

Song of Solomon 6: 5-7; “Christ Overcome by Love”, Sermon # 53 in the series - “I am My Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on December 8th, 2013, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

There is a question which should immediately come to your mind as you hear these words of verse 5, “Turn your eyes away from me, for they have overcome me.” Seeing that these are the words of the Bridegroom-Shepherd King, who represents our Lord Jesus Christ, what can they mean? For He is the Sovereign Lord of all things, and He has been given all power and authority in heaven and earth by His Father. Can He be overcome by anyone or anything? We can understand when we read in Revelation 17: 14, of His enemies, “These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”

Christ is the One who has overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and are we to believe that there is something which can overcome Him? Yes, we need to understand that these words of our text are telling us that Christ is overcome by the Church’s love for Him. This is truly something which each of us needs to consider, for His being overcome by the love of any believer will prove that they truly are one of His own; called, chosen, and faithful ones. But it also shows that Christ as our Lord has real human feelings; feelings which are related to your highest welfare as a believer.

Our text here is saying, that your having steadfast love toward Christ, the kind of love that will overcome Him, is manifested 1st of all – In the way that you look at Him. (verse 5) 2nd – In your private devotion to Him. (verse 6) And 3rd – In your sincere desire to have a clear conscience before Him. (verse 7)

1st of all – Your having steadfast love toward Christ, the kind of love that will overcome Him is manifested in the way that you look at Him. (verse 5)

Verse 5 says: “Turn your eyes away from me, for they have overcome me.” When we look back at verse 1, at the beginning of Chapter 6, we find the Daughters of Jerusalem asking the question, “Where has your beloved gone, O fairest among women?” “Where has your beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with you?” If you will remember, in Chapter 5, the Shulamite Bride had forfeited the sense of her Heavenly Bridegroom’s presence, through her laziness and neglect of her spiritual duty. That duty was to go and open the door to her Beloved, and to let Him come in and speak with her about the things which were most important to Him.

Christian, will you not remember that our Lord comes seeking fellowship with you? And when He comes, He comes desiring to impart to you His wisdom and counsel; and that you should understand that this Divine calling upon your soul might take place at any time of the day or night? Sometimes His coming will not seem convenient to you. He comes to you to speak with you about your faith and to think about your love for Him. We saw, then, that because she did not want to get up out of her bed of what was convenient for her, and open to her Beloved, that He departed. She later thought better of it, and went to the door to open to Him, but He had already turned away and was gone.

This was very distressing to her; that she had failed to respond to His overtures for communion, and so she went looking for Him, calling out to Him, but He gave her no answer. She did meet with the watchmen of the city, who represent the elders of the local church. In their preaching and counsel to her, she felt wounded in her conscience. These “keepers of the walls of Zion” took her veil away; they exposed her short-sightedness and spiritual blindness, and they told her in the words of 2nd Peter 1: 4 that she needed to apply all diligence in her faith; that she needed to add moral excellence to her faith. And in that in her moral excellence she needed to add knowledge, and in her knowledge to exercise self-control, and in her self-control to add perseverance, and to her perseverance godliness, and in her brotherly kindness, Christian love.

They explained to her that if these qualities were hers and increasing, they would render her neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2nd Peter 1: 5-9)

And although it was very necessary for the Watchmen to say these things to her, she felt wounded in their saying these things to her. O yes, this was very necessary for her, to see where she needed to repent, and what she needed to do to glorify God, and to have a better relationship with her Beloved. But she did not receive much comfort at that time from the watchmen or the keepers of the walls of Zion, because she could not find Christ Himself. She wanted to know what Christ thought of her now; and whether He would come back to her desolate soul, and fill her with light and life and glory.

Dear Christian, will you not realize, that no amount of direction or instruction on what your duty is will avail you to comfort your soul unless you yourself continue to seek, and eventually to find Christ for yourself in relation to all the trials and difficulties of your life? Truly, the source of all comfort in your living the Christian life is found proceeding from Christ Himself. Only Christ Himself can bring you this everlasting consolation and good hope by grace. Only He can comfort you and establish you in every good word and work. (2nd Thessalonians 2: 16 and 17) Only He can truly establish comfort through the words of godly people around you, or even from His blessed Word, the Bible.

You must continue to look to Him in faith; this faith becoming stronger by means of your love for Him your Beloved, so that He will return to you in your experience of Him. Psalm 105, verse 3 – “Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord!” “Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore!” And He will come back to you, speaking peace to your soul; knowing the beauty of His own grace working in you has prevailed. You shall have His glorious presence with you, and you shall realize His wonderful power, in all of your attempts to live a godly, God-glorifying life.

But what is wonderful here, is that this is the very thing that she did, and in doing so, her Beloved came back to her. Truly, Christ never leaves nor forsakes any believer, and He is never far from them in their heart’s experience. However, in the way that they experience His presence, they may feel that He has left them forever, never to return. They may fear that their failures and their sins have been too great for Christ to forgive, and that if He does forgive them, they surely cannot be of use in service to Him.

But you need to understand dear downcast believer, that Christ does not leave you, in your experience of Him, never to return. He only does this, for certain and particular reasons. His great salvation which He worked out on the cross for you was never intended to be a temporary help or deliverance. God is making you over into Christ’s image. You are united to Him. You are betrothed to Him in spiritual marriage. Christ will be faithful to His vows forever. You are clothed in His righteousness. You stand in His grace. He has given you His Holy Spirit. He has begun a good work, and He will complete it till the Day He returns for all of God’s Elect people.

So, when He leaves you alone and does not give you a sense of His presence, when your sense in your spirit that He is disappointed in your falling short of His glory, in your obedience to His Word, what is He really looking for? What is the essential requirement? What overcomes Him? It is when He sees that you are truly repenting of your spiritual laziness and carelessness; it is when He sees that you truly must have Him to care for your sin-sick, love-sick soul. It is when He sees that you have fixed your eyes on Him, the Author and Perfecter of your faith.

When He says, “Turn your eyes away from me”, He is not saying to stop looking at Him in faith. He is saying, “Your prayer to Me to have Me with you is answered.” “I see that your heart is fixed and steadfast in your desire for Me.” “You have overcome Me.” “I now see your love to Me, and it is a very beautiful thing to Me.” You see, His love for you, dear believer, never diminishes; it never changes. But yours to Him is not as fervent and as constant as it should be at all times. And so, He Himself must revive your love. He must fan the flame of your graces. The Lord Jesus, when He goes away from you in your experience of Him, He only goes away for a time, in order to test your

graces; to test your faith and love for Him, and to prove them to Himself and to you. What is it that Christ is really looking for from you, so that you will know His return to you in your heart's experience; to know that He is really with you, and that He is really for you, and that He is really working in your life? It is your love for Him and what He has done for you.

That is what He really wants to see; your eyes of love steadfastly looking upon Him, desiring more to experience His grace and wisdom and power in relation to do what pleases Him most. "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, another Comforter." (John 14: 15 and 16) He will give you more of the Holy Spirit; more of Himself. For it is only when your eyes of faith are steadfastly looking at Him, that He gives you this. And then He can also speak to your soul at the right time, "Turn your eyes away from Me, for they have overcome Me."

Christ is overcome when He sees you pleading for what He died to bring to you; more of the fullness of His love, so that you will desire to keep His commandments. Ephesians 3: 14 –"And for this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Have you overcome Christ with your love of desire for more of Him, dear believer? This is how you come to be more and filled with the love of Christ.

Now 2nd – Your steadfast love toward Christ is manifested in your private devotion to Him. (verses 5b and 6)

"Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from Gilead." "Your teeth are like a flock of sheep which have come up from the washing; each one bears twins, and none is barren among them." If you will notice, the Bridegroom who represents our Lord Jesus Christ, in verses 5-7 of our text, mentions once again here, 4 of the 7 qualities of spiritual beauty, or graces, which He so admires in His Church, and every believer. He had spoken of these qualities of beauty before in Chapter 4, verses 1-5. He mentions the eyes, once again here in verse 5, and now He will go on to mention the hair, the teeth, and the temples again as well.

In this section, He leaves out the lips (which I will group with the mouth), and the neck and the breasts. He will not mention these beautiful qualities again until Chapter 7. Why is this? Well, I believe that that the issue, in this particular section of Song of Solomon, is the Bride's being able to come back from her spiritually lazy or backslidden condition, to have a more meaningful and fruitful relationship with her Lord. And that is why some of some of the members of the mystical body of Christ are not mentioned again here. It is a lovely thing in Christ's sight when with our lips, we have kissed Him for salvation. "Kiss the Son", it says in Psalm 2, verse 12, "lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." "Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him."

And at the beginning of the book of Song of Solomon in Chapter 1, verse 2: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is better than wine." The true believer in Jesus has tasted of the good things of grace and wants more. But sometimes they may backslide because they have fallen into thinking that their private devotion and communion with Christ over the word is not really that important. They may indeed confess Christ with their mouth, they may speak of Him with their lips, but in their hearts they are not walking as closely with Christ as they should, and so they do not realize that they have left their first love because they really are not spending time with Him in prayer and in fellowship over the things which are important to Christ, such as holiness of life, and sharing with others the truth of what they are learning from the word of God.

Furthermore, when this is the case, they are not as able or willing to share the gospel with unbelievers around them. They are not often not able to give themselves fully to Christ in service to Him because their love to Him burns low, or it is cold. We will see this change for the Shulamite in Chapter 8 of this book. When a true Christian falls into this weak spiritual state, they are not able to nourish others in the words of sound doctrine, and this affects the strength of their church that they attend, and it affects their whole ability to minister to others and defend the gospel, which is what the features of the breasts and the neck being a tower convey to our minds. This is why they are left out here. It will take the Shulamite's finding her Savior again, in the secret place of her heart, to be able to be a strong and vibrant Christian once again.

Your private and secret life, flourishing and developing and bearing fruit in good words and works, dear Christian, is very important to Christ Himself; and how full of joy He is when He sees you, and many other Christians with you, whom you have been praying for, come looking to Him for it. How blessed a thing it is when the Christian Church wears her hair in such a way as to be presentable to Christ. How fair they are to Him when they are going down from Gilead, the place where they have found balm for their eyes, and we they are like a flock of sheep which has come up from the washing of water with the word. How truly beautiful when their teeth are chewing the word of God and meditating upon it day and night. Then the Lord will bring prosperity. What a great day it is when He says, "O my love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, and awesome as an army with banners!" "Turn your eyes away from me, for they have overcome me."

3rd – Your steadfast love for Christ is manifested in your sincere desire to have a clear conscience before Him. (verse 7)

"Like a piece of pomegranate are your temples behind your veil." As I said before in my sermon on Song of Solomon 4: 3-5, "The temples behind her veil refer to the believer's self-abasement and modesty; their having a humble and right view of themselves." "These temples would include the cheeks of the Bride, which are described here for us as being like a piece of pomegranate." "A piece of pomegranate is pink and white in color, just like a woman's cheeks when she is blushing." "Sometimes because our walk with Christ is not as close as it should be, we have reason to blush." "At other times, we would do spiritual work for Him and find that unbelievers oppose it." We may become ashamed of Christ before men. "In both cases we must come to have a tender and clear conscience if we would be a strong and confident believer."

The Shulamite's conscience in Chapter 5 was not as clear as she would have it to be. She knew that she had not lived up to all the grace and truth that had been given to her. But she had come to know the preciousness of Christ. She also knew that He had died for her so that she would could to have a clear conscience, and therefore, she could indeed hope to become useful in service to Him. This was her greatest hope and all of her desire. We have a good example of this in the life of one of the Apostles over in John Chapter 21, verse 15. You will remember that Peter had denied our Lord 3 times, when before he had boldly asserted that he would go to the cross and die with him there. Actually, he was not able to pray with Jesus for one hour in the garden of Gethsemane.

You can imagine what he thought about himself now. Jesus was risen from the dead now, and Peter must have thought that there wouldn't be any way that he could ever serve the Lord acceptably again, having failed him so badly during His most difficult hour. But let us read what it says here: "So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?'" "He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.'" "He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.'" "He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?'" He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.'" "He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.'" "He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?'"

"Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?'" "And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.'" "Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep.'" You see, here, don't you, what Jesus was looking for from Peter? He was looking to see if Peter still

loved Him. He did not say, “You failed me so badly Peter that now I cannot trust you.” “You will have to step down from this group of chosen Apostles.” No, he simply asked Peter if he still loved Him. Peter was honestly able to say that did. The Lord Jesus did not even publicly reprove him for his sins and mistakes in the matter of his denial. You can see, however, how essential it was that Peter would publicly declare His love for the Lord Jesus there at that time. And you see how Jesus was convinced of Peter’s love. The same will be true of you dear believer, if you learn these lessons.