Session 13 – Mature Partnership with Jesus –7:10 – 8:4

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A. INTRODUCTION

Last time we saw the Bride abandon herself completely to the King as they became one together. From this place of intimate union she becomes passionate to see others enter into the relationship she now has with Him. To go to those who she once knew and to the ends of the earth to bring in the harvest. She longs to put this love on display for all to see. This is the end time Bride bringing in the harvest at the end of the age.

B. THE BRIDE'S SPIRITUAL IDENTITY IN GOD'S LOVE

I am my beloved's and his desire is for me.

1. This short but powerful verse articulates the solid identity that has been established in the Shulamite's heart during the course of her journey with the Bridegroom. The two elements of her declaration are the framework of her life, and the basis of her success in personal matters as well as in ministry.

2. ***I am my Beloved's*** (7:10a) A powerful transaction has taken place in the Shulamite's heart. She is no longer her own, but belongs to another. All her emotions, all her decisions, all her actions, all her relationships are formed and shaped by this foundational statement – I belong to Jesus.

3. This is one of the great statements of our humanity in Christ. Jesus owns me, I love Him, and my deep desire is to please Him in every dimension of my life. This is the most important element of our success in relationship to Jesus. His command to us is to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and then to love those around us as He does. When our identity is rooted in loving God and not in performing for Him, we can be successful even on our worst day. Even if all else fails, I am a lover of God, and He loves me – therefore I am successful!

4. ***His desire is toward me*** (7:10b) This revelation is the great empowerment of our lives – I am loved and desired by God! The Shulamite has grown through a series of steps in the knowledge of the Bridegroom's love. She has moved from self-centeredness to the place where she gives herself fully and without fear to Him and His purposes.

5. This is the point of transition that is so needed in the church. In the beginning the book is all about her – her needs and her desires – and she is captivated by this One who is able to satisfy all those needs. However, she has now come to fully realise that her life is about him – his glory and honour.

6. We need to come to that place where we accept and enjoy that we **belong** to Him. Too often we hear the phrase "I just want Him to use me." As if this is the ultimate sacrifice that He desires; that we would be fully at His disposal. But this is not maturity – maturity is a revelation of partnership. We are not a tool in His hand we are His bride, His partner, His friend. He is in me doing His work.

7. She has gone through 4 stages in this development as we mentioned in an earlier session:
   i. We enter into the relationship with Jesus because we are self-centred and we know we need to be somebody. This longing has to be met by Him by knowing we are *His beloved* or we will strive to make it worth something to someone else and satisfy the desire elsewhere! The starting point has to be to know we are loved by God. (1:13)
   ii. She decides to take the risk of giving herself to Him. Her focus is still on what she is receiving but she knows that she is now His – *He is mine and I am His.* This is not yet trust - trust is the fruit of a long term relationship. You can risk but trust needs mileage and a proven dimension of faithfulness. (2:16)
   iii. He has demonstrated His sacrificial love and proven His faithfulness again and again. She is able to give herself to Him with increasing confidence, acknowledging His ownership but still conscious of her demands on Him. She is willing to go with Him even into the place of loneliness and opposition knowing that He loves her but more importantly she is willing to trust Him. Her first priority now is to be *His beloved.* (6:3)
   iv. Now in 7:10 she has come to full maturity – she is totally abandoned to Him. She knows He is faithful, she knows her identity is fully in Him and she has no thought for tomorrow (no worries). She has now entered into a place of full liberty not because she isn't important but because she knows she is the focus of His desire. She is no longer responding from human desire and her unmet needs but in response to the Lord's desire for a Bride to move in authority in partnership with Him. This is love based and the fulfilment of Jesus' desire in John 17.

John 17:24 ***Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.***

8. Jesus is filled with this desire for His Bride. It is not desire that is rooted in need, but in the pure and holy passion to reveal His own glory through His people made glorious. We see this when Jesus' glory is displayed in His Bride as she is revealed as the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. This is our journey to come to that place where <u>we are His glory</u>.

9. Isaiah 62:1-7 reveals to us the passion that is in the heart of God, and that is the basis for the Prayer Movement that He is raising up in these last days.

Isaiah 62:1–7 For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. [2] The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name. [3] You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. [4] You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; but you shall be

called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. [5]For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. [6] I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent, [7] and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

10. To be desired by God is the greatest foundation of identity possible, for it implies the complete and total fulfilment of all potential, all giftings and callings, for the sake of exhibiting His glory to all creation. We are – corporately and personally – the trophy of His grace, and He will not rest until we are glorious.

C. THE BRIDE'S MINISTRY IS BUILT UPON THIS SECURE FOUNDATION

1. All that proceeds from the Bride's life now is rooted and grounded in His love. She is now able to freely move into full partnership in ministry with Him, no longer needing to establish her identity, but giving expression to her identity as the Bride of Christ.

2. The Bride' ministry is rooted in intercession, calling on the Bridegroom for His presence and power.

[11] Come, my beloved, let us go out into the fields and lodge in the villages; [12] let us go out early to the vineyards and see whether the vines have budded, whether the grape blossoms have opened and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love.

3. This is the answer to one of her first prayers in the journey – ***Draw me after You, and let us run together*** (1:4). The Bride has been established in intimacy and love, and now is ready for full partnership in ministry, "running" with the Beloved as He draws His corporate Bride to Himself.

4. Her cry is ***"Come, my beloved, let us go out. . ."*** This is the cry of intercession for the Bride to partner with Jesus in the fullness of His presence and power released in ministry to His Church. She is now committed to the things He is committed to. Her focus is no longer on her needs; His love has settled her in confidence that He will meet all her needs. Therefore, she no longer has to focus on them, but rather can give herself to serving the larger Bride of Christ.

5. The Bride is committed to the Great Commission, desiring to go with Jesus to the ends of the earth to strengthen and nourish His people with His love and power. The "field" speaks of the harvest fields that are ready for evangelism.

John 4:35 Behold . . . the fields, for they are already white for harvest!

Matthew 13:44 Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field . . .

1Corinthians 3:9 For we are God's fellow-workers; you are God's field . . .

6. The "field" for each believer is that place that the Lord touches your heart for in the times of intimacy with Him. As you grow in love with Jesus, you can be sure that He will capture our heart for what He cares about.

7. Her cry is "Let US go . . ." She is not willing to go alone, or ahead of Him. The Shulamite understands that her main priority is intimacy with Jesus, and that all her grace for ministry flows from communion with Him. Therefore she will not get burdened or distracted with lesser visions or strategies.

Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, You say to me, `Bring up this people.'...He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. "...So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name." (Ex. 33:12-17)

8. Our greatest delight and joy will be in doing those things He prepared for us since the foundation of the earth. As we enter into ministry partnership with Him it will be exhilarating and we will know fullness of joy. Not because we see revival, not because of great signs and wonders but because we are in intimate partnership with Him. If this is where we function from then we will be His glory and know fulfilment and great delight whether we're on the stadium platform or in the cave.

9. The Shulamite pledges to maintain intimacy with Jesus in the context of active ministry

Come, my Beloved, let us go forth to the field...the villages...to the vineyards...THERE I WILL GIVE YOU MY LOVE (7:11-12).

The Shulamite is saying that as she ministers to the Body of Christ, she will stay actively engaged in intimate communion with Him. This is profoundly important, because remaining in love with Jesus while giving oneself to His people can be difficult. She is following Jesus' heart to serve God's beloved people, who are mostly immature and not very Christ-like. If she begins to look to the people as the source of her affirmation and identity, she will be headed for defeat. Her only hope is to maintain a depth of love relationship with Jesus as she serves His people.

10. There is a danger for the Bride as she moves back into ministry, and that is that she can have a romanticised expectation of what it will be like. The fields and the vineyards look so beautiful and appealing from a distance. However, close up, there is much hard work, and without the constant resource of the Bridegroom's presence, she will again face the burnout and wounding of her past (her brother's vineyards 1:6).

11. The Bride has a treasure store that has been laid up for the King, to offer Him as expressions of her love in the context of ministry.

There I will give you my love. [13] The mandrakes give forth fragrance, and beside our doors are all choice fruits, new as well as old, which I have laid up for you, O my beloved. (7:12-13)

Matthew 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys.

12. Mandrakes have purple flowers that give off a beautiful fragrance. The fruit of the mandrake was treated as an aphrodisiac, stimulating intimacy. This speaks of preparations the Bride has made to have times of sweet communion in the context of ministry activity. The pleasant fruits of her ministry are presented to the Bridegroom as offerings of affection and devotion. The fruit of her ministry now is not for her pleasure or fulfilment, but for the enjoyment of the King. Notice, *all choice fruits, new and old*, have been prepared for Him. There is diversity and plenty, the enduring fruit of mature and effective ministry that has been prepared for the Beloved.

D. THE BRIDE'S BOLD AFFECTIONS IN PUBLIC MINISTRY

[1]Oh that you were like a brother to me who nursed at my mother's breasts! If I found you outside, I would kiss you, and none would despise me. [2] I would lead you and bring you into the house of my mother— she who used to teach me. I would give you spiced wine to drink, the juice of my pomegranate

1. The Shulamite is expressing a desire in prayer that she might be able to express deep affection and devotion to Jesus in all settings. In the mid-east culture, public affection for a sibling would be more acceptable than for a fiancé. So, her desire is for boldness in responding to Jesus despite the opinions of those watching. Peter prayed in Acts 4:29 for boldness to come upon the disciples as an effect of the release of the Holy Spirit's power among them. Paul prayed in Ephesians 6:19 that he would have boldness in the face of resistance to preaching the gospel.

2. She is also desiring to bring her intimate friendship with Jesus into the setting of the traditional Church, the "house of her mother, who used to instruct her." This can be a challenging and even daunting task, because of the dynamics of historic relationships. Again, the longing in her heart is that in public or in the context of the Church, Jesus would enjoy the fruits of her life – the full flavoured, spiced wine of intimacy, and the delightful flavours of fruitful ministry. Pomegranates were on the hem of Aaron's robe and speak of much fruitfulness. When you open a pomegranate it is full of many beautiful seeds which are its fruit. Her ministry is sweet and plentiful.

E. THE BRIDE'S CONFIDENCE IN THE SOVEREIGNTY AND LOVE OF THE KING

[3] His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me! [4] I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases.

1. The King's left hand under her head speaks of His sovereign care and leadership in the things that she cannot see or perceive. To have confidence in the unseen activity of God produces peace and calmness when circumstances seem to dictate otherwise. The Apostle Paul speaks of this dynamic in Ephesians 6 when he exhorts the believers to put on the armour of God in order to stand against the enemy's strategies. One of the primary tactics the enemy uses is to lie to us in the midst of testing circumstances.

Ephesians 6:13–18 Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. [14] Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [15] and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; [16] above

all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. [17] ***And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;*** [18] ***praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—***

2. We must understand this – Jesus is training a Bride for war, not for retirement. We are being prepared for the great battle at the end of the age, and the pressing circumstances that face us are in fact gracious training events, allowing us to build the muscles of faith and confidence in His sovereign care and leadership.

3. The King's right hand speaks of the visible and obvious activities of God. These are the manifest evidences of His presence and power among His people, and our hearts are thrilled when we see these things. We love to experience the obvious sense of His touch, the manifestations of His power upon us and among us. We love it when His provisions and the evidences of His leadership are obvious.

4. The key to spiritual growth in all these varied settings is to trust His sovereign leadership, that His banner over us is love, and that in all circumstances what He is looking for is a response of trust and love. Jesus' desire is that we will trust Him in all things, pour out our hearts in love to Him in every circumstance, and wait for Him to bring resolution to every situation.

5. The King charges the Daughters of Jerusalem to not disturb the Bride in this strategic season of her life.

   I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases.

   Jesus speaks to the corporate Church to not impose an external agenda on the Bride as she moves by the Holy Spirit. The more the presence of God comes among us, the more people come with their own agendas, trying to bend the work of God to their will. Jesus is declaring here that He is the Lord of His Church, and that He will move His people and build His Church according to His own ways and means. This is an exhortation to us to be tuned in to the Lord and to what He is doing with His people in any situation.