

Longing for the Salvation of God's Elect

Song of Solomon 8:8-10; John 10:16

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Greg L. Price

Perhaps it is a question that you never considered before: What should be your attitude toward those whom God has elected from eternity but whom He has not yet effectually called to Himself? Should we care at all since it is only God that sovereignly elects and effectually calls?

We do not know all those whom God has chosen to save, but that should not hinder us from praying for God's elect and longing to see them brought to faith in Jesus Christ (beginning with our own children).

Such a perspective would transform our view of unbelievers—even those who are most vile and offensive (whether family members, friends, co-workers, or strangers)! Such a godly perspective would help control the words we speak and the life we live before unbelievers. You may be the very one God uses to prepare one of His elect to come in faith to Jesus.

It was this very hope within Paul that led him to declare the following: Read 2 Timothy 2:10. It was this very hope within Paul that brought forth the cry that we find in Romans 10:1. We who believe in Jesus evidence our thanksgiving to God for our own salvation by pleading with Him in love to draw His elect to Himself and by living before others as the very elect whom He will draw to Himself.

We are not only to pray for God's elect who have already believed in Jesus, but we are also to pray for God's elect who are yet to be drawn to Jesus by His irresistible grace. As you long for the salvation of God's elect and plead with Him to draw them to Jesus, you will become the Christian that the Lord delights to use to lead others to Christ. The faithful bride of Christ is found in our text today pleading for her elect little sister that has not yet come in faith to Christ. The main points are: (1) The Longing of the Bride (Song 8:8); (2) The Promise of Jesus (Song 8:9); (3) The Assurance of the Bride (Song 8:10).

I. The Longing of the Bride (Song 8:8).

A. In Song 8:6-7, the beloved bride of Jesus appealed to Him that He would reassure and remind her of His immeasurable love for her (Song 8:6); of the strength of His love for her (Song 8:6); of the jealousy of His love for her (Song 8:6); of the fervency of His love for her (Song 8:6); of the invincibility of His love for her (Song 8:7); and of the infinite value of His love for her (Song 8:7). Just as every bride longs to be reassured of her husband's love for her, so all Christians long for Jesus to continually reassure them of His love for them. And He reassures you through His means of grace (promises), communion with Him, supplying your needs, and in the kisses of Jesus through His saints.

B. Now the bride's attention is turned from reassurance of Christ's love for her to praying in love for His elect who have not yet come in faith to Christ. The bride longs to see the love she has received from Jesus shed abroad in the hearts of all His elect—even those not yet called.

1. The bride prays, "We (i.e. Jesus and the bride) have a little sister" (Song 8:8). Who is this little sister? She is not an actual sister in being yet, but is a little sister that has been foreordained to become a spiritual sister, but has not yet been effectually called. As the bride is the spiritual sister of Jesus in adoption (Song 4:9-10), so is the little sister who is foreordained to become a spiritual sister through faith in Christ.

2. This little sister is not yet married to Christ by faith. She is elect, but not yet called. She is yet young having no breasts and is not yet spoken for in being married to Jesus by faith (John 10:16).

a. Notice the contrast between the elect little sister that has not yet come to faith

and has no breasts (Song 8:8) and the elect bride that has come to faith and does have breasts to nourish her members through the appointed ordinances just as a mother breastfeeds her children (Song 8:10)—the elect pre-conversion and post-conversion.

b. A young girl that is not able to give birth to children or to nourish children upon the breast is certainly not physically ready for marriage. That is the very point being made here about this little sister. She is elect, but she is not yet effectually called to Christ by faith.

3. “What shall we do?” Should the little sister be hated and despised, or even treated with a nonchalant, indifferent heart because she is not yet called or ready to be joined to Jesus? Absolutely not! She should be lifted up in prayer to Jesus. She should be pitied. We should long for her to come to Christ. We should pray, speak, and live in such a way that we do not forget the elect of God. We should not be stumbling blocks in hindering the elect by our sin (especially our own children). She needs the gospel preached to her and the gospel lived before her.

a. Do you care about your words around unbelievers? Do you compromise the truth around unbelievers in order to fit in? Do you join in laughing with them at their filthy jokes, hoping they will like you and not think you are above them or holier than thou?

b. Jesus sat and ate with unbelievers, but His testimony for truth and righteousness did not change when around them. He spoke the truth in love. He had compassion upon them in helping and healing them. He showed the sinner mercy, but He did not approve of their sin. Why should the sinner desire to be a Christian if there is little or no difference between him and you?

4. Though this little sister represents all of God’s elect who have not yet been effectually called, she may also have a more particular historical application to the Jewish Church of the Old Testament praying for the incoming of the Gentile Church of the New Testament, and now for the Gentile Church of the New Testament praying for the re-grafting of Israel back into her own olive tree (Visible Church) and of the fullness of the Gentile nations being brought into Visible Church (Romans 11:25-26). Samuel Rutherford writes (from *Rutherford’s Letters*, p. 596):

Oh, what joy and what glory would I judge it, if my heaven should be suspended till I might have leave to run on foot to be a witness of that marriage-glory, and see Christ put on the glory of His last-married bride, and His last marriage-love on earth; when he shall enlarge His love-bed, and set it upon the top of the mountains, and take in the Elder Sister, the Jews, and the fullness of the Gentiles.

II. The Promise of Jesus (Song 8:9).

A. Jesus now responds to the plea of the bride. Jesus delights to hear the bride praying for her little sister (just as He delights to hear your prayers for the lost among whom are His elect). Our prayers should not be all about ourselves and our needs, but should extend to praying fervently with compassion for the needs of one another and for the salvation of our elect little sister. In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus taught us to pray, first, to exalt Him; second, to see His kingdom grow and Satan’s kingdom defeated; third, to bring before Him our physical and spiritual needs; and fourth, to conclude by exalting God. How many of our prayers are all about us? Granted, we are all needy, and we should pray for our needs. But it is in exalting God and seeking first His kingdom that all that we need will be added unto us.

B. Here Jesus gives a beautiful promise to all His elect—beginning with the little elect sister who has not yet come to faith in Christ.

1. **“If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver” (Song 8:9).** Jesus states that before He will make of her a beautiful palace of silver, the little sister must first be joined by faith as a wall to the foundation, Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). You cannot have a palace without walls; and firm, stable

walls cannot be built upon shifting, sinking sand. Storms and waves will bring such walls to destruction. But notice the promise that when by faith in Christ she becomes a wall built upon Him as the foundation, what does Jesus promise the little sister (and all His elect)? “We (the holy Trinity) will build upon her a palace of silver.” We will make of her a holy habitation in which we will dwell and live—now and for all eternity (John 14:23). This is a promise that what Jesus begins in salvation, He will complete in a glorious way. She begins as a wall, but ends as a glorious palace of silver in which the King will reign (this is the unbreakable chain of salvation—Romans 8:29-30).

2. Essentially the same promise follows, using another part of a building: the door. **“And if she be a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar” (Song 8:8).** If the elect little sister becomes like a door through which Jesus can enter into her life to be both Savior and Lord, then we (the holy Trinity) will beautify her with boards of precious cedar wood. The little elect sister must be a door of access through which Jesus has communion with her through prayer, the Word, and sacraments. She must not be a closed door, but an open door (Revelation 3:20). Again, the promise is that the Holy Trinity will complete what was begun (Philippians 1:6). There will be none who begin as a wall that will not end as a palace of precious silver. There will be none who begin as a door that will not be beautified with precious boards of cedar wood. All who begin in union and communion with Jesus will end in union and communion with Jesus. This is the unbreakable promise of God who cannot lie, who cannot break His promise, who cannot fail to keep His Word. Will you believe Him? Will you trust your feelings, Satan (who is a liar), or Jesus?

III. The Assurance of the Bride (Song 8:10).

A. Being a wall and having breasts refer to God’s elect who have come to faith in Jesus Christ; for the bride says that she is a wall built upon Christ and has “breasts like towers”—she has the ordinances that nourish God’s people; whereas the elect little sister has no breasts at all—thus, she is not yet married to Christ by faith nor does she have the ordinances to nourish the saints.

B. The bride began by praying for her elect little sister (Song 8:8). Then Jesus gives His promise to her elect little sister (Song 8:9). Now the bride looks to the fulfillment of Christ’s promise in her own life (as His elect bride) in order to assure her that God’s promise will also be realized in her elect little sister (Song 8:10).

1. If Jesus has fulfilled His promise to you, He will do so for your elect little sister (for all His elect). Parents, you need not fear or worry about your children or loved ones (John 6:39). You must never despair; for where there is life, there is hope in the sovereign love, mercy, and power of Jesus. You are called to pray for your children, to love them, to walk in faithfulness before them, and to lead them to Jesus. It is, however, God alone that can save them. Salvation is of the Lord—from beginning to end (Jonah 2:9).

2. Can you be a wall built upon Jesus if you have daily struggles with sin? Yes, you are a wall He has built if you are also a door through which you have communion with Him (union and communion with Christ). Your longing to be with Jesus (privately and publicly), to call out to Him, to read His Word, to submit to Him, and to be taught by Him is evidence that you are a wall and a door.

3. There is no growth in fruit and there is no sanctification without struggles with sin. Rather than being a reason to doubt that you are a wall built upon Jesus, spiritual struggles and conflicts with sin are the way of holiness—the way of contending for the faith—the way of exercising yourself to godliness—the ways of crucifying the flesh—the way of warring against the lusts of the flesh—the way of cutting off the hand that offends. At certain seasons of your life those struggles will be greater than at other seasons. That’s true of all Christians (Romans 7:19).

4. If you are a wall and a door that Jesus has built, you will persevere in trusting Him. You will arise seven times from failures. You will not quit the race, but will continue to run the race (however weak and exhausted you may feel), looking to Jesus until your race is finished (Romans 7:24-25).

5. You will only finish the race because you have found favor, mercy, love, and strength in

Jesus Christ (Song 8:10). You are accepted, justified, sanctified, and glorified in the Beloved alone. It is not you, but Jesus in you that will carry you to the finish line (Philippians 2:12-13).

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