

Session 10: Her Journey Begins with Spiritual Crisis

We are continuing our studies on the Song of Solomon. We are on session ten. We are going through the book of Song of Solomon for twenty-four sessions verse by verse right through it. It is a natural love song that magnifies the beauty of married love, but it also has a spiritual application as well describing the journey that we have in our relationship with Jesus onto holy passion with the Lord. I call this series “The Progression into Holy Passion—Studies in the Song of Solomon.”

THE BRIDE’S JOURNEY BEGINS: THE PARADOX OF GRACE: “DARK, BUT LOVELY”

Here in this session, we are looking at Song of Solomon 1:5-11 entitled, “The Bride’s Journey Begins with a Spiritual Crisis,” or I could title this as well “The Lord’s Seven Answers to Her Spiritual Crisis,” as you will see in this session, and in the notes that the Lord gives a seven-fold answer to deliver her from the crisis.

Those of you who do not have the notes, you can get them on the website. They are available right now. We will not cover the entire set of notes in any of the classes, so I always give you a little more for you to study on your own after the class is over.

We will begin in Song of Solomon 1:5-6 as just a brief review of the last session—session nine. The bride cries out before the Lord her two-fold confession that I call “the paradox of grace.” She says, “I am dark in my heart,” she is understanding the weakness of her flesh, “however, I know that because of Jesus, I am lovely to God.”

FOUR REASONS WE ARE BEAUTIFUL TO GOD EVEN IN OUR WEAKNESS

Paragraph B. We are beautiful to God. As we went over in session nine, she is lovely to God for four reasons. I just want to say them one, two, three and reference the notes from session nine.

GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN CHRIST AND A WILLING SPIRIT

First, we are lovely because of the gift of righteousness that we receive from Jesus. Secondly, we are lovely before God because at the new birth, the Holy Spirit

worked into our spirit a “yes” to God. There is a “yes” in our spirit. The Scripture calls it a willing spirit, a spirit that is willing to obey God, that longs to obey God, and desires to obey God. Though that “yes” in our spirit can be fully a “yes,” our maturity to walk it out increases over the years, but the “yes” is big from the very beginning. The “yes” is real.

It is a resounding, “Yes, Lord, I will do anything you tell me,” but as we discovered, as time goes on, the Lord gives us more light and ability to walk in greater and more specific obedience. However, if the yes in our spirit is big from the very beginning, it is huge, and it is a huge part of our life—that “yes” in our spirit.

A “YES IN OUR SPIRIT” IN SECRET WILL BE REMEMBERED AND HONORED

The Lord sees every movement of our heart toward Him, and He delights in it. He honors it, He remembers it, and He rewards every movement of our heart toward Him—not just the couple big ones—but throughout our entire walk with Him on the Earth. That is why saying “yes” to Him in secret, when no one else sees that we say, “yes” to obedience and faith. It moves His heart, and He records it in His book, and He will remember it. This is what makes every moment of every day alive and real because it matters to Him—even the movements of the heart do. It makes every day important and every day exciting. I do not mean in the one sense that you are jumping up and down because something novel or new is happening, but every day is important.

Just a tired afternoon is important because in our spirit, it does not mean that you are working hard and studying hard every minute of every day. That is not what I mean, but there is a “yes” in our spirit to the Holy Spirit, and that matters to God.

GOD’S VERY EMOTIONAL MAKEUP

The third thing that makes us beautiful even in our weakness is the very fact of God’s emotional makeup. It is the fact that He is a God of passion. It is the fact that He esteems us and evaluates us through the lens of tenderheartedness. He evaluates us through the lens of liking us. He is a God of gladness. He is a God of joy.

HE SEES OUR ETERNAL DESTINY AS A BRIDE OF CHRIST

Fourth is because He sees who we are in the big picture. He does not just see what is happening in a three-day or a three-week period. He sees who we are from the billion-year picture. He sees that we are His Son's eternal companions. We are the joy of His Son's heart in partnership forever.

The Lord sees that reality about us now. He does not only figure that out in the resurrection. He knows that right now about us, and it moves Him—we really do move Him. It is awesome because He is a God who is easily moved by His people because of the kind of heart He has.

THREE STAGES OF VICTORY

We must understand the three stages of victory. Now, I have more information on this. This is actually meant to be review, but we did not cover this in session nine. I will just mention it. The notes are more extensive on this in session nine.

Victory begins in our life with our initial commitment, our sincere intention to obey the Lord. Before we have even acted, the decision itself even before we have actually put feet to it, just, “Yes, Lord, I want to say yes to You. I am saying yes, and I want to fully obey You in that area”—the initial commitment is where victory begins. Victory is not only manifested when we have the full breakthrough in our life. Victory begins with a “yes” in our spirit. That is where it starts. Again, that “yes” in our spirit did not come the devil. It did not come from our flesh. It came from God the Holy Spirit. That is a part of victory working in our spirit.

Then the area with a little more partial breakthrough, whether it is our speech, or the way we spend our time, or our physical or emotional passions, our money, our pride, the way that we forgive and bless those who are against us and humble ourselves easily—whatever area it is, we get a partial breakthrough, and we have some sense of transformation in our heart, but there is still a continual war. There is some breakthrough happening in our emotions and in our character and in our life choices.

Of course the third is what we are aiming for is what I call the substantial breakthrough. It is when our desires are substantially transformed in that area. Now some people only count victory when it hits stage three. So therefore, they are always living in defeat. Their whole paradigm in walking with God is defeat because they cannot see victory in those other two dimensions.

HER SPIRITUAL CRISIS: REJECTION AND SHAME

Roman numeral II. Her spiritual crisis. So she has this overwhelming sense of her darkness, but she has this exhilarating reality of her loveliness—that is the paradox of grace. Now, she describes five different pressures in her life from day one. Beloved, every one of us understands this. These are common to everyone who is in love with Jesus, so do not think that you are getting picked on. This is common for every believer in the Body of Christ.

She says in Song of Solomon 1:6, “Do not stare, do not look upon me because I am dark,” and she is talking about in the spiritual application. In the spiritual interpretation she is saying, “I am dark in heart. My mother’s sons were angry with me.” That is the second pressure.

Number three: “They made me keepers of the vineyard” (Song 1:6). That is the third pressure. Song of Solomon 1:6: “So much so that my own vineyard I did not keep”—that is the fourth one. The fifth one, we will read Song of Solomon 1:7, “Tell me, O you whom I love,” she is talking to Jesus, “Where will you feed my heart? Where will you make my heart rest even in the noon time?” The noontime would have been the most difficult time to rest. We will look at that in a minute. She is essentially saying in verse seven, “Even in the most difficult situations, where will you make my heart rest? Where will you feed my spirit, O you whom I love?”

Now, she describes her fifth pressure in verse seven: “Why should I be as a veiled woman, a woman who veils herself by the flocks of your companions?” Now all of this language is spoken in the language of her own heart. It is the language of agricultural society with the farms and the livestock, and it is through that paradigm that she is expressing that relationship to the Lord by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. So these ideas were very easily understood at the time the Song of Solomon was written. They were instantly understood. The people who heard it would have said, “Oh, yes, I understand that—that is easy to understand.” It is only now in the twenty-first century, that these ideas are a little bit odd to us.

FIVE PRESSURES RELATED TO HER SPIRITUAL CRISIS

Paragraph A. She describes five pressures relating to her spiritual crisis. The first pressure she feels is when she says, “Do not look upon me for I am dark.” She feels the shame of people who are aware of the darkness of her heart. Now whether people know your deepest and darkest secrets and failures is one thing; but

everybody knows what it is like to have a few people who know our failure, just the fact that we are not walking in humility and love and wisdom in the way that we long to.

So she is aware that others are aware of her failure, so she does not like that at all. She does not like the idea that others see her. It says in the other translations, “Do not stare at me.” They are looking at her and they are wagging their head. All of us know that pressure.

She goes on to say, “My mother’s sons were angry with me.” She is rejected by her angry brothers. All of us know what it means to be rejected in the Body of Christ by other members of the Body of Christ who are angry at what we are doing.

Then she talked about the third pressure as being overworked because they are over her in the vineyard in this season of life, so they make her, they cause her to be the keeper of many vineyards (plural). They overwork her. They load up the responsibility upon her, and I am not trying to stir up anybody’s self pity. I do not want anybody to go there. Somebody says, “That proves it. That is in the Bible. I am overworked. I knew it. The Lord confirmed it in that class.”

WHY SHOULD I LIVE AT A DISTANCE?

She goes on to say, “But my own vineyard, my own heart, I have not kept.” What she longed to do was know the kisses of His Word and know the chamber experiences, and now her own heart, her own vineyard, the garden of her own heart is now not kept. Then she goes on to describes how she serves Jesus at a distance. She says, “Why should I be like one of the veiled women who are serving down the road? I want to be near You. I do not want to be like a stranger serving far away from You. I want to be with You where You are. I want to be doing what You are doing. I want to be near You. I signed up to be near You, not to be just working at a distance from You with a cold heart, with angry people, with shame and awareness of my sin. This is not what I wanted. I wanted the kisses of Your Word. I wanted the chamber experiences with the King. I wanted the fragrance of Your good perfumes to wow and woo me forever.”

Of course throughout the Song of Solomon, she experiences those in different seasons, and in different ways, but all of us signed up to be wholehearted lovers of God. We signed up to go for God with all of our heart and to feel His love and be exhilarated by Him, and a few years go by and people are mad at us. People are aware of our failures and our shortcomings, and they are wagging their head

talking against us; we are overwhelmed, our heart is dull, and we are at a distance from Jesus. We think, “I was just trying to be a missionary to serve God, you know, and here I am backslidden, angry, and burned out.” Whether you are a missionary locally or abroad, it is the story over and over and over again, and then Jesus gives seven answers. We are not going to look at each one of them in any kind of detail tonight, but just to reference them, and the principles are just Biblical principles, but it is nice to see them one, two, three laid out.

SONS WERE ANGRY AT HER YOUTHFUL ZEAL

Paragraph C. The sons were angry with her. Why were they angry with her? They were angry with her youthful zeal. Now, these angry sons are the leaders in the vineyard over her. They speak of the leadership over the purpose of God, and many times it is a very common experience that all of have had. We run into older, more experienced, they have been there, they are in charge leaders who have a dull spirit. The world is filled with leaders in the Body of Christ who have a dull spirit. They have a faint memory of the good old days when the Word of God moved them to tears; they remember they had a spirit of prayer, and a vision for revival in their heart and in their city and nation.

Now these older, angry brothers really do not like her. They do not like her zeal, and they do not like the way she does things, and they let her know it. Now first, they are angry with her because she brings conviction to them.

I tell you, the last thing that you want, if you have settled into complacency, is a red-hot believer next to you who loves the presence of God, loves the Word of God, loves fasting and witnessing and giving and believing God and prophesying and healing. You are thinking, “Leave me alone. All you are doing is tormenting me because those are the things that I loved ten, twenty, thirty years ago.” I am saying this to those who are fervent toward the Lord. What happens often is that the dull, those who are dull of spirit, will use the word legalism for almost every category for every area that convicts them. I am talking from thirty years of ministry.

THE SONS PREFER COMPROMISE OVER LEGALISM

Whenever people get fiery, the people who get troubled by it claim legalism because the one thing nobody wants is legalism. They prefer compromise before legalism. So if you say legalism, it just stops the room cold, “No, not legalism,” so people back away from their zeal under that charge. I have watched it so many

thousands of times, and I just tell those of you who are younger that you do not have to be intimidated and thrown off because they throw the legalism word at you.

That is a word that normally people use when you have a zeal for Jesus that is troubling them and disturbing their comfort zone. That is the cure-all zone for them to get rid of the zealous people—if you are immature enough to buy that criticism. Sometimes it is true, but mostly over the years, it has not been true when I have heard the charge against fiery people, it is just that she was convicting them. I have also found having done it much in my youth, and then much sometime since my youth is that the zealous do not always have their zeal tempered, and they have pride in their zeal.

I have found in my own life and in the lives of others, that it is easy in our zeal to be self-absorbed and proud. We want everyone to do it like we are doing it or they are off, and we are vocal about it. It is more about our zeal and us than it is about the love of God being communicated to other people.

SHE IS MISTREATED BY THESE ANGRY SONS

Paragraph D. Well, she was mistreated by these angry sons. They give her more vineyards to keep (vineyards is plural), and she gets burned out. She gets burned out spiritually. Now, let me give you a very important insight into burnout. Burnout is the next big word. If they do not get you on legalism, they will get you on burnout. Burnout does not come from hard work. Every now and then it does, but rarely does burnout come from hard work. Burnout comes from doing work with a wrong spirit. It really does. Burnout comes from working without connecting to the Holy Spirit while you are working.

I have done it both ways, and I have watched it for years. A lot of people are saying they are burned out, and what they are really what they mean is that they are mad at somebody, or that they did not get the honor that they want. They are just angry, but they call it burnout. Others are burned out, just because they are spiritually disconnected from the Lord. They are spiritually bored, but they say burnout instead of saying that they are spiritually bored because burnout is a classy way to quit.

If you say burnout, then people say, “Yeah, I know what you mean.” It typically means, “I did not get the honor I wanted,” or, “I have worked super hard, and I

wanted people to give attention to me, and they did not give me the attention I wanted. I did not connect with the Lord in it. I am just dead inside, and I am burned out.”

BURNOUT COMES FROM WORKING HARD WITH WRONG MOTIVES

Burnout comes from working hard with wrong motives, we want people to give us honor, we want people to recognize us, and it also comes with working hard without connecting with the Holy Spirit in the task. As strange as it seems, at IHOP in prayer meetings, it is very easy for prayer leaders and singers to get burned out because they can sing the songs without singing them to God. Their spirit gets jaded in the process, and it is not because they are singing too much, but because they are not singing to a Person, they are singing to the air, or they are singing to get noticed.

I am not picking on singers. We just have so many of them. It is the same with preachers, servers, servants in any different dimension, you can do the task without doing it in a way where you connect with the Holy Spirit.

SHE KEPT OTHER VINEYARDS AND NOT HER OWN (HEART)

Paragraph E. So she says that she kept the other vineyards, but she did not keep her own heart. She said, “I was a keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I did not keep” (Song 1:6). Beloved, our first responsibility, your first responsibility is your relationship with Jesus. Your first responsibility is not to make sure the whole world is won. Some people, you know, for ten years I understand youthful zeal, but some people ten or twenty years later have still not gotten the message that they are not the Messiah.

GOD DOES NOT NEED US BUT ENJOYS PARTNERING WITH US IN MINISTRY

God uses them because He likes them not because He needs them. There are many people God could use to do twice the work of somebody else if He wants to. He uses us because He likes working with us. We do not need a Messianic complex. We do not need to be so concerned about God’s kingdom that we disconnect from God to make sure God gets glorified out in the nations.

Beloved, I cannot bring you to some relationship with Jesus that is different than the relationship with Jesus that I have. Our first responsibility is to keep our own garden, our own vineyard. It does us no good to sacrifice our life in ministry, while

we are living in sin in an area of our life, or living disconnected from intimacy with God, but we are serving Him. That is a Messianic complex or a person who is overdosing on self-importance in terms of how important their ministry is. No—start taking care of your intimacy with God built up and strong. I do not mean that we quit everything until then, but let us keep our own vineyards going while we are serving the other vineyards.

YOU CAN ONLY BRING OTHERS WHERE YOU HAVE GONE IN GOD

I cannot bring you further in God than I have in my own secret life. I can tell you ideas that are cool, and if I can get good ideas and memorize them, and write them down from other people. I could give you ideas that you might say, “Wow, that is a good idea,” but I cannot impart that which I am not living in my own secret life in God.

So I really urge you, those of you who are younger who do not have to get pushed around by every person who has a strong opinion, “You are legalistic.”

“Ok, I will quit.”

“You are burned out.”

“Ok, I will quit again.”

“You are not doing enough.”

“Ok, I will do more.” Just get anchored in the Word of God. Obey the Holy Spirit. There will always be a voice telling you to do more, and to do it differently, always. I have watched young people. I did it a bit myself in the early years, and because I did it, I can see it. They do whatever the last energetic conference did where five leaders got up and said it really boldly. They say, “That must be my new calling,” and they lose out in their walk in God. We have to keep our own vineyard alive.

SHE FEELS THE PAIN OF SERVING JESUS AT A DISTANCE

Paragraph F. She feels the pain of serving Jesus at a distance. She says, “Why should I be as one who veils herself by the flocks of Your companion?” (Song 1:7) Now, a veiled woman was, when a woman put a veil on, she was working next to people who were not her family, who were strangers to her.

She essentially is saying, “Why should we be like strangers, and why should I be serving down the road? I used to serve next to You?” This is using the language of her day, in the farm language, so to speak, to talk about being at a distance from Him. She wants to be by her shepherd. She wants to be with Him wherever He is. She has lost the sweetness in her communion with God.

Remember in Song of Solomon 1:2-4 that she longed for the kisses of His Word because His love was better than wine. The King had brought her into His chambers, and she had these chamber experiences, and her secret life in God was soaring. Now she is at a distance, not connected to Him, relating to Him like He is a stranger. She is like a veiled woman before Him. Again, a veiled woman in that society was at a distance, she was unfamiliar to the relationship.

The good news is that you can get your intimacy back with God, and you can get it back pretty quickly. It does not take three years of probation to get it back. You can get your intimacy back quickly, but you have to reorder your priorities and your goals in life to get it back. We need to cry out like the bride did in Song of Solomon 1:2, “I want the kisses of Your Word.” The supreme cry of our heart is to have the Word of God touch us in a way that moves our heart in love to Him to where we feel the love of God, and we give ourselves back to Him in love. I promise you in that environment, you will overflow in love to people. You will have plenty of love to go around if the Word of God is touching you and tenderizing your spirit.

HER DESPERATE CRY TO HAVE MORE OF JESUS

Roman numeral III. Now is her desperate cry to have more: Song of Songs 1:7: “Tell me, O you whom I love, where do you feed your flock? Where do you make it rest at noon?” Here she is in a mess, but the thing I love that she is in a mess, but she is desperate to correct it.

Beloved, it is never too late. I do not care if you have gone through the most horrible experiences where you have grieved the Holy Spirit for years and years and years and years, you can return back now if you want to. You can get the relationship back where it is fresh, alive, and tender. Quickly it can return, but it will require a giving of yourself fully to the Lord in the way that this Song of Solomon describes. Now only the people who have confidence that they are lovely to God are going to pray this prayer. When the brothers are angry, we are at a distance. We have kept our distance; our heart is heavy with weeds in it. The Word

of God is choked in us, and she feels dark, this is when you need to know that Jesus looks at you, and longs for you to come near Him.

A person who thinks that God is angry with them is not going to pray this prayer. They are going to say, “Tell me, O You whom I love, how long is probation? How long until I meet You in the resurrection?” She is essentially saying, “I want You to feed my spirit and bring me to rest,” meaning, “I want You to satisfy my spirit now. I want to connect again like I did in former days.” That is why it is critical that people have a revelation of their loveliness before God. Only a person who has the confidence that even in their weakness that they are lovely to God, only that kind of person is going to stand and say, “Tell me, I love You, give me, feed my spirit, give me the things You used to give me.”

It is going to take that kind of confidence that God actually likes us praying this way. If you think that He is exasperated and disgusted, “How dare you, you old hypocrite, tell Me that you love Me and want Me to satisfy your heart? Get out of here.” That is not the God of Jesus. That is not the Father of the Lord Jesus. That is not the Spirit of God. That is not Jesus. That is a spirit of religion talking.

Now it says, number one, that she loves Him. She says, “Tell me, O you whom I love.” Now she knows that she has failed in love. This is like Peter. Remember in session 9 when Jesus said, “Peter, do you love Me?” He says, “Yeah, I love You.” “Say it louder. Look Me in the eyes. Tell Me you love Me. Peter, I am not asking you to convince Me. I am asking you to convince you that you love Me.”

Peter denied the Lord three times. In John 21, three times Jesus makes Peter confess the truth of his love until the thing breaks shame off of his life—three failures and three times Jesus says, “Do you love Me?”

But, it says that on the third time that Peter was grieved. He said, “Why are You asking me this?” The Lord wanted Peter to be reinstated with confidence that God knew that Peter was a genuine lover. Here she is. She says, “Tell me, O you whom I love.” She did not say, “Tell me, O Jesus, You know that I am a hypocrite. Just tell me anyway.” She says, “You know that I love You. My love is weak, but my love is real.”

GOD WANTS US TO REST IN THE MIDST OF PRESSURES AND LIFE

Now it says this that she cries out, paragraph C, and asks Him: “Where will you feed your flock? Where will you make it rest at noon?” (Song 1:7) It is only in the noontime, the heat of the day, the only time that the sheep will lie die down—as if their stomachs are full.

I have asked several shepherds this. I have had that affirmed not being a shepherd. That is one of the things that I say, “Is this true?”

They say, “Yep, if you feed them enough even in the heat of the day they will lie down. They will just be totally at peace.”

So she is basically saying, “Where do you feed my spirit? Where do you make me rest? Where is my spirit satisfied to where even in the heat of the day, I can be at peace in my spirit, alive and happy in you?”

WE MUST BE FED BY GOD DIRECTLY AND NOT JUST OTHER’S TEACHING

She has been fed by others. Others have fed her, but she wants Jesus to feed her. Beloved, it is not enough for you to go to teaching meetings, and have other people feed you. In the fullest sense of the word, what a teacher does is point you to the green pastures, and then you have to go feed on them yourself.

A lot of times people will say, I have heard it over the years, “Wow, I went to that meeting and really got fed.” What I think is more accurate is, “I went to the meeting, and I was inspired.” The way you are fed is when you and the Lord in private talk about that truth.

The only way you really are fed is when the truth that inspired you is in your lips, and you and the Lord are talking. You are saying it to Him. You are feeling a little bit of His presence. You do not have to say it perfectly, but you are saying that you are longing, or you tell Him your appreciation, your gratitude for a truth, and then it moves your heart a little bit. That is really when we are fed.

A book inspires us to go do that alone with the Lord, just like a teaching meeting or a conference. The problem is that many people will read a book, they will underline it, but they will not actually turn it into a conversation with Jesus to where it feeds their spirit. They get inspired by it, they will even tell their best

friend, but they will not actually bring it up in their relationship with the Lord in an ongoing way.

TO BE FED BY GOD DIRECTLY AND HAVE CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD

So she says, “Other people have fed me, I want You to feed me. I want You to feed me.” One thing that I am really jealous for here at IHOP is that the people here are being fed by the Lord directly. I love it that teachers will inspire them. We are only pointing to the pasture and saying, “If you go eat that, satisfaction guaranteed. There will be no unsatisfied customers if you go eat that truth.”

Beloved, you are not getting fed tonight. You are getting inspired tonight, I trust by the grace of God. You are only fed when these ideas become part of your language of your heart with God, you talk with God about these truths. When you feel even a little bit of His presence on you that is when you are being fed.

JESUS’ GLORIOUS ANSWER: SEVEN ESSENTIAL STATEMENTS

Ok now, Jesus gives a glorious answer. It is a seven-fold answer in Song of Solomon 1:8. He gives four of the statements in verse 8 and then He gives the other ones in verses 9-11. Again, we will not finish it all, but we will at least point in the direction. He says, “If you do not know,” because here is the question, “Where will you feed my spirit even such that at the noontime you will make me, in the difficult time, you will make me rest, even when life is difficult, even my intimacy with God stays intact.”

You know some people get a little sense of God’s presence in their life, and the slightest bit of trouble, disappointment, things do not work out well, people do not honor them, somebody rises up against them, they get left out, forgotten, and they lose whatever intimacy and their connection with God They lose it when pressure comes, or the finances do not work out right, or a really negative circumstance arises.

Beloved, we want a connectedness with the Lord that holds up in the heat of the day, do we not? It is available to anybody who wants it. So Jesus is answering the question here in verse eight. He says, “If you do not know the answer to where I will feed My people, then I am going to tell you right here,” and the answer is surprising.

JESUS AFFIRMS HER AS BEAUTIFUL

Paragraph A—First He is going to affirm her as beautiful, “O fairest.” That is the New King James Version. The other translations say, “most beautiful.” Now just a little free wisdom for men who are telling the girl of your dreams, your wife, or going to be wife, if you get the chance to say, “O most beautiful,” or, “O most fair,” go for beautiful. It just works a lot better.

I tried a few of these things at home. They just hit rock bottom. I said, “O fair one.”

She says, “What are you talking about?”

I say, “Your neck is like the tower of David.” She hit me. So if you mean business, talk straight. Then I had to figure out what all that stuff meant. Ok, so instead of, “O most fair,” use “O most beautiful.” Most translations go with that one.

Then He gives a three-fold answer in Song of Solomon 1:8. He gives a three-fold affirmation in verses 9-11. Now, as strange as the language is because it is unfamiliar to some of us because of our background as we do not have an agricultural background in terms of our lifestyles. This is a vital part of theology for holy passion—this seven-fold answer.

FIRST, HE CALLS HER “O, MOST BEAUTIFUL AMONG WOMEN” (SONG 1:8)

Ok, first thing, He starts off and calls her, “O most beautiful among women” (Song 1:8). He could say, truthfully, “I see the weeds in your unkempt vineyard. Your vineyard is not kept. The weeds are everywhere. It is torn down. I see the weeds in the garden of your heart, and I also see that you serve Me at a distance, but you are still beautiful to Me.”

Now you would expect that the Lord would say, “There are weeds in your garden, you are serving at a distance, whenever you are sincere come back,” but He does say that. He calls her, “O fairest,” or, “O most beautiful among women.” He sees the cry in her spirit as real. This is massive what I am saying. She said, “O You whom I love.”

He goes, “I believe that. Your track record in the last year is not that great. There are weeds everywhere in your life. You are not close to Me, as you used to be, you

promised Me that you were in this thing for the kisses of My Word, the chamber experiences, but that is not what is happening, but you know what I think about you? I see the cry in your spirit. You have cried out to Me. I take it at face value. I see the reality, and I call you most beautiful among women.” I have a little bit in the notes as to why she is called, “the most beautiful among women.”

HE CALLS US BEAUTIFUL EVEN IN THE MIDST OF OUR FAILURE

Paragraph C. Jesus starts off by saying in verse eight, “If you do not know, O most beautiful,” in other words, the answer that Jesus is going to give her is going to be surprising and shocking to her. A lot of people are looking for an answer which might seem mysterious and startling, but the answer is so direct and simple—it is just the main and plain principles and precepts of the Word of God.

Well, first we would be thinking that she would be getting a rebuke, and then we think He would give her some catch a chariot to the third heavens and meet the angels. He is just going to give her a really straightforward answer as to how He will feed her heart and even cause her heart to rest at the noonday.

JESUS GIVES A THREE-FOLD ANSWER AS TO WHERE HE FEEDS HIS FLOCK

Paragraph F. Jesus gives a three-fold answer as to where He feeds His flock. Number one, well, I will read it to you. He says, “O fairest among women,” here in Song of Songs 1:8, “follow in the footsteps of the flock”—that is number one. Song of Songs 1:8: “Feed your little goats”—that is number two; “and do it beside the shepherds’ tents,” which is number three.

The thing He emphasizes almost seems opposite of what she thinks. He is going to talk to her about not overreacting in her negative experiences because she has just experienced the angry sons, burnout, being overworked. What happens in the Body of Christ, and again, I have seen this in thirty years of ministry so many times. I wish it were hundreds of times, but it is more like thousands of times. That is not exaggerated. For so many people, it does not go the way that you think it should go with God; five or ten years they are on fire, it does not go just right, and they end up overreacting, and they leave the Body of Christ. They get into isolation in a way that is not sanctified, not anointed by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, the Lord will call you aside because He wants to encounter you. It is not a sanctified, holy moment of isolation for a few days here or there. It is an unsanctified, unholy isolation.

Then the next thing they do is get out of service to the Body, and they get into idleness, and they do not even know it. The Spirit of God is so committed to giving us more when we are giving it to people in the will of God. Then they get into a spirit of independence.

DRAWING IS INTIMACY AND SINGULAR, RUNNING IS PLURAL BECAUSE IT IS MINISTRY

Now remember, paragraph G, running is plural. We looked at this in session seven and eight. She says, “Draw me after You.” That is singular: “draw me, draw me”—that is singular. “Draw me singularly, but let us run together.” Running in ministry, running is plural.

God does not want us running in isolation, idleness, or with an independent spirit. As simple as this is, so much of what is going on in the Body of Christ of people I have seen walk with the Lord for years who are really stuck, it first starts off that they have a wrong paradigm of God.

They do not see themselves as beautiful before God. They see God as angry with them. They do not have the Bridal Paradigm, and then once they get the Bridal Paradigm down, they have to get recommitted back to the Body. It is kind of really cool today in the Body of Christ in our nation to be disconnected from the Body, and again, that goes under “grace” because being under the Body is legalism.

It is critical to be vitally connected to the Body of Christ, your entire life in a meaningful, real way. It is real. It is Biblical, and the spirit of lawlessness that is breaking out in the nations today, Jesus said that the spirit of lawlessness would abound in the end times.

The spirit of lawlessness is all through the Church in many ranks of the Church, and it is not the anointing of the Spirit. It is a spirit of lawlessness that is separating the Body, and people are really selfish and really idle and they despise authority, and it is popular, but it is anti-presence of God and anti-Holy Spirit and anti-Word of God. I feel energy about this because I see so many people swept away. Due to their bad spirit or bad experiences, they overreact in these ways, and they get disconnected from the Body of Christ.

WE MUST BE COMMITTED TO THE BODY OF CHRIST

First thing He says, paragraph H, about the commitment to the Body, He says: “Follow in the footsteps of the flock” (Song 1:8). In other words, “Get into the place where the sheep walk.” It is not just the footsteps of the flock, like where they gather locally in your area. It is also talking about the historical faith. It is where the Church walks, gathers together, and where we believe what is historical in the Word of God (what they did in the book of Acts).

It is not a new twenty-first century version of the Church. It is Bible from the days of old. It is where the flock has walked all through the generations. It is anchored in the Word and in gathering together—in small meetings and little ones as well. A lot of people overreact to the brothers because the brothers hurt her. He says, “No, get in the footsteps of the flock” (Song 1:8).

She responds, “No, I do not like the flock. The flock treated me wrong.”

He is basically saying, “Yeah, there are bad people in the flock, there are people who will do wrong in the flock, but safety is in the midst of the Body of Christ.” The devil wants us in isolation. If he gets a believer in isolation, he can destroy their faith and destroy their vitality so quickly. They do not even know it for ten years that their vitality, their freshness in God is gone. It takes them ten years to figure it out because they live on the memory of how devoted they were a decade earlier. Hebrews 10:25: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as in the manner of some.” That is far more popular today. Do not forsake the assembling together. The Body needs the Body to be safe and to be spiritually healthy.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR GOD-GIVEN RESPONSIBILITIES

The next paragraph and we have to bring this to an end here. I am out of time. Take care of your God-given responsibilities. The Lord gives each of us the little ones to take care of. It may be one or two. The Lord gives you so much more if you give even to one and two. Do not wait until it are thousand. Give to one or two. Beloved, I taught Bible studies in my room as an eighteen-year old at the university, and at my home in my basement. I taught thousands, I am using the word thousands over ten years of three-member Bible studies. Multiplied hundreds, two and three a week. I overdid it, but I would teach Colossians on Tuesday nights, and four people would show up. I would teach Philippians on Wednesday night, and two people would show up. I would come with a stack of notes and people were kind of bored. I was trying to learn. I was teaching and

feeding. They were all two and three years younger than me, most of them. I would get them and disciple them.

Again, nobody showed up, and I took care of the little ones. I did this for years, and then suddenly the room where I was preaching started getting a little larger, but that is not when things got better. That is not the goal to get a bigger room. The goal is to feed the little ones He puts before you. Do not wait for a crowd. Start feeding ones and twos right now.

Then finally she (He) says, “Do it in a relationship, a right relationship to the shepherds. Do it beside the shepherds’ tent. Do not do it a spirit of lawlessness. Do not do it in a spirit of independence and rebellion.”

SUBMISSION AND HUMILITY NOT REBELLION AND INDEPENDENCE

Be in right relationship to the authority, not just in the Body of Christ, which is what He is talking about here—just the spirit of submission and humility instead of rebellion and independence that is growing and growing and growing.

The End-Time Church will be established strong in humility and submission. Submission is almost as bad as the word legalism and burnout. Submission might be number three, so I have hit all of the bad ones tonight, but I tell you, suspicion, submission. Submission is the Lord calling us with an attitude of humility to receive humility, though there is a lot of abuse of that through history. I have seen lots of it in the decades, I mean, recent decades, but it is critical that we are rightly relating to one another.

Then, He gives three affirmations to her. You can read the notes. Then He gives a promise to her as well. Amen, let’s stand.

MINISTRY TIME

Father, I thank You in the name of Jesus as we come before You we say, O You whom I love, O You whom I love, we ask You Lord, even now, where do You feed Your flock? Where do You feed Your flock, Lord? We are going to take a minute and do one worship song.