

**Song of Solomon 7: 11-13; “Giving Christ Your Love”, Sermon # 65 in the series – “I am My Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

In my last message to you from this blessed book, I told you that Christ desires to bring you, dear believer, into a deeper, more intimate fellowship and communion with Him. In verse 10, the Bride says – “I am my beloved’s and his desire is toward me.” She asks her Bridegroom Husband King to go forth with her into the field of the world and lodge with her in the villages. How much of success in the Lord’s work depends upon Christ going with us into that work. And how much of fruitfulness in the Lord’s service, and progress in holiness, is related to having the desire to have these things come to pass in our life as a Christian. It is always incumbent upon us as Christians to check over our lives and examine ourselves in the presence of Christ in prayer, to ask Him whether the grape blossoms are open, and the pomegranates are in bloom in our hearts; whether we are giving ourselves to the Lord to serve Him out of love to Him?

Let me ask these questions as we begin our time – Have you, in the experience of your heart relationship with Christ, revealed to Him the great desires that you have; that He would be glorified in your life? Do you desire to be alone with Him, and in prayer and fellowship, to give Him your spiritual love, as it says in verse 12? Are the affections of your heart being communicated to Christ in such a way that you know that He has heard you, and His affections are then communicated back to you, in the sense that you know the love of Christ which passes knowledge? That is what I want to speak to you about from this text at this hour. 1<sup>st</sup> of all, I want to speak to you about mandrakes. And then 2<sup>nd</sup> – I want to speak to about the pleasant fruits at your gates. I pray that as you hear this message, that you will think more about your love relationship with the Lord Jesus, and how you can give Him your love.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all, I want to speak to you about mandrakes.** (verses 12 and 13)

“Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine has budded, whether the grape blossoms are open, and the pomegranates are in bloom.” “There I will give you my love.” “The mandrakes give off a fragrance, and at our gates are pleasant fruits, all manner, new and old, which I have laid up for you, my beloved.” The setting is the village of Shunem, and the Bride wants her Shepherd-Husband Christ to get up early with her to go the vineyards to see if the vine has budded, whether the grape blossoms are open, or whether the pomegranates are in bloom. So, both the mandrakes and all manner of fruits which are mentioned in verse 13 are things which the Shulamite had laid up for her Beloved, for her Bridegroom, Shepherd, King. I said to you in my last message that the field in verse 11, where this vineyard of verse 12 is, is the world; the whole world of mankind, even as Jesus relates in the parable of the wheat and the tares.

I said to you that the true Christian understands, or they should understand, that Christ’s command and His desire is for them to – “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”. This may mean going to a different country to be a missionary, or it may be going next door to talk to your neighbor about Him. But when you go, and as you go, He likes to hear you say to Him in effect – “Let us go forth to the field”. In other words – Lord, how can I go and preach the word and make disciples and have any success in preaching or sharing your word, unless You go with me? So the Bride asks Christ to go with her in the good work of evangelism, and seeing people come to Christ; the Church’s bearing children for Christ, and to Christ, in this good work that she is about, takes place.

The vineyards here in verse 12 appear to represent churches. The Bride of Christ, and the individual believers who make up that Bride, want to have Christ come with them to evaluate the state of the Church’s fruitfulness. I want you to understand that the Church of our Lord Jesus sometimes cannot clearly tell whether she is bearing fruit which is pleasing to Christ, without

His help. She needs the help of the One who has perfect discernment, the One who can help her to understand whether she is making progress; whether grapes and pomegranates are open and in bloom; or whether she is going to bear lasting fruit for Christ. Do you think about these things, dear Christian? Lasting fruit and spiritual children come from developing your love relationship in your heart with your Bridegroom husband, your Lord Jesus Christ. The doctrine that we find here in verse 13 is that the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ and every individual member of it should lay up mandrakes and fruits of all manner, both old and new, for their Beloved, in order to glorify Him in the way that they live their life to Him.

What do the mandrakes spiritually mean in our relationship of union and communion with our Lord Jesus Christ? Well, mandrakes are only mentioned two times in the Bible; here, and in Genesis chapter 30, verse 14-16. So, if you will turn over there with me, we shall discover I believe, the key to understanding why this word mandrakes is used here by the Shulamite. It says – “Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah.” “Then Rachel said to Leah, ‘Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes.’” “But she said to her, ‘Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband?’” “Would you take away my son’s mandrakes also?” “And Rachel said, ‘Therefore, he will lie with you tonight for your son’s mandrakes.’” “When Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, ‘You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son’s mandrakes.’” “And he lay with her that night.” “And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.”

Now I am told, that these mandrakes were a plant with a small fruit on it, that gave forth a sort of musky fragrance which was very strongly pleasant. And when it was smelled, or the fruit eaten by a person, it would cause them to think about the desirability of marital love. And then out of that union of husband and wife, in connection with this scent, or the eating of this fruit, would hopefully come the ability to conceive a child. This was certainly how Rachel was thinking of it, and this was the reason that she wanted some of Leah’s son Reuben’s mandrakes. It was so that in having them, and partaking of the fragrance and the fruit, she would hopefully conceive a child. Leah, knowing that Jacob was usually staying overnight with Rachel instead of herself, as the preferred wife, makes this statement – “Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband?” “Would you take away my son’s mandrakes also?” She then goes on to demand that if Rachel is to get any of these mandrakes, that Jacob would lie with her that night. Interestingly, it is Leah who first conceives a child because Jacob did sleep with her that night. Perhaps Leah had kept back some of the mandrakes and did not sell all of them all to Rachel.

But it is evident that they both believed in the power of the mandrakes; to their being able to in some way attract the attentions of their husband, and be stimulated to be able to conceive a child. In applying this spiritually to the verse that we are studying here in Song of Solomon 7: 13, it is the fragrance of the mandrakes which creates the atmosphere of the desirability of experiencing spiritual love with Christ; that is, union and communion with Christ, out of which, hopefully then, results in the believer’s being able to bear spiritual children to Christ. That is what is being spoken about here by the Bride. The Christian is a spiritual plant in the Lord’s garden. Jesus said in Matthew 15: 13 – “Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up.” But the Christian is one who, as it says in Romans chapter 6, verse 5, has been planted together with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection, by faith in Him.

The mandrakes are Christians exuding the fragrance of Christ’s grace; that fragrance which comes from the cultivation of garden of the Christian’s heart; their holding sweet fellowship and communion with Him in their heart, and then out of that love relationship with Him, they bear fruit to Him. Turn with me over to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 2: 14. “Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.” “For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among

those who are perishing.” “To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life.” “And who is sufficient for these things?” The mandrakes of our text represent the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ, both to Christ and to the believer themselves, as well as to a watching world, when the Christian is out in public. But this fragrance that is being mentioned in our text is more specifically the fragrance of the love between the believer and Christ; what the believer wears, to make themselves more attractive to Christ in their relationship with Him in private, even as perfume would be to a woman who loves her husband. The scent of faith being exercised, and the fruit of the Spirit being manifested, is what gives off a fragrance which excites Christ’s heart.

It is out of this most private display of affectionate love to Christ in the heart, that the believer is led by the Spirit in their relationship with Christ, to bring to forth fruit to Him in obedience. And it is this same close communion with Christ and affectionate obedient love to Him which will allow the believer to beget spiritual children to Christ as well. It is because they love Christ, that they love to share the gospel of Christ with others; to show them the same love of Christ, that they have been shown. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 4: 15 – “For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.” “Therefore I urge you, imitate me.” Imitate him how? In developing their love relationship with Jesus Christ, and out of that love, praying that the smell of the mandrakes of Christ’s grace would come to others and that you will then be able to by the power of His grace, beget spiritual children to God.

The same kind of thing is to be found in the book of Philemon, verse 8. “Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, yet for love’s sake I rather appeal to you – being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ – I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains, who once was unprofitable to you, now is profitable to you and to me.” “I am sending him back.” “You therefore receive him, that is my own heart.” I believe that it was out of Paul’s heart, out of his love for Christ, even the Christ who He loved all the while that he was in prison, that he could show such love to Onesimus, preach the gospel to him, and live out what it meant to cultivate a relationship with Christ before him, that led this man to trust in the same Christ who Paul loved and served. All this came about because Paul had the fragrance of the mandrakes about him.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> – I want to speak to about the pleasant fruits at your gates.**

“And at our gates are pleasant fruits, all manner, new and old, which I have laid up for you, my beloved.” When it says here – “At our gates” are pleasant fruits, I agree with John Gill that it is referring to the practice of that time in which a newly married couple would garnish the posts of their door with the branches of trees and fruits, and flowers, which made it inviting to enter in: and these pleasant fruits he says, may denote the plenty, the variety, and the excellency of the blessings of grace, and the graces of the Spirit which believers have from Christ.” The ASV has it this way – “At our doors are all manner of precious fruits...” The ESV has it – “And beside our doors are all choice fruits...” The NAS has it – “And over our doors are all choice fruits...” Well it is evident that the heart of the Christian should be well garnished with the fruits of spiritual life and their experience of Christ.

In Romans 7, verse 4, it says – “Therefore my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another – To Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.” A Christian is one in whom you see the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of righteousness, the character qualities which come to pass, over time, because they are growing in grace, and they are laying up treasure in heaven. This is what laying up all manner of pleasant fruits at your gates are all about. These graces of love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, faithfulness, and self-control, being realized in your experience, are leading you to greater service to Christ. These fruits of service are things which you work at

in your service to Christ, so that you are going about to achieve certain Biblical goals which you set for yourself in relation to keeping the commandments of God, and loving the brethren, and doing good to all men. These fruits are seen in the good works that you do. All that we do, in the Christian life, is done ultimately for our Christ, and for God's glory. We lay up these graces and these good works for Christ, at the gate or the door of our heart, first of all. The door of our heart is the door to the kingdom of heaven, and heaven itself eventually. It is where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Matthew 6: 19 – "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Jesus says in John 15: 4 – "Abide in Me, and I in you." "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me." "I am the vine, you are the branches." "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." And verse 7 – "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you." "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." But to bear much fruit, means that you will have to cultivate your love relationship with Christ. Verse 9 of John 15 – "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you: abide in My love." "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

What does it mean when it says that these fruits which are laid up for Christ, are of all manner, new and old? Well, let me read to you Matthew 13: 52 – "Then Jesus said to them, 'Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.'" Although this parable concerns those who would teach others, I believe that application can also be made to all Christians in terms of their growing in their love relationship to Christ. Every believer, especially those whom the Lord would have to instruct others, is a steward of the grace of God which is given to them, and they are stewards of the mysteries of God revealed to them. We store up the experience of grace and truth that we have had from the beginning of our Christian life. That is the old things. And we continue to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord, and in doing so we are able to add to our treasure, new things. These are new things which the Lord will show by leading us into the truth of them. If we are a mature Christian, we gather with Christ, these good things, and we do not scatter by losing them. We lay them up for Him in our mind and heart and we use them then, in service to Him.

Since we are continually receiving from our Lord, grace upon grace, we add to our faith moral excellence. We add more knowledge from God's word on top of that. And then to these we add the actions of self-control, and perseverance and godliness, and to these we add brotherly kindness and Christian love which we show to all. We will bring these things forth from our treasury of Christian experience at the right time, and in the right way, because of our love for our Lord. We will consciously attempt then, to bear fruit to Him, and lay these fruits up against our door so that when Christ comes back for us, to raise us from the dead, we will not be ashamed, but will have these fruits to present to Him; our good works from a lifetime of service, and having loved Him according to the grace that He supplied. These will be pleasant fruits indeed, for our love for Him, and His love for us, will then be fully consummated.

