

Song of Solomon 8: 3-5a; “Leaning on Her Beloved”, Sermon # 67 in the series – “I am My Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on July 26th, 2020, in the Morning Worship Service.

I want to remind you as I attempt to lead you into a greater understanding of the word pictures of this blessed book, that it is a book designed to teach us spiritual things on two different levels. 1st of all, God gave it to us to speak to us on the level of our individual experience; our personal relationship with Christ. And the second level is the spiritual mystical relationship that the whole Church has, with our Lord Jesus Christ. He thinks upon her, and He loves her, and is using her to witness to the whole world, what it is like to be married spiritually to Him. He is making her fit for heaven and eternal glory. She is bearing His gospel and His word to the nations, in doing so, she is described for us here in verse 5 as coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved.

So, at this time I want to open up for you the 2 main spiritual concepts in these verses which will help you to understand better where Christ is leading you personally in your spiritual relationship with Him. And also, where He leading His whole Church in these days in which we live; that is, toward the climax of redemptive history. So, 1st of all, I want to speak to you about – The support that Christ’s Church knows at all times during times of difficulty and tribulation. (verse 3) And 2nd – I want to speak to you about the leaning of the Church upon her Beloved, which she does coming up from the wilderness (verse 4 and 5a) May the Lord open our eyes to behold wondrous things from His word at this time, so that we might lean more on our Beloved.

1st – Let’s think together about the support which the Church knows during times of difficulty and tribulation.

Verse 3 says – “His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.” The word pictures are literal physical; the meaning is literal spiritual, as in all of this blessed book. It is the picture of Christ’s everyday, on-going, everlasting love for His Church and every individual believer that makes up His Universal Church. He supports us with His own spiritual hands; in and by the Person of His Holy Spirit. His thoughts are continually of His Church, in how He might show her His love, and how He might strengthen and uphold her faith. His left hand is under His Bride’s head, sustaining and upholding her in relation to all of her thoughts about Him, and towards Him. His right hand is embracing her; that is, He is continually convincing her by His lovingly holding her, that He will be there at her side. He will be there with her, in all of His thoughts towards her, until His Church sees Him literally, visibly, face to face in His Second Coming at the end of the world. “Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age,” Jesus says in His Great Commission to the Church.

The apostle Paul says in Hebrews 13: 5 – “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.” “For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’” “So we may boldly say: ‘the Lord is my helper; I will not fear.’” “What can man do to me?” This is how the Lord Jesus puts His left hand under your head. This is how He supports your mind and helps you to think right thoughts. He is right there with you by His presence. He is your Helper in all the various situations of your life. It is by His speaking to your mind, by and through His written word, accompanied by the power of His Holy Spirit, that your thoughts are directed to what is right. This is how your mind is sustained and instructed by the truth so that you are able to glorify Him.

And yet at many points in this present Church age, we find that Christ’s Bride, His Church, has been harassed by the Devil and the powers of evil among the nations of the world. Many Christians have, throughout the history of the Church, been persecuted and even put to death by cruel political rulers and false church leaders. This has happened all down through all the centuries of Church History. How did they endure these sufferings? They did it by Christ’s left hand being under their head, and His right hand embracing them. The same will be true for you. 1st

Corinthians 2: 12-16 – “Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.” “These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” “The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” “But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.” “For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” “But we have the mind of Christ.” One of the reasons that Christ suffered on the cross was to show you what His suffering love would accomplish for you, and what His Spirit can, and does accomplish in you. He accomplished very definite results in terms of your being sustained during your greatest trials and difficulties.

He purchased for you a new spirit of power and love and a sound mind, it says in 2nd Timothy 1: 7. Yes, you have the mind of Christ in His word; but you also need to remember that you have the Spirit with you. It is the Spirit who is taking that word and He is powerfully applying it to your mind and to your thoughts; thus giving you wisdom and strength in all the various situations of your life. This has been the case all down through the history of the Church beginning with the apostles. But I hope that you understand that Christ does expect that this will be a love relationship that you will have with Him; a spiritual give and take that you have with Him, even as lovers have in their companionship and their intimacy, only in a spiritual sense. Your love for Him was something that was established by His love for you. Therefore, your love to Him is shown in your responding to His faithfulness to your soul. You respond to His overtures to you by your seeing that He becomes to you, your all in all; the One who you love in return, with your whole heart, by keeping His word, and becoming His faithful witness in a lost and dying world.

He expects you to pray to Him for this to come about. He expects you to have holy, loving fellowship with Him in your mind over all of the joys of your heart as well as all the trials and difficulties of your life. He expects you to praise Him and to thank Him everyday, for all the good things which He and the Father providentially order in your life, for your good. Listen to how Jesus words this in John chapter 16, verses 23-27. “And in that day you will ask Me nothing.” “Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.” “Until now you have asked nothing in My name.” “Ask, and you will receive that your joy may be full.” “These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father.” “In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.”

Now, the Lord Jesus was not speaking to His apostles and disciples about the time after He returns in His Second Coming when He said – “In that day”. He was speaking to them about the time after He ascended to heaven and came to sit at the Father’s right hand; the time when He would send the Holy Spirit; the time when they by the Spirit’s power would really be able to pray, and to see their prayers answered! They had not really asked for anything in prayer before, like they would when the Spirit came. Then they would ask in order that their joy would be full. Their joy would be full in realizing the greatness of the love of Christ for them. They would then know the reality of asking for things in Christ’s name; things that related to the furtherance of His kingdom and His glory, not their own life and their own glory. This would involved suffering for His name’s sake, but they were very willing to do it.

In Acts 13: 49, it says – “And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.” “But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.” “But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium.” “And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. It was that love of Christ, his right hand embracing them, in the early Church, that was what gave them such great joy.

Think about how it is that Christ has His right hand embracing you. Romans chapter 8, verses 31-37. “What then shall we say to these things?” “If God is for us, who can be against us?” “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” “Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect?” “It is God who justifies.” “Who is he who condemns?” “It is Christ who is risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” “As it is written: For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”

So, you see here, that not only is your mind sustained and strengthened and upheld to do God’s will and to be a good witness for Christ and the truth, by His left hand being under your head, but also we find here that Christ’s right hand continually embraces you during those times when you are being charged with crimes that you have not committed. Or when you are being opposed and persecuted, or even put to death for your faith. Still, you are more than a conqueror through Him who loved you. Remember what the Lord Jesus said to His own dear apostles before He went to the cross. John 16: 33 – “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace.” “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

2nd – Let’s look at the leaning of the Church upon her Beloved, which she does coming up from the wilderness. (verse 4 and 5a)

Verse 4 says – “I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.” “Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved.” The book of Song of Solomon has more word pictures in it than any other book of the Bible, except possibly the book of Revelation, and there are reasons for this. Both of these blessed books are speaking of the mystical spiritual relationship of Christ and His Bride the Church. In the progress of the History of Redemption, this verse indicates that there will be progress made unto victory, for Christ’s cause of truth and righteousness, as this age progresses. That, I believe is what verse 5 is picturing for us.

The visible Church has been in the spiritual wilderness for many hundreds of years now; over 1200 I believe, due to Roman Catholic and Liberal Protestant false doctrine and practice. There have been, and there will be, times of intense opposition coming to us from Satan and from evil men. But this verse is telling us that there will come a time when the Church will come out of this wilderness; a time when the victory will be won; where Satan will be bound by our Savior for a thousand years, and he will be prevented from deceiving the nations any longer. The relationship between Christ and His Church will come to dominate the thinking of the whole world.

In verse 4 Christ charges the daughters of Jerusalem that they should not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases. I have just finished explaining to you from verse 3 how it is that Christ’s love will always be with every Christian, in whatever situations of persecution or difficulty that they will face, all during this Church age. So that is not that constant uninterrupted love that is being spoken of in verse 4b. What does this mean then? Well, the daughters of Jerusalem are those young believers, or those unformed believers, who desire to promote the victory of Christ’s kingdom. They are looking on, at the drama of redemption. They are looking at Christ and His Bride, and they do not completely understand God’s purpose of the Bride and the Bridegroom.

For instance, they do not know why they should not stir up and awaken the love of many to anticipate the full victory of Christ’s Church; that full and immediate victory which will take place at Christ’s Second Coming. They think that Christ’s Coming could come at any time. They hope that it is imminent. In one sense this is good. For this world is a most certainly a wilderness, and in terms of our living soberly and righteously and godly in the present age, we ought always to be looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. We should always be looking forward to and hastening unto His Second Coming, when He will bring to us our complete redemption, our resurrection from the dead, and our glorification.

We do look forward to that time, of the consummation of all things. We do look forward to that coming day of God, when Christ shall come and gather all of His people to Himself in the Rapture of the Church, when He shall judge the world in righteousness, when He shall separate the wicked from the righteous, and bring us to , to be Himself with Him forever. We know that this world is a wilderness of sin in which we live in, and we want to be free from that. We long to be brought out of it into that perfect world of righteousness that He will make for us. But I want you to think with me more carefully about the word “wilderness” of our text. Is it referring to our being brought out of the world and into heaven or the New Heavens and New Earth? No, I do not think so.

For I believe that this verse that we are studying is saying that we are not to stir up nor awaken that love until He pleases; that is until God the Father is satisfied that all of Christ’s enemies have been put under His feet. We do long and look forward to His Coming, but we must not stir up that love in the sense that we think that it could somehow happen at any time. No, the timing in the Father’s mind is most certain. Are the Antichristian powers destroyed? Have the Jews been converted? Have the nations been brought to Christ’s feet? Has death been destroyed? For the last enemy that will be destroyed is death. (1st Corinthians 15: 26) That will only take place at Christ’s Second Coming.

Is this verse then referring to the conversion of individual people; their being brought out of the wilderness of sin, and into the promised land of gospel grace? Yes, I think that the picture language is referring to that. In fact, we find that in the latter part of this same verse that Christ says to the Bride – “I awakened you under the apple tree.” Although I do believe that this verse is saying this, I also believe that it is speaking in a greater sense, as referring to Christ’s whole Church as she attempts to make progress with the gospel among the nations. Read in this way, this verse is particularly applicable to the times that we are now living in now; the time when Christ’s Church is trying to be a good witness to all the world, and make disciples of all the nations. But she has been forced into this “wilderness” for a certain time.

Listen to what I think is a similar use of the word “wilderness” in Revelation chapter 12, verses 1-6 – “Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.” “Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.” “And another sign appeared in heaven: behold a great fiery dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.” “His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth.” “And the dragon stood before the woman who ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.” “She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.” “And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.” “Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.”

Now, what is this speaking of? It is speaking of the rise and establishment of spiritual Babylon, the antichrist of the New Testament times whose reign will be for 1260 days, which are really years. During that time Satan has attempted to roadblock the gospel, as much as he can. He successfully, in many ways, has hindered Christ’s cause and kingdom from coming to the nations, in Spirit and in truth. Instead, what we now still see among the nations of the world, is largely great confusion about the truth of the gospel and God’s word, because a false Christianity has largely been preached to them. Christ most certainly has been caught up to heaven, even as it first appears that this passage is teaching. He now sits at the right hand of the Father.

However, if you look more closely, the woman of this passage is not the virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus. This woman is clothed with the sun, and has the moon under her feet, and a garland of twelve stars on her head. She is none other than Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so we must conclude that the Child that is being spoken of is not Christ Himself, but rather the Child is Christ’s gospel, and His kingdom’s advance with that gospel, that she is trying to bring to the nations. She is trying to bring forth the gospel of Christ to the nations through her fulfilling the Great Commission.

But the Dragon's scheme, Satan's scheme, was to draw away many ministers; a third of them, from preaching the true gospel of Christ, and thus to devour her Child as soon as it was born. The Church's Child, Christ's cause and the success of it, were caught up to God and His throne. In other words, the success of Christ's kingdom, and the Church's fulfilling the Great Commission, and His kingdom's coming to spiritually rule and reign among the nations, are all connected with God the Father's decisions from His throne. That is, He has decided that at a certain point in Church History, after the 1260 years, that the kingdom will be given to the saints.

This is what Revelation 20 and the Millennium are about; it is the climax of Christ's Kingdom, the Church coming out of the wilderness, and leaning on her Beloved. So, even as our Christ is destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron, that is through the rod of His strength, the gospel will prevail over individual men's hearts; that is, all through this Church age. Even so, the Church, by means of her faithfulness to God's truth, and by the power of the Spirit, will, according to the will and purpose of God, spiritually conquer and rule among the nations with the same rod of iron. All antichristian Jezebel false doctrine will come to an end during the Millennium. She is in the wilderness now, but she shall come out that wilderness leaning on her Beloved.

Listen to how Christ words it in Revelation 2, verse 24 – “Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, (that is, the antichristian doctrine of the woman Jezebel who was teaching and seducing Christ's servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols), those who have not known the depths of Satan as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come.” “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations – He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels – as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.”

So the morning star is the precursor of Christ's Second Coming. And if I am correct, it relates to dawning of the Millennial Day. That day which is a thousand years, and a thousand years is as a day. The Church down through her generations has been held in the strong arms of her Savior-Shepherd-King. He has always loved her, and He always will. In all of her generations He will show her His love, His faithfulness, and His continual care over her as His Bride. And as this Church age progresses, she will be awakened over and over again to remember the importance of what her calling is; that is, to promote holiness.

Her calling is to be a faithful witness to the Gospel of her Husband Christ. She will more and more show forth what it means to be married to the King of kings and Lord of lords, her Shepherd-King, her Spiritual Husband. She will lean more and more upon Her all powerful, all-wise and knowing Friend as she comes out of this wilderness. And this is what you and I should pray for, both now, and in the years to come; to see this sight of the Church coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her Beloved.

Note: For a more full explanation and treatment of Revelation chapter 2, verses 18-29, be sure and read John Gill's commentary on this. It is very helpful in bringing out the spiritual truth of the Church's role in the downfall of the Roman antichrist, and the advent of the Millennium. John Gill, although he appears to be Premillennial in his view of eschatology is actually Postmillennial because He teaches that the spiritual reign of Christ and His Church takes place before Christ's Second Coming, and that the Personal Reign of Christ and His Church can only take place after Christ returns, and eternity commences. His only mistake, as far as I can see, was that he did not equate the spiritual reign of Christ's Church with the thousand years of Revelation 20, and thus he is claimed by some Christians to be Premillennial in his view of eschatology. But what I have said about his belief that the Spiritual reign coming before the Personal Reign, which commences with Christ's 2nd Coming, determines that he is undeniably Postmillennial.