

Leaning on Jesus

Song of Solomon 8:5

23 January 2022

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

Introduction:

Today in our Song of Solomon sermon series, we come to a verse that beautifully captures the essence of our relationship with Jesus Christ in this world.

- The Song of Solomon is a very special part of God's holy word to His church.
- It uses marriage to illustrate the relationship that the church has with Jesus Christ.
 - Bible frequently refers to the church as the bride of Christ—
 - she is depicted as one bride made up of many members.
 - The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is frequently presented as the Bridegroom.
 - The church is described as an adulterous woman when she is trusting other gods or nations.
 - At the end of the world, is the wedding— she is presented to Him as without spot.
 - One of the most wonderful things about the description of the church as Christ's bride is the emphasis it places on the love and affection He has for us.
 - His saving work in us makes us pleasing and delightful to Him.
 - In the Song, our fruit delights Him, our affections are like a sweet aroma.
 - Yes, the Song of Songs (as the Holy Spirit calls it) is a very special part of God's word that highlights our relationship with Jesus our husband.
 - It speaks of true believers, not the false sons.

And today, we come to this single verse that beautifully captures the essence of our relationship with Him in this world.

- Last week, we came to chapter 8, and we saw in the first four verses how we (the bride) told Him how wonderful it would be for us if He were like our brother.
 - He is such a holy and majestic king that we feel how unworthy we are of Him.
 - Though He reveals himself sweetly to us...
 - We are insecure because of our awe of Him (His holiness, His majesty).
 - We want Him to remain glorious—
 - but we want to be more comfortable with Him—like we are with a brother,
 - and we want Him to be more accessible to us—so that we can find Him.
 - In verse 3, we saw that He responded to that request by taking us up in His arms, His left hand under our head and His right hand embracing us.
 - With great joy, we spoke to the young disciples of the church, the daughters of Jerusalem, and charged them to wait for this love.
 - It is something that cannot be rushed—
 - It must grow naturally by the means of grace.
 - We must not take shortcuts.

- Love will come—
 - by degrees now...
 - in fullness when He returns...
- The Daughters of Jerusalem (whom we understand in the Song to be the young disciples who belong to the church), look upon the church (of which they are a part) and marvel to see the bride in His loving embrace.
 - It brings forth from them the question that we are looking at today.
 - It is actually only the first part of verse 5, but it is so rich with application that it is all I am going to cover today.
- Listen carefully and reverently as I read it to you now—Song of Songs, chapter 8, verse 5.

Song of Solomon 8:5: Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?

This could be the question of the friends of our Lord,

- angels, ministers, departed saints...
- It doesn't matter, but many think it is the Daughters of Jerusalem... she just addressed them.
 - The bride is complex.
 - The daughters of Jerusalem are young members,
 - they are learning of His great love for the church of which they are a part.
 - They will come to know His love more and more in time.
- They look and they say: "Who is this, coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?"

I. This question shows the amazement the Daughters of Jerusalem have as they learn of the church's relationship with Him.

- It captures the very essence of our relationship with Him.
- A. Who is this so near to Him?
- He is the King of Kings.
 - He is the holy Son of God.
 - He is from heaven.
 - She is of the fallen race of Adam.
 - She is from the wilderness—ruined by sin.
 - How is she with Him?
- B. They see that He is bringing her out of the wilderness.
- She is coming up and out.
 - He has gone there to rescue her.
 - Look at how much she has changed from what she was!
 - She is hardly recognisable—
 - She has growing affections, growing holiness... and He loves it.
 - He is bringing her to His house in glory.
 - It is obvious that He is bringing her to His house in glory

C. They see that she is leaning upon Him.

- This speaks of her faith.
 - See how she relies on Him to bring her out of the wilderness!
 - She relies on Him for her standing in righteousness.
 - She depends entirely upon Him.
- Her strength is from Him.
 - Her progress is from Him.
 - Her hope is in Him.
- She looks to no other.
 - She does not lean on her own understanding.
 - She does not look to the counsel of the worldly wise.
 - She does not trust in riches or honours for her happiness.
- When the trials hit her the hardest, she leans on Him the hardest...
 - And she emerges from them trusting Him even then.
 - Thankful for the stronger trust and nearness she has.

D. They see also that she leans on Him as her beloved.

- She loves Him.
 - She trusts Him.
 - She admires Him.
 - She is ever more intimate with Him.
- And He so obviously loves her.
- They delight to be together.
- As He rescues her again and again and brings her out of the wilderness more and more, her love and admiration deepens.

TRANS> The daughters of Jerusalem look on with great admiration—

- Who is this coming up out of the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?
- What a lovely thing it is! What progress the bride is making!

II. This relationship of the church leaning on her beloved is seen throughout the Bible. Let's consider that.

A. We find it in the entire history of God's elect people.

1. Over and over, He comes to His people in the wilderness to deliver them.
 - All those that receive Him lean on Him—They believe.
 - Then He graciously brings them out of wilderness by His grace and strength.
 - All the while, there is growth in their relationship with Him.
 - He delights more and more in them as they grow.
 - They delight more and more in Him as they learn of Him.
2. Is this not the theme that flows through redemptive history?
 - a. After the fall, He comes to Adam and Eve.
 - They went from paradise to the wilderness.
 - He says, "Lean on me—a Son will come."
 - All who do are delivered.

- b. Then in the time of Noah—the sinful world is a barren wilderness of sin.
 - He comes to Noah in the wilderness.
 - Noah and his family lean on Him.
 - c. Then we have Babel—people trying to save themselves.
 - God comes to Abraham who is barren. A son is given to him. Abraham leans.
 - d. Then we have Jacob and his drifting sons.
 - Yet, the Lord comes to Joseph and promises to rescue them through him.
 - Joseph leans on Him even though he is brought into the wilderness of slavery and prison in a foreign land.
 - He leans on the Lord and is delivered by His hand.
 - And then he leads his brothers to lean on Him so that they are brought out of the wilderness of famine.
 - e. Over the years, Israel is brought into the wilderness of oppressive slavery.
 - The Lord comes to Moses and says, “Lean on Me.”
 - He leans, and leads the whole nation to lean on Him so that the whole nation is brought out of the wilderness into the promised land.
 - They are taught to love Him and to lean on Him for life, liberty, and blessing.
 - f. We could speak of the period of the judges when Israel repeatedly stops leaning on Him and is repeatedly turned over to the wilderness again.
 - But again and again He comes to them so that they lean on Him again, and He brings them out from the grip of their enemies, leaning upon Him.
 - g. Then there is David, the man after God’s own heart.
 - He leans on the Lord and the nation is delivered from the wilderness of disorder where every man was doing what was right in his own eyes.
 - They lean on the Lord and receive the promise of the kingdom, being taught of the greater than David, Jesus, who is to come—if they will lean on Him.
 - h. They harden themselves and are cut off from the temple and the land, to be brought to the wilderness.
 - But the Lord comes to them again and makes promises of a new covenant that all who lean on Him will embrace.
 - Those who lean, as was always the case, will have ultimate deliverance from the wilderness of this fallen world and be brought to glory by the beloved, Jesus.
- Today we read chapter 1 of Mark’s Gospel.
- B. I read it because it more explicitly reveals to us how Jesus brings us out of the wilderness.
- This is the theme of all of the gospels and all of the epistles and of Revelation.
 - But it is more explicit in Mark.

1. Mark opens by telling us that John's baptism is the beginning of the gospel.
 - John was in the wilderness.
 - He was in the wilderness because that is where God's people were.
 - The gospel he preached was that one was coming who would baptise with the Holy Spirit—and that He would save them from their sins and bring them God.
 - His message is to lean on Him that you may be delivered from the wilderness into His kingdom.
2. Then Jesus comes.
 - He has the same message as John, only He presents Himself as the One to lean upon.
 - 1:16-20: He gathers disciples to be fishers of men—to deliver people from the wilderness.
 - 1:21-28: He delivers from demons.
 - 1:29-34: He delivers from sickness and bondage.
 - 1:35-39: He goes preaching through Galilee and those who lean on Him are delivered.
 - 1:40-45: A leper leans on Him and is cleansed from his wilderness.
 - 2:1-12: A paralytic leans on Him and is made to walk and his sins are forgiven.
 - 2:13-17: A sinful tax collector leans on Him and is accepted and forgiven, being brought up from the wilderness of rebellion.
 - 2:18 - 3:6: His disciples lean on Him and are delivered from the wilderness of legalism in rituals. They learn to delight in the Lord's Sabbaths.
 - 3:7-19: Multitudes begin to follow Him. He calls the twelve out that they might be with Him—that is, that they might learn to lean upon Him so that they might be brought out of the wilderness that they might lead others to lean on Him.
 - In Mark 4, He teaches them about the importance of continuing to lean on Him, in the parable of the sower, and encourages them with more parables that they will continue to grow and multiply if they lean on Him.
 - He goes on to calm storms in the wilderness (4:35-41); to raise the dead (5:21-43); to provide food in the wilderness for His people (6:30-44).
 - In chapter 7:1-23, He explains that coming out of the wilderness involves more than merely cleaning up the outside—that they must lean on Him to transform their hearts by the Holy Spirit.
 - Then in 7:24 to 8:10, He shows that He also meets Gentiles in the wilderness and brings out those who lean on Him while rejecting His own covenant people who refuse to lean on Him (8:11-26).

➤ All of this brings forth Peter's confession that He is the Christ (8:27-30)—the One who has come to bring His people from the wilderness into the kingdom of God.
3. Along the way, Mark shows that Jesus, in order to deliver His bride from the wilderness, must Himself go into the wilderness.

- a. In chapter 1, He meets John in the wilderness and is baptised there.
 - Immediately He is led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested for forty days. He comes forth endued with power.
 - He must enter the wilderness that He might conquer it and bring us out.
 - He must conquer sin and temptation.
 - He must conquer death and the curse.
- b. In chapter 8, after Peter's confession, Jesus begins to tell the twelve that He is going into the deepest wilderness.
 - That He will be officially rejected by the highest court of the Jewish church, will suffer at their hands and be killed, but will rise on the third day (8:31).
 - The disciples are dismayed by this as shown initially by Peter's rebuke of Him in 8:32, followed by His sharp reprimand...
 - And by His instruction that they too will have to suffer in the wilderness for His sake and the sake of the gospel (8:33-38).
 - He shows Peter, James, and John His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration where He also speaks of His departure with Moses and Elijah (9:1-13).
- c. Then from 9:14 to 10:52, He instructs them in the way of the cross.
 - Here He repeatedly speaks of His own suffering that He must endure and instructs them in the way of sacrificial living for others.
 - He teaches them that in this world, we must suffer for the sake of others—following His example.
 - He addresses everything from jockeying for position, sectarianism, offending others, separating marriage unions, caring for children, and supposing that you are strong enough and good enough to get on without leaning on Him—as if you don't need Him to rescue you from the wilderness.
- d. In chapter 11 & 13, He confronts those in authority who oppose His kingdom and prophesies of their destruction.
 - He makes it clear that they cannot prevail against His kingdom.
 - He will go to the wilderness, but only to come out bringing those who lean upon Him out.
 - In 11:1-11, He enters Jerusalem on a donkey and accepts praise as the One who came to save those who lean on Him from the wilderness.
 - In 11:12-26, He instructs His disciples that He will bring down the leaders of the Jews who oppose Him. He instructs His disciples to pray for the removal of those mountains of opposition.
 - In chapter 11:27 – 12:40, He sets forth His authority as the Christ and declares that He is the rejected stone mentioned in Ps 118 that becomes the cornerstone on which His people are supported and upheld.
 - In 12:35-37, He reminds them from Psalm 110 that He is the Lord even of King David.
 - In chapter 13, He prophesies of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple and declares that He will gather the elect from all the nations through the work of His apostles.

- e. Then, to the great dismay of His disciples, He heads to the deep wilderness of the cross for His people.
 - In 14:12-31, He institutes the Lord's Supper and declares to His disciples that one of them will betray Him and that the rest will forsake Him.
 - In 14:32-42, He goes to pray against temptation, accepting the call to go into the deep wilderness of the cross for His people.
 - To the dismay of His disciples, He goes to the cross (14:43 – 15:47)
 - f. But just as He said, He rises again on the third day.
 - In 16:14-20, He calls His disciples to go out and preach the good news to all the nations, declaring that whoever leans on Him will be rescued from the wilderness.
 - His words are: **Mark 16:15-18: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."**
- So Mark begins in the wilderness with the promise of deliverance by Christ for those who lean upon Him.
- Then Jesus conquers the wilderness, all the while teaching His disciples to lean on Him.
 - Mark ends with Him sending them to call all people to lean on Him so that they might be brought out of the wilderness and into the kingdom of His Father forever.
- C. How beautiful are the words of our text, "Who is this coming up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved?"
1. It reminds us that as we go on with Jesus in this wilderness world, we go with Him as our beloved.
 - Indeed, the goal of the whole journey out of the wilderness to the celestial city is that we who lean on Him grow in our love for Him.
 - As He leads us progressively out of sin, our affection for Him deepens.
 - We trust Him more.
 - We admire Him more (seeing His grace and power).
 - We love Him more.
 - We go through the hard things of the wilderness with Him.
 - And this deepens our love even more as He supports us.
 - Our love keeps growing as we lean on Him and as He delivers us.
 - It is a very lovely thing indeed.
 2. In Mark, we only see glimpses of this growing love for Him.
 - Very few even understand what He is doing by descending into the deep wilderness of the cross at the time.

- But there is one who displays her deep love for Him by anointing Him as He goes to the cross with costly oil of spikenard.
- This outward act was a true display of the precious love that was in her that He takes such delight in—as we have seen in the Song—as a fragrance that He finds most pleasing.
- Jesus memorialises her action in Mark 14:9, saying: **“Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”**
- Beautiful!

III. So what about you?

- A. Are you among those who make up the bride of Christ?
 - Are you leaning upon Him?
 - Are you coming up by His grace from the wilderness of sin, leaning upon Him for forgiveness, for transformation of your heart and life?
 - Are you leaning on Him so that you are being brought out of the old wilderness ways into His beautiful kingdom ways?
- B. And are you, as you come up from the wilderness leaning upon Him, growing in your love for Him as your beloved?
 - Are you learning to trust Him more and more?
 - Are you more and more grateful to Him?
 - Are you filled with more and more delight in Him and do you have more and more praise for Him?
- C. I admonish all of you to lean on Him.
 - What an excellent thing it is to come out of the wilderness of sin and death leaning upon the beloved.
 - Who is this?
 - It is His bride.
 - It is the one who was in the wilderness.
 - Now she is leaning on the Son of God and He is bringing her to His home to live with Him as His bride forever.