

Session 2 Delighting in the Lord: Enjoying God (Song 2:3-5)

I. DELIGHTING IN THE LORD

- A. The Bride spoke of the delight she had in relating to the King. She declared, “Your love is better than wine” (1:2); the King “is pleasant” (1:16); “I sat down in His shade with great delight” (2:3). The Christian life includes the glorious discovery of the pleasure of knowing and loving God.

³*I sat down in His shade with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. (Song 2:3)*

²*For your love is better than wine...¹⁶You [King] are handsome, my Beloved! Yes, pleasant! (Song 1:2, 16)*

- B. The Lord is beautiful and so delightful. David exhorted people to delight themselves in the Lord.

⁴*Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. (Ps. 37:4)*

- C. There is nothing more powerful or pleasurable than when God reveals God to the human spirit. “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him” (John Piper).

II. THE SUPERIOR PLEASURES OF THE GOSPEL

- A. God is the author of pleasure. He created us to enjoy physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual pleasures. Our longing for pleasure is part of our created design, and it must be satisfied. Satan did not invent the idea of pleasure. He perverted pleasure and offers empty substitutes that never satisfy.

- B. The greatest pleasures available to the human spirit are spiritual pleasures that come to us when God reveals God to our spirit. This exhilarates our heart at the deepest levels.

- C. I refer to the “superior pleasures of the gospel.” These pleasures include the beauty of Jesus and the beauty and glory He gives the redeemed—those who know, love, and reign with Him forever.

¹⁷*Your eyes will see the King in His beauty. (Isa. 33:17)*

- D. All human beings have a God-given longing for pleasure and fascination. Understanding that our longing for these two things is by design is foundational to pursuing holiness in a biblical way.

- E. The call to holiness is a call to the *superior pleasures of being fascinated* by the revelation of Jesus.

- F. The Spirit escorts the redeemed on a divine treasure hunt into the beauty of Jesus. The Spirit takes what Jesus possesses and the things Jesus is thinking and feeling and declares them to us.

¹⁴*“He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” (Jn. 16:14)*

III. JOY AND PLEASURE COME FROM GOD'S PRESENCE

- A. David described God's heart and leadership as being full of joy and pleasure. God's throne is the epicenter of joy and pleasure for the universe. God is a happy God with happy holiness.
¹¹In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forever. (Ps. 16:11)
²⁷Honor and majesty are before Him; strength and gladness are in His place. (1 Chr. 16:27)
- B. The "river of pleasures" includes the Holy Spirit revealing the beauty of God to the human spirit.
⁸You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. (Ps. 36:8)
- C. The Holy Spirit causes rivers of living water to flow in the heart of a believer (Jn. 7:37-39).
- D. Spiritual pleasure is what motivates us to abandon the lesser things and give ourselves to Jesus.
- E. Our longing for these pleasures is satisfied *in part* in this age and *in fullness* in the age to come. Even though these are God-given pleasures, they are temporary and need to be repeatedly received.
- F. In small measures, the Spirit inspires and tenderizes our heart. These subtle flashes of glory are to be a regular part of our relationship with God. Over time they change us emotionally.
- G. We are liberated from the *inferior pleasures* of sin by experiencing the *superior pleasures* of the beauty of Jesus. We will not overcome the darkness of immorality, bitterness, or pride by focusing on it. We do not decrease darkness in us by focusing on darkness. We must change our focus to be preoccupied with gaining more of the *light of the superior pleasure of the revelation* of God.
- H. The best way to overcome darkness is to turn on the light. No one seeks to remove the darkness in a room by opening a window to throw out buckets of darkness. They simply turn on the light. The way to decrease darkness in our lives is to focus on increasing the amount of light we enjoy.
⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (Jn. 1:5, RSV)
- I. We sin because we believe that it will provide a pleasure that is superior to obeying God. The power of temptation rests on a deceptive promise that sin will bring more satisfaction than living for God. Scripture calls this the deceitfulness of sin, or deceitful lusts (Eph. 4:22; Heb. 3:13).
²⁵...choosing to suffer affliction...than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin. (Heb. 11:25)
- J. John Piper says, "Sin is what we do when our hearts are not satisfied with God."
- K. The call to holiness is the call to enjoy God by living fascinated. The battle for holiness is the battle to be preoccupied with the right thing; it is won in the pursuit of the spiritual pleasure that comes from enjoying God. The way forward in holiness is to be preoccupied with living fascinated in God.

IV. THE KING IS PLEASANT (1:15-16)

- A. We see two foundational truths. First, the King declared that she was fair, or beautiful, to Him. Second, He revealed His affection for her as the one He called “My love,” or “the one I love.” The beauty that God possesses is the very beauty that He imparts to His people (Isa. 61:3).

¹⁵***Behold, you are fair [beautiful], My love! Behold, you are fair [beautiful]! (Song 1:15)***

- B. The King’s personality is pleasant, or pleasing, to the Bride. When we see Jesus as beautiful and pleasant, we enjoy our relationship with Him more, and then obedience seems reasonable.

¹⁶***You are handsome [beauty of the King], my Beloved! Yes, pleasant! (Song 1:16)***

V. THE BRIDE DEEPLY ENJOYS HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE KING (2:3-5)

- A. The Bride declared that the King is the apple tree who refreshes her heart spiritually (2:3).

³***Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my Beloved among the sons [human race]. I sat down in His shade [resting in grace] with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste.***

⁴***He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner [leadership] over me was love.***

⁵***Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick. (Song 2:3-5)***

- B. **Apple tree:** The apple tree is defined as that which refreshes (2:3a, 5). As we rest in God’s grace under the shade of the cross, and as we pursue loving Jesus, we find delight in God’s presence.

- C. **Sat down:** As we sit before God, we experience more of the delight of His presence (2:3b)—the Word becomes a delight, and His presence is sweet to those who faithfully sit before Him.

³***I sat down in His shade with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. (Song 2:3b)***

- D. **His shade:** The cross is the only tree that can shade us from the scorching heat of our sin and guilt. We only enjoy the shade of God’s presence by resting in the shade of Jesus’ cross. We cannot rest in our achievements by relating to God based on our spiritual maturity.

- E. Jesus’ banner, His leadership, over her life led her to experience and express His love (2:4). Jesus’ plan for each of us is to lead us to God’s banqueting table—the place we celebrate His love for us and ours for Him. The ultimate fulfillment of this table is the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7). We can enjoy tokens of the *wedding table* in this age by the power of the Word and Spirit.

⁴***He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner [leadership] over me was love. (Song 2:4)***

- F. **Banner:** In the ancient world, armies marched in battalions under a flag or banner. The banner over our life is Jesus’ leadership—He leads us to grow in love. God’s first priority—His *banner purpose*—for our life is greater than giving us more physical comfort, money, ministry influence, etc. His banner over our life is that we would grow in understanding and impartation of His love.

- G. The Bride cried out for greater encounter with God’s love (2:5). She became sick with love. She cried out to be sustained by experiencing a greater measure of His love, presence, and Word.

⁵***Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick. (Song 2:5)***

- H. **Lovesick:** The truth conveyed by the term “lovesick” speaks of the joy of delighting in God’s beauty, feeling the spiritual pleasures of the Word, feeling the Spirit’s presence on our heart, and understanding what it means to be loved by God. This can also be referred to as “the fullness of joy” (Ps. 16:11). Paul’s heart was exhilarated—he was “lovesick” for God. He gave up everything—his position and prestige. He considered it as rubbish; it meant nothing to him (Phil. 3:8).

⁸***I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ...for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ. (Phil. 3:8)***

VI. THE GLADNESS OF THE KING

- A. The delight and gladness of the King is in the Bride and her activities (Song 3:11; 4:13, 16; 7:6, 13).

¹¹***...see King Solomon...on the day of his wedding, the day of the gladness of his heart. (Song 3:11)***

- B. God has gladness, delight, and joy in His people. His capacity for gladness is infinite in measure and eternal in duration. He designed humans in His image, with a great capacity for gladness.

⁴***“For the Lord delights in you...⁵And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.” (Isaiah 62:4-5)***

- C. A commonly held perspective is that *God is mostly mad or mostly sad when we relate to Him.*

1. How does God feel most of the time? How does He feel when He looks at you?

2. Our view of God’s emotions affects how we approach and relate to Him.

- D. Jesus walked in the anointing of gladness more than any man in history (Heb. 1:9; cf. Ps. 45:7).

⁹***God has anointed You [Jesus] with the oil of gladness more than Your companions. (Heb. 1:9)***

- E. Gladness and joy are at the center of Jesus’ personality. Jesus imparts His joy to His people as they feed on His Word; their emotions are gradually transformed, so that His joy becomes their joy.

¹¹***“These things I spoke...that My joy may remain in you...that your joy may be full.” (Jn. 15:11)***

- F. God’s end-time restoration of His people will flow from His heart of rejoicing and gladness.

¹⁷***“The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.” (Zeph. 3:17)***