

Songs - Revelation of God's Heart (4:1- 5:1)



A. Overview

1. We experience most of the song through the bride's viewpoint and her monologue. But Ch 4 is unique in the following ways:-
 - a. It is mostly the bridegroom's direct speech, giving us *rare and intimate insights into how the Lord feels about us* through the eyes of the bridegroom. It is difficult for most of us to connect with *God's love for us* than *our love for Him*, and we need the Spirit's help to gain insight into God's heart. *'For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.'* (1 Cor 2:10-12)
 - b. The bride responds to the wooing of the Lord only twice (4:6 & 16), which are significant confessions and turning points in the whole storyline of the Song of Songs.
2. The primary emotion of the Lord's heart here is cherishing: *'that He might (i) sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church...For no one ever hated his own flesh, but (ii) nourishes and (iii) cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.'* (Eph 5:26-29)
 - a. The young bride is coming out of the season of discipline, yet the Lord speaks with *great gentleness and affection*, lifting any guilt and shame off of her heart.
'Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great.' (Ps. 18:35)
 - b. When we feel cherished by the Lord our heart is empowered to overcome all kinds of obstacles, fears, and besetting sins. So, we need to primarily focus on connecting with the truth of God's emotions rather than being preoccupied with our failures.
 - c. The Lord relates to us in the depth of His grace. *'Judge nothing until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.'* (1 Cor 4:5)
 - d. The Lord's gracious editorial work is evident in the lives of His saints:
Abraham - *'He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief...'* (Rom 4:20)
Gideon - *'The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valour.'* (Judges 6:12)
David - *'I have found David...a man after My heart, who will do all My will...he had served the purpose of God in his own generation and fell asleep.'* (Acts 13:22, 36)

B. The Cherished Bride (v1-5)

1. The bridegroom describes SEVEN virtues of His bride, however immature still. The Lord cherishes and affirms our budding virtues within, starting with a double affirmation: *'You are fair (beautiful), my love.'* (repeated twice - v1) – even after the previous season of His loving discipline (3:1-2).
 - a. Dove's eyes – of single-minded devotion, purity and spiritual insight. (Eph 1:18)
 - b. Hair – (c.f. Nazirite vow, Num 6) of dedication and consecration. Mt Gilead was fertile, where sacrificial animals were raised in preparation for temple sacrifices.
 - c. Teeth – the ability to chew the meat of the Word (Heb 5:12-14), clean and well balanced in pairs with no missing set, needed to chew and digest the often-paradoxical nature of truth.
 - d. Lips and Mouth – the scarlet colour often speaks of redemption (Jos. 2:21). i.e., Speech salted with grace (Col 4:6). The mouth speaks of intimacy (1:2). *'You are fairer than the sons of men. Grace is poured upon Your lips. Therefore, God has blessed you forever.'* (Ps 45:2)
 - e. Temple (countenance/cheek) – emotional makeup. Pomegranate is very sweet and red (blushing - innocence). Pomegranates decorated the hem of the priestly garment and the temple pillars. This fruit was the symbol of life (Ex 28:33).
 - f. Veil – hidden life of modesty and tenderness.

- g. Neck – Neck speaks of our will. (c.f. stiff-necked people) ‘like a tower of David built for an armoury, on which hang a thousand bucklers...’ refers to the resolute will to obey God’s word and to do His will – which is a mighty defence and weapon against Satan’s kingdom (c.f. Ezk 27:11).
- h. Breasts – ability to nurture others. Gazelle feeding among the lilies (purity). (c.f. 1:5-6) She was perfect to the bridegroom! How could this be? Because ‘beauty is in the eye of the beholder!’

C. Bride’s FIRST Response (v6-8)

1. ‘Until the day breaks, and shadows (of compromise) flee away...’ (4:6, C.f. ‘Turn, my beloved...’ 2:17)
 - a. ‘I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh’ (4:6) – After experiencing the Lord’s deep cherishing, she embraces the mountain of myrrh in order to follow him - the way of the cross. ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.’ (Lk 9:23-24)
 - b. ‘...and to the hill of frankincense’ – prayer life. ‘Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.’ (Ps 141:2, C.f. Rev 5:8) We ascend the hill of frankincense to receive strength to climb the mountain of myrrh. Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane: ‘...Nevertheless, not my will, but Yours be done.’ (Lk 22:42)
2. ‘You are all fair (altogether beautiful, NIV) ... no spot in you.’ – It is the first time ‘ALL’ is said of the bride. She has only said ‘Yes’. She hasn’t gone to the mountains yet. The Lord sees there is no area in which she consciously resists His leadership. ‘Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse (My bride)’ – again the first time this title is used for the Shulamite. (c.f. ‘Rise up, My love, My fair one and come away.’ 2:10)
 - a. Her ‘Yes’ stirred a powerful emotional response from the Lord, like an acceptance of His marriage proposal. He keeps calling her, ‘My spouse’ (or My Bride).
 - b. The bridegroom is calling the bride to His house in the forests in the mountain range of Lebanon, which was famous for fragrant flowers (4:11; Is 35:2 – ‘glory of Lebanon’) and wild beasts (Hab 2:17). The Lord calls His bride to both spiritual heights and warfare with lion’s dens and leopards (c.f. 1 Pet 5:8; Eph 6:10-12).
 - c. Mt Hermon is the Mt Transfiguration (Matt 17:2; Ps. 133:3), and also Mt Senir (Deut 3:8-9). Mt Amana is believed to be a different peak of the same mountain range. Amana in Hebrew means ‘constant, permanent, integrity, the seal of verity, covenant.’

D. Ravished Heart of God (v9-15)

1. ‘You have ravished my heart’ (repeated twice). Ravished means ‘overcome with an intense feeling of joy.’ Or ‘you have made my heart beat faster (NASV, Heb ‘לִבִּי’ - making cake, i.e., a volcanic eruption of emotion.) This is holy ground which we’ll never fully grasp. The veil is lifted off the Lord’s heart. This is the ‘Why’ behind the Cross. ‘As my Father loved Me, I also have loved you.’ (John 15:9) E.g., David ‘panted’ after God – He was ‘man after God’s heart.’ (Ps 42:1, c.f. Acts 13:22)
 - a. ‘My sister’ – an affectionate term for wife (C.f. Tobit 7:16; 8:4, 7; sharing the same humanity). ‘My spouse’, sharing the same destiny. All SIX uses of this title are from this section. (4:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 5:1)
 - b. God who is full of affection and love toward us is a radical Christian teaching, far from the Greek understanding of ‘gods’ who were emotionally detached. (C.f. Stoics and Epicureans, Acts 17:18) Judaism doesn’t have this view of intimate, loving God.

This is the mystery - the Triune God who is both transcendent beyond human understanding, and imminent closer than our very breath. God who is Almighty and yet so tender and suffering with us. There is no other religion that reveals God who is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and yet intensely desires a personal relationship with each one of us. This truth alone gives us infinite reasons to go on living – speaks of the absolute sanctity of life.

- c. Consider the following.
 - (i) ‘one look of your eye’ – the single-eyed devotion to the Lord

- (ii) *'one link of necklace' – the will to follow Him*
- (iii) *'how much better than wine is your love' – The Lord values our love more than all the glories of His creation. Our obedience of love deeply affects God's heart (C.f. 1:2)*
- (iv) *'scent of your perfume' – our inner thoughts reaching out to Him (2 Cor 2:14-15)*
- (v) *'lips...drip as honeycomb' – speech as sweet and healing*
- (vi) *'honey and milk are under your tongue' – our thoughts behind our words are sweet and nourishing. C.f. 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.' (Ps 19:14), 'They sharpen their tongues like a serpent. The poison of asps is under their lips.'(Ps 140:3)*
- (vii) *'fragrance of your garments' – acts of obedience and lifestyle of godliness. 'For the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.' (Rev 3:18, 19:7-8)*

2. *'A garden enclosed..., a spring shut up, a fountain sealed' (C.f. Num 19:15).*

- a. Private garden (1 Cor 3:6-9) – not open to the public, therefore unpolluted by wild animals. Our hearts and deep affections kept only for the One. They are not for sale, nor to impress anyone else. It is 'unshared love'.
- b. The Lord's fragrance becomes her fragrance – (nine gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit?)
 - (i) pomegranates (means 'exalted')
 - (ii) Henna (1:4)
 - (iii) spikenard (1:12)
 - (iv) Saffron (costly lovers perfume)
 - (v) Calamus (Heb. redeemed)
 - (vi) Cinnamon (holy oil, Ex 30:23)
 - (vii) frankincense (for the golden altar, 3:6)
 - (viii) myrrh (resin formed by cutting a tree, 1:13; 3:6)
 - (ix) aloe (healing balm, Ps. 45:8)

'With all the chief spices' – describes the best of the fragrant spices (C.f. all the merchant's fragrant powders 3:6). The bride looks like the LORD in Revelation - jasper and sardius, etc. (Rev 4:3, 21:18-21)

c. THREE descriptions of the water source to her garden:

- (i) fountain (flowing from within)
- (ii) Well (deep inner reservoir)
- (iii) Streams (flowing above ground - Ps 1:3) C.f. John 4:14 - *'...but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.'*

E. Bride's SECOND Response (v16)

- 1. *'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.'* (4:16)
 - a. North wind - cold winter wind of adversity, tests and trials. South wind - warm summer winds of the seasons of blessing and increase. For all the fruit trees to mature, both types of winds are required. She is no longer afraid of the adversity of life and she invites all seasons of life to work together to mature the fragrance of her garden (her character) to flow out for the Lord.
 - b. *'Let my Beloved come to his garden'* – this is both her invitation to the Lord to come to her garden, and her confession that her garden is His garden.
- 2. *'I have come to my garden' (5:1)* – Notice the 'my' repeated 9 times. C.f. *'He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him...If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.'* (John 14:21, 23)

The scene closes with the bridegroom inviting His friends to the rich feast.