Message Six

The Sixth Stage of Song of Songs—Hoping to Be Raptured

Scripture Reading: S. S. 8:1-7, 13-14

I. Through her growth and transformation in life, the lover of Christ becomes mature in life to the extent that she has become the same as Christ in every respect except that she has the flesh; she is hoping to be saved from her groaning for her flesh, indicating that she hopes to be raptured through the redemption of her body—S. S. 8:1-4; Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Eph. 4:30b; Phil. 3:21.

II. "Who is this who comes up from the wilderness, / Leaning on her beloved?"—S. S. 8:5a:

A. The lover of Christ who came up once from the spiritual wilderness (the worldly environment) by herself (3:6) now comes up from the fleshly wilderness (the earthly realm) by leaning on her Beloved, trusting in Him helplessly:

1. *Leaning on her beloved* implies her feeling that she is powerless and unable to walk apart from the Lord; she makes herself a burden for her Beloved to carry—2 Cor. 12:9-10; 13:3-4.
2. *Leaning on her beloved* implies that, like Jacob, the socket of her hip has been touched, and her natural strength has been dealt with by the Lord—Gen. 32:24-25.
3. *Leaning on her beloved* implies that she seems to find herself pressed beyond measure, and this seems to last until the wilderness journey is over—2 Cor. 1:8-9.
4. A trusting life in the Lord is indispensable; we should trust in Him helplessly until the Holy Spirit exclaims, "Who is this who comes…leaning on her beloved?":
   a. "Trust in Him at all times, O people; / Pour out your heart before Him; / God is a refuge to us"—Psa. 62:8.
   b. "Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, / For in You I trust. / Make known to me the way on which I should walk, / For to You I lift up my soul"—143:8.
   c. "Those who trust in Jehovah are like Mount Zion, / Which cannot be moved but abides forever"—125:1; concerning Mount Zion, see footnote 1 on Psalm 48:2.

B. As she is waiting for His coming, she is going out with Him to meet Him (cf. Matt. 25:1); by leaning on our Beloved, we constantly enjoy Him as our "going-out" strength to leave the world behind (Gen. 5:22-24; Heb. 11:5-6).

III. "Set me as a seal on your heart, / As a seal on your arm; / For love is as strong as death, / Jealousy is as cruel as Sheol; / Its flashes are the flashes of fire, / A flame of Jehovah"—S. S. 8:6:

A. She asks her Beloved to keep her by His love (heart) and His strength (arm), for His love is as strong as unshakable death and His jealousy is as cruel as unconquerable Sheol, which is like the jealous Jehovah, who is a consuming fire (Deut. 4:24) that burns up all the negative things.

B. "When she recalls her original condition, she cannot help but be filled with humility. She cannot help but consider her emptiness, the vanity of her experience, the undependability of her mind, and the futility of her pursuit. Her only hope is the Lord. She realizes that whether she can endure to the end does not depend on her own endurance, but on the Lord's preservation. No spiritual perfection can sustain a person until the Lord's return. Everything depends on God and His preserving power. When she realizes this, she cannot help but exclaim, 'Set me as a seal on your heart, / As a seal on your arm.' The heart

is the place of love, while the arm is the place of strength. 'Set me as permanently as a seal upon Your heart, and as indelibly as a seal upon Your arm. Just as the priests bore the Israelites upon their breasts and their shoulders, remember me constantly in Your heart and sustain me with Your arm. I know that I am weak and empty, and I am conscious of my powerlessness. Lord, I am a helpless person. If I try to preserve myself until Your coming, it will only bring shame to Your name and loss to myself. All my hopes are in Your love and power. I loved You before. But I know the undependability of that love. Now I look only to the love You have toward me. I held You once, and it seemed to be a powerful grip. But now I realize that even my strongest grip is just weakness. My trust is not in my holding power, but in Your holding power. I dare not speak of my love to You any longer. I dare not speak of my grasping of You any longer. From this point on, everything depends on Your strength and Your love'"—Watchman Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee,* vol. 23, "The Song of Songs," p. 119.

C. His love cannot be quenched by trials nor drowned by persecutions nor replaced by any wealth—S. S. 8:7; Rom. 8:35-39; 1 Cor. 13:1-3.

IV. The last two verses of Song of Songs are vital for our being prepared to be the bride of Christ so that we may hasten His coming and bring Him back—"O you who dwell in the gardens, / My companions listen for your voice; / Let me hear it. / Make haste, my beloved, / And be like a gazelle or a young hart / Upon the mountains of spices"—8:13-14:

A. She addresses Him as the One who dwells in the gardens, the transformed believers; she says that her companions listen for His voice; then she implores the Lord, "Let me hear it."

B. Our daily prayer must be, "Lord, let me hear Your voice today—the voice of my Beloved"; the Lord says to the seeker, "Let Me hear your voice" (cf. 2:14); we want to hear the Lord's voice, and He wants to hear our voice for mutual, intimate fellowship together.

C. Our lives depend on the Lord's words, and our work depends on the Lord's commands; in the work that we as lovers of Christ do for Him as our Beloved, we need to maintain our fellowship with Him, always listening to Him.

D. The central point of our prayers should be our longing for the Lord's speaking—Rev. 2:7; Isa. 50:4-5; Exo. 21:6.

E. Without the Lord's words, we will not have any revelation, light, or knowledge; the life of the believers hinges totally upon the Lord's speaking.

F. Thus, it is vital that we have the attitude of a hearer, like Samuel, who said, "Speak, for Your servant is listening" (1 Sam. 3:10), and like Mary who "sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to His word" (Luke 10:39); the Lord's call in these last days is: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 2:7a).

G. Song of Songs 8:13-14, concerning our hearing and listening to the Lord's voice so that He can return, is intrinsically related to Ephesians 5:25-27; these verses in Ephesians encapsulate God's entire economy:

1. Verse 25 says that Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her; He died to redeem us, to purchase us, because He wants us to be His bride—this verse reveals Christ as our Redeemer with His judicial redemption.
2. Verse 26 continues by saying that He gave Himself up for the church "that He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word"—this verse reveals Christ as the life-giving Spirit with His organic salvation for bride preparation:
   a. In the present Christ is the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b), and as the life-giving Spirit, He is embodied in His word (John 6:63; Eph. 6:17-18; 2 Tim. 3:16).

b. *Word* in Ephesians 5:26 is not *logos* but *rhema,* which is the Lord's instant, present, living, personal word to us in order to metabolically cleanse away the old and replace it with the new, causing an inward transformation.

c. We personally need to hear our Beloved's voice, His instant, present speaking to us every day; the Lord's speaking cleanses and washes us with the flowing life of God inwardly and metabolically to sanctify and transform us; we are now in such a washing process, that the church may be holy and without blemish.

3. Ephesians 5:27 says, "That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish"—this verse reveals Christ as the Bridegroom for bride presentation:

a. In the past Christ was our Redeemer, in the present He is the life-giving Spirit, and in the future He as the Bridegroom will present the church to Himself as His counterpart, the real Shulammite, for His satisfaction—S. S. 6:13.

b. The wrinkles signify our oldness, the spots signify our natural life, and "any such things" signify everything of the old creation in us; these things are washed away by the water in His word for us to be His transformed new creation, His Shulammite.

c. His personal, particular, and direct speaking to us day by day prepares us to be His glorious bride so that He can come again to marry us—"My companions listen for your voice; / Let me hear it"—8:13.

V. As the concluding word of the poetic book of Song of Songs, the lover of Christ prays that her Beloved would make haste to come back in the power of His resurrection (gazelle and young hart) to set up His sweet and beautiful kingdom (mountains of spices), which will fill the whole earth—8:14; Rev. 11:15; Dan. 2:35:

A. The Lord says, "Yes, I come quickly"; the apostle John's response is to pray-read this word back to the Lord by saying to Him, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20); this is the last prayer in the Bible; the entire Bible concludes with the desire for the Lord's coming expressed as a prayer.

B. Such a prayer portrays the union and communion between Christ as the Bridegroom and His lovers as the bride in their bridal love, in the way that the prayer of John, a lover of Christ, as the concluding word of the Holy Scriptures, reveals God's eternal economy concerning Christ and the church in His divine love.

C. Our living a life of love, according to the Song of Songs as a love poem, makes us the *poiema,* the poem, of God, issuing in grace as our ultimate enjoyment of God (Eph. 2:10); only the grace of the Lord Jesus can enable us to experience, enjoy, and express the all-inclusive Christ and participate in the Triune God that we may become His eternal corporate expression as His ultimate Shulammite, the wife of the Lamb, for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose, that He and we may enjoy absolute satisfaction and complete rest mutually for eternity (Rev. 22:21; 19:7; 21:9).

D. "When He comes, faith will be turned to facts, and praise will replace prayer. Love will consummate in a shadowless perfection, and we will serve Him in the sinless domain. What a day that will be! Lord Jesus, come quickly!"—Watchman Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee,* vol. 23, "The Song of Songs," p. 126.

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