

Songs - The Heart of the Bride (5:2-6:3)



This song celebrates the beauty of married love, but we are looking through the lens of the love relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and His church.

- a. The garden of the bride's heart has been transformed into His garden after her THREE responses to the Lord. (i) 'Yes' to mountain of myrrh (4:6); (ii) 'Yes' to the north and south winds (4:16); (iii) Invitation to the beloved, i.e., Come into 'His' garden' (4:16).
- b. The focus of the song turns from '*her inheritance*' (Ch 1-4) to '*His inheritance*' (5:8). What has caused this turning? (i) The Lord's loving discipline (3:1-5); (ii) The revelation of His glorious leadership and invitation (3:6-11); (iii) His heart of cherishing for the bride (4:1-5).
- c. The King's response to His garden = '*I have come to My garden*' (Notice 'my' repeated 9 times, C.f. John 14:21, 23). It is followed by joyously inviting others to the feast to celebrate their love.

A. 5:2-9 The Dark Night of the Soul – Ultimate Test of Love

1. **A New Invitation** – there is a knock on the door at night, and it is different from the last time (2:9; 3:1).
 - a. Shulamite had a *restful sleep* knowing that *she fully belongs to Him*. Even restfully asleep, yet her heart is awake to the voice of the beloved (1 Thess 5:6). And His voice calls out to her in the middle of the night, calling her: (i) 'my sister' (humanity); (ii) 'my love' (intimacy); (iii) 'my dove' (loyalty); (iv) 'my perfect one' (mature love). This endearment is used, just before and just after the test (5:2; 6:9).
 - b. '*He knocks saying, 'Open for me...'*' – This is the third invitation to open the door of her heart (Rev 3:20). However, the Lord has a very different look than all the previous encounters. '*...my head covered with dew. My locks with the drops of the night.*' (5:2) Is he vulnerable? Is he in need? It is Jesus of Gethsemane calling out to her (Lk. 22:44) The invitation is to share in the fellowship of His sufferings. '*...that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.*' (Phil 3:10)
 - c. '*I have taken off my robe; How can I put it on again? I have washed my feet; How can I defile them?*' (5:3) Is this a small hesitation because of inconvenience? Maybe it is affirmative self-talk (C.f. Lk 22:42). In any case, she arises swiftly to open the door (of her heart). The moment she saw his cold and wet hand on the door latch, her heart 'yearned' to reach out to Him (5:4).
 - d. Her fingers dripped with liquid myrrh (5:5). Did the fragrant oil transfer from his fingers to hers? Did her hand drip with oil so she couldn't open the door immediately? Myrrh goes into the making of the anointing oil (Ex 30:23). It is a symbol of suffering and death. Nicodemus brought 100 pounds of mixture and aloes to embalm Jesus' body (c.f. Jn 19:39). It was His anointing for burial.
Heidi Baker – In a vision, the Lord said to Heidi when she was saved, 'You are married to Me.' When He kissed her hand, her hands began to drip with oil.
2. **Two-Fold Tests** – The bride's initial two-fold vision was: '*pursuing intimacy*' & '*running in ministry*' (1:4)
 - a. His presence withdrawn – '*I 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; I called him, but he gave me no answer.*' (6:4)

Her heart leaped and she got up to open the door. And she looked for him and called out to him, but there was no answer. But unlike last time the Lord's presence is not easily found. It is not the Lord's discipline. She is in full obedience. This is often known as '*the dark night of the soul*' (St John of the Cross, 16th C) where the presence of the Lord is hidden for a season, not of our fault (C.f. 3:4). Jesus promised us, '*I will never leave you nor forsake you,*' (Heb 15:5) but He can withdraw His discernible presence for a time for a purpose.

Hezekiah: '*God left him [Hezekiah] to test him and to know what was in his heart.*' (2 Chr 32:31)

Job: '*Have you considered Job, that there is none like him on the earth.*' (Job 1:8)

Joseph: 'He sent a man before them – Joseph – who was sold as a slave. They hurt his feet with fetters. He was laid in irons. Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the LORD tested him.' (Ps. 105:18-19. Russian proverb - 'The hammer that shatters glass forges the iron.'

- b. Her veil is taken away – (Veil - symbol of authority, 1 Cor 11:10). The watchmen and the keepers of the walls are a picture of spiritual leaders set over her in the body of Christ. They 'found her', 'struck her', 'wounded her' and 'took away her veil' (removed her spiritual authority and ministry). This speaks of spiritual abuse. Rejection, especially by the spiritual authorities over our lives leaves deep scars. Nothing seems to be working out for her in this season, and the Lord's presence is not quickly found by her cry. She is in her Gethsemane. His myrrh is becoming her myrrh experience.
- c. The bride's last plea – 'I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem.' (C.f. 2:7; 3:5; 8:4) In the past, this phrase was voiced by the narrator or the Spirit (repeated 3 times). This time it is clearly the bride's voice, and it is a desperate plea. What would she be crying during this time of deepest pain and crisis? 'If you find my beloved, that you tell him I am lovesick!' (5:8)

This is the deepest cry of her heart. And it is a response of deep 'humility' and 'love'! It is not the voice of vengeance and justice for herself. She speaks of her heart as 'lovesick' for the Lord! (Heb. 'חָלָה' 'chalah' - 'weak and ill', Samson - Jud 16:17, Gen 48:1. Dan 8:27 – 'And I, Daniel fainted and was sick for days...') The watchmen (plural) wounded her, but it did not wound her relationship with the Lord. The cry for more of the Lord was deeper than any other cry within her even in pain and confusion. The pain drove her closer to the Lord rather than away from Him.

How does Jesus view the wounding of the cross? 'And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms? Then he will answer, 'Those with which I was **wounded in the house of my friends.**' (Zech 13:6). How do we respond to the wounding of life? Jesus did not deliver John from prison, but said, 'Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.' (Matt 11:6)

What will be our cry in times of crisis? 'Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him.' (Job 13:15)

B. 5:10-6:3 Questions from the Daughters of Jerusalem & the Bride's Response

1. **FIRST Question from the daughters of Jerusalem:** 'What is your beloved more than another beloved (repeated twice) ... that you so charge us?' (5:9) The powerful love and devotion of the bride to the Lord amazes them, 'After all that you've been through, you still love Him that much? Even when He doesn't seem to be there for you, let the watchmen hurt you and take away your ministry? What makes him so special compared to other men who can give you the ministry you want?'

The greatest witness we bear for the Lord is our passion and devotion for Him and for each other. This is the first and the second commandment. They are more powerful than the most spectacular gifts, 'I in them, You in Me, that they may be perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.' (Jn 17:23)

2. **The Bride's Glorious ANSWER:** The bride explodes in words of love for her beloved! Her eyes were fixed on the Lord's beauty, not the bitterness of her trials. The eloquence of her words reveals her deep and heartfelt insight and knowledge of her beloved. She truly knows Him. She sees, '...the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' (2 Cor 4:6)

<u>Description of His features</u>	<u>Song of Songs 5:10-16</u>	<u>Revelation 1:11-17</u>
General statement of His beauty (At initial encounter)	White & Ruddy (= Radiant & Red)	One like Son of Man (Dan 7:13) (Father = jasper & sardius)
Introduced as (His value)	Chief among Ten Thousand	Alpha/Omega & First/Last
Head – His leadership	Finest gold	White like wool & snow
Hair/Locks – His dedication	Wavy & black as a raven	White like wool & snow
Eyes – His knowledge	Doves & rivers of waters	Flame of fire
Cheeks – His emotional makeup	Bed of spices & scented herbs	

<i>Lips – His words</i>	Lilies dripping with myrrh	Sound of many waters
<i>Hands – His action</i>	Rods of gold set with beryl	Holding seven stars (churches)
<i>Body – His compassion & administration</i>	Carved ivory & sapphires	Garment down to his feet, girded with a golden band
<i>Legs – His walk</i>	Pillars of marble set on gold	Fine brass refined in the furnace
<i>Countenance – His glory</i>	Lebanon & cedars	Sun shining its full strength
<i>Mouth – His Words</i>	Most sweet	Sharp double-edged sword
<i>The response of the encounter</i>	<i>‘Altogether lovely. This is My beloved, and this is my friend’</i>	‘I fell at His feet as dead’
<i>Revealed as</i>	Beloved, Friend, Bridegroom	Judge & King

3. **SECOND Question from the daughters of Jerusalem:** *‘Where is your beloved gone (repeated twice) ... that we may seek Him with you?’ (6:1)*
- The bride’s spirited answer filled with the deep personal knowledge of the Lord, causes the girls to change their question from *‘Why are you so dedicated to the Lord?’* to *‘Where can we find Him?’*
 - They are asking the same question the bride at the beginning of her journey now realising that they do not really know the Lord as the bride does (1:7). The bride has asked the daughters of Jerusalem to help her find Him (5:8), but now the role is reversed (6:1). They refer to Him as ‘your beloved’ as He is not *their beloved* in the same way yet.
4. **The Bride’s Surprising ANSWER:** The bride answers,
- My beloved has gone to His garden (His Church) (5:1).
 - To the beds of spices (virtuous and pure hearts) (2:13 c.f. Ps 18:25-26).
 - To feed His flock in the gardens (committed to His people), and to gather lilies (attracted to purity) (1:8; 2:16).

There is a significant turning in the bride’s confession at this point, *‘I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine. He feeds his flock among the lilies.’ (6:3 c.f. 2:16; 7:10)*