

**Song of Solomon 5: 8-10; “Chief among Ten Thousand”, Sermon # 44 in the series – “I am My Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

These Daughters of Jerusalem represent all those persons who are curious about Christ and the personal relationship which those who know Him, have with Him. They may be those who are religious but who do not know Christ. Or, they may be those who are babes in Christ, and they haven't really come to terms with Who it is that they have believed in. Therefore, we can say this this afternoon; that when a believer is sad and disconsolate over their own neglects in their obedience to Christ, it is a very good thing to talk it over with other believers. It says in Malachi 3: 16 - “Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them.” No doubt the Lord Jesus listens to the conversations that we have with one another.

We can also say that it is good to share a description of your Beloved with those who do not know Christ, as of yet. There will be those around you who are curious about your faith and your experience of Christ, and your sharing your concerns about yourself may be the very thing which will convince them to think more about their own soul's salvation. This is what the distressed Shulamite did when she found that she was lovesick for Christ her spiritual husband. She speaks to others, describing her Beloved, and in the process, her own soul is strengthened in faith. Here in verse 10 she describes Him as, “The Chief of Ten Thousand”. This is a description which sets Christ apart from all other men.

It is this phrase that I would like to begin to open up to you this afternoon. For Christ our Savior, Christ our Lord and King, Christ our Shepherd and Spiritual Husband, is the only One who fits this description. He is the Chief among Ten Thousand to the soul of the one is spiritually married to Him. So this afternoon we want to think 1st of all – about why Christ, as a Savior and a Friend, is someone who must be found. Then we want to think 2ndly about why describing Christ is so needful to cure this lovesickness.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – About why Christ, as a Savior and a Friend is someone who must be found.**

(verse 8 and 9)

“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I am lovesick.” Love sickness is a true sickness of heart. Some of these Daughters of Jerusalem needed to find Christ for themselves, but they do not understand the difference between having an earthly beloved, and having a heavenly Beloved. They understand earthly things and earthly relationships well enough, but they do not understand the New Birth as they ought. They look at a Christian who is sad and grieving over how they have lost the sense of having Christ with them and they do not understand. Either they have assumed that all people who profess to know Christ are true Christians, and therefore those people always have the sense of Christ's presence with them, or they do not understand that a personal relationship with Christ is absolutely necessary to knowing God.

A Christian will not die eternally from lovesickness because they are in union with Christ. But a religious person who does not know Christ will, unless they find Christ through faith in the gospel. This is the importance of the believer's finding Christ, anew and afresh, in their experience day by day. Their knowing the reason for their own love sickness, may be the basis of another person's coming to know their Lord, or finding Him in their experience. The Christian who has lost the sense of Christ's presence will have to think back and understand how it this lovesickness came about so that, then, they might find the cure.

As we think back to what has happened in Chapter 5, we see that Christ had come to His beloved spouse to pay her a love visit, and He got to her house late in the evening. She had already taken off her robe and washed her feet and she had barely fallen asleep when He came

calling. He knocked and called to her with His voice. She heard Him calling but she made excuses to herself as to why she could not come to the door. It was too late. It was too inconvenient. He continued to call out to her, calling her by all the tender names of endearment that He knew would cause her to remember His love for her, and yet she hesitated. Then, having myrrh and spices in His hands, He reached out and touched the handle of the latch and left His calling card of liquid myrrh, to let her know that He had been there. And then He departed. He was disappointed, very disappointed indeed, but He would think about when He could come back again at another time.

Dear believer, how often has Christ come knocking on your heart's door, and you, like the Shulamite, have not risen up immediately, and gone to answer His knock? He is calling to you to open to Him. He wants to come in and pray with you, and to have sweet fellowship with you, and to talk over all the matters of pressing concern to Him and to you. You, however, were too tired, or too lazy, or too preoccupied with selfish or worldly concerns, and so you hesitated. You felt that Christ was asking for too much when He was calling to you, to open to Him, for that deeper, more meaningful fellowship that He desired.

There were many things which were on His holy mind, and He would have talked them over with you if He could have. There were things related your faith in Him. There were things related to your obedience to His commandments. There were things related to your love for Him; whether it was as earnest and fervent as it should be. There were things related to other people, what He would have you do to minister to them on His behalf, but you did not want to be bothered. I would say that this is the condition which many a Christian has experienced or will experience at some time in their future.

Well, a short time after Christ withdrew, we found that in verse 4, something wonderful happened. She repented of her lazy response to Christ's loving call. After Christ had touched the latch of the door, and had left His calling card of liquid myrrh, the Shulamite got up and she went over to the door. And as she was going from the bed to the door, she found that her hands dripped with myrrh and her fingers with liquid myrrh. She had found his calling card. It was grace. It was Christ's faithfulness to her and to Himself, to give to His Beloved the grace to get up and do what was right, even when she did not deserve to receive such grace.

You and I must have this precious grace to obey Christ and to come and open the door, even if we have failed Him initially. He is faithful, even though we are faithless. If you will remember, as a part of her repentance, she went out and sought Him, but she could not find him. She called, but He gave her no answer. The watchmen who went about the city found her in this very sad and dejected condition. She was disconsolate, but she was also still frantically trying to find Him. They took her for a person who was looking for trouble, and out of her mind, and they struck her and they wounded her. They took away her veil from her, and tried to find out who she was. They were ministers but they were not doing a good job of helping her find her Christ. Instead they were wounding her with conviction of sin. They were able to minister no comfort to her at all.

Finally the daughters of Jerusalem show up, and they were able to identify her to the watchmen. After they told the watchmen that the Shulamite was not crazy, but a friend of theirs, she was left in their custody. They sympathize with her plight, and they tell her that they will now try to help her find her Beloved. She then gives them this charge. She says to them, "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I am lovesick." What they are seeing is her repentance; her repenting of spiritual laziness. She wants Christ back with her again. She now wants to have this deeper more meaningful fellowship with her husband Christ. And they in response, in order that they might better identify Him, themselves, ask her this question in verse 9. "What is your beloved, O fairest among women?" "What is your beloved more than another beloved that you so charge us?"

It is very important, I believe, for true believers to speak of their personal relationship to Jesus Christ in realistic terms. Both unbelievers and immature believers need to see the struggles that you go through to find Christ, when you have failed to rightly respond to what He has called you, or commanded you, to do. They need to see your weakness and to hear of your struggles in your attempting to do everything that Christ has commanded you. They need to know that you are a sinner saved by grace, and that you need continual supplies of grace from Christ if you are to be spiritually minded and live the Christian life.

If you think that they are believers, then charge them to pray for you. Tell them in all seriousness that the reason that you are sad and discouraged is because you have had a hard time finding Christ's presence and His power in your life, because you have not been diligent enough in responding to what He has been asking you to do in relation to His Word. You can explain to them that you have not been sensitive enough to begin to do the things that He would lead you to do in relation to furthering His kingdom and cause.

Tell them and charge them, if they are unbelievers, that they must find Christ for themselves. They are going to ask you some direct questions about Christ. One of those questions might be the question of verse 9 of our text. What is your beloved more than another beloved, that you so charge us? Do not hesitate to tell the truth of your own experience of needing Christ. Both believers and unbelievers need to see how Christ saves sinners and how He leads His dear people into all the truth.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – We want to think about why describing Christ to ourselves and others is so needful to curing lovesickness.** (verse 10)

“My beloved is white and ruddy, Chief among ten thousand.” This is the first and overall description which the Shulamite gives, of Christ, to the Daughters of Jerusalem. There are 10 more descriptions that follow in verses 11-16. They are absolutely needful to your being saved from your sins, or to your being restored to spiritual strength and health as a Christian who has been lovesick. When she says that her Beloved is “white and ruddy”, which is the first and overall description, she not trying to describe Christ's physical appearance. She is not trying to describe for us what Christ's actual physical skin tone was while He walked upon the earth. She is trying to show us what Christ's Person is like in regard to His being our Mediator and the friend of sinners.

These are descriptions of spiritual qualities in Christ as we look to Him in faith. And these are the qualities which will become desirable to sinners as they begin to think that they themselves need this Christ to be saved from their sins. And as for the saints, they love to think upon these great and desirable qualities which remind them that their salvation, and their having an infallible assurance of that salvation, do not ultimately come from themselves, but from seeing and knowing Christ as He really is. He has become unto them “wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption”. (1 Corinthians 1: 30)

This description of Christ's being white and ruddy, I believe, refers to His having two natures. Both of them are beautiful and desirable. Jesus Christ is both God and man. He is Divine and He is human, both, in His one Blessed Person. In Lamentations 4, verse 7, it says with reference to Jerusalem, “Her Nazarites were brighter than snow and whiter than milk; they were more ruddy in body than rubies, like sapphire in their appearance.” John Gill says that Nazarites were persons who separated themselves by a vow to the Lord, and abstained from drinking wine and strong drink, and by a moderate diet, and often washing themselves, as well as taking great care of their hair, appeared very neat and comely, like snow, without any spot or blemish.

Christ was and is the ultimate Nazarite in the sense described here in our text; white and ruddy. In the brightness and purity of His Divine Person He was brighter than snow and whiter than milk. He is altogether pure and lovely in His righteousness. As you drink in His glory by

reading of Him in the Bible and as you hear it preached to you from Sunday to Sunday, you begin to realize that He is very great in His love for you. You think upon what He has done, what He was willing to suffer for you the sinner, and you believe that He can and He will be giving grace to you as you declare to yourself and others what He means to you; this is how you will be healed of lovesickness like the Shulamite had.

This great Savior is also your Friend, and He knows how very important it is for you, to regularly partake of His grace. He knows that is so very needful, that it is just as important that you receive His help as it is that a child needs to be nursed at its mother's breast. Therefore do not be afraid of making your need known; of your need to be cured of your lovesickness. You must indeed find Christ. And those who you speak must too. It says in 1 Peter 2: 1 – "Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is precious."

Surely if the milk of the written word is desirable, how much more desirable it is to have Christ Himself who is the Living and Essential Word of God dwell richly in your heart. He is fairer than the sons of men. At the time of His transfiguration, on the mount, His garments became whiter than any launderer on earth could make them. His glory was and is the glory of the only-begotten of the Father; full of grace and truth. Unto you who believe in Him, He is precious. He was more ruddy in His body, His human nature, than rubies, and like a sapphire in His appearance. In Proverbs 3: 15 it says, "Happy is the person who finds wisdom." "She is more precious than rubies, and the things you may desire cannot compare with her."

And Proverbs 8: 11 says, "For wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her." But just think; in Christ are all the riches of wisdom and knowledge." This makes Him of infinite value to the soul of the sinner who needs salvation, and the soul of the saint which needs wisdom on how to live their life to the glory of God, every day. Job 28: 12 says, "But where can wisdom be found?" "And where is the place of understanding?" "Man does not know its value, nor is it found in the land of the living." "The deep says, 'It is not in me'; and the sea says, 'It is not with me.'" "It cannot be purchased for gold, nor can silver be weighed for its price." "It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire." "Neither gold nor crystal can equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewelry of fine gold." "No mention shall be made of coral or quartz, for the price of wisdom is above rubies."

The wisdom of Christ and the riches of the grace of Christ is of far greater value than these. Christ is found by seeking for Him by faith. Of David, who would become the king of Israel, it says that Samuel had a hard time finding the Lord's anointed among the sons of Jesse. It says in 1 Samuel 16: 10 – "Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel." "And Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen these.'" "And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all the young men here?'" "Then he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.'" "And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and bring him.'" "For we will not sit down till he comes here."

"So he sent and brought him in." "Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good looking." "And the Lord said, 'Arise, and anoint him, for this is the one!'" If David was described in this wonderful way, then think of how beautiful and desirable a thing it is to have Christ for your Savior and Lord and Friend. He is ruddy in this spiritual sense. You may have a hard time finding Him in your experience as a Christian at times. But remember that searching in order to find Him in your experience is the best and most important thing that you can do. If you see Him as the Shulamite did; the Chief among Ten Thousand; the only One who can save and satisfy your soul; the only One who can give you spiritual strength to do what is right, and the only One who give you assurance of your salvation; then know that He will come to you in your experience and make Himself known. He loves you and cares for your soul far more than you know. You will indeed find Him, when you search for Him with all your heart.