

Session 12 The Bride's Identity and Life Purpose (Song 2:1-7)

I. THE BRIDE'S IDENTITY AND LIFE PURPOSE: BEING JESUS' INHERITANCE

- A. A foundational premise of God's kingdom is the Father's promise to give Jesus an inheritance that He knew Jesus would greatly desire. An aspect of His inheritance involves the mandatory obedience of all creation. Jesus wants more than this. He longs for an eternal companion, a Bride, who voluntarily chooses to be equally yoked to Him in love (Eph. 5:31-32; Rev. 19:7-9).
- B. The Bride of Christ is the great prize of all the ages that Jesus awaits. The affections of the human heart are the most precious possession to God. Jesus died to redeem and thus, possess, human affections. The reason we were created and redeemed is to love Jesus with all our heart. Satan attacks our hearts so that we would not fully love God and thus, live as Jesus' inheritance.
²³***Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. (Prov. 4:23)***
- C. The Spirit is restoring the first commandment to first place in the Body of Christ. It is the first commandment because it is the first priority to God. It is not called the "first option." Loving God is an ***end in itself*** and is the highest lifestyle possible. It is the ***great commandment*** because it always is great in the impact it has on God's heart and our heart (eventually others).
³⁷***Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."*** ³⁸***This is the first and great commandment." (Mt. 22:37-38)***
- D. The Church, as Jesus' Bride, will be prepared in this age before the second coming. The power of the end-time Church will be found in walking in the anointing to love God (Rev. 15:2-4). This includes the supernatural ability to feel God's love and then to feel love back to God.
⁷***"For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." (Rev. 19:7)***
- E. The Bride is pictured as a ***beautiful rose*** and a ***pure lily*** whose primary life purpose and identity is found in seeking to fully love (rose) and obey (lily) Jesus. The rose is chosen for its beauty and fragrance as the chief of flowers. A lily speaks of purity. The valley speaks of the low and dark places in this fallen world. She lives in purity in the midst of the dark valley of this fallen world.
¹***I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. (Song 2:1)***
- F. In poetic language, the Bride declares her primary life purpose and identity as being Jesus' inheritance. The rose and the lily are the same people identified as the Bride in Song 2:2. The king sees her as a lily among the thorns, which, like the valley, speaks of sin. Thorns came forth as the result of the curse of Adam's sin (Gen. 3:17-18; Heb. 6:8).
²***Like a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. (Song 2:2)***
- G. We are the rose and lily whose love and obedience arises as fragrance that intoxicates Jesus' heart. We are the only prize Jesus longs for. The reason we were created and redeemed is to fully love (rose) and obey (lily) Jesus as His inheritance and thus, to bring joy and pleasure to God.

- H. The Bride's first confession was that she was dark in her heart but lovely to God through Jesus (Song 1:5). She sees much more in seeing her purpose for her life in confessing, "I am Jesus' desired inheritance." This revelation only comes after seeing the truths in Song 1:12-17.
- I. We must pray to receive revelation that we are the inheritance the Father promised the Son.
¹⁷that...the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation...¹⁸that you may know...what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints... (Eph. 1:17-18)
- J. We cannot separate love and obedience. Jesus' inheritance is a people who walk out their purity. Our life choices are a real part of the Father's plan to reward and honor His Son. God has made a great investment in us by choosing us as the rose and lily that He is cultivating for Jesus. We are the reward of His sufferings. Many believers mock the call to purity by dismissing it as legalism.
²¹"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me..." (Jn. 14:21)
- K. Our identity is determined by the way we define value or measure success. "Who am I? How do I become successful?" The issue of our function (ministry) is important but secondary to this.
- L. Our primary identity (value/success) is found in who we are in our intimacy with God, which consists of being loved by God and in being a lover of God. I confess, "***I am loved*** (by God) ***and I am a lover*** (to God/others) ***therefore, I am successful.***"
- M. We find our identity or success in being desired by God and in loving Him instead of seeking our primary value in how much we accomplish or the impact we make. We are most successful because we are desired by God and love Him. We no longer need to fear being a failure.
- N. Our primary identity is not what we do with our hands but what we pursue with our hearts. Seeing that we are ***His rose and lily*** breaks a sense of purposelessness, failure, and inferiority. We measure our success in context to how much we grow in our intimacy with God by loving and obeying Him. It takes revelation to see the nobility of loving God and how it matters to Him.
- O. We must agree with God's definition of success. Many agree with lies about what success is and thus, feel like a failure and live aimlessly. They focus mostly on externals (what they do and possess) instead of internals (who they are to be in their hearts). They view their life in context to their struggle and lack of impact. Jesus corrected those who put their ministry before loving God.
³"[you]...have labored for My name...⁴...I have this against you...you have left your first love.⁵Remember...from where you have fallen; repent...or...I will...remove your lampstand." (Rev. 2:3-5)
- P. Paul taught the truths of Song 2:1, that we are betrothed (engaged) to Jesus and live in devotion to Him. Our ultimate destiny in this age is to walk out a lifestyle as His inheritance.
²For I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.³I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2-3, NASB)

II. THE BRIDE'S REVELATION: JESUS ALONE CAN SATISFY HER HEART (SONG 2:3A)

- A. The Bride declares that Jesus alone is the apple tree who refreshes (fully satisfies) the heart.
³Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. (Song 2:3a)
- B. The apple tree speaks of that which refreshes.
⁵Refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick. (Song 2:5)
- C. There is only One who refreshes the human spirit at the highest level. When we receive the revelation of Jesus as an apple tree, the primary source that satisfies our heart, then we seek Him with all our heart. This is a foundational truth in marriage, business, and ministry. Jesus is more than the savior who forgives or the healer and provider. He is the apple tree that satisfies. In vain, some transfer the primary source of their joy to their ministry, money, and relationships.
- D. Jesus is like an apple tree among all the great men of the earth. The trees of the woods speak symbolically of the great men of the earth who tower over others as lofty trees (Dan. 4:10-14).
¹²The day of the LORD of hosts shall come upon everything proud and lofty...¹³upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan... (Isa. 2:12-13)

III. THE BRIDE ENJOYS GOD'S PRESENCE: SITTING BEFORE THE KING (SONG 2:3B-4)

- A. Jesus declared the wisdom of Mary's life as she sat at His feet. Mary is described three times in Scripture. Each time she is sitting at Jesus' feet (Lk. 10:39; Jn. 11:32; 12:3). Jesus forever settled the debate about the importance of sitting at His feet by calling it the "one thing needed" and choosing the "good" way to live (v. 42). She took the call to live with extravagant devotion seriously. We must choose this part. No one can choose it for us. That good part will not be taken away from Mary. Her decisions had eternal implications, remembered by Jesus forever.
³⁹Mary...sat at Jesus' feet and heard His Word.⁴¹...Jesus answered...⁴²"...one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." (Lk. 10:39-42)
- B. Like Mary of Bethany who sat at Jesus' feet, we must sit before Jesus and experience His refreshing shade that protects us from the scorching heat of this fallen age. One of the greatest pleasures available to the human spirit comes as we feed on His Word and feel His presence. The Word brings delight and is sweet to all who will continually feast on Jesus in spirit and truth.
³I sat down in his shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. (Song 2:3b)
- C. She asked, "Where will You feed your flock?" (Song 1:7). She had been feasting at the King's table on God's love as seen in Song 1:12-17. The cross is the only tree that can shade us from the scorching heat of our sin. We only enjoy the shade of God's Word by resting in the shade of Jesus' cross. We cannot rest in our achievements by relating to God based on our maturity.

- D. We must have a vision to be regularly exhilarated by the Word by pray-reading (meditating) it. Our inheritance is to experience the sweetness of the Word of God. This is for all believers, not just a few. There is a sweetness that is within reach of every believer. We will never experience the delight and refreshing of Jesus as the apple tree without sitting long hours in the shade of the apple tree by feeding on His Word by the help of the Holy Spirit.
- E. We put our cold heart before the bonfire of God's presence by seeking Him in the Word. We can feed on the Word even in the presence of our enemies (sin, disappointment, difficulty, etc.).
⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies... (Ps. 23:5)
- F. We must enjoy our relationship with God if we are to mature consistently. We can persevere through great difficulties if we find delight in His presence. A lover will always outwork a worker. When a worker becomes a lover, their paradigm about the work changes greatly. I have not seen anyone seek God diligently for decades without enjoying Him in the Word.

IV. JESUS' BANNER OVER HER LIFE: HIS LOVING LEADERSHIP (SONG 2:4)

⁴He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. (Song 2:4)

- A. In the ancient world, an army would march in battalions under a specific flag or banner. Each unit had their own banner that was meant to clearly identify them. The banner or flag over our life that identifies who we are and where we are going in our life is Jesus' good leadership (wise, loving, and powerful) that leads us to grow in love and in our identity as His inheritance (Bride).
- B. We are called to feast at God's banqueting table. The fulfillment of this ultimately occurs at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7). Jesus wants us to enjoy tokens of that "wedding table" in this age by the power of the Word and the Spirit. This is translated by some as the house of wine because it refers to the celebration of God's love.
- C. Jesus has a good and specific plan for each believer. He wants to bring us to His banqueting house, where we celebrate His love. His primary goal in His leadership over our life is to bring us to the banqueting house to celebrate His love for us and our love for Him. We may not know the details as to where Jesus is leading our ministries. Make no mistake about it; He is first leading us so that we feed at the "wedding table" (truths about our identity as the Bride of Christ).
- D. Jesus' goal in His leadership over us is to lead us in a way that reveals His love to us as well as imparting it in us. He is determined that we grow in love, meekness, and revelation. God's plan and first priority for our life is much bigger than our comfort or our function in ministry. There is great confusion in many because they think His banner over their life is comfort in this age.
- E. Jesus wants us to be strengthened in the revelation that we are His inheritance, with our primary identity in being a lover of God. This occurs as He feeds us on His Word related to the "wedding table." He may "bring us to the table" by giving us a dream or a vision that excites our heart about His love. He may give us the joy of a new friendship that ministers God's life to our heart.

- F. Jesus manifests His banner of leadership over us in various ways. First, His banner over us is His lovingkindness (mercy). When we fail, the banner over our life is confidence in His mercy, not the fear of being rejected by God. We confess, “His banner over me is love, even when I fail.” Second, His banner over us speaks of His ability to overrule the negative circumstances in our life by working everything for our good (Rom. 8:28). The banner over us is His goodness in that we are not neglected by God. Third, the banner over us is to be exhilarated in God’s love instead of being deceived with the false comfort of sin.
- G. He brings us to the table using both positive and negative ways because He is jealous to remove everything that hinders love in us. First, the positive way in ***voluntarily following His leadership*** to the banqueting house by feeding on and obeying His Word. Second, the negative way is seen in ***resisting His leadership*** as He seeks to take us to the banqueting house. Thus, He is forced to discipline us by exposing our sin, taking things from us, and shutting doors that frustrate us.

V. THE LOVESICK BRIDE CRIES OUT FOR GREATER ENCOUNTER WITH GOD (SONG 2:5)

- A. The Bride’s experiences at the “wedding table” awaken a greater desire in her to go deeper in God. They cause her to be lovesick as she cries out to God to be sustained and refreshed by giving her more of His presence and Word.
⁵Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick. (Song 2:5)
- B. As the apples speak of the refreshing of Jesus (Song 2:3), so the raisins speak of the ministry of the Spirit, since they are dried grapes. Grapes symbolically point to the wine of the Spirit. In other words, she cries, “Sustain me with more of the Spirit and refresh me with more of Jesus.”
- C. We are called to live lovesick for God. This caused us to have deep and even painful feeling of love and longing for more of Jesus. When we touch this, we can never go back to “business as usual” in our walk with God. She is ruined. I will mention two aspects of spiritual lovesickness.
 1. First, “***feelings of love***” that are very strong. We love to feel love for God.
 2. Second, “***spiritual hunger pains***” come because of her life vision to walk in all that God has for the human heart in this age. God does not immediately satisfy this in us. Thus, we have a painful, even agonizing, hunger. Lovesickness will not be satisfied with anything less than persevering; desperate hunger pains prove we have been touched by God.

⁴“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (Mt. 5:4)

VI. EXPERIENCING GOD’S TWOFOLD EMBRACE (SONG 2:6)

⁶His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me. (Song 2:6)

- A. The Bride understands God’s twofold activity in her life, the right and left hand of God. The ***left hand of God*** speaks of the activity of God that we cannot see. It is under the head; therefore, it is out of view. The Lord does many things for us that we do not see. He withholds and releases many things to bless, provide, and protect us. He spares us from troubles that we are not ever aware of in this age. For example, we have been delivered from accidents we did not discern.

- B. The **right hand of God** speaks of the visible (discernable) activity of God. The idea is that Solomon stood in front of the Bride to embrace her. She can see and feel it. This speaks of the “sweet” manifest presence of God that can be felt and discerned. At times, we feel our heart tenderized by the working of God’s right hand.

VII. THE HOLY SPIRIT GUARDS US IN STRATEGIC SPIRITUAL SEASONS (SONG 2:7)

⁷I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up [disturb] nor awaken love until it pleases. (Song 2:7)

- A. The Holy Spirit speaks here. He has ordained strategic seasons in each person’s spiritual life. There are seasons when He desires to establish our heart in new and deep revelations of His heart. The Spirit’s agenda for the Bride in this season was to awaken lovesickness in her as she went deep in the Word as she fed on apples and grapes at the banqueting house (Song 2:3-5). Many do not see the necessity of dedicating seasons of their life to go deep in God and His Word. John was told to eat the scroll, or to understand God’s Word in a deep way (Rev. 10:9-11).
- B. The daughters of Jerusalem represent believers who lack discernment of the various operations of the Spirit and the different seasons in God. The Spirit solemnly charges other believers to not disrupt or disturb the devoted ones with the Bride’s heart in this season by their opinions and judgments. We can trust Jesus to disturb us when the seasons change as seen clearly in Song 2:8. The Spirit tells those who were insensitive to the ways of the Spirit to not disturb the Bride from this particular season of sitting at the table to be sustained and refreshed by the Word and the Spirit. Many only have one counsel; that is to seek God less and increase in ministry activity.
- C. Solomon charged them by the gazelles or by the does of the field (Song 2:7). “By the gazelles or the does” speaks of the importance of gentleness and sensitivity in relating to the young Bride in this season. A gazelle or doe has a sensitive nature and can be easily startled. Many are easily distracted from the Word. We must have sensitivity in relating to others in different seasons.
- D. In the phrase, “Until it pleases,” the Hebrew can be translated as it, he, or she. The NASB accurately translates the phrase as “Don’t awaken love until she pleases” instead of “until it pleases.” If the Hebrew was translated “He” it would refer to the Lord being stirred to action by the daughters of Jerusalem. The Lord has no need for this nor does He need to be protected by the gentleness pictured by the gazelles. It is the Bride that must be protected from distraction. Three times Jesus speaks this phrase, “Don’t arouse or awaken my love until it pleases.” (2:7; 3:5; 8:4). In 8:4, He uses the same phrase “don’t disturb her.” He embraces her like the other two times. However in this third reference, He omits the phrase “by the gazelles of the field” because she is no longer immature and easily tossed to and fro (Eph. 4:14).

VIII. SUMMARY: SEVEN CONFESSIONS OF FAITH IN SONG 2:1-7

- A. When we worship or when we are tempted, we are to proclaim the *seven different confessions of the Bride* in Song 2:1-7:
1. I am the rose of Sharon (Song 2:1)
 2. I am the lily of the valleys (Song 2:1)
 3. Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my Beloved among the sons (Song 2:3a)
 4. I sat down in his shade with great delight and His fruit was sweet to my taste (Song 2:3b)
 5. He brought me to the banqueting house and His banner over me was love (Song 2:4)
 6. I am lovesick (Song 2:5)
 7. His left hand is under my head and his right hand embraces me. (Song 2:6)