

Session 11 The Bridal Paradigm: Foundational Truths (Song 1:12-17)

I. REVIEW AND OVERVIEW OF SONG 1:5-17

- A. The Bride asked Jesus, “Where will You feed me?” (1:7). He gave her a sevenfold answer declaring her beauty (1:8a) then gives her a threefold instruction (1:8b,c,d) and a threefold affirmation (1:9-11).
- B. She gives a threefold response as she is fed by Jesus at His table (1:12-14). She is confident in Jesus’ love even in her weakness as her heart is dark and like a vineyard not kept (1:5-7).
¹²While the King is at His table, my spikenard sends forth its fragrance. ¹³A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me...¹⁴My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms... (Song 1:12-14)
- C. Then she receives increased revelation of God’s love for her and her beauty to God (1:15). The Bride gives a fivefold response. She sees Jesus as handsome (beautiful God), the one she loves (my Beloved), and pleasant as He leads her life to rest now and then to eternal glory (v. 16-17).

II. MEDITATION ON THE CROSS: GOD’S LOVE AND OUR BENEFITS (SONG 1:13)

¹³A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts. (Song 1:13)

- A. She receives revelation of Jesus’ love and provision for us in going to the cross (Rom. 3-8).
- B. Myrrh is an aromatic gum resin produced by various trees and shrubs in India, Arabia, and East Africa. It was very expensive and used in making perfume (Prov. 7:17), the holy anointing oil to burn incense (Ex. 30:23), and in preparing a body for a funeral (Jn. 19:39-40). It has a bitter taste. The three wise kings brought myrrh to Jesus’ birth as a prophetic symbol of His death (Mt. 2:11). On the cross, Jesus was offered myrrh (Mk. 15:23). It speaks of Jesus’ death (Ps 45:8).
- C. Myrrh speaks of the fragrant yet bitter reality of embracing death to our fleshly ways.
- D. Esther’s beauty preparations included bathing in myrrh and other perfumes (Esth. 2:12). Myrrh is referred to eight times throughout the Song (Song 1:13; 3:6; 4:6, 14; 5:1, 5, 13).
- E. Some wealthy women in the ancient world went to bed with a bundle or large necklace of myrrh to provide fragrance through the night. Solomon gave her this extravagantly expensive gift.
- F. The Bride proclaimed that Jesus was like a bundle of myrrh that lay on her heart through the night. The cross was King Jesus’ extravagantly expensive gift to His Bride. Jesus’ death was an “abundant offering.” It speaks of what He endured because of us His love for us. It reveals how valuable we are to Him. Our value is seen in what Jesus endured for us. The fact that we exist is a statement of our value. Add to that the fact that the God of Genesis 1 became human and was crushed by the wrath of God to make the way to have an eternal relationship with us.
- G. The myrrh lay all night on her heart. The night speaks of the nighttime of her temptation and/or trials as well as carrying the idea of consistency. It rests on her heart all the time.

- H. We will forever marvel at the Lamb slain for our sins (Rev. 5:8-12). When we really see who He is and what He did, for all of eternity our hearts will be awed and overwhelmed with gratitude. For endless ages, we will see Jesus as a “bundle of myrrh” that will lie on our hearts.
- I. We are to carry it in our heart all through the day and night. We are to continually remember His love as we meditate on the cross (Song 1:4d). The most obedient and worshipful saints think the most on the cross. It is their constant meditation and confession. We will never grow weary of meditating on it. If it becomes boring to us, it is only because we have not understood it.

III. REVELATION OF JESUS’ BEAUTY AND DELIGHTFULNESS (SONG 1:14)

- A. Jesus was to her as a cluster of beautiful and fragrant henna flowers in full bloom. A henna is a shrub or a small tree with fragrant flowers. Jesus is as a cluster of henna flowers to those with revelation of His heart. He is not the burdensome and boring God that religion falsely proclaims.
¹⁴My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of En Gedi. (Song 1:14)
- B. Jesus’ commandments are not burdensome and His yoke is easy as we understand Him in truth.
³And His commandments are not burdensome. (1 Jn. 5:3)
³⁰“For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Mt. 11:30)
- C. Jesus’ personality is as a “cluster” of blooms. He is more than one flower but a cluster. This emphasizes the diversity and abundance of the beauty He possesses. The vineyards of En Gedi were well known for their abundant fragrance. Jesus has fragrance that is beyond all others.
¹⁶Yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend. (Song 5:16)
- D. We must tell the whole earth the truth of Jesus, who is as a “cluster of henna blooms.” They will repent much easier if they understand the truth. We must preach about the beautiful God who is filled with kindness. He is a fragrant and sweet God who intoxicates us with good news.
⁴Or do you despise [minimize] the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Rom. 2:4)

IV. THE BRIDE FEASTS AT THE KING’S TABLE: HER WORSHIP ARISES (SONG 1:12)

- A. God has provided a table for us (1 Cor. 10:21) in which we feed on the cross and its benefits that come because we receive the gift of righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21). The Bride sits with Jesus at His table to feed on the truths related to her salvation. These truths cause her worship to ascend as fragrance. This parallels the truths that the prodigal son discovered when he returned home to sit at the Father’s table (Lk. 15:20-28). The second revelation of Jesus expresses the Father’s heart.
¹²While the king is at his table, my spikenard sends forth its fragrance [perfume]. (Song 1:12)
- B. Her worship ascends to God as the fragrance of spikenard (perfume). Spikenard is literally a “spike of nard.” Nard was an eastern plant from India used to make expensive perfumes.
- C. What Jesus feeds us produces a worship that spontaneously ascends from our spirit like perfume.

- D. The Lord enjoys the fragrance arising from our spirit as we focus on the provision of His table. We are the fragrance of Christ to God. This is manifest in those filled with gratitude and love.
¹⁴Thanks be to God who...through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. ¹⁵For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? (2 Cor. 2:14-16)
- E. In Luke 7, a prostitute ran into the house of Simon the Pharisee. She broke the vial of perfume upon Jesus' feet. The perfume that filled the room speaks of the fragrance Jesus saw in her love.
- F. In the presence of the enemies of our soul, we can feed on the Lord's table. If we neglect to feed our spirit at the King's table, then our spirit starves as shame and guilt weigh us down.
⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies...my cup runs over. ⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. (Ps. 23:5-6)
- G. We are to reckon (see ourselves) as those who stand before God in the same righteousness that Jesus possesses (2 Cor. 5:21). We offer ourselves to God as those alive and free from the judgment of our sin. We present ourselves alive to God by saying, "Thank you for making me alive by giving me Your righteousness." Do not come as beggars filled with condemnation.
¹¹Likewise...reckon yourselves [see yourselves] to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ...¹³present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead... (Rom. 6:11-13)
¹There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus... (Rom. 8:1)
- H. What kind of fragrance is coming forth from your spirit before God? Does God smell the fragrance of confidence and gratitude? Many can say, "I am dark in my heart" but lack the understanding to say, "I am lovely to God." Our perfumed worship arises though the day, as we say, "I love You." We say, "Thank You that You love me. I love so You, Jesus."
- I. Jesus is a great King who has victory over all His enemies. The King speaks to us with affection. We trust that His plan will prevail because He is a King. The One who says, "I love you," is the same One who reigns as King over all the created order. He has the authority to establish that which His love has determined. His plan will prevail because He is the great King.
- J. **Summary of her three responses (Song 1:12-14):** First, her life is filled with spontaneous worship and adoration that arises as spikenard as she feeds at the King's table (1:12). Second, she constantly meditates, or feeds, on the love Jesus has for her and what He accomplished for her as He endured the myrrh of the cross (1:13). Third, she sees His beauty and delightfulness (1:13).

V. REVELATION OF GOD’S LOVE FOR HER AND HER BEAUTY TO GOD (SONG 1:15)

¹⁵*Behold, you are fair [beautiful], my love! Behold, you are fair [beautiful]! (Song 1:15)*

¹⁵*Behold, you are beautiful...my love... (Song 1:15; NASB/NIV)*

- A. In this passage, we see two foundational truths in the bridal paradigm. First, her beauty to Him in the grace of God and the revelation of His affection for her as the one He calls, “My love.” She has presented herself with confidence in Jesus’ love even in her immaturity (Song 1:12-14). This foundational truth equips us to receive more truth about our beauty to God.
- B. We are beautiful to God even in our weakness for four reasons. First, our loveliness comes by receiving the gift of righteousness (2 Cor. 5:17-21). Second, at the new birth, the Spirit put a “Yes, in our spirit” to God. Each movement of our heart to God is His work in us called a willing spirit (Ps. 51:12; Mt. 26:41). Third, our beauty is related to God’s emotional makeup. The tender affections and passions in God’s heart determine how He feels towards us. Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. God views things very differently than man does (1 Sam. 16:7; Isa. 55:7-9). Fourth, God sees us through the lens of our eternal destiny as the Bride of Christ.
- C. Each believer is one that Jesus calls, “My love.” He chose to love and pursue each one of us. Every believer can confess, “I am the disciple the Lord loves and His favorite one.”
⁹*“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you.” (Jn. 15:9)*
²⁰*Peter...saw the disciple whom Jesus loved...who...had leaned on His breast... (Jn. 21:20)*
- D. When we feel loved and beautiful in the grace of a beautiful God, then our heart is exhilarated. We will spiritually grow the fastest and deepest as we confidently confess, “Because of Jesus, I am beautiful to God, even in my weakness.” The Bride taught the virgins to remember His love.
⁴*We will remember your love more than wine. (Song 1:4)*
- E. The Bride’s spiritual journey begins with her twofold confession of faith (Song 1:5). I refer to this as the “paradox of grace” because as she discovers her sin she also knows she is lovely to God. Without revelation, when we see our sin we only feel dirty and ashamed. As long as we feel ashamed, we will continue to do shameful things. A person that feels dirty will live dirty. An immature believer that feels beautiful and loved by Jesus will run to Him not from Him.
- F. The more we see God’s heart for ourselves, the more we see His ravished heart for others. God wants us to also see the beauty of the corporate Church. In relational difficulty, we must remember God’s love (Song 1:4d) in knowing that He is ravished for all Christians (Song 4:9).
- G. **Review:** In an introductory way, she confessed, “I am dark in my heart but lovely to God” (1:5). Then Jesus said, “You are beautiful, You are My love and your cheeks are lovely” (1:8a, 1:9b, 10). Then she sees Jesus as beautiful (1:12-14). Now He emphasizes, “You are beautiful” (1:15).

VI. THE BRIDE HAS EYES LIKE A DOVE

¹⁵*Behold, you are fair [beautiful], my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes. (Song 1:15)*

- A. In the Scripture, a dove is a picture of the Holy Spirit. There are several implications to this.
- B. Single-minded: A dove has no peripheral vision. It only sees straight ahead. It is not distracted by what is happening at its right or left. To have dove's eyes is to have a good eye (single-minded).
²²*"The lamp of the body is the eye. If your eye is good, your body will be full of light." (Mt. 6:22)*
- C. Loyalty: A dove will mate once in its life. If their mate dies, they never mate again. This speaks symbolically of loyalty. (**Note**: it is not disloyal to marry if one's spouse dies).
- D. The impact of seeing herself as beautiful to God in v. 15, is having greater singleness of vision.
- E. The Holy Spirit is the ultimate One with "dove's eyes." He is single-minded and loyal to Jesus. We ask the Spirit to give us "dove's eyes."
- F. Perspective: We want the Spirit's perspective of Jesus and of our life. We are to see Jesus as henna blooms, or as fragrant and beautiful, and to be single-minded in our obedience and in our faith in God's grace that we would be confident by refusing all condemnation.

VII. HER WORSHIP AND FAITH: HER FIVEFOLD RESPONSE

¹⁶*Behold, you are handsome, my beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also our bed is green. ¹⁷*The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir. (Song 1:16-17)**

- A. The Bride's fivefold response to the revelation of being loved and beautiful to God (1:15) is to see with dove's eyes. She sees Jesus as handsome (the beautiful God), as the one she loves (Beloved), and pleasant as He leads her life to rest and security now and eternal glory in the age to come.
- B. She proclaims to Jesus, "You are handsome, my Beloved." In other words, You are the beautiful God and I love you. The more she sees of Jesus' beauty and the more she loves Him, the more spiritual pleasure she has in her walk with God (v. 16). This is described more in Song 2:3-5. When we see Jesus as beautiful and pleasant, then full obedience seems much more reasonable.
- C. Jesus promised us that we would have fullness of joy, or that it would be pleasant and enjoyable to walk with God as we obey Him and abide in His love. We do this as we continue in an on-going dialogue (1:12-17). Our spirit can know this joy even when circumstances are difficult.
⁹*"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." (Jn. 15:9-11)*

VIII. ABIDING IN JESUS' LOVE: REST, CONFIDENCE AND GLORY (SONG 1:16-17)

¹⁶*You are handsome, my beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also our bed is green [couch is luxuriant, NASB].*

¹⁷*The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir. (Song 1:16-17)*

- A. Abiding in Jesus' love brings her abundant rest and confidence in her life (1:16). The Bride is resting on a "luxuriant couch" or a bed that is green. Green fields were sometimes referred to as luxuriant fields, or those with profuse growth. The couch of the Lord is plush, green, and filled with life. It is not a desert (parched land). Our confidence is to be abundant as a luxuriant couch.
- B. The couch of the Lord speaks of our rest and confidence in the grace of God in two ways.
 - 1. *The rest of forgiveness:* We experience this with the assurance that we are forgiven as a free gift in Jesus. We rest in receiving forgiveness because of the cross (2 Cor. 5:17).
 - 2. *The rest of intimacy:* We experience this as we pursue intimacy with God. There is no rest until we conclude the highest purpose of our life is intimacy with God. Our intimacy with God includes the wisdom of obeying Jesus' leadership. Augustine wrote, "Man does not rest until he finds his rest in God." We only find our ultimate purpose for life in being wholehearted in our love for God. Many with the assurance of forgiveness still strive to find purpose and a life of greatness that has no regrets at the judgment seat of Christ.
- C. There is no fear of condemnation now nor fear of regret as we stand before the Lord on the last day. Living in the Bridal paradigm leads us to confidence in our love for God and in the wisdom of our choices to obey, even if the Church calls us religious and the world calls us foolish.
- D. We will live forever in relationship with God and in a house filled with beauty and strength. She refers to "our bed/couch" because it comes only in deep union of salvation (1 Cor. 6:17).
- E. She said that the beams of their houses were of cedar, and their rafters were of fir (1:17). Beams and rafters provide the structure for a house. The structures of a house are hidden. Cedar and fir were the most permanent, expensive, beautiful, and fragrant building material made of wood in Solomon's day. Cedar and fir trees were used in building the temple, so that its structures would not decay. Wood in the temple is a picture of humanity.
- F. God is building an enduring house. Our dwelling with the Lord is strong, permanent, and durable. Jesus became a man so that He could provide a permanent house for His Bride. Our house in God is strong. It will last forever. It is beautiful. We will dwell together with Jesus in beauty and strength forever. She sees the house as "our house," or their dwelling place together forever.

¹⁹*You are...members of the household of God...²²in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (Eph. 2:19-22)*

⁵*you...are being built up a spiritual house... (1 Pet. 2:5)*