

# Jesus' Betrothed Becomes a Beautiful Bride

Song of Solomon 8:10-12

*13 February*

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

## **Introduction:**

Please turn to the last chapter of the Song of Solomon.

- We are nearing the end of this series.
  - In this Song, we have seen portrayed to us the relationship that Jesus Christ has for His church.
  - The Song portrays Him as a husband ravished with His bride who in turn is enraptured with Him as her husband so that she melts into His embrace.
- After this book was written in the time of Solomon, it became a theme to which the prophets and apostles frequently turned when they spoke about Christ and His church.
  - Jesus Himself frequently uses this allegory.
    - Many of His parables speak of His relationship with us as a marriage that will be consummated when He returns at the last day.
    - It is a very helpful and beautiful way to think of our relationship with Him.

The Song of Solomon has a kind of development.

- It begins with the bride as a young bride, yearning for His kisses—that is, for Christ to manifest His love to her.
  - She is seen to be somewhat immature in her relationship with Him.
    - She is thrilled to be brought into His house and to hear of His love for her.
    - She confesses that she has not tended to herself (her vineyard) as she ought.
    - She is not sure where to find Him and is concerned that she might be thought to be a prostitute if she comes around looking for Him, but He welcomes her.
  - She finds that as He feeds her at His table, her love and affection for Him increase and flow out profusely from her to Him.
    - He expresses how He is pleased with her, brings her into His banqueting house with a banner of love over her, and embraces her affectionally in His arms.
    - She is enraptured and tells her friends (who make up the bride who is one bride with many members) not to rush this—to let it grow naturally.
  - We then saw how delighted she was when He was portrayed as a gazelle leaping across the mountains to come to her and visit her.
    - And how glad she was in the springtime of love to go away with Him.
    - But then there was a trial, when, for no apparent reason, He seemed to withdraw so that she could not find Him—but soon He was embracing her again.
  - Everyone began to notice the change in her when they saw her with Him in His entourage (remember the palanquin?) coming out the wilderness to marry Him, to enter His palace.
    - He told her how delightful she was to Him and how He was ravished with just one look from her eyes!

- He described her as a fruitful garden with precious spices that He loved to visit.
- But it was at this time (chapter 5) that she gave Him a cold reception, her love having grown cold toward Him.
  - We saw how He handled that situation—first appealing to her, then rekindling her love, yet withdrawing from her for a time to teach her a lesson.
    - Did she ever learn it!
    - In her separation from Him, she realised how she could not bear to live without Him. She searched earnestly and unrelentingly for Him.
      - Soon, He could no longer resist her pleas and returned to her, declaring again how pleased He was with her and her love.
      - How warmly she did welcome Him now! “Come my beloved,” she said, “and enjoy the fruit that I have laid up for you.”
  - Once again, she is noticed coming up from the wilderness of sin and death, leaning on her beloved. She has no desire to go anywhere else.
    - In 8:6-7 she expresses how glad she is that His love is so strong and enduring!
    - In 8:8-9, she yearns for her little sister to experience this love.
- The Song, as a whole, illustrates how Jesus takes His elect people who make up His bride and brings them to maturity.
  - In this way, He brings His bride, made up of many members, to maturity that she might be presented to Him at the last day (when He returns for us in glory) as a bride without spot or blemish.
  - As individual members, we grow from immaturity to maturity in the ways that are shown in the Song—through the experiences described here...
    - And all the while there are new members who are betrothed and begin the process so that all the while, the bride is growing up to perfection.
  - What we have in our text today (Song of Solomon 8:10-12) is the bride, who has just expressed interest in helping her little sister,
    - recognising the progress that she has made over the years by His grace.
      - She realises that she has matured, and that she has done so because Jesus her husband is such a wise husbandman.
      - Now, more than ever, she wants to give herself completely to Him.

Listen now as I read our text to you for today—Song of Solomon 8:10-12:

**Song of Solomon 8:10-12: I *am* a wall, and my breasts like towers; then I became in his eyes as one who found peace. <sup>11</sup> Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon; he leased the vineyard to keepers; everyone was to bring for its fruit a thousand silver *coins*. <sup>12</sup> My own vineyard *is* before me. You, O Solomon, *may have* a thousand, and those who tend its fruit two hundred.**

Thank the Lord for His precious Word. May He bless us as we consider it.

- In this passage we declare that we, the church, have become a mature bride (v. 10),
- Because Jesus our husband is a fruitful vinedresser to us His vineyard (v. 11),

- Who has cultivated devoted love in us, His bride, for Him (v. 12).

This is what we will be looking at today. Let's begin.

**I. In verse 10, we (the bride of Christ) declare that we have grown to maturity.**

- We say: **8:10: I am a wall, and my breasts like towers; then I became in his eyes as one who found peace.**

A. We see how much we have grown—how much we have matured.

1. This recognition has come about from talking about our little sister.
  - He told us His plans for her—
    - to make her a strong wall devoted to Him.
  - We realise that this is what He did for us.
    - We were once immature like her—
      - without breasts to love Him and to feed others....
  - We realise that He brings each generation of His church from immaturity to maturity.
2. We note two major proofs of our maturity:
  - a. We are now a wall,
    - not interested in other lovers.
    - not tempted to run away.
  - b. Our breasts are like towers (unlike our little sister)
    - to give our love to our husband.
    - to nourish His little ones (milk).
3. It is very encouraging to look back and see how we have grown.

B. He (Jesus our husband) also sees how we have matured.

1. We have become “in His eyes as one who has found peace.”
  - a. Peace—*shalom*.
  - b. Peace is the blessing that is always promised to believers...
    - 1) rooted in the promise to Abraham—“I will bless you.... in your seed...”
    - 2) The Aaronic blessing:
      - **Num 6:23-27: Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: <sup>24</sup> “The LORD bless you and keep you; <sup>25</sup> the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; <sup>26</sup> the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”’ <sup>27</sup> So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.**
    - 3) The promise of Jesus:
      - **John 14:27: Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**
    - 4) Almost all the epistles: “Grace and peace to you...”
- c. We cannot and do not have peace without Christ.
  - A subjective feeling of peace without Him is only temporary.

- Objective peace is only found through reconciliation with our Maker through Jesus.
  - **Isaiah 48:22: “There is no peace,” says the LORD, “for the wicked.”**
- 2. This *peace* speaks of our settledness in Him and in His house.
  - a. We are settled upon Him—chaste—not going off to idols.
    - Happy in Him. fully trusting in Him.
    - There is a rest of satisfaction with Him that we have entered.
  - b. Hebrews 4 speaks of the rest,
    - **Heb 4:1-3: Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. <sup>2</sup> For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. <sup>3</sup> For we who have believed do enter that rest...**
  - c. And 1 Peter 3 of the settled trust.
    - **1 Pet 3:3-6: Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— <sup>4</sup> rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. <sup>5</sup> For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, <sup>6</sup> as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.**
- 3. He loves to see us so... we love to be so... we love that He loves to see us so...
  - a. It honours Him for us to be happy and secure in His love.
  - b. It is a tremendous blessing for us—to be resting securely in His love and faithfulness.
  - c. We should aim for this in our earthly marriages. They are to reflect Christ...
    - Husbands are to be husbands in whom their wives can safely trust.
    - Wives are to be devoted to their husbands and secure under their leadership.
    - We all need to exhibit this trust with the civil magistrate, even with the ungodly.

TRANS> So in v 10 we declare that both we and Jesus recognise that we have matured.

## II. In verse 11, we attribute our growth to Jesus our fruitful vinedresser.

- Verse 11 says: **Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon; he leased the vineyard to keepers; everyone was to bring for its fruit a thousand silver *coins*.**
- A. Notice that we call Him *Solomon* (Shel-o-moh)
1. This name means *prince of peace*—
    - As the *prince of peace*, He is the one who brought forth the *peace* we just described in verse 10.
    - He is Shel-o-moh—the prince of peace
      - We, His bride, are Shul-a-mith—the princess of peace
    - Isaiah 9:6-7 describes Him as the author of peace: **For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His**

name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the increase of *His* government and peace *there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

2. He brought us peace both objectively and subjectively.
    - a. Objectively by the cross—reconciled to God...
    - b. Subjectively by His ministry in our lives as our husband, making us secure in His love...
      - We have seen in this book how He has worked in our lives over the years.
      - This is how He works with each generation of His bride to bring her from immaturity to maturity.
- B. Notice how we speak of Him here as having a vineyard...
- **v. 11: Solomon had a vineyard.**
1. Saying that he *had* it does not mean He does not possess it now.
    - It simply shows that He has had it for a considerable amount of time.
    - It is speaking in a retrospective way—
      - For example, I might say, “When I was 16, I had a car...” and it does not mean that I don’t have one now.
      - Isaiah 5:1 uses the same form (Qal Perfect) when it says: **My beloved has (or had) a vineyard on a very fruitful hill.**
  - Isaiah 5:1, is in fact, quite parallel with this passage.
    - Both there and here and very often in scripture.
  2. Both there and here (and very often elsewhere) the church is called His vineyard.
    - And of course, the church is His bride.
    - We are a vineyard given to Him by the Father.
      - In John 10, He calls us those who were given to Him by the Father.
      - He tells us that He purchases us by laying down His life for us.
      - And that He will preserve us and keep us as His own forever.
        - There is an ownership—He takes us and looks after us with skill.
- C. Our maturity is the result of His fruitful husbandry—His skill as a vinedresser.
1. First, we see that He set us in a very fruitful place.
    - *Baal Hamon* refers to fruitfulness.
      - It means—*master of a multitude—or an abundance,*
        - similar to Abraham—*father of a multitude.*
    - So like Isaiah 5:1, **My beloved had a vineyard on a very fruitful hill.**
      - Compare Psalm 1—the tree planted by the waters.
  2. Second, He made sure of our care... He leased the vineyard to keepers.
    - a. This speaks of the pastors and elders and deacons He gave us to look after us.
      - Jesus picks up on this in His parable that we read in Luke 20.
        - **Luke 20:9: A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time...**

- b. He provided these keepers with ordinances to administer:
  - the word to feed us.
  - the sacraments to mark us out and refresh us as His own.
  - discipline to correct us (pull weeds).
  - prayer to keep us leaning on Him.
  - praise to keep us honouring Him and delighting in His excellence.
- 3. His goal is fruitfulness—that we become a beautiful bride devoted to Him.
  - He expects a high yield.
    - See the last part of verse 11 in our text: **He leased the vineyard to keepers; everyone was to bring for its fruit a thousand silver coins.**
      - Isaiah 7:3 tells us that a thousand shekels for a thousand vines is a high yield!
      - He expects to see His bride grow and mature from generation to generation.
  - The same expectation is seen in Isaiah 5 and Luke 20:
    - **Isaiah 5:2: He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it; So He expected *it* to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes.**
    - **Luke 20:10: Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed.**
  - In both these cases, there were problems.
    - But these problems never prevented His elect people (who are His bride) from growing to full maturity.
      - The visible church is a mixture of elect and non-elect people.
      - Jesus uses this mixture in a marvellous way to bring forth His elect bride as a faithful bride.
    - Here in the Song of Solomon, we, the bride, testify that He has brought us to maturity.
      - It is because He is a fruitful vinedresser that we are a wall with breasts like towers.
      - Our little sister will experience this, then her little sister after her, and her little sister after her—unto all are brought in and the bride is complete.

**III. In verse 12, we express our devoted love that He has cultivated in us, promising to give ourselves completely to Him.**

- **Song 8:12: My own vineyard is before me. You, O Solomon, *may have* a thousand, and those who tend its fruit two hundred.”**

A. We recognise that our vineyard is our responsibility—

1. We say, “**My own vineyard is before me...**
  - The language emphasises ownership...
    - It could be translated: My vineyard is my own and it is before me.
    - It is my responsibility.

- We all belong to Jesus our husband, and He is responsible for all of us.
    - But we are responsible for the portion of the vineyard that He has given to us.
2. Your portion may be
- a. those He has placed under your oversight as an elder or pastor.
    - According to 1 Cor 4:1-4, the officers of the church are stewards of the mysteries of God who must give an account of their stewardship.
    - Paul certainly felt the weight of this responsibility as we saw last week.
      - **2 Cor 11:2: For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present [you as] a chaste virgin to Christ.**

➤ But not all are ministers. Your portion may be
  - b. those He has placed under your oversight as a father and husband.
    - **Gen 18:19: For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.**

➤ But all are not fathers either. Nevertheless,
  - c. In every case, you are responsible for your own soul.
    - **2 Cor 5:10: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**
3. We are to be diligent that we might bring forth the fruit that Jesus expects.
- We are to make diligent use of the means of grace
  - We are to abound in worship and good works
  - We are to grow in grace and obedience out of ever increasing love for our Lord.
    - Say to Jesus, “My own vineyard is before me and it is for you.”
- B. As His bride, we promise to give our fruit to Him.
1. We gladly say to Him, **“You, O Solomon, *may have a thousand, and those who tend its fruit two hundred.*”**
    - We bring forth more and more fruit by His skilful husbandry and it is all for Him—all to please Him.
      - A thousand refers to all of it. We give Him our all.
      - This fruit also pleases His keepers—they rejoice when we grow.
        - We give them their two hundred.
        - Think of how Paul expresses his delight when the church grows.
  2. The Lord rebukes us when we give ourselves to other lovers.
    - In Ezekiel 16, He tells how He took us as His bride, provided for us to be fruitful and beautiful for Him... and how we rebelled...
      - This speaks of the visible church which is a mixture of elect and reprobate.
    - He speaks first of how He found us in our sin and took us in with the purpose of making us into a fruitful bride for Himself.
      - **vs. 6-11: “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. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. <sup>10</sup> I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. <sup>11</sup> I adorned you with ornaments, and so on...

- In verse 13, He speaks of how attractive He made us and how we then gave our beauty to other lovers. Again, this is the visible church as a whole.
  - v. 13: “Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing *was of* fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate *pastry of* fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. <sup>14</sup> Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it *was* perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you,” says the Lord GOD. <sup>15</sup> But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who *would have* it. <sup>16</sup> You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored high places for yourself, and played the harlot on them. *Such* things should not happen, nor be.
  - In verse 20, He shows the extent of our unfaithfulness to Him.
    - v. 20: Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. *Were* your acts of harlotry a small matter, <sup>21</sup> that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through *the fire*? <sup>22</sup> And in all your abominations and acts of harlotry you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, struggling in your blood. <sup>23</sup> Then it was so, after all your wickedness— ‘Woe, woe to you!’ says the Lord GOD.”...
    - This is not what His bride does—at least, not without repentance.
  - Part of His wisdom as a vinedresser is seen, however, in putting us in the visible church with false brothers and sisters.
  - He uses this environment to bring out the best in those are His chosen bride.
- 3. His elect bride is set in contrast to the adulterous woman who rejected His ministry.
  - a. She grows up in maturity as His bride, giving herself entirely to Him.
    - If you are His true bride, you live to please Him.
    - When we are perfected in glory, everything we do, we will do for Him
      - Then we will live for nothing but His glory—
      - And it will be absolutely delightful to us to do that.
  - b. This is the fruitfulness that He requires of all people, and that He, by His saving work, produces in His elect bride—His vineyard—the elect church.
  - c. Does this requirement seem unreasonable? Is God narcissistic?
    - Last week, a young woman told me that God seemed narcissistic to her.



- I told her that there could only be one reason that was so.
  - Because she did not see Him as God.
  - She was looking at the most high God as an equal to us.
- For a mere creature, no matter how advanced, to expect everyone to be entirely devoted to them and to live for their glory would indeed be reprehensible.
  - But to give the most high God anything less than that is equally reprehensible.
  - He is worthy of our complete and entire devotion.
- Let me illustrate this with a parable.
  - A group of vile men find a lovely woman.
    - They take her by force and sexually abuse her, then beat her without mercy, leaving her half dead.
  - She reports them to the authorities in her country and they look at her with disdain and say,
    - “Who do you think you are?
    - Why do you think those men should respect you?
    - You are just being selfish and narcissistic.”
  - You would tell those wretched authorities that she was a human being and deserves to be treated like a human being.
- So, likewise, if God is God, He ought to be respected as God.
  - If God is not treated as God, wrong has been done.
  - If a person is not treated like a person, wrong has also been done.
  - If the woman were a blow up doll, wrong would be done before God, but not to the doll—because the doll is just a doll.
- But I say, there is more difference between God and a woman than there is between a woman and a doll.
  - We don’t realise how great God is, how glorious He is, because we wickedly suppress the truth.
    - It is not just ignorance, it is inexcusable rebellion.
- Whenever anyone sees a manifestation of the glory of God, they are immediately consumed with guilt that cannot be shaken.
  - They realise how wretched they have been before Him.
    - When we are betrothed to Christ, He first shows us how we have sinned against the most high God.
      - We don’t see it fully yet, but we see it enough that we realise that we cannot save ourselves, but need Jesus our crucified Saviour to save us.
    - Then we turn to Him for forgiveness and we turn to Him to deliver us so that henceforth we might live for Him—for God.
    - We lean on Him to bring us out the wilderness of sin and condemnation.

- The more we do so, the more delightful we find Him to be, the more rich and full our restored relationship grows, and the more we long for perfection in glory with Him.
- Yes, when we come to maturity, we say, as Ephraim did in Hosea, “What have I to do with idols anymore?”
- We want to pour out our lives for our dear Lord and husband and not for idols...
  - We offer our whole being to Him...
    - We say, “**My own vineyard is before me. You, O Solomon, *may have a thousand, And those who tend its fruit two hundred.***”