

Christ my Beloved – Song Series

Recovery from Spiritual Decline

Text: Song of Solomon 6:1-13

Introduction:

1. Context: The bride has been awakened from spiritual slumber and sloth (backslidden state) (5:1-2) to a renewed seeking after her Bridegroom.
2. In her quest for spiritual revival, she issues a charge to the daughters of Jerusalem in Vs. 8. This provokes a question from them concerning her Beloved. In effect they ask, “how is your Beloved unique, what makes Him more special than other beloveds?” In response to this question, words of praise and exaltation come pouring out of the bride like a river (5:10-16).
3. In chapter 6, we see a restoration of full communion with her Beloved. She has recovered from her backslidings and has returned to a life of fruitfulness for Him. She has experienced personal revival/renewal in four key areas.

She has a...

I. Renewed Witness (Vs. 1)

A. Her Testimony of the Bridegroom (5:10-16)

1. In her fervent seeking after her Beloved, she had recovered the ability to witness freely of Him.
2. One of the first things a backslidden, defeated Christian loses is their witness for the Lord.
3. One of the first signs of spiritual recovery is that there is a renewed readiness to testify of Christ.

B. The Inquiry after the Bridegroom (Vs. 1)

1. The daughters of Jerusalem, representing those who are seekers of the Lord, respond to her powerful testimony of Christ with a desire to know Him also.
2. Burrowes: “Such a description of the beloved might well make the daughters of Jerusalem anxious to see him, and enquire where he might be found. A judicious holding forth of the character and loveliness of Christ has ever been the leading means of drawing sinners to the Cross, the salvation of souls is effected by preaching to them Christ crucified.”
3. It is of interest that she had asked help of the daughters of Jerusalem in finding her Beloved (5:8) but now they put the question back on her for her to answer (6:1).

She has a...

II. Renewed Assurance (Vs. 2-3)

She has renewed assurance of...

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A. His Presence in Her (Vs. 2)

1. Her meditation on the blessed Attributes of her Beloved (5:10-16) had the effect of reviving her heart and renewing her sense of His presence and faithfulness. The fact is, He has already told her where He was! (5:10)
2. The garden represents the Bride (See 4:12-16)
 - a. Christ is pictured as the Master Gardener, attending to the needs of her inner life. While she had temporarily lost the sense of His presence, He had not ceased in His labours for her perfection and wellbeing.
 - b. 'spices' = represent Christian graces
 - c. "to feed" = we are fed by Him. The language suggests a shepherd providing for the sheep.

B. His Possession of Her (Vs. 3)

1. Nee: "Though feelings change, the covenant between the Beloved and herself was of an unchangeable character and forever held steadfast."
2. "I am my beloved's" = she belongs to him and therefore has assurance that the enjoyment of His presence will be recovered. The truth that she belongs to Him is foremost in her mind. His claims now come first. Compare with her previous words in 2:16.
3. Masters: "She has matured in her love. She has a stronger sense of her obligation, putting first "I am his." One of the greatest lessons to learn in the Christian life is to say, "I am not my own." (See 1. Cor. 6:20).
4. "he feedeth among the lilies"
 - a. 'feedeth' = to tend a flock. Root word translated 'shepherd' numerous times in the O.T. Christ is pictured as a Shepherd feeding His flock.
 - b. The lily pictures the believer (2:2). We are precious in His sight in a world full of depravity and sin. She grows as a beautiful flower in an environment of ugliness (James B. Currie)
 - c. Principle: Christ's nurturing and shepherding ministry is experienced in the midst of His blood-washed, purified people – it is "among the lilies". Compare 1:7-8 where the bride is counselled on where to locate her Shepherd-lover. He is found amongst the flock and with His under shepherds. The Lord ministers in a special way to His people as they assemble together.
 - d. Christ's presence is to be experienced **both** in the quietness of personal communion **and** in the assembly of believers in collective worship.

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III. Renewed Communion (Vs. 4-9)

His voice which has been silent for some time now speaks again and the Beloved speaks to her of...

A. Her Beauty (Vs. 4-7)

1. New symbols (Vs. 4)

- a. “**beautiful** as Tirzah” = for many years Tirzah was the royal city of the Canaanites. It was the chief residence of the kings of Israel from Jeroboam to Omri, until Omri made Samaria his capital. A city frequently mentioned in 1 & 2 Kings. The word means delightful, pleasant, beautiful. Probably on account of its location on a hill surrounded by pleasing scenery. (Flanigan)
- b. “**comely** as Jerusalem” = special city and capital of the nation at this time under Solomon. This city is also set on a hill. Matt. 5:14 *“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.”*
- c. “terrible as an army with banners”
 - i. ‘terrible’ is not used in the sense of ‘horrible’ or ‘evil’ but in a positive sense as denoting something awe inspiring. The Bridegroom is pleased with her militancy for the truth.
 - ii. ‘banners’ = the symbolism is of an army with banners unfurled. Pictures the church that unashamedly proclaims the truth and is engaged in the battle against the enemy for Christ’s sake.
 - iii. While contending for the faith may be repulsive to the Laodicean church, it is still a praiseworthy quality so far as Christ is concerned.
 - iv. Nee:

“Here, therefore, the phrase signifies that the loved maiden was not only beautiful and comely but strong like a heavenly host. And though she was serene and quiet as a sanctuary, yet she could brandish the glory of complete victory before all the wicked powers of hell and of men. Her life within the veil was not meant to be lived only in the sanctuary of God’s presence but in the field of battle before the enemy.”

2. Repeated symbols (Vs. 5-7)

- a. He repeats similar virtues he has mentioned before in chapter 4. We need constant re-assurance and comfort as believers and our Lord provides that for us by His repeated words of love and assurance.
- b. It reveals that despite her failings, His love for her has remained constant and faithful and He still sees her beauty through salvation with the eyes of grace.

B. Her Exclusivity (Vs. 8-9)

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1. In these verses her uniqueness and specialness is highlighted. She is precious to Him, His one and only.
2. Masters explains: “Essentially the groom says: “You may assemble all the queens in the world together with all the concubines of their polygamous kings and all their unmarried daughters, but their combined beauty will not match the excellencies of my bride, who they will praise.”
3. The church is prized by Christ far above any institution in this world. Christ “loved the church, and gave himself for it.” (Eph. 5:25) He purchased the church “with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28)

IV. Renewed Power (Vs. 10-13)

A. Power of Testimony (Vs. 10)

Light is the prominent theme of this verse. She is likened to:

1. The dawn – “as the morning”
2. The moon – has a soft and gentle light. The moon does not produce light but simply reflects the greater light of the sun. So, in our lives, Christ is the light source for the believer and we reflect Him to a dark world.
3. “clear as the sun” – the suns rays. She shines brightly.
4. “terrible as an army with banners” – same as Vs. 4. Her boldness for the truth and involvement in the battle is precious to Him.
5. Masters: “It is a picture of a witnessing church of Christ from which Gospel truth – marvellous to the saved and uncontaminated as the sun – streams forth. She is the church militant with her banners.”

B. Power of Vitality (Vs. 11)

1. The garden picture comes into view again and in particular, the Bridegroom’s care of the garden.
2. Christ tends lovingly and patiently to our lives, ministering His life in us and through us.

C. The Power of Victory (Vs. 12-13)

1. In Vs. 12 we have reference to “the chariots of Amminadib” and in Vs. 13 the mention of “the company of two armies”. Her beloved will be with her, supplying her with the resources she needs for the battle.
2. “two armies” – “the same Hebrew word is used in Gen. 32:2 where Jacob gave a place the name ‘Mahanaim’ meaning two hosts or camps. Jacob was returning home in obedience to God with his small arm of family and servants. God gave him a glimpse of an army of angels to powerfully comfort and assure him. The church will be one army, but the other will be the host of God.” (Masters”

Conclusion: Are you backslidden? In need of a personal revival? The good news is that you CAN recover a place of spiritual blessing with Christ’s help.