

Session 2 An Overview of the Storyline in the Song of Solomon

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I. SONG OF SOLOMON: THE BRIDE’S LIFE VISION (SONG 1:2-4)

A. The theme throughout the Song of Solomon is the Bride’s spiritual journey to be drawn near to Jesus in intimacy, and then to run in ministry, in partnership with Jesus and others. Note that the prayer request to be “drawn” is singular, “draw *me*,” but “run” is plural, “*we* will run.”

Note: Capitalization of words in the Song, such as *king* and *beloved*, has been changed in my notes to denote the spiritual (allegorical) interpretation of the King as Jesus.

²Let Him [Jesus] kiss me with the kisses of His mouth [Word]...⁴Draw me away [intimacy]! We will run after You [in ministry]. (Song 1:2-4)

B. The Song has two main sections; each section has a different primary focus.

Song 1-4 is focused on God’s people receiving *their inheritance* in God.

Song 5-8 is focused on God receiving *His inheritance* in His people.

II. HER JOURNEY BEGINS WITH THE PARADOX OF GRACE (SONG 1:5-11)

A. The paradox of our faith is that we are dark in our heart, yet we are lovely to God. Some emphasize how sinful we are (darkness of heart), and others how beautiful we are to God (in Christ). Both of these truths must be held in tension to understand our relationship with God.

⁵I am dark [in heart], but lovely [to God]...⁶my own vineyard [heart] I have not kept. (Song 1:5-6)

B. We are lovely before God even in our weakness for four reasons:

1. ***God’s personality:*** God possesses loving and kind emotions. Because of who God is, He sees us through His eyes as beautiful. Beauty is in the eyes of the Beholder.
2. ***The gift of righteousness:*** We receive the beauty of Jesus’ righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21).
3. ***A willing spirit:*** A willing spirit, the sincere intention to obey God, is beautiful to Him.

⁴¹The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Mt. 26:41)

⁴...the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit...is precious in the sight of God. (1 Pet. 3:4)

4. ***Our eternal destiny:*** Forever in the resurrection we will live in perfect love. God sees the end from the beginning, and thus sees us in the light of eternity, with perfect obedience.

C. She wants more of God and to be fed by Him. He affirms the beauty of her sincere love (1:8-11).

⁷Tell me, O You whom I love, where You feed your flock... ⁸O fairest among women... (Song 1:7-8)

III. UNDERSTANDING HER IDENTITY IN GOD’S BEAUTY (SONG 1:12-2:7)

- A. She begins her journey into being fascinated by Jesus’ beauty. She sees salvation as more than being forgiven and blessed in her circumstances, but as an invitation to live fascinated by Jesus.
¹⁶Behold, You are handsome [beautiful], my Beloved! (Song 1:16)
⁴One thing...will I seek...all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD. (Ps. 27:4)
- B. She gains insight into her identity in Christ as a beautiful rose in God’s sight.
¹I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. (Song 2:1)
- C. As we rest under the shade of the cross and pursue intimacy with Jesus, we experience the sweetness of God’s presence. In this lifestyle she becomes “lovesick” for Jesus (Jn. 15:9-11).
³I sat down in His shade [resting in Jesus’ work on the cross] with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. ⁴He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner [leadership] over me was love. ⁵Sustain me...refresh me...for I am lovesick. (Song 2:3-5)

IV. CHALLENGING THE COMFORT ZONE (SONG 2:8-17)

- A. Jesus is pictured as effortlessly skipping over the mountains or obstacles (human and demonic). Jesus has all power. Thus no obstacle can hinder Him from fulfilling the Great Commission.
*⁸The voice of my Beloved! He comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.
⁹My Beloved is like a gazelle...¹⁰My Beloved spoke, “Rise up, My love...and come away...”
¹⁷Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved. (Song 2:8-17)*
- B. She has learned to enjoy His presence sitting at His table (2:3-5). Jesus wants more than a Bride who enjoys His presence; He also wants deep partnership with her in the work of the kingdom. Therefore, He disturbs her “comfort zone” to call her to a higher place of obedience and faith.
- C. Initially she refuses Him by telling Him to *turn* and go to the mountain without her (2:17).
- D. Her compromise is due to her immaturity, not to her rebellion. She fears that total obedience will be too difficult. She loves Him, but does not think she has the strength to obey Him fully.

V. SHE EXPERIENCES GOD’S DISCIPLINE (SONG 3:1-5)

- A. She experiences God’s loving discipline as He hides His face from her. The sweetness of Song 2:3-5 is gone. God disciplines us in His affection for us (Heb. 12:5-12). His correction has no rejection. He longs to pry our fingers from that which holds our heart in bondage. The Father loves us too much to allow us to come up short of partnering with Jesus in a deep way.
¹By night on my bed I sought the One I love...but I did not find Him. ²I will rise now...I will seek the one I love...⁴I found the One I love. I held Him and would not let Him go... (Song 3:1-4)
- B. She “arises” to obey by leaving the comfort zone (3:2); His manifest presence returns (3:4).

VI. A FRESH REVELATION OF JESUS AS A “SAFE SAVIOR” (SONG 3:6-11)

Jesus reveals Himself as one who is safe to obey. She comes to believe that 100% obedience is the only safe path in life. Walking with Jesus on the water is far safer than being in the boat without Him.

VII. THE PROPHETIC HEART OF THE BRIDEGROOM GOD (SONG 4:1-8)

A. The maiden rose up to go into the city (3:2), but she does not go to the mountains until Song 4:6. Yet she was beautiful to the King. He described eight aspects of beauty that He saw in her (4:1-5). He prophetically proclaimed her “budding virtues.” God defines us by the cry in our heart, not by our struggles. He calls things that are not as though they were (Rom. 4:17). The Lord called Gideon a mighty man while he was hiding from his enemies with fear (Judg. 6:11-12).

¹***Behold, you are fair [beautiful], My love! Behold, you are fair. (Song 4:1)***

¹⁷***God...calls those things which do not exist as though they did. (Rom. 4:17)***

¹²***The Angel...said [to Gideon], “The LORD is with you...mighty man of valor!” (Judg. 6:12)***

B. Initially she refused to obey His call to come to the mountain (2:10). But in Song 4:6, she commits to go to the mountain of myrrh—a fragrant burial spice that speaks of suffering.

⁶***I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh. (Song 4:6)***

VIII. THE RAVISHED HEART OF THE BRIDEGROOM GOD (SONG 4:9-5:1)

A. In verse 9, the King is revealed as the Bridegroom, with a heart ravished with desire and affection for His Bride. This insight into the King’s heart equips her to embrace the cross (4:6, 16).

⁹***You have ravished My heart...My spouse...with one look of your eyes... (Song 4:9)***

B. Jesus gave a sevenfold description of her purity (4:12-15). A king’s garden was private, in contrast to a public one with defiled water. We declare this to God in our desire to walk in purity.

¹²***A garden enclosed is My sister, My spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. (Song 4:12)***

C. She wants the fragrance of God’s spices to increase in her life. Her garden speaks of her heart. The *north wind* speaks of the cold, bitter winds of winter. The *south wind* speaks of the warm, refreshing winds of summer. She is no longer afraid of the testings of God.

¹⁶***Awake, O north wind, and come, O south! Blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out. Let my Beloved come to His garden and eat its pleasant fruits. (Song 4:16)***

D. She wants the King to have His inheritance in her, and thus prays, “Let my Beloved come to His garden.” In the first four chapters, she was concerned with her inheritance (her garden). In the last four chapters, her focus is on Jesus’ inheritance in her. From now on, her heart is His garden. He defined her life in a radically different way. Nine times He used the ownership word “My.”

¹***I have come to 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. (Song 5:1).***

IX. THE ULTIMATE TWOFOLD TEST OF MATURITY (SONG 5:2-8)

- A. Jesus embraced the cross in the long, lonely night in Gethsemane. Jesus comes to us as the Man of Sorrows in Gethsemane (5:2) and invites us into the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 3:10).
²The voice of my Beloved! He knocks, saying, “Open for Me...My love...My perfect one; for My head is covered with dew, My locks with the drops of the night.” (Song 5:2)
- B. Jesus asks us to “open up,” that He may come to us as the Man of Gethsemane. He wants to be the goal of our life, not just the stepping stone to our agenda of seeking happiness.
- C. She responded in obedience, saying that she had taken off her dirty robes and washed her feet in His grace (5:3). She was not afraid of obeying Him, asking for the bitter north winds (4:16). She arose immediately with a heart yearning in love for Him (5:4). The locks of her heart had myrrh on them, speaking of her commitment to embrace death to herself in her pursuit of Jesus.
⁴My heart yearned for Him. ⁵I arose to open for my Beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh...on the handles of the lock. (Song 5:4-5)
- D. She experienced her first test as God withdrew His presence (5:6). This affected her ability to experience intimacy with God. The awareness of His presence left her for the second time in the Song (3:1). However, this time it was not related to disobedience (as in 3:1-2), but rather to her mature obedience. Some medieval teachers called this “the dark night of the soul.”
⁶I opened for my Beloved, but my Beloved had turned away and was gone. My heart leaped up when He spoke. I sought Him, but I could not find Him...He gave me no answer. (Song 5:6)
- E. She experienced her second test as her ministry was rejected by men (5:7). The watchmen, or the leaders, struck her and took her veil (spiritual covering), so that she could no longer function in ministry in the Body. Her ministry was gone. How will she respond to Him now?
⁷The watchmen...struck me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took my veil away from me. (Song 5:7)
- F. **Summary:** Jesus called her to join Him in Gethsemane. He then allowed her to be tested in both ways related to her life vision—to be drawn near to Him and to run with Him in ministry (1:4).
⁴Draw me away [intimacy]! We will run after You [in ministry]. (Song 1:4)

X. THE BRIDE’S RESPONSE: SHE IS LOVESICK INSTEAD OF OFFENDED (SONG 5:8-6:5)

- A. She responded to God with love and to others with humility by asking for help from the daughters of Jerusalem. The Lord was asking her, “Will you be Mine, even if I withhold the things you deeply desire? Will you be Mine when you cannot feel My Presence? Will you love and trust Me when you are disappointed by circumstances?” She responded with love (5:8).
⁸O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved...tell Him I am lovesick! (Song 5:8)

- B. The daughters of Jerusalem ask the Bride a question (5:9). In essence, they ask, “Why do you love Him so much? He has abandoned you. He removed His presence from you (5:6) and allowed the elders to wound you as they took your ministry from you” (5:7).

⁹What is your Beloved more than another beloved, O fairest among women? (Song 5:9)

- C. Her answer revealed her love for the King—she gave ten descriptions of His beauty (5:10-16).

¹⁰My Beloved is white [dazzling, NAS]...and chief among ten thousand. ¹¹His head is like the finest gold; His locks are wavy...¹²His eyes are like doves...¹³His cheeks are like a bed of spices...His lips are lilies...¹⁴His hands are rods of gold...His body is carved ivory...¹⁵His legs are pillars of marble...His countenance is like Lebanon...¹⁶His mouth is most sweet, yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my friend. (Song 5:10-16)

XI. JESUS PRAISES HER AFTER THE SEASON OF TESTING (SONG 6:4-10)

- A. After the twofold test was over, the King broke His silence as He lavished affection on her and described her beauty (6:4-10). He declared that she was as beautiful as *Tirzah* (a city in northern Israel) and as lovely as *Jerusalem* (the capital of Israel). He proclaimed that she was as awesome as a victorious army with banners. When an army returned victorious from battle, they displayed their banners in a military procession. She defeated her greatest enemies—those in her heart.

⁴O My love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners! (Song 6:4)

- B. Jesus is “conquered” by His Bride’s extravagant love. Our eyes of devotion deeply touch the King’s heart. All the armies in hell cannot conquer Jesus, but the eyes of His Bride “conquer” Him when they are true to Him in times of testing. The Bride’s maturity is described (6:5c-7).

⁵Turn your eyes away from Me, for they have overcome Me. (Song 6:5)

- C. We see her preeminence in the King’s court (6:8). The attendants around His heavenly court are seraphim, cherubim, and angels without number. The Bride’s beauty is described (6:10).

⁸There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins without number. ⁹My dove, My perfect one, is the...only one of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her...¹⁰Who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as an army with banners? (Song 6:8-10)

XII. THE VINDICATION OF THE PERSECUTED BRIDE (SONG 6:11-7:9A)

- A. As the Bride walks in the revelation of who she is before the Lord, she is persecuted. Mature love with a deep commitment to serve the Church (6:11) overcame her (6:12). She received a sincere response from some in the Church (6:13a, b), but a hostile response from others (6:13c, d).

¹³Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon you! What would you see in the Shulamite—as it were, the dance of the two camps? (Song 6:13)

- B. The Bride is pictured as being vindicated by discerning saints (7:1-5) and by Jesus (7:6-9a).

XIII. THE BRIDE'S MATURE PARTNERSHIP WITH JESUS (SONG 7:9B-8:4)

- A. The Bride describes the mature partnership that she walked out with full obedience (7:9b-10).
- B. The Bride expresses deep partnership in her intercession for more power (7:11-13), in her boldness in public ministry (8:1-2), and her full union with the King (8:3-4).

XIV. THE BRIDAL SEAL OF MATURE LOVE (SONG 8:5-7)

- A. Jesus invites her to receive the seal of fire upon her heart and to walk with Him in holy, jealous love. God is a consuming fire and desires to impart His fire into our hearts.

⁶Set Me [Jesus] as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death, [God's] jealousy as cruel [demanding] as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame. ⁷Many waters [sin or pressures] cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised. (Song 8:6-7)

- B. God's commitment is to seal our heart supernaturally with His fiery love. This refers to walking in the grace to walk in the first commandment to love God with all our heart.

XV. THE BRIDE'S FINAL INTERCESSION AND VIEW OF HERSELF (SONG 8:8-14)

- A. The Bride intercedes for the church (8:8–9) and for Jesus' presence (8:14). In verse 10, we see her threefold confidence as a wall (selfless motives), as a tower (supernatural ability to nurture), and as one with peace (all emotional hindrances in her are removed).
- B. The Bride experiences the power and enjoyment of living before His eyes instead of before the eyes of men. Her sense of importance is rooted in eternity as she has revelation of giving account before God (8:11). The Bride has a revelation of her spiritual maturity before God (8:12).
- C. The King gives His final commission to the Bride (8:13-14). Her urgency is expressed in prayer. His last words to her commend her faithfulness in serving the Church. She continued to dwell in His gardens serving God's people. She did not quit or retreat into selfish isolation. Earlier, Jesus had called her to worship and prayer by telling her that her voice was sweet to Him (2:14).

¹³You who dwell in the gardens [the Bride], the companions listen for your voice—Let Me [Jesus] hear it! ¹⁴Make haste, my Beloved [Jesus], and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices. (Song 8:13-14)

¹⁷The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" (Rev. 22:17)

XVI. QUESTIONS FOR SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Identify one point that inspired or challenged you. Why? What will you do differently to apply it?
2. Identify one point that you want to impart to a younger believer. Why? How will you approach this?
3. Identify one point that you would like to gain more understanding of. How will you seek to gain it?