

Transparent through Christ's Love
Song of Solomon 7:10-13; 2 Corinthians 13:5
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When you are assured and confident of one's love (whether a husband, wife, parent, child, or friend), you are much more likely to be transparent with that person. You are more willing to reveal your weaknesses and your strengths, your likes and dislikes, and who you truly are. Having a security in the love of another says that what I reveal about myself will not be used to destroy me, but will be used to help me grow—to build me up rather than to tear me down. That is why biblical love (sacrificial love that puts God first and others before ourselves) is so necessary in our homes and in the church. When it is absent all manner of suspicion and distrust are bred and fed.

Likewise, it is foundational in the Christian life to understand and be assured of Christ's love for you, His elect bride. You will only be honest and transparent with Jesus and enjoy sweet communion with Him as you are assured of His everlasting and unending love for you—a love that has no boundaries and that is the same yesterday, today, and forever (regardless of the ups and downs in your life, the gains and losses, the struggles with sin, or the heartaches and disappointments that you face). For it was because of Christ's love for you that you were chosen from eternity, and that He endured the cross for you. That is why in this Love Song Jesus repeats this truth over and over again. When you not only hear that truth, but believe it, there will be nothing that you hide from Him and everything that you bring to Him. It will transform your time spent with Him from mere duty to pure joy and delight. That is the place of love and joy that Jesus desires for you, dear Christian.

The main points from our text are: (1) The Bride's Assurance of Christ's Love (Song 7:10); (2) The Bride's Desire to Be Alone with Christ (Song 7:11); (3) The Bride's Care to Be Transparent with Christ (Song 7:12-13).

I. The Bride's Assurance of Christ's Love (Song 7:10).

A. The Lord Jesus has spent significant space in the last two chapters (Song 6:4-7:9) tenderly describing to you, His beloved people, how you ravish His heart. He has not done so in order to flatter you, but rather to glorify His work of love and beauty that He has freely given to you and worked within you. Jesus wants you to be assured (regardless of what you face) that His love for you is unshakeable. He especially emphasizes this since her fall and failure in sending Him away due to her spiritual laziness (Song 5:2ff)—she could not inconvenience herself to open herself up to Jesus and sweet communion with Him. She had left her first love. But Jesus comes to woo her back by His grace and through His unending love. Will she believe Him that He can love her with such an unchangeable and almighty love? Will you believe it? This is the gospel.

B. We find her response in Song 7:10.

1. **"I am my beloved's."**

a. She truly believes and receives as true the perfect love of Jesus that drives away the doubts, the unbelief, and the fears. "I am my beloved's." She trusts Him who is always faithful and true rather than the lies of the enemy that tell her, "It is too good to be true." She falls into His loving and sovereign arms of safety. When you believe this to be true (even knowing how many times you have failed Him), it promotes not a desire to betray Him, but a holy desire to be loyal to Him. Living for yourself and your pleasures only reveals that you have not known the love of Jesus Christ, for His love promotes holiness in joyfully submitting to Him, rather than rebellion against Him.

b. Jesus has been reassuring her of the unbreakable marital covenant of grace that binds Him in everlasting love to her, and she now declares with the assurance of faith: "I am my beloved's." His view of her has become her view. That is not presumption; that is faith. That is the nature of faith—it

receives and practices what Jesus says is true. "I am my beloved's" should be our confession each day.

2. **"And his desire is toward me."**

a. Understand, dear Christian, that Jesus has never regretted even once the love He bestowed upon you. He has never second-guessed Himself in bringing you into His marital covenant of grace (even when you have miserably failed Him). He does not think to Himself, "I wish I could undo that covenant promise I made to love Greg Price for all eternity because of his weaknesses and failures." His desire is always toward you, dear Christian, longing to be near you.

b. He loves you not only because you are bound to Him by covenant, it was His love for you that brought you to Him to be united in a marital covenant with Him. He doesn't simply love you because it is His duty by covenant to do so; He has loved you from all eternity and therefore bound Himself by covenant to accomplish your salvation. His desire and yearning is to be near you now and for all eternity. Dear ones, cling to this verse in all your struggles and hardships.

II. The Bride's Desire to Be Alone with Christ (Song 7:11).

A. Now that she is assured of Christ's love, she utters with great desire the words which Jesus had previously spoken to her with a greater desire (Song 2:10): **"Come, my beloved" (Song 7:11).**

1. When it is your great desire (not just an obligation) to be alone with Jesus, you can be sure that His love for you has changed you and is changing you. When you have no such desire to withdraw from work, family, and friends to commune with Him in prayer, reading of His Word, singing of psalms, meditation, and resolution, where is the evidence that you have actually been changed by His love? The greatest expression of love is earnestly desiring to be with the one loved. We can repeat the words, "I love you", but the proof is seen in our desire to spend time with the one loved. Is there a greater shame than for the Lord Jesus to desire us, and for us to say we have no time for Him? How we order our day, shows what is most important to us and what we love.

2. The bride says, **"Let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages" (Song 7:11).** She does not want to go by herself into an isolated field or a rural village just to get away from all of the noise, hustle, and bustle of her routine work, if Jesus does not go with her. It is not more "me time" that is needed in being strengthened to face the hardships and troubles of this life, but more "Jesus time" in communing with and enjoying Him. That is true refreshment and strength that carries you through the most difficult times of life. When you truly understand and believe that Christ's desire is toward you, it will be your desire to be alone with Him—to leave the busyness of your daily routine, to walk away for a time from the violence of murders and riots that are raging throughout the country, troubling news about the virus and its terrible impact on lives, families, work, and liberties, and to take a refreshing trip into a private place where you can be alone with Jesus to exalt Him and to submit everything to Him, where you can cast yourself and all of your cares upon Him, where you can ascend spiritually into the heavenly places to behold His glory and to breathe deeply of His peace who rules over all. An evidence of your election is your desire to spend time with the Lord Jesus every day (and even throughout the day).

III. The Bride's Care to Be Transparent with Christ (Song 7:12-13).

A. One important work of grace in the life of Christ's elect bride is transparency and self-examination in the light of God's Word. Rather than fleeing from shining the light of His Word into your life in order to expose both your failures and your fruit, the love of Jesus opens you up to take Him with you in revealing to you those sins for which you need to repent as well as that fruit for which you need to rejoice.

1. **"Let us get up early to the vineyards" (Song 7:12).**

a. The vineyards speak of particular churches and congregations or individual Christians (i.e. the Visible Church and her members that profess faith in Christ, Song 1:6). The elect bride not

only desires to spend time in loving communion with Jesus to exalt Him, to submit unto Him, to pour out her heart to Him, and to receive of His grace to face the trials He brings her way, but also to use that time to do some fruit inspecting.

b. This time of self-examination is not a work to be deferred to sometime in the future whenever we get around to it. It is to be done “early”. It is to be taken seriously and therefore done early rather than later. Yes, we are to examine ourselves when we prepare to come to the Lord’s Supper. Then we act seriously about that work, but how serious can we be about self-examination if we only do it when we come to the Lord’s Supper? Yes, it should be done then (1 Corinthians 11:28), but it should also be done as a part of our daily time of communion with Him. That is the point being made here by the bride.

2. **“Let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves” (Song 7:12).**

a. Here is the inspection and self-examination that we are to exercise in evaluating where fruit is lacking and where fruit is growing—where it flourishes and where the fruit is tender and is just budding forth and has not matured. It is not an easy task to be honest and transparent. It is easier to quickly pass over this part of your communion with Christ. You are to know and evaluate how you are doing financially in being good stewards of what God has given to you (Proverbs 27:23). Benefitting and profiting in any endeavor comes from time spent evaluating and inspecting both your losses and your gains and how to minimize the losses and how to maximize the gains. The same is true no less in your spiritual life (2 Corinthians 13:5; Psalm 139:23-24).

b. This is not a work that you can set out to do in your own strength or with your own mere insight and knowledge. You must only do this work of self-examination in communion with Jesus Christ and with your eye of faith upon Jesus and His glorious redemption. For, dear ones, you will either be too easy on yourself (in not taking this work seriously) or too hard on yourself (in seeing only your failures, sins, and faults rather than seeing the fruit that is growing by His grace). If you only take the law to examine yourself, you will be crushed under its condemnation. But if you take the law in the gracious hand of your loving Savior to examine yourself, you will be humbled by the law and yet rejoicing in His mercy and love. Only as you commune with Jesus will you be guided by His unchangeable love to apply both godly fear in taking this matter seriously and yet abounding grace in praising Him for every sprout of grace in your life. In performing the gracious work of self-examination, it is easy to wallow in self-pity or to be overwhelmed by past and present failures, and that is why self-examination can only be a merciful benefit to you as you are enabled by God’s grace to do so in the light of His unending love and gracious covenant. And as you do, you will give to the Lord Jesus your best affections (“loves”, Song 7:12).

3. **“The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved” (Song 7:13).**

a. The “mandrakes” were like an ancient love potion (Genesis 30). Here the chapter closes with the elect and beloved bride of Christ declaring that all of the fruits and graces (both old and new—both those that are growing well and those that are yet in the bud) are presented back unto Jesus as His rather than hers. This is beautifully pictured as the saints who are rewarded cast their crowns before the Lord (Revelation 4:10-11).

b. We are quick to examine others, but Jesus calls us to be rise up early to go with Him in sweet communion to examine yourself, but only to do so through the lens of a loving Savior, whose law yet binds you, but no longer condemns you—for He kept it perfectly for you.

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