

## ***Session 2 An Overview of the Story Line in the Song of Solomon***

*\*For additional study material pertaining to this session, see [mikebickle.org](http://mikebickle.org)*

### **I. SONG OF SOLOMON: THE BRIDE’S LIFE VISION (SONG 1:2-4)**

- A. The theme throughout the Song of Solomon is the Bride’s spiritual journey to be drawn near to Jesus in intimacy, and then to run in ministry, in partnership with Jesus and others. Note that the prayer request to be “drawn” is singular, “draw *me*,” but “run” is plural, “we will run.”

*Note:* Capitalization of words in the Song, such as *king* and *beloved*, has been changed in my notes to denote the spiritual (allegorical) interpretation of the King as Jesus.

***<sup>2</sup>Let Him [Jesus] kiss me with the kisses of His mouth [Word]...<sup>4</sup>Draw me away [intimacy]!  
We will run after You [in ministry]. (Song 1:2-4)***

*In twelve weeks we cannot cover every verse. That is why we are giving additional notes on the website. We start off tonight in Song of Solomon 1:2-4, and it is the Bride’s life vision. She cries out, so she is speaking in the spiritual sense; we are giving the spiritual interpretation of this. It does have a natural interpretation about the beauty of married love, and that is a very powerful way to interpret this book. We have established that does not exhaust its complete meaning. There is a higher ultimate meaning, which is revealing the heart of Jesus, as we said in our last session.*

*She cries out, and, in the New Testament language, she is crying out to the Father, “Let Him...” She is speaking to the One who has authority over the King. “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His Word.” Then she gives her cry, her two-fold request, which really is her life vision. “Draw me away, and we will run after You.” Now you will notice that the drawing is singular and the running, we, is plural. So she is asking to be drawn to Jesus in intimacy with God. She wants intimacy. She desires, “Draw me to you”—there is an individual dimension.*

*Then she asks for more than that. She says that she wants to run in ministry. “Let us run; we will run together with you.” There is a group of us coming hard after You and partnering together with You as we partner with one another in the grace of God.*

- B. The Song has two main sections; each section has a different primary focus.  
Song 1-4 is focused on God’s people receiving ***their inheritance*** in God.  
Song 5-8 is focused on God receiving ***His inheritance*** in His people.

*As we said last session, the song has two main segments. The first four chapters focus on believers receiving our inheritance in God. For a lot of believers, all they think about is receiving their inheritance. That is glorious; we cannot emphasize that theme enough. But there is something else in the salvation story. God wants to **receive His inheritance from His people**, and that is one of the major themes of this book.*

*She begins her journey now. We are going to do just a little snapshot, skip a few of the sections, and give you a feel for the storyline. Her journey begins with what I call the paradox of grace.*

### **II. HER JOURNEY BEGINS WITH THE PARADOX OF GRACE (SONG 1:5-11)**

- A. The paradox of our faith is that we are dark in our heart, yet we are lovely to God. Some emphasize how sinful we are (darkness of heart), and others how beautiful we are to God (in Christ). Both of these truths must be held in tension to understand our relationship with God.

**<sup>5</sup>I am dark [in heart], but lovely [to God]...<sup>6</sup>my own vineyard [heart] I have not kept.  
(Song 1:5-6)**

*The paradox of our faith is that we are dark in our own heart, yet we are lovely to God. That is the great paradox that a lot of believers never ever settle. We are dark in our own hearts; that is talking about our own fallenness and sinfulness. Because of the grace of God we are lovely to God, and God actually enjoys His relationship with us even in our weakness. Beloved, this one truth will change your life radically. You land this, you get this established in your heart, and you will run to Him and not from Him when you discover your weakness and failure. When the devil wants to accuse you and put shame on you, you will go boldly into the presence of God with confidence. Both truths must be held in tension.*

*She says, “I am dark, but I am lovely [to God] though my own vineyard I have not kept.” She is saying that she is acknowledging her own heart because the vineyard, the garden of her heart, is in ruins right now, yet she knows that she is lovely before Him. Now this is talking about a sincere believer. We are not talking about a believer who is casual with their compromise, who is camping out in a casual attitude toward disobedience. We are talking about a believer like so many of you in this room. You are very serious about pleasing the Lord, but you are seeing the weakness of your life. The vineyard of your heart is not kept; you are dark in your heart, but you are lovely before Him.*

B. We are lovely before God even in our weakness for four reasons:

1. **God’s personality:** God possesses loving and kind emotions. Because of who God is, He sees us through His eyes as beautiful. Beauty is in the eyes of the Beholder.

*Sincere believers are lovely before God, even in our weakness, for four reasons. Number one, because of God’s personality. We are lovely because of who God is. He is so kind. He is so loving. He is so generous. It is a glorious reality that the One we are relating to is so kind. You have heard the statement that beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. He sees beauty; therefore we are beautiful. He is so kind in His emotional makeup and is so filled with tenderness.*

2. **The gift of righteousness:** We receive the beauty of Jesus’ righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21).

*We are beautiful because we have received the gift of righteousness. Beloved, we cannot exaggerate the power and the glory of that truth. The very righteousness of the magnificent, glorious Son of God is ours, and God sees us through that righteousness. The devil, the accuser, does not want us to land in that truth.*

3. **A willing spirit:** A willing spirit, the sincere intention to obey God, is beautiful to Him.

**<sup>41</sup>The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Mt. 26:41)**

**<sup>4</sup>...the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit...is precious in the sight of God.  
(1 Pet. 3:4)**

*When I say a willing spirit, I am talking about a sincere intention to obey Him, a sincere intention. Our love is weak, but our love is still sincere. Again I am not talking about a believer who is casual about sin. I am talking about a person who is troubled by their sin. They are not trying to find ways to get away with sin; they are trying to find ways to get free from it.*

*Jesus told Peter, “Peter, your spirit willing, but your flesh is weak.” That is Matthew 26:41. He had told Peter previously in verse 34, “You are going to deny Me tonight.”*

Peter said, “No, I am not.”

Jesus said, “Yeah, you are, but do not worry, Peter. You will recover.” The Lord appeared to him in John 21 and called him. Part of the message in John 21, in essence, when he recovered Peter from his failure, Jesus said, “Your love is sincere, Peter.” That is another message that we will look at in our next session.

Look at what Peter says in I Peter 3:4. He knows it so well because he experienced it right there after the crucifixion of Jesus. He talked about the incorruptible beauty of a spirit that is right with God. It is so precious and beautiful to God. Beloved, when your spirit is right, when your sincere intentions are there even in your weakness, even your cry, your desire to obey moves Him. Your victory does not begin when you get the full breakthrough; your victory begins by the very breakthrough of a desire to obey. The intention to obey is powerful in God’s sight. It is not of no consequence; it matters to Him.

4. **Our eternal destiny:** Forever in the resurrection we will live in perfect love. God sees the end from the beginning, and thus sees us in the light of eternity, with perfect obedience.

Then number four, because of our eternal destiny. You know, we look at our lives in the time frame of weeks or months, maybe years. He looks at us through the grid of billions of years. He already sees you as somebody who for billions of years will walk in perfect love. He knows who you are, and He is already relating to you through the gift of righteousness, through the grid of His own heart, through your eternal destiny. Beloved, it is glorious!

- C. She wants more of God and to be fed by Him. He affirms the beauty of her sincere love (1:8-11).

<sup>7</sup>**Tell me, O You whom I love, where You feed your flock...** <sup>8</sup>**O fairest among women...**  
(Song 1:7-8)

She cries out in her struggle, “Tell me, O You whom I love”—she does love the King—“Tell me, where will You feed me? I am languishing, and my vineyard is not being kept.” Again we will go through these sections in more details as we unfold this course. “Tell me, O You whom I love, where will You feed me?” She is languishing in her soul.

He answers in verse 8, “O fairest,” which in many translations is the word **beautiful**. He says, “You are beautiful.” That is, I see your love, and it is beautiful.

She responds, “I see that I am dark, and I am parched. You see that my love is beautiful, but my love is so weak.” So she wants more of God, and He affirms the beauty of her sincere love. He affirms the beauty of her sincere love, though at this part of the journey her love is weak, He calls it beautiful.

She is parched. She feels barren and starved. He says, “Yes, but I see the cry. You do love Me. You are not a hopeless hypocrite.” Beloved, the enemy wants to come and tell you that you are a hopeless hypocrite because your love is weak. Sincere, weak love is not false love. It is just weak love, but it is still love.

### III. UNDERSTANDING HER IDENTITY IN GOD’S BEAUTY (SONG 1:12-2:7)

- A. She begins her journey into being fascinated by Jesus’ beauty. She sees salvation as more than being forgiven and blessed in her circumstances, but as an invitation to live fascinated by Jesus.

<sup>16</sup>**Behold, You are handsome [beautiful], my Beloved! (Song 1:16)**

<sup>4</sup>**One thing...will I seek...all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD. (Ps. 27:4)**

*She goes to the next season in her journey; she begins to understand her identity in the beauty of God. I still have so much to learn in all of this, but I remember some years ago when I first began to really grasp this when I started studying the Song of Solomon. Not that it is only the truths of the Song of Solomon; it is the New Testament truths of who we are in Christ. There is an emotional dimension that touches our heart and God's heart, and that is what the Song of Solomon focusing in on, though there is plenty of that reality in the New Testament as well.*

*I remember when I began to see my identity as beautiful and sincere in the sight of God instead of as a worthless failure, a hopeless hypocrite, not even worth the effort of going forward. That is how the devil is calculating to try to make you feel because, when a person that feels that way, they do not want to press into God. They want to draw back and quit. That is the point of the accusation. The devil has got just enough willing vessels, even believers, to vent that accusation from hell upon you even through a well-meaning believer. Do not listen to it. Take your identity from the Word of God.*

*Well, she begins this, because this whole section is her identity. She starts off, beginning her journey into being fascinated by Jesus' beauty. She begins by being fascinated by Jesus' beauty. In verse 16, she declares, "You are beautiful, my Beloved." She has that Davidic heart revelation of the beauty of God.*

*I believe David as a young man locked into this. I mean, he was a broken, sinful man, but he began to get a vision that he could discover and experience the beauty of God, even as a young man. That is one reason he was called the man after God's own heart. I urge you not to be content with a few Bible verses, a few ministry skills, and a few leadership skills. Be locked into this: I am going to experience more of the beauty of who Jesus is.*

*It is going to take some time. You are not going to get that on the run. It is going to take time. You are going to have to turn some things off, turn some things away, and spend some time talking to Him with an open Bible. There are portions of the Bible that are really focused upon the beauty of Jesus. There is no chapter like Revelation 1 in my opinion, but that is the next session.*

- B. She gains insight into her identity in Christ as a beautiful rose in God's sight.

***<sup>1</sup>I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. (Song 2:1)***

*Now she cries out, "I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys." Some people believe that is a description of Jesus. I believe—and I will tell you why when we get to that passage—I believe it is the confession of the Bride. It dawns on her that she is the prize that He wants. "I am the rose that moves Your heart." She gains insight into her identity in Christ; she sees her identity in Christ. Then she goes on to say statement of Song of Solomon 2:1.*

- C. As we rest under the shade of the cross and pursue intimacy with Jesus, we experience the sweetness of God's presence. In this lifestyle she becomes "lovesick" for Jesus (Jn. 15:9-11).

***<sup>3</sup>I sat down in His shade [resting in Jesus' work on the cross] with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. <sup>4</sup>He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner [leadership] over me was love. <sup>5</sup>Sustain me...refresh me...for I am lovesick. (Song 2:3-5)***

*Then in verses 3-5 she begins to experience the sweetness of His presence. She says in verse 3, "I sat down in His shade." The shade tree that we sit down under is the finished work of the cross where we rest from our own labors and trying to motivate God to love us. He loves us. We are wholehearted. We throw all of our strength into the relationship, not to earn to His love, but because we know we have it for free. We rest from our own*

labors in seeking to motivate God to love us. When we know He loves us, it makes us extravagant in pursuit of Him, not to gain anything, but to give ourselves fully to Him in gratitude.

She says, “I sit down; I am resting in that shade tree.” There is only one shade tree in the history of the realm of truth, and that is the cross of Jesus. She says, “I rested. I sat down with great delight;”—Oh, I love the feeling of Your presence—“it was sweet to me.” She is in the early days of her journey, and she has those moments of the sweetness of God’s presence. The Lord wants her to get a vision to never, ever be content to live without that.

She says in verse 5, “Sustain me; refresh me. Oh, my heart is sick with love.” What that means is, the more love I experience, the greater my hunger is to experience more, and that is what this principle of being lovesick is through a New Testament paradigm. It is that the more that you and I experience of the love of Jesus, the more hungry we get, the greater our appetite, and the more we demand to have a greater understanding. The less we experience, the more easily content we are. The more we are experience, the bigger the vision, and the less content we are with what we have.

It is just the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. People who never experience His presence, who do not press into God and just live on the peripheral of the kingdom—God loves them—but they never feel the power of it, and that is their vision. They say, “Well, if I get involved in a little ministry, have a few friends, money works out okay, a few people like my ministry, and I find somebody who I really, really like and they like me, we get married, and things work good, hey, I am happy.”

The Lord says, “I have more for you than that. I have an unveiling love that will so expand your capacity, your hunger, your vision. You will never be content without it ever increasing.”

#### **IV. CHALLENGING THE COMFORT ZONE (SONG 2:8-17)**

- A. Jesus is pictured as effortlessly skipping over the mountains or obstacles (human and demonic). Jesus has all power. Thus no obstacle can hinder Him from fulfilling the Great Commission.

<sup>8</sup>*The voice of my Beloved! He comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.*  
<sup>9</sup>*My Beloved is like a gazelle...* <sup>10</sup>*My Beloved spoke, “Rise up, My love...and come away...”*  
<sup>17</sup>*Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved. (Song 2:8-17)*

Things are going well. She is under the shade tree. She is sustained with apples. Oh, it is sweet. She is lovesick. She says, “Let’s just push ‘save’ and just end the whole thing right here; let’s not even change anything.”

The Lord could whisper, “Well, there is one problem. You are only at the beginning of your inheritance in Me. There is a lot more of your inheritance in Me, **and** I have an inheritance in you that you are not even thinking about. I am not only something to you. **You** are something to **Me**. When you see the glory of it, you will never be content to live disconnected from it.” In effect it’s as if He is saying, “No, we are only in Song of Solomon 2, honey. We’ve got eight chapters.”

Well she is enjoying herself, never happier. Then suddenly in verse 8, here comes the voice of my Beloved. He is leaping on mountains and skipping on hills like a gazelle. I mean leaping from mountaintop to mountaintop. She looks at him, and she says, “Wait, I am lying under the shade tree eating grapes. You are on mountaintops leaping.” She says, “I do not like heights. No, you come to me here.”

He replies, “No, you rise up and come with Me to the mountaintops.

*She answers, “Wait, that throws off everything. I do not like heights, I do not like surprises, and I do not like risk. No, you come to me at the table.”*

*He says, “Oh, no. I will be with you at the table, but I want you to come with Me in partnership. I want to challenge that comfort zone you are living in because I have more for you. We have more together that you will never experience except you rise up. I love you all the same, but there is so much you cannot experience until you rise up.”*

*He is pictured as effortlessly skipping over mountains or over all the obstacles. The mountains speak of the challenges, the obstacles. It says in verse 10, “Rise up and come away.”*

*She responds, “I do not want to leave the shade tree. No, no, no!” Well, as we break this down later in the upcoming sessions, you will find out she tells him no.*

*In verse 17, I mean it is heart breaking, she says, “Until the day breaks, and the shadows flee away”—until the compromise is gone in my life—“No, You turn and go to the mountains yourself. I am staying here.”*

*He is saying, in effect, “You do not really want that. You do not really want to cultivate a spiritual life where you tell Me no and live in spiritual superficiality. You do not want to do that.”*

*She says, “Yeah, I think I do. You go jump on mountains Yourself and give me a report. I will read all about it.”*

- B. She has learned to enjoy His presence sitting at His table (2:3-5). Jesus wants more than a Bride who enjoys His presence; He also wants deep partnership with her in the work of the kingdom. Therefore, He disturbs her “comfort zone” to call her to a higher place of obedience and faith.

*She had been enjoying His presence at the table, but beloved, He wants more than a Bride who enjoys His presence. He wants deep partnership. He wants more than you and me to enjoy Him. Oh, He loves that. But He says, “I want more than you enjoying Me, I want you and Me in deep partnership.” There are so many dimensions of life and love that unfold. So He disturbs the comfort zone. He comes as the Sovereign King leaping on mountains, discipling the nations. “Come with Me out of the safety zone.”*

- C. Initially she refuses Him by telling Him to *turn* and go to the mountain without her (2:17).

*Initially, because we are only in Song of Solomon 2, the things have turned negative here. Because she was really having a great time, she initially tells Him no.*

- D. Her compromise is due to her immaturity, not to her rebellion. She fears that total obedience will be too difficult. She loves Him, but does not think she has the strength to obey Him fully.

*Here is the important thing to understand: her compromise is due to her immaturity, not her rebellion. She is not rebellious right here. She is not saying no because “I want it my way, and that is it.” She is saying, “No. I am afraid. I love You, so please let’s just do it like we have been doing it.”*

*I tell you, I get things in a nice rhythm, and things are going well. Then He comes and gives me a challenge. He gives you a challenge and says, “Believe Me for this level of devotion and consecration. Embrace this challenge.”*

*I say, “Ugh, what if does not work?”*

*He replies, “Yeah, but you will have obeyed Me. It does not matter if it works in the eyes of man. You have obeyed Me; that is what matters. You will be with Me.”*

*I answer, “Ugh, what if it is hard? What if it does not work? What if it is not popular? What if it is not easy? What if it does not make money? What if it does not bring me honor?”*

*“It might not, but you will be faithful, and we will be doing it together.”*

*I say, “Oh, I mean I really do love You, but why don’t You come back later? Let me go do a few more semesters and then come back, and I will let You know if I am ready for that level of consecration, obedience.”*

*I do not mean it is just a project. It is how to carry our heart in our inner man. It is blessing our enemies. Beloved, if you have never blessed your enemies, if you have never given time and money away that was costly—that is challenging the comfort zone.*

*It is not just going on an adventuresome ministry trip that is a little scary, in a place where your parents warned you not to go. That is not what we are talking about. We are talking about something far more fundamental than just an adventuresome ministry trip. We are talking about the way we carry our life. “I am determined,” the young maid would say, “that I am going to obey You. I am going to have a level of devotion and consecration in the what I do with my eyes, what I do with my words, what I do with my time, what I do with my reputation, how I relate to enemies, how I relate to friends. I am going to go another way with You, and I am going to the mountaintop with You.”*

*The Lord says, “That is good.” This has a different application in every single person’s life.*

## **V. SHE EXPERIENCES GOD’S DISCIPLINE (SONG 3:1-5)**

- A. She experiences God’s loving discipline as He hides His face from her. The sweetness of Song 2:3-5 is gone. God disciplines us in His affection for us (Heb. 12:5-12). His correction has no rejection. He longs to pry our fingers from that which holds our heart in bondage. The Father loves us too much to allow us to come up short of partnering with Jesus in a deep way.

***<sup>1</sup>By night on my bed I sought the One I love...but I did not find Him. <sup>2</sup>I will rise now...I will seek the one I love...<sup>4</sup>I found the One I love. I held Him and would not let Him go... (Song 3:1-4)***

*Next she experiences God’s loving discipline, because all of a sudden now He hides His face from her. This is a brand new experience. She is just, “What about the apple tree and what about the feast under that tree? I mean what happened?” Song of Solomon 3:1, “By night on my bed I sought the One I love.” She still loves Him. This is not a rebellious believer; this is an immature believer. “I could not find Him.” That is, “I love Him, but I cannot find Him. I am not trying to live in compromise. I am compromising, but I hate my compromise.”*

*Then she says, in effect, “Okay, I cannot live like this. I cannot live without that dialogue, that conversation, that sense of Your presence I have become accustomed to. I cannot live without that dialogue, that interchange.” Verse 2, “Okay, You win. I will arise. I will go. I will arise. I will obey.” The Lord is not punishing her; He is disciplining her. When the Lord disciplines His people, it is not punishment. He is prying our fingers off the things that hold us in bondage.*

*We are fixated on holding on to something. He says, “You think you want it, but you do not. I love you more than you love you. I am going to pry your fingers off, not to punish you, but to exhilarate you with the possibilities of what it is like to live with Me at the next level.*

*She says, “Okay, I will arise now. I will seek the One I love.” When you read the whole passage you will see she rose and went to the city. She left the apple tree, though she still keeps that reality in her life. “I will go to the city,” and in the city there is a lot of hustle and bustle.*

*He says, “But really I told you to go to the mountains. The city is step one; that is good. The city is better than nothing, but I want you on the mountains.” So she has not fully gone all the way yet.*

*Verse 4, she is still young and immature, “I found Him, I found Him.” In other words “Oh, I have that dialogue, that connect back. I have that sense of His presence.” Again, the wounding of her heart was not punishment; it was to awaken her to the possibilities of how to live at a new level with God on the inside. It has to do with outward things as well, but this is a whole lot more about the way we carry our hearts.*

B. She “arises” to obey by leaving the comfort zone (3:2); His manifest presence returns (3:4).

*She arises to obey. She is going to leave the comfort zone, but she has not gone to the mountain yet. She does not go to the mountain until Song of Solomon 4-5; we are still in Song of Solomon 3. She goes to the city.*

## **VI. A FRESH REVELATION OF JESUS AS A “SAFE SAVIOR” (SONG 3:6-11)**

Jesus reveals Himself as one who is safe to obey. She comes to believe that 100% obedience is the only safe path in life. Walking with Jesus on the water is far safer than being in the boat without Him.

*So you found yourself in this song yet? I find myself in stages all of the way through it. I am in stages three, six, and two all at the same time. Well, we are not going to go to this now, but in Song of Solomon 3:6-11, Jesus reveals Himself as the safe Savior. This is a fantastic passage! He shows Himself in that poetic language of the love song as the one who is safe to obey.*

*Walking on the water with Jesus is safer than being in the boat without Him. That is a cool preacher statement, but it is a really different way to live. I mean, I make that statement, and you go, “Whoa!” You tweet it. You go for it, thinking “Ooh!”*

*The Lord says, “Oh good, you are really into that.”*

*“Well, you know, Lord, I want my friends into it.”*

*“I am into it, too.” It is safer to walk on the water with Jesus. When He says, “Get out of the boat,” it is safer to be on the water with Him than in the boat without Him.*

*The enemy comes and says, “If you are that dedicated, you are going to miss out. If you are that dedicated, you are going to lose out on fun. You are going to get too tired, and too burned out. You are going to lose out, you are going to this, you are going to that, you are going to this.”*

*We have this idea that we will actually lose out if we obey the One who is incarnate love and wisdom. It is a complete upside-down kingdom because our natural thinking says that if we obey Him too intensely, we are going to lose out. That is where this whole distorted-grace message is contending for people to live shallow as though if they go hard they are going to lose something. Beloved, we expand our experience in God when we give all of our strength to Him.*

## VII. THE PROPHETIC HEART OF THE BRIDEGROOM GOD (SONG 4:1-8)

- A. The maiden rose up to go into the city (3:2), but she does not go to the mountains until Song 4:6. Yet she was beautiful to the King. He described eight aspects of beauty that He saw in her (4:1-5). He prophetically proclaimed her “budding virtues.” God defines us by the cry in our heart, not by our struggles. He calls things that are not as though they were (Rom. 4:17). The Lord called Gideon a mighty man while he was hiding from his enemies with fear (Judg. 6:11-12).

<sup>1</sup>***Behold, you are fair [beautiful], My love! Behold, you are fair. (Song 4:1)***

<sup>17</sup>***God...calls those things which do not exist as though they did. (Rom. 4:17)***

<sup>12</sup>***The Angel...said [to Gideon], “The LORD is with you...mighty man of valor!” (Judg. 6:12)***

*I call this the prophetic heart of the Bridegroom God. She rose to go up to the city, things are going well, but she still has not gone to the mountain yet, and that is what He said to do. He said, “I want you on the mountains. I do not want you just in the city.” Again, in the city there is that active dynamic of interfacing with many different dynamics that are not as safe as being under that shade tree, but it is not the mountain yet.*

*Here is the part I want you to get. Before she goes to the mountain, which is in Song of Solomon 4-5, before she goes, He looks at her. She only went to the city. She only has taken a few steps. He says, in chapter 4, verse 1, “You are beautiful.”*

*It is like that little child. They take those first few steps. They say those first syllables. Mom and Dad say, “Wow!” They want to tell the whole world. I mean they want everybody to see it, and they interrupt you to show you. “Look, amazing!” Well, it is not that amazing. “Oh yes, it is.”*

*That is what she is doing, and He is absolutely moved. He says, “You are beautiful. Your love is beautiful. I love you. I see that you have not gone there yet, but you are moving there because you love Me.”*

*In Song of Solomon 4:1-8, He describes eight different virtues. He uses the agricultural language of that day because it is in the setting of a woman on a farm where the King comes by and woos her. That is the setting because everybody could identify with that in that culture. He describes eight virtues of her beauty, but she is not even mature yet. They are what I call budding virtues. He calls forth our budding virtues.*

*Our desire to love Him, our intention to love Him is there, but our love is weak. He says, “Look at your glorious love.”*

*We say, “Well, it is not that glorious.”*

*He says, “It is to Me. Look at your commitment to serve.”*

*“Well, I am pretty selfish.”*

*He replies, “Yeah, you are, but look! There is a new awakening to serve more. Look at it! Look at you! Look at that hunger for My Word.”*

*“Well, I do not have that much hunger.”*

*“It is a lot more than you use to have, though there is a long way to go.” He calls forth the budding virtues. He does not motivate by shame, but He shares the joy of our progress each step of the way.*

*God defines us by the cry in our heart. He does not define us by our struggles. We see our struggles, and we think we are just hopeless hypocrites. He sees the cry in our heart to obey Him, He says, “I define you by the*

*cry in your heart, by the willing spirit.” By more than that—the gift of righteousness and the other things we covered—but beloved, He calls forth things that do not exist as though they did. That is what Paul said in Romans 4:17. He said that God calls forth things that you cannot see with the natural eye, but God sees them, and He says they are real.*

*One of my favorite examples is here in Judges 6:12. Gideon. Gideon is hiding from the enemy. He is hiding, shaking in fear. The angel appears to him and says, “Gideon, mighty man of valor!”*

*Gideon looks around. He says, “Mr. Angel, I am hiding. I am not a man of valor.”*

*The Lord could say to him, “I see something in you, Gideon, that you do not see, and if you believe what I say about you, you will walk in that destiny.” Beloved, you are lovers of God, you are people that love God, you have set your heart. You are not just workers, but you are those who have committed to give your strength to Him in love. You love Him, to obey Him, that is who you are.*

*I love what John the apostle called himself: the disciple that God loves. He said, “That is who I am. I am the one God loves.” He said that five times about himself. Can you imagine calling yourself the one God loves? That is one thing. But putting it in the Bible? When that book of John was canonized, John said, “Yes! Forever it is locked in, forever.”*

- B. Initially she refused to obey His call to come to the mountain (2:10). But in Song 4:6, she commits to go to the mountain of myrrh—a fragrant burial spice that speaks of suffering.

***<sup>6</sup>I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh. (Song 4:6)***

*This revelation of the beauty dimension, it moves her. She says in verse 6, “Okay, I will go to the mountain, I will go to the mountain.” Here is a dynamic turning point. “I will do it, if you feel that way about me. I mean I just left the shade tree for the city, but I am a mountain climber if You think I am. If You think I am, I am one.”*

*He says, “I see that in you.”*

### **VIII. THE RAVISHED HEART OF THE BRIDEGROOM GOD (SONG 4:9-5:1)**

- A. In verse 9, the King is revealed as the Bridegroom, with a heart ravished with desire and affection for His Bride. This insight into the King’s heart equips her to embrace the cross (4:6, 16).

***<sup>9</sup>You have ravished My heart...My spouse...with one look of your eyes... (Song 4:9)***

*There are several really high points in the Song, and this is one of them. He looks at her. She has not even gone to the mountain. She has only said, “I will go to the mountain.” She has not actually done it yet. She just declared, “Okay, I am going all the way to the mountain.” She has not packed her bags, she has not made any changes, but she has declared the intention. He says to her in verse 9, “You have ravished my heart.” The accuser could stand up and say that she has not done anything yet. He says, “She has set her heart to go all that way. That moves Me deeply.”*

*The King is revealed as a Bridegroom with a heart ravished with desire and affection. Beloved, He is ravished; He is moved deeply with desire and affection. He does not just stamp your passport. He really likes you. He likes you much more than you like you, He really does. He is infinite, eternal love in expression. He is a Man who loves you with all of His heart.*

Paul wrote about the width and the length, the height and the depth of God’s love. Nobody will grasp it all; it is beyond what you think, even with great revelation. The width and the length, the height and the depth is beyond what we grasp. This revelation of His ravished heart equips her, moves her. She said, “If You feel that way about me, I am going all the way to the mountain.”

- B. Jesus gave a sevenfold description of her purity (4:12-15). A king’s garden was private, in contrast to a public one with defiled water. We declare this to God in our desire to walk in purity.

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

- C. She wants the fragrance of God’s spices to increase in her life. Her garden speaks of her heart. The *north wind* speaks of the cold, bitter winds of winter. The *south wind* speaks of the warm, refreshing winds of summer. She is no longer afraid of the testings of God.

**<sup>16</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)**

She says, “Okay.” Then this prayer is the most—I do not know, how do I want to say it?—this is a very intense prayer. I will say it that way. I was going to say the most challenging or scariest, but, no, that is not the right word. This prayer has it all. She says, “Okay, if You feel that way about me, and I have not even done what You asked yet, then I am fearless.” She looks at Him and says, “Let the north winds come. I am not afraid of them anymore. Let the south winds come. Let them both come, and let the garden of my heart be filled with perfume that moves You.”

Then she makes this statement. It is the critical statement. Remember we are at the end of Song of Solomon 4, and for the next four chapters the theme is different. She says, “Let my Beloved come into His garden.” In other words, she says, “For four chapters my heart was **my** garden. From now on I am **Your** garden.” From now on, it is a whole different paradigm shift. She looks at her time, her money, her enemies, her opportunities, her strength, her reputation, and she looks at it all now through the grid of being **His** garden, not being her garden. She declares, “I am now Yours.”

Look what she says, “Awake north winds,” the bitter winds of the north. She says, “If the north winds come, under Your leadership I am not afraid of them, those bitter winds of the north. Awake south winds, those refreshing winds of the south. At the end of the day through blessing or struggle, the fragrance will increase in my life, and I will be an expression of belonging to You.” Wow! I mean verse 16 is where the whole book changes.

- D. She wants the King to have His inheritance in her, and thus prays, “Let my Beloved come to His garden.” In the first four chapters, she was concerned with her inheritance (her garden). In the last four chapters, her focus is on Jesus’ inheritance in her. From now on, her heart is His garden. He defined her life in a radically different way. Nine times He used the ownership word “My.”

**<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. (Song 5:1)**

I will say this all through the course: she wants the King to have His inheritance in her. Let that vision touch your mind, for the King to have His inheritance in your life. Yes, I love free forgiveness. I love it. I will never ever get over my joy over free forgiveness. I love being forgiven for nothing. I mean it is fantastic. I love the eternal city. I love God using me in little ways, bigger ways, littler ways, bigger ways; it does not matter.

*But I tell you—I want to live as His inheritance. I have got something on my mind more than Him doing things for me. I want Him to do things for me forever; I want ten times more of everything. I do not throw away the blessing of God, but I want more than just to receive blessing. I want to be an embodiment of His inheritance. I want to be what He is after in the earth in my little heart and life.*

## **IX. THE ULTIMATE TWOFOLD TEST OF MATURITY (SONG 5:2-8)**

- A. Jesus embraced the cross in the long, lonely night in Gethsemane. Jesus comes to us as the Man of Sorrows in Gethsemane (5:2) and invites us into the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 3:10).

***<sup>2</sup>The voice of my Beloved! He knocks, saying, “Open for Me...My love...My perfect one; for My head is covered with dew, My locks with the drops of the night.” (Song 5:2)***

*Now it gets really intense. He asks, “Oh, you want the north winds? Are you sure?”*

*“Yes.”*

*“Are you sure that you are now My garden? Are you sure?”*

*“Yes, I am not afraid anymore.”*

*He says, “Okay, let’s see.” This is the most intense passage of the entire book. I call it the ultimate two-fold test. She has cried out for the north winds. She has said, “Anything goes.” Again the Lord is not after difficulty for the sake of difficulty. He wants to prove Himself to us, and He wants us to show ourselves as His in times of testing and show Himself as belonging to us.*

*He comes as the Jesus of Gethsemane; He comes to us as the Man of sorrows in Song of Solomon 5:2. There is a whole completely different look. He is not jumping on the mountains. He is not under the shade tree. He is not the One that is showing Himself ravished. He still is, but He says, “I am going to show you something else different here.” Verse 2, we read, “The voice of my Beloved.” Okay, now He is coming to answer the “Awake, O north winds.” He says, “Okay, here I come.” He knocks. He says, “Open up for me. Open up your heart. Respond.”*

*His head is covered with the dew of the night, with the drops of the night. He is the Jesus of the garden of Gethsemane. He is in the dark and lonely night. He says, “Meet Me in the dark lonely night. Will you do that? Do you trust Me?” This is not talking about going to some geographic area that is unsafe. That is not what I am talking about right now. He is saying, “Will you trust Me and be Mine when things go dark, when the blessings seem to disappear? When things are not working right, are you still Mine?”*

- B. Jesus asks us to “open up,” that He may come to us as the Man of Gethsemane. He wants to be the goal of our life, not just the stepping-stone to our agenda of seeking happiness.
- C. She responded in obedience, saying that she had taken off her dirty robes and washed her feet in His grace (5:3). She was not afraid of obeying Him, asking for the bitter north winds (4:16). She arose immediately with a heart yearning in love for Him (5:4). The locks of her heart had myrrh on them, speaking of her commitment to embrace death to herself in her pursuit of Jesus.

***<sup>4</sup>My heart yearned for Him. <sup>5</sup>I arose to open for my Beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh...on the handles of the lock. (Song 5:4-5)***

*In verse 4 she says, “My heart yearned.” She instantly rises up, “Yes. I will meet You in the dew of the night.”*

- D. She experienced her first test as God *withdrew His presence* (5:6). This affected her ability to experience intimacy with God. The awareness of His presence left her for the second time in the Song (3:1). However, this time it was not related to disobedience (as in 3:1-2), but rather to her mature obedience. Some medieval teachers called this “the dark night of the soul.”

***<sup>6</sup>I 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...He gave me no answer. (Song 5:6)***

*The next thing that happens instantly when she arises, she experiences her first test as God withdrew His presence. Now God never withdraws His presence in the true sense, but her discernible feeling of His presence lessened. His presence is always with His people, but sometimes we feel His presence more than others.*

*The first test: He withdrew His presence. He goes away. She says, “I opened,” Song of Solomon 5:6, “but my Beloved turned away.” She thinks, “I did what you said. You said to come meet you. I jumped out, my heart yearned, and here I am. He is gone! My heart leaped, but I could not find Him.”*

*Now this is not a discipline. This is not because of disobedience. Some present this chapter as she is in disobedience again, and it is another discipline. I am convinced it is a very different thing. We will get to that in a few weeks from now. He is gone.*

- E. She experienced her second test as her *ministry was rejected* by men (5:7). The watchmen, or the leaders, struck her and took her veil (spiritual covering), so that she could no longer function in ministry in the Body. Her ministry was gone. How will she respond to Him now?

***<sup>7</sup>The watchmen...struck me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took my veil away from me. (Song 5:7)***

*Her second test is that her ministry is rejected by men. The watchmen—the elders in the church—struck me and wounded me. The leaders of the city, the leaders of the kingdom, took my veil—my covering—away. I have lost my place. All the leaders are now against me. The presence of God lifted in verse 6, and now the leaders are against me, verse 7. Her ministry is gone.*

- F. **Summary:** Jesus called her to join Him in Gethsemane. He then allowed her to be tested in both ways related to her life vision—to be drawn near to Him and to run with Him in ministry (1:4).

***<sup>4</sup>Draw me away [intimacy]! We will run after You [in ministry]. (Song 1:4)***

## **X. THE BRIDE’S RESPONSE: SHE IS LOVESICK INSTEAD OF OFFENDED (SONG 5:8-6:5)**

- A. She responded to God with love and to others with humility by asking for help from the daughters of Jerusalem. The Lord was asking her, “Will you be Mine, even if I withhold the things you deeply desire? Will you be Mine when you cannot feel My Presence? Will you love and trust Me when you are disappointed by circumstances?” She responded with love (5:8).

***<sup>8</sup>O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved...tell Him I am lovesick! (Song 5:8)***

*What is she going to do? How is she going to respond? Well, she was lovesick earlier, but right now she could be offended. Here is the second time in the book, “O daughters of Jerusalem if you find Him, tell Him I am lovesick.” That is, “I am not angry. I meant what I said, north winds, south winds. I am in it for you. Jesus, you*

are not just a stepping stone to my ministry agenda. You are the goal. You are not just a means to an end. You are the end.”

*Beloved, something dynamic happens when He becomes the end and not just the means to the end. He is always the means to the end. A billion years from now, He is the means. He is the way we get the blessing. We never graduate from that. But we do not limit our relationship to that. He is not only the means to the end; He is the end. I do not mean just the fact that He is there. I am talking about our devotion, our obedience even in the dark night. She says, “Tell Him I am lovesick.”*

*The Lord is asking her, “Will you mind if I withhold the things you want.” Remember what her life vision was? Draw me—I want your manifest presence—and let us run—I want to be in ministry. Both of the things she wants are now lifted seemingly. The two things she started out crying out for are now gone. “Will you be Mine when you cannot feel My presence? Will you be Mine when the ministry is disappointing? When the favor is not there, when you are being charged wrongly, accused? When good leaders turn you away for wrong reasons?” Jesus says, “Are you in this for Me, or are you in it so I can put you on a platform somewhere or give you a big business or give you the happy family you want?? Those things are good but there is more to our relationship than those things.*

- B. The daughters of Jerusalem ask the Bride a question (5:9). In essence, they ask, “Why do you love Him so much? He has abandoned you. He removed His presence from you (5:6) and allowed the elders to wound you as they took your ministry from you” (5:7).

***<sup>9</sup>What is your Beloved more than another beloved, O fairest among women? (Song 5:9)***

*The daughters of Jerusalem said to her, “What is your Beloved more than another?” That is, “Why do you want Him? Look what He has done! He has lifted His presence. He has let you get kicked out of church. What do you see in Him?” The right question.*

- C. Her answer revealed her love for the King—she gave ten descriptions of His beauty (5:10-16).

***<sup>10</sup>My Beloved is white [dazzling, NAS]...and chief among ten thousand. <sup>11</sup>His head is like the finest gold; His locks are wavy...<sup>12</sup>His eyes are like doves...<sup>13</sup>His cheeks are like a bed of spices...His lips are lilies...<sup>14</sup>His hands are rods of gold...His body is carved ivory...<sup>15</sup>His legs are pillars of marble...His countenance is like Lebanon...<sup>16</sup>His mouth is most sweet, yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my friend. (Song 5:10-16)***

*Her answer reveals her heart. She is lovesick. She gives ten descriptions of His beauty, ten descriptions. Oh, this is one of the most magnificent passages in the Bible! I cannot wait! I cannot wait until next week or the week after week; these are fantastic truths. She replies, “Am I offended? Why do I love Him? O my Beloved is dazzling. O my Beloved is chief among ten thousand. His head is like finest gold. His locks, His eyes, His cheeks, etc.,” Verse 16, “His mouth is most sweet. He is altogether lovely. He is the one I love. That is why I am not drawing back. I am in it for Him.”*

## **XI. JESUS PRAISES HER AFTER THE SEASON OF TESTING (SONG 6:4-10)**

- A. After the twofold test was over, the King broke His silence as He lavished affection on her and described her beauty (6:4-10). He declared that she was as beautiful as **Tirzah** (a city in northern Israel) and as lovely as **Jerusalem** (the capital of Israel). He proclaimed that she was as awesome as a victorious army with banners. When an army returned victorious from battle, they displayed their banners in a military procession. She defeated her greatest enemies—those in her heart.

**<sup>4</sup>O My love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners! (Song 6:4)**

*After the two-fold test was over, the King broke His silence. The King breaks His silence because He has been quiet, His presence lifted. When the elders rose up, the watchmen, He did not intervene for a short season. How does she feel? She is lovesick over Him. She refuses to draw back. She refuses to be offended. He breaks the silence.*

*Look at this verse, Song of Solomon 6:4. “O My love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah. You are lovely, you are as awesome as an army with banners. I was seeing your heart; you cried for the north wind, you said you were Mine. Look at you, you are beautiful, you are lovely! That response, you are as awesome as an army with banners.” An army with banners in the ancient world was an army that came back in victory. Beloved, she has defeated the number one enemy of her life—that is her own passion, disappointment and agenda. She has overcome that. She is His no matter what. She has overcome like an army with banners.*

- B. Jesus is “conquered” by His Bride’s extravagant love. Our eyes of devotion deeply touch the King’s heart. All the armies in hell cannot conquer Jesus, but the eyes of His Bride “conquer” Him when they are true to Him in times of testing. The Bride’s maturity is described (6:5c-7).

**<sup>5</sup>Turn your eyes away from Me, for they have overcome Me. (Song 6:5)**

*In Song 6:5, He says, “Turn your eyes away from Me, for your eyes have overcome Me.” Oh, this is one of the high points as well. Now we do not overcome God in that sense that God is conquered, but Jesus is overcome by the Bride’s extravagant love. He says, “Turn your eyes away from Me.” Beloved, all the armies of hell cannot conquer Jesus, all the kings of the nations cannot, but the eyes of His beloved who trusts Him and loves Him in difficulties—He says, “You have conquered My heart. You have overwhelmed Me by the way that you love Me when everything is going bad.”*

- C. We see her preeminence in the King’s court (6:8). The attendants around His heavenly court are seraphim, cherubim, and angels without number. The Bride’s beauty is described (6:10).

**<sup>8</sup>There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins without number. <sup>9</sup>My dove, My perfect one, is the...only one of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her...<sup>10</sup>Who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as an army with banners? (Song 6:8-10)**

## **XII. THE VINDICATION OF THE PERSECUTED BRIDE (SONG 6:11-7:9A)**

- A. As the Bride walks in the revelation of who she is before the Lord, she is persecuted. Mature love with a deep commitment to serve the Church (6:11) overcame her (6:12). She received a sincere response from some in the Church (6:13a,b), but a hostile response from others (6:13c, d).

<sup>13</sup>*Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon you! What would you see in the Shulamite—as it were, the dance of the two camps? (Song 6:13)*

- B. The Bride is pictured as being vindicated by discerning saints (7:1-5) and by Jesus (7:6-9a).

### **XIII. THE BRIDE’S MATURE PARTNERSHIP WITH JESUS (SONG 7:9B-8:4)**

- A. The Bride describes the mature partnership that she walked out with full obedience (7:9b-10).
- B. The Bride expresses deep partnership in her intercession for more power (7:11-13), in her boldness in public ministry (8:1-2), and her full union with the King (8:3-4).

### **XIV. THE BRIDAL SEAL OF MATURE LOVE (SONG 8:5-7)**

- A. Jesus invites her to receive the seal of fire upon her heart and to walk with Him in holy, jealous love. God is a consuming fire and desires to impart His fire into our hearts.

<sup>6</sup>*Set Me [Jesus] as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death, [God’s] jealousy as cruel [demanding] as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame. <sup>7</sup>Many waters [sin or pressures] cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised. (Song 8:6-7)*

*Jesus invites her to receive the seal of fire of her heart. Oh, the great verse! Song of Solomon 8:6, that He would be the seal of fire on the heart.*

- B. God’s commitment is to seal our heart supernaturally with His fiery love. This refers to walking in the grace to walk in the first commandment to love God with all our heart.

*This seal of fire refers to walking in the grace to walk in the first commandment. That seal of fire is that ability to walk in the first commandment. When we walk in the first commandment, we will always walk in the second commandment, always. Nobody walks in the first commandment and shuts down their heart in the second; they become energized in love.*

### **XV. THE BRIDE’S FINAL INTERCESSION AND VIEW OF HERSELF (SONG 8:8-14)**

- A. The Bride intercedes for the church (8:8–9) and for Jesus’ presence (8:14). In verse 10, we see her threefold confidence as a wall (selfless motives), as a tower (supernatural ability to nurture), and as one with peace (all emotional hindrances in her are removed).
- B. The Bride experiences the power and enjoyment of living before His eyes instead of before the eyes of men. Her sense of importance is rooted in eternity as she has revelation of giving account before God (8:11). The Bride has a revelation of her spiritual maturity before God (8:12).
- C. The King gives His final commission to the Bride (8:13-14). Her urgency is expressed in prayer. His last words to her commend her faithfulness in serving the Church. She continued to dwell in His gardens serving God’s people. She did not quit or retreat into selfish isolation. Earlier, Jesus had called her to worship and prayer by telling her that her voice was sweet to Him (2:14).

***<sup>13</sup>You who dwell in the gardens [the Bride], the companions listen for your voice—Let Me [Jesus] hear it! <sup>14</sup>Make haste, my Beloved [Jesus], and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices. (Song 8:13-14)***

***<sup>17</sup>The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!” (Rev. 22:17)***

*At the very end, the King gives His final commission to the Bride. He says in Song of Solomon 8:13, “O you who dwell in the gardens.” In other words she did not quit, she is still among the people of the gardens; the garden is plural here—all the people of God. You did not draw back, you did not quit, you did not give up, you did not give in, you did not get into self-pity, you did not get into bitterness, you are still in the midst of the people of God serving.*

*He says, “O the people, the companions, want to hear your voice. You have touched their lives. You have not drawn back. Not only that, but I want to hear your voice.”*

*She cries out in essence the prayer of Revelation, “Come Lord Jesus,” as she says, “Make haste, my Beloved, as the One that is on the mountain of spices.” That is the Song of Solomon version of “the Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’”*

*Well, we are going to end with that, and we will break it all down as we go on. But what a glorious love song! I am going to invite you to stand.*