

ADDRESSES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON

by

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CHAPTER FIVE

SONG OF SOLOMON 4:12-5:1

“A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh, and aloes, with all the chief spices: a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. 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. I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved” (Song of Solomon 4: 12-15; 5: 1).

WE have been noticing in chapter after chapter how the blessed Lord puts before us our privileges as those who are permitted to enter into communion with Himself, and now in this little section we have the believer (if you think of it as the individual), or Israel, or the Church, whichever you will, pictured as a watered garden set apart for our Lord Himself to bring forth fruit that will be to His delight. It is a lovely figure, one used on a number of other occasions in Scripture.

In the fifty-eighth chapter of the prophet Isaiah, God pictures His people as such a garden. In verse eleven, He says,

“The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.”

This is a beautiful picture. Primarily it refers to Israel, and morally it speaks of any believer, of that which God would see in all His saints as they walk with Him.

In the book of the prophet Jeremiah, chapter thirty-one, verse twelve, we read, **“Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.”**

It is the Risen Christ Himself from whom we draw abundant supplies of mercy and grace; but did you ever think of your own heart as a garden in which He is to find His joy? Your very life is as a garden which is to be for His pleasure. That is the figure you have here. It is the bridegroom looking upon his bride with his heart filled with delight as he says to her, ***“You are to be for me, you are like a lovely garden yielding its fruit and flowers for me, set apart for myself.”***

“A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.”

We in America like open gardens that anybody can enjoy, but in Syria and in other parts of the old land, they have many inclosed gardens, gardens that are walled in. This is necessary in some of those countries, as otherwise they would be destroyed by marauding creatures and robbers. It is as though the Lord says, ***“That is what I want My people to be, separated to Myself; I want them to have about them the wall of holiness, for I have marked them off as My own.”***

In the Psalms we read, **“The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself.”**

Some Christians shrink from the idea of separation. If it is only a legal thing, it may become mere Phariseeism with no heart to it, but if it is to Himself, if it is the soul going out to Him, if one turns away from the world for love of Him, then separation is a very precious thing indeed, and one does not need to think of it as legal bondage, for it is being set apart for God Himself.

Could one think of a higher privilege on earth than that He might find His joy in us and we might find our joy in Him?

“A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse.”

How Satan likes to break down the wall, to destroy that principle of holy separation which would keep our hearts for the Lord alone; but what a loss it is to our own souls, and what a loss it means to Him, when His people become like a garden trodden under foot, as it were, by every wayfarer. That is what the Christian becomes who does not keep the path of separation.

Then notice the next figure, **“A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.”**

Pure water is a very precious thing in the Far East and so often, when a spring is discovered, it is walled about, covered, and locked, and the owner of it keeps the key so that he can go and drink when he will, and the water is kept from pollution and waste.

That is what our Lord would have in His people. He has given His Holy Spirit to dwell in us, and the Holy Spirit is Himself the Fountain of Water within every believer's heart, that we might be to His praise and to His glory. This living water within the garden will, of course, result in abundant fruit and flowers.

“Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard.”

The orchard suggests more than a mere garden of beautiful flowers; not only something fair to look at, or something that is fragrant to the senses, but something fruitful as well. What precious fruit is borne by the believer; what precious fruit is found in the heart of the one who is shut up to God!

In Philippians one, the apostle tells those dear saints that he is sure that God who has begun the good work in them, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. In verses nine to eleven of this chapter, he says, **“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”**

It seems to me that every one ought to understand that a life that is lived for God is one bringing forth the fruits of righteousness.

Love, purity, goodness, sweetness, kindness, compassion, and consideration for others, all of these things are the beautiful fruits that grow in this garden when the living water is properly fructifying the soil.

In Galatians 5: 22 we have a long list of the fruit of the Spirit. Challenge your own heart by asking, “Am I producing this kind of fruit for Him, ‘**Love, joy, peace, longsuffering**’?” It is that patience, you know, that makes you willing to endure. Then there is **“gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”**

This is the delightful fruit that our Lord is looking for in the lives of His people. He would have every one of us as a garden that produces fruit like this.

That word translated **“orchard”** is really similar to the Persian word for *“Paradise,”* and it may suggest that as God has a paradise above for His own people, where they shall share His joy for all eternity, so a believer's heart when it is producing fruit like this, is for God a paradise where He finds His joy and His delight. I wonder if we think enough of that side of it. Are we not likely to become self-centered and merely think of God as serving us, the blessed Lord Jesus giving Himself for us, dying for us, rising again for us, nurturing our souls, guiding us through the wilderness of this world and bringing us at last to glory?

Some of the hymns we sing are almost entirely occupied with the blessings that come to us, but these do not rise to the height of the Christian's communion at all.

It is when we are through thinking about what God is doing for us, and are seeking by grace to adore the One who does all this for us, and are letting our lives go out to Him as a thank-offering in praise and adoration, that we truly rise to the height of our Christian privileges. Then it is that He gathers these sweet and lovely fruits in His garden. It is not only fruit upon which He feeds, but it is that which gives satisfaction in every sense.

“Camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.”

Some of these plants give forth their fragrance as the rain and dew fall upon them; some of them send forth a subtle aroma when the rays of the sun are warming them. Others never exude, never give out their fragrance, until they are pierced and the sap flows forth. So is it with our lives. We need all kinds of varied experiences in order that we may manifest the graces of Christ in our behavior, and it is not only that we are to be for His delight in the sense in which I have been speaking, but we are to be for His service too, in making known His grace to a lost world.

In the next verse we read, **“A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.”**

Let us see if we can correlate that. There is Lebanon, that backbone mountain range of Palestine, with Mt. Hermon to the north covered with snow. The streams coming down from Lebanon sink into the ground, and as they do so, springs rise here and there in vales and dells to the surface of the earth, and so the living water flows forth to refresh the thirsty soil.

The living water represents, as we know from John’s Gospel, the blessed Holy Spirit. Our Lord Jesus said, **“If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified”** (John 7:37-39).

Now the Spirit of God descending from above enters into our inmost being and then we have the living water springing up unto everlasting life. Our own hearts are refreshed and gladdened, and the living water in abundance flows out from us for the blessing of a lost world around.

Is this not a beautiful picture?

My brother, my sister, what do you know of this life in the fulness of the Holy Spirit? Far too many of us seem to be content to know that our sins have been forgiven, that we have a hope of heaven based upon some testimony that we have received from Holy Scripture. But it is more than this.

We are not merely to have the assurance of our own salvation, but every one of us should be as watered gardens for Him, with streams flowing out for the refreshment of dying men and women all about us.

In what measure is your life touching others?

In what measure are you being used of God to win other souls for Christ?

If we have to confess, as many of us would, that we have never had the privilege of winning one soul that so far as we know we have never yet give a testimony to any one that has really been blessed in his or her coming to Christ, let me suggest that there must be something that is hindering the outflow of the living water.

Can it be that great boulders of worldliness, selfishness, pride, carnality, sinful folly or covetousness are literally choking the fountain of living water, so that there is just a little trickling when there should be a wonderful outflowing? If this is the case, seek by grace to recognize these hindrances and deal with them one by one.

Away with worldliness, away with pride. Who am I to be proud? What have I to be proud of?
“What hast thou that thou hast not received?”

- Away with carnality,
- Away with self-seeking,
- Away with covetousness,
- Away with living for my own interests.

Let me henceforth live alone for Him who shed His precious blood for me and redeemed me to Himself. As I thus deal with these things that hinder the outflow of the living water, I will myself enter into a new, living, blessed and wonderful experience, and my testimony then will count in blessing to those about me, and my life will be at its best for Him.

There has been some question as to the identity of the first speaker in verse sixteen.

It is very evident that the one who speaks in the last sentence is the bride, but is it the bride or the bridegroom in the first part of the verse?

“Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.”

If it is the bridegroom who is speaking, then he it is who is calling on the winds to blow upon what he calls, **“my garden,”** the heart of his bride, in order that she may be at her best for him. If, on the other hand, as I am personally inclined to believe, it is the bride who is speaking, then it indicates her yearning desire to be all that he would have her to be.

Dear child of God, is that your desire?

Do you yearn to be all that Christ would have you to be, or are you still actuated by worldly and selfish motives that hinder communion with Him? Listen to these words again, as we think of them as coming from the lips of the bride, **“Awake, O north wind.”**

That is the cold, bitter, biting, wintry blast.

Naturally she would shrink from that as we all would, and yet the cold of winter is as necessary as the warmth of summer if there is going to be perfection in fruit-bearing. It is as though she says, *“Blessed God, if need be, let Thy Spirit breathe upon me through trial and sorrow, and difficulty and perplexity; take from me all in which I have trusted from the human standpoint; bereave me of everything if Thou wilt; leave me cold, naked, and alone except for Thy love, but work out Thy will in me.”*

The best apples are grown in northern climes where frost and cold have to be faced. Those grown in semi-tropical countries are apt to be tasteless and insipid. It takes the cold to bring out the flavor. And it is so with our lives. We need the north winds of adversity and trial as well as the zephyrs of the south so agreeable to our natures.

The very things we shrink from are the experiences that will work in us to produce the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

If everything were easy and soft and beautiful in our lives, they would be insipid; there would be so little in them for God that could delight His heart; and so there must be the north wind as well as the south. But, on the other hand, we need the south wind also, and our precious Lord tempers the winds to every one of us. **“Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.”**

It is a blessed thing to be in that state of soul where we can just trust ourselves to Him.

Charles Spurgeon tells of a man who had the words, “God is love,” painted on his weather-vane.

Someone said, “That is a queer text to put there. Do you mean to say that God’s love is as changeable as the wind?”

“Oh, no,” said the other; “I mean that whichever way the wind blows, God is love.”

Do not forget that. It may be the north wind of bereavement when your dearest and best are snatched from you, but **“God is love.”** It may be that the cold wind of what the world calls ill-fortune will sweep away like a fearful cyclone all that you have accumulated for years, but **“God is love,”** and it is written, **“The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet”** (Nahum 1:3).

Perhaps you have been asking questions like this, “Why has God allowed the sufferings we have had to undergo? Why has He allowed these weeks and months with no employment and everything slipping away, the savings of years gone?”

Dear child of God, He giveth not account of any of His matters now, but,

“When you stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o’er life’s finished story,”

then He will make it clear to you, and you will know why He allowed the cold wind to blow over His garden as well as the south wind, and if you would bow to Him now, and recognize His unchanging love, perhaps He would be able to trust you with more zephyrs from the south than you ordinarily experience.

We are not subject enough to the will of God. We need to learn the lesson that, **“All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose”** (Romans 8:28).

“Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.”

In other words, *“Anything, Lord, that will make me a better Christian, a more devoted saint; anything that will make me a more faithful child of Thine, so that Thou canst find Thy delight in me.”*

Is that your thought? And then she looks up into the face of her bridegroom and says, **“Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.”**

How He delights to get such an invitation as that from His people.

He responds to her immediately, for the first verse of chapter five really belongs to this section. She no sooner says, **“Come,”** than he replies, **“I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.”**

It closes with a scene of rapturous communion. And when you look up to the Beloved of your heart and say, **“Come into Thy garden and eat Thy pleasant fruits,”** He will immediately respond, **“I am come.”** You will never have to wait; you will never have to give Him a second invitation. If you have any time for Him, He always has time for you.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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