

Song of Solomon 7: 8b – 9; “The Fragrance of Your Breath”,
Sermon # 63 in the series – “I am My Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on June 24th, 2018, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

The descriptions of Christ’s Bride which are given to us here by Christ Himself, show forth the beauty of her spiritual discernment which she has cultivated by His grace. Christ commends this as something that He is pleased with, and because of His great love for her, He gives us more of the details of what He is pleased with. And then follows the Bride’s comment upon His observations. This is what I want to open up for you at this hour. Christ is pleased 1st of all, with the fragrance of her breath which is like apples. 2nd – He is pleased with the roof of her mouth which is like the best wine. And 3rd – He is pleased with the Bride’s comment that the wine goes down smoothly for Him, and this moves gently the lips of sleepers. Let us learn together about what pleases our Lord.

1st of all, Christ is pleased with the fragrance of His Bride’s breath which He says is like apples.

I hope that you have come to understand, as I have preached to you through this book, that there are literally dozens of word pictures given to us which represent spiritual realities in the life of a Christian. These pictures well represent the truths and doctrines of Christ and His grace, and the thoughts of the believer’s heart toward Christ, and what His heart and mind is toward her, in their spiritual love relationship. The reality of what we are talking about here in these verses is the fragrance of the Bride’s breath; what the smell of it means to Christ. He says it is like smell of apples, very pleasant. The Bride represents Christ’s Church and every individual believer in it. Her breath and the fragrance of it represents the smell, or the lovely fragrance, which comes forth from the believer’s lips; that is, from the devotion of their heart, and what they say to Him in their prayers and praise of Him. This is expressed by the metaphor of her spiritual breath. And this fragrance is conveyed to Christ in the Bride’s close spiritual interactions with Him. It speaks especially of her fervent and loving prayers to Him; asking to glorify Him in all of her behavior, and wanting to be pleasing to Him in the way that she lives her life. She breathes out these desires of her heart to Him as a loving wife does; often thinking of her husband and wanting to be close to Him.

She loves Him for all that He means to her, and all that He has done for her. And the breath of His life which is in her; the life of faith which He has spiritually spoken to her in His gospel, is evidenced in the desires of her heart which she whispers to Him in prayer. And she is saying in the words of Song of Solomon 1: 2 – “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth”, because she knows that her salvation from sin and her progress in righteousness all come from His grace. She wants Him to draw near to her and so she draws near to Him in prayer. “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you”, it says in James 4: 8. She knows that the nearness of her God is her good.

Christ notices when you draw near to Him, and He can smell the scent of apples, the scent of his grace, spiritually speaking, on your breath. He senses and knows the fragrance of your breath; the deepest desires that you have, to know the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings in putting sin to death in your heart, and your longings to walk with Him on the path of righteousness. He smells the fragrance of your heart submission to Him, and to His word; your longings to do His will. He knows that your life exudes this fragrance because you have embraced Him as Your King and Your God. Even though He is in heaven and you are upon the earth, He knows when you express your devotion to Him, your love of His glorious Person in heart-felt prayer. He knows this; He senses it most really and definitely, much more even, than a couple in love whose faces are close to each other.

Christ smells the Church's breath, and it is most pleasant to Him. A believer's interaction with Him, when they are walking closely with Him, and when they are setting Him before them, is very sweet, to Him. He is pleased with this fragrance; that is, the smell of apples.

For a better understanding of this, we should think back to the words which we find in the 2nd chapter of this book, and verse 3 – "Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons." "I sat down in his shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." And also verse 5 of that same chapter – "Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick." Christ is the apple tree among the trees of the wood. He is the Beloved among the sons. There is none like Him in righteousness and perfection of holiness. It is by partaking of His fruit, spiritually speaking, that you will be saved. It is by sitting down in the shade of His finished work, that you will find that His fruit will be sweet to your spiritual taste. It is in partaking of Him and His righteousness, the fruit which He brought forth through His sufferings and death, that you will find eternal life. It is by sitting down under His tree that you will find great delight for you will be shaded there, from the fierce attacks of the Devil, the strong pull of the world and your flesh; a place where you can take refreshment from Christ's presence with you.

There is old hymn which I believe is very appropriate for me to quote the verses of, in relation to what I am speaking about here. It is from the Divine Hymns or Spiritual Songs compiled by Joshua Smith who lived in New Hampshire in 1784. The tune was composed by Elizabeth Poston who was born in 1905 and died in 1987. It goes this way. "The tree of life my soul hath seen, laden with fruit and always green: the trees of nature fruitless be, compared with Christ the Apple Tree." "His beauty doth all things excel: by faith I know, but ne'er can tell; the glory which I now can see; in Jesus Christ the apple tree." "For happiness I long have sought, and pleasure dearly I have bought: I missed of all; but now I see, 'tis found in Christ the Apple Tree." "I'm weary with my former toil, here I will sit and rest awhile: Under the shadow I will be, of Jesus Christ the Apple Tree." "This fruit doth make my soul to thrive, it keeps my dying faith alive; which makes my soul in haste to be, with Jesus Christ the Apple tree.

You will remember that in the garden of Eden there were many trees there, but there were only two trees which were especially taken notice of, there in the narrative. One was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And the other was the tree of life. God had told Adam – "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Both of these trees had fruit which could be eaten, but in the case of the first, it was spoken of by God as the tree, which if Adam and Eve ate of it, it would bring death to them.

Even though the text in Genesis 2 does not tell us what kind of fruit it was, that they ate from, it has often be speculated that it was an apple. It was the fruit of that tree which brought about the fall of man from his original righteousness; a poisoned apple, which brought death to Adam and Eve, and defiled the whole nature of man. And the effects of Adam's eating that apple are with us to this day, in the hearts and lives of every person descended from Adam. But I hope that you will glory in the goodness and mercy of God to all of us, the rest of mankind, that there was another tree which was in the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Paradise, which Adam and Eve did not get to eat from that day, although spiritually, they ate from it later. And that was the tree of life which was also there in the midst of the garden.

Adam and Eve, if they would have been wise, if they had by their own free-will, chosen to resist the temptation of the Devil, and instead had decided to eat the fruit of the tree of life, they would have been confirmed in their original righteousness by their own works, and they would have obtained perpetual and eternal life. The tree of life also had apples hanging from it, but these apples were spiritually life-giving. But since Adam and Eve failed to pass the test of obedience to God, in the keeping of this one good commandment which God gave to them, it

says in Genesis 3: 22 – “Then the Lord God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil.’ “And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever – therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.” “So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.” My brethren, this was done to show us, that never again in the history of the world, would it be possible for any man descended from Adam, to be saved by their own works or by attempting to keep God’s holy commandments.

But thank God, this tree of life shows up again at the end of the Bible, in Revelation chapter 22, verse 14. It says there – “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.” Here we see, not the Covenant of Works, but the Covenant of Grace through Jesus Christ our Lord. The reality of our having been forgiven of our sins, and having been given grace through Christ, is that we now love Him and want to keep all of His commandments. You have a right to the tree of life if you show your devotion to Christ by keeping His commandments. You keep His commandments because you love Him. This is the fragrance of your breath; your confession of your need of Christ’s grace; the fruit of His sufferings upon Calvary’s tree; the tree which became an apple tree under which we sit, and partake of the fruit of His sufferings and death, and the fruit of His resurrection life. It is pleasing to Christ when He smells this fragrance of your breath; your confession that You are dependent upon Him for grace to do what He commands. He does not want you to think that you go it alone in living your Christian life. You are His spouse and He will provide everything that you will spiritually need to be sustained and satisfied in your walk with Him.

Then 2nd – Christ is pleased with the roof of His Bride’s mouth, which is like the best wine.

Verse 9 – “And the roof of your mouth like the best wine.” Since the roof of the mouth is that which the tongue rests upon, in various ways, in order that a person may speak clearly, I believe that what is being referred to here is Christ’s pleasure in His Bride’s being able to speak clearly about Him and His grace. For His grace comes to us through faith in Him, and we then want to speak about that grace which we have received. Here we find that Christ is pleased with the Bride’s speaking of His grace, which is compared to the best wine. Turn with me over to Luke chapter 5 and verse 33. “Then they said to Jesus, ‘Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?’” “And He said to them, ‘Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them?’” “But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days.” “Then He spoke a parable to them: ‘No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was taken out of the new does not match the old.’” “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined.” “But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved.” “And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, ‘The old is better.’”

Now, I want you to see that there connections here between the Song of Solomon’s Bridegroom, and Christ which are found in this text. Christ calls Himself the heavenly or spiritual Bridegroom here in these verses. And what He is saying is that no one attempts to put a piece from a new garment on an old one; no one can take and put the gospel of grace on the old garment of the legalism of the Pharisees and not expect that the new will not make a tear. No, the new religion produced by grace will not match the old which had grown up independent from the Christ of the Scriptures. Now that Christ was among them, no one could successfully take and put the new wine of Christ’s teaching about grace into the old wineskins of the legalistic

Pharisaical system of the duties which they prescribed, such as spiritual such as fasting, when the source of everything truly spiritual was standing right in front of them. Why fast when the bridegroom, who is easily able to supply all of your needs, is right there to answer your requests? The reason that the disciples of John and the Pharisees did not desire the new wine of Christ's teaching was because they liked the old forms of religion under the Old Covenant well enough, that they had not yet taken the time to examine carefully what Christ had come to bring. They were content to live with these old forms. Christ came to bring to believing people, this relationship with Himself which was not legally austere, or attempting to impose the duties of the law upon any person; but He came to bring the wine of His grace into every act of worship and obedience to God, and thus bring great joy to the hearts of men in their service to God.

Even as wine makes a man's heart merry, even so grace makes a person's heart glad and joyful to do God's will in the right way and in the right time. For Christ's disciples it was not the time for fasting because He was with them. But now, because of their closeness to Him, they now had this personal relationship with Him; the One who was fulfilled the law, and bringing them the grace and truth which was setting them free from all legalism. Christ does bring joy and gladness, even as a bridegroom with His bride into every activity of worship and service to God. Christ is pleased when we speak of His love as being like the best wine. Song of Solomon 1: 2 – "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth – for you love is better than wine." And chapter 1, verse 4 – "The king has brought me into his chambers." "We will be glad and rejoice in you." "We will remember your love more than wine."

3rd – Christ is pleased with the Bride's comment that the wine goes down smoothly for Him, and this moves gently the lips of sleepers.

We should understand by this that the wine of Christ's grace is something that we should always be thankful for; the fact that our Lord is gentle and humble of heart, and knows how to teach us by His grace to do His will from a joyful heart. Dear Christian, are you satisfied with Christ and His grace, like a glass of good wine? You can drink of this wine and never have to worry about overdrinking. Wine is a mocker and strong drink is a brawler, and he who is intoxicated by it is not wise. But is not so with the wine of Christ's grace. It goes down smoothly and you can have as many glasses of it as you want. In fact, the more, the merrier. Why is this? It is because you can never be too full of the Holy Spirit. Be not drunk with wine, which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit. Be being filled with the Spirit, I believe it reads in the Greek.

You remember how the apostles were filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and the experience of those hearing the gospel that day brought them to a state of amazement. The apostles were so filled with the Spirit that when those who being preached to, heard the gospel in their own tongues, it was so spiritually intoxicating, that some of those looking on, said in a mocking way – "They are full of new wine." And Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.' "For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day." This was the wine of the gospel moving gently the lips of sleepers, causing them to wonder at what was happening. Peter could have just as easily preached to them and said, "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." (Ephesians 5: 14)

This is what the gospel is supposed to do. It is the only means that Christ uses to introduce us to His precious and powerful grace. But it is meant to more for those who are already saved. It is meant to be the wine which brings us joy and gladness in our being able to be married to Him spiritually. We remember what it cost Him to bring this about. We know His life in our life brings us joy. He is the One whose tree we sit under, and whose apples are on our breath. We will draw near to Him to find all that we will need to be satisfied, as we live our lives to Him.

