

Searching for Jesus

Song of Solomon 3:1-5; Jeremiah 29:13

Lord's Supper in Lewiston, ID

October 13, 2019

Greg L. Price

Many of us have had the experience of misplacing or losing something important or valuable (car keys, a wallet with your driver's license, cash, or perhaps even your car in a crowded parking lot). You searched and searched looking everywhere you could think it might be. You even retraced your steps, looking not only in different places, but looking in the same places you had already looked before.

Jesus even related parables about things that were lost (a lost coin, a lost sheep, and a lost son) and the intense search for that which was lost. But He also relates the great joy and delight in finding that which was lost (especially the joy in heaven over one lost soul that is found). The more valuable the item lost, the more intense the search for it. Is there anyone or anything more valuable than Jesus to the true Christian?

Though the Lord Jesus is never lost, it may seem to you at times that you cannot find Him. You cannot feel His presence. Where has He gone? All true Christians have had a similar experience (Job 23:8-9; Psalm 90:13). Should Jesus not be searched with greater intensity than you would look for something of this earth that you have misplaced?

You do not have some guarantee that you will find the earthly things that you have lost in this world. But you do have a guarantee from the Lord Himself that you can never lose Him (He is yours and you are His); and as you diligently search for Him with all your heart, you will surely find Him (Jeremiah 29:13). The main points from our text are: (1) The Bride Ceases Not to Search for Jesus (Song 3:1-3); (2) The Bride Finds Jesus and Holds Him (Song 3:4-5).

I. **The Bride Ceases Not to Search for Jesus (Song 3:1-3).**

A. As we concluded Song 2:16-17, the elect bride of Jesus Christ had found her comfort in her union with Him in the blessed marital covenant (the Covenant of Grace): "My beloved is mine, and I am his" (Song 2:16). Her faith was enlarged to lay hold of Him even when she could not feel His presence. She was walking by faith in His covenant promises rather than walking by sight, feelings, or experience. Just as man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God; so likewise the Christian does not live by feelings alone, but by faith in the promises of Jesus who cannot lie. Though you rejoice to have the feeling and sense of Jesus' nearness, He is no more near when you sense His presence than when you don't. Why? For this reason: "My beloved is mine, and I am his", whether I feel Him or not.

B. As we look now at Song 3:1-3, the bride is still alone as to sensing the presence of the Lord Jesus with her in His loving communion.

1. It is as a nighttime of darkness to her on her bed as she privately seeks him whom her soul loveth (Song 3:1).

a. There are nights for the true Christian where the darkness of disappointments, delays in answer to prayers, conflicts, illness, persecution, or worldliness have you crying out to the Lord on your bed for His nearness, help, and comfort. It paints a picture here of the bride searching for Jesus even when she should be sleeping. But she can't sleep because of the darkness of fears that surround her and her desperate desire to sense the presence of the Lord Jesus with her (Psalm 63:5-8). Dear ones, God sends those times of darkness into your life so that you will search for Jesus with such intensity that you are willing to

forgo food (fasting) and even sleep to His communion. Jesus loves to see that holy and loving passion in your private searching for Him.

b. In all of her private searching for the Lord to make His presence real to her in this night of trials, she says, “I found him not.” Is Jesus playing games with His beloved bride? No, He is creating in her a deep spiritual appetite to hunger and thirst for Him. Did she cease searching? Did she give up? No, she didn’t. What did she do next?

2. Christ’s beloved bride did not remain on her bed privately in seeking to find him whom her soul loveth, she arose and with even greater zeal to find Him she went searching for Him publicly (Song 3:2).

a. “I will arise now.” I will not allow the darkness or the enemy to discourage me from seeking out and finding that precious sense of closeness and familiarity with Jesus that I long to have. His sensed nearness may not be easily obtained all at once or in my first searching for it, but I will not quit seeking for Him anymore than I would quit seeking for my lost child. His nearness is of greater value than anyone or anything. She searches for him because He is her love.

b. The bride goes about publicly (note the transition) in the streets and broad ways of the city to find him whom her soul loveth. What is the city? The city to which the bride goes is the congregation of Christ’s Visible Church (Psalm 87:3; Hebrews 12:22—just as the Church Triumphant in heaven is called a city, so here is the Church Militant upon earth in Song 3:2). The bride of Jesus arises from her solitary and private bed even in the darkness of trials that she faces to seek the Lord among the brethren in the Visible Church. She does not allow her the nighttime darkness of fears, discouragement, or trials hinder her from assembling with the saints to receive their love, help, comfort, and direction in enjoying the real spiritual presence of the Lord Jesus. The streets and broad places would be the places where the bride would expect to meet the citizens of the city and continue her search for the Lord.

c. Get up and get out and fellowship with your fellow brothers and sisters in the church. Stir yourselves up from your isolation and make contact with your brethren who will renew you in your zeal to find the Lord Jesus. Communion with brethren is a means to find Jesus.

(1) Why do you come to public worship each Lord’s Day? If you don’t come chiefly to find Jesus and to enjoy His blessed spiritual presence as your worship, then you come for the wrong reason. Even fellowship with the brethren is not an end in itself, but is a means to promote the end of finding and delighting in the sweet and blessed presence of the Lord Jesus. Are you searching for Jesus?

(2) Jesus has promised to be present in the administration of His ordinances—they are His face and countenance (Matthew 28:18-20). He speaks to us through His Word and sacraments. We speak to Him through our prayers and singing of Psalms. Our great God and Savior is the chief reason we gather to worship Him and why it is so necessary to worship Him as He has commanded and authorized in His Word. Today we celebrate Lord’s Supper—the love feast of the Lord Jesus wherein He comes to us really and spiritually, and we find Him showering His love upon us through His once offered sacrifice for His elect bride. So the elect bride moves from privately seeking the Lord Jesus to publicly seeking the Lord Jesus.

d. However, she states, “I found him not” (Song 2:2). She did not sense His presence in her private communion on her bed, though she did so with a fervent heart and though she neglected sleep. But she did not walk away from her public worship with God’s people. Never allow disappointment or discouragement to keep you away from seeking Jesus in the city of God.

(1) At times the sense of Christ’s presence may not immediately be restored to you simply because you seek Him privately or seek Him publicly. Jesus promises His presence with you as you worship Him in spirit and in truth, but He does not necessarily promise that you will always have the same sense of His blessed presence with you.

(2) This is the problem with expecting the same emotional experience or

depending upon it as evidence that Jesus was with you in worship. Certainly, you should desire that Jesus overwhelm you with His presence, but do not base His real spiritual presence upon whether you feel it. That is also true as we celebrate the Lord's Supper today. He is present with you as you by faith eat of His body broken and drink of His blood shed for you. But what if you did not feel and experience His presence in some tangible way?

3. Does the beloved bride stop searching for Jesus even then? No! (Song 3:3). As the bride is seeking that sweet communion she had known with the Lord Jesus and is yet publicly in the City of God (the Visible Church), the watchmen find her, and she inquires of them, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" (Song 3:3).

a. The ministers to whom are entrusted the ordinances of Jesus are called watchmen and their calling is to watch over the flock that Jesus has entrusted to them (Ezekiel 3:17; Hebrews 13:17). A watchman was stationed upon the walls to warn the city of impending danger and to arouse the inhabitants out of slumber and sleep when the enemy was at hand. This is the calling of faithful ministers. A faithful minister does not tickle the ears of those hearing the sermon. To the contrary, he is more like one sounding a loud trumpet in their ears saying, Thus saith the Lord. The loud trumpet of the Lord trumpets forth His gospel and His commandments. We must not only love the gospel, but the commandments of the Lord Jesus as well. The gospel causes us to love God's moral law, for they are His will for our lives.

b. And so I warn you: Awaken out of your half-heartedness and give to the Lord Jesus your wholehearted worship, love, and obedience. Beware, for there are many false teachers that will seek to take you from the truth of Scripture that is summarized in our subordinate standards. Look out for those sins with which you are playing, teasing, and flirting. The warning of a faithful watchman is not because you are despised, but because you are loved. Being up on that wall as a watchman, warning the people in the City of God, will draw the attack of those who despise his warnings, but it will draw the love and appreciation of those who understand that in His instruction, counsel, correction, and admonition is the love of Jesus.

II. The Bride Finds Jesus and Holds Him (Song 3:4-5).

A. We now are informed that it was shortly after asking the watchmen if they knew where to find her beloved that the bride found Him and experienced His sweet presence and communion with her.

1. She persevered privately upon her bed at night and publicly with Christ's Church—she did not allow disappointments or delays to hinder her from searching for Him and finding Him and holding Him and not letting Him go with that renewed sense of His presence and communion with her (Matthew 15:21-28). It is truly an evidence of saving faith when you do not allow God's providences to put out the love in your heart to find the Lord Jesus and to enjoy His presence.

2. The bride then brought Jesus to her mother's house to be enjoyed by all. This is the Visible Church through whom we are begotten—Galatians 4:26. Mary is not our mother. Christ's Church is through the means of grace that God uses to bring us forth unto new life.

B. Finally, in Song 3:5 the elect bride charges the professing believers (daughters of Jerusalem with the City of God) not to stir up the Lord Jesus from His blessed presence with her by offenses that grieve Him (whether in the heart, family, or church). Once you have known and experienced the precious presence and communion of the Lord Jesus, you will persevere in seeking Him and finding Him; and once you have His presence restored to you, you will flee from and repent of all sin and corruption that offends Him and takes His sensed presence from you (Psalm 51:11). That is to be our plea even now at the Lord's Supper. Are you coming to the Lord's Supper to seek and find Him whom your loves? You will not seek Jesus with faith and love until you are first found by Jesus; for all of us are lost and no one apart from God's grace will seek Him (Romans 3:11). Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, not those who think they do not need to be found and saved by Jesus. How do you know that Jesus has found you and saved you? In faith and love you seek Him

privately at night on your bed and publicly in the city of God with God's people and in His ordinances—even in the Lord's Supper.

Copyright 2019 Greg L. Price.