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**Opening Text: Song 1:12-15: Do you remember Mary and her very costly pound of spikenard ointment that she anointed the Lord Jesus with?**

It was the presence of the Lord Jesus that brought Mary to that supper, and it was her love for Him that moved her TO DO WHAT she did.

If you are born again, a child of God, you "should long" (BY FAITH) to be in the presence of Christ...HOW? Through EVERY "means of grace" which God has ordained for us; in His Word, in intimate prayer, and in the church gathering and fellowship of the saints!

Child of God, if your heart is not motivated, energized, and in great expectation whenever you come before the Lord... something is amiss! You are coming BY FAITH to the table of the Lord, your King.

*In those times, the fragrance of YOUR pound of spikenard (or YOUR LOVE TO CHRIST) should be opened and diffused, so that all who are present should experience the aroma of your love to Christ!*

The bride then described her well-beloved as:

*WHEN HE is with me, (saith the bride) I SMELL the sweet aroma of His love TO ME! Like "a bundle of myrrh around her neck, lying between her breasts and a cluster of camphire" flowers in her hand.*

And in those times, MY DESIRE is to embrace and hold Him, and to do nothing that would provoke Him to depart from me!

His loving kindness TO ME IS BETTER THAN LIFE, saith the bride, I cannot bear living without the expressions of His love to me, which, when I cannot detect His presence... it unsettles me! *Song 3:1-4, 5:6*

This brings us to the bridegroom's response the bride, and His reassurance TO HER that she is the one that He loves, and that it is her beauty that has captured His heart!

It is as if He is stopping her from her fears; and what are her fears? That He would "BEHOLD" her infirmities and her imperfections and sins, and that He would see no beauty AT ALL in her! And His love would depart from her!

Remember what she said of herself in *Song 1:6: "Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me"*; but STILL, He reassured her of His love to her!

**She feared the departure of His love because she did not and could not see (in herself) any beauty!**

Don't we have these thoughts (as children of God) when we look upon our imperfections and failures and sins against Christ? Doesn't it fill us with sorrow and grief at the

thought of them? And oftentimes when we have confessed our sins...which were against Christ... doesn't it (at times) bring us to the place of questioning...how could you love me, Lord? How can you see any fairness or beauty in me that You would set your love upon me?

But IT IS YOUR struggles against your own wickedness, and your hatred of your own sins that the Lord Jesus Christ loves so much in you, THAT is what HE finds to be so beautiful in you, even with all your imperfections, child of God... And it is His Spirit (IN YOU) driving you to give diligence to make your calling and election sure, and to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling that He so loves!

And IT IS when you DO acknowledge your sins against Him, and when you DO confess your sins with brokenness and contrition... that is His love working IN YOU, changing your desires, and turning you from your sins, which you now hate... toward Christ, whom you now love! That is what Christ sees in you "child of God" THAT is so beautiful to Him, and that which He so loves! After all, He is beholding HIS workmanship IN YOU!

Hence, the bridegroom reassured the bride of His love toward her, even with all her imperfections and failings.

### **Behold, "MY LOVE"**

This is one of the most difficult things to grasp and believe; that the Lord Jesus calls you, Christian: "MY LOVE"; but also, that He will always love you, and His love to you, will never waver!

John 13:1: "Having loved HIS OWN which were in the world, He loved them unto the end".

Now I know that this is spoken of His disciples, but isn't this true for us now, who are His children and disciples?

YES! John 14:21, 23

BUT HOW, Lord, can you love me, when my love is so often so cold and weak toward you! I am nothing, a sinner, like the prodigal who dishonored His Father's good name, YES CHILD! Tis TRUE! Tis TRUE! BUT God chose to set His love upon you, and that will never change! Jeremiah 31:3

But in our defective/fallen/weak minds, our doubts and fears so often overrule our faith in Christ, and we come to the place in which we base Christ's love TO US on our love to Him, it is AS IF WE SAY, He will only love me when I first love Him... Or when I am good enough to merit His love!

Do you see that? In those times when you cannot fathom how Christ could love you ...and keep on loving you, remember, YOUR love to Christ is the supernatural produce and result that HE FIRST LOVED YOU!

You COULD NOT ~ WOULD NOT love Christ unless He first loved you!

**The fact of the matter is this, child of God; Christ took you unto Himself as His betrothed bride, (His Church) NOT when you were perfect and without any sinful blemishes, but it was precisely the opposite. Romans 5:8-10**

This perhaps, one of the most amazing things to consider in your relationship to Christ as a believer, THAT HE (who is Infinitely Holy, Perfectly Righteous) BEHOLDS YOU in your fallenness, with all your sinful baggage; in all your struggles and failings when tempted, and in your fallings into sin, and STILL, He declares of you:

*"Thou art fair, my love; thou art fair"*

I must be very careful HERE and warn you that I am not saying that the Christian life may be a "continuing in sin" that Christ's love might abound toward you! You cannot love Christ and love your sins!

But it PLEASES the Lord when you struggle against sin, endure the temptations and fiery darts THAT COME AT YOU from the wicked one.

And it pleases the Lord when you acknowledge your transgressions and your sins against Him, repent of your sins against Him, and come to Him in contrition, brokenness, and humility confessing your failings and your falls into sin to Him!

THOSE whom Christ loves, He keeps loving, He beautifies them, conforms them to His image, cares for and nourishes them! Always!

*Ephesians 5:25-27, 32, 1:6: "made us accepted"*

*Psalms 149:4: "For the LORD taketh pleasure in His people: He will beautify the meek with salvation".*

The Lord is preparing you (His church ~ His chosen bride) for the marriage celebration that will take place in heaven at the end of the age!

The fact is, YOU and I NEED cleansing, washing, purification, and preparation before we go into the actual presence of the King in heaven.

LIKE Esther, who was brought into the King's house, to the keeper of the women. And for an entire year, she didn't see the King in person until she was purified and prepared to go in unto Him. Many of those young women were rejected, but not that one.

Beloved, your earthly life (in Christ) is to be your days of purification and preparation; so that you might be ready, when you're called, to go into the King's.

**"Thou hast doves' eyes"**

Next time!