

## **Session 17 The Ravished Heart of God (Song 4:9-5:1)**

### **I. REVIEW OF SONG 4:1-8**

- A. After a season of divine discipline, Jesus surprised the Bride by calling her fair (beautiful) while she was in the process of maturing in her obedience and faith. He validated her desires to obey Him before they were manifest in her character. In Song 4:1-5, Solomon spoke of eight aspects of the Shulamite using agricultural language. He affirmed eight “budding virtues” in the maiden’s life. They are identified by God as desires in her heart before they are formed in her character.
- B. Our obedience begins when we set our heart to obey, not just after we gain victory in an area of our behavior. After we set our heart to obey God, we declare war on areas that we struggle in. Thus, we can confidently receive His affectionate mercy and feel His pleasure in each step of the growth process. We are not content with only setting our heart to obey, we want full victory.
- C. We are beautiful to God even in our weakness. Immediately after the maiden’s season of discipline (Song 3:1-2), the Lord declares that she is beautiful to Him. The revelation that a sincere believer is beautiful to God, even in their weakness, is foundational to growing in God’s grace. We are changed by this revelation.  
*<sup>1</sup>Behold, you are fair [beautiful], my love! Behold, you are fair! (Song 4:1)*
- D. Her fearless wholehearted commitment (Song 4:6)  
*<sup>6</sup>Until the day breaks...I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh... (Song 4:6)*
- E. The Bride responds to Jesus’ affirmations by setting her heart to obey His call to come with Him to the mountains (Song 2:8-13). She now embraces the cross by going to the mountain of myrrh. She makes a firm decision to leave the comfort zone to go up the mountain saying, **“I will go!”**
- F. She had only said yes, she had not yet gone to the mountain. She does not go up the mountain until she faces the twofold test (Song 5:2-8). He sees her willingness to embrace the cross. The Lord defines her in terms of her willing spirit, not in terms of her weak flesh or her maturity.
- G. Jesus pours out extravagant affirmation calling her all together beautiful (Song 4:7)  
*<sup>7</sup>You are all fair [altogether beautiful, NASB], my love, and there is no spot in you. (Song 4:7)*
- H. The Bride joins the King in spiritual warfare as He calls her His spouse for the first time in the Song. With her new commitment to go to the mountain, she now carries her heart as a loyal Bride. For the next four chapters in the Song, we see her development into mature love.  
*<sup>8</sup>Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse...Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards. (Song 4:8)*
- I. Next, Jesus reveals His desire for His Bride (4:9-10) and then affirms her godly life and fruitful ministry referred to as a flourishing garden (4:11-15). She prays for His full intervention (4:16).

## I. JESUS' HEART IS RAVISHED FOR HIS PEOPLE

<sup>9</sup> *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. (Song 4:9)*

- A. This verse summarizes the Song of Solomon. Many believers do not know that God is filled with desire for them. A working definition of the **ravished** heart of God is *to be filled with emotions of joy or delight because of one who is unusually attractive* (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary).
- B. The revelation of Jesus' ravished heart equips us for one hundredfold obedience. The Bride's decision for radical obedience (Song 4:6) is walked out in Song 5:2-8.
- C. Our salvation involves much more than receiving a legal position of righteousness before God (2 Cor. 5:21). We must understand God's affections for us. Why? Because we will never have more passion for God than what we understand about His passion for us. We love Him because we understand He first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19). God's heart is filled with delight for His people.

<sup>10</sup> *I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me. (Song 7:10)*

## II. THE CHRISTIAN PARADIGM OF GOD

- A. The Christian paradigm of God is founded on the revelation of God's deep emotions of love. The revelation of God as a tender Father and a passionate Bridegroom was a new idea in religious history (see William Barclay's commentary on Heb. 4).
- B. In Jewish tradition, what was most emphasized about God was that He is holy in the sense of being *totally separate from sin*. They did not think of a holy God as sharing human experience. They thought of God as incapable of sharing it simply because He is God. In other words, they saw God as being "above" sharing the human dilemma by the very definition of being God.
- C. The Greek philosophers saw God as *emotionally distant* from humans. The most prominent Greek thinkers were the Stoics. They saw the main attribute of God as being *apatheia*, by which they meant God's inability to feel anything. They reasoned that if God felt something, then He might be influenced or even controlled by what He felt. They argued that those who felt sorrow or joy were vulnerable to being hurt and, thus, controlled by those they had feelings for. They believed that anyone who affected God's emotions would be greater than God for that moment. The Epicureans (a school of Greek philosophy) believed that the gods *lived detached* in eternal bliss. They lived in the intermediate world and, thus, were not aware of events occurring on earth. They were, therefore, totally detached from human affairs as they lived in great happiness.
- D. The Jews understood God as a *holy God* separated from humans; the Stoics, a *feelingless god*; the Epicureans, a *detached god*. Into this context of religious thought came the totally new idea of the Christian God who deliberately subjected Himself to human emotion, pain, and weakness.

- E. Jesus came as the One who embraced human experience and was therefore, sympathetic.  
*<sup>15</sup>For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Heb. 4:15)*  
*<sup>8</sup>though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. (Heb. 5:8)*
- F. It was inconceivable to the religious mindset of the first century that a holy God would have capacity for tenderness, sympathy and affection, who even wrapped Himself in the garments of humanity and then experienced God's wrath on a cross. It is difficult to realize how dramatic this Christian paradigm of God was at that time.
- G. The capacity to deeply love is unique to the human spirit. It distinguishes us from even the most exalted angels. Nothing in Scripture describes angels as having the capacity for affection. They have joy, but never are described as having affection. This capacity for affection brings us to unimaginable heights in God's glory, but it can also be dangerous by bringing us to agonizing depths of perversion, if we resist God's grace.

### III. JESUS' REVELATION OF HIS LOVE FOR US (REVIEW FROM SESSION 5)

- A. *God loves us in the same way that God loves God:* The measure of the Father's love (affection) for Jesus is the measure of Jesus' love for us. This is the ultimate statement of our worth. It gives every believer the right to view themselves as "God's favorite."  
*<sup>9</sup>"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide [live] in My love." (Jn. 15:9)*
- B. I refer to "affection-based obedience" as the stronger type of obedience because it flows from experiencing Jesus' affection. It is the most consistent obedience because a lovesick person will endure anything for love. It is stronger than "duty-based obedience" (obedience when we do not feel God's presence) or "fear-based obedience" (motivated by fear of negative consequences).
- C. The gospel flourishes most when we understand the extravagant passions in God's personality. It is essential to know what He has done for us on the cross and what He will do for us in the coming revival or even eternity. We need to know how He feels, or why He does what He does.
- D. Experience of God's affection causes us to love Him more than our own lives.  
*<sup>11</sup>They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and...they did not love their lives to the death. (Rev. 12:11)*
- E. Paul reflected on his sacrifices for God and testified that what he gave up was rubbish when compared to the glory of knowing Jesus. There is no sacrifice too great for those in love.
- F. The great question is, "Why is God's heart ravished for us?" His personality is filled with loving desire. He evaluates our lives with such kindness because of the type of personality that He has. Because of who Jesus is, how He feels, and how He processes life, He sees loveliness in us.

#### IV. JESUS' PASSIONATE AFFECTION FOR HIS BRIDE

<sup>9</sup>*You have ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse [bride]; you have ravished my heart with one look of your eyes, with one link of your necklace.* <sup>10</sup>*How fair is your love, my sister, my spouse! How much better than wine is your love... (Song 4:9-10c)*

- A. **My sister:** Being called Jesus' sister refers to Him becoming human (Heb. 2:11-17). He endured indescribable humiliation and suffering to be like His brethren in all things (Heb. 2:17). He descended so far and we ascend so high to meet Him as His sister (Mt. 12:49-50).
- B. **My spouse:** Being called Jesus' Bride speaks of His desire for affectionate partnership with us.
- C. Her twofold identity as His sister and bride is emphasized seven times (4:8, 9, 10, 11, 12; 5:1, 2).
- D. **With one look of your eyes:** Jesus' heart moves with each look of devotion that we give Him. The very movement of our heart to love Him touches Him. Our obedience begins when we set our heart to obey Him, not just after we gain victory in a specific area. Thus, we can confidently receive His affectionate mercy and feel His pleasure in each step of the growth process. The glance that moves God's heart is the gaze of loving obedience. The obedient gaze is rooted in quality decisions. The bridal paradigm is rooted in the message of the true grace of God.
- E. **With one link of your necklace:** In Scripture, the neck often speaks of the will that can be resistant (stiff necked) or submissive. The king described her neck as being like David's towers, which were effective in defeating the enemy (Song 4:4), and as a golden necklace that made her beautiful (Song 1:10). Each link of her necklace represented each individual response of obedience that she gave to him. Each decision for love that we make moves Jesus' heart. He remembers every movement of love that our heart makes towards Him.

<sup>10</sup>*God is not unjust to forget your...love which you have shown toward His name... (Heb. 6:10)*

<sup>42</sup>*“Whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.” (Mt. 10:42)*

- F. **How fair is your love:** Jesus considers our love as beautiful. Our obedience based in love beautifies us and brings great delight to Jesus.  
<sup>3</sup>*Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—<sup>4</sup>rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. (1 Pet. 3:3-4)*
- G. **How much better than wine is your love:** Jesus turns around her earlier statement when she cried out “For Your love is better than wine” (Song 1:2). The wine metaphor speaks of that which exhilarates the heart. Wine in the context of a marriage speaks of the drink of celebration. Scripture points to the “good wine” of God's blessing and the “bad wine” of sin. Experiencing God's love is better than other privileges and the best experiences we can have in this age.

H. Jesus is saying, “Our love is more beautiful to Him than the splendor of His creation.” He values our love more than everything under His authority. Jesus’ heart is filled with delight over her new decision for obedience (Song 4:6).

**V. JESUS’ PLEASURE OVER HER HEART (HER THOUGHTS, WORDS AND DEEDS)**

***<sup>10</sup>How much better than wine is your love, and the scent of your perfumes than all spices! <sup>11</sup>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. (Song 4:10-11)***

A. ***The scent of your perfumes*** refers to her mind being filled with God’s Word. As the invisible fragrance of perfume expressed the inner quality of a plant, so our thoughts are the scent of our inner life. Our intentions to obey God and our meditation on the Word arise as fragrance to God.

***<sup>14</sup>Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge...<sup>15</sup>For we are to God the fragrance of Christ... (2 Cor. 2:14-15)***

B. ***Than all spices***: Rare spices were used as expensive gifts. The queen of Sheba gave spices to King Solomon (2 Kgs. 10:2). The wise men brought spices to Jesus because they believed He was a king (Mt. 2:11). Spices were used in the priestly sacrifices and offerings (Ex. 30:23-24).

C. ***Your lips drip as the honeycomb***: Speaks of her words as being sweet like honey when spoken to God in worship and prayer (Song 2:14) and when blessing others by feeding and sustaining them. Her redemptive lips (words) were described as being like a strand of scarlet (Song 4:3). Honey is like that which delights the heart and is sweet to the taste. The production of honey requires much time and hard work from the bees.

1. ***O my spouse***: Jesus notices every word of love to Him that is spoken from His Bride.

2. ***Honey and milk are under your tongue***: Two foods that described the prosperity of the promise land and that are used to feed babes (1 Pet. 2:1). The recurring theme of speaking for the edification of others is prominent in Scripture (Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6). The phrase “under his tongue” refers to the private thoughts. The mouth full of deceit has trouble “under its tongue” (or in his heart; Ps.10:7). The Bride has truth “under her tongue” (in her heart) as she speaks expressing agreement with what she really thinks. What she thinks and speaks are in unity and thus, sincere.

D. ***The fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon***: Refers to the Bride’s deeds as being fragrant before God. Garments speak of the Bride’s acts of obedience (Rev. 19:7-8). Jesus warns us to “keep our garments” lest we end up with the shame of a life without service for God (Rev. 16:15). Jesus counseled the Laodicean church to buy from Him “white garments,” so that they would be clothed and the shame of their nakedness would not be exposed (Rev. 3:18). Mt. Lebanon was known for its fragrant cedar trees and flowers. This is in contrast to a life of spending our time and money mostly on ourselves. Paul spoke of receiving financial service from the Philippian church as a sweet smelling aroma well pleasing to God (Phil. 4:18).

## VI. THE BRIDE'S EXTRAVAGANT DEVOTION TO JESUS

<sup>12</sup>*A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut [sealed, NASB] up, a fountain sealed. (Song 4:12)*

- A. *A garden enclosed* was a private garden (not open to the public). It was enclosed with a fence to keep animals from polluting it. The purpose of a king's garden was to provide pleasure and rest in contrast to most gardens used for growing food. It was costly and required much work from many servants to cultivate. The Church is God's garden (1 Cor. 3:6-9; Song 6:2, 3; 2:16).
- B. To live as an enclosed garden, or a sealed spring or fountain, means to shut ourselves off from the defilement of sin and compromise. In locking our heart to compromise, we become a place of pleasure for our King. A water supply without a covering was considered defiled (Num. 19:15).  
<sup>15</sup>*Every open vessel, which has no cover fastened on it, is unclean. (Num. 19:15)*
- C. *A spring and fountain sealed up* speaks of an undefiled water supply (not polluted by animals). In Israel, springs of water were rare and, thus, provided a valuable water source to help a garden grow abundantly. It is rare and precious to God for us to live as a spring sealed up.
- D. Job made a covenant with his eyes to not gaze on anything unholy (Job 31:1). In doing this, he lived by carrying his heart as "an enclosed garden."

## VII. A DESCRIPTION OF THE YOUNG BRIDE'S FRUITFULNESS

<sup>13</sup>*Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard,*  
<sup>14</sup>*spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices. (Song 4:13-14)*

- A. She is described as an orchard filled with pleasant fruits, fragrant plants, many trees and chief spices. This speaks of her abundant fruitful life and ministry. Fruit refers to both godliness, which is to have a vibrant heart in God (Rom. 6:22; 7:4-5; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9; Heb. 12:11; 13:15; Jas. 3:18), and to our ministry to others (Jn. 4:36; Rom. 1:13; 15:28; Phil. 1:22; Col. 1:5-6).
- B. Pomegranates (v. 13a) and pleasant fruits (v. 13b) are sweet and speak of having a pleasant impact on others. Fragrant henna with spikenard (v. 13c) speaks of the precious and costly work of the Spirit in our life. Spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon (v. 14a,b) speak of the diverse graces seen in her ministry. "With all trees of frankincense" (v. 14c) speaks of a ministry of prayer. Myrrh and aloes (v.14d) speak of the cross and death to self. "With all the chief spices" (v. 14e) speaks of grace imparted to others through her ministry (2 Cor. 2:14-16).

## VIII. A THREEFOLD DESCRIPTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY IN THE BRIDE'S LIFE

<sup>15</sup> *...a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. (Song 4:15)*

- A. The Bride is described as having three sources of water, which refer to the different ways in which we experience the Spirit in our lives. A believer is described as a tree planted by water (Ps. 1:3). A hardened heart is pictured as being dry (Isa. 1:30). Jesus promised that we would be as a well of living water (Jn. 4:14; 7:38). The fountain is the indwelling Spirit. The well speaks of our history in God. The streams are like the Holy Spirit coming upon us from the high places.
- B. *A fountain* is a hidden source of water that is below the surface. This speaks of an inward source of supply, or the indwelling Christ (Col. 1:27). The gardens are plural (in contrast to the singular enclosed garden; v. 12), speaking of the anointing of God that brings blessing to others.
- C. *A well* speaks of the capacity to store water, so as to draw on when needed. Welled water is water that is stored up that provides a supply in dry times. This refers to our personal history in God that we draw on from our past experiences. This speaks of a past stored up source of supply.
- D. *Streams* speak of an outward flow of water. A stream is above the ground and a spring is below the ground. Streams speak of an energetic flow of water. These streams flow from the mountains or high places of Lebanon, thus, they speak of the Holy Spirit "water supply" coming from on high. This speaks of an outward source of supply (Acts 8:18).

## IX. HER CRY FOR INCREASED ANOINTING

<sup>15</sup> *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... (Song 4:16).*

- A. She now has enough confidence in God's goodness to offer a twofold prayer. She prays for both the north winds of adversity and the south winds of blessing. She knew that both played a strategic role in her becoming a fragrant garden for God's pleasure.
- B. *Awake, O north wind*: This speaks of the bitter cold wind of testing and difficulty. This prayer is answered in Song 5:3-7 as she goes through what I call the ultimate twofold test.
- C. *Come, O south wind*: Her second prayer is that Jesus send the refreshing winds of blessing to mature her. Only God has the wisdom to know the right combination of the north and the south winds that are necessary in each season of our life. Only God knows our makeup and destiny.
- D. *Blow upon my garden*: She wants the garden of her heart and ministry to be deeply affected. Deep pockets of our unperceived pride, ambition, anger, etc., are uncovered to us as we work under difficult circumstances. *That its spices may flow out*: She desires to be filled with God's fragrant presence. In other words, she wants to grow in love.

- E. ***Let my beloved come to his garden:*** The transition from her garden to His garden. She desires to be totally God's. She wants an anointing of consecration. She sees her life and ministry as "His" garden instead of hers. Jesus has an inheritance in the church (Eph. 1:18). This is the turning point in the Song. For the first four chapters it was her inheritance, from now on it is His. ***Let my beloved eat its pleasant fruits:*** That Jesus might enjoy what the Spirit has worked in her.

**X. JESUS ENJOYS HIS INHERITANCE WHICH IS A BRIDE**

***<sup>1</sup>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! (Song 5:1).***

- A. The Bride now lives under Jesus' full ownership. Nine times He says "My," depicting His ownership of her life and ministry: My garden, My sister, My spouse, My myrrh, My spice, My honeycomb, My honey; My wine, My milk.
- B. ***I have come to my garden:*** Jesus answers her prayer from Song 4:16, when she asked Him to come and eat. Jesus comes to take full possession of her life as His inheritance in the twofold relationship of sister and spouse.
- C. ***I have gathered my myrrh with my spices:*** Jesus gathers what the Spirit has worked through the Church. My myrrh speaks of the time in which we follow Jesus by embracing the cross. My spice speaks of the impartation of grace in her life.
- D. ***I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey:*** Jesus is feasting on the fruit of a mature Church. She asked Him in 4:16 to come and eat. Jesus enjoys what the Spirit has released in the Church. Honey speaks of delightful food that Jesus may feast on from her life.
- E. ***I have drunk my wine with my milk:*** Jesus celebrates the love that the Bride has for Him. Wine is for celebration and milk is for strength. Jesus celebrates her love and is delighted by it.
- F. ***Eat, O friends! Drink, yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones:*** Jesus wants the Church to enjoy the fruitfulness of mature believers. These beloved friends are other believers. Paul wrote of death working in him so that life would flow to others (2 Cor. 4:10-12). He embraced difficulties that God's spices would bless God and others. She is as a living sacrifice that the Lord Himself feasts on (Rom. 12:1) and feeds to the Church. We can strengthen and nourish others with the grace.
- G. ***Summary*** of Jesus' five activities in Song 5:1: He gathers myrrh, eats honeycomb, drinks, and then He offers her as a feast for others to partake of. He comes into His garden (5:1a)—draws near to her. He gathers His myrrh with spice (5:1b)—uses what the Spirit has worked in her. He eats His honeycomb with honey (5:1c)—feasts on the fruit of her maturity. He drinks His wine with milk (5:1d)—celebrates her maturity and is delighted by it. He invites His friends to eat (5:1e)—wants the Church to enjoy the fruitfulness of mature believers.