Message Two

The Second Stage of Song of Songs—Called to Be Delivered from the Self through the Oneness with the Cross

Scripture Reading: S. S. 2:8—3:5; Matt. 3:13-17; 21:32; 16:24

I. We must see that Song of Songs guides us into an understanding and a knowing of Christ as our resurrected, ascended, enthroned, and coming King, typified by Solomon:

A. The first stage of the seeking lover's pursuit reveals how much the King meant to her; but in the second stage of her pursuit, the King is the center, and it is the time for the King to appreciate her, look upon her, and desire her—2:14.

B. In the first stage of our pursuing Christ, it was Christ for me; now it is me for Christ; Psalm 45 reveals that if we have an affectionate love for the Lord Jesus as our King, our tongue will be the pen of a ready writer, ready to write our love for Him and our praise to Him with our experience and enjoyment of Him in all that He is—v. 1; Matt. 12:34b; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6; Isa. 6:5-7.

II. In Song of Songs 2:8—3:5 the lover of Christ is called by Him to be delivered from the self through her oneness with the cross; three critical words help us to interpret this section—*cross, self,* and *introspection.*

III. "The voice of my beloved! Now He comes, / Leaping upon the mountains, / Skipping upon the hills. / My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. / Now he stands behind our wall; / He is looking through the windows, / He is glancing through the lattice"—2:8-9:

A. After the Lord's seeker has some success in pursuing Christ for her satisfaction, she falls into introspection, which becomes a seclusion as a wall that keeps her away from the presence of Christ—v. 9.

B. Introspection is to examine the self by looking into and analyzing the self; the self is constituted with introspection—cf. 1 Cor. 4:3-4.

C. We must look away unto Jesus; our self is not worthy to look at—Heb. 12:1-2a; John 3:14-15; 12:31-32; Num. 21:4-9.

D. His leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills like a gazelle or a young hart signify Christ's power of resurrection to overcome all difficulties and barriers; as the power of resurrection, He is the mountain-leaping and hill-skipping Christ—S. S. 2:8-9.

E. The Lord's seeker is disappointed by her introspection, but the Lord is calling her into the springtime—vv. 10-11; cf. Heb. 3:7-8; John 8:58.

F. When she looks into herself, it is the wintertime of dormancy; when she looks away to the resurrected Christ, she enters into the stage of spring, the stage of resurrection—S. S. 2:10-13.

G. The secret to victory is never to look at ourselves apart from Christ and never to consider the self that is outside of Christ—Heb. 12:1-2a.

IV. "My dove, in the clefts of the rock, / In the covert of the precipice, / Let me see your countenance, / Let me hear your voice; / For your voice is sweet, / And your countenance is lovely"—S. S. 2:14:

A. We are delivered from the self through our oneness with the cross by Christ's resurrection power through His fellowship—v. 14:

1. Christ wants His seeker, His dove, to remain in a crucified condition continually, that is, to remain in Him as the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the precipice—v. 14; Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 4:10-11.
2. However, to remain in the cross is a difficult matter, like entering into the clefts of the rock and the covert of the precipice high in the mountains by a rugged road.
3. Our being crucified is not by our natural life or strength but by the power of resurrection, by the presence of the mountain-leaping and hill-skipping Christ, "the hind of the dawn"—Psa. 22 title; Prov. 4:18.
4. In order to empower and encourage His lover to rise up and come away from her low situation in her introspection of the self, Christ empowers her by showing her the power of His resurrection (S. S. 2:8-9), and He encourages her by the flourishing riches of His resurrection (vv. 10-13).
5. It is by the power of Christ's resurrection, not by our natural life, that we, the lovers of Christ, determine to take the cross by denying our self; it is also by the power of Christ's resurrection that we are enabled to be conformed to His death by being one with His cross—Matt. 16:24; Phil. 3:10; Rom. 8:13.
6. The reality of resurrection is the pneumatic Christ (John 11:25), who as the consummated Spirit indwells and is mingled with our regenerated spirit (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17).

B. It is in such a mingled spirit that we participate in and experience the resurrection of Christ, which enables us to be one with the cross to be delivered from the self and to be transformed into a new man in God's new creation for the fulfillment of God's economy in the building up of the organic Body of Christ.

V. We must die daily, take up our cross daily, being conformed to Christ's death by the Spirit as the power and riches of His resurrection for the sake of His Body—15:31, 36; Luke 9:23; Phil. 3:10; cf. Hosea 6:1-3:

A. We must take the way of righteousness by entering into the vision and ministry of the age, recognizing that we are good for nothing but death and burial so that we may enjoy the open heavens, the descending Spirit of God, and the speaking of the Father—Matt. 3:13-17; 21:32; cf. Ezek. 3:1-3.

B. We must enjoy the precious death of Christ with its sweet effectiveness and the precious resurrection of Christ with its repelling power in Christ as the compound Spirit for the church life—Exo. 30:23-25; Rom. 14:17-18; cf. Phil. 1:19-21; 2:13; 3:10; 4:11-13.

C. We must take up the cross, which means to take up the will of God; the cross is God's will, and God's will is our food—Matt. 26:39; Heb. 10:5-10; John 4:34:
1. The one church is God's will, and every brother and sister in the church is God's will; thus, to bear the cross is to bear the church and to bear all the saints so that we would have the genuine oneness—Eph. 4:1-3; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2.
2. The oneness in the divine glory is realized when the self is fully denied, and we are Body-centered, not self-centered—John 17:21-23; 1 Cor. 12:24-25.
3. The cross is the will of God in our outward environment and the killing of Jesus in our inward being, which work together to kill our natural man and remodel us with the God of resurrection—2 Cor. 4:10-12; 12:7-10; 13:3-4.
4. To take up the cross for the Body is to let the peace of Christ arbitrate in our hearts, to take the forgiving Lord as our life, to receive the Lord's believers, and to turn away from those who cause divisions and spread death—Col. 3:12-15; Prov. 25:15, 20, 26; Rom. 15:7; 16:17; Num. 6:6-7; Lev. 5:2.

D. We must enjoy the crucified and resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit to be the solution to all the problems in the church life—1 Cor. 1:9; 2:2; 15:45b, 58.

E. We must eat the crucified and resurrected Christ as the tree of life, taking Him as our daily "antibiotic"—Rev. 2:7; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; John 6:57.

F. We must enjoy the crucified, limited Jesus as the land of wheat and the resurrected, unlimited Christ as the land of barley—Deut. 8:8; John 12:24; 6:9.

G. We must enjoy the crucified Christ as our spiritual rock by drinking of Him and flowing Him out as the water of life in resurrection to save us from the iniquity of the sanctuary—1 Cor. 10:4; John 19:34; Exo. 17:6; Num. 20:8; 18:1; Jer. 2:13; John 7:37-39; Ezek. 47:1; Rev. 22:1.

H. We must take the crucified and resurrected Christ as our dwelling place, our hiding place, the secret place of the Most High—S. S. 2:14; Psa. 90:1; 91:1; 31:20; 83:3; Isa. 32:2; Exo. 33:22; cf. Matt. 6:6; John 14:23.

I. We need to live a pure and simple life of trusting in God in the midst of an intermixed and complicated situation—S. S. 2:2; 1 Kings 7:17-20; Matt. 6:28.

J. We must continually exercise our spirit to deny the self, which is both the embodiment of Satan and the soul declaring independence from God—Rom. 1:9; Matt. 16:22-24.

K. We must follow the pattern of the Lord Jesus, who lived a crucified life to express the divine life, living out the divine attributes as His human virtues; to follow Him as our model intrinsically is to bear in our body the brands of Jesus by the grace of Christ—John 5:30; 1 Pet. 2:21; Gal. 6:17-18.

L. We must serve by the Spirit of God for the glory of God and have no confidence in ourselves—Phil. 3:3; 1 Thes. 3:13; 2 Cor. 4:5; 1 Cor. 10:31; cf. Prov. 25:28; 28:25-26; 29:23.

M. We must see a vision of the crucified Christ and apply the cross of Christ to our bitter situations and our bitter being to enjoy the resurrected Christ as our Healer and healing power—Exo. 15:22-27; 1 Pet. 2:24; Rev. 2:7; Matt. 9:12.

N. We must "switch on" the law of the killing and resurrecting Spirit of life, keeping ourselves in constant contact and touch with the Lord, to remain in the divine dispensing for the divine economy—Rom. 8:2, 10, 6, 11, 13.

VI. The issue of our being delivered from the self through our oneness with the cross is that we experience the flourishing of resurrection life, we experience and enjoy Christ, we grow in the divine life, we are beautified through transformation, and we become conscious of the Body of Christ and live in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body—Phil. 3:10; Col. 2:19; Rom. 12:4-5, 15; 1 Cor. 12:12-27.

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