voice of our Beloved, and this causes us also to rise up and go after Him.

She hears Him knocking at her door and asking for her to open up to Him. I believe that this is the same knock as we see in **Revelation 3:20-22.** Many preachers use this passage from Revelation 3 to compel non-believers to come to Christ which is totally fine, but that is not the context of this verse. The context of this verse is that Jesus is knocking at the door of His Church asking for entrance to His own people and His Church. Jesus is doing the same thing with His bride in **Song of Songs 5:2.** Because Jesus so loves and honors the freewill that He gave to humanity, He refuses to violate it. Jesus doesn't have to knock at the door of His own Church, but He chooses to operate within the boundaries of what He set in motion in the first 3 chapters of **Genesis.** Instead of barging in, He entreats us from a knock followed by a tender voice beckoning for us to open the door. Mike Bickle calls this "affection based obedience." What this means is that the best kind of obedience to Jesus is based in affection. Jesus could demand us to serve Him, but He wants us to serve Him because we want to, not because we have to. So, instead of breaking down the door and pointing a gun at us, forcing us to obey Him, He knocks. There has never been a Man who has knocked on as many doors as Jesus has, or who has been rejected as much as Him.

As the young maturing bride hears Him knocking at the door of her heart and listens to His voice she notices that "his head is covered with dew, and His locks with the drops of the night." Jesus is coming to her in a very unusual way. It's my belief that He is appearing to her as the suffering Servant of Gethsemane, the Man who endured the long night of prayer under the cover of night prior to His public betrayal. This is the fifth revelation of Jesus that the bride has seen. If you remember we talked about Jesus being like a Diamond with not just one facet but many. So He is here spinning the Diamond of Himself. In SOS 1:7 she saw Him as the Shepherd. In SOS 2:8-9 she saw Him as the King who possess all power. In SOS 3:6-10 she saw Him as the safe Savior who will protect her through His loving Kindness on the Cross. In SOS 4:9 she saw Him as the ravished Bridegroom God; and here in SOS 5:2 she is seeing Him as the suffering Servant who poured out His soul unto death.

She is seeing Jesus when His hair was wet from being out through the long agonizing night of prayer where His sweat became like great drops of blood prior to His crucifixion (Luke 22:44). Jesus was called the suffering Servant by Isaiah in Isaiah 53. That passage of scripture is where the prophet Isaiah saw a Man who was marred beyond recognition, who was assumed to be smitten and rejected by God Himself. Isaiah of course saw this vision of Jesus some 750 years prior to Jesus' birth. You have to image that the bride is not only in a good place with Jesus concerning their intimacy together, she is also sleeping. She is startled not only by His request, but by the way that He came to her. This is all very difficult for her to understand, much like it would be for you and me.

#### The Bride Responds with 100% Obedience (SOS 5:3-5)

Jesus has just called out to her, he has knocked on her door and presented Himself as the suffering Servant who endured the long dark night of His soul. And it wasn't enough that Jesus wanted her to hear His voice, but He also wanted her to respond to His request. In **Song of Songs 5:3-5** she replies to His request by saying "I have taken off my robe; how can I put it back on again? I have washed my feet how can I defile them? My Beloved put His hand by the latch of the door, and my heart yearned for Him. I arose to open for My beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the lock." As I said previously, many commentators assume that the bride is being selfindulgent right here. They say that she couldn't get up and answer the door because she didn't have time to get all dolled up and looking in tiptop shape. I don't believe this to be the case at all. It's important that we don't look at the bride in the moment only, but in the entirety of her journey. We have to judge the bride as Jesus does: on an average, not on a moment. Jesus looks at all the good and all the bad that we do in our lives. He is able to evaluate us based not on our bad moments, but on the whole of our lives --though we struggled we were yet reaching for Him. This is where I see the bride, struggling with His request yet reaching for Him nonetheless. To say she's self-indulgent and lazy is to take away from her progression over the past four chapters, as she has overcome such huge obstacles in her life and continued on her journey towards maturity.

The bride is struggling with the connection between a life of suffering under Jesus' leadership and intimacy with Him. Would you say that this is something that you struggle with? I would assume you answered yes. And it's no different for the bride. What He is asking of her is dark, foreboding and challenging; to reconcile all of that with her Beloved is difficult. She is saying to Him "I have already endured hardship and suffering ("I have taken off my robe...I have washed my feet how can I defile them?") Why would You be calling me into more? I have already been rejected by my fellow man and the leaders around me, why would You be calling me into more?" It's this question that she is wrestling with in her mind. It's crucial that we understand it's not sin to wrestle with God's requests of us. It is sin if we wrestle with His requests and come to the conclusion that we know better than Him and don't trust Him. But to question what He's asking you to do is normal. The hope is that the more we get to know Him the quicker we say yes, because when we come to know Him, we also come to trust Him. Jesus is asking something of the bride that doesn't fully make sense to her.

The bride is in a much better place here in **Song of Songs 5:3** than she was in **Song of Songs 2:15** when Jesus called out to her to come away with Him and her response was for Him to catch the little sin areas of her life. Here the bride is clean, as opposed to dirty or defiled. She's resting in Him as opposed to being separated from Him on her bed in the night, as she was in **Song of Songs 3:1**. It's here in the midst of her confusion and internal wrestling match that Jesus touches her and helps her to arise and follow Him. **Song of Songs 5:4** she says "my Beloved put His hand by the latch of the door and my heart yearned for Him." As God touches her heart or places His hand upon her heart it causes such internal passion to arise within her and reach out to Him. It takes God to love God, and it takes God to enter into these dark seasons that He calls us into. We don't move into a place of suffering in the Gospel without Jesus' leadership over our lives and without His hand coming upon and helping us. It's not something that we do on our own or in the power of our will, but through Christ and through Christ alone. Even the suffering that Jesus went through, He didn't do on His own, but through the power of the Holy Spirit and

the help of the Father. He cried out to the Father many times in His pain and suffering and it's no different for us. The Holy Spirit is coming upon the bride's heart to help her make the decision to follow Jesus into the fellowship of His sufferings and God's plan works perfectly.

As Jesus touches her heart she says in **Song of Songs 5:5** "I arose to open for my Beloved, and my hands dripped with Myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the lock." The empowering touch of Jesus' hand upon her heart caused her to arise and open the door to Him. As soon as she opens the door her hand is covered with a large amount of Myrrh. Just as for the bride, our crisis of faith in Christ comes suddenly. She didn't really have time to prepare for this crisis that she was being called into, but rather she suddenly found herself in the midst of it. Just arising from sleep and touching the door caused her hand to be covered with Myrrh (burial spice or connected to suffering). It's here that the bride is up and moving into the fellowship of His sufferings. As you will see in the next chapter, this suffering is two-fold and it's a dark painful night that the bride is about to endure. The important thing for us to understand is that everything she is about to experience is under the leadership of Jesus. He has overlooked nothing and is actually empowering her to walk through, not to take her out of it.

Some of us have known the power of the Cross to destroy the *old man*, but it seems few within the Church have understood the power of the Cross to embrace suffering, shame and rejection. The idea of being happy, healthy and wealthy isn't something that Jesus promised to those that follow Him. Jesus promised that though we might die physically on the journey, He will surely keep our souls for the age to come. Beyond that, many things might come our way and many things might leave our way, but His faithfulness and leadership over our lives in the process is perfect and not to be accused.

Beloved there is a stigma attached to following Christ that the Church isn't currently helping people understand. Being connected with Christ will alienate you from relationships, from careers, and from family, but He is worth it. Jesus' words to us were "If they've done this to Me in the green wood, what will they do to you when the wood is dry" (Luke 23:31). Right now the Holy Spirit is raising up a people that will embrace the stigma attached to following Christ more than they will embrace the praise and affirmation of man. It's time for us to rise up and follow Jesus outside the camp, to embrace a life that is faithful to Him and countercultural to that which is around us. Will you embrace His call to join Him in the fellowship of His sufferings?

# **Chapter Thirteen Song of Songs 5:6-16**

#### I) Introduction

A) In Session Thirteen we are going to see the bride loose His presence again (SOS 5:6); loose her place of ministry within the body (SOS 5:7); and still respond with humility and an un-offended heart (SOS 5:8). We will also see the lukewarm believers question her about why she loves Jesus so much (SOS 5:9), and her response about the beauty of Christ in midst of her suffering (SOS 5:10-16).

## II) The First Part Of Her Great Two-Fold Test; The Loss Of His Presence (SOS 5:6)

- A) Song of Songs 5:6 <u>"I opened for my Beloved, but my Beloved had turned away and was gone. My heart leaped up when He spoke. I sought Him, but I could not find Him; I called Him, but He gave me no answer."</u>
  - 1) As the bride has risen in 100% obedience to answer His knock and invitation at the door, she opens for Him and steps outside, but He's nowhere to be found. She says that "her heart leaped up when He spoke, but I could not find Him."
  - 2) If you remember from **Chapter 3**, the bride lost His presence and got up and started searching for Him and eventually found Him. In **Chapter 3** she arose in disobedience and found Him. Here in **Chapter 5** she arose in obedience, but couldn't find Him.
  - 3) This is a new experience for her to respond in obedience and be unable to find Him. The Church doesn't really have a theology for those that can't feel His presence. We become like Job's friends assuming the reason for the distance is something sinful.
  - 4) In **Song of Songs 1:4** the bride laid out her life vision which was "draw me away with You, and we will run after You." She has now lost the first part of her life vision which was to be near Him in intimacy and it's all under the leadership and approval of Jesus. It's Jesus who has invited her into this crisis (SOS 5:2).

# III) The Second Part Of Her Great Two-Fold Test; The Loss Of Her Ministry (SOS 5:7)

- A) Song of Songs 5:7 "The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me."
  - 1) It's here that the bride encounters the Saul watchmen within the body of Christ. It's here in the house of her friends that she is struck and wounded (Ps. 55:12-21), and loses her position of ministry within the body of Christ.
    - (i) <u>"They struck me"</u>=This literally means to punish, to hit, to smite, to attack, to destroy and to give stripes.

- (ii) <u>"They wounded me"</u>=The word wound literally means to bruise, to split open and to deeply wound. The wounds of the mouth are much stronger than physical wounds to our body.
- (iii) <u>"They took my veil from me"</u>=The word veil is the word shawl, mantel or the cloak of God upon her life. This represents her ministry or place of service within the body.
- 2) She has now lost the second part of her two-fold life vision from **Song of Songs 1:4** "...And we will run after You." She no longer has a place of ministry within the body, being struck and wounded by the Shepherd, and it's all under Jesus' leadership and oversight.
- 3) This brings up questions as to why God allows hardship and pressure in our lives. Here are a few short answers;
  - (i) He's teaching us the depths of His heart. We meet God in places of pain and difficulty.
  - (ii) He's building us into Christ-likeness and it comes through pain and hardship.
  - (iii) He's teaching us to look at Him, not at those who are mistreating us.
  - (iv) He's exposing the false foundations within our hearts. It's under silence and pressure that we see what's really alive within us.
  - (v) He knows something we don't. There's something bigger going on.

### IV) The Bride's Response Of Humility and Love (SOS 5:8)

- A) Song of Songs 5:8 <u>"I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem; if you find my Beloved that you tell</u>
  <u>Him I'm lovesick."</u>
  - 1) This is the first response from the bride in the midst of her great two-fold test, and it's the response of humility and an un-offended bride. She's under severe pressure, having lost His presence and her place of ministry, but she's not offended at Jesus for His leadership, she's lovesick.
  - 2) She's calling out to the lukewarm ones around her; meaning anyone who will help her find her Beloved. And she says to them "If you see Him, tell Him I'm not mad at Him, I'm not offended, I'm not guestioning His leadership over me. I love Him!"
  - 3) The Lord is watching how she's responding when all her dreams and the longings of her heart are taken away from her. He wants to know who she's really in it for.

# V) The Response From The Lukewarm Believers Around Her (SOS 5:9)

- A) Song of Songs 5:9 "What is your Beloved more than another beloved, O fairest among women? What is your Beloved more than another beloved that you so charge us?"
  - 1) Because the bride is full of the oil of the Holy Spirit and she responded rightly under pressure with an un-offended heart, it caused those around her to ask about her Beloved.

- 2) Remember, the daughters are lukewarm believers standing on the sideline, though in relationship with God they have yet to receive a revelation. They are asking what separates Him from the many activities (beloveds) in the Church and in life. Why is He so different?
- 3) The daughters are stunned that she is so in love with this Man, who is seemingly mistreating her so badly. They're saying, "He's taken His presence away from you, and He's allowed the shepherds to strike you and take away your position. Why aren't you offended at Him? What makes Him so different?"
- 4) When asked by non-believers and lukewarm Christians why they should love Jesus like we do, could we answer them in such a way that we provoke them to abandon all and join us in our pursuit of the Holy?

## VI) The Bride's Glorious Response To The Daughters Question SOS 5:10-16)

- A) Song of Songs 5:10-16 "My Beloved is white and ruddy, Chief among ten thousand. His head is like the finest gold; His locks are wavy, and black as a raven. His eyes are like doves, by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. His cheeks are like a bed of spices, banks of scented herbs. His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh. His hands are rods of gold set with beryl. His body is carved ivory inlaid with sapphires. His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of fine gold. His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet; yes He is all together lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."
  - 1) This is the bride's response to the question the daughters ask about what makes Him so different from other beloveds.
- B) <u>"My Beloved is white and ruddy"</u>=That word white means glaring, dazzling, bright and sunny. And the word ruddy means red. She was declaring His youthful dual nature (1<sup>st</sup> Sam. 16:12; Rev. 21:22) Jesus is called a Lamb because He was taken out in His youth.
- C) <u>"He's Chief among ten-thousand"</u>=She is declaring Him to be Chief among a myriad of people. In the midst of an innumerable amount of people Jesus stands head and shoulders above. This is speaking to His preeminence (Col. 1:15-18).
- D) <u>"His head is like the finest gold"</u>=Jesus is head over all things **(Eph. 5:22)**, and the Bible uses the head to speak of leadership.
  - 1) Jesus' leadership, or the place from which He makes decisions is of the finest gold. Finest gold speaks of something be refined (Rev. 3:18).
    - (i) In the Chronicles of Narnia the question is asked "Is he—quite safe?? Safe? (said Mr. Beaver)...Who said anything about safe? Course He isn't safe. But He's good! He's the King I tell you."
- E) "His locks are wavy and black as a raven" = She is saying His hair isn't broken, brittle and decaying, but it's wavy and jet black like a raven. She's declaring He's youthful, full of zeal and well able to help those that come to Him (Ps. 110:3 Eph. 3:20).

- F) <u>"His eyes are like doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set"</u>=He sees rightly: with purity and equality. His eyes are fitly set about His head meaning His evaluation of humanity and nations and situations is true. Its perfect (Rev. 19:11).
  - 1) It's important that we understand the bride is still in the midst of this great two-fold test. She's without His presence and her place of ministry & it's all under Jesus' leadership (eyes).
- G) <u>"His cheeks are like a bed of spices, banks of scented herbs"</u>=Jesus' cheeks declare that He's mostly happy and not mad, mostly glad and not sad (Heb. 1:9).
- H) <u>"His lips are like lilies, dripping liquid myrrh"</u>=Jesus' words are full of purity and divine grace. His words cover us and empower us to walk through suffering (myrrh) (Ps. 45:2).
- I) <u>"His hands are rods of gold, set with beryl"</u>=Jesus' hands aren't separated from His head like ours. Our minds often want to do things that our hands refuse to do. But not with Jesus. He uses His hands to create, heal, protect and redeem (Jn. 8:1-11).
- J) <u>"His body is carved ivory inlaid with sapphires"</u>=Ivory isn't something that's mined, but rather comes only through great pain or death. Jesus' body was broken for us. His body (bowels) or His side was pierced for us (Jn. 19:34).
- K) <u>"His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of fine gold"</u>=Jesus is upheld by the finest Gold, or a foundation that's eternal. Pillars speak of strength, leadership and orderliness. And marble speaks of beauty that's been forged under great pressure! He's beautiful!
  - 1) Remember, the bride is in the midst of the great two-fold test, and though her season has changed, she's enduring great difficulty and the foundation of His throne hasn't changed.
- L) <u>"His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars."</u> = Jesus is pictured as being above all things earthly and demonic, just like the cedars tower over all other trees. He's stately, secure, and strong and has a heavenly perspective.
- M) <u>"His mouth is most sweet, yes, He is all together lovely"</u>=The bride sums up His physical attributes by saying that <u>"His mouth is most sweet."</u> Beyond all that He does, and who He is, it's the gracious words He speaks that moves us most!
- N) <u>"This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem"</u>=Oh for the day that the Church would preach Christ, the desire of all nations in the midst of unprecedented trouble and pressure. No presence, no place of ministry, but un-offended and lovesick!
- O) She described His head, His hair, His eyes, His cheeks, His lips, His hands, His body, His legs and His overall countenance. If you notice she has described Him from His head to His feet.

# **Chapter Thirteen Extra Reading**

As you begin to look at **Song of Songs 5:6-16** it is going to cause you to wrestle with many things concerning the activity of God in our lives. As we saw in the previous chapter, the bride was being called into a place of suffering, separation from her Beloved and the scorn of man by Jesus Himself as He is knocking at her door and calling her outside **(SOS 5:2)**. And it's here in Song of Songs 5:6-16 you will see the outworking of this call, in real time suffering all under the leadership/Lordship of Jesus. I, along with many commentators, refer to this portion of the **Song of Songs** as the *Dark night of her soul*.

It's here in this chapter that I will cover **Song of Songs 5:6-16**. In this chapter you are going to see the first part of her great two-fold test —the loss of His presence **(SOS 5:6)** and the second part of her great two-fold test —the loss of her public ministry within the body **(SOS 5:7)**. It's in the midst of the bride's hardship that she responds with humility and love **(SOS 5:8)** causing the lukewarm believers around her, the daughters of Jerusalem, to ask why she the bride loves Him so much **(SOS 5:9)**. **Song of Songs 5** ends with one of the most climatic, beautiful and stunning descriptions of Jesus in all of the Word of God **(SOS 5:10-16)**. Each chapter within the **Song of Songs** has powerful truths to be found, but Chapter 5 presents a marvelous picture, in my opinion, of what the Church at the end of this age will endure. The Church will be faced with the greatest pressure in human history from the judgments of God, the wrath of satan, the sin of man and the groan of creation. The bride, the Church the ecclesia of God, will emerge from this wilderness leaning upon her beloved. The bride's life in **Song of Songs 5** paints the picture that life will get worse before it gets better. But the *better* that God will usher in will be a better that lasts forever, eclipsing our temporary hardship, suffering and separation in this fallen age.

## The First Part of Her Great Two-Fold Test—the Loss of His Presence (SOS 5:6)

Song of Songs 5:6 begins with the bride having already risen off her bed and answering the door/invitation from her Beloved. As soon as she steps outside the door she is unable to find Him whom her ears heard calling and Him for whom her heart *leaped up* when He spoke. She says in **Song of Songs 5:6**, "I opened for my Beloved, by my Beloved had turned away and was gone. My heart leaped up when He spoke. I sought Him, but I could not find Him; I called Him but He gave me no answer." It's here as the bride is responding to His call, in what I believe to be 100% obedience, that she is unable to find Him anywhere. This is a brand new experience for the bride in the grace of God. The second time she had lost His presence and the intimacy they were sharing she was in a place of disobedience, but in her place of disobedience she arose and started searching for Him and eventually found Him (SOS 3:1-5). But here in Song of Songs 5:6, the Shulamite (bride) and Solomon (Jesus) are sharing intimacy between one another and she has risen in 100% obedience but she's unable to find Him. This is something brand new for her.

It's my belief that the Church today and throughout history struggles to help those who are in Christ but have lost Jesus' presence on their heart. Most seem unable to instruct those that are under a closed heaven and often times our (Christians) default answer is 'sin.' Unfortunately, we Christians become more like Job's friends than we do those who are compassionate and understanding. Now the reality is that often times we become separated from the Lord's presence because there is un-confessed sin, or disobedience in our lives much like the bride in **Song of Songs 3:1**, but that's only one side to a two sided coin. The other side of the coin is that God is doing something we don't understand and may not ever fully understand. It's true that closed heavens over our lives, tell us more about what's really living

within us than an open heaven does. When the heavens are closed in my life, I become depressed and filled with guilt, shame and condemnation. I assume I have done something wrong so that Jesus has withdrawn Himself from me. And because my personal identity is still being formed into the image of Christ, I begin to think that maybe He doesn't really love me; maybe He's not all that concerned with me and I start to believe the accuser more than the Word of God. I tell you, these closed heavens help us in ways that we will never fully understand. And although we don't long for the heavens to be closed and our proximity with Jesus to be separated by distance, we will come to love that separation when we see the fruit it will produce within us, if we allow it.

In **Song of Songs 1:4** the bride opened up the entire book by laying out her two-fold life vision which says "Draw me away, and we will run together." To simply break this apart so that you can see the two-fold life vision, we look first at the statement made singularly and then at the statement made in the plural. She first said "draw ME" away. This first phrase is in direct connection with the first and great commandment to "love God with everything." We love God primarily on our own. It's something that we do in the privacy of our own heart. And then "WE will run together." The second phrase has everything to do with serving the nations and working in the harvest in community, which is directly connected to the second commandment "loving your neighbor as yourself." We are never called in the scriptures to express our love on our own, like a lone ranger but rather with others and in the midst of community. So we cultivate intimacy with God on our own and we serve the body of Christ and the nations with others in community.

If you notice here, the bride is entering into the first part of her great two-fold test (the loss of His presence) in the same exact way that she had originally longed for her two-fold life vision. First His presence is gone (*draw me away*) and as we will look at next she loses her place of ministry among the body (*and we will run together*).

# The Second Part of Her Great Two-Fold Test—the Loss of Her Ministry (SOS 5:7)

As we continue throughout **Song of Songs 5:7-16** the bride is going to remain in the midst of divine testing, not because of disobedience but because of obedience. She has already lost His presence, meaning she no longer feels Him and now she is about to be endure pain at the hands of those who are supposed to be leading her. In **Song of Songs 5:7** the bride says "The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took my veil away from me." It's okay to say ouch, this is extremely painful. These watchmen that the bride is encountering are what are called the Saul watchmen. They are vastly different from the David watchmen. The David watchmen are helpful to those that are reaching for maturity and the Saul watchmen are those that are jealous of others who are reaching for maturity. They see the reach of a weak heart as worthless or competition for their current position.

Because the bride is in a place of desperation to find her Beloved she is out looking for Him and this is where she encounters these watchmen. The first thing they do to her when they see her is to strike her. That word *strike* literally means to punish, to hit, to smite, to attack, to destroy and give stripes. After they have struck her, they also wound her. That word wound literally means to bruise, split open and to deeply wound. I believe it's safe to say that the wounds of a friend are far more painful than the wounds of an enemy. It's not that these shepherds are specifically her friends, but rather they are supposed to be safe people that she can trust, but this wasn't the case with them. It's also true that the wounds from words are often far more painful than the physical wounds from injury or externally inflicted pain. It's

often the deeply painful words that were spoken against us that we carry around with us for life. And lastly, these Saul-styled leaders take her veil away from her. The word used here for veil, is the word shawl, cloak or mantle. It's the same idea as when Paul was speaking to women of the Corinthian Church in 1st Corinthians 11 and said that women should wear a covering over their head when they pray (1st Cor. 11:10-12). It's here that the Saul watchmen don't help the bride find her Beloved, but rather have struck her, wounded her and taken away her place of ministry within the body which was her veil/mantle. She is now without His presence and now without her function within the body or what we call the local Church. She has now lost her two-fold life vision in the same order that she originally prayed for it. She asked for nearness, and then lost His presence. She asked to serve in the harvest with others, and then she lost her function within the body. It's important throughout this entire chapter that we keep in view it is Jesus who has called her into this entire crisis (SOS 5:2).

#### The Bride's Response of Humility and Love (SOS 5:8)

The bride is now in the midst of full blown crisis. She has lost His presence and now she has lost her function within the body. She's suffering under the leadership of Jesus and it's at the hands of those she has trusted and loved deeply. In this place of extreme difficulty the bride calls out to the daughters of Jerusalem and asks them this in **Song of Songs 5:8**, "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem; if you find my Beloved that you tell Him I'm lovesick."

This is a stunning display of humility and a beautiful declaration of where her heart is. It's a stunning display of humility because the daughters of Jerusalem throughout the Song of Songs represent lukewarm believers who are in relationship with Christ, but are serving Him at a distance. Because of her hunger to find Him she is willing to do anything to be near Him, even asking those who are in relationship with Him but living at a distance from Him. This is true humility.

But then the bride says to them, <u>"if you see my Beloved, tell Him that I'm lovesick."</u> Wow! She just ratcheted it up a few notches. It's amazing to express humility in the midst of great personal suffering and hardship; but it's something totally different to make clear that your heart is un-offended at Jesus' leadership over your life in the middle of this kind of hardship. The bride is responding to what Jesus has invited her into, with an un-offended heart concerning His leadership over her.

The Lord is watching how she is handling the loss of passions and internal longings. He is watching and wanting to know who she is in this thing for. Is she in it for ministry? Is she in it for the accolades of man? Is she in it to be rich and famous, to validate within her that which didn't get validated through her parents, as a child? Or is she in it for Jesus. There are times in my (Patrick) life that I have to remind myself why I signed up for Christianity to begin with. I didn't originally sign up to be in ministry, to hold positions of influence over others and strive for dreams that have been deeply seeded with me. I signed up for Jesus Christ because I was lost and He reached out to me. It wasn't hell that kept me in Christ, but rather intimacy with Jesus through the Holy Spirit that so moved me towards Him. What the bride doesn't know is that the chapters that follow chapter 5 are chapters filled with a fruitful ministry. The Lord is working to prove her in it right now, to make sure she's in it for Him.

Beloved, what do you do when you're pressed on every side and things look dark around you? What do you do when you find yourself in the midst of personal suffering and pain? Do you look to those things that are harming you, those people who are miss-treating you and those situations that are hurting you? Or do you set your eyes on Jesus? Do you find yourself accusing Jesus' leadership and assuming that He

should be doing something that He's not? It is in this place of a closed heaven that we come to understand what's really alive within us. Often times when we are under an open heaven it's easy to assume that our hearts are right, but when heaven closes up we come to know who we *really* are!

#### The Response from the Lukewarm Believers around Her (SOS 5:9)

The daughters of Jerusalem have been watching the passion of the bride ever since Chapter One. They have seen her journey and have watched her throughout the ups and downs of loving God. There have been several times that they have talked and she has challenged them to get off the sidelines and join in wholeheartedness with the King. But it's here in Song of Songs 5:9 that they respond to the bride's inquiry about her Beloved by asking her a question. This is what they say to her, "What is your Beloved more than another beloved, O fairest among women? What is your beloved more than another beloved that you so charge us?"

These ones around her are very confused as to why she is so committed to a Man who is seemingly mistreating her so badly. It doesn't make sense to them.

The bride has been filling her lamp with oil throughout the Song, all the way back in Chapter One up until now. It's not that she has been perfect throughout her journey, but rather in her immaturity she is reaching for maturity. She doesn't want to stay where she is, but rather to grow and to enter into the plan of God for her life; because of this the Lord has been moving her along. But now, while she is under pressure from all sides and she has asked the daughters for help finding her Beloved, they now ask her what's so special about Him. In reality they are saying, "Why should we love this One who is seemingly mistreating you so badly? Why should we leave these other beloveds to go after your Beloved? What makes Him so special?"

I believe that the Church has many *beloveds*. If you made a list of the top ten most important things to the local Church, Jesus would most definitely be in the top ten, but He wouldn't be number one. We might say that He is number one, but by the way we live our lives and lead our ministries shows we are doing something far different from what we are saying. There are many *beloveds* in the Church, and what is so challenging is that people love their *beloveds* as much as their Beloved Jesus. So when we start taking things away from the Church, and begin working to set their gaze back on Jesus and Jesus alone, things get a little dicey. Mike Bickle says "When the first commandment (loving Jesus wholeheartedly) is restored to first place in the body of Christ worldwide, there will be more bloodshed in the Church than in any other time in history." I have seen a little bit of this as I have worked in a small way to call people to love Jesus wholeheartedly. People have resisted, fought against it and it's all in the name of God. As I have asked people to read their Bibles, pray, spend time fasting and fellowshipping with the Holy Spirit, it's often like herding cats. People are just unwilling. And it's not because they don't love Jesus; it's not because they have sin and are mean people; it's because we have a western paradigm that we are looking through, and it often hinders us more than it helps us.

The goal of Christianity is that our passion for Jesus be so great, and our knowledge of Him from the scriptures so clear, that we are able to give a clear witness and response to His beauty when we are asked by others. Often times as Christians when we are asked about Christianity, we respond by talking about our Church. Now that's not entirely a bad thing, but before we speak about our kids ministry, our worship program, our modern buildings and the things we offer for families, what about speaking of the worth, majesty and beauty of Christ Jesus? What about telling people how Jesus has changed your life, how you were once lost and now you're found; about how your marriage was falling apart but through the Church you met Jesus and He healed your marriage and family? What about making Jesus the center and not the many other things we do.

#### The Bride's Glorious Response to the Daughters Question (SOS 5:10-16)

These last 6 verses in **Song of Songs 5:10-16** are a beautiful response to the question that was asked by the daughters in **Song of Songs 5:9** about why they should leave their other beloveds and chase the bride's Beloved. Before we jump into this verse, I must remind us that the bride is still in the middle of her great two-fold crisis, the dark night of her soul. It's not until the following chapter that God is going to break the silence and speak over her. Until then it's still raw suffering, hardship and rejection. I am going to write out the entire passage and then I will break it down piece by piece. **Song of Songs 5:10-16** reads, "My Beloved is white and ruddy, chief among ten thousand. His head is like the finest gold; His locks are wavy, and black as a raven. His eyes are like doves, by the rivers of waters, washed in milk and fitly set. His cheeks are like a bed of spices, banks of scented herbs. His lips are like lilies, dripping liquid myrrh. His hands are like rods of gold set with beryl. His body is carved ivory, inlaid with sapphires. His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of fine gold. His countenance is like Lebanon, Excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet, yes He is all together lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." I will now break open each part in order to see the whole.

In the bride's response to their question she starts by giving a physical description of the beauty of Christ Jesus. Beloved, He is far more beautiful than we could ever imagine. She starts out by saying "My Beloved is white and ruddy." The white literally means glaring, dazzling, bright and sunny. And the word ruddy literally means red. She was describing Jesus' dual nature as being fully God and fully human. When John saw the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:22, he said that there was no temple in it, because the Lamb is its light. This is speaking of Jesus divinity and His humanity. He's a Lamb (humanity) and He's a light (Divinity) and they are both dwelling together in perfect harmony. Secondly, she says "He's chief among ten thousand." She is declaring Jesus to be the head of all things. She is saying that He stands head and shoulders above the rest. Even in the midst of ten thousand people, He is still the Chief among them all. And Paul gives one of the most shocking descriptions of him in Colossians 1:15-18. Thirdly she says "His head is like the finest gold." Here the Shulamite is speaking about His head, or the place from which He makes decisions. That word fine or finest literally means to be refined as through a furnace and to come out in its purist form. Beloved, Jesus has passed through a furnace of affliction and He was found pure. It's from this place that Jesus makes decisions which are based on what's best for us. In the Chronicles of Narnia the question is asked, "Is He (Aslan, which was a type of Christ in the movie) quite....safe?? Safe? (said Mr. Beaver)...who said anything about being safe? Course He isn't safe. But He's good! He's the King I tell you." Jesus is anything but safe, He's a wild untamed lion who sits in the heavens and does what He pleases. He's not safe, but He's good. His head has passed through a furnace and it hasn't changed His love for us and the way that He thinks about us.

Fourthly she says "His locks are wavy and black like a raven." In this statement she is describing His youthful zeal. His hair isn't dead, decaying, brittle and broken, but rather long, strong and jet black like a raven. Jesus is youthful, full of zeal and well able to accomplish the things He starts. Fifthly she says "His eyes are like doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set." His eyes are pure and filled with equality. When Jesus looks at a situation He sees rightly, regardless if it's about people, nations or situations, He sees rightly. In Revelation 19:11, it is said of Jesus that "...in righteousness He judges and makes war." Many people don't think about Jesus leading a holy war, but it's totally true. This war that Jesus will lead will be a war led in truth and equality. Jesus will slay His enemies and those that oppose Him and it will be done in righteousness, truth and justice. As we continue through these descriptions we must keep in view that the bride is making these various statements about Jesus' leadership while she is under his severe testing. It's Jesus who has placed her into this season of divine testing and it's

also Jesus' eyes or what He sees that she says is perfect. It is one thing to talk about the qualities of Jesus' leadership but it's another thing to speak highly of Him while you're under intense pressure that He Himself has placed you in.

Sixthly, she says, "His cheeks are like a bed of spices, banks of scented herbs." This is speaking about Jesus' disposition or the emotions His cheeks express towards those who reach for Him. Hebrews 1:9 says Jesus "has been anointed with the oil of joy more than His companions." Jesus' cheeks declare to us that He is mostly happy and not mad, and mostly glad and not sad. He's the glad heart happy God. Seventhly, the bride says, "His lips are like lilies, dripping liquid myrrh." The Shulamite is saying that Jesus' words are full of purity and empower us to embrace suffering, hardship and pain, just like what is going on in her life currently, within the Song. She is under the hand of Jesus' suffering from the Saul watchmen around her; it is Jesus' voice which compelled her to rise up and answer the door, following Him into His sufferings. She knows firsthand that His words empower humanity to embrace whatever might come their way. Eighthly, she says that "His hands are rods of gold, set with beryl." She is saying that Jesus' hands are separated from His head, like ours. What I mean by this is that often times our minds think about doing nice things for others, but our hands never follow through. But this isn't the case for Jesus. His hands follow through with the thoughts of His head. With Jesus' hands He creates things, heals things, and sacrifices them for the sake of those that were far from Him. His hands are fine gold, safe and trustworthy.

Ninthly she says that "His body is carved ivory inlaid with sapphires." Ivory is different from elements because it's not mined out of a mountain of gathered from the depth of the sea, but only comes from death or great pain. You have to either kill animals while they are alive, or wait for them to die before you can get their ivory. In the same way Jesus body was pierced on the Cross, as the executioner came to Him and saw that He was already dead. So instead of breaking His legs, they pierced His side where water and blood flowed out from Him. The word here for body, in the King James, is actually the word bowels. It was there that He was pierced for the freedom of humanity (John 19:34). Tenthly, she says "His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of fine qold." This is speaking to the reality that Jesus is upheld by that which is pure, strong and eternal. Pillars speak of strength, leadership and orderliness. And marble is something that is forged under great pressure. Jesus is upheld by strength, eternality and a sure foundation that will never fade away. As sure as the rising of the sun unto its setting, so also is the faithfulness of Jesus. It's hard to image the pain that the bride is in when she makes such a statement about the stability of His leadership. She realizes that just because the season in her life has changed, that doesn't mean the foundation that He is seated upon has changed. His is eternal, solid and firm throughout the tests of time.

Eleventh, the bride says that "His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars." Lebanon was a place of elevation, or height which made it possible to see many things from this vantage point. And combined with the cedars which speak of stateliness, security and strength we get the idea that she is speaking about His heavenly position. Jesus doesn't look at us from only up close and personal, but also through the whole of our lives. He sees the end from the beginning. And it is in the oversight of our lives that we come to trust Him in such a way that we give our lives, our money, our time, our family, our future, our past and our present to this Man. He stands above all things and sees what's best for me, therefore I won't worry. It's here that the young maturing bride brings the descriptions of Jesus to a close by saying/summing up all things with "His mouth is most sweet, yes, He is all together lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." We, like the bride, love the many things that Jesus does for us and who He is as a person, but it's the words which proceed from His mouth that

move us the most. This is a huge statement from the bride concerning what He says, how He says it, and who He is saying it to. Yes, His mouth is most sweet, or the words which come from His mouth as we wait upon Him! And she brings the chapter to a close by saying that this is her Beloved and her friend. If you look back at these descriptions she just gave of Jesus, you will see that she starts with His head then goes to His hair, His eyes, His cheeks, His lips, His hands, His body, His legs and His overall countenance.

I long for the day when the Church realizes that they have a God who is far greater than the production of man and the ingenuity of humanity. As we have just read, He is stunning, glorious beyond description and yet so approachable. Look, I (Patrick) know that life is going to be very hard and it's going to present many challenges, but beyond all of this I want to know that there is something worth my time, my energy, my affections, my personality and all of my heart. I want to live for Him in the same way that He lived for me. Beyond dying for Jesus, I want to live for Jesus even when others assume He is misstreating me and should be taking better care of me. I want to side with the reality that He knows far better than I do and I can trust Him through all things. Beloved, don't get hung up on the hardship, let it go and cling only to Christ. This is your security, everything else is shifting sand.

# Chapter Fourteen Song of Songs 6:1-7

#### I) Introduction

A) In Session Fourteen we are going to see the daughters ask the bride where to find Jesus (SOS 6:1) and the bride's great Ah Ha moment (SOS 6:2-3). We are also going to see Jesus break the silence between Him and the bride (SOS 6:4), and the conquered heart of God as He praises her faithfulness in the midst of great pressure (SOS 6:5-7).

#### II) The Daughters Ask The Bride Where HER Beloved Has Gone (SOS 6:1)

- A) Song of Songs 6:1 <u>"Where has your Beloved gone, O fairest among women? Where has your Beloved gone that we may seek Him with you?"</u>
  - 1) It's here, because of the way the bride responded to Jesus in the midst of her great two-fold test, that the daughters come to her and ask for help in finding Jesus.
  - 2) In Song of Songs 5:9 the daughters ask her what makes her Beloved (Jesus) so much better than the other beloveds they were busy with. Then in Song of Songs 5:10-16 the bride responds by declaring her Beloved to be chief among ten thousand and describes His beauty from head to foot.
  - 3) Within this verse there are three things taking place;
    - (i) First: she made it through—The bride is now on the backside of her great two-fold test and she's more in love with Jesus; even though He still hasn't spoken to her since **Song of Songs 5:6.**
    - (ii) Secondly: the daughters watched the bride walk through this dark season of testing. When we trust Jesus in a wholehearted way, we release the fragrance of Christ through the mundane areas of our lives (work, school, home and responsibilities).
    - (iii) Thirdly: what the bride has chosen to do on her own, regardless of what others do or don't do, has caused those around her to become engaged with both her and her Jesus.
  - 4) The daughters are still serving Jesus at a distance because they ask twice about **how to find HER Beloved, not their Beloved.**
  - 5) The bride first asked the daughters for help finding Jesus (SOS 5:8), and now they are asking her where to find Him. You never know who's watching your life!

#### III) The Bride's Great Ah Ha Moment (SOS 6:2-3)

- A) Song of Songs 6:2-3 "My Beloved has gone to His garden, to the beds of spices, to feed His flock in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine. He feeds His flocks among the lilies."
  - 1) The bride is now answering the question from the daughters about where her Beloved had gone. And it's here that she has a powerful "Ah Ha" moment.
  - 2) Remember, He hasn't spoken to her yet and He won't until the following verse; but here, still in the middle of her crisis, she realizes that He never really left her at all.
  - 3) She tells the daughters that "He has gone down to His garden (Universal Church) and to His gardens (Local Churches)." It's only His manifest presence that she hasn't felt, but that doesn't mean that He had left her. He had been with her the entire time, she just didn't feel Him.
    - (i) Jesus has one garden and it's called the body of Christ, but it's made up of many Churches. New Life is part of the whole but we are not the whole part.
  - 4) She is coming to understand that Jesus comes and goes upon the hearts of all those that love Him.
  - 5) It's here that the bride is changing her phrase from "He is gone, I sought Him but couldn't find Him...He has turned aside and is gone..." (SOS 5:5-6), to "my Beloved has gone to His garden...I am my Beloveds and He is mine." She hasn't even been joined with Him, but she has come to understand that sometimes you feel Him and other times you don't; but it doesn't mean He's forsaken her.

# IV) The Lord Breaks The Silence And Their Separation (SOS 6:4)

- A) Song of Songs 6:4-5a "O My love you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners!
  - 1) It's here that Jesus finally breaks the silence between them and declares how He feels about the bride. She has walked through her great two-fold test and come out on the other side.
  - 2) "O My love you are as beautiful..."
  - 3) Jesus is again staying true to His pattern to first tell her how He feels about her prior to sharing any information with her. He says to her "O My love, you are as beautiful..."
- B) <u>"...you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners..."</u>
  - 1) Jesus is praising the bride because she has submitted to His leadership through the dark night of her soul working out what God has worked in.

- (i) Isaiah 53:11 "He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied."
- (ii) Hebrews 12:2 "Looking unto the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."
- 2) The bride's life is declaring the work of His hands. The satisfaction/joy that Jesus receives is to see sons and daughters come to the knowledge of God.
- C) <u>"...beautiful as Tirzah"</u> =Tirzah was the capital city of the Canaanites and it means *delight, favor and good*.
- D) <u>"...Lovely as Jerusalem"</u> =Jerusalem is the earthly worship capital of the world and it shadows the "New Jerusalem," the heavenly city that has yet to come down (Rev. 21-22). It speaks of perfection and holiness.
- E) <u>"...awesome as an army with banners!"</u> = An army with banners speaks of a victorious people. An army that returned with their banners speaks of an army that won. She is being pictured as victorious over that which conquers most people.
  - 1) In the time of battle it's most important to have weapons; but in the time of victory it's most important to have banners.

## V) The Conquered Heart Of God & His Praise Of The Bride's Maturity (SOS 6:5-7)

- A) Song of Songs 6:5-7 "Turn your eyes away from Me, for they have overcome Me. Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from mount Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of sheep which have come up from the washing; every one of them bears twins, and none is bearing among them.

  Like a piece of pomegranate are your temples behind your veil."
- B) "Turn your eyes away from Me, for they have overcome Me..."
  - In poetic language, the Lord is declaring over the bride what her faithfulness to Him in the midst of not feeling His presence and being mistreated by the shepherds around her, has done to Him.
  - 2) Beloved, the uncreated God is overcome (captured) by the faithfulness of the bride. Though she felt nothing, He felt everything. Jesus is so moved by the maturing bride that He can't look at her without being captured by emotions.
  - 3) The mountains don't move Him; the angels don't move Him; the powers of hell don't move Him; but the steadfast gaze from weak, struggling humans captures Him.
- C) "Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from Gilead."
  - 1) If you remember from **Song of Songs 4:1-5**, Jesus identified 8 budding virtues that the bride was longing for internally, but didn't yet possess externally.

- 2) Jesus is praising her internal longings that have become external fruit. They're not just longings.
- D) <u>"Your teeth are like a flock of sheep which have come up from the washing. Every one of which bears twins and none is barren among them."</u>
  - 1) This is speaking about her ability to chew up the Word of God (Heb. 5:12-14; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:1-3). But it's not an internal longing anymore, but rather an external reality. In real time ,what she is eating in the Word of God has empowered her to walk through this recent season and produce life, not only in herself, but also in others.
- E) "Like a piece of pomegranate are your temples behind your veil."
  - 1) The NLT/MSG translates the word *temples* to 'cheeks.' God is declaring that what she has been longing for internally is manifesting externally in a happy life. What she was reaching for internally has become a reality externally.
- F) Galatians 6:7-9 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."
- G) The conclusion is, don't quit reaching internally because in due season you will surely reap, if you don't lose heart!

# **Chapter Fourteen Extra Reading**

Within the Song of Songs there are several places where a serious shift takes place. The first real shift that we see take place is in **Song of Songs 4:6** where the bride finally agrees to start ascending the mountain of God. The second shift takes place in **Song of Songs 4:16** when the bride calls out to both the north and south winds to blow upon her life, so that her spices may flow out. And in **Song of Songs 6:1-7**, the verses that I will cover in this chapter, we are going to see another major shift start to take place in the life of the bride. As I have already mentioned, **Song of Songs 1-4** is about the bride's inheritance in Jesus; **Song of Songs 5-8** is about Jesus' inheritance in the bride. As we move into the latter half of the book we are going to see the bride start to move into a place of divine partnership with Jesus as He is busy working the harvest.

In this chapter we are going to see the daughters ask the bride where to find Jesus (SOS 6:1); the bride's great *Ah Ha* moment (SOS 6:2-3); Jesus break the silence between the bride and Him (SOS 6:4); and the conquered heart of God as He praises her faithfulness in the midst of great pressure (SOS 6:5-7). In the previous chapter I covered the portion of scripture where the bride praises Jesus in the midst of her great two-fold test (SOS 5:10-16) as she listed the beauty of Christ Jesus from head to feet. And here in Song of Songs 6:6-7 Jesus is going to respond to the bride's declaration of His beauty with an equally stunning description of the bride's beauty. It's the back and forth praise from one to the other. Jesus loves us, and His love for us awakens our love for Him.

#### The Daughters Ask the Bride Where Her Beloved Has Gone (SOS 6:1)

It was back in **Song of Songs 5:8** that the bride was asking for help from the daughters of Jerusalem to find her Beloved. But here in **Song of Songs 6:1** the daughters are now coming to the bride asking for help to find Jesus. They say to her "Where has your Beloved gone, O fairest among women? Where has your beloved gone that we may seek Him with you?" I believe that it's clear from the text that the daughters are asking her for help finding Jesus because of the way that the bride responded to the question of her Beloved's beauty in **Song of Songs 5:9**. Because she answered with such passion, clarity and an accurate description, it provoked them to search for Jesus with her. Her response to their questions caused them to search for Jesus along with her.

The goal of Christianity is that we have been touched with the beauty of Christ Jesus in such a way that it radiates from us both in the way we live and the way we answer those who are asking questions about Him. It is one thing to know about Jesus, but it's another thing to actually know Jesus and be able to share Jesus from a place of intimate knowledge about who He is. This is available to every person and it's something we should actually be desiring to do. This is what the Bible means when it says in 2<sup>nd</sup>

Timothy 4:2 "be ready in season and out of season..." It's not the passage that we use for "quick" witnessing to strangers, but a passage that we use for the relationships with people who don't know Jesus, and for those around us in our social world. It's meaning that we should be filled up with the knowledge of God and the revelation of His beauty, so that when people ask about Him our answer about Him provokes them, as it did for the daughters of Jerusalem.

Within this short verse I see three specific things taking place in the life of the bride. Firstly, it's clear that she has come through this great two-fold test even though Jesus is still being silent in her life. She's now on the backside, even though she's still not out of the woods. The tables are turning from it being about

her to being about others, as the Daughters are asking about her Jesus. Secondly, the Daughters have watched the bride walk through this recent season of testing. It is important that as Christians and those who love Jesus that we make a decision to follow Christ through the up's and downs of life regardless of what those around us do or don't do. Many will follow you and many will turn aside, but you can't make your plans based on what others do. You must settle it in your heart and say "I will follow You until" (SOS **4:6).** If you base your decision to follow Jesus throughout your life on constantly changing variables, you will be among the most miserable people on planet earth. And thirdly, as the bride has been faithful to Jesus throughout her journey, it has caused people around her who were once lukewarm to be engaged with Jesus also. The Daughters who were serving Jesus at a distance throughout the Song are still at a distance in this verse, but at least they are asking. The bride first asked them for help finding Jesus in Song of Songs 5:8, but now in Song Songs 6:1 they are asking her for help finding Jesus. The bride's life shows us that you never know who is watching your life. It's not just the people watching your life and hoping that you will fail that are important to keep in your mind, but it's the ones watching you to see if your Jesus is real that you want to keep in mind. The bride made up her mind that she was following Jesus until, and because of that resolve, others around her are coming to her with questions. People are watching. What are they reading when they see your life?

#### The Bride's Great Ah Ha Moment (SOS 6:2-3)

It's here within these two verses that the bride is going to receive a powerful revelation about where Jesus is. In **Song of Songs 6:2-3** the bride makes this statement "My Beloved has gone to His garden, to the beds of spices, to feed His flock in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine. He feeds His flocks among the lilies." The bride is answering the question of the Daughters from **Song of Songs 6:1** about where her Beloved had gone with this statement here in **Song of Songs 6:2-3**. If you remember, Jesus hasn't spoken to the bride since **Song of Songs 5:6** when He called her out of her bed to open the door and enter into the fellowship of His sufferings. But it's here at the tail end of her crisis that she comes to the realization that He has never left her after all. She sees that it's just His manifest presence that she hasn't felt, but just because she doesn't "feel" Him it doesn't mean that He has left her. This is a powerful Ah Ha moment for her.

She tells the Daughters "He has gone to His garden (Universal Church) and to His gardens (Local Church)." Jesus has one garden or one universal Church that is made up of millions of Christians worldwide and those Churches throughout the world are called Local Churches made up of individual groups of people. It's like the Church that I (Patrick) pastor, New Life. New Life is part of the whole, but we are not the whole part. New Life is one local Church in Raymond, WA that is actually a part of THE CHURCH which is the universal Church or the Church worldwide. The bride understands that Jesus hasn't left her in a way that He's forsaken her; it's just that He comes and goes upon our hearts. It's His manifest presence that she didn't feel but that's not the same thing as Jesus Himself leaving us. We know from the Old Testament in **Deuteronomy 31:6** that "God will never leave us nor forsake us." Her great Ah Ha moment is that Jesus comes and goes upon the hearts of those He loves continually throughout our lives. It's not that He forsakes us; He just lifts His manifest presence off our hearts from time to time as He is moving throughout the nations of the earth.

We know the bride is having this revelation, not only because I am saying that she is, but because the text tells us so. In **Song of Songs 6:2-3** she says, "My Beloved has gone to His garden...I am my Beloveds and He is mine."

This is much different from her statement in **Song of Songs 5:6** where she said "My Beloved had turned away and was gone...I sought Him but I didn't find Him...I called Him but He gave no

<u>answer."</u> Remember, it's not until the following verse that Jesus is going to break the silence and speak to her. So here in **Song of Songs 6:2-3** she is still in the midst of her crisis, but it's also here that she is receiving the revelation that He hasn't ever left her; only His manifest presence had been lifted off her heart. She is saying that "Sometimes we feel Him and other times we don't. Sometimes He's near us and we can feel Him, but other times He's not." And so it is with all those who love Jesus; sometimes we feel Him and sometimes we don't. This is her powerful *Ah Ha* moment.

## The Lord Breaks the Silence and Their Separation (SOS 6:4)

The bride has now gone through a very difficult season where she has lost His presence upon her heart (SOS 5:6) and she has been wounded by the Church leaders of her day (SOS 5:7). Even though the bride has not felt Jesus' immediate presence, Jesus has been feeling immensely and it's here that He shares just how much He feels towards the bride. In Song of Songs 6:4 Jesus finally breaks the silence and says this to the young mature bride "O My love you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners!" It would seem because the bride had not felt Jesus' presence throughout her great two-fold test that He didn't have much to say, but that isn't the case at all. Jesus is actually holding on to a flood of information about the bride. His silence wasn't His rejection of her, but His approval of her. He was watching, and even though she felt nothing, He felt everything.

Throughout the Song, Jesus has been faithful to stay true to His pattern of first telling the bride how He feels about her before He says anything else to her. He breaks the silence by saying "O My love." Jesus makes it clear with His first words to the bride since Song of Songs 5:6 that He loves her and He feels deeply about her. Jesus loves us in a way that we will never fully know, maybe not even in eternity. What God did in becoming a Man, living and dying as a criminal for the redemption of hateful sinners is something that will never register in my mind. He then says to her "you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners." Jesus is praising the bride because she has worked out what He has worked in. She has submitted to His leadership through the dark night of her soul in such a way that she trusted Him in blind faith and He is now expressing His feelings towards her.

The Bible says in Isaiah 53:11 "He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied" and in Hebrews 12:2 "Looking unto the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Jesus went through extreme pain to endure the Cross. It was pain that we will never know, only read about, pray about and look into, but never will we feel what He felt as He bore the sin of mankind. But that wasn't the joy that was set before Him as the writer of Hebrews just said. That wasn't the labor that made His soul satisfied as Isaiah the prophet wrote. What was the joy and what made Him satisfied? It was the understanding that on the other side of His pain and suffering was the freedom to an entire human race, that if they so choose, they could become slaves of righteousness and no longer slaves of sin. This was what sustained Jesus in the midst of His "dark night." During the 1700's in Hernhut Germany, there was a Moravian man by the name of Count Ludwig Von Zinzendorf who pioneered a night and day prayer meeting that lasted 100+ years. As this prayer meeting grew, it turned into a powerful mission movement that sent out hundreds of missionaries to preach the gospel in dark, unreached places of the known world. Many of these young missionaries died as they were sown onto the mission field. The saying behind all of their missions thrusts was "that the Lamb would receive the reward of His suffering." They were passionate that Jesus would see the labor (crucifixion) of His soul and be satisfied. Jesus is seeing the work of His hands in the life of young bride as she has stayed faithful to Him in the midst of the dark night of her soul.

There are three phrases that Jesus speaks over the bride in **Song of Songs 6:4** and we are going to look at them in brief detail. Firstly Jesus says to her "...you are as beautiful as Tirzah..." Tirzah was the capital city of the Canaanites and the word actually means delight, favor and good. The commentators have much to say about this little city and its comparison with the mature bride, but for this chapter I am not going to get into any of them. Jesus was using the city of Tirzah to speak about her natural beauty, and the perfection that she was both reaching for and attaining. Secondly, Jesus says to her "...you're as lovely as Jerusalem..." Jerusalem was the earthly worship capital of the world and it shadows the Heavenly Jerusalem which will descend from heaven to the earth after the first earth and the first heavens are done away with. When John sees this city coming down in Revelation 21 he says that it's like a bride adorned for her husband. This heavenly city speaks of perfection in the grace of God and it is being used to describe the bride's beauty among life in this fallen age. Spiritually she is perfect or beautiful before God. And thirdly Jesus says that "...she is as awesome as an army with banners." Here God is using a military term or event to describe the victorious bride as she has come through this dark night. When an army went into battle the most important thing to have was weapons. But when returning from a battle the most important thing to have is banners. Banners represent your victory over your enemy. If the winning team from the super-bowl returned with only their uniforms to the citywide parade, we would wonder what happened. We love the team and their uniforms, but where is the trophy (banner) to prove that you won. She is being pictured as a conquering bride who overcame the test: to become offended at God, and throw in the towel. Instead of surrendering her banners, she held onto them and came out victorious.

#### The Conquered Heart of God and His Praise of the Bride's Maturity (SOS 6:5-7)

The most important thing about the Song of Songs is not only understanding all the little phrases and seeing some of the revelation that there is to be had. The most important thing about the Song of Songs is that you take the actual words and situations and turn them into an active dialog with Jesus, so that you also encounter Jesus as the bride does. Her experience can also become your experience. It's free for the taking and God is no respecter of persons. Jesus here continues His praise of the bride and actually reveals the depth of His heart and his emotions towards the victorious bride. In **Song of Songs 6:5-7** He says to her "Turn your eyes away from Me, for they have overcome Me. Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from mount Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of sheep which have come up from the washing; every one of which bears twins, and none is barren among them. Like a piece of pomegranate are your temples behind your veil."

As far as poetic language goes, this statement from Jesus toward the mature bride is among the greatest from His lips. It is here that we don't just get a glimpse, but a very clear view of just how much Jesus feels when we stay faithful to Him in the midst of hardship and pressure. He says to her "turn your eyes away from Me, for they have overcome Me..." In some of the commentaries I have looked at, they assume that Jesus is making a statement of disgust and disappointment in the bride, but this is so far off base it's not even funny. This isn't a statement of disappointment but rather a statement of a conquered heart. Jesus is saying to her "Turn your eyes away from Me. I can't even look at you. O My love, the way that you have stayed faithful to Me in the midst of such intense pressure, while not feeling My presence, has left Me totally overcome and undone. You have conquered My heart, My love. I am so overcome with emotion as I look at your weak but steady heart. I love you in a way that you might never know." This is the ravished/conquered heart of God. The mountains don't move Him, the devil and all the demons of

hell and even His own creation don't move Him, but the steady gaze from the struggling heart leaves Him totally undone. He's conquered.

From this powerful phrase about how He feels about her, He then moves describing three different things that are going on in the life of the bride. In **Song of Songs 4:1-5** Jesus spoke about 8 budding virtues that were deep within the life of the bride, but hadn't yet manifested externally in her life. But here it's a totally different story. Here Jesus is going to speak to her about some of those very same things from **Song of Songs 4:1-5**, but now instead of them being just internal longings, they have become eternal realties for the life of the bride. What she was only reaching for internally has become what she owns externally in her life. This is the beauty of following God in the midst of the mundane areas of our lives, throughout the many seasons that come and go. If we will stay faithful to Jesus over time, He will make those things that we are reaching for a reality in our lives.

Paul closes out his letter to the Galatians with this truth from Galatians 6:7-9 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." Paul says that we have whatever we reap. That could either be really good news for you right now, or really bad news. It could be really good news if you're sowing good things, but it could also be really bad news if you are sowing bad things. Whatever you are sowing, you have. If you are sowing good things, then Paul assures you that in due time you will reap a harvest if you don't quit. One of the powerful themes from the life of the bride, in the Song of Songs, is that we see a picture of a person who refuses to guit and become bitter due to the pressures of life and the many ups and downs. As the bride has been faithful to Jesus throughout the many seasons, she has begun to possess externally the things she was longing for internally. In order to emerge with the passions and dreams of your heart becoming a reality in your life, you must not quit. You must stay the course and walk through the dark night of your soul. Don't stop now. You have made it this far and there is so much more to receive in the grace of God. If you have taken yourself out of the game, put yourself back in. Don't sit any longer on the sidelines when Jesus has called you to be a starter in His game. This is your time. Stick it out and play through the side-aches and other difficulties that are going to come your way. Remember, whatever you're reaching for you will soon possess, but only if you don't quit.

# **Chapter Fifteen Song of Songs 6:8-13**

- I) Jesus Declares The Bride To Be Among The Favorite Of Church History (SOS 6:8-9)
  - A) Song of Songs 6:8-9 "There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins without number.

    My dove, My perfect one, is the only one, the only one of her mother, the favorite of her who bore her. The daughters saw her and called her blessed, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her."
    - 1) It's here that Jesus is continuing to praise the bride from **Song of Songs 6:4-7** where He said "O my love...your beautiful, lovely...victorious...you've conquered My heart...I love your dedication...your ability to eat the word...and your happy heart." In the above verse Jesus is continuing to praise the bride.
    - 2) Solomon is praising the bride by describing the other women that he has around him. He is saying that his bride, his perfect one, far surpasses the many others that he has around him.
  - B) <u>"My dove, my perfect one, is the only one, the only one of her mother, the favorite of her who</u> bore her..."
    - 1) "My dove..." = He is once again declaring His bride to be single-minded, devoted and pure.
    - 2) <u>"...My perfect one is the only one..."</u> = He is declaring her not to be "perfect" but moving forward in maturity. It's not that she's attained perfection, but that she's reaching for maturity.
      - (i) Ephesians 4:13-15 "...till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children...but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head—Christ..."
    - 3) The goal of Jesus' heart is that He would have a bride on the earth that would be equally yoked with Him in love, understanding that she has an inheritance in Him (1<sup>st</sup> Commandment), and that He has an inheritance in her (2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment).
    - 4) <u>"The only one of her mother, the favorite of her who bore her..."</u> = We understand from other passages and specifically this one, that her mother is the Church or the person (vehicle, or instrument) that gave her life.
    - 5) Solomon is saying that there are many people who love him, and even at different degrees; but his bride, or his dove, his perfect one is the favorite of her mother.
    - 6) When it comes to the Kingdom of God and being in relationship with Jesus, we get out of it what we put into it.

- 7) All of us have been given a measure of grace and what we do with that measure is up to us in partnership with the Holy Spirit. God has invited everyone to go deep and to love Him in the way that He has loved us, but few respond to His invitation.
  - (i) 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:10 "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly then they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."
- 8) There are many Christians in the body of Christ, but there are few that strive to love God in the way that He has loved them.
  - (i) Philippians 3:12-13 "Not that I have already attained, or am perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus laid hold of me."
- 9) Though Church history is filled with millions of Christians, it only has some that stand out among the many as our favorites.
  - (i) Watchman Nee's commentary on the "Song of Songs" touched me deeply, but it wasn't published until after he died in prison under persecution for the Gospels sake. Nee thought it better to die for Jesus in mainland China then go somewhere in the west and be free.
- 10) The bride is no longer being praised only by Solomon, but also the others around her because of the way she has pressed in and worked through the many hardships that have come her way. She's maturing and it's beautiful.

# II) The Bride Is Praised For Her Maturing Glory (SOS 6:10)

- A) Song of Songs 6:10 Who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as an army with banners?
- B) <u>"Who is she who looks forth as the morning..."</u> = It's here that the bride is receiving the fruit of her decision to <u>"follow Jesus until the **DAY** breaks and the **SHADOWS** flee away (SOS 4:6)."</u>
  - 1) The shadows aren't totally gone, but she's starting to break forth with the light of day.
    - (i) Proverbs 4:18 "But the path of the just is like the shining of the sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day."
- C) <u>"...fair as the moon..."</u> = She's reflecting the subtle, hidden, indwelling Christ that's much different than the sun (Col. 1:27). The moon has a much different purpose than the sun, for it shines at night and it's a reflection of the Sun. It has no light of its own (Gen. 1:14-16).
- D) <u>"...awesome as an army with banners."</u> = It's here that she is summed up by not only living a nearly shadow-less life and reflecting the inward Christ, but she's also victorious over her enemies. An army with banners, was an army returning from battle in victory. She's victorious!

#### III) The Bride's Sudden Growth In The Second Commandment (SOS 6:11-12)

- A) Song of Songs 6:11-12 I went down to the garden of nuts to see the verdure of the valley, to see whether the vine had budded. Before I was even aware, my soul had made me as the chariots of my noble people.
- B) <u>"I went to the garden of nuts to see the verdure of the valley, to see whether the vine had budded..."</u>
  - 1) Throughout the entire Song, the garden of God is mentioned 9 times. The first 3 times are in reference to her garden (SOS 4:12,15,16) and the last 6 references are speaking about His garden (SOS 4:16;5:1;6:2,11:7:12;8:13).
  - 2) It's here that the bride has gone down into the garden of God to serve others in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment.
  - 3) She was going down with the purpose of seeing if the vine had budded and to help it come to fruition.
  - 4) This is speaking about the immature Church as the garden of God, still in seed (nut) form, and it's just starting to bud or break forth with real external fruit.
  - 5) She's now serving others in the way that God had served her. Do you remember from **Song of Songs 2:15** that she said her vineyard was just starting to bud, and in **Song of Songs 4:1-5** where God addressed the 8 budding virtues within the bride that weren't external yet, just internal?
  - 6) She is only able to care for others in this patient way, because she has first been served by God in a patient way.
- C) "Before I was even aware of it, my soul had made me like as the chariots of my noble people."
  - 1) It's here that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment (service to others) is being worked out through the life of the bride in a real, powerful and fruitful way.
  - 2) Her soul has been transformed in such a way that she is now moved towards people from the inside out.
  - 3) Because the bride has put the 1st commandment in first place (being drawn away with God) she is now walking out the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment in a powerful and fruitful way.
  - 4) In Hebrew culture and the Old Testament time period, there were several ways to travel: with a chariot being among the best and smoothest.
  - 5) She's likening the transformation of her soul towards people in the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment like moving swiftly, stately and smoothly in a chariot.

- 6) Her soul has been transformed through the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment to do the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment.
  - (i) Colossians 3:1-4 "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."
- 7) Many people are worried that if we give ourselves to the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment in a real way, that the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment won't get done. But it's clear that we do the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment through the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment.

## IV) Two Different Responses To The Bride From The Church (SOS 6:13)

- A) Song of Songs 6:13 "Return, return, O Shulamite; Return, return, that we may look upon you! What would you see in the Shulamite—as it were the dance of two camps?"
  - 1) The daughters first speak up and ask the Shulamite (bride) to stay so that they can continue learning from her. But she is committed to partnering with Jesus in serving His many gardens, which means she must move on with Him.
    - (i) Many were sad to see Jesus move on to other people and the same was true with Paul (John. 16:5-7; Acts 20:37-38).
  - 2) The second response is from the watchmen who struck her and wounded her. They have a response of sarcasm and distain for the wholehearted way that the bride has searched out Jesus.
  - 3) There will always be a dance of two camps in the body of Christ. Those that desire wholeheartedness before God and those that don't. You life of wholehearted devotion to Christ, will always encourage some and challenge others.

# **Chapter Fifteen Extra Reading**

Often times in Christianity we have been raised within a culture that speaks, sings and preaches much about the love of God, but my experience is that many never actually experience that love. It's one thing to know that God loves you, but it's something totally different to live in the experience of His love for us. This is why Paul prays in **Ephesians 3:18** that we might encounter the Lord of God by saying "that you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of God which passes knowledge..." It's the experience of the love of God that has and will continue to empower the bride to continue journeying along with Jesus through that which is yet to come.

Here in Chapter 15 Jesus continues His praise of the faithful bride as she has come through the recent season of testing underneath His leadership. He is lavishing great love upon her for her faithfulness to Him. In this chapter we are going to look at Jesus' praise of the bride as the favorite of Church history (SOS 6:8-9), the bride's maturing glory (SOS 6:10), the brides sudden growth in the second commandment (SOS 6:11-12) and two different responses to the bride from the Church (SOS 6:13).

#### Jesus Declares The Bride To Be Among The Favorite Of Church History (SOS 6:8-9)

Here in **Song of Songs 6:8-9** Jesus is continuing His praise of the bride from **Song of Songs 6:4-7** by saying to her "There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, My perfect one, is the only one, the only one of her mother, the favorite of her who bore her. The daughters saw her and called her blessed, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her." The approach I have taken through this entire book is that of an allegory. What I mean by allegory is that I am using Solomon as a type and shadow of Jesus and the Shulamite as a type and shadow of the bride of Christ. In the natural love story of Solomon, he was a man who had many wives and many concubines. But when he looked at the many women he had around him, he said that "His dove, his perfect one, is the only, the only one of her mother, the favorite of her who bore her..." Jesus continues to refer to the bride as His dove, or His love of purity, single-mindedness and devotion. When He says that she is perfect, He doesn't mean perfect as in sinless like Jesus, but rather perfect here refers to being mature or growing up in the faith. Paul said it this way in Ephesians 4:13-15 "...till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children...but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ."

The goal of Jesus' heart is that He would a bride on the earth that would be equally yoked with Him in love, understanding that she has an inheritance in Him and that He has one in her. This is what we mean by an equally yoked relationship. It's the reality that Jesus can share His Kingdom with her as she shares her life with Him. It's a partnership between humanity and divinity. God has determined not to work on the earth without humans. Even in the age which is yet to come, during the 1,000 year of Christ on the earth, Jesus will still be delegating authority to the redeemed. It's this bride in the Song of Songs that is becoming an equally yoked partner with Jesus. Solomon says of his bride here "...the only one of her mother, the favorite of her who bore her." I have made clear who the mother is in pervious chapters and this is the main verse that clearly helps us understand that the mother is her who bore her, or in our allegory, the Church. It was John Calvin who rightly said "If God is our Father, then the Church is our mother." What Solomon is saying through this passage is that there are many people who love him and

even at different levels (queens, concubines ect...) but his dove, or his perfect one is the favorite of her who bore her.

It's my personal opinion that in the Kingdom of God, we get out of it what we put into it. Now I believe that the Bible presents this same idea, but because it doesn't come outright and say it, I will keep it as my personal opinion. It's true that all of us have been given a measure of faith or grace, and what we do with that grace is up to us. In Matthew 25 Jesus tells a story about 3 different people who were given talents. The receiving of the talents in the story is Jesus' gift to those 3 people, but what they do with them is their gift to Jesus. So the saying is true, we have all been given something and what we do with what we've been given is up to us, through partnership with the Holy Spirit. Paul says something very similar in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:10 when he says "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace" toward me wasn't in vain; but I labored more abundantly then they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." I love how Paul starts and ends this statement. He starts out by saying "I have labored more abundantly than they all." Paul was saying, what God gave me wasn't in vain, I worked hard to wring out everything that was given to me. But he finishes his statement by saying "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Paul was saying, I worked hard, harder than the other people around me, yet it wasn't I who was working but the grace of God which was given to me. We have all been given a measure of grace, and it's up to us through the power of the Holy Spirit to put that grace to work.

It seems that there are many in the body of Christ, but few who strive to love Jesus in the way that He has loved them. And though Church history is filled with millions of Christians, it only has some that stand out among the many as the favorites. Watchmen Nee is one of those who stands out among Church history as a favorite. Watchmen Nee lived in China in the midst of great communism which was very hostile towards Christianity. And instead of moving to west where he could've lived in religious freedom, he chose to stay there and risk his very life to take the Gospel to his countrymen. It was there that Watchmen wrote a commentary on the Song of Songs. This was one of the first commentaries that deeply impacted me concerning the Song of Songs. What become even more powerful to me about this commentary that Watchmen wrote, is that Watchmen was imprisoned and this commentary on the Song of Songs wasn't published until after his death in prison. Nee had no idea about the impact of his writings and because he said no to so much, he has become a favorite among Church history. The bride is in this place of being one of the favorite's because of the way that she is living her life and making Jesus the priority of her life.

# The Bride Is Praised For Her Maturing Glory (SOS 6:10)

Jesus continues His praise of the bride by describing her glory as a mature saint. Jesus says to her in Song of Songs 6:10 "who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as an army with banners?" If you remember back in Song of Songs 4:6 when the bride finally agreed to ascend the mountain of Myrrh she made a powerful statement by saying "until the day breaks and the shadows flee away..." What she was saying there is "the shadow areas of my life are not gone, so instead of waiting here for them to go, I will rise up and follow You until they do." So here in Song of Songs 6:10 Jesus is praising the bride because though the shadows aren't completely gone, the light of day is starting to break over her. She made a prayer in Song of Songs 4:6 that she is now reaping the fruit of in Song of Songs 6:10. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 4:18 "But the path of the just is like the shinning of the sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day." The goal of our lives in Christ is that our life reflects the life of Christ to the world in which we live. Solomon is letting us know that our goal is

to have a noon day sun shining over our lives for the purpose of sharing Jesus with the others that we come in contact with.

The light of the moon is much different from the light of the sun. The reason for that is because the sun generates its own light, but the moon on the other hand is only a reflection of the sun's light, so it actually has no light of its own. Jesus continues His praise of the bride by saying to her that "she is as awesome as an army with banners." This becomes a powerful praise for the bride in the context of her recent season that she has just come through. During Song of Songs chapter 5 the bride entered into the dark night of her soul. This was an incredibly dark place for her as she lost both His presence and her place of ministry among the Church. But because she didn't give up, and throw in the towel, she came out on the other side. This is why Jesus likens her to an army with banners. When armies were going to war the most important thing they could carry was weapons. But when an army was returning from war, the most important thing they could be carrying was banners. These banners meant that they overcame their enemy and were returning victorious. Jesus in the same way is declaring the bride to be an overcomer who conquered the difficult season and her own conscious. This is truly a beautiful bride.

#### The Brides Sudden Growth In The Second Commandment (SOS 6:11-12)

In Song of Songs 6 we seen the bride's powerful revelation that Jesus had never left her, but had only withdrawn His manifest presence off her heart as He was working in His many vineyards. The bride found Him once again as she also moved into His vineyards and started working with Him tending the gardens. Here in Song of Songs 6:11-12 the bride is going to a have a powerful and very right transformation of her soul concerning the second commandment. The bride is now talking and she says "I went down to the garden of nuts to see the verdure of the valley, to see whether the vine had budded. Before I was even aware, my soul had made me as the chariots of my noble people." The bride has gone down into the vineyards to serve others in the second commandment and something powerful happens to her own soul. Up until this point the bride has mainly put her focus on serving Jesus in the secret place, though at times her life has been very public. But now, more than ever she is moving into a place where she is serving others in the second commandment. And it's here in service to others that she says "...before I was even aware, my soul had made me as the chariots of my noble people."

During the time when this was written there was only several ways to travel. You could take basically take a camel, a horse, walk or a chariot. The chariot was the best of them all because it enabled you to sit on something comfortable while you traveled. What the bride was saying is "as I got involved with people in the many gardens of God, my soul, the internal life of me got caught up with them. I was transformed towards them and I fell in love with them as I served them and worked with them."

It seems that much of the Church gets worried about loving Jesus as if no work will ever get done. It's so easy to put much effort and energy into the building of the ministry without spending equal amount of time on loving Jesus and spending time with Him. We often build great ministries that reach the masses, but fail to connect with Jesus at the heart level. It's hard and nearly impossible to build a deep relationship with Jesus on the run. I have heard many say that they don't pray for more than 15 minutes at a time. That's good. More prayer is better than less prayer, but we must take time to sit before Him. It's not about the amount by any degree. But there is also the reality that we often spend much time doing things that help put our mind in neutral when it could be engaged with Jesus. But what the Bride's life is showing us here is that when we get busy loving Jesus in the place of intimacy, it's just a matter of time that our souls become transformed and we start serving others in the second commandment or in

the place of ministry. Ministry to others is the fruit of intimacy with Jesus. We often forget that the Chief Intercessor is also the Chief Evangelist. We must do the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment through the power of the first commandment. It's not one or the other, but rather both.

#### Two Different Responses To The Bride From The Church (SOS 6:13)

As you endeavor to serve Jesus and get involved with building His Church you will quickly experience the difficulty that is connected with it. The bride is here in a place where not only Jesus is praising her, but also the daughters around her. They have watched the bride for a long time now, and see the fruit and wisdom of her decisions to follow the King forward in radical obedience. Because the bride is starting to move into the place of fruitful and powerful ministry with Jesus the daughters cry out for her to stay with them. Here in **Song of Songs 6:13** the daughters first say "Return, Return, O Shulamite; Return, Return, that we may look upon you!" After the daughters say this to her the watchmen speak up and say "What would you see in the Shulamite—as it were the dance of two camps." The bride is becoming more and more busy with ministry in her bridal partnership with Jesus and she is moving on. But the daughters don't want her to move on because they are just starting to come alive and they want to keep looking at her.

Jesus had the same situation happen when He was moving on to other villages and so also did Paul when he was moving on to other places (John 16:5-7; Acts 20:37-38). The first response from the daughters is very endearing towards the bride. They see the fruit of her personal choices and the wisdom with which she made decisions. But the second response from the Watchmen is a sarcastic response to her wholeheartedness. The truth is, your commitment to follow Jesus will encourage some and it will bother others, stay faithful anyway. There will always be some that are excited about what you're doing and others who say your into legalism, and what you're doing isn't needed. The watchmen didn't care about the bride wholeheartedness, but the daughters did.

Make up your mind like the bride to serve Jesus regardless of what others do or don't do. You have to make the commitment to move forward and love God in the way that He has loved you. It seems that these two camps in the body of Christ have always been here and will always be there. It's not trying to change one camp or the other, but rather continue to change as your with Jesus. The Bible is your commission to go deep in God. Take it and run with it. Don't let anyone or anything hold you back from following Jesus through the many seasons of life, even if the watchmen around you don't agree with what you're doing!

# **Chapter Sixteen Song of Songs 7:1-9**

#### I) Introduction

A) In the previous session we looked at Jesus' praise of the bride for being the favorite among Church history (SOS 6:8-9) and His praise for her maturing glory (SOS 6:10). We also looked at the bride's sudden heart change towards the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment (SOS 6:11-12) and the two responses towards the brides devotion to Jesus (SOS 6:13).

#### II) The Bride Is Publicly Vindicated By The Daughters Of Jerusalem (SOS 7:1-5)

- A) Song of Songs 7:1-5 How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! The curves of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of skillful workmen. Your navel is a rounded goblet; it lacks no blended beverage. Your waist is a heap of wheat set about with lilies. Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. Your neck is like an ivory tower, your eyes like the pools in Hesbon by the gate of bath Rabbim. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon which looks towards Damascus. Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel, and the hair of your head is like purple; a king is held captive by your tresses.
  - 1) It's here that the daughters of Jerusalem answer the sarcastic response from the watchmen in **Song of Songs 6:13** about the wholehearted devotion of the bride when they said "What would you see in the Shulamite—as it were the dance of two camps."
  - 2) Some commentators are divided about who's speaking here (SOS 7:1-5); but I believe it to be crystal clear from 2 separate parts that it's the daughters speaking and not Jesus.
    - (i) Every time Jesus speaks to her He calls her "His love" or "My love" or "My spouse" and here in **Song of Songs 7:1** they say "How beautiful... O prince's daughter!"
    - (ii) And in **Song of Songs 7:5** it says "A king is held captive by your tresses." Jesus speaks in the first person, and not removed by using words like "a king."
  - 3) The daughters start here by describing the beauty of the bride's wholehearted devotion to Jesus.
- B) Song of Songs 7:1a "How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter!" = This is speaking about the fruit of evangelism in her life. Our feet throughout the Bible speak about carrying the Gospel to others and about destiny (Luke 15).
  - 1) Isaiah 52:7 <u>"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that bring the good news (gospel)..."</u>
  - 2) Ephesians 6:15 "...and having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace..."

- C) Song of Songs 7:1b "The curves of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a skillful workmen." = Her thighs speak of the strength upon which her whole body is being supported. The strength of her support base is being likened to jewels that have been handcrafted by skillful workmen.
  - 1) When we meet those in the Lord who have stood through the test of time and still have passion for Jesus later in life, we see that this happened over time, being tempered through many storms. Strength in one's legs is costly and time consuming.
- D) Song of Songs 7:2a <u>"Your navel is a rounded goblet; it lacks no blended beverage..."</u> = The Hebrew meaning for navel here is "umbilical cord." This is speaking about the healthy, formative early years of developing our inner life in God (Jer. 1:5). Her inner life developed correctly. She's been well fed.
- E) Song of Songs 7:2b "Your waist is a heap of wheat set about with lilies." = The daughters see the bride as prepared for the coming harvest. She's pictured as having a large waist, or being pregnant with harvest. What she will bring forth in the harvest will be pure (lilies).
  - 1) **John 4:35** <u>"...Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already</u> white for harvest."
- F) Song of Songs 7:3 "Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a Gazelle." = This is speaking again about her ability to feed and nurture young ones (fawns are deer less than a year old) in the grace of God. It also speaks of a double portion anointing. I believe the double portion anointing is an anointing of power and wisdom.
- G) Song of Songs 7:4a <u>"Your neck is like an ivory tower..."</u> = Jesus originally praised her in Song of Songs 1:10; 4:4 for the strength of her neck. The neck speaks of submission to God and others. But here, the daughters speak of her neck now being like ivory.
  - 1) It speaks of submission through pain. It's not just a longing to be submitted, but she has become submitted and it's been through pain!
- H) Song of Songs 7:4b <u>"Your eyes, like the pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath Rabbim."</u> = The daughters see her as having received much revelation from God about both her life and His. Commentators state that Heshbon was known as a resort town with clear water.
  - 1) Ephesians 1:17-18 "That the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened..."
  - 2) **John 9:41** <u>"Jesus said to them, if you were blind, you would have no sins; but now you say, we see, therefore, your sin remains."</u>
- I) Song of Songs 7:4c <u>"Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon which looks towards Damascus."</u> = The daughters see that she rightly discerns her enemy and is able to be prepared for combat. She has a discerning nose! Damascus is the capital of Syria which was Israel's greatest enemy.

- J) Song of Songs 7:5a "Your head crowns you like mount Carmel..." = The daughters see that she has been crucified in her mind. Mount Carmel is where Elijah called down fire on the prophets of Baal demonstrating the power of God over the devil. Our mind is central to the place of effective warfare!
  - 1) 1st Corinthians 2:16 "But we have the mind of Christ."
  - 2) Philippians 2:5 "Let that same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus."
  - 3) Romans 12:2 <u>"Be not conformed to this world, but rather be transformed by the renewing</u> of your mind..."
  - 4) 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 10:3-3 This is all about our mind in the midst of warfare
- K) Song of Songs 7:5b "And the hair of your head is like purple..." = The daughters are speaking about her dedication to God from the Nazirite vow (Num. 6), and it's here that royalty is now added to her dedication. Her hair had been spoken of earlier, but now it's being spoken of in terms of royalty.
  - 1) Revelation 17:4 "The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones..." John is speaking about the harlot Babylon, or what I call the "High-class Harlot." It's a counterfeit royalty.
  - 2) <u>"...and put on Him a scarlet robe...they clothed Him with purple and twisted a crown...put on Him a purple robe..."</u> (Matt. 27:28; Mark 15:17; Jn. 19:2).
- L) **Song of Songs 7:5c** <u>"...A king is held captive by your tresses."</u> = Tresses are locks or long hair which is again speaking about her dedication to Jesus through the many seasons.
- M) Right now the earth doesn't take the Church seriously, but there is coming a day, when the kings of the earth will take note of the beauty of the Risen Christ in the midst of His Church. Kings will be held captive by the unwavering beauty of Christ in us.
  - 1) If you remember in **Song of Songs 5:10-16** that the bride listed 10 descriptions of the beauty of Jesus from His head to His feet, but here the bride is praised by the daughters as they speak about her feet, thighs, navel, waist, breasts, neck, eyes, nose, head and her hair.

## III) Jesus Publicly Vindicates The Bride For Her Steadfast Devotion (SOS 7:6-9)

- A) Song of Songs 7:6-9 "How fair and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights! This stature of yours is like a palm tree, and your breasts like its clusters. I said "I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches. Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine. The fragrance of your breath like apples, and the roof or your mouth like the best wine."
  - 1) It's here that Jesus breaks into the conversation about the beauty of the bride because He can't help Himself. His words and feelings towards her faithfulness to Him over the seasons have overcome Him. He can't be silent!

#### B) Song of Songs 7:6 "How fair and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights!"

- 1) Our Beloved Jesus is faithful and true! He is remaining true to His pattern to first tell her how He feels about her before He says anything else to her.
- 2) It's here that Jesus is praising her for the delights she now possesses in the Godhead, but this isn't the first time He has praised her. And it's not only in the place of maturity that He has lavished love on her but throughout the entire process from immaturity to maturity.
- 3) Beloved, you will never make it to chapter 7 in the Gospel of God if you don't start to see a God who loves you, passionately, tenderly and kindly all the way back in Chapter 1.
- 4) You must receive a revelation of the Father's love for you in your immaturity; not only when you're mature.

# **Chapter Sixteen Extra Reading**

The journey of the maturing bride is starting to change from one of being misunderstood to one of acceptance with her own identity. She has walked through many valleys and up numerous mountains, all of which have helped shape and forge the life of Christ in her. Paul prayed for the Galatians in **Galatians 5:19** "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you." The people that Paul was praying for were already Christians. So why is he praying that Christ be formed in them? This is because the process of forming Christ in us is painful and also because Paul is laboring in prayer to make it happen, which is also extremely painful. The bride's life is as of labor in birth. Here, as we are going to see in Chapter 7, she is starting to see the fruit of her labor, and it's nothing short of Christ in her!

The bride has walked through the joy of encountering Jesus in His chamber, the pain of losing His presence and becoming overworked in other vineyards while neglecting her own. She has been reunited with her beloved, only to lose His presence again because of disobedience. She's encountered her own sin and weakness and Jesus' love for her in the midst of it. She has also lost both His presence and her place of ministry among the body, all while serving Jesus and under His leadership. But in all things she hasn't thrown in the towel or stopped short of what Jesus has for her. This has produced the life of Christ in her, and she's radiating that life to those around her. Her life here in Chapter 7 is declaring the joy of following Jesus beyond the difficult and into the fruitful. In this chapter we are going to see the daughter's of Jerusalem publicly vindicate the bride (SOS 7:1-5), and then Jesus publicly vindicate the bride as He releases her into uber-fruitful ministry (SOS 7:6-9).

### The Bride Is Publically Vindicated By the Daughters of Jerusalem (SOS 7:1-5)

Song of Songs chapter 6 ends with two different responses to the wholehearted devotion of the bride. The first response is from the daughters of Jerusalem and the second one is from the same watchmen who struck her back in Song of Songs 5:7. The daughters are sad to see the Shulamite move on into the gardens of God, as she is serving in the second commandment. They don't want to be without her therefore they ask her to stay (SOS 6:13a). But the watchmen, on the other hand, respond with a sarcastic statement disregarding the bride's wholeheartedness and the curiosity of the daughters to continue to look upon the Shulamite. In Song of Songs 7:1-5, which is the very following verse after these two responses, the daughters are going to open their mouths and declare the beauty of the bride as she has matured into a faithful partner of Jesus. The daughters say to the maturing bride, "How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! The curves of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a skillful workmen. Your navel is a rounded goblet; it lacks no blended beverage. Your waist is a heap of wheat set about with lilies. Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. Your neck is like an ivory tower, your eyes like the pools in Hesbon by the gate of bath Rabbim. Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon which looks towards Damascus. Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel, and the hair of your head is like purple; a king is held captive by your tresses." This chapter has a heavy amount of symbolism as the daughters are using various things to describe the beauty of the bride.

I will now take some time to walk through what each of these different parts mean when it relates to the life of the maturing bride. They start out by saying "How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter!" Feet and sandals or shoes throughout the bible speak of two main things, destiny and evangelism. In the story of the prodigal son in **Luke 15**, as the son is restored into right relationship with

the father, the father puts the robe on him, the ring and new sandals. The father putting new sandals on the son was symbolic of him taking away the son past prodigal life and giving him a new future. But here, in the **Song of Songs** it is speaking mainly of evangelism. **Isaiah 50:7** says. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that bring the good news (gospel)." And when Paul is talking about putting on the whole armor of God he says in **Ephesians 6:15** "...and having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace..." Both of these passages speak about taking the gospel to others. The bride in the Song is now ready and is already taking the good news to others, helping in the garden of God. The daughters then say of the bride, "The curves of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a skillful workmen." The bride's thighs in the Song speak about the support base she is standing on. The strength of her legs are being likened to jewels that have been worked, cut and handcrafted, not just by anyone, but by a skillful workman. This is speaking about the previous circumstances that the bride has walked through, the many trials, joys and great hardships that she has endured up unto this moment. It's true in my own personal life: when I see those that are 30, 40 or 50 years in the Lord, still serving and passionate about Jesus that I understand their thighs are strong, having been weathered by many storms and great pressure. Our physical thighs don't define themselves and neither do our spiritual thighs. The maturing bride has worked hard to strengthen that which she is standing upon and others have taken notice.

From her thighs the daughters then say "Your navel is a rounded goblet; it lacks no blended beverage..." The Hebrew meaning for navel here is "umbilical cord." This is speaking about the healthy, formative early years of developing in our inner life. Jeremiah 1:5 says "before you were even born in your mother's womb, I knew you. And I sanctified you and ordained you a prophet unto the nations." It's here that God is making it clear to Jeremiah that while he was still in his mother's womb that God was forming and shaping his future life as a prophet of the most High God. The daughters see that her inner life in Christ has rightly formed. It is empowering her to move on through many hardships. Many people give their lives to Christ; start the journey of following Jesus, only to find themselves entangled with many of the same things that once brought them down. Now this could be for many reasons, but one of the main reasons I have seen this happen is because these people haven't developed a deep inner life through Christ that helps them stand in an old world. We must give time and energy to developing a deep inner life if we are going to stand in the midst of great pressure and remain faithful to Jesus. From her navel they speak about her waist by saying, "your waist is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies." The daughters notice that the bride is living pregnant with a coming harvest. It's not that she is experiencing fully right now what's alive on the inside, but she is noticeable in the Spirit with what she is carrying on the inside. What's also powerful about this internal harvest she is carrying is that it's a harvest brought forth in purity. Lilies throughout the Song speak of purity (SOS 2:1). She is going to bring forth a harvest, and because she is living a life of purity, her harvest will be a harvest of purity. We truly reproduce who we are, not what we want to reproduce.

The daughters continue to describe the beauty of the bride in the midst of the watchmen by speaking of her breasts. They say to the bride, "your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a Gazelle." In some of the previous chapters we have already covered the various scriptures about breasts and the ability to feed and nurture young ones. This is what's being said here. As a man, this passage was a little challenging to read and really come to grips with, but when set against the backdrop of the scriptures it's clear and easily understood. But, it's here that the daughters add something else to her beyond just her ability to nurture young ones. They say that in her nurturing, she is actually producing twins, or a double portion. Now, if you have been in church before you have heard about the double portion anointing. But what I am pretty sure you haven't heard of is what the double portion is! I believe that

the double portion is a mixture of the first and second commandment operating in their proper arrangement according to Jesus. I believe that the double portion is the combination of power and wisdom. It seems that throughout history there have been ministries that are either wisdom (academic) ministries or they are powerful (operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit) ministries but we have rarely seen ministries that do both. It's both the power of the Holy Spirit and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit that she is operating in. She is a prototype that God is emerging within the earth today: of people that love Jesus like Jesus loves them, operating in the power of His name but coupled alongside with wisdom to build healthy, long-lasting ministries to be handed down from father to son. From the bride's breasts the daughters move on to describing her neck by stating, "your neck is like an ivory tower..." Back in Song of Songs 1:10; 4:4 Jesus praised for her for the strength of her neck. The neck, throughout the Bible and even in our world, speaks of our will such as being stiff-necked or having a stubborn will. But here they are saying something much different than just the reality that she has a submitted will. Here she is said to have a neck that is like an ivory tower. Now ivory is much different from jewels or gems that are mined from a mountain, because it can only come through pain or death. The bride's will is being spoken of not only as just submitted, but submission through pain. For those of you that have become submitted in a real way, not just in want or word, but in action, clearly understand that it comes through great pain, pressure and struggle. The bride has walked through hardship and pain, trusting Jesus' leadership over her life and it's equating in a will that has been forged into a safe tower. A will submitted through pain will provide safety in the midst of compromise.

The daughters move from her neck to her eyes as they say to the maturing bride, "your eyes like the pools in Heshbon, by the gate of bath Ribbim." The daughters of Jerusalem see that the bride's eyes have given her great grace in receiving revelation from God. It's through the eye-gate that we receive that which is alive within us, and that's for the good or the bad. Our eyes are the entrance into our inner life. And if they are set on Jesus, we become filled with light, but if they are set on sin, wickedness and compromise then we also become filled with negative things. Paul gave us a powerful prayer in Ephesians 1:17-18 that we can pray asking God to give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that our eyes are enlightened. Heshbon was a resort town that was known for its clear water which made it a destination that people wanted to come. Being able to see is the gift of God to us that we only receive by confessing to Jesus that we are currently blind (John 9:41). In our confession that we can't see, we actually receive our sight. The bride is then described by the words "Your nose is like the tower of <u>Lebanon which looks towards Damascus."</u> Now, don't try to use this pickup line with your spouse in the morning before they get a triple Americano into them. Wait till either the Americano kicks in, or until you have at least 30+ years of marriage under your belt. What the daughters were saying about the bride is that her sense of smell was trained to detect the enemy before it got to her. Damascus is the capital of Syria and they were the fiercest of Israel's enemy. She was like a defensive tower, a tower which stood tall giving her great ability to see the enemy coming, prior to them getting to her. There are many Christians who live their lives like being tossed to and fro throughout life in this age, unanchored into the age to come (Ephesians 4). When we don't have the ability to smell the enemy prior to him getting to us, we become defeated and not victorious. We must become a discerning people if we are going to inherit what God has promised us.

The beauty of the bride continues to be unfolded by the daughters as they are describing the various parts of her physical body and how they relate her personal spiritual growth. The daughters then say to the bride, "Your head crowns you like mount Carmel." Now, Mount Carmel is the place where Elijah called down fire on the prophets of Baal. It was a place where the power of God was demonstrated in the midst of a demonic culture, a place where God got the victory over the devil on behalf of a man who

had a crucified mind. The same thing is true for us. We must have victory over our minds, and work to have them transformed by the power of God, if we are going to wage a good warfare like the bride. The bride has a mind that's crucified because she has been willing to walk through the difficult seasons that are behind her. From the bride's head, they describe her hair by saying, "and the hair of your head is <u>like purple."</u> It's clear from **Numbers 6** that hair throughout the Bible mostly speaks of our dedication to God. In Numbers 6 it tells the story of what the Nazarite vow is. Part of this vow was that the men weren't to cut their hair, but let it grow for a certain period of time. It was a vow of dedication to God and a very honorable thing. It's here that the bride is being praised for having great dedication to God. But it's not just that she's been dedicated, but that her dedication has turned into royalty. Purple throughout the Bible speaks of royalty (Rev. 17:4; Mat. 27:28; Mark 15:17; John 19:2). It's one thing to long to be dedicated to God, it's another thing to actually be dedicated, but it's something entirely different to have your dedication to God turn into a life of royalty. Dedication isn't the goal of our lives; it's to be brought near Jesus! Being with Jesus as His royal partner both in this age and in the age to come is our goal. It's here that the daughters of Jerusalem sum up all things concerning the spiritual growth of the maturing bride by telling her "...A king is held captive by your tresses." Tresses are long locks of hair. And if you remember from the previous statement, hair speaks of dedication. But what's interesting is that they are saying her long hair (tresses) is actually holding kings captive. Beloved, right now the earth doesn't take the Church or Christianity seriously, but there is coming a day when they will. There is coming a day when the book of Acts will play out, not only in Jerusalem and the surrounding regions, but throughout the entire globe. It's in this coming hour that the earth will take seriously the Church as it moves forward touching cities, states, nations and the globe.

In **Song of Songs 7:5c**, this is the final verse where the daughters of Jerusalem are speaking. Through the past five verses though, they actually gave a spiritual description of the maturing bride much like the maturing bride gave of Jesus in **Song of Songs 5:10-16**. In **Song of Songs 5:10-16** the bride gave ten descriptions of Jesus from His head and hair down to His feet. But here in **Song of Songs 7:1-5** the daughters give ten descriptions of the bride starting at her feet and moving up all the way to her head and hair. This is a beautiful parallel between these verses as we get a picture into the grand plan of Father God and His great passion for us.

## Jesus Publically Vindicates the Bride for Her Steadfast Devotion (SOS 7:6-9)

Here in **Song of Songs 7:6** the speaker shifts from being the daughters of Jerusalem **(SOS 7:1-5)** to being Jesus. Some question who is speaking here, but I believe from the things already written in this chapter that it's Jesus. Jesus is here, standing by, listening to the words of the daughters as they praise the bride's beauty. He can't help Himself but to speak up. Jesus here jumps into the mix and also rattles off different things that He loves about the bride. So it's here in **Song of Songs 7:6-9** that Jesus says to the maturing bride, "How fair and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights! This stature of yours is like a palm tree, and your breasts like its clusters. I said, "I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches. Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine. The fragrance of your breath like apples, and the roof or your mouth like the best wine." Our Beloved Jesus can't help Himself. He must stay true to who He is and to His pattern: first to affirm the bride before He says anything else to her. He starts out by saying, "how fair and how pleasant you are O love with your delights." The bride is being praised by Jesus for the many delights she now possesses in the Godhead. But something you must understand is that this isn't the first time Jesus has praised the bride and lavished love upon her. He has been doing this all the way back in the start of **Song of Songs chapter 1.** 

Beloved, if you don't see a God who is lavishing love upon you in chapter one of your life, you will never make it to chapters 7-8. You must see a God who isn't just lavishing love upon you when you finally become mature, but also throughout the entire process of becoming mature. You must receive a revelation of the Father's love for you in your immaturity not only when you're mature. If you think only about God loving you when you are mature, you will fall short in experiencing the love of God today. Get a revelation of God loving you right now, so that you end up enjoying the fruit of walking with Him throughout the whole of your life. He loves you, is passionate about you and longs to embrace you right now.

# Week Seventeen Song of Songs 7:9b-13

- I) The Bride's Affection Based Obedience (SOS 7:9b-10)
  - A) Song of Songs 7:9b-10 <u>"The wine goes down smoothly for my beloved, moving gently the lips of sleepers. I am my Beloveds and His desire is towards me."</u>
    - 1) In Song of Songs 7:8-9a Jesus commissioned the bride in 3 primary things;
      - (i) <u>"Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine..."</u> = Nurture and feed others in the grace of God. Freely you have received, now freely give (Matthew 10:8).
      - (ii) <u>"The fragrance of your breath like apples..."</u> = Let your breath refresh others in a way that empowers them to love Jesus (**Proverbs 25:11; Song of Songs 2:5; John 20:22**).
      - (iii) "And the roof of your mouth like the best wine." = Make sure that your intimacy with Jesus, the love that we receive from Him and give to Him, is always the best wine in your life. Keep intimacy with Me your priority (Song of Songs 1:2).
  - B) The bride's response to Jesus' commission is here in **Song of Songs 7:9b-10** when she says <u>"The wine goes down smoothly for my Beloved, moving gently the lips of sleepers. I am my Beloveds and His desire is towards me."</u>
  - C) "The wine goes down smoothly for my Beloved..."
    - Jesus is asking her to do difficult things, and she is able to do them, because it's <u>"for her Beloved."</u>
    - 2) Often times, we choke on the activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It's not a wine that goes down smoothly for us, but rather something that's hard to swallow.
    - 3) But here, the bride is able to say "I'm living in 100% obedience (I'm responding to Your commission) with the activity of the Holy Spirit. I will obey You when You speak, though it may be hard and confusing to me."
    - 4) Jesus was in the same place as the bride, struggling to swallow the Father's cup (wine).
      - (i) Luke 22:42 "(Jesus) saying, Father, if it is Your will, take this cup (wine) away from Me; nevertheless not My will but Yours, be done (I'll do it for You MY Father)!"
    - 5) The only way we are able to follow the will of God and drink the wine that He offers us, is because we are doing it for Him! The bride says "I can drink the wine, because it's for You, my Beloved Jesus!"

#### D) "...moving gently the lips of sleepers..."

- It's here that the bride is moving into the joy of awakening others around her that are sleeping in Christ. Many today within the Church are asleep when it comes to the things of the Kingdom of God.
- 2) According to Jesus, half of the Church is considered foolish because they aren't taking serious the hour in which they live (Matthew 25:1-13). What's Jesus' advice to those foolish, sleeping Christians? Buy oil for your lamp (Matthew 25:9)! Wake up!
- E) "I am my Beloveds and His desire is towards me."
  - 1) For the first time the bride is living, not in the longing to feel Jesus' love towards her, but in the living, present day experience of His love towards her.
  - 2) Here's a look at the bride's progression in the experience of God's love for her;
    - (i) Song of Songs 2:16 "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." (Knowledge)
    - (ii) Song of Songs 6:2 "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine." (Heart)
    - (iii) Song of Song 7:10 "I am my Beloveds, and His desire is toward me." (Experience)
  - 3) Our emotional security in Christ comes from the deep internal experience that God's desire is towards you, right now, both in Chapter 1 and in Chapter 7.
  - 4) How much does God the Father love God the Son? Did you know that God the Father loves you, right now, in the same way that God the Father loves God the Son?
    - (i) John 15:9 "As the Father loved Me, I have also loved you."
    - (ii) John 17:23 <u>"I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that</u> the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.
  - 5) The wine of God or the will of God goes down smoothly, when we are doing it for Jesus, because we feel His love towards us. We obey God best, when we feel loved by Him.

## II) Their Partnership In Powerful And Fruitful Ministry (SOS 7:11-12)

- A) Song of Songs 7:11-12 "Come, my Beloved, let us go forth to the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine has budded, whether the grape blossoms are open, and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give You my love."
- B) "Come, my beloved, let us go forth to the field; let us lodge in the villages..."
  - The bride is now pictured in a place of bridal partnership with Jesus, asking for His power and presence to go with her as she works the fields of harvest. Intersession is going forth for fruitful harvesting.

- 2) This is about Christian service (ministry) taking place through the context of intimacy. She's not working the field alone, but with Him and through His power.
- 3) The pace of serving others (ministry) is often the pace of running, and we must be able to maintain our intimacy with Jesus as we run. We have to sit before God, before we stand before men.
- 4) Notice that she no longer speaks about her own life! Her life belongs to Him and she is now selflessly serving others.
- C) "There I will give you my love."
  - 1) The bride is loving God and serving others. She says "There, in the place of service to others, through the power of the Holy Spirit, I will maintain my love for you!"
  - 2) It's easy to serve God in the secret place and at the banqueting table, but God longs to have a people who like the bride, love Him in the midst of service to Him.

#### III) The Bride Enjoys The Fruit Of Her Labor (SOS 7:13)

- A) Song of Songs 7:13 "The mandrakes give off a fragrance, and at our gates are pleasant fruits, all manner, new and old, which I have laid up for you, my Beloved."
  - 1) Within 3 verses **(11-13)** the Shulamite refers to "their labors" 8 times. She says "come, let us, let us, let us, give You, at our gates and laid up for You." This is powerful and fruitful ministry not alone, but together with her Beloved.
- B) "Which I have laid up for You, my Beloved."
  - 1) She is producing much fruit through her life of service to others and it's not being laid up for her, but for Jesus!
    - (i) Matthew 6:20 "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven..."
    - (ii) Revelation 4:10 <u>"The twenty four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying..."</u>
    - (iii) Revelation 3:11 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have that no one may take your crown."
  - 2) There are 22 eternal rewards mentioned in **Revelation 2-3** to those saints that overcome.
  - 3) What if our stored up treasure from our life in this age became the crown that we wear in the age to come? How would you live your life now if that was true?
  - 4) Because the bride is motivated by the love of God, she does right with the fruit that comes from her life, she stores it up for her Beloved Jesus!
  - 5) Are you living your life from the experience of the Father's love? Do you know the way that you move His heart?

# **Chapter Seventeen Extra Reading**

As I have already mentioned in the opening chapter of this sermon series, the bride is on a journey from immaturity in Christ to full bridal maturity. God's intention for the bride is not different from His intention for us today, that we would become mature in Christ, partnering with Him in a deep and communal way. And it's here in **Song of Songs 7** through the difficulty of the past six chapters that the bride starts to enter into the fruit of her labor.

Because the bride felt Jesus' love for her throughout the process of maturity she has been able to stay the course through the thick and thin of walking with Christ over the decades. It's here in the second half of **Song of Songs chapter 7** that the conversation shifts gears from Jesus talking with the Shulamite, to the Shulamite speaking with Jesus related to their partnership in the Gospel together. In this chapter I will cover the bride's affection based obedience (SOS 7:9b-10), their partnership in powerful and fruitful ministry (SOS 7:11-12) and the bride's enjoyment of the fruit of her labor (SOS 7:13).

#### The Bride's Affection Based Obedience (SOS 7:9b-10)

It's here in **Song of Songs 7:9b-10** that the bride says to Jesus <u>The wine goes down smoothly for my</u> <u>Beloved, moving gently the lips of sleepers. I am my Beloved's and His desire is towards me.</u> If you remember in **Song of Songs 7:8-9** Jesus commissioned the bride in three primary areas. Firstly He said to her <u>Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine...</u> This first area that she was commissioned in was to nurture and feed others through the grace of God that was given to her. The idea is that she has freely received from God, so she should freely give to others (Matt. 10:8). Secondly, Jesus said <u>The fragrance of your breath like apples.</u> This was the call to refresh others in a way that empowers them to love Jesus wholeheartedly. There are many teachers, preachers and leaders in the body of Christ, but it's been my experience that it's rare to find leaders who leave you hungry, not just for more preaching, but for God Himself. Good preaching and leadership should cause others to come alive in the Godhead (**Prov. 25:11**; **Song of Songs 2:5**; **John 20:22**).

And lastly the maturing bride is commissioned with the phrase ...and the roof of your mouth like the best wine. This is the call to make sure that her intimacy with Jesus, the love that she both received from Him and gives to Him is the primary focus of her life. In **Song of Songs 1:2** the bride says that loving You is the best wine. In a life of fruitful ministry it's easy to lose sight of our single focus for Jesus as we become distracted with many other good opportunities. Jesus must be our primary focus.

The reason why I have mentioned these three areas in which the bride was commissioned, in the previous chapter, is because what the bride says in this chapter is a direct response to three areas in which she was called to operate. We see her now speak to Jesus in **Song of Songs 7:9b-10** saying The wine goes down smoothly for my Beloved, moving gently the lips of sleepers. I am my Beloved's and His desire is towards me. I will work to break open this verse and look at several things that are being said.

The bride is in a place where she's maturing in Christ and now moving into a place of fruitful ministry with Him. Jesus has already asked her to do some very difficult things and this won't stop. On this side of eternity, the bride understands that Jesus will continue to call her into the place of difficulty on the **Song of Songs 4** mountains of leopards and lions. But in all of this, she's able to answer His call because she's

not doing it for herself, but <u>...for her Beloved.</u> Wine in this verse represents the difficult things that God asks us to do and the places He asks us to follow Him into.

We can often choke on the wine of God, which is the activity of the Holy Spirit. I know that there have been times in my life where I have nearly spit out the words of the Holy Spirit as they entered into my mouth, much like a person would spit liquid out of their mouth after hearing something wild. But it's here in the place of ministry, in the face of great challenges that she is able to say the wine goes down smoothly....because it's for my Beloved.

Jesus was in a similar place when He was approaching the Cross and the pain of his emotional and physical betrayal and crucifixion. In **Luke 22:42** He cried out to the Father saying ...if it is Your will, take this cup (wine) away from Me; nevertheless not My will but Yours, be done (I'll do it for You MY Father). Our response to the challenges that are set before us must be the same as Christ's and of the bride's. The only way we are able to follow the will of God and drink the wine He offers us, is because we are doing it for Him! We say with the bride and with Jesus, It's for You that the difficult wine goes down smoothly.

In this very verse the bride mentions that she is able to do the challenging things of God's will and the result is that it's *moving gently the lips of sleepers*. The things she is doing in the will of God and with God is actually starting to awaken those around her who are slumbering in Christ. It's common for much of Jesus' church to be asleep while they are busy working for Him in the Church. Three of the seven Churches addressed in **Revelation 2-3** were in just this place (Ephesus, Sardis and Laodicea). Often we don't realize the power of our obedience to Jesus because it has a ripple effect on the lives of those around us.

In the last part of this verse the bride for the first time puts into its proper order a powerful phrase that she has said several other times. This phrase is ...I am my Beloveds and His desire is towards me. It's the first time that the bride is living, not in the longing to feel Jesus' love towards her, but in the present day experience of His love towards her. Here's a little look at the progression of the bride's confession about how Jesus feels towards her;

Song of Songs 2:16
 Song of Songs 6:2
 Song of Songs 7:10
 My beloved is mine, and I am His
 I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine
 I am my Beloveds, and His desire is towards me
 (Knowledge)
 (Heart)

This progression is the same progression that you and I have to walk through in order to move to this place where the bride is, in **Song of Songs chapter 7.** We start with knowledge that God loves us and is moved by our weak attempt to love Him. This is good, but it's not enough. Your knowledge must lead you into feeling an internal longing at the heart level. Though you're not experiencing anything yet, you have some knowledge and a longing internally, towards Him. From this place you are now set to walk from knowledge into experience. You are feeling what the initial incline told you was available and know your experiencing it in real time.

Our emotional security in Christ comes from the deep internal experience that God's desire is towards us, right now, both in Chapter One and in Chapter Seven of our lives. We will struggle to define our identity in Christ until we feel loved, cherished and wanted by Him, both early on in our walk and later in our maturity. This brings up the question, how much does God the Father love God the Son? Well,

according to **John 15:9 and John 17:23** the Father loves the Son a lot As the Father loved Me, I have also loved you...I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Here's the kicker though, God loves you in the same way that God loves God. God the Father loves you, in the same exact way that God the Father loves God the Son. That's earth shattering and beyond our comprehension in this age. I have met people who are Christians and they have never thought about how God feels about them. That thought has never crossed into their minds and to me that's so tragic. Beloved, Jesus longs for us to know how He feels about us, because from this knowledge we are strengthened to grow in our relationship with Him, not to go away from Him.

#### Their Partnership in Powerful and Fruitful Ministry (SOS 7:11-12)

In **Song of Songs 7:11-12** the bride continues her conversation by saying <u>Come, My Beloved, let us go</u> <u>forth to the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine has <u>budded, whether the grape blossoms are open, and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give You <u>my love.</u> Through these two verses the bride is describing the power and very fruitful partnership in ministry. The idea is that she is no longer working FOR Jesus, but WITH Jesus. We want to make it clear that Jesus hasn't called us to work *for* Him, but to work *with* Him.</u></u>

Firstly the bride says <u>Come, My Beloved, let us go forth to the field; let us lodge in the villages...</u> It's here that the bride is pictured in a place of bridal partnership with Jesus, asking for His power and presence to go with her as she works in the fields of harvest. What's true of the bride is true for us. This means that our harvesting is far more effective when it goes forth under a root-system of worship and intercession. When prayer precedes the mission, the mission goes with greater power.

It's clear that the bride is in the place of partnership with Jesus in this passage and not just working for Him and for others like she was in **Song of Songs 1:6.** She is asking Jesus to go with her (intercession) and then she is going together with Him (intimacy in the place of ministry) as they work the vineyard. It's also important we understand that the pace of ministry is often the pace of *running*. And while we run in the place of ministry, Jesus still expects us to spend quality time with Him. We must learn to sit before God, prior to standing before men. We sit before God in the place of intimacy before we stand before others in the place of ministry.

It's here in the place of ministry that she makes the sweeping statement ...there I will give You my love. The bride is loving God and serving others. She says There, in the place of service to others, through the power of the Holy Spirit, I will maintain my love for You. I have found that it's easier to serve God in the secret place than it is to serve Him through prayer, fasting and rigorous Bible study, in the midst of ministry to others. When she says there I will give you my love she is referring to the place of ministry where they are serving together.

## The Bride Enjoys the Fruit of Her Labor (SOS 7:13)

The bride says in **Song of Songs 7:13** The mandrakes give off a fragrance, and at our gates are pleasant fruits, all manner, new and old which I have laid up for You, my Beloved. Within just three verses, in Song of Songs 7:11-13 the Shulamite refers to their labors eight times. The eight statements read like this ...come; let us; let us; give You; at our gates; and laid up for You. This is powerful and fruitful

ministry in partnership with one another. She's producing much from her labor of love for her Beloved, and in the midst of it all she says Which I have laid up for you, my Beloved.: The bride is producing much fruit through her life of service to others and it's being laid up not for herself, but for her Jesus. I am a firm believer in the prosperity of God the Father and His longing to lavish wealth on His people. But it seems that prosperity gets to us, but often it doesn't get through us. Granted, I have enjoyed the wealth of the Gospel in my own life, but because of poor stewardship I really didn't even get to enjoy the blessing of God, I just struggled month to month. When Jennifer and I finally got a handle on our personal finances, it was clear that lots of money was flowing through our hands, but we never saw it in a way that was a blessing to us, or to others.

The bride is doing good with that which comes forth from her labors. This is also the goal for each of us. We want to lay up for Jesus that which He gives to us, because it's all His anyway.

# Week Eighteen: Song of Songs 8:1-7

#### I) Introduction

A) In the previous session we looked at the bride's affection based obedience (SOS 7:9b-10), their partnership in powerful and fruitful ministry (SOS 7:11-12), and we saw how the bride was enjoying the fruits of her labors as she was laying them up for Jesus (SOS 7:13).

#### II) The Bride's Partnership With Jesus And Humility In Her Ministry (SOS 8:1-2)

- A) Song of Songs 8:1-2 "Oh, that you were like my brother, who nursed at my mother's breasts! If I should find you outside, I would kiss you; I would not be despised. I would lead you into the house of my mother, she who used to instruct me. I would cause you to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate."
- B) <u>"Oh, that you were like my brother, who nursed at my mother's breasts! If I should find you outside, I would kiss you; I would not be despised..."</u>
  - 1) It's here in the language of the bride's day that she is expressing her passion to show Jesus affection in public not only in private. During this time it was improper for one to show affection to someone of another sex if it wasn't your immediate family.
    - (i) "Oh, that You were like my brother...if I should find you outside, I would kiss you; I would not be despised..."
  - 2) The bride is longing to love Jesus in public, in the same way that she has loved Him in private.
    - (i) Acts 4:29 "Now, Lord look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word."

      New Testament boldness isn't a personality trait; it's a spiritual quality that only comes through the Holy Spirit.
  - 3) It's also here that the bride is expressing her passion to kiss Jesus with her words of intimacy. This is very different from **Song of Songs 1:2** where the bride said to Jesus "Kiss me with the kisses of Your mouth (word)."
  - 4) Receiving love from Jesus causes us to give love to Jesus. Many don't give love to Jesus, because they don't see or hear His great love for them.
- C) <u>"...I would lead you into the house of my mother, she who used to instruct me. I would cause you to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate."</u>
  - 1) In great humility the bride is now leading Jesus back into the Church (mother) to share Him with those that first helped her in her journey of loving God.
    - (i) I owe so much of my experience in the Gospel to others. I also work hard to thank those

that have impacted me, provoked me, and challenged me by periodically calling them and telling them thanks.

#### III) The Unseen And Seen Activity Of God In The Bride's Life (SOS 8:3-4)

- A) Song of Songs 8:3-4 "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand embraces me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases."
- B) "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand embraces me..."
  - 1) The bride is speaking about the unseen and seen activity of God in her life. His left hand being under her head speaks of the activity of God in her life that she can't see. And His right hand embracing her is the activity of God in her life that she can see.
  - 2) It's important that we thank God for His activity in our lives that we see and that which we don't see. I have learned to tell the Holy Spirit regularly how grateful I am of all the things He does in my life that I never see.
- C) "...I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases."
  - 1) For the third time within the Song, the bride admonishes the daughters to make sure they are ready to satisfy Jesus' love when it becomes awakened within them.

#### IV) The Ascension Of The Bride From The Wilderness (8:5)

- A) Song of Songs 8:5 "Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved? I awakened you under the apple tree. There your mother brought you forth; there she who bore you brought you forth."
  - 1) In this verse two people are speaking. I believe that it's first the daughters that say "Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?" and then it's Jesus who says "I awakened you under the apple tree. There your mother brought you forth; there she who bore you brought you forth."
- B) "Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?"
  - 1) This is what I like to call a loving and leaning heart. The bride now has a heart that's empowered in love (demonstrating the works of the Kingdom), but she's still pictured as leaning (resting, humility, confession of her weakness) upon her Beloved Jesus.
  - 2) She has power in both private and public ministry, but she fully understands that she is not God. This is the goal of our Christian life. That we have power but that His power doesn't stop us from leaning into Jesus even harder still.
  - 3) The Church at the end of this age will be a victorious bride who will ascend from this wilderness called "life in this fallen age." It will be a loving (victorious) bride who is fully leaning (dependant) upon Jesus.
  - 4) Beloved, the bride is only able to ascend the wilderness because she first saw Jesus ascend;

- (i) Song of Songs 3:6-7 "Who is this coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchants fragrant powders?

  Behold, its Solomon..."
- (ii) Revelation 1:17-18 "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me; do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of death."
- 5) The daughters can't recognize who it is that's ascending. They can't tell if it's one person or two! The bride has become one with her Beloved!
- C) <u>"...I awakened you under the apple tree. There your mother brought you forth; there she who bore you brought you forth."</u>
  - 1) Jesus enters into the conversation and reminds her that it was Him who awakened her under the apple tree.
    - (i) Song of Songs 2:1-3 "...like a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is My beloved among the sons."
  - 2) It was here, under the apple that the bride sees her unique beauty among the thorns and His unique beauty as an apple tree among the trees of the woods.
  - 3) We become awakened when we see the combination of both our beauty and His beauty.
- 1. <u>"...There your mother brought you forth..."</u> The Churches goal is to awaken people to both their unique beauty and His unique beauty. Those two revelations alone awaken the heart.

#### V) The Fiery Seal And The Price Of Love (SOS 8:6-7)

- A) Song of Songs 8:6-7 "Set Me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, nor can floods drown it. If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised."
- B) "Set Me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm..."
  - 1) Jesus is calling out to the bride and asking to be the seal upon her heart (1<sup>st</sup> Commandment) and her arm (2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment). The heart is about her passion for Jesus and her arm is about her service to others. He wants to be central in both her love and in her service.
    - (i) Revelation 2:1-5 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, but found them to be liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless you have left your first love...Repent or else I will put out your lamp stand (ministry)..."
      - (a) They had works, labors, patience, hated evil, good doctrine, perseverance and hadn't become weary (Service/Arm) but they lost their first love (Heart/Jesus).

- 2) The seal is a wax seal that came from kings when they were sealing secure documents to be transported in the hands of others. The kings would either wear this ring on their finger or on a chain that hung around their neck (near their heart).
- 3) Jesus doesn't only seal our hearts with wax (Holy Spirit) but He also has the ring (power) to enforce the implications of the wax seal. Jesus isn't just a hopeless romantic, He's a King who can enforce the implications of His love (Eph. 1:13).
- C) <u>"...for love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a</u> most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, nor can floods drown it..."
  - 1) Jesus' love is stronger than death, more cruel than the grave. Of the multiplied billions that have lived, all but three are in the grave: Enoch, Elijah and Jesus. This is a massive statement to the strength of God's love (Rom. 8:37-39).
    - (i) God is not like a fire, He is a fire: 7 lamps burning before Him; a sea of glass mingled with fire; His eyes like flames of fire; His face shinning like the sun; Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire; the seraphim or cherubim who are before Him night and day are literally called the burning ones; He leads His people with a pillar of fire; He speaks through burning bushes; He makes His ministers a flame of fire; and He Himself is like a refiners fire.
- D) If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised."
  - (i) We often praise the sacrifices of men in the Church who leave lives of ambition and success to follow Jesus as something noteworthy. We're measuring apples with watermelons. We aren't giving up anything in this age that's worth what we are receiving in the age to come (Phil. 3:8).

# **Chapter Eighteen Extra Reading**

We are now in part one of **Song of Songs, Chapter 8**, and the second to the last chapter in this written series. The life of the bride is flourishing into something much more than a worker who is struggling to love, as she was in **Song of Songs 1**, but now she is a lover who is working with Jesus in His many gardens. There is a difference between working *for* Jesus and working *with* Jesus. Working for Jesus leads us into a place of exhilaration.

In 1988 Mike Bickle had a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit where God spoke to him and told him "Before I return to the earth I am going to release the grace of Song of Songs 8:6 on the body of Christ worldwide." The implications of what the Holy Spirit spoke to Mike were beyond his ability at the time to understand. It wasn't until 2006 that this book (Song of Songs) began to deeply impact me. Now that I have touched only a little bit of this book's glory, I understand what the Holy Spirit was saying to Mike some nearly 30 years ago. Song of Songs 8:6, which I will cover in this chapter, is about the bridal seal of fiery love that God promised to set upon the hearts of those in the body of Christ who are hungry for Him. It's the call to love Jesus in the way that He has loved us, and to love others in the way that He loves others. In this chapter I am going to cover the bride's partnership with Jesus and her humility in ministry (SOS 8:1-2). I am also going to cover the unseen/seen activity of God in the bride's life (SOS 8:3-4) and the bride's ascension from the wilderness (SOS 8:5). And lastly we are going to look at the bridal seal of fire and the high cost of love (SOS 8:6-7).

#### The Brides Partnership with Jesus and Humility in Her Ministry (SOS 8:1-2)

The bride opens **Song of Songs 8:1-2** by saying "Oh, that you were like my brother, who nursed at my mother's breasts! If I should find you outside, I would kiss you; I would not be despised. I would lead you into the house of my mother, she who used to instruct me. I would cause you to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate." This passage has lots of interesting phrases within it, but as we become a little more acquainted with it, it becomes very impactful. It's here in the language of the bride's day that she is speaking about her longing to love Jesus publicly in the same way that she loves Him privately. During the bride's day it was improper to love someone of the opposite sex that wasn't from your immediate family. The story that comes to mind is the story of Joseph and Mary and Joseph's passion to put Mary away when he found out she was pregnant (Matthew 1:18-24). You can hear this same reality coming from the bride as she says "...If I should find you outside, I would kiss you; I would not be despised..."

As believers in Jesus, many of you might struggle with the same thing. It's much easier to love Jesus in private than it is to love Him in public. When we leave the comfort of the Church or our house, we struggle with sharing Jesus with others. It's not that we don't love Jesus; it's just that we struggle with the cultural pressure that comes along with being attached to Jesus Christ. It's one thing to talk about God and share God with others, but when you share Jesus with people the mood of others often changes. It's not that the bride wanted to share everything she knew about Jesus with others; she wanted to share some things, but was struggling with it. This was something the apostles struggled with as well. In **Acts 4:29** they prayed to Jesus and said, "Now, Lord look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your Word." It's not that the apostles struggled with being outspoken; they struggled with being bold in Jesus' name. What this passage tells us is that boldness, the kind of boldness that Jesus is calling for, isn't a personality trait as much as it is a deep

inner working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We must have the Holy Spirit help us with our boldness. I have also seen many people who have a loud personality assume that this is the kind of boldness Jesus is looking for. But often that kind of boldness (outspoken personalities) is something that's abrasive, brash, rude and inconsiderate of those who are separated from Christ or struggling with sin. The kind of boldness that Jesus is looking for within us is the kind of boldness that empowers our hearts to move towards weak people with tenderness and compassion, yet never compromising the truth of the God's words to lost people.

Besides the bride's passion to share Jesus with others publicly she also longs to kiss Him with the words of her intimacy. If you remember from **Song of Songs 1:2** when the bride originally asked Jesus to "Kiss" her with the kisses of His Words" but she is now saying in the final chapter of the book "...if I should find You outside, I would kiss You; I would not be despised." The premise of this entire book was driven by the bride's hunger all the way back in chapter 1 for Him to kiss her, but now is ending with her great longing to kiss Him with the words of her intimacy. It's my firm belief and the Bible's teaching that as we grow in Jesus' affection for us, it causes great affection for Jesus to arise within us. As we receive Jesus' love for us it causes us to give love to Jesus. Many people who are born again, and who have been in relationship with Jesus for a while, still struggle with giving Him their love. The reason for this is because they have yet to experience Jesus' love for them in a powerful and consistent way. Not experiencing the Father's love leaves us in a weak and deficient place as we look to give our love to Jesus. We give our love and lives best to Jesus when we feel His love towards us. The idea of feeling His love must be clarified as more than a feeling but rather something we live within, deep inside us. It's a reality that we know we belong to Jesus and that He is Shepherding our lives regardless of our circumstances. Feeling loved by God is the fruit of making a decision. We don't always feel His love for us or upon us, but that doesn't mean it's not.

The bride then closes this section out by saying in **Song of Songs 8:2** "I would lead you into the house of my mother, she who used to instruct me. I would cause you to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate." Here you are able to see the bride's humility as she longs to share her experiences in the Gospel with those she used to run with. We have already established that the mother represents the Church or the vehicle which produces spiritual life within others. She is longing to return to the place where she first encountered Jesus, to share with them her gratitude and how deeply they had impacted her. Many people encounter Jesus through faithful witnesses, but they often fail to return to give thanks for the lives of sacrifice that enabled them to meet Jesus. The bride on the other hand is passionate about returning and giving honor where honor is due. It's also true that when we are new in Christ we learn from the body of Christ and allow the Church to teach us. But there comes a time when we who have been well taught become the teachers of others. If we also come to be taught, then who is going to teach those that don't know? The bride is now longing to return and teach those that have taught her. I (Patrick Walton) have personally returned to many people within my life to give them an update about what I am doing and where I am at in my life. To me this is very important because as someone who works with others, you often pour out much into people but seldom hear about your personal impact upon their lives. It's nice to hear that, and this is exactly what the bride is doing. She's sharing with others how they first impacted her and how she took what they gave her and built upon it.

#### The Unseen and Seen Activity of God in the Brides Life (SOS 8:3-4)

The bride moves from the place of concern and the passion to share Jesus with others, to a place of appreciation of God's activity in her own life and a charge to others concerning this fiery flame of love.

In **Song of Songs 8:3-4** the bride says "His left hand is under my head and His right hand embraces me. I charge you O daughters of Jerusalem, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases." Jesus' left hand refers to the invisible (unseen) activity of God in our lives and Jesus' right hand speaks of the visible (seen) activity of God in our lives. It is both of these realties that make up our encounter of Christ. Meaning there are times that we feel Him (His right hand) and there are many other times when we don't feel Him (His left hand). From time to time we have big experiences with God where we feel His manifest presence, but there are many other times when we don't feel His manifest presence.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is the most un-thanked Person within the Trinity. What I mean by this is we thank the Father and the Son but we hardly give thanks to the Holy Spirit for His activity in our lives. It's actually the Holy Spirit who is at work within our lives here in this age. This doesn't mean that we don't love the Holy Spirit; it's just that we often forget to return and give the Holy Spirit thanks. He does so much within our lives and it would mostly be considered in the *left Hand* category. What is meant by the left hand being under her head is that it's *under* her head. That sounds silly, but the truth of the matter is that because it's under her head, she can't see it. So that's why it relates to the invisible work of God in our lives. If you do a search of the right hand of God in the Bible you will come to find out that 8 out of 10 times it refers to the strength of God, or the in breaking of His Spirit and power upon people and situations.

It's also here that the bride gives one last exhortation to the daughters about awakening love for Jesus internally. She says to them "I charge you O daughters of Jerusalem, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases." This is the third time that the bride has given the daughters this exhortation. In case you forgot, the daughters throughout the Song of Songs represent lukewarm believers who are serving God at a distance. It's not that they don't love God; they just haven't fully surrendered to Him in all things. Now, from the bride's perspective she has given up much and has gone through many valleys and up tons of mountains. This love that was awakened in the bride has caused her to follow Him to many difficult places (SOS 4:6-8). In this challenge to the daughters, she is saying to them, "Beloved daughters, be sure that you are ready to awaken love for the Son of God, because if you do, you must be ready to sustain that which is awakened. If you only awaken love but aren't willing to satisfy it, you will be among the most miserable people on the earth."

I believe that this is an accurate plea and experience with those that have had their hearts awakened in the love of God, but aren't willing to satisfy that deep internal longing. We become a miserable people when our hearts are awakened in the love of God but we choose to do nothing with it. We become Christians who live their lives with a bad attitude, struggling with spiritual disciples because our hearts are somewhere other than satisfaction in Christ. I know many Christians whose hearts are awakened in the love of God, but still choose to hang onto sinful pleasures, struggling with much condemnation, guilt and shame. Jesus told us that you can't have two masters, because you will love the one and hate the other (Matthew 6:24). Her charge to the daughters is a charge that we still use today. It's a blessed thing to have your heart awakened, but it's a terrible thing if your heart is awakened but you're unwilling to sustain it through fellowship with Jesus.

# The Ascension of the Bride from the Wilderness (SOS 8:5)

Of all the passages within the Song of Songs this very well might be my favorite. In **Song of Songs 8:5** there are two people speaking to the bride. At first it's the daughters that say "Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?" And then it's Jesus who says to her "I awakened you

<u>under the apple tree. There your mother brought you forth, there she who bore you brought you forth."</u> I will address the first phrase by the daughters and then I will look at the second phrase from Jesus.

Firstly the daughters continue their conversation with the bride from **Song of Songs 8:4** when in **Song of Songs 8:5** they say "Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?" It's clear from this statement "Ieaning upon her Beloved" that we can deduce it's the daughters speaking. They see the bride leaning upon Jesus, but are asking who it is. Jesus wouldn't ask the bride who she is leaning upon, because He knows that it's Him that she is leaning on. This helps us understand that the first part of this phrase is from the daughters of Jerusalem. The bride is now being pictured with a loving and a leaning heart. It's a heart that is fully empowered in love (operating in the fullness of the Kingdom of God) but yet ever leaning (resting, in humility and in confession of her weakness) upon Jesus for all things.

A loving and a leaning heart is a heart that has both public and private victories with God. It's a life that is being lived for Jesus both in private and in public. Often times what happens is that people experience God in private, He then promotes them in the public but they don't ever return to the private place of encounter. When our lives become something that's demanded upon, we often lose sight of the reason why we are doing what we are doing. The bride is walking in the perfect balance of having a life that's making a huge impact on the kingdom of hell, plundering it for the Kingdom of Heaven, but what's most powerful about her ministry impact is that she's still leaning upon Jesus through it all. This is the goal of Jesus' heart as He raises up an end-time Church that's fully empowered in love, yet leaning upon Him and Him alone. It's a Church that operates in the fullness of the Holy Spirit but longs more and more to be with Jesus in private.

Life in this age is a wilderness for many reasons. Among which is the reality that compared to what we are inheriting (the eternal city), there is nothing worth keeping here in this age. That doesn't mean that we don't enjoy life in this age, but it means that compared with what God has prepared for us, this is a deserted wasteland filled with hardship, pain, suffering, tribulation and some joy. The bride is pictured here as ascending from this very wilderness. You might ask *how is that so?* That's a great question and I would like to answer it.

All the way back in Song of Songs 3:6 the bride looked up and in the distant she said this related to what she was seeing "Who is this coming up from the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh, and frankincense, with all the merchants' fragrant powders?" We know from the context that the bride is looking at Solomon, who for our study is a type of Christ. She is making this statement based on the reality that she is seeing him ascend from this wilderness. Although this passage is disconnected by nearly five chapters, the reality of what the bride has seen here, and her journey in Christ, are by no means disconnected. I believe the evidence is concrete to say that because the bride saw Solomon/Christ ascend from the wilderness she also was able to ascend from it. The reality is: the only way we can make it through life in this age is to look upon Someone who has already overcome it. Jesus is that One. Revelation 1:5 refers to Jesus as "...the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead..." The reason Jesus is called the faithful witness and the firstborn from the dead, is because He's the prototype. He now is what we will become, and how He was in His ministry is what we are to be now. Looking upon Jesus as the One who conquered death, hell and the grave, gives us hope that the One whom we love, the One who loves us overcame. He will also help us overcome. The bride is able to ascend from this fallen age (wilderness) because she first saw Jesus ascend and overcome. It's true that what we look at we become (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 3).

#### The Fiery Seal and the High Price of Love (SOS 8:6-7)

Many people ask about growing in love and passion for Jesus. Some feel that it's confusing and beyond their ability to grasp these challenging concepts. What I have found is that growing in passion for Jesus and being touched by His great passion for us, is more about cost than it is about confusion. It's costly to have a heart fully alive in the beauty of Christ. I believe that many hearts live in a place of distance from Jesus because of the price that must be paid to have a heart fully alive. It's not that we are earning anything from God, because God longs to set us on fire, but it does cost time and energy for it to be a reality in us, it doesn't just "happen."

Jesus continues to speak from **Song of Songs 8:5** here into **Song of Songs 8:6-7** and says "set Me as the seal upon your heart and as the seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; it's flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it. If a man were to give all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised."

This passage really changes things when we look at it in context to the other verses around it. Here Jesus is asking the bride to set Him as the seal upon her heart and as the seal upon her arm. It is one thing to ask Jesus to be the seal, but it's a game changer when Jesus asks to be the seal upon our hearts.

This passage is what I call a first and second commandment passage in the Bible. It's clear through this passage that Jesus doesn't only want to be involved in our passion for Him or just in our service with Him to others, but rather both. The seal upon the heart is the call to the first commandment and the seal upon the arm is the call to the second commandment. Jesus is saying to the bride "set Me as the seal upon your heart. I want to be the center of your passion for Me. In the same way that I made you the passion of My heart I want you to do the same. But I also want to be the passion of your arm and all that you put your hand to. I want to be involved in your service to others in My name. "The Church of Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-5 was a Church that had extreme fruit and success in the service of their arm. But in the midst of serving others they had lost their own heart, or their passion for Jesus. Jesus threatened to blow out their candlestick if they refused to repent. The candlestick according to Revelation 1 and 2 speak of the ministry. And it's not because they had become successful that Jesus threatens to shut it down, but because they had done it all without Him. Their success came at the high price of losing their personal relationship with Jesus.

The seal that is being spoken of in these verses is a wax seal that kings would use to seal up important documents. What would happen is that the king would melt some wax over the closure of the document and then take his signet ring and press it into the wax. This ring was either on the king's hand or hanging from a necklace (which placed it by his heart). On this ring would be some sort of symbol that represented the King or His kingdom. These letters/documents would then be transported by a trusted currier who would deliver the contents. If that seal was broken and the documents tampered with, the currier was guilty at the penalty of death. The reason this is important for you to understand is because Jesus not only seals our hearts (1<sup>st</sup> commandment) and our arm (2<sup>nd</sup> commandment) but He also enforces (presses the signet ring into the wax) the implications of His kingdom into the seal. This means that Jesus isn't just a hopeless romantic, but that He's also a King who can enforce the implications of His love upon our hearts. Jesus doesn't just say that He loves us, without any ability to enforce that love. He says "I love you and here is how I am going to demonstrate that love towards you." Beloved, this is

great news. I would encourage you to look at Ephesians 1:1-14 to see this reality in the New Testament.

Jesus also shares with us how hot His love burns for us by saying "...for love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; it's flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, nor can floods drown it out..." It's here that Jesus makes it clear through the Holy Spirit that His love isn't just a fire, or flames of fire, but flames of the most vehement (intense) fire. Fire most always in the Bible relates to the nature of God and His great passion for us. Most of the fires in this life can be put out with only a little bit of water, but not this flame. This flame cannot be quenched even by the floods. It's an eternal flame that's actually been burning forever. Not like a little while forever, but seriously, forever! The Bible makes it clear that Jesus isn't like a fire, but that He is a fire. It says "there are seven lamps burning before Him, a sea of glass mingled with fire is before Him. His eyes are like flames of fire, His face is shining like the sun in all of its strength, and that He baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire. The Seraphim and the Cherubim who are before His throne day and night are literally called the burning ones. He leads His people with a pillar of fire, speaks through burning bushes, makes His ministers a flame of fire, and He Himself is like a refiner's fire. Beloved, our God is an all consuming fire.

And the final word of exhortation for this chapter from Jesus is, "If a man were to give for love, all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised." This phrase used to bother me as I would read Song of Songs chapter 8. It just seems as if it didn't fit in the flow of conversation, but when it became revelation to me, I saw that it fit within this passage perfectly. The way that I connected it to my life and gained understanding into it was when I looked at what the Church often does with people who leave worldly success and join the ministry. The Church often celebrates people who leave high paying jobs and lifestyles to carry their cross for Jesus' sake. This is great and it's impactful, but before we venture out into this reality we must realize the truth. The truth of the situation is this, it doesn't matter what anyone has left, to follow Jesus, it is worthless compared to what they are receiving in the age to come. Now that doesn't mean that we diminish people and their choices, but it does mean that we put it in proper perspective. That perspective is we are comparing apples with watermelons. There isn't equality with what we say no to in this age that compares to what we are receiving in the age to come. Christians are going to inherit an eternal city that will never fade, where there is no need for the sun or the moon because the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ lights the entire city. This is wealth beyond understanding in this age.

It doesn't matter if a man were to give all the wealth of his entire household, all the assets, properties, bank accounts for love, Jesus here says that it would be utterly despised. In this Chapter it's clear that the overarching theme is the great, powerful and potent love of Jesus. This is a love that holds us, keeps us and empowers us to press on into the upward calling of Christ Jesus.

# Week Nineteen: Song of Songs 8:8-14

#### I) The Bride's Public Vindication From Her Brothers (SOS 8:8-9)

- A) Song of Songs 8:8-9 "We have a little sister, and she has no breasts. What shall we do for our sister in the day when she is spoken for? If she is a wall, we will build upon her a battlement of silver, and if she is a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar."
  - 1) It's here that the speaker changes from Jesus to the brothers. They are coming to the Shulamite (bride) and asking her for help with a young one (immature believer). The brothers who struggled to handle the bride in Chapter 1 are now struggling to handle this *"little sister."* 
    - (i) Song of Songs 1:6 "...My mother's sons (her brothers) were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I haven't kept..."
  - 2) Because the brothers had little revelation about the beauty of Jesus the only thing they were able to give the bride back in Chapter 1 was work. This led her into a place of burnout as she says "...they (the brothers) made me the keeper of the vineyards (ministry), but my own vineyard I have not kept."
  - 3) The very ones who had rejected the bride and couldn't help her 7 chapters ago are coming to her for help, asking her what to do to make their <u>"little sister"</u> alive in the grace of God; like the bride is now.
  - 4) We are often looking for expression before we have received a revelation. Our revelation will eventually lead us into its expression. The expression is a by-product of our revelation.
  - 5) If you stay faithful to the revelation that you have received from Jesus, expression for that revelation will come in due time. **Matthew 11:19** "...But wisdom will be justified by her children."

## II) The Bride's Personal Revelation (8:10-11)

- A) Song of Songs 8:10-11 "I am a wall, and my breasts like towers; then I became in His eyes as one who found peace. Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon; He leased the vineyard to keepers; everyone was to bring for its fruit a thousand silver coins."
  - 1) The bride is making a huge statement of self discovery. I see four primary things concerning herself discovery;
    - (i) <u>"I am a wall..."</u> = Her personal destiny and purpose in the Kingdom of God is clear and she's going after it. If your destiny isn't clear, then you will live a life of continually missing the mark and being unfulfilled.
      - (a) Wall's speak of protection in the scripture and this is her gifting.

- (ii) <u>"...and my breasts like towers..."</u> = This speaks of her great ability to feed those around her. She has confidence in what God has worked into her in such a way that she is able to use it to help others.
- (iii) <u>"...then I became in His eyes..."</u> = The bride is experiencing the power of living before the eyes of Jesus alone. She is accepted as a son/daughter before a loving Father. She's doing this for Jesus and for Him alone.
- (iv) <u>"...as one who found peace."</u> = The bride is now at a place of peace internally and externally for she knows who she belongs to and how He feels about her.
  - (a) **John 13:3-5** "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His Hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself..and began to wash their feet..."

#### III) The First And Second Commandment Operating In Perfect Union (SOS 8:12)

- A) Song of Songs 8:12 "My own vineyard is before me. You, O Solomon, may have a thousand, and those who tend its fruit two hundred."
- B) "My own vineyard is before me."
  - 1) It's here, through 7 previous chapters of many ups and many downs that the bride has the first and second commandments working together in perfect union.
    - (i) Matthew 22:36-40 "Teacher, what is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets."
  - 2) This is a huge turnaround from **Song of Songs 1:6** when she originally said <u>"...They made me</u> the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept."
  - 3) She is serving the masses: being used by God in a powerful way among the nations working to build the body of Christ; and she hasn't lost herself in the process. Though there is much serving going on, she's spiritually, emotionally and physically healthy.
  - 4) This is the goal of the Christian life: that we serve others from the overflow of our personal encounter with Jesus; and that we are serving many vineyards- but never losing our own.

# IV) From One Lover To Another (SOS 8:13)

- A) Song of Songs 8:13 You who dwell in the gardens, the companions listen for your voice—let Me hear it!
  - The bride is busy impacting the nations in the grace of God. She's serving in the many gardens that God possesses and many are coming to hear her for she truly has something to say to the nations.

- 2) Do you hear the ravished heart of the great Bridegroom God? Do you see the passionate plea from one lover to another?
- 3) Fasting, prayer, Bible study, speaking in tongues and giving our money are not an end in themselves. They are a means to an end. The end is Jesus. You would never consider yourself warm from collecting wood, matches and lighter fluid.
- 4) I struggle with talking to others about Jesus more than I do talking to Jesus Himself. Beloved, He longs to hear our voice!

#### V) The Bride's Instant Obedience And Final Intersession (SOS 8:14)

- A) Song of Songs 8:14 "Make haste, my Beloved, and be like a Gazelle or a young Stag on the mountains of spices."
  - 1) The bride responds to Jesus' request to let Him hear her voice with instant obedience as she calls for Him to come to her.
  - 2) It's not that the mountains of Myrrh have changed (SOS 4:6), but it's the messenger that's changed causing her to no longer see the mountains as a sacrifice-but rather as a delight. There spices now instead of mountains of separation (SOS 2:1; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:18).
    - (i) "How long O Lord until that marriage Day? O my Beloved, take large steps. For love is tormented until it's finished."- Samuel Rutherford
  - 3) The Churches lack of cries for Jesus to come is an indicator of her separation from Him. If she knew Him, she would cry day and night hastening His return. But it won't always be this way. God is raising up messengers even now, who will preach about His beauty and it will cause listeners to cry for Him to come.
  - 4) This book starts with hunger and ends in hunger (SOS 1:2; 8:14) Revelation 22:17, 20. Hunger begets hunger.

# **Chapter Nineteen Extra Reading**

Here in the second half of Song of Songs Chapter 8 **(Song of Songs 8:8-14)** we will see the story of the bride at the end of her journey to experience the vindication, the peace and the joy of walking with Jesus through the course of her life. I remember hearing Doug Lasit from City Bible Church in Portland, Oregon, say: I recently met a young student in another state across the country at a youth conference I was preaching. When this student introduced himself to me, he said that he was once in his youth ministry back in Portland, Oregon, before he had moved to where he now lived. He told me about what God did in his life in Portland and how he was now serving God in this new state and city. What Doug was saying through this powerful encounter is that so many in ministry do it for a short season, and because of that short season they often don't see that kind of fruit.

The life of the bride proves to us that if we stay the course with Christ we will also see so many things in our life come full circle. Pastor Dwayne, who is my father-in-law, has always said *growth is the great alienator*. What this means is that when we choose to grow in Christ and go for His calling in our lives, we often separate ourselves not only from others, but often from loved ones as well. We will see in this chapter that the brothers who were so hard on the bride in Chapter One, are going to come to her now in Chapter Eight and ask her for help because they see the wisdom in the way she has lived her life.

As you read through this chapter, make a commitment to put yourself in the bride's shoes and allow her life of maturity to encourage you, inspiring you to stay the course and see the promised outcome. Remember, it's not all who run the race that win, but only those who compete according to the rules and finish the race (1st Corinthians 9).

### The Bride's Public Vindication from Her Brothers (SOS 8:8-9)

Here in **Song of Songs 8:8-9** the brothers return to the bride saying to her *We have a little sister, and she has no breasts. What shall we do for our sister in the day when she is spoken for? If she is a wall, we will build her a battlement of silver, and if she is a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar. As I have already mentioned, I believe it's best to see those asking the bride a question, as her brothers. These are the same brothers that appeared strongest in Song of Songs 1:6 when the bride spoke of them saying ... My mother's sons (her brothers) were angry with me; they made me the keepers of the vineyard, but my own vineyard I haven't kept...* These brothers, because they didn't have anything else to give the young bride other than what they knew, put her to work apart from intimacy with the king. It led to great burnout. But thank God the bride didn't become bitter at God and the body and quit, but rather she continued to look for the One whom she loved. Her looking in **Song of Songs 1:7** led her to finding Him, which led to a lifelong journey of encountering the beauty of Christ. And it's because of her lifelong journey of maturity with Jesus that the brothers are now returning to speak with her and ask her for help.

It's powerful that the very ones who had so harshly rejected her in **Song of Songs 1:6** are now coming full circle to ask her for help with what do for their <u>...little sister</u>. This little sister is speaking spiritually about the new life in a young lady among them. She's a new Christian, a new believer in the God of the Bible, and the brothers are at a place where they need help on how to raise her up. Because the bride is fully alive in the grace of God, they see the wisdom of her life and need her to help them do the same for this little sister.

It's been my personal experience that my pursuit for Jesus over the years has caused much strain on relationships. It's not because I am a good follower, but because Jesus is a great leader. And it's not because I am good listener, it's because He's such a good speaker. For whatever reason, Jesus has helped me to stay faithful to Him over the years. With lots of ups and downs, I have moved forward some seasons, only to go backwards in other seasons. But overall, God has helped me to keep moving forward and I hope that this is true for the entirety of my life. But as I have attempted to reach for Jesus, though not always attaining Him, it has caused great disruption in the lives of those around me. I have had no less than ten people return to me at some point during the past twelve years and apologize to me for their jealousy, and envy of me and my passion for Jesus. The reason for the repentance is because many of them rejected me through the process. I have understood what it means to some degree to be rejected by my own people.

But what's also true about this passage, and it's been true for my life as well, is that I don't always have to have the expression of how what I have received from God is going to work. The reason why I say this is because many people want to know the *expression* before they have received a *revelation*. What I mean by expression is the way what God has given them is going to work before the eyes of others. Lots of people try to *make* something happen in the grace of God, but this isn't how Jesus works. Jesus doesn't usually give us the expression and then the revelation; in fact it's mostly the other way around. Jesus loves to give us a revelation of Himself and from that revelation, if we will be faithful to it and search it out, God will give it expression in due time.

I will never forget reading Gary Wiens book, *The journey to intimate authority*, and when getting to this place in the book from **Song of Songs 8:7**, being so impacted by its truth. What so set me free internally is that I don't have to have the *expression* to run with the *revelation*. The revelation of what I have received in Christ will soon make room for its own expression in real time. It's like the idea that, *That which you see with your mind's eye, can become a reality among you if you will stay the course*. The bride received a revelation of the King in **Song of Songs 1:4-5**; it's that very revelation that will sustain her over the years and lead here to this place in **Song of Songs 8:8-9**. Jesus told us this by looking at John the Baptist's life. He said of John's life ... *But wisdom will be justified by her children (Matthew* 11:19). This was a rebuke and a promise that those who rejected John's lifestyle and Jesus' ministry would, down the road, see the wisdom of it in the lives of those who chose to follow it also. And it's here that the wisdom of the bride's life is showing itself forth in the way that others are coming around her, asking for help.

## The Bride's Personal Revelation (Song of Songs 8:10-11)

As the bride is answering these others about what they should do with the little sister, she has a moment of personal revelation about her own life and what God's been doing internally with her. It's here in **Song of Songs 8:10-11** that she says <u>I am a wall, and my breasts like towers; then I became in Hiseyes as one who found peace. Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon; He leased the vineyard to <u>keepers; everyone was to bring for its fruit a thousand silver coins.</u> This is a moment of self discovery for the bride. Self discovery is the most powerful discovery one can make. It's not greater than the revelatory activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives; but when it comes to seeing something personally with our own eyes and heart, it empowers us to make serious changes. Listening to others is good, and having others point things out in our lives is great; but when we see it ourselves there is something that's cementing about it.</u>

Through this self revelation the bride sees four primary things about her life as it relates to God and others. Firstly she says <u>I am a wall...</u> This is such a simple phrase and we could easily overlook it but she's making a very large, sweeping statement about her calling in life. Her being a wall speaks about her purpose in the Kingdom of God. Her destiny in God and what God had called her to do is totally clear within her. And through this revelation she has confidence in what God has called her to do. She's not missing the mark with her life, but like Paul, she is pouring it out as a drink offering unto the Lord (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:6). A wall speaks of protection in the scripture; for her it was her prophetic calling to give leadership to the body of Christ, as one who was set on that Isaiah 62 wall.

Secondly she says ...and my breasts like towers... This is a funny phrase to the unlearned and has been the brunt of many Church jokes, but it represents a powerful truth and a very common New Testament truth related to breasts and the milk of the word. Through this statement the bride understood that she was filled with great truth in the knowledge of God and was able now to feed others. She is confident enough in what God has worked in her, to now let it work through her to others. Beloved, there comes a time when we stop becoming, primarily, the one who is learning and we begin also teaching others. Christians become sick when we only are filling with truth but have no outlet. We become overweight and sick through our stagnant life. There comes a time when we stop only being fed and begin feeding others with what God has given. Even as a woman who has delivered a baby gives the newborn milk that is needed for growth, it is important is that we give others what we have received.

Thirdly the bride says about herself ...then I became in His eyes.. It's here that the bride is realizing that she's living before His eyes and His eyes alone. She is a true daughter of the King, living her life for Him and not for others. Beloved, though we live in community with others, we can't only gain our personal value from those around us; it must come primarily from God alone. It's through His eyes that we become confident in who we are. She's living before His eyes and we will see that it results in great internal peace.

And fourthly the bride says ...as one who found peace.. This is a result from the previous statement that she made when she said then I became in His eyes. The idea is that because she is living before His eyes alone, she now has peace in her life. It's not just that she has peace internally, but also externally. She is living in light of what God is doing in and through her. This is her understanding that God feels deeply for her and has passion about her life in Him. Oh the joy of belonging to Christ in real time, not just in longing and in theory, but in real time!

Jesus experienced the same thing as the bride when it says of Him in **John 13:3-5** Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself...and began to wash the disciples' feet. Because Jesus knew who He was, where He was from and where He was going, He was able to lay aside the priestly robes of ministry, to gird Himself with a towel, and do what was lowest in the kingdom of God: wash another's feet. Beloved, knowing who we are and who God is empowers us to live at peace with the many things that we are required to do. When I find myself complaining about a minuscule task in Christianity that I have been asked to do, I have to ask myself if I understand who I am and who God is. Because, if I had that knowledge I would approach the lowest of positions as Christ did, with great passion and confidence that God loved what He was doing.

The First and Second Commandment Operating in Perfect Union (SOS 8:12)

Now that the bride is towards the end of her journey she makes another powerful discovery that is in stark contrast to her initial experience from **Song of Songs 1:6**. She says in **Song of Songs 8:12** *My own vineyard is before me. You, O Solomon, may have a thousand, and those who tend it's fruit two hundred.*The phrase from this verse that I really want to hone in on, is when she says ... my vineyard is before me.

This is the second time the bride has mentioned her vineyard in the Song. The first time in **Song of Songs 1:6** she said ... they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I haven't kept. The idea in the first time she spoke about her vineyard is that she had totally neglected it because of the amount of work she was doing in the many other vineyards. This led her to a place of burnout because she was working hard with an un-fascinated heart which is very tiring. But here, at the tail end of her life, she is finally living in the tension of the two commandments with her statement that ... my own vineyard is before me.

The young mature bride is serving the masses, but in the midst of her serving she hasn't lost her own soul, or heart in the process. This is very challenging, but it's our destiny in the grace of God to live in the tension of these two commandments. Though there is much serving going on, even at a running pace, she isn't losing sight of her own vineyard in the service of other vineyards like early on in her life where the serving led her away from Christ not towards Him.

What is happening in the life of the bride is the goal for every person that loves Jesus. Again, using the bride's life as a pattern for our lives, just like we would look at the life of David for personal insights, we can see that what God did with her He longs to do also with us. It's our goal, also, to live just like she was living --serving others in the *daily grind* of doing ministry, while never losing sight of our primary call to set our gaze on Jesus personally, not just for others.

#### From One Lover to Another (Song of Songs 8:13)

The bride has done a lot of talking during the course of Song of Songs chapter 8, but here Jesus can't help Himself and is going to break into the conversation and speak to her. He says to her **in Song of Songs 8:13** You who dwell in the qardens, the companions listen for your voice—let Me hear it! The reason why I title this section From One Lover to Another is that the bride is a lover, because the One she loves is an even greater Lover. We are who we are and express the emotions that we express because of the One in whose image we are made.

It's lovely to me how much God loves us and does what He does to make sure that we know it. it's here in the midst of the bride's service towards others (which, by the way, God has ordained and set in motion) that He breaks in and says this to her. The ravished heart of the Bridegroom God is calling out to her saying Don't get so busy that you haven't time for Me. Don't go down the road of Ephesus, Sardis or Laodicea (Revelation 2-3). In the midst of all your work, don't forget to spend time with Me, not because I am a taskmaster, but because I am a Lover and I love to be with you!

It's true that fasting, prayer, Bible study, speaking in tongues and giving our money are not an end in themselves. They are only a means to an end, and that end is Jesus. If all of our studies, all of our ministry, all of our prayer and spiritual disciplines aren't leading us into encounter with Christ, something is wrong with what we are doing; or we are doing what's right in a wrong way. The call is to talk with Jesus more than we are talking with others; for someone who loves to talk, this is a great challenge. As much as I love to talk to others, Jesus calls me to talk to Him more, making sure I am

keeping Him central in all that I do.

#### The Bride's Instant Obedience and Final Intercession (Song of Songs 8:14)

When Jesus calls out in **Song of Songs 8:13** for her to let Him hear her voice, the bride responds to Him instantly in **Song of Songs 8:14** by saying <u>Make haste my Beloved, and be like a Gazelle or a young stag</u> <u>upon the mountains of Spices.</u> God calls her to let Him hear her voice in the previous verse. Here, one verse later, she lets Him hear her voice.

The voice is a call for Him to come near to her in the place of service to others. Even though she has influence and people are coming to listen to her, she doesn't stop asking for His intervention in life and in her ministry. We never get to place where we don't need the in-breaking of God upon our hearts, lives and ministries. She is asking for Him to come to her. It's powerful to see that it wasn't just an ideal, or a thought about how to live her life before Him, but the actual day-to-day way she lives.

And if you notice her thoughts about the mountains to which God had called her onto, in **Song of Songs 4**, have changed from *Mountains of leopards and lions* (**Song of Songs 4:8**) now to *mountains of spices* (**Song of Songs 8:14**). I don't believe that it's the mountains that have changed but rather her perspective that's changed. The mountains of ministry that He called her to are no longer a sacrifice, but rather a delight. The mountains are no longer a place of separation as in **Song of Songs 2:17** but now they are mountains of sweet communion.

And regarding her cry for Him to make haste and come to her, Samuel Rutherford once said *How long O Lord until that marriage Day? O, my Beloved, take large steps. For love is tormented until it's finished.* Part of the reason we know that the Church is sleeping and separated from Christ is because of her separation from the coming of His return. The apostolic writings were all so dynamically connected to the hope which was firmly placed upon Jesus' return for His beloved ones.

It seems today that the Church's lack of cry for Jesus to come is an indicator of her separation from Him. If she knew Him, she would cry out day and night working to hasten the Day of His return. But it won't be this way forever. Because God is raising up messengers even now, who will preach about His beauty and it will cause listeners to cry for Him to come.

The very last part of this book, chapter and verse that must be mentioned is that it ends the same way it began: with hunger for God. **Song of Songs 1:2,** which is the first real verse of the book (other than an introduction in verse 1), says <u>Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His Word.</u> And the final verse in this book, Song of Songs 8:14 says <u>Make haste, my Beloved and come...</u> This book starts with great hunger for God and it ends with great hunger for God.

I believe that hunger begets hunger. If we stick with it, the little bit of hunger we exert in the beginning of our journey, will only increase and end with a massive increase in our capacity to hunger for God.