

Lesson 13 25 January, 2014

The Covenant of Love Strengthened

Lesson Scope: [Song of Solomon chapters 4 & 6 to 8](#)

Lesson Focus

In the previous lesson, we studied the disastrous effects that indifference created in the relationship between the Shulamite bride and her bridegroom. Having found the bridegroom again through her diligent search, the bride finally enjoyed a blossoming and maturing relationship between her and her beloved, a relationship she did not want to lose.

When self is denied, a person's relationship with Christ has the potential to grow and to bring him into heavenly places in Christ. Christ readily desires close communion with every believer, and in this mutual relationship, the believer becomes progressively transformed into His image, until the Bridegroom declares, "There is no spot in thee" (Song 4:7).

Even though this relationship with Christ will not be complete until we are in His presence in heaven, we can enjoy a satisfying relationship with Him while in this life. Christ desires that each of us continue to grow in our love and commitment to Him.

In this final study of the Song of Songs, we notice that the bride, having learned from her earlier neglect of her relationship with her bridegroom, sought to firmly establish this relationship so that it would not be broken again. The relationship continued to grow into a more blessed experience through fellowship and service between the two. The bride experienced a level of rest and satisfaction in the mutual love between her bridegroom and herself. This is highly symbolic of the relationship of love that can be experienced between Christ and the believer.

This satisfying relationship with Christ, however, is not a static relationship. Let us never think that we can attain a level of communion with Christ to the point that we can drift along. A satisfying relationship will remain only as we continually strive to do our best for the sake of the Bridegroom and experience continual growth in our relationship with Him.

Jesus Christ has given His life so that the church may belong to Him-

self alone. The unspeakable gift of His love inspires the devotion of her love and life to Him.

These lessons should inspire each of us to evaluate our relationship with Christ, to endeavor to become more like our Bridegroom each day, and to prepare our hearts for eternity in Christ's presence where nothing can ever separate us from Him.

Lesson Aim: To present characteristics of one who is enjoying a satisfying relationship with Christ.

Theme Verses: [Jude 20-21](#). But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Lesson Text

The Fruits of the Garden

[Song of Songs 4:7](#) Thou *art* all fair, my love; *there is* no spot in thee. [Song of Songs 4:12-16](#) ¹² A garden inclosed *is* my sister, *my* spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. ¹³ Thy plants *are* an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, ¹⁴ Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: ¹⁵ A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. ¹⁶ Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, *that* the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

[Song of Songs 6:1-3](#) ¹ Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee. ² My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. ³ *I am* my beloved's, and my beloved *is* mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

[Song of Songs 6:10-13](#) ¹⁰ Who *is* she *that* looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, *and* terrible as *an army* with banners, ¹¹ I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, *and* to see whether the vine flourished, *and* the pomegranates budded. ¹² Or ever I was aware, my soul made me *like* the chariots of Amminadib. ¹³

Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.

The Strength of the Covenant

Song of Songs 7:10-11 ¹⁰ I *am* my beloved's, and his desire *is* toward me. ¹¹ Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.

Song of Songs 8:5-7 ⁵ Who *is* this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth *that* bare thee. ⁶ Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love *is* strong as death; jealousy *is* cruel as the grave: the coals thereof *are* coals of fire, *which hath a* most vehement flame. ⁷ Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if *a* man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

The Return of the Bridegroom

Song of Songs 8:11-14 ¹¹ Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand *pieces* of silver. ¹² My vineyard, which *is* mine, *is* before me: thou, O Solomon, *must have* a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred. ¹³ Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear *it*. ¹⁴ Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

Questions for Study

The Fruits of the Garden

1. What is significant about the believer being "a garden inclosed" and "a fountain sealed" (Song 4:12)?
2. What might the spices that flow out of the believer's garden represent?
3. What evidences of beauty should the world notice in the church?

The Strength of the Covenant

4. How can we know that Christ's desire is toward us (Song 7:10)?

5. What is the significance of the seal upon the heart, from both the bride's and the bridegroom's viewpoint?
6. How might people be tempted to gain a relationship with Christ by using their own resources (8:7)? Why is this futile?

The Return of the Bridegroom

7. What are some riches and wealth we can partake of in a satisfying relationship with Christ?
8. Discuss the relationship between our expectation of Christ's return and our love for Him.

Analyzing the Passage

It is rather difficult to know who is speaking in these verses, especially in Song 6:10-13. Perhaps this relationship has grown so thorough and mutual that the prose intentionally is vague on who is speaking. Both were present and both were deeply interested and united in each other's activities.

"A fountain sealed" (Song 4:12) was water reserved for a specific purpose. It was not a public fountain available to all. This signifies the exclusive relationship that the bride and bridegroom shared.

The daughters of Jerusalem requested the Shulamite to return into their presence so that they could marvel at her beauty (Song 6:13). This may symbolize the glory of the church, which is so attractive to seekers because of the beauty of Jesus that is seen in the lives of the saints.

The seal (8:6) was an identifying emblem denoting official ownership and authenticity. Here it symbolized the inseparable union and attentive care that the bride desired of the bridegroom.

Principles and Applications

The Fruits of the Garden

1. A satisfying relationship is built upon mutual love (Song 4:7). "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). It was Christ who initiated this relationship by dying for us while we were yet sinners. We can rest assured that the love Christ shows to us is more than we can ever reciprocate. Recognizing His love for us should help us to carefully guard our relationship lest sin or indifference should tarnish this mutual trust.
2. A satisfying relationship is an exclusive relationship (Song 4:12-15).

When Christ is in the center of our lives, the pleasures of this world and the materialism that pervades society will not be attractive to us. Singleness of heart marks a relationship that is truly devoted to Christ.

3. A satisfying relationship with Christ enables one to be fruitful and to be a blessing to others in all experiences of life (Song 4:16). By having a close relationship with Christ, we can have the benefit of the Spirit's presence. The resulting fruit of the Spirit will grace our lives and will affect those around us positively. Even the winds of adversity will bear the sweet aroma of Christ's presence. As we yield to Christ's sanctifying work in our lives, our communion with Him grows sweeter.

3. What evidences of beauty should the world notice in the church?

The Strength of the Covenant

4. A yearning for and a commitment to Christ are characteristics of one who has a satisfying relationship with Him (Song 6:1-3).

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). Just as the physical body craves food and water to support life, so we must actively yearn for the Bread of Life to support our spiritual needs. Without food, the body dies. Our devotional life and our worship experience are highly indicative of the condition of our spiritual life. Am I growing in my desire for the Word? Am I committed to give up self for the sake of Christ? Honestly answering these questions will reveal our spiritual temperature.

5. Those who have a satisfying relationship with Christ leave a clear testimony that is attractive to those around them (Song 6:10-13). When the Christian is transformed into a new creature in Christ, his life becomes remarkably different from those who seek fulfillment in life outside of Christ. Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). This renewed life can be a powerful beacon of hope to some seeking soul. May our lives bear witness of the transforming power of the Gospel so that others may be attracted to the truth.

6. Those who have a satisfying relationship with Christ desire His fellowship and presence (Song 7:10-11). Our hearts sometimes want to keep a portion selfishly for our own carnal desires. However, these desires create a conflict with the desire for Christ's presence in our hearts. We must renounce self and surrender wholly to Christ before He will dwell with us.

7. Permanence and stability characterize a satisfying relationship with

Christ (Song 8:5-7). Nothing will overcome or threaten Christ's love for us, and when our faith is firmly rooted in the Rock that is Christ Jesus, nothing can separate us from His love. Only if we take our eyes off of Him can we be overtaken by doubt and temptation.

The Return of the Bridegroom

8. The one who has a satisfying relationship with Christ is partaker of spiritual wealth and riches (8:11-13). A sanctified life, a cleansed conscience, the peace of God in our hearts, and a rich communion with Christ are some of the riches we can experience today. Moreover, we cannot begin to fathom all the eternal riches the Bridegroom has stored up for the bride. The children of God are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ"! All the hardships, trials, and temptations that afflict the Christian today are miniscule compared to the eternal rewards of faithfulness. Heaven will surely be worth it all!

9. Those who have a satisfying relationship with Christ anticipate His return (Song 8:14). When we do our best to maintain a close relationship with Christ in this life, we can have the assurance that we will join the saints in the air when Christ comes to receive His bride, the church. Living with a clear conscience and being at peace with God will allow us to say with eager hearts. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Answers to Questions

1. What is significant about the believer being "a garden inclosed" and "a fountain sealed" (Song 4:12)?

This expresses the exclusiveness of the relationship we need to have with Christ. We cannot portion out our life and keep certain areas for ourselves. Our life, as represented by the garden, is to be wholly devoted to Christ alone.

2. What might the spices that flow out of the believer's garden represent?

As the garden represents the believer's life, the spices could represent the graces and virtues of the soul that result because of the work of the Spirit in the believer's life. This could also represent the prayers of the saints, which are as incense to our Lord (Revelation 5:8). Sacrificial living and giving are "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God" (Philippians 4:18).

3. What evidences of beauty should the world notice in the church?

The world notices the peace; the quiet endurance; and the patient, positive outlook that surrounds the believer, especially when he faces the difficulties of life. Another attraction is the unified efforts of the church to "bear ... one another's burdens." The saying "The only Bible the world reads is the Christian" is truer than ever today as society deteriorates. A simple obedience to the Scriptures should help draw others to search for truth.

4. How can we know that Christ's desire is toward us (Song 7:10)?

His willingness to leave His heavenly abode and to give His life to accomplish the salvation of the church is His greatest display of His desire for the church. He is currently preparing a place for His bride and has promised to come again to receive the church unto Himself.

5. What is the significance of the seal upon the heart, from both the bride's and the bridegroom's viewpoint?

The bride entreats the bridegroom to always give her an abiding place in his love and protection by his power, setting her name as with the deep impression of a seal on his heart and on his arm, so that she might neither lose her interest in his love nor the comfort of it. She is asking to be identified with the bridegroom as a public declaration of belonging to him.

6. How might people be tempted to gain a relationship with Christ by using their own resources (Song 8:7)? Why is this futile?

Some people think they can gain merit by their good deeds or by how much money they can donate. They may be deceived into thinking that living a good life will satisfy God.

Jesus taught clearly that no man can come to the Father but by Jesus Himself.

7. What are some riches and wealth we can partake of in a satisfying relationship with Christ?

Being at peace with God and having a clear conscience are priceless. Knowing that God loves us and has given us salvation and enjoying the ensuing Father-son relationship are worth more than anything this world can offer. The riches of the Word of Life will be worth much more to us when we have a close communion with Christ. The eternal rewards for the faithful will far exceed even what we can ask or think.

8. Discuss the relationship between our expectation of Christ's return

and our love for Him.

If we do not have a high anticipation of Jesus' imminent return, then likely we will not have a close relationship with Him either. But when we have a close relationship with the One we love, we will be more constant in thinking about His return. This will help us to live in readiness to meet Him in the air at any moment.

Important Teachings

1. A satisfying relationship is built upon mutual love (Song 4:7).
2. A satisfying relationship is an exclusive relationship (Song 4:12-15).
3. A satisfying relationship with Christ enables one to be fruitful and to be a blessing to others in all experiences of life (Song 4:16).
4. A yearning for and a commitment to Christ are characteristics of one who has a satisfying relationship with Him (Song 6:1-3).
5. Those who have a satisfying relationship with Christ leave a clear testimony that is attractive to those around them (Song 6:10-13).
6. Those who have a satisfying relationship with Christ desire His fellowship and presence (Song 7:10-11).
7. Permanence and stability characterize a satisfying relationship with Christ (Song 8:5-7).
8. The one who has a satisfying relationship with Christ is partaker of spiritual wealth and riches (Song 8:11-13).
9. Those who have a satisfying relationship with Christ anticipate His return (Song 8:14).

Research Guide

Read Romans 8 for inspiration.

Summarizing the Lesson

Lord, light the great fires of Your love in my soul,
 O kindle those burnings divine;
And let Your great Spirit flow freely within
 To witness that Jesus is mine.
 O wonderful, wonderful Jesus my Lord,
 O wonderful Saviour Divine;
 O wonderful, wonderful Jesus, my friend,
 The dearest that I may call mine.
 O fill me and use me and bless me, I pray,
 And grace all my life with Your Love,
That I may breathe humbly and boldly the truth
 That blazes Your glory above.
I love you Lord Jesus, I love you today,
 I love you in spirit and mind,
My body is Yours for anything, Lord,
 I'm satisfied now in Your love.

—*Wilmer Shenk*