

What a Sweet Embrace it Will Be!

Song of Solomon 7:6-10

12 December 2021

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

Introduction:

Today we will continue our sermon series in the Song of Solomon.

- Last week we came to chapter 7.
- Matthew Poole says that the design in chapter 7 is only this, “to describe the beauty and glory of the church under the representation of a beautiful and noble woman.”

As we have studied the Song of Solomon, we have seen that the church’s relationship to Christ has been presented in this Song under the figure of a husband and wife.

- We have all been stretched to see the delight that Christ has for His church under this figure.
 - We knew that Christ has loved us as undesirables, and that He rescued us with a love that is not based on anything good that He has found in us.
- But it has really stretched us all to see that having redeemed us, He also loves us in the way that a young man loves his bride—delighting in her and rejoicing over her.
 - The Song of Solomon shows that He deeply desires to be with us—that He is strongly attracted to us and finds us beautiful and delightful, even alluring.
 - We (the church) are described repeatedly as His garden that has choice fruits that enrapture Him and bring Him great pleasure and joy.

His mercy to sinners is amazing enough, just that we should be pardoned and tolerated by Him is a marvel in itself,

- but to think that through His work of sanctification He actually transforms us into a beautiful bride that is delectable to Him—that is beyond all measure!
- The Bible teaches that those who have come to Christ are not only pardoned and justified, but also adopted as sons and daughters of God, and that the believing church as a whole is the bride of Jesus Christ, God’s Son.

We actually become a bride that He cherishes and rejoices in.

- Several times I have quoted Isaiah 62:5 to you which says, **For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.**

Last week, we looked at the first five verses of chapter 7 where He praises our beauty as the church that He has redeemed.

- He used a number of figures that we looked at in detail as they all speak of our relationship to Him as our God—He spoke of our beautiful feet that now walk in His ways; the thighs that speak of the lovely manner in which we walk; the navel representing all our the affections that are like a mixed beverage; the belly that is like wheat that gives solid nourishment; the breasts that represent both the giving of our love to Him and the nourishing of His and our children; the neck like an ivory tower that will not turn to give our affection to idols; the eyes that are deep and clear, pure

like the pools of Hesbon; the nose that is like a watch tower—jealous to guard our relationship with Him; and the head with purple hair (symbolic of royalty) that rises like beautiful Mount Carmel, no longer hung in shame, but now as the bride of the Son of God—truly a prince’s daughter—a woman that is noble and beautiful in His eyes.

We went over all this in detail last week.

- Today, we will pick up from there at verse 6 where He speaks of how desirable we are to Him.
- Give attention as a read this passage to you. It is the word of God. Song of Sol. 7:6-10:

Song of Solomon 7:6-10: How fair and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights!
7 This stature of yours is like a palm tree, and your breasts like its clusters. 8 I said, “I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches.” Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, 9 and the roof of your mouth like the best wine. The wine goes down smoothly for my beloved, moving gently the lips of sleepers. 10 I am my beloved’s, and his desire is toward me.

Thanks be to God for His holy word.

If you look back at the end of previous section—at the end of verse 5, you can see how He wraps that section up with the assertion that He is captivated by the tresses of His bride.

- Remember that we who believe in Christ as He is offered in the gospel are His bride—all of us together are His holy bride—one bride made up of many members.
- He is saying that our beauty as His redeemed people is so pleasing to Him that He can’t leave us—we have a hold on Him that cannot be broken. His desire for us is too strong.

Today we will look at three things from verses 6-9 that speak of His strong desire for us.

- We will begin with verses 6-7 where He tells us that we are the object of His desire.
- Then we will look at the first half verse 8 where He tells us that He will embrace us the way a husband embraces his wife.
- And lastly, we will look at the rest of verse 8 and at verse 9 where He pronounces a blessing on us to enhance the time during which we are in His embrace.

Let’s begin then, with the first point.

I. In verses 6-7, He tells us that we are the object of His desire.

- He simply tells us how attractive we are to Him.
- A. He begins, “How fair and how pleasant you are.”
1. *Fair* and *pleasant* are pretty much synonyms, though *pleasant* refers more to inward disposition.
 - We have seen these words used together before in 1:16.
 - *Fair* means *beautiful* or *lovely*; and *pleasant* carries the idea of *agreeable* in the sense of knowing how to please—we please Him.
 2. He strengthens His declaration that we are fair and pleasant by adding the words **“O love, with your delights.”**

- a. The word *love* used here often refers to sexual love or the emotional love shared between a man and woman—so it speaks of His attraction and desire for us.
- b. The term *delights* likewise often refers to erotic pleasure found in tender love, sometimes it refers to luxurious pleasure.

TRANS> So the Son of God is telling us that He has a passionate desire for us not unlike the desire that a man has for his wife. He is illustrating His love with that kind of love.

B. In verse 7, He steps back to get a broader view of us.

- He has spoken of the individual parts, now He looks at the whole.
 - He says, **This stature of yours is like a palm tree, and your breasts like its clusters.**
1. *This stature of yours*, refers to a view of us from the feet to the head.
 - *Stature* refers to our height—so it includes all of us at once.
 - And by saying *this stature*, He seems to point to what He has already spoken about—in this case, to all those all of those qualities He has just praised in verses 1-5 that make us His bride.
 - He sees them all blended into a harmonious way that is very attractive.
 2. He uses the image of a palm tree to describe our stature—apparently a date palm.
 - Beautiful women were often said to look like a palm tree in the poetry of the day, beautiful, slender, well proportioned, straight and tall, always green and flourishing, resilient and fruitful.
 - He finds everything in place. All our graces (or qualities) are beautifully joined together with each member in its place.
 - Our breasts are described as like the clusters of the palm, the fruit of the tree which hangs below the palm branches, fruit that was highly prized.

C. It is wonderful and surprising to have Him speak of us like this!

1. We know what we are like.
 - We know where we have come from, and we know how far short we still come.
 - He knows that too—
 - When He found us, He Himself described us like this in Ezekiel 16:3-9:
 - **Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: “Your birth and your nativity are from the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. 4 As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. 5 No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born. 6 And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ Yes, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ 7 I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. Your breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you were naked and bare. 8 When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was**

the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine,” says the Lord GOD. 9 “Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil.”

2. All that we are as His bride, we have become by His powerful grace that transforms us—the same power that raised Him from the dead is now at work in us, His church.
 - To wash us, He had to go to the cross that we might receive pardon by His death and suffering. He had to impute to us His righteous standing and He had to pay for our sins to free us from condemnation.
 - He also had to wash us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit—He saw us in our defilement and He said, “Live!”
 - He caused us, we who were dead in our sins, to become alive by the Holy Spirit.
 - And now by the sanctifying work of His Spirit, He continues to transform us into a bride that He finds to be very lovely and desirable.
 - As we have seen in the Song elsewhere, we are His garden, and as a master gardener, He continues to bring forth in us more and more fruit that makes us (us if we believe) more and more pleasing and delightful to Him.
- So you see that here, He is telling us that we are the object of His desire.
3. I know it is hard to fathom how we could be the object of His desire, what with all our flaws and sins.
 - But you see, these sins are all pardoned by His blood shed on the cross. The delight that He has is in the new life that He is forming in us by grace.
 - The scripture is full of talk about this—that we are a new creation in Christ, that the old has passed away and the new has come; that we were buried with Him in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life; that our hearts have been circumcised; that we who were unclean are now holy; that we who were in rebellion now keep His law; that we who could not love now love.
 - Even the very beginnings of this fruit is pleasing to Him because He knows that it will all grow to perfection.
 - It is the evidence that we who were dead are now alive, and it is lovely.
 - It makes us desirable to Him—a desire so strong that the best way to describe it is by comparing it to a man’s desire for his wife when he marries her.

II. He tells us in verse 8 that He will embrace us with His love.

A. He uses very colourful language here.

1. Having just described us as a palm tree that He greatly desires, He tells us that He is going to climb His palm tree and hold on to its branches.
 - The words are, verse 8:
 - **I said, “I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches.”**

- Those who tended palm trees would climb the tree both to pollinate the date clusters and to harvest them.
 - The NET Bible says: A Palestinian palm tree grower would climb a palm tree for two reasons: (1) to pluck the fruit and (2) to pollinate the female palm trees. Because of their height and because the dates would not naturally fall off the tree, the only way to harvest dates from a palm tree is to climb the tree and pluck the fruit off the stalks. This seems to be the primary imagery behind this figurative expression.
 - The word *branches* used here probably refers to the date clusters which themselves refer to the breasts of His bride.
2. So what you have here is the picture of a man embracing his bride to make love to her.
- It is an embrace that enhances their love.
 - It is an embrace in which there is a mutual joy and delight, a communion of both giving and receiving.
- B. What is the analogy here to us with our Lord Jesus?
1. This is showing us that as we grow in grace, Christ will come to us to embrace us, to manifest more and more of His love to us.
- This is how it for the Christian:
 - As time goes on in your walk with Christ, you grow in holiness and in likeness to Jesus Himself, learning to love, to forgive, to show mercy, to serve, to obey when it is hard, to present yourself as a living sacrifice to God, to pour out your life for others, to be honest, to be an ardent worshipper, to maintain purity and chastity, to care for those under you and to honour authority.
 - You grow, and as you grow, you learn more and more of Him—His Spirit works to open His word of truth to you and you learn of how much Christ delights in His people and in their growth.
 - As a faithful husband shows his love and delight in his wife, so Christ shows you His love and delight in you.
2. Notice how He says, “I said, ‘I will go up...’ ”
- a. Why does He add the words, “I said?”
- This shows that it is a definite thing.
 - He has seen how desirable we are, He has seen our love for Him that makes us ready and desirous to give ourselves wholly to Him, and He says, “I will do it, I will go up the palm tree and I will take hold of its branches.”
 - He is showing His resolution to embrace us in His love. He assures us that He will do this.
- b. But why? Why do we need this assurance?
- So that we will be certain that He will come—and come often.
 - So that we will expect Him to come and look for Him to come.

- So that we will look for Him to embrace us in love when He does come.
- So that we will prepare for His coming (make ourselves ready) by bringing forth fruit for Him.

C. What is the outcome when a husband lovingly and sweetly embraces his wife in marital affection?

1. It causes his wife to grow more and more in ways that are pleasing to him.
 - It gives her great comfort and assurance in his love—it gives her security and pleasure, so that she wants to be more and more pleasing to him.
 - It causes her to flourish in her relationship with him.
2. So it is with Jesus.
 - As our fruit grows, He comes to enjoy it, but His coming also causes our fruit to grow still more.
 - His enjoyment and approval of our fruit when He manifests His love to us makes us want to produce more fruit for Him.
 - His delight in our love causes us to love Him even more.
 - This is what we read in John 15—that when we abide in Him and His word abides in us, we bear much fruit, and as we bear fruit, He works in us that we might bear yet more fruit.
 - We grow through our union with Him.

TRANS> This brings us to our third point.

III. In the rest of verse 8 and verse 9, He pronounces a threefold blessing on us for the time that we are in His embrace (when He comes to “make love” to us).

A. Seeing His delight in us, seeing His plans to embrace us in love, what more do we want than that we should be pleasing to Him.

1. He is such an excellent husband.
 - He has taken us as His bride.
 - He has been so gracious and loving, so tender and kind.
 - He is so wonderfully accepting of us that our heart as His bride is warmed toward Him.
2. Our prayer is that always in every way we would be pleasing to Him...
 - And that when He comes to embrace us in love, we would please Him.
 - What a great privilege it is to have a husband like Him.
- But let us never forget that we (the bride) are not the only one that wants us to be pleasing to Him.
3. As our husband, He wants us to be pleasing to Him too!
 - He wants us to be all that He created us to be.
 - As we saw in Ezekiel, He found us in our defilement, but He washed us and nourished us that He might find delight in us and make us glad in His love.

- The goal is that we would find joy in what He at first created us to find joy in—in worshipping Him, in adoring Him, in serving Him, in loving Him and pleasing Him.
- B. This being so—He pronounces a three-fold blessing on our trysting with Him—on the spiritual equivalent of making love.
1. The first blessing is that our breasts will be like the clusters on the vine.
 - **Let now your breasts be like the clusters of the vine.**
 - a. In other words, He is blessing us with the grace that we need to give our love to Him.
 - Last week, we noted that both her husband and her children desire her breasts and that she responds rightly by freely giving them to both.
 - She gives her breasts to her husband as a way of welcoming Him when He come to love her, of surrendering to Him, of receiving Him...
 - And she her give her breasts to her children to nourish them.
 - b. By saying to us as His bride, “Let now your breasts be like the clusters of the vine,” He is blessing us that we might be enabled to freely give ourselves to Him.
 - This is not always so easy for us to do.
 - If we are His, it is something that we desire to do, but like Paul said is often the case, the good that we want to do, we do not do, but the evil that we hate, that we do.
 - c. Thus, what an encouragement it is to know that the Son of God blesses us so that we will be able to lovingly, joyfully, surrender ourselves to Him.
 - We know that whenever we do, we will both be glad and make Him glad.
 2. The second blessing He pronounces on us is that the fragrance of our breath would be like apples.
 - a. The point here is that everything about us would be as a sweet savour to Him.
 - He who breathed into us the breath of life desires that our life would breathe only what is lovely.
 - Sin makes our lives a stench, but grace makes them fragrant.
 - b. Paul talks about believers being a savour of the gospel, a savour of life to those that are being saved, but a savour of death to those that are perishing.
 - But here in the Song when we speak about being in the intimate embrace of Christ, it perhaps speaks especially of the savour of our breath in our worship.
 - We want the incense of our prayers and our praises to be sweet like apples (or apricots as some allege).
 - c. It is only the blessing of Christ, working in us by His Spirit, that makes our worship sweet.
 - We can be confident that He will bless us when He comes to tryst with us so that the sacrifice of our praise will be like apples.
 3. The third blessing He pronounces on us when He draws near is upon our palate.

- In verse 9, He says, “**And let the roof of your mouth be like the best wine.**”
 - Note that to bring out the context, I have added the word “let” and the word “be.”
 - This is warranted because all three statements are tied in with verse 8 where it says “Let now your breasts be like...and then the implication is, “Let your breath be like” and in our present verse 9, “Let the roof of your mouth be like...”
- a. The roof of the mouth speaks of our kisses.
 - As His bride, we spoke early in the song of His kisses that are better than wine. Now He blesses our kisses that they would be like the best wine.
 - Kisses, as I have mentioned before, are the way that we express our love.
 - Asking for the Lord’s kisses is to ask Him to manifest His great love toward us; while His request for our kisses is a request for us to express our love to Him.
 - Just as we want Him to express His love to us, so He wants us to express our love to Him—and He blesses us that we may kiss Him with kisses that are like the best wine.
- b. Compare this with the first of these three blessings—the blessing on our breasts.
 - The blessing on our breasts is the blessing that makes us able to give ourselves to Him—
 - The blessing on our palate is that blessing that enables us to express our love to Him.
 - Kisses refer to the more active expression of our love toward Him.
 - We need both.
 - So here by blessing our palate, He blesses us so that we will be able to express our love to Him better.
 - How wonderful is that!
 - By His Spirit, He causes appropriate love to well up from within us and to flow out to Him in a beautiful expression—a spiritual kiss as it were.
- c. It is difficult to tell who is speaking for the rest of the verse, and also difficult to tell for sure what the meaning is.
 - But the general idea is clear enough—
 - The desire, whether it be His or ours as His bride, is that our kisses would be like excellent wine that goes down smoothly and that produces a good effect.
 - If it is, as the New King James translates it, that the effect of this wine, these kisses, moves gently the lips of sleepers,
 - Then it would seem to be that our kisses arouse Him and get Him to speak to us the way wine gets sluggish lips to speak.

- In other words, our expression of our love to Him when He embraces us stirs up the manifestation and expression of His love even more...
 - Just the way a kiss can do.
- The major alternative translation would simply be that the kisses are received like fine wine that glides across the lips and the teeth—
 - that the expression of our love to Him would be well received by Him.
 - I think the first translation is better in the context—that our kiss stimulates a deeper kiss from Him.

TRANS> In any case,

Conclusion: we, the bride, respond to all that He has said to us in this chapter in verse 10 with these words,

- **“I am my beloved’s and His desire is toward me.”**

She follows this with a warm invitation to Him that continues into the next chapter...an invitation to Him that He would do what He said He would do and embrace her in love.

- We will look at that next week.
 - But this week, we will look at her (or our) delight in what His words have shown us so plainly... That “I am my beloved’s and His desire is toward me.”
- What could be more wonderful than this?
 - We who were cut off from Him because of our sin now belong to Him.
 - As His bride, we may say, **“I am my beloved’s.”**
 - He has taken us by covenant to be His wife forever.
 - He will never leave us or forsake us.
 - He will always be a faithful husband to us, a friend and a companion.
 - He will protect us and provide for us.
 - He will give us an inheritance in His house.
 - And He will teach us to live according the beautiful ways of His family, beholding the love that He had with the Father and the Spirit from eternity and bringing us to participate in that love.
 - Yes, by His blessing, as we have seen, we will be able to grow into the fullness of the appropriate love that we ought to have toward Him as our husband who is also the Son of God.
 - As His bride, with one voice, the church says, “I am my beloved’s.”
- But that is not all that is wonderful. That we belong to Him has been expressed before, but now, after hearing what He has said, there is this new thing that we say:
 - **“I am my beloved’s and His desire is toward me.”**
 - That He desires us was brought out with great strength in all that He said...
 - First praising us from foot to head in verses 1-5, and then declaring what we have seen today, His desire to embrace us with His love.
 - His desire to embrace us because He finds us attractive and pleasing.

- Seeing our readiness to receive His love, He expresses His strong desire and His commitment to give us His love and to bless us so that we will be more and more pleasing to Him when He does.
- In other words, He will do the spiritual equivalent of making love to us the way a husband makes love to his wife.
 - And He will find great joy and delight in doing so.
 - It will be a sweet and enriching experience for Him and for us.