

# Christ's Bride is as Irresistible to Him as Ever

Song of Solomon 6:4-9

21 November 2021

11:00 AM (Halifax); 3:00 PM (Glenholme & Livestream)

## **Introduction:**

Today as we continue to work our way through the Song of Solomon, we come to a passage that is quite timely for us.

- The church around the world is experiencing the Lord's hand of chastisement.
  - We have seen churches that have lost their pastors.
  - We have seen divisions among those who once walked together in unity.
  - We have seen individual believers struggling and overwhelmed with various trials and pressures, the threat of job loss, and division in their families.
  - We see a government that is operating with a heavy hand, imposing heavy fines on churches for holding meetings they do not approve of.
  - We are seeing nations paralysed with fear.
  - We are seeing economic collapse.
- In such times we can struggle, wondering why the LORD does not seem to answer our prayers for deliverance.
  - When we have times when we know that He has withdrawn from us to chastise us for resisting Him, we can wonder whether He loves us as much as He did before.
    - We can wonder if He is hearing our prayers at all.
    - We may wonder if we have become repulsive in His eyes.
    - We might even come to suppose that He must surely want to find another bride. Maybe He would prefer to cast us out and find a better church.

In the passage we are looking at today, Song of Solomon 6:4-9, these doubts are all answered.

- We are shown clearly what Christ thinks of His true church when He chastens her.

Let me remind you of the situation.

- In chapter 4, we saw the woman (which is the bride of Christ) being highly praised by her husband (Jesus). He is describing how attractive she is to Him and how her fruit gives Him great pleasure.
- But when we go to chapter 5, verse 2, we have her resisting Him when He wants to come to her to express His love to her and to enjoy her love to Him.
  - He is portrayed as knocking at the door, out in the dew of night, and she is portrayed as unwilling to trouble herself to let Him come in.
- At last, He reaches out to her with His hand, and she has a complete change of heart, but when she opens the door for Him to come in, she finds that He has withdrawn.
  - It is the picture of the us as church resisting Christ our husband, and then having Him chasten us by withdrawing from us for a time.
  - He does it to teach us how inappropriate it is for us to refuse to draw near to Him—to be content to keep our distance from Him.

- We saw her, in her desperate search for Him, actually growing in her love and affection for Him.
  - As she explained to her friends why she wanted to find Him so much, her love for Him became all the more fervent.
  - After hearing her describe how wonderful He is, her friends (fellow church members) wanted to find Him too and asked her where He had gone.
    - She who could not find Him before tells them that He is in His garden, enjoying the fruit of His bride and tending to her that she might bring forth more fruit for Him.
    - Last week, I explained to you that the garden is the church where He receives the church's worship and feeds her with His word and sacraments.
- We saw in 6:3 that at last she has found Him and has been restored to Him.
  - Today we get to look at what He says to her about the time of His withdrawal.
  - This is the thing that is so helpful for us.
    - Because here Jesus tells us what He thinks of us when He has withdrawn from us to chasten us.
      - Has He heard our prayers? Have they had any effect on Him?
      - Does He still think that we are beautiful?
      - Is He looking for another wife now?

Listen as I read this passage to you and then I will expound it.

I will begin in Song of Solomon 6:4 and read to verse 9.

- This is the holy word of God.

**Song of Solomon 6:4-9: O my love, you *are* as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as *an army* with banners! <sup>5</sup> Turn your eyes away from me, for they have overcome me. Your hair *is* like a flock of goats going down from Gilead. <sup>6</sup> Your teeth *are* like a flock of sheep which have come up from the washing; every one bears twins, and none *is* barren among them. <sup>7</sup>**

**Like a piece of pomegranate *are* your temples behind your veil. <sup>8</sup> There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins without number. <sup>9</sup> My dove, my perfect one, is the only one, the only one of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her. The daughters saw her and called her blessed, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.**

And there we end the reading of God's Word.

This is so helpful for us.

- Because we resisted Him, He withdrew.
- Does this mean that His relationship with us is compromised?
  - Let's look at three things He tells us in these verses.

**I. First, He tells us that though He withdrew, He cannot (and could not) resist our cries to Him to return to us.**

- When the Lord withdraws, we may think that He does not want to be with us, but verse 4 & 5 show that He actually finds it impossible to stay away when we turn to Him.

- A. He has a three-fold description of how attractive we are to Him in verse 4.
1. First, He says that we are as beautiful as Tirzah.
    - a. Tirzah was a beautiful city in the Promised Land that belonged to the tribe of Manasseh.
      - In the days of Solomon (when this Song was written), all the tribes of Israel were united (before the separation of Judah and the northern tribes).
    - b. Tirzah means *pleasant* and is thought to have been situated in a valley not far from Shechem.
      - Being in a valley, it was well watered and therefore bursting with fruitfulness.
      - The Beloved compares His bride (the church) to Tirzah because it represents the best of the Promised Land, the land that itself represents the church.
    - c. When He has withdrawn and we are seeking Him, He is not staying away because He finds us unpleasant.
      - No, He sees the fruit in us—
      - He sees our deep affection for Him by our seeking after Him and He is very pleased with our fruitfulness—it is pleasant as Tirzah.
      - We are His bride, His workmanship through His saving power, and He wants us, even though He had deemed it best to stay apart a little longer—that our yearning for Him might increase.
  2. Second, He says that we are “lovely as Jerusalem.”
    - a. Jerusalem is the trysting place of the Old Testament...
      - Here, through rituals, the Lord had His people come to Him to praise Him and to bring their offerings—to show their love to Him.
        - And He, in turn, showed His love and acceptance of them through the sacrifices of atonement that He appointed to cleanse them from their sin.
      - In this city, He showed them His love and acceptance of them, and they showed their love of Him.
        - How He delights in making love to His people in this way!
    - b. Now we have the church which, of course, consists of many different assemblies all united together in the profession of the gospel—professing to trust in the sacrifice of the New Covenant, Christ crucified, and *His* blood shed for the remission of sins.
      - God finds His bride as lovely as Jerusalem where these ordinances were kept.
      - Indeed, the Lord delights in the praise of His people just as He delights in their fruit.
      - He delights when He sees our affection expressed for Him in our worship.

- So with Tirzah, you have the beauty of the bride's fruit described and with her comparison to Jerusalem, you have the loveliness of her worship depicted.
  - But the third comparison seems to be out of place.
- 3. He says that she is as awesome as an army with banners.
  - Looking at the Hebrew word translated *awesome* makes it even more difficult because the word used here carries the idea of terrifying.
    - The suggestion is that His bride is a mighty force to be reckoned with, a power that cannot be resisted.
    - When you saw a great multitude come with their banners lifted, you knew that there was no way to effectively resist them!
  - a. Now we might think of the way that church unsettles unbelievers by her unrelenting commitment to the Lord.
    - Even though God often gives them leave to kill us or to imprison us; no matter what they do, they cannot destroy our affection for Jesus.
      - That is what unnerves them.
      - When believers suffer and die for Him, they are more feared than ever.
    - She strikes terror in her adversaries because deep down, they know that what she stands for is true.
      - For many centuries, the world has tried to snuff her out, but when she is weak, then she is stronger than ever.
        - How many times are we told in Acts, in the days when the church was most persecuted, that her enemies were afraid and dared not join the disciples.
        - It is true, as Jesus said, that the gates of Hades will not prevail against her—she is mighty and cannot be stopped.
  - b. Indeed, we may think of her in that way, but our Lord seems to be describing what she is in His eyes—a mighty overcoming force that He could not resist.
    - “Now hold on,” you will say, “How could that be? He is the Son of God.”
    - Ah yes, He is the Son of God.
      - And it is that very fact that makes her such a mighty force that He cannot resist her.
    - Because as the Son of God,
      - He has pledged His troth to her—His commitment.
      - Therefore, when she comes seeking Him, He cannot resist her.
      - His love and His commitment as God's Son won't let Him resist our prayers.
    - There is a dangerous heresy that teaches that we can claim cars and beach houses and such things by the impersonal force of faith.
      - That is absolutely not what I am talking about here.
        - I am talking about the fact that He has promised to forgive us when we come to Him, confessing our sins, and looking to Him for

salvation. He has told us that though He would chasten us, we break Him down so that He must relent.

TRANS> For proof of this, look at verse 5.

B. In verse 5, our Lord pleads with His bride to turn away her eyes from Him because they have overcome Him.

- You can see that. Ver. 5: **Turn your eyes away from me, for they have overcome me.**
- 1. This is one of those times when it would not be wise to draw a doctrine of our faith from poetry.
  - We are to get our doctrines of faith, the things we believe, from books like Romans or Deuteronomy, not poetry like the Song of Solomon.
  - What we get from Song of Solomon is beautiful enriching pictures and illustrations of the doctrines of our faith.
    - So we dare not conclude that our longing eyes for our Lord are like a powerful army that overcomes Him unless we have that doctrine taught elsewhere in God's word, but we do have it taught elsewhere!
- 2. He presents Himself to us as one who is unable to refuse our prayers when we pray for the things He has promised.
  - The heretics who teach the prosperity gospel take this true doctrine and twist it to suit their own ends, but we must not miss the truth.
    - When Jesus teaches us in John 14:13 that **"whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may glorified in the Son,"** He means it.
    - He means, for example, that a repentant sinner praying for forgiveness in His name, according to His saving work in the gospel, will be forgiven.
      - He is not able to resist such a prayer.
- 3. We have this illustrated for us in the Old Testament with the entire church which is called Israel.
  - Do you remember how Israel got her name?
    - It was when Jacob wrestled with the Lord and would not let Him go until the Lord blessed him.
    - Jacob had been trying to obtain God's blessing by his own clever tactics, and again and again the Lord blessed him anyway, but in a way that showed that it was despite his tactics.
  - But finally, Jacob had come to place where he fully understood that the only way to find God's blessing was not through clever tactics, but through faith in the Lord.
    - So it was that at Peniel, when he was threatened with extinction because of the perceived wrath of his brother Esau—this would be the extinction of the bride of Christ—he cried out to the Lord and would not stop.
    - We read of this in Genesis 32.

- In 32:6, Jacob hears that his brother Esau is coming to him with 400 men, and we are told that he was “greatly afraid and distressed.”
- So in verse 9-11, he cries out in desperation to God, confessing that he is not worthy of even the least of all the mercies that God has shown him, but claiming God’s promise:
  - His words are, from verse 9: **O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you’: <sup>10</sup> I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. <sup>11</sup> Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau...**
- In verse 24, we are told that the LORD comes and that Jacob wrestles with him all through the night so that the LORD says:
  - **“Let Me go, for the day breaks.”**
  - There it is. The LORD wants to be released, but Jacob replies, **“I will not let you go unless you bless me.”**
    - Think of it! He had a hold of the LORD.
  - And in verse 27, the Lord changes Jacob’s name because, He admits, Jacob has prevailed.
    - He says (v. 27): **“What is your name?” He said, “Jacob.” <sup>28</sup> And He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.”**
    - Jacob’s name was changed to Israel because he prevailed with God.
- Did the Lord not likewise say to Moses when Moses prayed for Israel after they worshiped the golden calf, Exodus 32:10: **“Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them, and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.”**
  - Moses had a power over Him by his prayers—it was a power rooted in the Lord’s promise to bless His people through the gospel.
    - And of course the Lord loved it when Moses prayed this way.
    - He wanted to forgive them all along, but He wanted Moses and all His people to know that forgiveness comes only by intercession in the name of Jesus (by the cross).
- So here in the Song of Solomon, Jesus is expressing the power that His bride had over Him during the whole time that she was seeking Him.
  - Though He appeared absent, He saw her eyes yearning for him the entire time and her longing eyes overcame Him—prevailed against Him.
- Isn’t that a huge encouragement!

- Even when the Lord seems far away, even when He does not seem to hear our prayers, we are in fact like a mighty army with banners coming to Him, an army that He cannot resist.
- Such is His love. Such is His faithfulness to His promise.

TRAN> Now let's look at the second thing we learn about Jesus' attitude toward us when He has withdrawn.

## II. Second, He tells us that though He withdrew, He still finds us as beautiful as ever.

- This is the teaching of verses 5-7 (starting from the middle of v. 5): **Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from Gilead. <sup>6</sup> Your teeth are like a flock of sheep which have come up from the washing; every one bears twins, and none is barren among them. <sup>7</sup> Like a piece of pomegranate are your temples behind your veil.**
- A. We have seen this description before, at the beginning of chapter 4. And the fact that we have seen it before is instructive in itself.
- After her cold treatment that caused Him to withdraw, she may well have thought that she would never be as lovely to Him as she was when He said all that.
    - Now she had a blot on her.
    - Surely she would always be much less in His eyes.
      - We can feel like that when we have sinned.
  - But by repeating the description He had used of her before she resisted Him now that they are together shows us that He thinks she is just as lovely to Him as ever.
    - His forgiveness is so thorough that it removes every spot and blemish.
  - Yes, dear brother, yes, dear sister, before the Lord, it doesn't matter what was ever on your record. The Lord gives you a new record.
    - When Jesus washes you, the record is clear so that your old sins do not stand against you.
    - There may be consequences of them—broken relationships that will never be mended and losses that will never be recovered, but as a person, you are as clean and as beautiful to Jesus as if you had never sinned.
      - His salvation is that complete.
- B. Now let's look at the particulars that are mentioned.
1. First, there is mention of the bride's hair.
    - Hair is a woman's adorning.
      - It is her glory, and He describes her hair as still like the beautiful image of goats going down the side of a hill from Gilead.
      - In short, He is telling her that she is as lovely as ever.
  2. Second, there is mention of her teeth.
    - When you sin, you feel dirty and defiled, but He says that your teeth are like a flock of sheep that have just come up from the washing.
      - You are not at all dirty anymore when you return to Him, confessing your sin. Though your sin is scarlet, He makes it white as snow.
    - When you sin, you may also feel that you are terribly disordered in His eyes,

- but no, He says that your teeth are like flock of sheep in which each is in its place and where each has a twin.
  - When you come back to Him, He puts everything in order again so that everything finds its place.
3. Third, there is the description her temple, her cheek, as like a piece of pomegranate.
- This is a description of the radiance of the bride in Christ's eyes.
  - When Christ has withdrawn you may feel that you are dull and uninteresting to Him, but no, He still finds you as radiant as you ever were.

TRANS> Such a comforting truth for us.

- He still finds us as lovely as we were before we resisted Him.
- Now let's learn the third thing that Jesus tells us about His attitude toward us when our sin has caused Him to withdraw from us for a time.

### **III. Third, He tells us that though He withdrew, He still has eyes only for us.**

A. He points to all rivals from every status...

1. The queens who are the highest rank—
  - They are the full wives who bring forth heirs to the throne.
  - There are sixty of these—not meant to be a definite number, but in the poetry representing all of them who might be seen as more desirable to King Jesus than His church after her coldness toward Him.
  - They are beautiful and noble and majestic.
  - Did the devil not show the glory of all these to Jesus to entice Him?
2. Then there are said to be 80 concubines—
  - These are indeed wives, but servant wives, not queens who bring forth royal heirs. They do, however, bring forth children.
  - There are more of them—eighty—because they are of less rank than queens.
  - “Surely,” the bride thinks, “there must be some of these that Christ would prefer to me, the one who would not get up to open the door for my beloved.”
3. And finally, there are all the virgins—
  - They are said to be without number.
  - The bride thinks, “surely there are many among them that would be more attractive to my Lord than I.”
  - They are fresh and young and teachable...
  - Surely they are more to be desired than Christ's bride from whom He had had to withdraw.
  - We remember King Ahasuarus calling for all the virgins to be brought to him in his kingdom that he might start over, replacing his queen.

B. But here Jesus tells us that we are still the only one for Him!



1. At the first of verse 9, He says, “My dove, my perfect one, is the only one.”
  - He has eyes for no other.
    - Let the devil show Him all the kingdoms of the world and all their glory, but what does He want?
      - He wants His bride, those that the Father has given Him to redeem.
  - He does not want the glory of this world; He wants those who are redeemed by His blood and filled with His Spirit.
    - He does not want those who do not love His Father, or those who have not been cleansed and made new creations by His power and His Spirit.
    - These have nothing to make them the object of His desire.
2. He goes on to describe us as those who have been brought forth by our mother and who are also her favourite.
  - He says that His bride is: **The only one of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her.**
  - Understand what this means.
    - The mother is the church who, by Christ, brings forth many sons and daughters who themselves are part of the church.
      - Isaiah 54 describes this:
        - **1 “Sing, O barren, you *who* have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you *who* have not labored with child! For more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman,” says the LORD. 2 “Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes. 3 For you shall expand to the right and to the left, and your descendants will inherit the nations, and make the desolate cities inhabited. 4 Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore. 5 For your Maker *is* your husband, the LORD of hosts *is* His name; and your Redeemer *is* the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth. 6 For the LORD has called you like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a youthful wife when you were refused,” says your God. 7 “For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you. 8 With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,” says the LORD, your Redeemer.**
  - The church is delighted with her children,
    - She has no interest in any but those who have been brought forth by her—whether they be noble queens, concubines, or virgins.
    - Unless they were brought forth by the gospel, they are of no account in her eyes.
  - Jesus the bridegroom goes on to say that the daughters who were brought forth look at the church who brought them forth and praise her.

- They see that there is none to compare to their mother—none in the world though the world may have mothers with greater riches, power, honour, and achievement—talents and beauty and all—but mother church is the one the daughters of the church praise.
3. The difference in Christ's bride should be evident to all.
- The difference is that she is the only one who has been reconciled to God.
    - All others, at the core of them, hate God, else they would serve Him.
    - He is God, and you cannot love if you will not have Him to rule over you as your God. You are denying all that He is. He is the one who is over all.
  - Jesus has no use for any who are enemies of His Father.
    - They are as reprehensible as reprehensible can be.
    - His delight is in His dove, His perfect one.
      - She is the only one because she has been reconciled to God forever.
      - Her glory will be revealed at the last day and all the queens and concubines and virgins of this world, however great and noble and lovely they may have seemed in the world,
        - will be shown to have gotten everything wrong—everything!
        - Everything wrong because they did not bow to God Almighty.
        - Everything wrong because they refused to come to Jesus that they might be cleansed by Him and reconciled to God.
      - So you see that in His withdrawal from us, it is not that Christ was looking for another bride.
        - He has no other to compare with the one He has.

### **Conclusion:**

What encouragement there is in our text!

- Both for those who are currently deprived of His kisses and yearning for them, as well as those who have recently been restored.
- Look at this text and know that your prayers for restoration are not unnoticed—they are having an irresistible draw on Him.
  - He still finds you as irresistible and as attractive as ever.
  - There is no one that He desires but you, dear bride of Christ.
- This is nothing to be proud about though!
  - Just the opposite.
  - There is nothing good in any of us until Christ has saved us.
    - Those who have been saved by Him know that.
    - There is no place for pride when you realise that there is nothing good in you, nothing that is acceptable to God, apart from Christ and His redeeming work.
      - That is why we do not glory in the flesh (what we do apart from God), but in the cross of Jesus Christ (His work that has saved us and reconciled us to God).
      - Take that away, and nothing good remains.

- But keep the cross and the saving work of Jesus and you have beautiful bride who has been transformed by Him.
  - You have someone who, by His saving work, loves Him.
  - You have someone whose fruit will grow up to full perfection.
  - This is the bride that Jesus will always love and there will never be another.
    - You are the bride if you are trusting in Jesus.