

Song of Solomon 5: 1 – “Christ’s Answers to Your Prayers”, Sermon # 41 in the series – “I am my Beloved’s, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on March 18th, 2012, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

What a wonderful thing, however, is mentioned here in our text here this afternoon. The Bride prays, and Christ answers her prayers immediately. This is what we want to focus our attention upon now, so that our faith will be strengthened to pray more earnestly, more fervently for the revival of Christ’s church in general, and the revival of our own hearts in particular. 1st – We want to see the speed with which Christ can come and make Himself known to His people. 2nd – We want to see the greatness of His desire to gather up everything good and eat everything sweet from their devotions and their works to Him, in order to answer their prayers. And 3rd – We want to see the greatness of Christ’s desire to refresh and satisfy His friends.

1st – We want to see the speed with which Christ can come and make Himself known to His people.

“I have come to my garden, my sister, my spouse.” He says this in order to inform her that He was there. She, evidently, did not realize that He was there. You and I need to remember that Christ is always with us, always watching, always listening, always thinking of what would be good for you in terms of your growth in sanctification, and what would be good for Him; what would advance the Father’s purposes and further His heavenly and spiritual kingdom. When Christ comes to make His presence known, it is often sudden and deliberate, and it opens our spiritual eyes and brings joy to us. “He is come, He is come!”, we say to our ourselves.

If it is in a meeting of God’s people, to gather for worship, we look around to see if others have noticed that He has spiritually come. I have not often experienced what I am talking about now, that tremendous realization that floods over you when you realize that Christ has come spiritually in the great way of making His presence known. It is really quite amazing. It is really, in my own mind and experience, something that has not happened to me more than a half a dozen times in all the worship experiences that I have been a part of. This is not to say that there have not been hundreds of times when I sensed God’s presence either in preaching or listening to the Word, or when I have been in private praying.

But you should understand that there is a more ordinary sense of His presence and then there is an unusual or extraordinary sense of His presence. I am not talking about anything related to the modern charismatic movement of gifts, speaking in tongues, or seeing visions or anything like that. I am speaking of simply knowing the power and presence of Christ with my mind and heart. Christ is always with me, but there are sometimes when He makes His presence known. Now the reason for this, I believe, in relation to our text this afternoon, is in order to answer our prayers and further His Kingdom in our hearts, not simply to make us feel good or to create awe. Christ’s purposes are often furthered in relation to your prayers for your own growth and sanctification by His Spirit. And so, when He sees that you are growing more spiritually minded about what are His purposes and concerns are, both for yourself and for His Church, then He is pleased sometimes to quickly grant you the answers to those prayers.

Turn with me over to Isaiah Chapter 65, verse 24. The context here is how quickly Christ will come and answer prayer for both Jews and Gentiles in the time of the Millennium, and how God will draw near to them in a very special way at that time, to hear their prayers. But you should also understand that this verse also can apply to the principle of how quickly Christ can come and answer your prayers, coming to any individual or to any church at any time He sovereignly chooses to, during the time of your earthly journey. “It shall come to pass that before they call I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.”

When it is the purpose of God and Christ to answer our deepest, most holy desires in prayer, He is at no loss to know how to do so. Remember that, dear Christian. There are no doubt many times when you greatly wonder why so many of your own relatives are not yet converted; why His

saints, yourself included, are so presently lacking in the vigor and power to see success in the work of His kingdom. Be faithful to Him. All your prayers which are according to His will shall be answered; and quickly, if He determines that it should be so. Sometimes the spiritual battle in prayer to see ourselves change to be like Christ, and to see others come to faith and change to become those who are men and women of faith and of the Word, are very great. And so we do not believe that Christ could come and change things suddenly. But He can, and sometimes He does.

Turn with me over to Daniel Chapter 10, verse 4. Daniel was a prophet, and yet he was also a man who had come to learn that he could not stand strong in the spiritual battle without Christ's strength. Have you learned this? He had been mourning and fasting for 3 whole weeks in order to be able to receive the Lord's Word to him. "Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is the Tigris, I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz!" "His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude."

"And I Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves." "Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength." "Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground." "Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands." "And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you."

"While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling." "Then he said to me, 'Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.'" It is this last sentence that I would like you to think about with me. There are two persons who are described in this passage besides Daniel. The first is the Son of God, our pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, whose description here is very much like that which was given in the vision which the Apostle John saw in Revelation 1. The second is an angelic being, probably Gabriel who had come to Daniel, in Chapter 9, verse 21 before, in another vision.

But what I want to show you is how quickly the Lord Jesus came to Daniel according to Gabriel's words. It was "from the first day that he set his heart to understand, and to humble himself before His God." It was then that his prayers were heard, and an immediate answer was given. Let us ask ourselves whether we are persons who pray like this? Are we persons who are humbling ourselves before God to understand His will and His ways? Are we setting our heart to understand how He would have us to live, and what He would have us to do for Him? Then we shall know the answer to our prayers in due time. Perhaps even immediately. But if not, it is not because the Lord is incapable of answering our prayers immediately.

2nd – We want to see the greatness of Christ's desire to gather up everything good and eat everything sweet.

He will gather up everything which He finds in your devotions and works to Him, in order that He might answer your prayers. "I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk." In answering your prayers, dear Christian, Christ takes notice of your sufferings for Him, your tears for him, and all of your service for Him. He thinks upon your repentance concerning your besetting sins, and He thinks about whether you are mortifying sin in your members out of your love to Him. He gathers all of these things into His great mind and heart and weighs how He can best answer your prayers.

Listen to Psalm 56: 8. "You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book?" "When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; this I know, because God is for me." The gathering of Christ's myrrh with His spices is His gathering, His collecting to

His own mind all of the sufferings and service on His behalf, all of the tears and perplexity of mind that He sees. After this gathering, He then becomes your Advocate with the Father and He intercedes on your behalf before the Father, so that your prayers can be answered. Listen to James Durham on this: “Christ will carve and shape out sometimes His answer, even according to his people’s desires, as if they had the power of prescribing their own answers.” “For when our prayers make for our good, Christ will alter nothing in them; but He will grant them in the very terms in which they are put up.”

He says a little later on: “Christ may be particular in answering one petition of the same prayer, when yet he may for a time suspend an answer to another, in itself as acceptable to him.” “Yea, He may answer the last prayer, and seem to pass over somewhat formerly sought for.” I think that this is very insightful. Christ does not always take everything that we say to Him in prayer and answer it immediately, or answer everything that we ask Him, favorably at all. Where He sees that there are things which we ask for, which are contrary to His Father’s will, either in regard to the precepts of His Word or in regard to His providential ordering of all things, then He will “carve and shape out” the answer in accordance with their desires in the way that will be the best for Him and for them.

We can further say that everything which is sweet to Him in our devotion to Him, our service to Him and our worship of Him is remembered by Him in relation to our prayers. He drinks in the wine of our love for Him in our reading of the Bible to commit it to our heart. He recalls all of our prayers to Him that we might keep His commandments. He drinks in the milk of our real obedience to the simple truths of His Word when we are a young Christian and our holding fast to those truths when we are an older Christian. He becomes a partaker of these spiritual realities in our hearts and in our conduct every day. He takes notice of all our prayers in all of these things. He eats the honeycomb with the honey.

He takes into His holy mouth, in answering our prayers, the sweetness of how we have gone about to perform our obedience to His commands (the outward form of it), just as much as He eats the honey itself. (the sweet substance of our love in the keeping of His commandments in our heart. Listen to Spurgeon on this. “Jesus Christ finds delightful solace in His people’s love, both in the inward love which is like the honey, and in the outward manifestation of it, which is like the honeycomb.” “He rejoices in the love that drips in all its preciousness from the heart, and in the honeycomb of organization, in which for order’s sake stored up and put into his hand.” (end of quote)

Let us remember that He will answer our prayers in relation to the desires of our hearts; having keep His commandments in order to please Him. Listen to 1st John Chapter 3, verse 21 – “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.” “And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” When Christ has gathered His myrrh with His spice, when He has eaten His honeycomb with the honey, when He has drunk His wine with His milk, and is satisfied, then He answers all of our prayers which are in line with the eternal purposes of His Father.

And then 3rd - We want to see what is the greatness of Christ’s desire to refresh and satisfy His friends after they have satisfied Him.

“Eat, O friends!” “Drink, yes drink deeply, O beloved ones!” There is an order in relation to having our prayers answered. It is to satisfy the hunger and thirst of our Lord first, and then we ourselves shall be fed and satisfied. When I say this I am thinking of the parable that Christ spoke in Luke 17: 7 where He says, “And which of you having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat?’ “But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink?’”

“Does he thank that servant because he did the things that he commanded him?” “I think not.” “So likewise you, when you have done all those things which are commanded, say, ‘We are

unprofitable servants.” “We have done what was our duty to do.” That is the attitude which each of us as Christians should hold in our minds until we are sure that we have pleased Christ and satisfied His expectations of us as His servants. We are unprofitable servants, but by faith in Him, we can please Him by our keeping of His commandments. But it is even more than that. If you will turn over with me to John Chapter 15, verse 14, you will see this. “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.” “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what His Master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My father I have made know to you.”

This is what Christ does, and He does it in that order. He declares to His disciples His Word and His will and then by grace expects us to go about to do it. Once we really go about to do His will, even though we do it as unprofitable servants, nevertheless, He rewards us. Look over at John 16: 23. “And in that day you will ask Me nothing.” “Most assuredly I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give to you.” “Until now you have asked nothing in My name.” “Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” Christ’s decided and full intention is that when we have served Him in pursuing righteousness and keeping His commandments that we shall be satisfied. Feed upon His faithfulness and drink deeply of the rivers of His love and comforts of His Spirit. He is ours forevermore!