

Session 24: The Bride's Final Intercession and Revelation

Song Song 8:8-14

In this class, session twenty-four, the final session of our studies on the Song of Solomon, I title it, "The Bride's Final Intercession." She gives two different intercessory prayers that are different in nature. It is her final revelation. It is the way that she views herself under the Lord's leadership. As I have said in each of the other classes, the details of the passage are too in depth to really break them down in a class like this, so I am going to give more of the broad strokes, and leave you with the notes.

Paragraph A. The eight-chapter love song tells the story of how this young maiden grew up to become a mature bride, and how she was filled with the fire of the Holy Spirit. She starts off sincere, but immature, and she ends up filled with the fire of God, in deep intimacy, and communion with the Lord. This is as I said in the last session, this is a timeless song; we will be singing the truths of this song a million years from now. In the eternal city, this song will continue to fascinate us, and excite our hearts even a million years from now. It is endless and timeless; it is the Word of God.

OVERVIEW OF THE SONG OF SOLOMON 8:9-14

Now, in Song of Solomon 8:8-14, if you have never read it before, it will seem so strange, and so odd at first glance. Again, like the entire song, as you break it down, and compare the symbolism with the symbolism of the Bible, you compare the Scripture with the Scripture, and use Biblical symbolism. The Bible gives us the best insight into what the Bible means when we look at it in a symbolic way. This is the only book of the Bible that I actually look at in a symbolic way. I do not really encourage people to study the Bible in an allegorical way. I actually strongly urge them not to do that, but actually take the Bible at face value. This love song you can take it at face value, and it depicts the beauty of married love, and there really is a natural love story that describes true romance in marriage. It is really to be taken at its face value. Of course, it is poetic language.

It is unthinkable to me that the Holy Spirit's highest point of this book is the glory of married love, because for billions of years there will not be marriage. People will only be married for a very, very small amount of their eternal life. This book

will be with us forever and forever. I have no doubt in my mind that its higher purpose is in the relationship of Jesus and His bride.

So, I say that to say that the symbolism in the Bible, we can understand it by reading what the Bible itself says. Having said that, I do not want people to spend most of their time reading the Bible allegorically, or for its spiritual interpretation. We take it at its face value. I mean that is really the best way to read the Bible. This one book I do make an exception for because in the resurrection, there will not be marriage except for to the Lord; certainly, this book will have an eternal relevance.

Continuing in paragraph A, this passage of Song of Solomon 8:8-14 is very dynamic, and it is very personal. She is describing how she sees herself before the Lord. She knows who she is. It is not probably accurate to have a favorite chapter of Song of Solomon, because all eight of them are my favorite chapters, but this is definitely one of my favorite ones. Song of Solomon 8:8-14 is awesome—it is really awesome. I do not mean to be melodramatic, but I have wept over this so many times over the years, crying over the phrases, as it has so moved my heart more than any of the other passages have. I say that because, I am not trying to be dramatic, but do not read this chapter, just leave it, and check it out again in ten years. It is so powerful. That is all I want to say to you. It has moved me nearly the most out of all the sections of the Song of Solomon (along with chapter five, chapter three, and then chapter two). Forget that statement, but it is a very moving one, and I will just leave it there.

THE BRIDE’S PASSION AND INTERCESSION FOR THE CHURCH (SONG 8:8-9)

What happens is that in the last section ,she received the seal of fire—of fiery love. With this seal of fire in Song of Solomon 8:5-7, now what happens is we begin to see how this bride views herself, and views life. The first thing that the bride runs into is the dilemma of her little sister. It is not her little sister; she talks to the Lord and says, “We have a sister.” She says in intercession, this is one of her prayers, she is talking directly to the Lord, “What shall we do for our sister?” In other words, there is this total partnership. It is not, “Lord, what are You going to do about her, or Lord what I am going to do about her?” She says, “Lord, through the seal of fiery love, I understand that my dilemma is Your dilemma, if it is in the will of God, and the thing that is on Your heart, now upon my heart.”

The thing that is on the bride's heart is what is the Lord going to do for the vast number in the Body of Christ who have no capacity, or not even a willingness, or propensity to nurture or care for other people. That is the state that this little sister is in. She does not even have a mindset, or an ability to nurture anyone, but herself. Of course, all you have to do is look around the Body of Christ, and that is where the vast majority of the Body of Christ is. The bride under the anointing of the seal of fire is consumed with this issue. It is not just her issue, she knows it is the Lord's issue, and therefore it is their issue. "What shall we do together? She is our sister, Lord. It is not just one of Your sheep."

Paul, the apostle, had this kind of identification with the people that he ministered to. I mean the extreme case in Paul the apostle is in Romans 9, where he said I would depart from Christ if I had to for the sake of my people. I cannot even comprehend that. That is another level. There is this place of identification. Not even identification conceptually, but the bride's heart is completely connected to the Lord's heart, and His concern for the little sister. "What shall we do? What are we going to do about her condition?"

She feels the same about the sister, as Jesus does about the little sister. We know that Jesus' heart is ravished over His people, even in their weakness. I will leave the details to the notes for you to read on your own, but the fact is she is concerned with, "What are we going to do?"

It is not okay that so much of the Body of Christ is stuck in their selfishness, immaturity, and their inability to nurture anybody in any kind of effective way.

There is the heart of shepherd who is in intimacy with God. For that shepherd, it is not just "let us get more people in the building," but it is a genuine heart connect with the Lord that is a painful burden that is consuming. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:14, I do not have this on the notes, he says, "The love of Christ compels me. I am compelled, I am beside myself," he would say in 2 Corinthians 5 (paraphrased): "I am beside myself and I am compelled by love to make a difference."

PERSONAL ENCOUNTER: "YOU AND ALL THIS PEOPLE" (JOSHUA 1:2)

Paragraph H. I am going to relay just briefly, a short encounter I had with the Lord. It was in the summer of 1983. I remember it vividly. It was similar though a little bit more dramatic, not more dramatic, but more powerful than the one I was talking about in Song of Solomon 7:12. I mentioned it in class twenty-two. I talked

about how the Lord said, “There you shall give Me your love,” when I was complaining about, “Lord, there is so much, the rigors of ministry, and leadership. I wanted to be in leadership, and then I was in leadership and it is like, ‘wait a second, it is like the mother who has all of the children.’”

She says, “I do not have any free time to myself.” So many of you who really care for people, your life is not your own. It really is not your own. The care for the people that you are connected to, there are so many issues to sort out in so many lives, even if it is only ten lives that is consuming to one person. Many of you know that. I grew up in a family where my mother had seven children, and she was always just taking care of us as she had seven kids in nine years. So, that is the image I sometimes have in my mind when I think of leadership. Just never enough time, there is never enough time to get all of the work done.

This time, in summer of 1983, I was really focused on my own spiritual development. I remember I was twenty-seven, and twenty-eight at that time. I had just turned twenty-eight.

I had just been in Kansas City maybe six, or eight months, and the church had grown to about five hundred young people. It was kind of exciting. I remember I was consumed with the vision of being a man of holiness. I am not trying to draw a lot of attention to myself in that. My point is that the idea of a growing church, though it was still a little church of five hundred people was overwhelming. A lot of people were coming, a lot people wanted to meet me, and lots of things were happening. We were having prayer meetings, a bunch had problems, and I just remember. I remember in my young days, I was consumed with the fact of my bigger vision in God, the fact that I wanted to be holy, and I wanted to know the Word. I wanted to know God. Ministry began to be a hindrance to me, and it began to be a disturbance. Though I wanted to be in ministry, I wondered if I could I be in ministry without really being in ministry? Is there some way to pull this off? The answer is “no.”

I was complaining because the church was new, and there were five hundred people within the first six months. We did not have an infrastructure so they all, not all of them, but a lot of them wanted to talk with me, relate to me, help me figure out where they fit, and what is going on in their life. I thought, “This is horrible. This is horrible. This is not what I signed up for. I signed up for You, and not just meeting after meeting after meeting.”

Of course, so many people in the Body of Christ whether they are in ministry, in business or just the cares of their own family, like I was talking about the mother with five kids, it is the same situation, you are busy. You do not have to be in ministry, to experience that. Many of you in this room, you know that situation in other circumstances in life. I was complaining to the Lord. I said, "This is not what I want to do."

The Lord spoke to me so clearly from Joshua 1:2. He did not say Joshua 1:2, He actually quoted it to me, but I had asked the Lord as I was complaining. He asked me a question. I was not expecting any kind of encounter with the Lord. I was just complaining, "Lord, I want to know the Bible, I want to know You. I want to be anointed in prayer. I want to move in power. I want to prophesy. I do not want to be with people all day. I want to connect with You. I do not feel You very much."

I was saying, "Lord, I do not think I want to be a pastor." That was twenty-five years ago, so the Lord won out on that one. I was thinking, "I think I want to be a traveling guy or something." They do not have to do this, or that, and the other. I was wrong on that. I found out that the traveling guys do not have it that easy either. They looked good to me.

Suddenly, I heard the Lord speak to me. It was riveting. It was so clear. He said to me, "What is more important to Me than a holy man?" I heard this so clear. I thought, "What is more important than a holy man? Nothing." It is not like I heard it audibly, but the sentence came so clear to my spirit.

I was perplexed. I could not imagine what the answer would be. "What is more important than a holy man?" That was my vision, I thought, "Nothing, nothing is more important than a holy man."

A WHOLE GENERATION OF HOLY PEOPLE

The answer the Lord spoke was, "A whole generation of holy people—that is more important than a holy man."

I responded, "Oh."

He said, "I want you, and the people." That is when He gave me the verse of Joshua 1:2. He did not give me the reference but the phrase, "I want you, and the

people to enter into the land of inheritance.” It was a rebuke. He said, “I want you, and the people.”

I was just stunned by this reality. “It is not enough that you would enter in. I want you and the people to enter in. I looked it up, the verse, it took me a few minutes to find it, and it struck me like an arrow.

It was the beginning of my journey, and I am certainly not there. This was the Lord beginning to impart into His heart more than just feeling His presence and feeling good about your life, and having all of your circumstances laid out. He wants us connecting with His heart, and He wants to feed us, and meet us in the midst of His vineyard. “There you will give Me your love” (Song 7:12). It is the same message of the story I told in the other class where the Lord said in Song 7:12, “There you will give me your love” in the midst of the rigors of serving.

I just have this fantasy about somehow being as close to God as any human being can, but never being disturbed by anything. That never happens. It just never happens. I say, “Lord, I have to sort my life out.”

The answer is, “Read the Bible, and you will find out that the holy men and women of old, they met Me while they were serving Me. They were not just serving people for their own ends.”

Many start out that way, but there is a time in the Spirit where we began to serve God for God’s reasons, and it has nothing to do whether those people will ever return back to your sphere of life and enrich it. It is not about just helping the people who are going to help you.

There is something more in God’s heart than helping, serving, and ministering to the people who somehow you think will turn back around, and build up your particular sphere of life. There is something more, and it is doing it for the Lord’s sake because it is His people, and it is what burns on His heart.

THE BRIDE PRESENTS HER LITTLE SISTER’S CASE WITH TWO POSSIBILITIES

Paragraph M. This is interesting, and this may throw you off, the language of it again, if it is new. I find it fascinating. I talk to the Lord along these lines because once you get used to the terms, then they are not unfamiliar once you get used to them just by definition of it. The bride is presenting the dilemma about her little

sister who is immature, and who cannot nurture anyone. She is stuck on herself, and so then, I am not going to spend a lot of time on this though I love this passage.

The bride in intercession is presenting her sister's case, presenting it with two different possibilities. She said, "If our little sister, now again she is speaking to the Lord. If she is a wall let us build an embattlement around her, but if she is a door, let us enclose her with the boards of cedar"—so this is a point of intercession (Song 8:9, paraphrased).

Now, in the poetic language of the Song of Solomon, what she is talking about are two general categories of ministry. You could talk about the five-fold ministry, and you could probably talk about ten different categories of ministry. She makes two very general categories of ministry, and you could call them the wall type ministries and the door type ministries.

WALL MINISTRIES AND DOOR MINISTRIES

Now, the wall type ministries: there are a number of ministries that would fit in this category. This is really general. A wall protects a city. You build a wall to protect a city to protect the people. You build a wall to establish what I call "a line of demarcation," where you draw a line in the sand, you build a wall, and on the inside the city is going to be this way, and on the outside it is going to be that way. It is a line of divide, a line of demarcation.

So, when I think of the wall ministries I think of the pastors. They are the ones who are building in people's lives to protect them from the onslaught of the enemy. Then, I think of the prophetic ministries who are building a wall, they are raising up a standard, they are establishing a line of demarcation. They are drawing a line in the sand saying, "This is God's way." I think of them as the wall type ministries. Although, that is not the real point of this passage to break down the symbolism, and make a doctrine out of it, but I just have always liked that verse, the language of it.

Then she said, "Maybe, I do not know where she is at in the grace of God, or how she will respond or what Your plan is." She is wrestling with the possibilities of this immature sister. She says, "What if she is a door?" (Song 8:9) There are door ministries who open up doors of opportunity. They open up doors of grace for other people, points of entry for people to go forward.

As intercessors we are door ministries. The very passage in Colossians 4:3, Paul asked the saints to pray in intercession that God “would open to us a door for the Word to speak.” That door would not open unless the intercessors opened it in intercession. We are a door ministry here at IHOP. We are asking for doors in the Spirit to open up. Evangelists are door ministries. They open up doors to unbelievers to the grace of God. Teachers are door ministries because they open up doors of new truth, and new experiences in the Word of God. Apostles are door ministries because they open up new regions. They break open new regions, and spheres of geography to the activity of the Holy Spirit, etc.

That was all incidental. I did not need to go into all of that because you could have read that on the notes on your own. It is the idea that she was pondering with genuine care over the possibilities of where this young, selfish, non-nurturing little sister is going to be one day. I see such a shepherd's heart in the bride even carrying this kind of concern. I am reminded that if you are a wall ministry, when the enemy shoots the arrows, guess where the arrows go? They go into the wall. If you are going to protect people, you are going to take some hits, because you stand as a wall of protection. The enemy strikes, and people strike, but you take hits if you are going to be a shepherding ministry that protects other people.

Again, my point was not to break down this passage into New Testament definitions of ministry. The real point of it was the way that the bride was wrestling over the potential future of this one she was so identified with.

BRIDE'S CONFIDENCE: REVELATION OF HOW GOD SEES HER (SONG 8:10)

Roman numeral III. We are going to skip this section, but I want to point it out to you. It is the three ways in which the bride viewed herself in God's eyes. It is powerful, these truths. We are going to skip it. There are a lot of details on that that we will not look at right now. Beloved, when we see ourselves with the confidence that the bride describes in Song of Solomon 8:10, when we see ourselves with that kind of confidence, and we know who we are in God's eyes, it is remarkable what happens in our emotions.

BRIDE'S REVELATION OF HER ACCOUNTABILITY BEFORE GOD (SONG 8:11)

Roman numeral IV—Song of Solomon 8:11. Here, she is describing her revelation of her accountability before God. This is one of the most significant revelations; this is again the foundation to our faith, or Christianity 101. It is not enough to know what our benefits are in the gospel. That is important—who we are in Christ. We must have a revelation on that day when we will stand before the King who has leased His vineyard out to us, and we will give an account for everything He has put in our hands. That is what she is saying in the poetic language of love here.

She said, “Solomon had a vineyard.” Of course, we know that King Solomon throughout the book of Song of Songs is a picture of King Jesus. What he did with this vineyard is He leased it out to keepers. He gave people a particular stewardship in this vineyard. Then he required everyone whom he leased the vineyard to, he required them to give an answer for that which he entrusted to them.

It is not a coincidence that when Jesus right before He went to the cross in Matthew 21, in Matthew 21:33-44, Jesus tells a parable, He was talking about Himself as a leader who leased His vineyard out. Of course, He is talking about the nation of Israel. Jesus is directly making reference to this passage, Song of Solomon 8:11. The details, many of them are similar that Jesus talked about in Mt. 21:33-44. He said that there was a certain landowner. He was talking about Himself. It is the same situation that Solomon is in here in Song 8:11.

Jesus, in Matthew 21:33-44, is saying there is this landowner who leased a vineyard. He gave it to the keepers, and then he required accountability. It is a direct reference to this passage, and Jesus was talking about accountability before God for being entrusted with a vineyard. I have no doubt that this passage is specifically about that.

LORD ENTRUSTS US WITH RESPONSIBILITY TO CULTIVATE HIS VINEYARD

Paragraph F. Jesus gives every single believer a stewardship in His vineyard. It is important as a believer wanting to mature like the Bride of Christ is in the Song of Solomon, this idea of the judgment seat of Christ is not a secondary idea. This is a foundational teaching. This is Christianity 101. We are given things freely by God, and He will make us give an account for that part of the vineyard that He has

entrusted to us. Whatever you do, do not wait, I have met many people who do this, they wait before they start they serving. I have heard it for years. They say, "Well, I have just joined the church or the ministry," whether this one, or another one. I might be talking to them about another place. They are saying, "I am waiting, and I do not quite know my place yet."

Okay, that is very common. I would say most people, that is the dilemma they are in. What they mean is, "I do not know what my role on the organizational chart of the ministry organizational chart is. I do not know what my role is on the org chart of the ministry. I do not have a title."

One year turns to two, two turns to three. "I do not know what my role is." They wait for years waiting to be identified on the org chart, and get a function before they start serving. Beloved, you are going to give an account before God for everyday of your life. I mean God is generous, and God is kind, but everyday is real. It is not a practice game. You do not need a job description, and a place on a ministry org chart to start obeying God, and serving Him in the vineyard in the bigger purpose of the Lord.

ONE DAY YOU WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT

There are enough people who need ministering to that it does not fit on the org chart. It is just the guy who needs encouragement. It is a new believer. It is a fourteen-year old. It is a twenty-year old who needs somebody to teach them the Bible. There is a neighbor who needs to be lead to the Lord. You do not need to wait for an org chart, and a role on it to start to serve God.

You do need anyone's permission to do ninety percent of the ministries in the Word of God. There are ministries you just do by the Holy Spirit because you serve somebody. They do not fit into a nice job description in a church organizational chart. I have seen people for years wait for years and years never serving, and always waiting for the mysterious moment when they finally get a job title. Now, they know what their role is.

Three months later, they do not even like that role because it is too mundane and routine; it was not as exciting as they thought. New leadership is hard, and they do not even like that role. They waited all these years to get a role, and now they do not even like the role.

My point is this—the enemy—that is one of his most covert ways of keeping people out of service. They are waiting to find their role, and it mostly has to do with one, two, or three of the more visible leaders in the ministry telling it what it is, and that is an absolute deception and distraction. You and the Holy Spirit can figure out what your role is. It has to do with serving people, speaking the Word to them, praying for them, investing your time, money, and energy into them, and do not wait for a title to do it.

Do it today. Do it tonight. Do it tomorrow. Do not wait until you get out of the program. Do not wait until you are trained. Serve all the way through your training time. Serve all the way in between the season where you are kind of in limbo. Serve all the way through those times. Serve and you will answer to the Lord in a way that will be pleasing to you on the last day.

You can be sure of this as she says it here. The Lord desires a full return from the stewardship that He gives the keepers. He requires it. This is an area in my personal life where the Lord has spoken to me a few times over the years about the Judgment Seat of Christ. I tell you, the Lord is not going to ask me about my role at IHOP, how big the conferences were, and how many books I wrote. That is not what He really cares about.

THE LORD LOOKS AT OUR HEART

He cares about how my servanthood, how much of my humility was developed, and how I connected with people in His eyes and served them. That is what He cares about, and not about a lot of the other things that we might think that He cares about. I think about it just day by day, the fact everyday that goes by I will answer to the Lord. I do not dread it. I do not look at it and say, “oh no, all the movements of my heart are written in His book. Every desire to obey Him He captures it.”

THE BRIDE'S CONFIDENCE IN HER FAITHFULNESS TO GOD (SONG 8:12)

What the bride is saying here in this passage, she is actually excited and confident that she will give an adequate response to the Lord on that day. You can find out more about that in roman numeral V, or here in Song of Solomon 8:12. I am going to skip that, but the point of that verse is that she has confidence that when she stands before the Lord, she will give the answer that the Lord will be pleased with.

To have the confidence in our spirit, instead of living in ambivalence about is awesome. I would guess the average believer would just never think about the Judgment Seat of Christ, or if they did, they would have so much dread about it that it would be a very unpleasant thought. Well, the bride here in Song of Solomon 8:12, she is actually confident that she will give the King the answer that the King wants. She is living her life with this in view: this is a significant paradigm of life. It is a significant part of our relationship with the Lord that we could have that kind of confidence.

The Judgment Seat of Christ doctrine is not meant to terrify us with dread. It is meant to excite us because we know that all of our efforts matter to the Lord, and even though men do not esteem them, the Lord does and He remembers them. The Lord, He judges us with the remembrance, as it says in Psalms 103:14. He remembers that we are but dust, and He shows us great kindness and mercy. The fact that God is kind to us, it does not make us look at that last day, the Judgment Seat of Christ, and cast it off as irrelevant. "Well, He is so kind that it does not matter." No, He will be kind and merciful when He evaluates us. Our desire to be faithful day in and day out, to serve Him, to grow in the Spirit, to grow in humility, to grow in revelation, and to grow in servanthood is important. He really, really does care that we are engaging our heart with Him at that level.

JESUS' FINAL COMMISSION TO THE BRIDE (SONG 8:13)

Roman numeral VI. Song of Solomon 8:13, now the Lord speaks, and this is right after the Judgment Seat of Christ revelation, and she is confident that she is going to give the Lord a good answer at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Now the Lord speaks up. This is a very moving passage. This is a passage you want to dream, in your holy inspired dreams, you want to think of your life, ten years, twenty years, thirty years, forty years, or however many decades you want to think down the road. You want to picture yourself standing before the Lord, and the Lord saying to you Song 8:13: "You who dwell in the gardens, the companions listen for your voice—Let me in!"

This is something that as she reaches the end of her natural life, this is what she wants the Lord to say after years of walking with Him. This is not something He says, the language of this, so much at the Judgment Seat of Christ, but this is what I want the Lord to be saying to me in the final years of my physical life on the earth before I meet the Lord.

Each one of these phrases is filled with meaning. He calls her, He names her first, “You who dwell in the gardens” (Song 8:13). Then He gives her the first observation, and He says, “Your companions” or “the companions”—and He means hers—“Listen for your voice” (Song 8:13). Then He gives His exhortation to her. He says, “Let Me hear it” (Song 8:13).

So there are three distinct phrases in this verse here. It is the Lord's final statement to her before, again she is still on the earth. I picture this as Paul who has served the Lord all the days of his life, and there he is. This is what the Lord would say to him, as he is writing 2 Timothy chapter four which is his last book before he met the Lord.

The Lord is talking to him, and he wrote some statements about himself standing before the Lord in 2 Timothy. I picture this kind of situation, and the Lord speaking this. This is what I want to hear Him say to me just in those final years before I stand before Him.

“YOU WHO DWELL IN THE GARDENS” (SONG OF SOLOMON 8:13)

He says, “You who dwell in the gardens” (Song 8:13). That is the first thing. That is how He describes her as the one who dwells in the gardens. Now we know that the garden of the Lord is His people. It is in the midst of His inheritance in His people. He is affirming to her that she still dwells in the midst of God's garden serving His people. In other words, she has not quit. She has not drawn back in selfish isolation. She has not just quit. She is still in the middle of the vineyard serving. I mean what an awesome statement.

Do you know how many of God's servants, maybe they have served the Lord for ten years, twenty years, thirty years, forty years, and they have another ten or twenty years to go, and even in the ministry, they disconnect, dial down, and coast the last one or two decades of their life? I will say it that way. They are no longer in the garden serving. They are on retirement. They kind of drop in on the Body of Christ occasionally. They do a little of this, and a little of that, and they are on vacation status. They are on “Protect my comfort because I have worked hard for years” status.

When the Lord speaks to her, He names her in this way that is so powerful, He says, “You are the one who still dwells in the garden.” I think of Paul the apostle, he is still pouring himself out at the very end. Beloved, you do not ever want to

retire. You never want to retire from actively pressing into God, and serving His people. You may retire from a role even in ministry, but you never ever retire.

Billy Graham is in his eighties, and he is still having stadium meetings. He is pressing the envelope, the guy he can hardly walk. I saw him when he was in Kansas City, and they got him up there. He got up there, and said, "Jesus loves you, repent." I thought, "I love this guy." He is not doing it for fun. I mean maybe the first hundred stadium events he did for fun, but the last five hundred, it was work. I remember going to the stadium, and looking here in Kansas City, and I thought, "I love that guy." He has a hundred good reasons to retire if he wanted to.

Anyway, make sure that when the Lord speaks to you in your final days that He is talking to you as one who is fully engaged in serving in the garden, and not as one who remembers the good old days when you were involved. For a lot of people, it is just a matter of retiring, just for the comfort of their dream retirement days. People spend years dreaming of retiring. Forget it. Get rid of the idea.

Go hard until the day that you have your last breath, fasting, praying, and laboring for people to connect with God. You may be touching just one's and two's, but I tell you that it matters the same to God in terms of when you stand before Him. A lot of people, what they do is they just get bitter, and they get a dull spirit. It is not that they are retiring in life per say, but they just get a dull spirit. I know so many people, I mean hundreds and hundreds who I can picture, and when I was in my twenties, they were on fire for God, they were fasting, praying, and believing for revival. Now, they just backed away, and they hardly open their Bible. If you asked them if they love Jesus, they would say, "Sure I love Jesus." They never talk about Him. They are not involved in prayer. They are not actively involved in promoting the Kingdom. In my thirties, I have hundreds I can remember, and today many more. In my forties, it is the same story.

Being in ministry for thirty years, I have hundreds and hundreds of friends who are pressing into God at one time, and now their big thing is just to kick back and relax and take life easy. Their Bible is dusty, and they have not opened it. They have not been in a prayer meeting in years. They have not had a day of fasting. They have not prophesied. They pray for the sick, maybe under pressure at a social gathering.

Some says, "Hey will you pray for this guy?"

“Well, for minute.” They lay their hand on him just to get it over with. I look at them all across America. I think, “What happened to the fire they had ten years, twenty years, thirty years ago?”

Beloved, it is a miracle if you stay steady for twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years. Make sure it is said of you by the Lord, “You who are dwelling in the garden.” You are still pressing into God, and you are still extending the Kingdom, and contending for breakthrough. I mean I love Lou Engle. He just moved here. I have known Lou for twenty years. That guy does not have an ounce of give up in him. When that guy is eighty years old he will be rocking, and he will be like talking to some president trying to make something happen.

I had the privilege of knowing Leonard Ravenhill. Some of you know him. I got to know him a little bit, one of the great intercessors. I think he met the Lord, went to meet the Lord in his late eighties. He was a radical intercessor from his teens, a revival preacher and wrote books on prayer. I read them for years. The time came, and he was in his seventies, and I had a chance to spend maybe six or eight times with him over the years where he came to Kansas City, for a week at a time just to be in our prayer meetings in his eighties. He was crying out to God with tears in his eyes, preaching on revival, and believing for it.

I looked at that guy and said, “My goodness, what a fiery dude.” I even told him that.

He said, “What is a dude?”

I said, “I don’t know just” actually I will not go into all of that. I loved him. It was amazing. Make sure you are dwelling in the gardens. That is all I have to tell you. At the end, make sure you are fully engaged and contending and involved.

“YOUR COMPANIONS LISTEN FOR YOUR VOICE” (SONG 8:13)

Then, He says the next thing, as an observation. He says, “Your friends, your companions still listen to your voice.” In other words, this is talking about the credibility that she has. He says, “The ones that you have served, the ones that you have known for years, they still see the weight of the Lord in you and they take you seriously. They are still listening to you eagerly.”

Beloved, you do not have to have a teaching ministry for that to happen. You can be a one-on-one type of discipleship ministry. Make sure that at the end that you have a vibrant spirit, and you have a vibrancy in God where the people that you have served for years still see you as a fresh man or woman of God, so much so that they are eagerly receiving from God through you because you have something to say. You are still alive. Your spirit is vibrant and alive. You are growing in revelation.

Then He changes the subject. He says, “Now I want you to let Me hear your voice” (Song 8:13, paraphrased). What? The Lord says, “I want to hear your voice. You companions take you seriously. I take you seriously.”

Paragraph D. The ways that the Lord hears our voice is number one in worship. “Do not stop worshipping,” is what He is saying. He says, “Number two, do not stop interceding.” When Leonard Ravenhill was here in his eighties, he was still crying out for revival. The Lord was still listening to his voice. “Do not stop teaching.” In your one-on-one teaching go and meet the guy, the person in need, and pour out your heart, and encourage them in the things of God. “Do not stop evangelizing.” So, this is what the Lord leaves her with. He says, “I see you involved and engaged. The people are still taking you seriously, and I am still taking you seriously.”

THE URGENT INTECESSION IS FOR JESUS TO COME QUICKLY (SONG 8:14)

The final verse of the Song of Solomon, and we will end with this. She does exactly what the Lord appealed. She responds, and she does it. She says, “Okay, You want to hear my voice?”

She cries out in terms of the New Testament language, Song 8:14 is the same in essence as Revelations 22:17, “Come, Lord Jesus.” This is the Song of Solomon version of “The Spirit and the Bride say ‘Come, Come Lord Jesus.’”

She cries, “Make haste” or “Hurry up, come quickly” (Song 8:14). That is how John said it, “Come quickly” (Rev 22:17, paraphrased). The bride said, “Make haste” or the Shulamite is saying, “Hurry up and visit” (Song 8:14).

Secondly, she says, “My beloved.” In other words, even at the end, Jesus is still the One she is in love with. She is not serving Him at a distance. It is not, “Come quickly, My Leader.” “Come quickly, oh You whom I love.”

She is fresh in love at the end. She is saying, “Be like the gazelle” (Song 8:14). Now the gazelle, if you remember was back in Song of Solomon 2:8 when the Lord appeared to her leaping on the mountains like a gazelle, conquering all of the mountains effortlessly leaping, and bounding from mountain to mountain. She said, “Be that gazelle continually conquering the mountains. Come Lord Jesus and defeat everything that gets in the way” (Song 8:14, paraphrased).

Then she ends in this final phrase, “Come like the gazelle on the mountain of spices” (Song 8:14). In paragraph H, the eternal city and the throne of God as well as the New Jerusalem is being pictured here as a vast mountain of divine fragrance called the mountain of spices.

The throne of God is drenched in fragrance of the beauty of Christ Jesus, and God the Father. Their fragrances emanate from the throne. The city is filled with the lovely fragrance of Christ Jesus. The mountain and the city itself is called the mountain of spices.

COME NEAR US IN INTIMACY

Paragraph C. Now when we cry out, “Come, Lord Jesus.” There is a threefold way. We can say, “Come near us.” When we say, “Come Lord Jesus,” that is Revelation 22:17 it is, “Come near me. Come and break in. I want a breakthrough at the heart level.”

COME TO US IN REVIVAL

That is not the only way that we say, “Come Lord Jesus.” We say, “Come to us.” We want God to visit our geographic area, whether our region or our nation we want to see a breakthrough of revival.

COME FOR US IN THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS

Then we can say, “Come Lord Jesus” in a third way. We can say, “Come for us.” In other words, it is at the Second Coming at that eschatological breakthrough of The Second Coming of Jesus. So whether we are crying “come near us,” “come to us,” or “come for us,” our spirit is actively involved with the One whom we love. He is the One who said, “Let Me hear your voice. Cry out to Me. Let me hear your voice.” Beloved, He wants to hear our voice forever and forever. He wants us in

worship, intercession, and proclaiming His Word. Amen and amen. We will end with that.

Let us stand.