

Session 8 The Ravished Heart of God (Song 4:1-16)

I. THE CHERISHED HEART OF GOD: EQUIPPED TO LOVE JESUS (4:1-8)

- A. In Song 4:1-5, Solomon gave eight characteristics of the Shulamite maiden that spoke of her physical beauty. These characteristics can also be seen as symbolic of spiritual characteristics. In her season of discipline (3:1-2) the King described her beauty (4:1-5), even while her obedience was immature. He saw her sincere desire to obey before it was fully manifested in her character. This motivated her to commit to obey Him by *rising up to go to the mountains* with Him (4:6).

¹Behold, you are fair [beautiful], My love...you have dove's eyes...your hair is like a flock of goats...²Your teeth are like shorn sheep...³Your lips are like...scarlet, and your mouth is lovely. Your temples...are like a piece of pomegranate. ⁴Your neck is like the tower of David...⁵Your breasts are like fawns...⁶I will go my way to the mountain... (Song 4:1-6)

1. The King spoke to her in agricultural language that was familiar in her day. The Scripture gives insight into the meaning of the symbols.
2. In interpreting this passage spiritually, we see the Lord affirming eight “budding virtues” in the Bride’s life. Each godly virtue starts out in “seed form” as a sincere desire to obey.

We are going to look at the whole chapter tonight, so I am going to skip a few points and hover around a few. We have additional material normally with every session; for this one we have sixteen pages of additional material that can be found at mikebickle.org. The reason I give you that is because I do not want to cover it in the sessions here. For those who are really eager and want to break this down a little bit more, I want to give you something to look at if you want it.

In the last session that covered Song of Solomon 3, the Bride was being disciplined because she had drawn back from a place of obedience. Now the reason she drew back was because of fear. The point we made over and over is that spiritual immaturity is not the same thing as rebellion. The Lord loves us and actually enjoys us in our immaturity, while He disciplines us because there is commitment and zeal in His heart for the relationship, not because He is angry. It is very opposite! He disciplines us because He has delight in, is committed to, and is interested in the relationship.

The discipline happened in Song of Solomon 3, and now we are in Song of Solomon 4. In the natural interpretation, King Solomon is highlighting eight different characteristics of the Shulamite maiden who would become the Bride. I call her the maiden sometimes and the Bride sometimes; I just use those interchangeably. King Solomon in the natural interpretation is highlighting eight features of her physical beauty.

In the spiritual interpretation, those are symbolic of spiritual characteristics. This is where I have a lot of material in the additional notes on the website that I do not want to go into tonight. Here’s how we understand the spiritual application of these. Number one, the Bible interprets the Bible. Number two, some of the features are just plain and simple agricultural terms and we can guess what they mean. So we cannot be 100 percent sure, but I think that you can guess in a fairly accurate way as to what is being said spiritually. As long as it is a biblical principle that is established in the New Testament, it is not a problem if you get it a little wrong, like if you get the teeth and the neck mixed up. It does not really matter as long as it leads you to obey the Lord in all of the areas of your life.

So in this season of discipline the King is describing her beauty, even while her obedience is immature. That is the key point. He sees her sincere desire. In the spiritual interpretation, remember she has not yet fully said yes. Not fully, but she is wrestling; she wants to obey. The Lord says to her, “You are beautiful to Me even in the process of rising up and facing your fears to obey Me.”

The Lord is affirming what I call budding virtues. These eight physical virtues in Song of Solomon’s natural love song—eight spiritual virtues in the spiritual interpretation—these virtues were not mature yet; they were budding. The Lord calls them forth, and He affirms her even though they are just beginning. She does not actually become mature for the next couple chapters.

- B. In Song 4:1-5, we see the cherishing heart of Jesus our Bridegroom King. Jesus washes and cherishes His Church. God’s cherishing heart for His people is one of the prominent spiritual themes in the Song. The Lord’s affirmation in our life breaks the power of accusation.

²⁶...that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word, ²⁷that He might present her to Himself a glorious church...²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. (Eph. 5:26-29)

*In Song of Solomon 4:1-5, we see the cherishing heart of Jesus. We see His cherishing heart. I love that phrase, **His cherishing heart**. I find it in Ephesians 5:29 where it talks about Jesus, that He cherishes the Church. He nourishes and cherishes; He washes the Church. Beloved, the way He washes the Church—you can read that passage more on your own—He washes us by the Word of God. What part of the Word? The part of the Word of God that reveals how much He cherishes us. That is why I like to talk about the Bridegroom God and our identity as the cherished Bride. We feel His tender affirmation over us, even in our immaturity, as we are growing and maturing. Now God’s cherishing heart is one of the prominent themes of this eight-chapter love song called the Song of Solomon.*

- C. The Lord transforms His people by cherishing them. He removes the stain of shame from our heart. One way that He cherishes His people is by affirming the budding virtues in their lives.

The Lord transforms His people. He washes us by cherishing us. That is not the only way, but I believe that is the primary way. The reason this is so important is because many believers do not have any paradigm of or perspective that He is cherishing them. When they look up, they are thinking, “Oh no, am I in big trouble now? You know what? This is not going to work. I might as well just dial down trying to be obedient and just acclimate to a carnal lifestyle because it is never going to work for me anyway.”

Many people give up the vision of going hard and wholehearted for God because they think it is just not going to work so why try? They do not know that the Lord is actually cherishing every step, every movement of their heart. He is saying, “Oh my beloved, look at that! You are coming forth!” He affirms it, and this love song really highlights that in the spiritual interpretation.

He removes the stain of shame from our heart. There is shame that happens when we sin because of our own fallenness. He wants to wash that away by saying, “Do you know how sufficient My blood is, and do you know how intense My heart is for you? Do you understand that? There is no need for you to put yourself on probation for a few months to prove that you love Me.” It is the revelation of His love that removes the stain of shame away from our heart.

- D. Jesus corrects, rebukes, and calls us to greater zeal and repentance with tender love (Rev. 3:19) as He invites us to deeper fellowship (Rev. 3:20) and partnership with Him (Rev. 3:21). This is also the spirit in which His people are to correct, rebuke, and call others to repentance.

¹⁹As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent...²⁰I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him...²¹To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne... (Rev. 3:19-21)

Now I believe one of the most classic passages on God's discipline and the way Jesus motivates is Revelation 3. Here we find the Laodicean church that is compromising and spiritually passive. In verse 19, He tells them, "I want you to repent," and He says, "But as many as I love I rebuke." He is rebuking them. He is chastening them. That means disciplining them. He is saying, "I want you more zealous, I want you on fire for Me, and I want you to repent."

Now when someone rebukes you, disciplines you, tells you to get zealous, and tells you to repent, in the human sense you say, "Oh no, I am in big trouble!"

But Jesus goes on in verse 20-21 to say, "Let Me tell you why I want this. I want to have dinner with you. I want to share a meal with you. I want you to come closer to Me. I am beckoning you to repent because it is My desire to fellowship deeply with you and to partner with you in a deeper way."

He invites us to deeper partnership and deeper fellowship with Himself. So deeper fellowship is what He is calling us to, and that is the way He is always motivating us, though that is not how many of us feel—motivated. We feel like He is rebuking us because we are bad. The truth is He is rebuking us because He wants deeper fellowship, and He wants to have dinner with us. He wants to open His heart to us because He likes us so much.

- E. The Laodicean church was self-satisfied, spiritually passive, and proud. They had taken their relationship with Jesus for granted. Yet Jesus pursued them, knocking on the door and lifting His voice to beckon them to return by offering to have dinner and to share His resources with them.
- F. The devil assaults us with accusation to influence us to give up in despair (Rev. 12:10). He wants us to feel like hopeless hypocrites, knowing that accusation and the fear of being rejected by God will hinder our motivation to love. Being preoccupied with condemnation, failure, and shame hinders us from walking with the Lord effectively.

¹⁰...for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. (Rev. 12:10)

The Devil assaults us with accusation. That is his age-old strategy. He has done it for thousands of years. He assaults us with accusation; he wants us to give up in despair. I hear well-meaning believers all the time who say that it is not worth it. They want to give up in despair because they feel accused. The Bible calls him the accuser. He is unrelenting, he never stops, and he will even use your own thought processes to sting your heart and to strike you. He wants you to feel like a hopeless hypocrite because he knows if you feel accused, you will not be motivated to love. If you feel accused, you will lose your motivation because people who are preoccupied with condemnation and shame find it hinders their ability to walk after God. The accuser wants you preoccupied with condemnation and failure. He wants that to be the main issue on your mind, not how Jesus feels about you and how He is beckoning you to come closer.

- G. The Lord makes His people feel beautiful and loved in the grace of God, even while they are growing. When we feel cherished, we become confident in our love for Jesus.

- H. The whole truth about our life includes so much more than what we have done wrong. Our obedience *begins* when we sincerely set our heart to obey Him, not just *after* we gain full victory in an area of our life. We can confidently feel His pleasure in each step of the growth process. Jesus does not define our life by our struggles. He sees more than our outward actions. He defines us by what we set our heart on and by our longing to love Him.

The fact is, the whole truth about your life is so much more than what you have done wrong. The whole truth about you is not just what you have done wrong. It is also how you are seeking to do right. That is the truth about you too, not just how much you came up short, but also how sincere you are. You seriously wanted to obey Him in that area and to follow through with love.

Beloved, the good news is our obedience begins when we sincerely set our heart. Our obedience does not begin only when it is fully mature. It actually begins when the seed is there. The plant begins when the seed goes in the ground, not when the fruit is full and comes to fullness. The plant actually begins when the seed is in the ground.

- I. The Lord relates to us on the basis of grace. This includes relating to us according to what we long to be, not according to what we fail to do. He sees our heart more clearly than we see it.

⁵...judge nothing...until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.
(1 Cor. 4:5)

Part of the message of grace is that Jesus relates to us according to what we long to be. What do you long to be? I mean when you get quiet, what do you really want to be? I am not asking you what you want to do in your ministry. I am asking what do you long to be?

“Oh, I want to be faithful to the Lord. I want my heart to be fully His. I want to love purity. I do not right now, not completely, but I want to, I really want to. I want to love the Word. I do not love the Word right now, but I want to. I want to be close to Him.”

Beloved, I have good news for you! Part of the grace message is that He relates to us according to what we long to do, to be not just what we fail to do. This is a whole different picture of God, a whole different paradigm of God. He does not only relate to us according to what we fail to do.

One of my favorite verses on this theme is right here, 1 Corinthians 4:5. Paul gives them the shock of their life. It shocked them. He says to hold off on judging. He is talking in 1 Corinthians 4:5 about judging themselves actually, and even about judging themselves he said to hold off until the Lord comes. He says that two things are going to happen. One is that He is going to bring to light the bad stuff. He is going to bring to light bad stuff that is not repented of or bad stuff in the lives of unbelievers when they stand before Him, as they will be judged on the things they did.

And then Paul says that He is also going to reveal the counsels of the heart. You could say, the motives of the heart. You could put another word, probably it is even better, the intention of the heart. The intention of what you are trying to do. The intention is probably better than motives; that is a good thing.

Then here is the shock of their life—when God reveals the intentions of the heart, everyone's praise will come from God. I can imagine them saying, praise? Don't you mean our rebuke will come from God? When all the secrets of our heart come out, won't we be in the biggest trouble imaginable? Paul says that actually when all the secrets come out, the secret of how you are longing to obey Him will come out, and He will praise you. The

word **praise** there—the idea is He will give you affirmation. He will tell you how He feels about the way that you carried your heart.

- J. He sees the *seeds* of character in us and *calls forth things* that do not yet exist in fullness as though they did. He sees the fullness of our love even when it is in seed form as a budding virtue.

¹⁷**God, who...calls those things which do not exist as though they did... (Rom. 4:17)**

He sees the seeds of character in us before the fullness of the fruit. My point is, He does not enjoy the relationship only once we are mature, He actually enjoys us each stage of the way when we are sincerely seeking to follow Him. We are sincere, though we are coming up short. He calls forth things that do not yet exist in their fullness.

- K. While Israel was being attacked by a mighty Midianite army, Gideon hid in the winepress in fear (Judg. 6:11-12). An angel appeared to him and called him *a mighty man of valor*. The Lord saw in Gideon what he could not see in himself—seeds of faith and courage that he was not yet operating in. The Lord named Gideon according to what he would become in the future, and he went on to become one of Israel’s great military leaders.

¹²**And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, “The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!” (Judg. 6:12)**

I love the illustration of Gideon. You can read the story of Gideon in Judges 6. The Midianite army was attacking the nation of Israel, and Gideon was hiding in fear. They were out-numbered by this fierce enemy army, Gideon is hiding, and the angel appears and says, “O mighty man of valor!”

Gideon looks right, he looks left, and he says, “Who me?”

The angel says, “Yes, you, mighty man of valor.”

“I am hiding right now.” The Lord saw in Gideon what Gideon could not see in himself. The Lord saw seeds of courage in a man who was not operating in courage yet. God named him according to what he would become, and he did become one of the great military leaders of Israel, though at that time his resume was bad, and he was trembling in fear hiding.

The angel visits and says, “Mighty man of valor! Mighty woman of God!”

We say, “Are you kidding? I am stuck on this... or I am stuck on that.... I am filled with fear. I am consumed with myself. I have tons of shame.”

“Mighty woman of God, arise! O lover of God, you love Me with all of your heart.”

“I do?”

“Well, your all is small, but it is still your all right now.

You say, “Like, really? Well, if I thought He was talking to me that way, I would run to Him. I would not run from Him.”

- L. Jesus called Peter a *rock* or one who was reliable and stable (Mt. 16:18). He knew Peter would one day deny Him, but He also saw the seeds of stability in Peter and so named him *the rock*.

Jesus called Peter “the rock” or “the one who is reliable and stable.” The name “rock” carried the idea that you are the reliable one; you are the stable one. He knew Peter would deny Him to a little servant girl, but He said, “You are the rock.”

When Peter denied Jesus, he was thinking, “I am not the rock.”

He said, “Yes, you are. Yes, you really are.”

“Well, how could you say I am the rock? I denied You.”

“Because I see the seeds of what is in your heart. You are going to be okay.”

Peter stumbled again in a major way some years down the road as an anointed apostle. He fell into hypocrisy for a short season, and Paul rebuked him. I tell you, he was still the rock. He was still the stable one from God’s point of view. Jesus named him that with full knowledge.

M. We see the Lord’s “editing process” in Abraham’s life, saying that he never wavered in his faith.

²⁰He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief... (Rom. 4:20)

I love God’s editing process. He looked at Abraham, in Romans 4, and says that Abraham did not waver. Well, when I read the Word of God, it looked like Abraham wavered a couple of big times. I mean some of the things Abraham did, in my home we call that wavering. I think, “He did not waver? Paul, did you know the story of Abraham? I mean, did you skip that in your Hebrew class?”

“No, I did not, but God saw more than wavering. He saw a man who pressed in, who constantly came back and took hold of the truth. The final summary is that he did not waver.”

Whoa, if that is how You do it, if that is how You look at my life, then hey I like this! I can do this. This is not just validating a life of compromise. Those are not the examples I am giving. These men whom God called this went on to press into the Lord. This is a truth that enables us not to quit in despair in the early days or in the later days.

N. David’s failures are recorded in the Scripture. Yet God’s testimony of his life was that David did *all* of God’s will and fulfilled God’s purpose (Acts 13:22, 36).

²²He raised up David...concerning whom He testified and said, “I have found David...a man after My heart, who will do all My will...” (Acts 13:22; NAS)

David’s failures are recorded. There are so many of his sins recorded. My guess is that David has more individual sins cataloged and described in the Bible than anyone else. I have never counted them all, so I do not know for sure, but at a quick read I think he probably had more individual sins than any other one person that God had cataloged and described in the Bible. Yet at the end of David’s life, here it is in Acts 13—this is a thousand years after David died, and Paul the apostle is talking about David. God’s testimony a thousand years later was—David did all the will of God. David did **all** the will of God.

Here he goes again! “Paul, didn’t you know the life of David or the life of Abraham?”

Paul might say, “That is not the issue. I knew the life of David and the life of Abraham. I just knew the heart of God and you do not. David did all the will of God.”

I say, “He did? Wow, well, if he did, this works for me then. I mean it is a thousand years later, and God said that he did the **whole** thing, that he served God’s purpose in his generation.”

II. WE ARE BEAUTIFUL TO GOD EVEN IN OUR WEAKNESS (4:1-5)

- A. After the Bride's season of discipline (3:1-2), the King declared that she was beautiful to Him. The Holy Spirit gives a trumpet blast to our heart, "Behold! You are beautiful, and I love you."

¹**Behold, you are fair [beautiful], My love! Behold, you are fair! (Song 4:1)**

Beloved, we are beautiful to God, even in our weakness. I am talking about sincere believers. Some people will take this to validate living in immorality. They will go live in this, they will go live in that, and they will say, "Hey, He likes me. What difference does it make?"

That is not the context I am talking about. I am talking about those in whom He sees the cry of the heart of His people to get free of those things, to resist them, to come through them, to walk in full obedience. As they are stumbling along the way, He enjoys the relationship. He does not enjoy the compromise, but He is saying, "I see your cry. I see the cry of your heart. I see the longing for full obedience. I see that virtue in you."

He calls her beautiful. Song of Solomon 4 is right after the discipline season of Song of Solomon 3, and He says, "You are beautiful."

You might think, "Wait, He should not be calling her beautiful yet. Maybe in Song of Solomon 8, but not in Song of Solomon 4. That is too early to call her beautiful." Well, He called her beautiful back in Song of Solomon 1, and in each chapter she gets more and more mature and gets in deeper relationship with the Lord as the storyline unfolds throughout the book.

- B. The King highlighted eight character traits that the Lord wants to develop in His Bride (4:1-5).
1. **Dove's eyes:** Eyes of single-minded devotion and loyalty to the Lord
 2. **Hair like goats:** Dedication to God (hair may point to submission or to a Nazirite dedication)
 3. **Teeth like shorn sheep:** Chewing the meat of the Word
 4. **Lips like scarlet:** Godly speech that calls forth God's redemptive (scarlet) purposes in others
 5. **Kisses of the mouth:** Intimacy with God in receiving the kisses of His Word
 6. **Veiled temples** (cheeks/countenance): Emotions empowered by the grace of God
 7. **Neck like David's tower:** Setting our will to obey God without any stiff-necked resistance
 8. **Breasts like fawns:** The power to edify and nurture others with the milk of the Word

In the spiritual interpretation, the King, of course, is the Lord Himself. He highlights eight traits. Again, they are physical traits to King Solomon in the natural love song, which is a valid way to read this book, but they are spiritual traits in the spiritual interpretation. Every one of these traits starts off as a budding virtue, as just a little bit, as a seed, and they grow forth. That He calls them forth as beautiful is the point I am making.

He says to her that she is beautiful, and He gives eight examples of her beauty. Again, she is not mature yet in these; she is not beautiful yet. He says, "Oh yes, she is! I see the cry of her heart." In the additional notes you can look more at those eight and see more of the interpretation. Again, there is liberty to interpret some of these characteristics different ways. That is not the point. As long as they validate New Testament principles, you are on safe ground.

III. THE BRIDE'S FEARLESS COMMITMENT (4:6-8)

- A. The Bride responded to the affirmations of her beauty (4:1-5) by setting her heart to obey the King by going to the mountain with Him (4:6). She walked this out fully in Song 5-8.

⁶Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense. (Song 4:6)

Look what she says in Song 4:6, “Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain.” What? “I will go to the mountain.” Remember, in Song of Solomon 2, He said for her to go to the mountain. She had said, “No, I am too afraid.”

In Song of Solomon 3 she said, “I am being disciplined, I will go the city. How about that? I will go to the city, but not the mountain.”

He said, “No, I want you at the mountain.”

Then she is so touched by the affirmations of Song of Solomon 4:1-5 that we just breezed through. She says, “I will go to the mountain, if this is how You see me. I know I can do this with You. I will go the mountain. I will challenge the comfort zone. I will meet You in the place of full obedience. I am not going to draw back anymore.” What a statement! “I will go to the mountain.”

The Bride responded to the affirmations of her beauty in those eight different, budding ways. She says, “I am going to obey. I am going to do it.” The rest of the book, Song of Solomon 5-8, is walking out that full obedience—going to the mountain—which means moving out of the comfort zone, fully obeying God with no more negotiating at all. “I will do the hard and the difficult. I will do that which is mundane and out of the way for which I get no affirmation from anybody. I will obey You in secret, I will serve in secret in the little out-of-the-way place even.”

A lot of folks will serve as long as there is audience, but will they serve when no one is looking? I think of our folks in just our little world who do the shuttles and all those other things. I see them sometimes in that parking lot at five below zero, and they are serving week after week; there is a whole core of them. I ask, “Why are you doing this?”

I have asked a few of them. “Because we want to serve.” I think that is pretty intense. Now again there are a thousand examples in everyday life, at the marketplace and in the neighborhood that are not related to church ministries; I am just talking about the out-of-the-way places.

1. The King called her to rise up to go to the mountains with Him in Song 2:10. She refused Him, telling Him to *turn* and go to the mountains without her (2:17).

⁸He comes leaping upon the mountains...¹⁰My Beloved spoke...“Rise up...and come away...”

¹⁷Until the day breaks...turn, my Beloved, and be like a gazelle...upon the mountains...

(Song 2:8-17)

In quick review, number one: remember back in Song of Solomon 2—I have already said it, but I will say it again—back in Song of Solomon 2, to get a reminder of how significant this is when she finally says, “I will go to the mountain.” Those who are new with us tonight, you have got to know the storyline because back in Song of Solomon 2:8, He was leaping on the mountains, and that was new to her. She had never seen Him leap on mountains.

In Song 2:10, He said to rise up and come on the mountains with Him. In verse 17, she answered, “No. You turn, and You go to the mountains. I am staying under the apple tree, in the garden, at the table. No, I am staying here, You go there.” She is saying no to Him when she says, “Turn.”

2. In Song 3:2, she agreed to arise to go to the city, but not the mountains. Here, she commits to obey by going to the mountains (4:6).

²***“I will rise now...and go about the city...I will seek the One I love.” (Song 3:2)***

This refusal leads to her being under a season of discipline. She responds in Song 3:2, “Okay, I will go to the city.”

He said, “Well, I did not say the city, I said the mountain. The city, that is the beginning. You are taking the right steps.”

Here Song of Solomon 4:6, the verse we are looking at, she says, “I will go all the way to the mountains.”

Now let’s look at verse 6 again. She says, “I will go my way.” Notice the phrase, my way. We are going to look at that in a minute. “I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh.” Mountain of myrrh is the key phrase. Then “I will go to the hill of frankincense” or the hill of incense, and that speaks of the prayer ministry actually. We will get there in a moment.

- B. **Myrrh:** This is a costly burial spice that has a great fragrance and speaks of Jesus’ death. He ascended the mountain of myrrh when He went to the cross. We are also to take up our cross to deny ourselves as we ascend the mountain of myrrh to obey God’s will (Lk. 9:26).

“I will go to the mountain of myrrh.” We know that one of the ways myrrh is used, throughout the book and in the Old Testament, is as a costly burial spice that has great fragrance. It smells beautiful, so they use it as a burial spice at funerals. It speaks of Jesus’ death, that He embraced that myrrh in the death that He died for us. We talked about that in a few other sessions, so I will not spend time on that right now.

- C. **Frankincense:** Incense throughout Scripture speaks of prayer (Ps. 141:2; Rev. 5:8). We ascend the hill of frankincense or engage in prayer to receive strength to ascend the mountain of myrrh.

The frankincense is incense. Just think of incense. Make it a little simpler word. Throughout the Bible it speaks of prayer. It is the incense that arises in heaven; the incense is the prayers of the saints.

So we ascend the hill of frankincense. In other words, by engaging in prayer we appropriate the strength to ascend the mountain of myrrh. We are never going to ascend the mountain of myrrh, we are not going to be able to sustain those big challenges, the mountain of myrrh where death to self is involved and there is risk, we are never going to be able to ascend the mountain of myrrh without the hill of frankincense, without the prayer engagement, without that interaction with the Lord.

- D. **I will go:** The maiden makes a firm decision to leave the comfort zone to go up the mountain or to walk in all God’s will without fear. How beautiful to Jesus are the words, “I will go...!”

She says, “I will go to the mountain. I will go.” How beautiful to Jesus are those words! Yes, I will do it. I will do it. I am not talking about going on an out-of-the-way ministry trip that is really strange or really different for three or four weeks. I am not talking about something like that. When I am talking about going to the mountain, I am talking about with the way we carry our heart in our daily lifestyle, not just a three-week thing or a weekend thing.

I am talking about something in which we say to the Lord, “I am going to obey You. I am going to bring myself into a deeper alignment with Your heart. It might cost me my reputation to be true. It may cost me money. It may be risky. It may not go well. I may look bad, or I might get criticized. It may be hard and out of the way of affirmation, but I am going to do it. I am going to do it. I am going to be faithful to the will of God in my life.” That is what this is talking about.

- E. **My way:** Each of us has a “tailor-made path” that the Lord has chosen specifically for each of us to walk. “Our way” to the mountain involves difficulties unique to God’s calling on each life.

She says, “I will go my way.” Every one of us has a tailored-made path that the Lord has chosen for each of us to walk in. Your way to the mountain of myrrh is different than my way. Even though we might engage in the same calling or we might engage in the same activity, how I do it is different from how you do it.

In conversations I get asked by young people, “How many hours do you do this and how many hours do you do that? How much money do you give to this? How much do you give there?”

I answer, “I do not want to tell you those things, not because I am trying to be humble—because I like my answers. I mean I feel at peace with the answers, I actually like them—I am not telling you the details to be hidden or to be humble. That is not even the point. The point is that I do not want you to try to go my way to the mountain. I want you to find your way.”

Because my way, which is forty years ahead of your way, may not work for you at all. My way may end up throwing you to a tailspin. When I was younger, I told everybody everything. Then, as I got older, I saw more and more young people trying to do exactly what I was doing at that time. They do not have my calling. They do not have the same history. They do not have the same assignment. They do not have the same personality. They do not have the same life circumstances, and so trying to do the same thing exactly does not work.

You go your way to the mountain. There is a way you will carry your heart. You and the Lord will find your way together. It is a very important principle. We can be inspired by other people’s dedication, but the practical application will just not work exactly because even your own way will change over the months and years. The Lord will adjust it as you go.

- F. The King called the Bride to come with Him from the mountains of Lebanon (4:8). With her new commitment to go to the mountain (4:6), she now carried her heart as a loyal Bride. Over the next four chapters in the Song, we see the development and expression of her maturity in love.

⁸Come with Me from Lebanon, My spouse [Bride], with Me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amana...from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards. (Song 4:8)

So she says, “I am going on my way. Let’s do it.”

“Okay,” He says in verse 8, “I will take you up on it then. Come with Me from Lebanon. Come with Me, My Bride. Look from the top of the mountain of Amana.” That is a mountain range in Lebanon. On the additional notes I have a lot more on this. So the Lord says in effect, “Okay, you said you will go to the mountain in verse 6. Here we are in verse 8—come, let’s do it.”

Just being humorous now, it’s as if she says, “Like now?”

“Yes, let’s do it.”

She thinks, “Ah, hum, okay, let’s do it. I will live out that new dedication.” Again, it is not just an eccentric kind of outward, one-time event. It is a whole way of carrying your life with God where you are really going to obey Him with your time, your money, your passions, your words, and what you do with your energy. I will go to the mountain.

Now notice this, He says that you are looking from the top of the mountains with Him. You are going to have that bigger perspective from the place where He is, but there are lions and leopards up here. There are battles. There are devouring animals up here that will come against you up there. You have to know that.

- G. **Lions and leopards:** She must war against lions and leopards—animals that devour humans. Satan is a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8). This verse speaks of spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-12).

Lions and leopards are animals that devour; this speaks of spiritual warfare. A higher dedication always brings a greater demonic resistance, always. One preacher said, “New levels, new devils.” When there is a new level of dedication, a new level of believing God, there will be a new level of demonic attack against you. There are lions and leopards up on those mountains—lions and tigers and bears, oh my!

IV. THE RAVISHED HEART OF GOD (4:9-5:1)

- A. God’s heart is ravished for His people (4:9). This verse touches one of the most significant truths in the Song—that God has deep desire for His people. A working definition of the ravished heart of God: *being filled with emotions of joy or delight because of one who is unusually attractive* (Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary).

⁹***You have ravished My heart, My sister, My spouse; You have ravished My heart. (Song 4:9)***

¹⁰***I am my Beloved’s, and His desire is toward me. (Song 7:10)***

He now tells her, “You have ravished My heart. This is how I feel about what you are doing. You are ravishing My heart.” Again, she has not matured yet. She has only said yes. She has not actually gone to the mountain. She just said that she would go. He says, “My heart is so touched by your resolve to obey Me with your money, your time, your energy, your reputation, that you will serve in difficult places with no affirmation, that are hard, that do not have any kind of those kudos that are so nice to get from other people.” He says, “You have ravished My heart. That response moves Me.”

Beloved, this is not just a theoretical poem! His heart is ravished by you in your weakness. This is not Song of Solomon chapters 5-8 where the maturity is all come to pass. She still is in the early stages, but she is resolved.

This verse touches one of the most significant themes in the whole Song, if not the most significant theme. Certainly one of the most, if not the most. It is the theme of God’s deep desire for His people. He loves the relationship. He loves the relationship!

I want to give you a working definition of the ravished heart of God. You could have a half-dozen good definitions. God’s heart is filled with the emotion of delight because of one who is unusually attractive. That is a definition made from Webster’s dictionary. To be ravished is to be filled with delight because of the unusual beauty. The Lord says, “I have delight in the relationship. I see your weakness. But remember verse 1—you are beautiful.” Then He praises eight virtues that she has not yet matured in because He is calling forth the seeds of her future full maturity.

Beloved, let this touch your heart a little bit, even as it touches my heart a little bit. A little bit of this will go a long way and change us on the inside. This is what we want to lock into—this kind of reality—that He feels this way about us.

- B. *God loves us in the same way that God loves God.* The measure of the Father’s affection and love for Jesus is the measure of Jesus’ love for us. This is the ultimate statement of our worth.

⁹***As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you. (Jn. 15:9)***

Here is the one verse that I probably quote the most in messages. Jesus said—and I will paraphrase—“In the same way the Father loved Me, in the same intensity, that is how I love you.” That is just unthinkable to me what the fullness of that could mean! It is so beyond what I can grasp. Jesus said, “In the same intensity the Father

loves Me, that is how I feel about you.” An hour or two later He told them, “And everyone of you will deny Me tonight.” In other words, “So My feeling for you is not based on some illusion of your maturity, as you will all deny Me tonight. I want you to know that I love you like the Father loves Me, and I will not change that while you are growing in maturing and discovering your own weakness, I will not draw back from how I feel about you.”

V. THE CHRISTIAN PARADIGM OF GOD

- A. The Christian paradigm of God is founded on the revelation of God’s tenderness and deep emotions of love. The idea of God as a tender Father and a passionate Bridegroom was a new thought in religious history in Jesus’ generation (see William Barclay’s commentary on Heb. 4).

The Christian paradigm of God—I got some of this from William Barclay’s commentary, not all of it, but a lot of it. I changed a few little ideas here or there. You can check it out yourself if you want. I just slipped in a few ideas from him. I read this many years ago. It was brilliant, and it so deeply touched me.

The Christian paradigm—paradigm means perspective or a group of ideas about something—the Christian point of view or paradigm of God is founded on the revelation of God’s tenderness, of His deep emotions towards us.

Now here is the idea that Barclay hit on. He said that the idea of God being a tender Father and a passionate Bridegroom was a new thought in religious history 2,000 years ago. This was a new idea, even though they had faint references to it in the Hebrew prophets. It was not something that took root in the Jewish mindset at all in any kind of prominent way.

- B. In Jewish tradition, what was most emphasized about God was that He is holy in the sense of being *totally separate from sin*. They did not think of a holy God as sharing human experience. They thought of God as incapable of sharing it simply because He is God. In other words, they saw God as being “above” sharing the human dilemma by the very definition of being God.

*In the Jewish tradition—we are going back thousands of years, 4,000 years of Jewish tradition. Counting from Abraham it has been 4,000 years that the Jewish nation and people have existed—in the Jewish tradition, what was emphasized most about God was that He is holy. The idea He is totally separated from sin was the idea that He is holy. He has no impurity. In thinking of God as holy they did not think of God as sharing human experience. Instead they thought of Him as incapable of sharing human experience **because** He is holy. So **because** He is God, He cannot really share our experience. He can observe it, but He cannot share it with deep feelings.*

- C. The Stoics were Greek philosophers who believed that God had *no emotions* for humans. They saw the main attribute of God as being *apatheia*, by which they meant God’s inability to feel anything. They reasoned that if God felt sorrow or joy, then He would be vulnerable to being hurt and thus influenced or even controlled by what He felt. They believed that anyone who affected God’s emotions would be greater than God for that moment.

*The Greek philosophers, the Stoics, believed God had no emotion, no emotion at all. The main attribute they saw of God was **apathea**. It is the Greek word **apathea** from which we get the word **apathy**. In other words, in their view of God, the Stoics highlighted God’s inability to feel. They reasoned that if God was really happy or really sad, either one, positive or negative, if He was really happy or really sad or if He even had that ability, then He would be vulnerable to being hurt. If He could be happy, then He could be sad. If He could be sad, then He could be hurt, and if He could be hurt, then He could be influenced by the one that hurt Him. If He could be influenced, then He might be controlled by them. They said it was impossible that God could ever have emotions*

because if He had emotions and was influenced by someone, then the person who influenced God for that one moment would be greater than God. So the Stoics said God could have no emotions. That was one Greek philosophy.

- D. The Epicureans, other Greek philosophers, believed that the gods lived *detached*, in eternal bliss. They lived in the intermediate world and were not aware of events occurring on earth.

The Epicureans, another group of Greek philosophers, believed that the gods lived in a detached, eternal bliss. It was not that they did not have emotions, but that they were in the nether world, and were not even aware of the events on the earth. So all the pantheon of Greek gods was uninvolved; they were detached completely.

- E. The Jews understood God as a holy God *separated from humans*; the Stoics had an *emotionless god* and the Epicureans a *detached god*. Into this context of religious thought came the new idea of the Christian God who subjected Himself to human emotion and suffering (Heb. 4:15; 5:8).

The Jews had a God who was separated from human feeling and human experience. The Stoics had emotionless gods, and the Epicureans had detached gods. It is into this context that Jesus came and said, “God is My Father. He is your Father.” Father? Technically that was in the Old Testament, but it was not a part of the Jewish mindset. “He is a tender Father. I am God, and I have become one of you, a human. I feel what you feel.”

For the Jews of His time, it was like, “What is this?” It was a mind-boggling new idea in religious thought in human history.

VI. JESUS’ LOVE FOR HIS BRIDE (4:9-10)

- A. Jesus has great love for His Bride (4:9-10c). The maiden’s twofold identity as His sister and spouse/bride is emphasized seven times (4:8, 9, 10, 11, 12; 5:1, 2). Being called Jesus’ spouse or Bride speaks of His desire for deep partnership with His people. And being Jesus’ sister speaks of His humanity and His partnership with His people (Mt. 12:48-50; Heb. 2:11, 17).

⁹You have ravished My heart, My sister, My spouse [Bride]; You have ravished My heart with one look of your eyes, with one link of your necklace. ¹⁰How fair [beautiful] is your love, My sister, My spouse! How much better than wine is your love... (Song 4:9-10)

How radical the message of Jesus of Nazareth calling us to His Father and as a Bridegroom King calling us to be His eternal companion forever starting the day we are born again. The full implications of this are just unimaginable to our limited thinking right now. We are going to be blown away as we see this unfold when we stand before Him.

Beloved, I do not want to wait until then. I want to get as much understanding of this as I can now. I have not gone that far. I have gone further than where I used to be, but I want to go further in this. This is absolutely worth everything, everything, absolutely everything for the pursuit of this. I know that you believe it or you would not be here tonight.

Let’s look at His love for His Bride in Song 4:9-10, particularly in verse 9. “You have ravished My heart.” He says it again, “You have ravished My heart.” That is, I have this deep delight because of your unusual beauty to Me. Only God could look at people like you and me and the human race this way. He really feels this way. He says, “With one look of your eye, with one link of your necklace I am ravished—one look of your eye, one link of your necklace.”

Then He goes on and makes this dynamic statement, “How beautiful is your love.” Then He goes on and repeats the phrase that the Bride said. He says, “How much better is your love than wine.”

Remember back in Song of Solomon 1, she said, “Your love is better than wine.”

He turns it around and says, “**Your** love is better than wine.” That is, **your** love is better to Me than everything in this world of all creation that can exhilarate the human heart. I want your love more than all the grandeur and splendor of the world. He turns the phrase around on her.

Beloved, it is not just that **His** love is better than anything this world can offer. He says to you that **your** love is better to Him than the splendor of anything that this world has, the most glorious things that He could get from this world. He wants you more than that. What a statement!

- B. **With one look of your eyes:** Jesus’ heart moves with each “look of devotion and love” that we give Him. The very movement of our heart to love Him touches Him. Our obedience begins when we set our heart to obey Him, not just after we gain the full victory in a specific area.

Jesus’ heart is moved by each look of devotion or each look of love, however you want to say it. Each look of love and devotion, devotion and love that we give Him. The very movements of our heart touch Him.

You are in a difficult time. You are just quiet, and you are not in a prayer room, but you are driving in a car. You say, “Lord, I love You. I love You.”

The Lord says, “That ravishes Me! The look of your eye, the movement of your heart, it moves Me.”

“Lord, it is just that I am so fickle because I love You today, and then, in a few moments, I am depressed, and then I am questioning things, and then I do not believe what You said, and then I am thinking of compromising to get ahead in another way. Oh, but I do love You.”

He says, “Really, talk to Me. I love when you tell Me this.”

The devil comes along and says, “You hopeless hypocrite! Just be quiet, you hopeless hypocrite.”

When he does this, you say, “No, He is ravished by one look of my eye!” Every movement of our heart, the very look of devotion that is in sincerity, the whole thing is in the context of that which is in sincerity with Him. I am not talking about just singing at a worship service. I am talking about singing at a worship service or being quiet in a worship service with a heart that is saying in truth, “I love You. I am not as far along as I want to be, but I really want to go there.”

- C. **With one link of your necklace:** In Scripture, the neck can speak of the will that can be resistant (stiff-necked) or submissive. Spiritually, each link of her necklace may represent each individual response of obedience that we give the Lord. Each decision for love that we make moves Jesus’ heart. He remembers every movement of love that our heart makes towards Him.

In Scripture, the neck can often speak of the will, our freewill. The neck can be stiff-necked, or the neck can be submissive. There are a handful of illustrations where the neck means submission or the neck means rebellion. So it speaks of our freewill.

Here is the idea: spiritually every response—every link—every decision, He says of each, “It ravishes Me. It moves Me. Every link in that necklace, every act of your will when you recommit again and come up short, you recommit again and come up short, you recommit again,” He says, “every single link touches Me.” He remembers every movement of your heart towards Him.

- D. **How fair is your love:** The Lord considers our love beautiful in His sight; therefore our life is defined as successful and great. Our obedience, based in love, brings great delight to Jesus.

The Lord considers our love to be fair or beautiful. The words fair and beautiful are used interchangeably. He considers our love beautiful. He says, “How beautiful is your love to Me!” Beloved, imagine what this does on the inside of us as this touches us! A little bit of this will go a long way.

- E. **How much better than wine is your love:** The King turned around her earlier statement when she cried out “For Your love is better than wine” (1:2). The wine metaphor speaks of that which exhilarates the heart. Wine in the context of a marriage speaks of a drink of celebration.

VII. THE BRIDE’S LIFE IN THE SPIRIT (4:10-15)

- A. The King had great pleasure in her heart (4:10-11).

¹⁰How much better than wine is your love, and the scent of your perfumes than all spices! ¹¹Your lips, O My spouse, drip as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue; and the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon. (Song 4:10-11)

He describes her life in the spirit. Again, He says in verse 10, “How much better than wine is your love.” That is, I would rather have your love than all the splendor of the grandeur of creation; I would rather have your love. It is better than the wine of this world. He goes on now and breaks it down farther, “The scent of your perfumes is better than all spices. Your lips drip like honeycomb. The fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.” So He describes three different facets of her love.

- B. **The scent of your perfumes:** This can refer to her mind being filled with God’s Word. As the invisible fragrance of perfume expresses the inner quality of a plant, so our thoughts are the scent of our inner life. The “scent” of our perfumes speaks of our thoughts expressed to God in our prayers, meditation on the Word, and desire to obey (Ps. 141:2; Isa. 60:6; Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4).

He talks about “the scent of your perfumes.” This refers to her mind. That is, her mind that is in agreement with the Word is probably a better way to say it. The mind in agreement, filled with the Word, but also in agreement with the Word, because the fragrance of a flower is that invisible fragrance of perfume expressing the inner quality of that plant. It is your inward thinking; it is your thoughts that He says are fragrant to Him. Not all of our thoughts are, but He says that those thoughts that are in agreement with Me, they are fragrant to Me.

- C. **Your lips drip as the honeycomb:** This speaks of her words as being sweet like honey when spoken to God in worship and prayer (2:14) and when blessing and encouraging others.

He speaks of her words as being sweet like honey. When you are worshipping, He says that your face is beautiful and your words are sweet. Remember He said that back in Song of Solomon 2:14? And when you are encouraging one another or you are speaking words of blessing to a believer or an unbeliever anywhere, the Lord says that your words are like honey to Me—I am listening to you.

- D. **The fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon:** This refers to her deeds as fragrant before God. Garments speak of the Bride’s acts of obedience (Rev. 19:7-8).

He goes on to speak of the fragrance of her garments. We know that in the book of Revelation the garments are the acts of the saints; they are deeds. So He is talking about the way that she expresses her love, her thoughts, words, and deeds.

- E. The Bride's dedication to the King was described as a garden with a spring and fountain (4:12). The garden of a king was private, enclosed with a fence to keep animals from polluting it. A sealed up spring and fountain speak of an undefiled water supply, unpolluted by animals.

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

Song 4:12 is one of the most amazing poetic verses about dedication, the Bride's dedication to the King. He says, "Here is what you are like. You are like an enclosed garden to me, a sealed spring, a sealed fountain." Again you can read more on the additional notes. A king's garden was private. It was enclosed; it had a fence around it because an open garden or an open fountain or source of water could be polluted by animals. So it was sealed off, enclosed; they put a fence around it so only the king could enjoy it, and it would not be polluted at all by the animals.

He says, "Your heart is like an enclosed garden. You shut the door to defilement. Your heart to Me is like sealed springs that cannot be polluted by the wild animals, a spring that is guarded and kept for Me."

- F. A description of the Bride's fruitfulness (4:13-14): The Bride's life and ministry was described as an orchard filled with fruits, plants, trees, and spices (4:13-14). This speaks of her fruitful life.

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

- G. The Spirit's ministry in the Bride's life is described as a fountain, a well, and streams (4:15). These three sources of water can refer to the different ways we experience the Spirit in our lives.

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

The Spirit's ministry is now described in three different ways, as three different sources of water, describing three different ways we experience the Holy Spirit. Again I have a bit more about that on the additional notes.

VIII. THE BRIDE'S CRY TO EXPERIENCE AN INCREASE OF GOD'S PRESENCE (4:16)

- A. She now has enough confidence in God's goodness to offer this important two-fold prayer (4:16). She prayed for both the *north winds of adversity* and the *south winds of blessing* that the spices of grace might flow in her life. She knew that both played an important role in her life becoming a *fragrant garden*. Only God has the wisdom to know the right combination of the north and the south winds necessary in each season of our life.

¹⁶***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)***

In Song 4:16, she now has enough confidence in God's goodness. She says, "Okay, You love me that way. You love my thoughts. My words are like fragrance to You. My garments, my deeds are like perfume. O You love, You love so much about me!" So she prays the most important prayer in the book. She says, "Awake, O north wind, and come! O south wind, blow on my garden that its spices may flow out. Let my Beloved come to His garden and eat its pleasant fruits."

The north winds were the cold winds of adversity. So she is saying, "I am not afraid of trouble now. I am not afraid of the north winds because You love me and we are so connected. Awake, O north winds! I am not troubled."

She says, “Awake, O south winds! I want the blessing, the refreshing winds of the south.” She knew that both dimensions are needed. There are times we deny ourselves, when there are times that are sacrificial, that are difficult in our obedience; that is the time of the north winds. There are times where everything is alive and fun; those are times of the south winds. She knows both of them are important for fragrance to come out of the garden of her heart.

- B. **Let my Beloved come to His garden:** The garden of her heart became *His garden*. She now sees her life and ministry as *His garden* instead of *hers*. Jesus has an inheritance in the church (Eph. 1:18). This is the turning point in the Song. Song 1-4 is focused on us receiving *our inheritance* in God. Song 5-8 is focused on God receiving *His inheritance* in us.
- C. The Bride now lives under the King’s full ownership (5:1). Spiritually speaking, Jesus is now enjoying His inheritance as His people live under His ownership. Nine times He says “My” to depict His ownership of her life and ministry (three times in 5:1 and six in 5:2).

***¹I have come to My garden, My sister, My spouse; I have gathered My myrrh with My spice;
I have eaten My honeycomb with My honey; I have drunk My wine with My milk.
Eat, O friends! Drink, yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones! (Song 5:1)***

Notice what she says—you have to read it carefully. She says, “My garden is now Your garden.” For the first four chapters—we are at the end of Song of Solomon 4—it was “my garden.” The next four chapters, it is “Your garden.” I am Yours from now on, wholly Yours.

The first four chapters are focused on her inheritance in Christ. The second four chapters are Christ’s inheritance in her. Both of them are eternal, and both are important. Some believers only think about their inheritance in Christ, but beloved, He has an inheritance in you. It is not just that He wants fragrance in your garden for your life to be mature. He says, “I want your garden to be My garden.” This is the turning point of the book right here, Song of Solomon 4:16.

Next He will take her on to Song of Solomon 5 where she is going to experience the north winds and He is going to see if she means it. She says yes, but that is for next week. Amen, let’s stand.