

Title: **FAILING SAINTS**
 AND
 OUR UNFAILING SAVIOR

Text: Song of Solomon 5:2-8

Date: Sunday Morning — April 21, 2007
 Campus Church, Welwyn, England

Introduction:

It is a sad fact, but a fact nonetheless, that we are in a constant state of fluctuation. No sooner are our hearts awakened than we are languishing again. No sooner does the Lord revive us than we are again lethargic. The Song of Solomon shows this constant state of spiritual fluctuation.

In this beautiful song of loves, this, the greatest of all love stories, we see the tender relation of Christ and his bride, the church, the marriage union of our souls to our Savior. What a blessed thought! The Lord Jesus is married to our poor souls; and we are married to him, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh! Our union with Christ is...

- A Marriage Union.
- An Eternal Union.
- A Real Union.
- A Union of Love.

This song of loves deals with the union of love that exists between Christ and his church, between Christ and our souls. On his part, the union is a union without

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fluctuation.

- His eternal love for us knows no change.
- His heart's devotion to us is without variation.
- His high esteem of his people never varies. —
“Behold, thou art fair, my love! Behold, thou art fair!” (4:1).

(Song of Songs 4:7) “Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.”

(Song of Songs 4:10-11) “How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! (11) Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.”

Blessed be his name forever, there is no fluctuation with our Savior! But, on our part, the one thing that is constant is our lack of constancy!

- We love him, truly we do (1 John 4:19); but our love for our Savior is utterly shameful.
- We trust him. Yes, I believe on the Son of God, but my faith in him is horribly shameful, ever mixed with unbelief!

AN EARNEST PRAYER

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Look at the last verse of chapter four. Here is an earnest cry for Christ to come into his garden with the stirring winds of his grace, that he might draw out from us the sweet spices of faith and love, praise and devotion.

(Song of Songs 4:16) “Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, *that* the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.”

In the next line, our dear Savior answers the prayer and comes into his garden (Matt. 18:20).

(Song of Songs 5:1) “I am come into my garden, my sister, *my* spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.”

How blessed! How delightful! How sweet! When we have such gracious visitations, we are like Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration. — We want to pitch camp on the mountain and stay there! But how quickly things change!

(Song of Songs 5:2-8) “I sleep, but my heart waketh: *it is* the voice of my beloved that knocketh, *saying*, Open to me, my sister, my love,

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my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, *and* my locks with the drops of the night. (3) I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? (4) My beloved put in his hand by the hole *of the door*, and my bowels were moved for him. (5) I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped *with* myrrh, and my fingers *with* sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. (6) I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, *and* was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer. (7) The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me. (8) I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I *am* sick of love.”

Our text sets before us a picture of the church of Christ, his beloved, chosen, and redeemed bride in her most lamentable condition. She is slothful, negligent, and indifferent. I wish it were not so, but I am compelled to confess that this, our most lamentable condition, is our most common condition. In other places the Bride speaks to Christ, but here she speaks of him, because now he had withdrawn himself.

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I want to talk to you this morning about **Failing Saints and our Unfailing Savior**. I want show you both the cause and the result of spiritual indifference. I can tell you something about the cause. And I can tell you something about the result. But I am afraid that I cannot prescribe any certain remedy.

When our fellowship and communion with Christ is broken, because of our base ingratitude, neglect, and indifference, the only remedy is that the Lord himself graciously return to us and revive our hearts according to his own sovereign pleasure.

“I sleep, but my heart waketh!” This is a subject about which I am afraid we are all too familiar. We all know by bitter experience the deep base notes of Newton’s hymn...

How tedious and tasteless the hours
When Jesus no longer I see!
Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flowers,
Have all lost their sweetness to me.
The mid-summer sun shines but dim;
The fields strive in vain to look gay;
But when I am happy in Him,
December’s as pleasant as May.

His name yields the richest perfume,
And sweeter than music His voice;

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His presence disperses my gloom,
And makes all within me rejoice:
I should, were He always thus nigh,
Have nothing to wish or to fear;
No mortal so happy as I;
My summer would last all the year.

Content with beholding His face,
My all to His pleasure resigned,
No changes of season or place
Would make any change in my mind;
While blest with a sense of His love,
A palace a toy would appear;
And prisons would palaces prove,
If Jesus would dwell with me there.

Dear Lord, if indeed I am Thine,
If Thou art my sun and my song,
Say, why do I languish and pine,
And why are my winters so long?
Oh, drive these dark clouds from my sky,
Thy soul cheering presence restore;
Or take me unto Thee on high,
Where winter and clouds are no more.

I will have nothing new to say to you, nothing deep, profound, or mysterious. I am simply going to remind you of those things that most afflict the hearts of God's children.

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Proposition: There is within each of us a terrible tendency to become negligent, indifferent and lukewarm towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love:
Here's my heart, Oh, take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

I want to call your attention to seven things in our text which tell us the sad but common story of spiritual indifference.

1. Here is **A VERY COMMON SIN** — “*I sleep.*”

The wise virgins often sleep with the foolish. Far too often this is the bad effect great privileges have upon our sinful hearts. When we indulge ourselves in carnal ease and security, our hearts become cold, neglectful, drowsy, and indifferent.

- Religion becomes routine.
- Devotion is lifeless.
- Service is drudgery.
- Worship is formal.
- Zeal is gone.

2. Here is **A HOPEFUL SIGN** — “*My heart waketh.*”

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It is a hopeful sign that there is grace in the heart when the heart struggles against our sinful sleep. Ours is not the sleep of death. There is life within, struggling, struggling hard against sin (Rom. 7:14-22).

(Romans 7:14-22) “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. (15) For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. (16) If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. (17) Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (18) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. (19) For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (20) Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (21) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. (22) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:”

3. Here is **A VERY LOVING AND TENDER CALL**
— “*It is the voice of my Beloved.*”

All is not gone. Though my heart sleeps so foolishly, yet Christ is my Beloved. Though my love is so fickle, so

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shameful, and so unworthy of him, I do love him. And what is more, I still hear his voice and know his voice.

Christ tenderly knocks to awaken us to come and open to Him (Rev. 3:20).

(Revelation 3:20) “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

- By His Spirit.
- By His Word.
- By His providence.

He not only knocks for entrance. **Our Beloved Redeemer graciously calls us, wooing us to himself by his grace.**

- Whose voice is it? — *“It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh.”*
- Who is He calling? — *“My Sister” “My Love” My Dove” “My undefiled!”*
- What does He call for? — *“Open to Me.”*
- Why is He calling? — *“My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.”* — In the night of his agony, in Gethsemane, in the judgment hall, when he was crowned with thorns, piercing his brow.

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4. Here is **A MOST UNGRATEFUL EXCUSE** (v. 3).

(Song of Songs 5:3) “I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?”

Because of her carnal ease, she refused the Lord’s gracious invitation to communion. She did not wish to trouble herself, and she did not wish to be troubled. Her heart was so cold that she preferred her ease to the fellowship of Christ.

- Carnal Ease
- Worldly Care

But our Lord is gracious still. Our Redeemer’s love cannot be quenched. He is longsuffering, patient, and gracious to his people, even in our most sinful rejection and denial of him.

5. Here is a picture of **OUR SAVIOR’S PERSEVERING, EFFECTUAL GRACE** (v. 4; Psa. 110:3).

(Song of Songs 5:4) “My beloved put in his hand by the hole *of the door*, and my bowels were moved for him.”

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(Psalms 110:3) “Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.”

Illustrations: David
Peter

I rejoice to know that Christ will not leave his people to themselves.

He will never, never leave us,
Nor will let us quite leave Him!

- His grace is effectual.
- His grace is persevering.
- His grace is irresistible.
- His grace is preserving.

6. Here is a sad picture of **THE LOVING CHASTISEMENT** our neglect and indifference brings upon us (vv. 5-7; Isa. 54:9-10).

(Song of Songs 5:5-7) “I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped *with* myrrh, and my fingers *with* sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. (6) I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, *and* was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him,

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but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer. (7) The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.”

(Isaiah 54:9-10) “For this *is as* the waters of Noah unto me: for *as* I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. (10) For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.”

7. Here is **ONE LAST HOPE** (v. 8).

(Song of Songs 5:8) “I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I *am* sick of love.”

She could not find Christ for herself, so she employed the help and assistance of the Lord’s people.

Application:

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1. **A word to you who believe** — When Christ calls you, come to him. — “*Today, if ye will hear his voice harden not your heart.*”

2. **A word to you who enjoy the fellowship of Christ** — Cherish the precious fellowship of Christ. Let nothing rob you of your rich privilege. Do nothing to drive him away (Eph. 4:30).

(Ephesians 4:30) “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

3. **A word to you who are the Lord’s children, but have by your own neglect lost the blessedness of fellowship with Christ.**

- Go back to the cross.
- Confess your sinful negligence.
- Go on seeking him.
- Trust Him still (2 Sam. 23:5; Lam. 3:18-33).

(2 Samuel 23:5) “Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although he make *it* not to grow.”

(Lamentations 3:18-33) “And I said, My strength

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and my hope is perished from the LORD: (19) Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. (20) My soul hath *them* still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. (21) This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. (22) *It is of* the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. (23) *They are* new every morning: great *is* thy faithfulness. (24) The LORD *is* my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. (25) The LORD *is* good unto them that wait for him, to the soul *that* seeketh him. (26) *It is* good that *a man* should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD. (27) *It is* good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. (28) He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne *it* upon him. (29) He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope. (30) He giveth *his* cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach. (31) For the Lord will not cast off for ever: (32) But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. (33) For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.”

- **Adore Him Still!**

(Song of Songs 5:8-16) “I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell

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him, that I *am* sick of love. (9) What *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, O thou fairest among women? what *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, that thou dost so charge us? (10) My beloved *is* white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. (11) His head *is as* the most fine gold, his locks *are* bushy, *and* black as a raven. (12) His eyes *are as the eyes* of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, *and* fitly set. (13) His cheeks *are* as a bed of spices, *as* sweet flowers: his lips *like* lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. (14) His hands *are as* gold rings set with the beryl: his belly *is as* bright ivory overlaid *with* sapphires. (15) His legs *are as* pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance *is as* Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. (16) His mouth *is* most sweet: yea, he *is* altogether lovely. This *is* my beloved, and this *is* my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.”

Return, O Son of God return!
Come knock again upon my door.
Dear Savior, my Beloved, return.
Possess me and depart no more!

AMEN.