

**Song of Solomon 2: 16 and 17; “Until the Day Breaks”, Sermon # 31 in the series – “I am my Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

These verses are the words of the Bride speaking in her own heart, to herself, of her great love for her Beloved; her satisfaction that Christ is her Savior and Lord; and that she belongs to Him. What is revealed to us here, are the deepest desires of her heart. She is reminding herself of what her husband is doing presently, as she is anticipating that one Day; that Day of Days; when He will come and take her to be with Himself forever. Now, she meets with Him in prayer and spiritual communion, and realizes the fellowship of His presence in her heart. Then, she knows, it will be face to face.

I want to approach this subject, this afternoon, by showing you 1<sup>st</sup>; what the Beloved, our Lord Jesus Christ is doing, until the Day breaks. 2<sup>ndly</sup> – I want to show you what it means when it says, “Until the Day breaks”. And then finally I want to show you what the longing desire is, which is felt by every believer in relation to that Day, and also their fellowship with Him presently.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – I want to show you what Christ the Beloved is doing until the Day breaks.**

My beloved is mine, and I am his.” “He feeds his flock among the lilies.” The New American Standard says, “He pastures His flock among the lilies.” But the words, “His flock” are not in the original Hebrew. So it should technically read as the King James says, “He feeds among the lilies.” The ESV says – “He grazes among the lilies.” I have told you in previous sermons that believers in Christ are Christ’s lilies. Christ is the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valley; but we are His lilies. He is the Chief Lily, but we are being transformed, during the time of our earthly stay, to become more like Him; to come to have more of the spiritual beauty of His character and holiness be seen in our lives.

Lilies are the emblems of sweetness and purity, says Thomas Robinson. We are flowers of God’s planting, which are meant to grow up to eternal life by feeding upon His Word. We, because of His grace, have been united together (planted) in the likeness of Christ’s death, and we also most certainly shall be changed, on that last great Day, and come to find ourselves in the likeness of His resurrection.” (Romans 6: 5) We are one of His lilies, one of His holy ones in His body the Universal Church, and if we are wise, we will join ourselves to one particular expression of that Universal Church, uniting ourselves to a local church, so that we can be fed the good Word of God and the words of our Christ.

Christ feeds His flock among the lilies. Christ feeds His flock in His churches. He stands among the candlesticks and in the midst of His people, feeding upon their devotion to Him. Here, in verse 16, we find the Lord Jesus being pictured for us as the Great Shepherd-King; the husband of His Bride, feeding His flock. These Metaphors of who the Bridegroom is, are all being mixed together for a reason. As the Great Shepherd He leads and guides and feeds us; as our King He rules over us and protects us and delivers us from our enemies. As our Husband He tenderly loves and cares for us, and provides for all of our needs. The Lord Jesus in each of these capacities is the great feeder of our soul. He is the great feeder; but as He feeds, He Himself is being fed. He grazes among His lilies. He alone can satisfy the hungering and thirsting of your soul, for righteousness and truth. But He Himself will only be satisfied, in His feeding of you, with the full devotion of your heart being given to Him, as He does so.

We need to see Him, in our hearts, and in our mind’s eye, in this marvelous work of feeding us; as those whom He loves, and the One who desires our greatest spiritual affections. Whether it is in your personal Bible Study, your reflection upon His Word during the day, or whether it is your attending church on Sunday to hear the Word preached; you need to see where your spiritual food is coming from, and offer your worship to Him as you are given this food. The spiritual food is the

doctrine and knowledge given to you through your eating and drinking in the knowledge of the Scriptures, or partaking of the Word as it is preached.

But Christ, in giving this to you, would Himself feed upon the devotion of your heart to Him in and through it. You will have a heart expressing thankfulness and joy to Him. You will have thoughts considering how you can put these truths and doctrines into practice in your life, so as to become a more righteous and holy person in His sight, and a more loving person in the sight of others; loving them with the love of Christ. One of His greatest acts of love was and is; that during the whole of the Old and New Testament times He is pictured as feeding His flock and grazing among them.

I do not know how much you are aware of this fact, or how much you ponder it; that whatever measure of spiritual food which is provided for you, providentially, in the church that you attend, is from the Lord. The Church is the Lord's flock and He Himself still feeds it today. But He feeds it through the lips of His pastor-teachers. He gives to them all manner of spiritual food and drink in the preaching of His blessed Word if they will come and sit and listen to it. He feeds upon the services of our worship of Him. And I believe that it is possible to disappoint Him when we think that there is something more important to our soul than listening to the word preached.

Let us look at a couple of verses to confirm this. First, let's look at Micah Chapter 5, verse 2. "But you Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." "Therefore He shall give them up until the time that she who is labor has given birth; then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel. And He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God; and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth; and this One shall be peace."

Now this passage, which is prophetic of our Lord Jesus Christ's birth in Bethlehem, and the fact that He was appointed by God to be the Ruler of Israel from all eternity, also tells us that when He walked upon the earth, that He stood and fed His flock in the strength of the Lord, and in the majesty of the name of His God and Father. His life was glorifying to God because He spoke Words which brought to men eternal life and the strength to do God's will, when their hearts were changed by it. Christ is still doing this today.

If He gave, and is still today giving His strength to feed His flock; then how can we think that we shall not come and meet and sit under it? O, yes it is true, He has finished His great work of Redemption; He is sitting at the right hand of the Father, but He has given gifts to men, and those men are under-shepherds and pastors of His flock. And they feed many. Under the Old Covenant, it says in Malachi 2: 7, "The lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts."

This was fulfilled to the utmost extent in the person of our great High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ. He not only kept knowledge; He was the personification of truth and the right use of knowledge. But now, since He is gone away to heaven for this time; it is very important to Him that you come and be seated as one of His lilies and hear His blessed Word. He feeds among us as we do this; looks deep into your heart to see whether you will receive Him in the Scriptures and hold fellowship and communion with Him in your heart.

Ask yourself now, in all honesty, if this is the activity of your heart in our seasons of worship. If it is; our Lord will give you the sweet assurance of His Spirit that He is yours and you are His.

**Now 2<sup>nd</sup> – I want to show you what it means when it says, "Until the Day breaks".**

"Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn my Beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bether." The word "until" implies that there is a sense in which the day has not broken. Now, we know according to the Scriptures in the book of 1st John, the second Chapter, the eighth verse; that spiritually the Day of Christ's reign of righteousness has already begun in a certain sense. It has begun in each believer's heart.

“Again a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.” “He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.” “He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

We know from these verses that the day of light and life has come, personally, for this person who is trusting in our Lord Jesus Christ. They are filled with love for the brethren. The graces of the Holy Spirit which have been given to them from their Lord have made them children of light. And as it says in Proverbs Chapter 4, verse 18, “The path of the just is as the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.” The Day that is being spoken of is indeed the Day when Christ will return and this present Age of mixed darkness and light, spiritually, shall come to an end, and the saints shall behold the light of the Eternal Glory shining down upon them in all its resplendence; in the face of Jesus Christ. And when we shall see our Lord face to face, and know ourselves to have been completely changed and transformed to be like Christ; then we shall be radiant; we shall be altogether satisfied; we shall be eternally joyful and happy.

This is most certainly coming for each of you who trusts in Christ in this life and has a sincere faith. That is the eschatological meaning of these words, which are meant to encourage the Church in all generations until Christ comes back. But there is an individual and personal meaning to the phrase which applies to every believer. The words can most definitely be applied to the day of the believer’s death. The reason is this. The time of our life, here upon the earth, is a time of darkness in comparison with the light of heaven; the light of seeing Christ face to face, even though we lose the body.

Even though we will die before Christ returns bodily and physically; even though we lose the body for a time; we will still be dwelling in the realms of endless day. We will never die spiritually; our spirit will abide in the light of heaven itself until the time of the Second Coming of Christ, when we shall receive the resurrection body and dwell in the literal physical New Heavens and New Earth. Turn with me to 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter Chapter 1, verse 16. “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.” “For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to him from the Excellent Glory: ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”

“And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.” “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.” Here Peter tells us that he and James and John were not making up stories about the Transfiguration, when they were asked by Jesus to come up on the mountain with Him and His glory was revealed to them; when His appearance and garments were changed to reveal what He would look like in the coming eternal kingdom.

They heard a voice from heaven and thus they had the prophetic word confirmed to them. They wrote down the scriptures related to this, and Peter says that we would do well to heed the Scriptures as a light that shines in a dark place until “the day dawns and the morning star arises in our hearts.” What does that last phrase mean? Well notice that the morning star is mentioned arising “in our hearts”. Why in our hearts? Because the eternal day actually dawns for us in our hearts and in our souls when we as believers die. Our body is lost to dust and ashes until the Day of Christ’s Second Coming; the Day of the Resurrection of all the dead. We will not see things with physical eyes quite yet. But the morning star, the light that is the precursor to that final glorious Day is already realized amidst the darkness of dying and death for the believer.

Remember, it is always darkest just before the dawn. And the glory of the eternal kingdom is revealed to us in stages; believing the Word that the Apostles saw Jesus transfigured; having been

transferred from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son; brought out of darkness into His marvelous light; the path shining brighter and brighter until the full day. So death is just another step into the further glories of spiritual and eternal light. There is separation from the body, but being with Christ in heaven in His light will be more than enough for us.

And then, as the Bible teaches us, The Day of Christ's coming shall bring it all together; the New heavens and earth shall be bathed in glorious light and eternal Day! But let us remember that all the shadows of darkness, for the believer, will cease when they depart their body in death. "Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from above, from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." (James 1: 17)

The believer in Jesus Christ dies, and his or her spirit is made perfect. Hebrews Chapter 12: 22 – "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly of the first-born who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect." By way of application; are you living in such a way that you are looking forward to the day of your death? The person who lives striving to have a good and clear conscience, in relation to the keeping of God's word, shall indeed be given an abundant entrance into Christ's heavenly kingdom.

**3<sup>rd</sup> – I want to show you what the longing desire is, which is felt by every sincere believer in relation to that Day, and also to fellowship with Him presently.**

"Turn, my Beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bether." The mountains of Bether are the mountains of division; for that is what the word "Bether" means in the original Hebrew. The Bride is saying to Christ, her husband – Until you come back for your Church; until the day breaks when I can see you face to face; turn, my Beloved Christ, and come to my longing heart and soul, and give me a sense of your love and presence with me, as I walk through this life, and try to live to your glory. Everything that seems to separate me from you as I walk through this life; everything that seems like mountains and obstacles in the way of our having deep and meaning fellowship; overcome it, Lord.

Be like a gazelle or a young stag upon these mountains that divide. Do not leave me feeling alone or forsaken, but come to my heart Lord Jesus, so that I might live to you a righteous, a holy, and a contented life." The life of the sincere Christian is a life of devotion to Him. They cannot be ultimately satisfied with the things of this world, like a hypocrite would; a person who would have Jesus sometimes, but the world most of the time. They must have spiritual communion with Him to satisfy them at all times.

Think of Psalm 63; David in the wilderness being chased by Saul. What is his greatest concern? To find God in the midst of his troubles and trials. "O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for you in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water." "So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory." "Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You." "Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name." "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips."

In closing, let me ask you whether you have these longing desires in your heart, as David did? Is His lovingkindness better than life itself? Then you will not be so afraid to die, for the Lord Jesus will be right there; in glorious light. But neither will you be so afraid to live either; for in living you will be able to declare the works of the Lord and to sing His praises each and every day until Christ comes for you; until the Day breaks, and the shadows flee away.