

Song of Solomon 6: 13; “Looking at the Shulamite”, Sermon # 57 in the series – “I am My Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on March 13th, 2016, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

In verses 11 and 12 I believe that we are looking at a spiritual picture of our heavenly Bridegroom-King, our Lord Jesus Christ, going down to His garden of nuts. The garden of nuts represents the hearts of His people, and Christ’s consideration of the garden of their heart in regard to their fruitfulness to Him. In John 15: 5, Jesus says: “I am the vine, you are the branches.” “He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” Christ had come down to this garden see the verdure of the valley; to see whether or not His spouse had learned from her affliction of not being able to find Him. He was concerned that she would now come to know His nearness, once again, and to have the full assurance that all was well with her soul.

Previously, in Chapter 5, we have seen that she had been negligent in her duty to open the door in order to answer Christ’s call to come and have fellowship with Him. And in failing to do so, she came to realize that she had become lukewarm towards Him, and that her heavenly husband was not pleased with this lazy spiritual state that she had fallen into. But she came back from this; she persevered in looking for Him, and she had finally found Him once again. She re-established her communion with Him, and she began to help cultivate the garden of her own heart. She began to be more conscious of what it would take to bear fruit for His glory. Christ had been watching her, in this time following her repentance and return to Him. And now, He was looking carefully to see whether the vine of His Church had budded and whether the pomegranates, the individual believers in His Church, had bloomed, had borne fruit to Him.

What He saw, when He looked closely, was the beauty of His own grace at work in the heart of His Bride, who is called here – the Shulamite. “As Christ in this book is named Solomon, so the Church is called the Shulamite, to show the communion that she has with him.” (John Trapp) Charles Spurgeon says: “The Hebrew word is a feminine of “Solomon.” “Solomon” may stand for the bridegroom’s name, and then the well-beloved bride takes her husband’s name in a feminine form of it, which is Shulamith, Salome, or perhaps better “Solyma.” “The King has named his name upon her, and as Caius has his Caiia, so Solomon has his Solyma.” “He is the Prince of Peace, and she is the Daughter of Peace.” “Aforetime she was called “the fairest among women,” but now she is espoused unto her Lord, and has a fullness of peace.” “Therefore is she called the Peace-laden, or the Peace-crowned.”

Now, I want to bring to your attention, as we begin this study, that it is the witness of the Shulamite which is the theme of verse 13, because it is not the Bride or the Bridegroom that is speaking in the first half of verse 13. Christ looks at His Bride and He knows what she is thinking. Other people looking at the believer may not understand at all. And so, I conclude that it is the Daughters of Jerusalem who are speaking here. The Daughters of Jerusalem are those persons who are looking on, watching the relationship develop between Christ and His Church. They may be young believers, those who need more wisdom and knowledge in living the Christian life. Or, they may be those who do not know the Lord, but who are curious about the relationship between the believer and Christ, and they want to know more.

In any case, they are asking the Shulamite to return that they may look upon her. So, this afternoon we want to look at the Shulamite’s witness concerning herself, and learn lessons about how we can witness concerning ourselves, and become a better witness to others concerning what Christ has done for us. 1st of all – We can say, that there are some people who do want to look upon a true Christian, and learn from their experience of Christ. And 2nd – We can say, that there are some believers who would rather that other people would not look upon them. And 3rd – We can say that it is important that the true Christian’s heart experience be related

correctly to others around them. Let us pray that by means of this study, we shall better understand ourselves and be better witnesses to Christ.

1st of all – We can say that there are some people who do want to look upon a true Christian, and learn from their experience of Christ.

These Daughters of Jerusalem say this in verse 13 – “Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon you!” There is such a thing as a holy curiosity; a curiosity which unbelievers, and young and inexperienced believers have, concerning the heart religion of a true Christian. This curiosity is the work of the Holy Spirit. They look at a believer who has a heart relationship with Christ and they wonder. They look at them and they marvel, because they do not really understand the beauty and the glory of fellowship and communion with Christ. They do not understand how painful it can be to the true believer not to be able to sense Christ’s presence, or to know His nearness and holy affection for them.

Is there any consolation in Christ? Is there any comfort of love, any fellowship of the Spirit; any affection and mercy? (Philippians 2: 1) There surely is! The Shulamite knew this blessed reality, and it had made a great impact upon her. Christ’s grace and favor and blessing had won her heart, and caused her to want to serve Him; to serve Him more dearly, and follow Him more nearly. Unbelievers and those who are babes in Christ often do not understand what a holy confidence comes to the sincere and seeking believer, when they have “found the One whom they love” in their experience.

When Christ is with His people they are able to “look forth as the morning”. They are “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and awesome as an army with banners.” This was why the Daughters of Jerusalem wanted the Shulamite to return. They had caught a glimpse of her as she went forth to do battle for her Shepherd-King. She was on a mission to declare His goodness, His mercy, and to proclaim His excellencies; the one who had called her out of darkness and into His marvelous light. She could easily have been singing: “Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before: Christ the royal Master leads against the foe; forward into battle, see, His banners go.”

The Daughters of Jerusalem saw her go forth to spiritual battle and they did not understand, and so they call after her to return. They had not seen this kind of confidence in her before. There was a time, once before, when they saw her in deep distress, not able to find her Beloved. She had come to them inquiring whether they had seen her Beloved. And they had not seen Him. And so she related her experience to them, of seeking for Him, and not being able to find Him. In Chapter 5, verse 8 she says to them: “I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I am lovesick!”

Being lovesick for Christ is not something that unbelievers are able to understand at all. And even young believers, although they love Christ, they may not have ever had any sense of the Lord’s withdrawing of His presence from them. This is because they are still experiencing those “times of refreshing which come from the presence of the Lord” which are often experienced by the younger believer. Acts chapter 3, verse 19 – “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ who was preached to you before.”

Let me ask you now whether you have ever had this kind of experience, of not being able to find Christ in your experience? You do value Him above all earthly friends and relations. But you realize that you have not pursued fellowship and communion with Him in the way that you should have, and so He has withdrawn from you and you cannot find Him. You sought for Him and yet you could not find Him. You say with David in Psalm 42, verse 1 – “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God.” “My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.” “When shall I come and appear before God?” “My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, ‘Where is your God?’” “When I remember these things, I pour

out my soul within me.” “For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast.” “Why are you cast down, O my soul” “And why are you disquieted within me” “Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.”

The Bride went on searching for Him and who did she encounter? She encountered the Daughters of Jerusalem who asked her in Chapter 5, verse 9: “What is your beloved more than another beloved, O fairest among women?” “What is your beloved more than another beloved, that you so charge us”, that we should tell Him that you are love-sick?” She had described to them her experience of looking for Him. She had told them in Chapter 5, verse 10, of the uniqueness of her Bridegroom Christ; that He was the Chief among ten thousand to her soul.

She went on to tell them many things of His uniqueness and His glory, and it created within them the desire to know Him for themselves, or to know Him better than they had known Him. Chapter 6, verse 1 – “Where has your Beloved gone, O fairest among women?” “Where has your beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with you?” Let us understand that there are people all around us who need to know more of Christ. They are looking upon us; they are gazing upon us, in order to understand why we think the way we think, why we live the way that we live, and why we do the things that we do. They may have asked us questions about Christ before, and we have told them about Him. But now they want to know more about our experience of Him, and what exactly has changed in our life since we became a Christian. “Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon you.”

If the Spirit of Christ is working in the heart of one of these Daughters of Jerusalem, they will ask questions about your Beloved; what He is like. And you must tell them, that He is the only Mediator between God and men; that He is sinless and perfectly righteous; and that He does all things well. You must tell them that He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. But tell them that once they believe in Him, that He will be knocking on the door of their heart, desiring to have fellowship and communion with them over all the various situations and concerns of their life. Tell them this, for they need to know about the love of Christ.

Now, 2nd – We can say, that there are some believers who would rather that other people would not look upon them.

“What would you see in the Shulamite?” This is good question for all inquirers after heart religion? What would you see in me? What would you see in the Christian who has heart religion? Well, first of all, they would hopefully want to see Christ. You who would be good witnesses of Christ to others need to make it clear to the people who are looking at you that they should not be impressed with you, the witness, but with the God who has shown you mercy. Direct their attention to the Heavenly Bridegroom; the Christ who has saved you, the One who overcome sin and death by His righteousness and the shedding of His precious blood. For He is the One who will enter their life and begin the work of transformation in their heart. He is the One who will transform them from one degree of glory to another by the Spirit of God.

The Christian needs to point the inquirer away from themselves to Christ. The Christian will often be thinking in their heart – “He must increase and I must decrease.” This good attitude of humility and you wanting God to get the glory for all that you do and say in living your Christian life, needs to be understood by the person who is inquiring, so that they will not so much be continually seeking our personal wisdom on how to live the Christian life, as to have the Bible correctly explained to them, so that they will come to spiritually see and hear about it for themselves. They will need to see the living, risen Christ in you. They will need to know that it is Christ in you who is the hope of glory. Dear Christian do you desire to help in the work of furthering Christ’s kingdom? Then learn to be self-effacing, and point people on to Christ.

And then 3rd – We can say that it is important that the true Christian’s heart experience be related correctly to others around them.

“What would you see in the Shulamite – as it were the dance of the two camps.” When unbelievers are curious and young believers would like to know more about the Christian life, and what heart religion really consists of, they should remember these words. It is, as it were, like the dance of the two camps. “The two camps” is the word “Mahanaim” in the Hebrew. It means the two companies, or the two armies. You will remember back in Genesis 32, that when Jacob left the service of Laban and was returning back to the land of Canaan, that the angels of God met him. God sent two companies of angels to watch over and protect Jacob’s two companies of relations that he had with him.

The word for two companies in that place is the same word that we have in our text – “Mahanaim”. Jacob and his two families needed protection because Jacob had sent messengers to Esau to tell him that he was passing through his territory of Edom. And the messengers returned saying that Esau was coming with 400 men. And Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed at this news. How can we apply this to the text that we are studying? We can apply it in this way: that when other people look at the Christian, they should be able to see a person who is fighting the good fight of faith. They are not trusting in themselves but in the Lord to help them.

You will remember that Jacob divided the people that were with him into two companies. He thought that if Esau attacked the first company that the second would escape. But Jacob did not understand that God would prevent Esau from harming him or his families. Jacob sent his families over the brook at the fords of the Jabbok, and he was left alone. And it says that “a Man wrestled with him there until the breaking of day”. The real issue in this struggle was the battle that was going on in Jacob’s heart. Ever since he had come to know the Lord years before, he had had to learn some hard lessons about the trickiness of his own heart. Now that he had learned them, he found himself wrestling with a Man who it turned out was God Himself.

The text says that “He wrestled with God and prevailed”. Jacob was a very good wrestler, but actually this Man, who was the pre-Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, let Him prevail with Him, and He changed Jacob’s name to Israel, because he had prevailed in his wrestling. Part of the fight of faith for all Christians is the great battle that is going on in their heart, between the flesh and the Spirit; the army of fleshly thoughts against the army of the spiritual thoughts. The Christian day by day must fight this battle with himself, with the sinful motions of his heart, and with his fears. But let us remember that Christ is there in our heart as well.

And as we wrestle with Him over the greatest issues of our life, we shall find that by His grace we will indeed prevail over our indwelling remaining corruption, and we shall indeed be delivered from all of our fears, because He is with us to do us good. He will see to it that your mourning shall be turned to dancing; that you will succeed in putting sin to death, and in making progress in holiness and righteousness. In Psalm 30, verses 11 and 12 it says: “You (God) have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent.”

You see, Christ will be with you, dear Christian in this daily battle. In the dance of the two companies, the Christian shall prevail, because he wrestles with his Lord in prayer and he will prevail because Christ would have him to prevail. This is witness that every Christian should joyfully bear before men; that with Christ we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us. If this victory over sin is evident in our lives, then others around us will come to know as they look at us that they are seeing the dance of the two camps.