

Song of Songs – Into the King’s Chamber (1:1-4)



A. v.1 – The Greatest Song of All

1. ‘Song of Songs’ means ‘the greatest song of all songs’ (1 Kings 4:32). There is no superlative in Hebrew, so we have many expressions like the King of kings, the Holy of holies, etc. My approach to this book is *‘an earthly model of heavenly love.’* It is the most beautiful poetry of God’s holy passion, revealing the ‘why’ behind the ‘what’ of creation.
2. *Who is the Shulamite?* A girl from Shunem (c.f. Josh 19:18; 1 Sam 28:4) in lower Galilee, south of Nain, southeast of Nazareth, and southwest of Tabor.
3. This book highlights the revelation of (i) God’s affection; (ii) the beauty of Jesus; (iii) the beauty of the bride in Jesus’ eyes; (iv) the process of bride maturing in love.

There will be a dramatic increase in the interest and revelation of God’s heart and affection in the end-time church! (John 17:26 c.f. Rev 22:17)

There are THREE responses of redeemed - (1) ‘Tremble’; (2) ‘rejoice’; (3) ‘kiss’. (Ps 2:11-12)

B. v.2 - Divine Kiss of the Word and Spirit

1. It is important not to project this verse sensually to the Lord. It is a metaphor for intimacy with God.
 - a. *‘Let him kiss me with kisses of his mouth.’* The Song opens with a *bold request (prayer) of the bride - ‘Let him...’* What an opening verse! Rabbis understood this as the *‘kisses of the Torah’* for 3000 years. *‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’* (Matt 4:4; Deut 8:3) It is the joy of hearing the voice of God by the intimate moving of the Spirit in our hearts!
 - b. *The divine kiss (intimacy) IS the Brides’ supreme request!* God appeared to Solomon and said to him, *‘Ask! What shall I give you?’* (2 Chr 1:7-12). Solomon was given a blank check from the Lord. His request revealed the hidden desires of his heart and they pleased the Lord. Solomon asked for the *‘wise and discerning heart’*, lit. *‘hearing heart’* (1 King 3:9) - *the ‘continual kisses of God’s Word.’* God tests His people to ask anything, *‘If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.’* (John 14:13-14 c.f. Mk 11:23). What would be the number one request (supreme prayer) of your life?
 - c. *Three major metaphors of intimacy with God in the song:* (i) Divine kiss (1:2); (ii) Divine embrace (2:6; 8:4); (iii) Divine seal (8:6). The bride’s journey completes with the seal of God’s holy love (8:6-7).
2. The reason for this request = *‘For your love (God’s love) is better than wine.’*
 - a. ‘Your loves (plural)’ – There are THREE levels of love of God: (i) Creator’s love (Jn 3:16); (ii) Redeeming love (Rom 5:8); (iii) Bridegroom’s love (Eph 3:17-19). What is the measure of Christ’s love for His Bride?
‘As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.’ (John 15:9)
‘I in them, and You in Me; that they may be perfect in one that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.’ (John 17:23)
 - b. *‘Better than wine’* (NKJV) / *‘more delightful (pleasurable)’* (NIV) – Wine intoxicates us and brings delight and pleasure to our hearts. It exhilarates our hearts, ‘makes our heart sing.’ There are TWO types of wine: (i) the passing pleasures of worldly sin (Heb 11:25); (ii) the good wine of God’s blessing in the natural realm, i.e., financial increase, a new sphere of influence, physical health, favour with others, etc.

Is God’s love better than all these things? How much better is intimacy with God than the wine of all other blessings? Paul calls this, ‘the surpassing greatness of knowing Jesus Christ’ (Phil 3:10). He is not referring to a one-off spiritual encounter, but consistent daily growth in the love of God through the Word. Is our personal life consistent with our confession?
 - c. Our hearts are made in such a way that we will never find true rest and joy until we walk intimately with God. We are created for pleasure: *‘In Your presence is fullness of joy...at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.’* (Ps 16:11).

There are THREE longings of heart: (i) Security (ii) Self-worth (iii) Significance. There is a God-shaped vacuum that cannot find a home except in God.

There are TWO areas of rest for the believers' heart: (i) Total forgiveness – *'he who is forgiven much loves much.'* (Luke 7:47); (ii) Intimacy with God. (Ps 131:1-3)

There are SEVEN longings of the human heart (Mike Bickle, D. Hiebert): (i) longing for the assurance that we are enjoyed by God; (ii) longing to be fascinated; (iii) longing to be beautiful; (iv) longing to be great; (v) longing for intimacy without shame; (vi) longing to be wholehearted and passionate; (vii) longing to make a deep and lasting impact.

When these longings are not filled in relationship with God, it leads to emptiness, pain, boredom, loss of meaning, dissatisfaction, etc. *We sin when our heart is not satisfied in God.* Usually, the temptation to experience the pleasure of sin is more powerful than the fear of punishment. We must discover the superior pleasure and delight of walking with God and encountering Him before we can consistently walk in personal holiness. Hence, the first cry of the bride is the acknowledgment of her deepest longing and for the kiss of God's word (intimacy) to touch the deepest part of her heart. This is how we learn to live before the audience of One.

C. v.3 – The Fragrance of Jesus' Name

1. 'Name' is more than designation in the Bible. It reveals one's internal character. (i) The fragrance of a rose comes from its internal qualities. It is something we can't see, but its internal qualities are diffused in the air, impacting our senses and powerfully stirs our hearts. Moses' requested an intimate encounter with the Lord (Ex 33:18-23). (ii) The revelation of God's nature was in His name. God 'proclaimed' His name and 'manifested' to Moses (Ex 34:5-7) – *'compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to the thousands, forgiving wickedness, punishing the guilty.'* (iii) As the result of this encounter, God's presence was transmitted to Moses, and his face shone (Ex 34:29-30) – c.f. 'beauty of the Lord' (Ps 90:17). C.f. Ps. 27:4
2. Thus, the fragrance and perfume of Jesus' name is His very presence – His character, thoughts, emotions that impact our heart and transform us. And the fragrance of the knowledge of Jesus is diffused through us, transforming the world around us, and touching those who come into contact with us. *'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.'* (2 Cor 2:14-15)
3. The virgins – the daughters of Jerusalem - represent the genuine, yet immature believers throughout the song. They represent those who are at the present more concerned about the things of this world than the things of God. (Taylor) But because of the fragrance of Jesus' name poured forth, they love Him!
4. Throughout the Song, the perfume of the bridegroom is imparted to the bride. His perfume becomes the bride's own perfume - the nine fragrant spices of the bride (4:13-16). It is through the impartation of Christ's name that our love for God is awakened and perfected. *'I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.'* (John 17:26)

Jesus our bridegroom is still doing this in our midst by the power of the Holy Spirit as we gather to praise, pray, and exalt Him, which leads to our sanctification. *'I will declare Your name to My brethren, in the midst of the assembly I will sing praises to You.'* (Heb 2:12)

D. v.4 – The Bride's Vision

1. Bride's two-fold vision and goal
 - a. (i) *'Draw me away!'* (ii) *'We will run after you.'* 'Draw away' is singular (life of intimacy). 'Run after' is plural (belonging to the community of faith and ministry). C.f. Col 1:28-29

We are both (i) drawn away (singular) to the Lord (in intimacy); and (ii) run together (plural) by serving the Lord (in ministry).

- b. The bride's life vision is set: To walk in intimacy with the Lord and to serve Him in the body of Christ. Being drawn away is a precious gift of God to our hearts, initiated by the Spirit of God moving in our hearts. Running requires exertion of sustained energy. *There is often tension between the two priorities*. Being drawn in intimacy with the Lord empowers our running for Him in our service. Otherwise, we easily end up in burnout, pain and disillusionment.
2. Brought into the King's Chamber
 - a. The bridal chamber is where she develops her inner life in the Spirit and the Word, and abiding in the His love. (C.f. 2:4 – banqueting house) Heb. 'a chamber inside a chamber' – It could be a reference to the 'Holy of Holies' inside the temple chamber.
 - b. The chamber experiences refer to the times God carries us to Himself by granting us deep spiritual experiences in Him, where He comforts and confronts us. E.g., dreams, visions, prophecies, revelations, and times of spiritual intimacy. During such times we are veiled to the world around us and we develop our secret history with God. Our times in the chamber form and fashion our spirit.

It is a tragedy when a believer achieves a prominent visible ministry position based on gifts, yet live in a shallow impoverished spiritual life. '*...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man...to comprehend with all the saints ... the love of God.*' (Eph 3:16) This is the time of our preparation in the life in the Spirit.
 3. Together with other virgins (believers), the bride pledges to remember the King's love and rejoice in His love above all other things in life. This is what the communion table (fellowship) is all about. So, the journey begins. Let us remember and rejoice in the love of God above all other things in life. Amen.