

Session 18 The Ultimate Twofold Test of Maturity (Song 5:2-9)

I. REVIEW: THE BRIDE’S CRY FOR THE INCREASE OF GOD’S PRESENCE IN HER LIFE

- A. The Bride prayed for both the north winds of adversity and the south winds of blessing to come to the garden of her heart that the spices of grace might flow in her life. She had the confidence to pray for the bitter ***north winds*** of testing which come in the twofold test of Song 5:3-7.

¹⁵Awake, 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).

- B. This is the time when the garden of her heart becomes His garden. She sees her life as “His” garden instead of hers. Jesus has an inheritance in His people (Eph. 1:18). This is the turning point in the Song. In the first four chapters, her focus is on her inheritance. In the last four chapters, it is on being His inheritance. Jesus enjoys His inheritance in her as she lives under His ownership. Nine times He says “My” to depict His ownership in Song 5:1 and six times in Song 5:2.

¹I 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. (Song 5:1).

II. JESUS CALLS HER TO THE FELLOWSHIP OF SUFFERING (SONG 5:2)

²I sleep, but my heart is awake; it is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, “Open for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.” (Song 5:2)

- A. Jesus reveals Himself as one who suffered in Gethsemane. He calls us to join Him in the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 3:10). She responds in obedience (Song 5:3-5), which is followed by a twofold test. First, Jesus tests her by withdrawing His presence from her (Song 5:6). Second, He allows the spiritual authorities to mistreat her (Song 5:7). She responds in love (5:8).

¹⁰that I may know Him...and the fellowship of His sufferings... (Phil. 3:10)

- B. Jesus calls the Bride to intimacy by coming to her as the “Jesus of Gethsemane” with His hair covered with the dew (drops of the night) because of enduring the long night in Gethsemane.
- C. Jesus calls her to ***open her heart*** “for Him” in order to experience new depths in God. He is now taking full possession of her heart for Himself as He declared in Song 5:1. Jesus knocks on the door of her heart in answer to her prayer for the north winds in Song 4:16. The knock refers to God’s initiative and desire to bring us forward in new dimensions of the Spirit. Opening the door speaks of entering a new measure of communion with God.

²⁰“I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” (Rev. 3:20)

- D. She sleeps, or rests, with confidence in God as the north wind is about to come. Jesus knew the “rest of faith” as He slept in the storm (Mt. 8:23-27). Her heart is awake to spiritual things as she walks in obedience. We are to be spiritually awake (1 Thes. 5:6; Rom. 13:11; Eph. 5:14).

- E. She hears His voice again as she did in Song 2:8. Jesus reveals Himself again to her as her Beloved. The voice of the Bridegroom is what John the Baptist heard as he became a voice.
²⁹*“The friend of the bridegroom...rejoices because of the bridegroom’s voice.” (Jn. 3:29)*
- F. Jesus empowers her to open to Him by calling her four names that describe different facets of her intimate relationship with Him and that gives her confidence in His love.
²*He knocks, saying, “Open for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one...” (5:2)*
1. **My sister:** Signifies His identification with her humanity. He endured indescribable suffering to be like His brethren in all things (Heb. 2:11-17).
 2. **My love:** Reminds her of His tender love for her. Grace motivation is to be motivated by love and gratitude instead of fear and judgment. Affection-based obedience is the strongest 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.
 3. **My dove:** Speaks of her singleness of mind and loyalty. The Spirit is pictured as a dove. A dove never mates again when their partner dies. They are known for their loyalty. Dove’s eyes cannot focus on two things and have no peripheral vision. This speaks of singleness of mind without compromise. Her eyes are fixed on Him.
 4. **My perfect one:** Her intentions are to perfectly obey God. Perfect refers to being mature. She has mature obedience. Before this test (Song 5:2) and after it (Song 6:9), Jesus refers to her as His perfect one because she refuses all compromise.

III. THE BRIDE RESPONDS TO JESUS IN FULL OBEDIENCE (SONG 5:3-5)

³*I have taken off my robe; how can I put it on again? I have washed my feet; how can I defile them?*
⁴*My beloved put his hand by the latch of the door, and my heart yearned for him. ⁵I arose to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh...on the handles of the lock. (Song 5:3-5)*

- A. The Bride arises in obedience to open her heart to Jesus. His first words to her after this time of testing make it clear that she responded in obedience (Song 6:4-5). We are covered with Jesus’ robe of righteousness (Isa. 61:10; Zech. 3:1-5). Our righteousness (robe) is as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). She took off her defiled garments and put on His garments of righteousness. She refuses to wear her garments or to live in compromise. She declares, “How can I put on my robe again.”
¹⁰*He clothed me with the garments of salvation...with the robe of righteousness... (Isa. 61:10)*
¹⁴*Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh... (Rom. 13:14)*
⁶*All our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf... (Isa. 64:6)*

- B. She washed her feet. Jesus told Peter that he was clean, except that he needed his feet to be cleansed (Jn. 13:6-14). This spoke of his need for daily spiritual cleansing. She refuses to defile her feet through compromise (Song 5:3d). The NIV translates this as if she compromises by refusing to get out of bed. The context is clear that she is now relating to Jesus in obedience.
- C. The hand of God releases grace on the latch and lock of her heart (Acts. 11:21-23). She refers to Jesus as her Beloved, or the One she loves. Her heart yearns with love for Jesus as she instantly arises to open the door to the Jesus of Gethsemane. Earlier she refused to arise (Song 2:13, 17).
⁴My beloved put his hand by the latch of the door, and my heart yearned for him. ⁵I arose to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the lock. (Song 5:4-5)
- D. Jesus putting His hands by the latch refers to helping her unlock the door of her heart. The lock on her heart speaks of her thoughts and emotions that affect her decisions.
- E. Her hands and fingers drip with myrrh that flows like liquid on the lock of her heart. This speaks of the abundant grace to help her embrace the difficulty of the coming twofold test. Myrrh was a fragrant burial spice. It speaks of death to self and the commitment to embrace the cross. There is no such thing as liquid myrrh. Her fingers dripping with myrrh speak of the activity of working faith as she fulfills her commitment to go up the mountain of myrrh (Song 4:6).

IV. FIRST TEST: JESUS WITHDRAWS HIS PRESENCE FROM HER (SONG 5:6)

⁶I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and was gone. My heart leaped up when he spoke. I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer. (Song 5:6)

- A. The Lord hides Himself from the Bride on two occasions in the Song (Song 3:1-2; 5:6). He withdraws His presence while she walks in full obedience in Song 5:6-7. Therefore, this season is different from the discipline she received in Song 3:1-2 because of her disobedience.
- B. In Song 5, Jesus calls her “My perfect one” (v. 2) because of her obedience to open her heart to Him as her heart yearns (v. 4) and leaps (v. 5) because she is lovesick (v. 8).
- C. Her greatest desire is to experience God’s presence (Song 1:2-4; 2:3-6). Feeling loved by God and feeling love for God is the most powerful pleasure we can experience.
¹The LORD came to Abram...saying, “...I am your...exceedingly great reward.” (Gen. 15:1)
- D. Jesus promised to never leave or forsake us (Heb. 13:5). However, He sometimes withdraws the discernable feelings of His manifest presence to test us and to bring our love to maturity as she prayed in Song 4:16. This is not because of sin, nor is it an attack of the devil. God sometimes hides His face from the obedient to draw out the yearning of their heart for Him in greater ways.
⁵For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Heb. 13:5)

E. Some Catholic contemplatives in the Middle Ages spoke of “the dark night of the soul” referring to seasons of divine testing for those walking in obedience to God. This is not a biblical term but a term referring to times when they could not sense His presence. This phrase originated from St. John of the Cross in the 16th century. Most Protestants do not have any theology for this.

F. Job was a righteous man when he was afflicted, then established an intimacy with God.

⁸*The LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?” (Job 1:8)*

⁵*“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You.” (Job 42:5)*

G. She seeks Him even more fervently by calling out to Him but she cannot find Him. This season of divine silence is part of His training to cause our love for Him to mature. In the time of testing our confession of faith must remain constant: “His banner over me is love” (Song 2:4).

V. SECOND TEST: THE BRIDE IS PERSECUTED AND REJECTED (SONG 5:7)

⁷*The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took my veil away from me. (Song 5:7)*

A. The watchmen and the keepers of the walls speak of the leaders or spiritual authorities who guard the walls of God’s city to protect His people. They strike and wound her. They wound her because she had a genuine relationship with them before they rejected and persecuted her. A stranger can publish accusation against you, but only a friend can wound you. Being wounded in the house of friends is part of God’s pattern that even Jesus endured (Ps. 55:12-21).

B. The leaders taking away her veil speaks of removing her spiritual covering, therefore, her place of function in the body (1 Cor. 11:10).

VI. HER RESPONSE OF HUMILITY AND LOVE (SONG 5:8)

A. Her humility is seen in her teachable spirit to the immature Daughters of Jerusalem.

⁸*O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved...tell him I am lovesick! (Song 5:8)*

B. She is lovesick for Jesus instead of offended at Him for allowing this twofold test.

⁶*“Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me [Jesus].” (Mt. 11:6)*

C. The Bride’s twofold life vision was experiencing His presence and running with Him in ministry (Song 1:4). Many of her promises from God are based on this. Thus, all seems lost. The issue is whether she will obey Jesus without feeling His presence and when circumstances are difficult. Does she seek God primarily for her comfort or will she obey God for His sake? The Lord longs for a people who will obey Him regardless of what is happening in their lives. This is the primary issue in being Jesus’ inheritance. He wants a Bride equally yoked in love.

- D. The Bride's seven crisis in the Song include: the crisis of sin (1:5-6); the crisis of fear (2:8-9); the crisis of divine discipline (3:1); the crisis of total obedience (4:6,16); the crisis of divine withdrawing (5:6); the crisis of rejection in the church (5:7); and the crisis of persecution and division (6:13).