

Our Beloved's Gracious Request

Song of Solomon 8:13

20 February

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

Introduction:

Please turn to the Song of Solomon.

- Last week, I told you that I was thinking we'd have one more sermon on this book, but that it might be two. Well, it is going to be two.
- We will cover verse 13 today, and verse 14 next week, DV, but I'd like to read them both and introduce them both.

Listen now as I read Song of Solomon 8:13-14. This is God's word:

Song of Solomon 8:13-14: You [fs] who dwell in the gardens, the companions listen for your [fs] voice—let me hear it! 14 Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices.

May the Lord add His blessing to the reading of His holy Word.

In these words, we have what may seem a surprising conclusion to the Song of Songs.

- As we have seen, this is the Song of Songs—the best of all songs.
 - It is about the love between Jesus Christ and His church in a beautiful allegory.
- You might expect such a song to end with the betrothed bride, Shulamite, the princess of peace, moving into the palace of King Solomon, the prince of peace, to live happily ever after.
 - Fairy tales actually get that phrase from the glorious gospel, because that is what will happen to us if we die in the Lord.
 - But the Song of Solomon does not end that way.
 - Instead we find the beloved and His bride separated—not due to a quarrel, but for other reasons.
 - We see great love between them, with Him wanting to hear her voice and with her yearning for Him to “make haste” and come to her.
 - We know that the words in verse 13 are His words to her because the Hebrew indicates that the pronouns are feminine singular (I marked them with fs on your outline).
 - So He is the one who says to her: **You [fs] who dwell in the gardens, the companions listen for your [fs] voice—let me hear it!**
 - And then she responds to Him with the words in verse 14: **Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices.**
- What we have here is actually the very same situation that we are currently in with Christ as our betrothed husband. We are here, and He is in heaven.
 - As long as we are in this world, we, His chosen bride, are betrothed to Him—He has taken us as His betrothed wife. We are being prepared for our marriage.
 - We have therefore not yet entered into His palace (the place He is preparing for us mentioned in John 14:1) to live happily ever after with Him in glory.

- In John 14, He explained that He will be in heaven with the Father until He comes for us at the last day.
 - Until then, He will be with us spiritually and come to us at times to manifest His love to us, but our communion will be by prayer and ordinances blessed by the Holy Spirit.
 - Understand that in the Bible, a betrothed woman is considered married because a covenant of marriage has been made with vows, but the consummation does not happen until the wedding.
 - For Jesus' bride, that day will not be until He returns to marry us and to bring us into His house forever—to live happily ever after.
- The Bible ends the same way the Song of Songs ends:
 - With the betrothed bride asking Him to come quickly to her.
 - In Rev. 22:16, we have Jesus speaking to her, saying: **“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”**
 - To which verse 17 follows with the words: **“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”**
 - And then, in verse 20-21, we have the final words of the Bible before the closing benediction which include, first, the promise of Jesus: **“Surely I am coming quickly,”**
 - followed by the response of the bride (spoken by John): **“Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”**
- We will look into this more next week, but this week as we look at His words to her in verse 13,
 - I want you to understand that He speaks to us here as His betrothed bride who is eagerly preparing to be wed to Him whenever He comes.
 - As we have seen, His chosen bride is one bride made up of many members.
 - They are all sinners who have their origin in the wilderness of sin and death, but they lean on Jesus to bring them out of the wilderness.
 - If you would like to be saved from sin and hell and be given eternal life in God's house, all you have to do is lean on Jesus to save you...
 - Trust in Him to bring you out of the wilderness of sin and death and He will do it. He is the Son of God who came to save us from our sins, and He went to the cross to secure our forgiveness, and gives us His Spirit to transform us so that we love Him and grow in holiness.
- Today, from verse 13, we will look at three things that are true of you if, and only if, you are a member of His chosen bride—one who is leaning on Him for salvation.
 - I. First, that you dwell in the gardens of Jesus.**
 - II. Second, that you have companions in the gardens who are eager to hear your voice.**
 - III. Third, that Jesus your betrothed husband asks to hear your voice.**

Let's begin, then, with the first of these three things that are true of you:

I. You dwell in the gardens of Jesus.

A. He addresses you here as “You who dwell in the gardens.”

1. These are His words to you as His betrothed wife,
 - as I explained: the pronouns are feminine singular.
 - The phrase could be translated: “O inhabitress of the gardens.”
2. Notice that we are said to **dwell** there.
 - a. **Dwell**—a word that means to sit.
 - It is often used of where one lives or dwells.
 - Ps 2 refers to the LORD as “He who sits in the heavens...”
 - b. To dwell **in the gardens** is to be **set** there—or, perhaps, **planted** there, like a cabbage or something.
 - We have seen that we are like fragrant flowers, herbs and spices...
 - Fruit that He delights in!
3. It is a tremendous privilege to be in His gardens!
 - a. He brought you up from the barren wilderness.
 - You were ruined and undone (unworthy).
 - You were cut off, but now you are betrothed to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!
 - b. You were unworthy, yet:
 - He redeemed you—rescued you from bondage to sin, Satan, death, the curse.
 - He called you and you came—He made a covenant of betrothal by His grace.
 - He planted you—established you as His own, sealing you with His Spirit.
 - He protects you and tends to you—so that now you grow.
 - He speaks words of kindness and love to you, assuring you of His acceptance.
 - He rejoices over you and delights in you as you grow.
 - c. You rely completely on Him (that is faith—leaning on Him)
 - Who is this, coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?
 - Make sure that you are leaning upon Him. If not, you are not truly His bride.

B. This garden is His church where presently He prepares us for marriage.

1. We are like Esther, receiving our beauty treatment before we are presented to the king.
 - As His betrothed wife, He is preparing us to live in His house.
 - He is making you lovely and gracious.
2. This is what is happening to you.
 - a. You are growing in your knowledge of Him (learning about Him—of His excellence)
 - b. You are learning to praise and thank Him
 - c. You are growing to trust Him—learning how safe it is to entirely trust Him.
 - d. You are growing in your obedience to Him—training to live in His house. The queen of Sheba mentioned this when she visited Solomon.
 - e. You are growing in chastity (as last week)—in absolute devotion to Him

3. When He is finished, we will be a bride without spot or blemish—even in His eyes!
 - That is one of the best things about heaven.

C. Let it sink in—you are privileged. You are His garden!

1. Be thankful! (Who is this [who are you], coming up from the wilderness?)
2. Be eager to grow! (Bring forth much fruit for Him!)
3. Be comforted in His steadfast unconditional love!
4. Be delighted with His affectionate love that grows as you grow more beautiful!

TRANS> You dwell in His gardens—that is the first thing we see in our text.

- Now let's look at the second.

II. You have companions in the gardens who are eager to hear your voice.

A. He says, “**The companions listen for your voice.**”

1. Who are these companions?
 - The word *companion* speaks of an associate—
 - (those sharing things in common).
 - It speaks of the other members of His church—
 - (the complex bride).
 - She is made up of all the elect—
 - (the ones not yet called, the little sisters not yet mature, the mature ones)
2. Like you, they have “ears to hear what the Spirit says.”
 - That means that within them, there is a Spirit-given desire to hear *the prophetic voice* and *the priestly voice* of the bride:
 - a. **the prophetic voice** is heard proclaiming the truth
 - it tells of Christ and His glory,
 - it sets forth God's promise and covenants,
 - it proclaims the works of Christ,
 - it calls to repentance and to faith in the gospel,
 - it instructs us in godly living and
 - it sets before us the hope of glory.
 - b. **the priestly voice** is heard praising our beloved husband,
 - it praises Him for His glory and grace,
 - it gives thanks to Him,
 - it confesses sin to Him,
 - it makes vows to Him,
 - it prays and makes intercession to Him,
 - it comforts those who repent with the assurance of forgiveness.
3. This eagerness to hear the bride's voice is what distinguishes the elect bride from others. As companions, we listen eagerly when one of us speaks of our beloved.
 - Mal 3:16 says that **those who feared the LORD spoke to one another about Him.**
 - a. Others have little interest in speaking of our beloved.
 - They are not preparing to live in His house as His beloved wife because they are not actually betrothed to Him.

- b. But think of the joy it gives to those of us who are!
 - 1) We love to hear sermons that exalt Him and to engage in the praises and the prayers of the church.
 - We delight in gathering for the purpose of speaking about Him and to Him.
 - 2) But also, whenever we are together in more informal settings,
 - Whenever any one of us starts to speak of Him or of His ways, our ears perk up and we want to hear because we love Him...
 - At least that is what we do unless we are in the flesh for a time—cold and resistant... but even then, we often are drawn in to hear.
 - 3) Think of the joy that comes...
 - In hearing a new believer speaking of Christ—of his conversion, of the new things he is learning.
 - or in hearing an old believer tell stories of God’s faithfulness...
 - or the encouragement of having another believer come to speak to you of Him when you are discouraged.
 - or even when they are kind enough to come and correct you when you need repentance.
 - Perhaps they just pray with you in a general way or tell you what they read in God’s Word—your ears perk up.
 - 4) Every believer has a fond place for hearing the other members of the body... because that is how we came to know Christ to start with...
 - And that is how we continue to learn of Him and to grow into a more beautiful bride—it is through the ministry of the church.
 - As His bride, He gave His word to our prophets and apostles and they have put it in the Bible for us.
 - And now Jesus uses us to speak for Him and to lead each other in worship.
- Your companions love to hear your voice .
- B. Let this encourage you to speak to your companions of Christ...
 1. Let your speech be in praise of Him and for edification and encouragement.
 - Don’t speak only of trivial things...
 - They need to hear words of their beloved and of their walk with Him.
 - They may not always seem so eager...
 - the flesh is strong so is the pull of the world...
 - They will change the subject, but bring it back...
 - Ultimately, if they are elect, they will be glad for it.
 - They will receive it and it will do them good.
 - In the end, they will thank you for it.
 2. You need this motivation to help you continue to speak as you ought to speak.
 - a. It is an encouragement to preachers—to earnestly preach the gospel.
 - The elect bride is waiting to hear—she needs to hear—she will hear the voice that speaks to her of Christ and His ways.
 - b. But it is not just preachers that need this encouragement—you need it too.

- What so often happens when you think about arranging to meet with a companion in the Lord? You have the best of intentions to do it...
- 1) But then, Satan will try to discourage you—
 - that it will do no good—what good can a word from you be?
 - that it might turn them away...
- 2) Your flesh will also try to discourage you—
 - that you have more attractive things to do—Netflix, hobbies.
 - that we got our edification and prayers at church and need no more.
 - the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak...
- 3) The world will try to discourage you too...
 - That it is rude to speak of Christ...
 - The world will rebuke you for it and call you evil...
- c. Certainly, you don't want to be obnoxious.
 - It is not that you may never speak of the good things of this life.
 - Jesus gives us all things richly to enjoy.
 - He Himself feasted and drank wine.
 - We are called to rejoice with the wife of our youth.
 - Proverbs commends having precious treasures in our house.
 - Neither are you to go on speaking to those who do not want to hear.
 - You are not to cast your pearls before swine—
 - Jesus and His apostles would shake the dust off their feet.
 - But almost always there were those that heard...
 - They found those with ears to hear and ministered to them.

TRANS> And now let's look at the third thing we see in our text.

- The first was that we dwell in Christ's gardens...
- The second that our companions listen to our voice...
- The third is that...

III. Jesus your betrothed husband wants to hear your voice.

A. He says, "Let me hear it."

1. He has returned to the Father in glory, but He has assured us that He can hear us.
 - Though He is not with us bodily, He is always with us spiritually.
 - As a loving husband, He has made a way for us to communicate with Him—to stay in touch with Him.
 - He speaks to us, as we have just seen, by the prophetic and priestly words of each other—
 - Especially we use the words of Scripture which He gave to the apostles who are also part of His bride.
 - That is how He speaks to us for now...
 - And then He calls us to speak to Him by prayer and praise.
 - He has exhorted us that until He returns, we are to pray to Father in His name—and He will hear us.
 - He actually hears every word that we speak because He is the Son of God.

- He has told us that He hears and judges every word—yes, even every idle word,
2. He is a loving husband and He desires to hear our voice when we speak as we ought.
 - a. He wants to hear words from us that are directed towards Him.
 - He wants to hear us declare our love and affection—like the Psalms teach us.
 - He wants us to praise Him for His glory and for His works.
 - He wants us to thank Him for all that He has done for us.
 - He also wants to hear our lamentations—like the Psalms also teach us.
 - He even wants to hear of our disappointments with Him—for example, if we cannot find Him—it honours Him for us to ask.
 - He wants to hear our confession of sin and our cry for forgiveness.
 - He wants us to look to Him for help for ourselves and others—it honours Him when we treat Him as a husband who cares and who is able to help us.
 - He wants us to cry out to Him when our enemies are surrounding us.
 - b. He also delights to hear us speaking to one another of Him.
 - I quoted Mal 3:16 before, but only part of it.
 - **Mal 3:16-17: Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard *them*; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name.** ¹⁷ **“They shall be Mine,” says the LORD of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.”**
 - It brings great joy to Him to hear us speak of Him to each other.
 - He also loves to hear our words that build each other up.
 - **Eph 4:29: “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”**
- B. Does it not motivate you to let Jesus hear your voice as His betrothed bride when you realise how much He wants to hear it?
1. Consider well—
 - He loves you so much.
 - He is waiting to hear your praises, your confessions, and your prayers.
 - He is also waiting to hear you speak to each other about Him.
 2. This is what we are to do while we eagerly wait for Him to come to us.
 - This is how we keep up our communion with Him...both publicly and privately.
 - Will He have the pleasure of hearing your voice?
 - See that He does!
 - Will your companions have the pleasure of hearing your voice as His betrothed?
 - See that they do!
 3. You will say, “But I don’t have much to say.”
 - Then ask your brothers and sisters how you can pray for them and do that.
 - Or get together with them and read a good Christian book or some scripture.