

Song of Solomon 2: 5-7; “For I am Lovesick”, Sermon # 25 in the series –“I am my Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on August 15th, 2010, In the Afternoon Worship Service.

In my afternoon sermons I will be trying to bring you at least one sermon a month from this blessed book. This book has so many wonderful pictures of the spiritual relationship of Christ and His Church; that I know that if we will focus our attention upon them and pray about them; that we will grow in our relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. Ask yourself this afternoon, am I cultivating my personal relationship with Jesus Christ my Lord? Am I coming, more and more, to know the power of His resurrection in my life and the fellowship of his sufferings?

Is He sustaining me, satisfying me, and helping me when I am discouraged or depressed in relation to all the trials and difficulties that I go through in living the Christian life? There are times; we must admit; times in living our Christian life when we would like to see our Lord and be with Him right now. We are so much in love with Him that it makes us impatient to be with Him. We long to be taken home to be with Him. We long for the Day of His coming; the Day of the resurrection of all the dead; the Day when we shall be caught up together with Him in the clouds in the air; the time when we shall forever be with the Lord.

But then we must remember that we as believers are in the betrothal stage of our relationship with Him. We must wait for Him to come for us. We realize that it is for us to learn patience. We know that our times are in His hand. We know that the number of the days of our life is all known and ordered by Him. Ours is not to waste our life by mismanagement of our time. Ours is not to try to shorten our own life when we are diagnosed with a fatal disease. Ours is to glorify God while we have life and any strength at all.

There are many times in our life as a Christian, however; since we cannot see Him and touch Him, and talk with Him face to face; that we become lovesick. This is a spiritual love-sickness that we are speaking of. We would like to get past this world of sin and woe and come to that blessed place where He is in the glory. We are waiting for New Heavens and New Earth in which righteousness dwells. But now, in this life, He has brought us into the banqueting house of becoming a part of His Church, and we have partaken of the reality of spiritual things and He has feasted us together with Him at the Lord’s Supper.

We have drunk of the wine of His love for us. But we long for the fuller revelation of Him to ourselves; both soul and body. The Lord Jesus said in John 14, verse 1, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.” “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.” “I go to prepare a place for you.” “And If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there may be also.” These words most certainly give comfort; but they also create a longing in the heart of the Christian for the fulfillment of them. Since we cannot see our Lord Jesus face to face, as of yet; still He does come to our love-sick soul and manifest Himself to us by the presence of His Holy Spirit with us, ministering to us by means of His Word.

This is what is being spoken of, here in these verses. In the Church’s experience of walking through this fallen world she prays that Christ would first of all, sustain her and refresh her. Secondly she most definitely comes to realize that it is He who is holding her up in her faith. We will look at these 2 points this afternoon and then the next time that I preach to you from this book, we will look at the charge that she gives to the daughters of Jerusalem. She gives a charge to other believers, who do not understand how true spiritual love should be expressed; not to stir Christ up by grieving His Spirit. But let us see now if we can learn together this afternoon what the cure is for the believer who is spiritually love-sick.

1st of all – If you as a believer are lovesick you should pray to be sustained and refreshed with the spiritual food and drink which only Christ can give.

Verse 5 says, “Sustain me with cakes of raisins, and refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick.” I take this to be a prayer of the Shulamite Bride to Christ Himself, but it could also be a request to the daughters of Jerusalem to bring her this food and drink. The food that she is requesting in this lovesickness is “cakes of raisins” and “apples”. She needs to be sustained while she waits for the arrival of her Beloved. You and I need to be sustained while we wait for Christ. We are waiting for His blessed Second Coming; the coming where every eye shall see Him, as it says in Revelation 1: 7.

We are waiting for God’s Son from heaven. We are waiting for our Resurrection from the dead, when comes the completion of our Redemption; the redemption of the body. We have so much which is good which is coming to us someday, most surely, in the Day when Christ returns. But this text is talking about a more immediate coming of Christ, than His Second Coming. It also may be rightly applied to a spiritual coming of Christ to His Bride the Church. This verse concerning lovesickness may be applied on multiple levels.

The whole Church in any given generation may be lovesick for Christ’s Second Coming, and long for His return. But the whole Church of Jesus Christ may also, in any given generation, be longing for Him to visit her spiritually in revival as well. And even further, these verses may be applied to the longing of the soul of an individual believer who longs for Christ to visit their soul; and the thought of it is ravishing to them. It is so ravishing that it is causing faintness, or that feeling of being overwhelmed with expectation and joy that He might really come to them in the sense that they will know it and recognize His presence and power in their lives.

Let me ask you, dear believer if you feel this way in in your spirit in relation to Jesus Christ, your spiritual husband and King? You realize the greatness of the things that He alone is able to bring to your soul by His grace; you have tasted of His goodness and love; and now you are longing for more. Until Christ comes in revival; until Christ comes spiritually to you to satisfy your soul, you are experiencing lovesickness. Now, I am saying that the person who experiences this feeling; this sense of expectation and blessing, is a healthy believer. It is the believer who does not experience these things, who does not have these longings for Christ to visit their soul, who is a weak believer.

It is the strong believer who is praying to be sustained in their lovesickness. And what does the strong believer ask to be sustained with? Raisin cakes and apples, it says here. Or, as it says in the King James, “Stay me with flagons.” She is saying, “Keep me together, Lord, by giving me wine, or a cordial to drink.” “Let me think upon the wine of the New Covenant which Christ has brought me into.” “He has brought me into His banqueting house (His house of wine), and His banner over me is love.”

“Let me be reminded of the great love which Jesus Christ has for me.” “Let it ravish my heart so much that I will sense that I need to know more and more of it all the time.” “Sustain me with the sweet raisin cakes of Christ’s perfect obedience; those made with the recipe of the Father’s making.” “Refresh me with the ability to think and to meditate upon the apples of fruit hanging from the tree of His cross, where He suffered there for me.” “It is a tree of life to me.” “Let me think of each apple as one of His promises to me.” “When I am lovesick let me remember them and eat of them, and be satisfied by them.”

John Gill says, “Now it ought to be observed, that she (the Bride) is desirous of more of that which had brought her into this condition (of lovesickness): Christ’s love had wounded her, and that only could heal her; what had brought her into this sick and fainting condition, could only bring her out of it; this wounds and heals, kills and makes alive, and is the only reviving cordial.” (end of quote) Let me ask you this afternoon if you know the reality of lovesickness and its cure? Lovesickness for the Christian comes because a believer has tasted the reality of the goodness

and mercy of God, in their being given Jesus Christ. And having been given Jesus Christ, the soul wants to know more and more of His love. That is the only cure.

Turn with me to Ephesians Chapter 3, and verse 14. “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the width and length and depth and height – to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

The only thing that will satisfy lovesickness for Christ is to be sustained by His Spirit and grace and to know the reality of the love of Christ coming to your soul now, even today. How does this come? It comes by faith and prayer that we might come to know this blessed reality. Do you know it dear Christian? Have you come to it; dear friend who has never understood and never been saved? Christ’s love is real and really does refresh and satisfy the soul. It really does sustain the weary soul and lift up the downcast and troubled soul. It really does bring true joy and lasting happiness and peace.

The way that other believers, even young believers in the faith, can answer the request of another believer, who is lovesick, is to remind them of the promises of God, and the reality of Christ’s finished work on the cross, which has guaranteed not only that God’s Elect will be gathered in, but also that Christ is faithful to satisfy His people with the blessings of the Spirit while they are waiting for His return. Psalm 107, verse 8 – “Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!” “For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.”

2nd – Christ’s Bride most definitely comes to realize that it is He who is holding her up in her faith. (verse 6)

“His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.” It is very interesting here, that when the Bride is feeling quite weak and faint, and overcome with lovesickness; that Christ comes quickly to her rescue. He never really has left her side, spiritually speaking, but it is in the time of her greatest weakness, that she senses His great strength. He is holding her faith up because He loves her. He is the One who is showing her this kind embrace. He will even communicate His strength to her when she is lying weak like this, in His arms. This should remind us of certain verses in the Bible.

Turn with me to Jude, verse 24. “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and forever.” “Amen.” Truly, Christ sees me in all of my need of Him, to keep me from stumbling and falling into sin; falling finally and falling fatally. And He is able to keep me and He will. But He also sees me in all my need of Him in regard to my need of strength and my need to know His supporting and comforting love. Turn with me first to Isaiah Chapter 40, verse 27. Sometimes God’s people grow very weary in their service to Him. It is not that they do not love their Lord; they do.

But they are weary and they need a word from Him; a word of encouragement, so that they can go on to do His will. “Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel: ‘My way is hidden from the Lord, and my just claim is passed over by my God?’” “Have you not known?” “Have you not heard?” “The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary.” “His understanding is unsearchable.” “He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength.” “Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”

Next, turn with me to Jeremiah Chapter 31, verse 18. “I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself; ‘You have chastised me, and I was chastised, like an untrained bull; restore me, and I will return, for You are the Lord my God.’” “Surely after my turning I repented; and after I was instructed, I struck myself on the thigh; I was ashamed, yes even humiliated, because I bore the reproach of my youth.” “Is Ephraim My dear son?” “Is he a pleasant child?” “For though I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still; ‘Therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him says the Lord.’” Sometimes we as believers grow faint because we really see how weak we are, to do and to keep the Lord’s commandments. But when we backslide, if we are one of His; He will bring us back.

Look at verse 23. “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘They shall again use this speech in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I bring back their captivity: ‘The Lord bless you, O home of justice, and mountain of holiness!’” “And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all its cities together, farmers and those going out with flocks.” “For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.” “After this I awoke,” says Jeremiah, “and my sleep was sweet to me.” Now, lest you think that this is Old Covenant language and dealings that the prophet is referring to, look down at verse 31. “Behold, the days are coming says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah –not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

This is how God, through Jesus Christ strongly supports His people’s faith. His right hand is under their head. In other words, He supports the strength of their mind in its devotion to Him. He writes His laws there, in their minds, and by the presence and power of His Holy Spirit, good thoughts with good God-glorifying motives are encouraged there; and the believer begins more and more to set His mind on the things which are above, where Christ is; seated at the right hand of God. Christ’s left hand is under your head, O believer. And His right hand embraces you. He satisfies the weary soul, and He replenishes the sorrowful soul. He says to the Apostle Peter just before his coming denial of him, “I have prayed for you Peter, that your faith will not fail.” This was Christ’s love to Peter.

This was His holding him up so that his fainting will not be dying. This is holding Peter up so that he would be able to feed Christ’s sheep after he was turned back from his denial of Christ. So this passage in Jeremiah, when it talks about farmers going out with their flocks? It is really talking about those under the New Covenant. Each church has ministers who are hard-working farmers, and each church has flocks which those ministers need to shepherd. But the great Shepherd is Christ, whose strength upholds them all. This was a great encouragement to the prophet Jeremiah, who was very faint in the ministry.

Look over at 2 Corinthians Chapter 12, verse 8, and you will see how much Paul understood that Christ supported Him with His strength. You will recall that the apostle had received a thorn in the flesh which he tried to pray about and get rid of. Here in verse 8 it says, “Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.” “And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” “Therefore most gladly I will rather boast of my infirmities (my weaknesses), that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities (in weaknesses), in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ sake.” “For when I am weak, then I am strong.” How so Paul? He is strong because Christ’s left hand is under his head, and his right hand embraces him. May it be so for each of us here today.