Session 4 – The Identity of the Believer in Intimacy with Jesus – Songs 1:12- 2:7

A. RECAP

So far we have seen the believer being awakened by the love of her Beloved and express her desire to enter into the journey with Him. This journey is one that will lead her through many seasons as she grows into the place of *intimate authority as a helper able to stand alongside Him to govern His Kingdom*. As she sets out on this journey she becomes aware of the awesome grace that He has for her – that even though she is "dark" He sees her as "lovely" and she seeks His help to grow in maturity. He assures her of her beauty, how he values her desire and willingness to follow and instructs her to learn from those who share from his heart and then share with those in her sphere of influence; being part of a community that is following the shepherd and where the flock are shepherded by the leadership.

Esther – pressure drives her to the place of partnership and authority.

B. INTRODUCTION:

Even as the King invites the Shulamite to pursue the journey to the revelation of His beauty and her place of intimate authority, He fuels her fire with words of passionate affirmation. The two lovers begin to exchange statements of affection.

It is essential that the Shulamite experiences the reality of the King's emotions early in their journey together. His desire and love for her are far greater than she can imagine, and she cannot begin to comprehend the destiny that awaits her as she grows in the knowledge of His love. There are stages of development that she will face on the road to revelation, and she must be ***rooted and grounded in the experience of His love****, not merely in the theory of it. …… The way forward for us is the same as for the Shulamite. We must take the words of the King and meditate upon them, lingering over the phrases as any lover would over the words of their beloved….. Beloved, this is the destiny that awaits the Shulamite, and it is waiting for each one of us as well. God has unimaginable things in store for us as the Bride of His Son Jesus, and He fully intends for us to grow in the* ***experiential knowledge*** *of that love so that we can endure the journey that will prepare us to inherit this destiny.*

Journey to Intimate Authority by Gary Wiens (bold text mine)

Eph. 3:16-19 ***16 that He*** *(the Father* ***would give you, according to the riches of His glory, power to be strengthened by His Spirit in the inner man, 17 and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.***

At this point in the journey, the Bride is almost entirely focused on her own needs, and on the willingness of the King to meet those needs. He is completely willing to give Himself to her on these terms, knowing that as she grows in maturity she will begin to trust His love and give herself to Him without fear. Sittng at the King's table they enter into a dialogue of divine romance.

SoS 1:12-2:7

The Shulamite
12 ***While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance.*** *13* ***My beloved is to me a bundle of myrrh that lies all night between my breasts*** *14* ***My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of En Gedi.***

The King
15 ***How fair you are, my love. How fair you are! Your eyes are doves.***

The Shulamite
16 ***How fair you are, my beloved! Yes, pleasant! Our bed is verdant;*** *17* ***the beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.*** *1* ***I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valleys.***

The King
2 ***As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the maidens.***

The Shulamite
3 ***As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. In his shadow I sat with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*** *4* ***He brought me to the banquet house, and his banner over me was love.*** *5* ***Sustain me with raisins, refresh me with apples; for I am faint with love.***
6 ***His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.*** *7* ***I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, do not stir up or awaken love until it pleases.***

This passage is a key passage to spend time in meditation as it opens up the relationship as the King and the Shulamite dialogue together. She is learning how to hear His voice and receive his love towards her and how to respond to Him in love. As we meditate of these verses so we too grow in our ability and desire to engage in intimate dialogue with our Bridegroom King. This is how knowledge becomes revelation upon our heart.

C. THE REVELATION OF THE KING'S PROVISION

1. Dining with the King at His Table

Song of Solomon 1:12a - While the King is at His table. . .

a) The King's table represents the fullness of God's provision for every aspect of our lives. All His resources are at our disposal, and it is His pleasure to share them with us as His Beloved.

Luke 22:19-20 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.

John 6:54-56 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. *55* ***For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.*** *56* ***He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.***

b) The principle at work here is the same as in John 17:26

John 17:26 And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

c) The King's table is spoken of in many places in Scripture – Psalm 23:5; 36:8; John 6:35; Revelation 3:20; Revelation 19:9

Psalms 23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.

d) It is essential to choose the King's table over every other source of nurture and fulfillment. The King's provision is complete, and He is a jealous lover. The Bride will experience His fullness as she responds to Him with holy love.

1 Corinthians 10:21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.

2. The Bride's Response to the King's Provision

Song of Solomon 1:12b-14 . . . My spikenard sends forth its fragrance. [13] A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts. [14] My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of En Gedi.

a) Her response of worship and adoration – ***My spikenard (perfume) sends forth its fragrance***. *(a costly fragrant offering)* It is a delightful thing to realize that our worship and adoration is pleasant and desirable to Jesus. We must realize that not only is He God, but Jesus is also a man who feels deep desire for the love of His Bride. Each of us is unique in our expressions of worship and adoration. Jesus knows and recognizes the scent of your worship, and it pleases Him.

We all know that there is something inside of us that will not be satisfied until we are able to release our love in a fervent single-mindedness that brings focus and passion to everything we do. The awareness of this longing causes an ache in the human soul that simply cannot be assuaged except by the touch of the infinite Lover, and by our response – a fervent commitment to Him. Only He can go that deep, only He can love that way. Only Jesus can elicit that kind of response. (Bridal Intercession, p. 41)

b) Her response of meditation on the Beauty of Christ's Sufferings - ***A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts.*** The bundle (or sachet) of myrrh is a symbol of the sufferings of Jesus, and is referenced eight times throughout the Song. Myrrh is an expensive and strong perfume that was used as a burial spice by the wealthy. To see the King as a bundle of myrrh speaks of the initial revelation of Jesus' sufferings, a revelation that captures our hearts with the depth of His love. The Shulamite meditates on the beauty and power of Jesus' sufferings, holding that revelation close to her heart. The more she reflects and ponders the price He paid to win her love, the more freely she will give herself to Him as they proceed through the journey together. She keeps Him in her focus through the long night. The "night" in the Song speaks of seasons of the deep, subconscious working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts to reveal the beauty of Jesus. She focuses on Him; He does the work of revelation.

Heb.12:3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and your hearts give up.

c) Her response of declaring the beauty of the King - ***My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of En Gedi.*** Notice the priority of who the King is to her. The Shulamite is focused on her needs (to me), which is an indicator of her immaturity. The King will strengthen her confidence throughout the journey so that she can fully trust Him with her destiny. He is a cluster of flowers. The beauty and fragrance of Jesus is multi-faceted, multidimensional. As we give ourselves to Him, we will be entranced with His beauty all our days.

The Hebrew word for "henna" is kopher, which can also be translated "a covering," or "atonement." Jesus is revealing Himself to us as the One who covers all our sin and weakness with His love.

The "vineyards of En Gedi" refer to a region near the Dead Sea that was known for the quality of the henna flowers grown there. This word picture combines the covering love of Jesus with the wine of His suffering love that intoxicates and delights our hearts.

D. THE DIALOGUE OF AWAKENING LOVE

1. The King's Declaration of the Beauty of the Bride

Song of Solomon 1:15 Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes.

a) ***Behold, you are fair, My love!*** The King of glory sees you and is stunned by your beauty! His words carry the power of life and death, and He considers you lovely! As we contemplate this, the power of His love grips our soul, and we begin to be changed. Even though we are only at the beginning of the journey, He sees the end from the beginning, and is captured by the beauty of who you are.

Here the King speaks from the perspective of the Father's eternal vision. He sees you in the glory of His finished work, what you will be when the journey is complete. This is the one reality of your identity, and so at the beginning of your journey Jesus relates to you as you will be when you come into your fullness.

From the beginning . . . when, in temporal terms, we did not exist at all, God's gaze fell upon us and knew us. . . . His gaze is creative, generative, originative, by His utterly free decree. "This is what, in My eyes, you are; this is what you mean; no other truth can have any validity but this, for Me, for you, or for anyone else." (Hans Urs von Balthasar, Prayer, p. 40)

b) ***You have dove's eyes.*** The King sees the single focus of your gaze as you look to Him. The dove has no peripheral vision – it only looks straight ahead, focusing on one thing. Jesus is saying to us, *"I see your heart, your determination to love Me, to seek Me and find Me. You have set your heart, and I am captured by your beauty!"*

2. The Bride's Response of Worship and Adoration.

Song of Solomon 1:16-17 Behold, you are handsome, my beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also our bed is green. [17] ***The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir.***

These are great verses to sit and meditate on. The power of the King's words begin to awaken the Shulamite's heart, and she begins to speak of her awakening love. The power to love God is directly related to hearing and receiving His words of love to us.

1 John 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us.

As she speaks of her delight, love begins to grow more and more in her heart. She declares that their place of intimacy is luxurious and fruitful, and their dwelling place is strong and protected, a place of preservation and safety. She feels restful and secure in His love and the structure of their love is strong, secure, and permanent.

3. The Bride's agreement with the king's declaration.

Song of Solomon 2:1 I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

The Bride's first confession of her identity was that she was "dark but lovely" (1:5). She was caught in the dilemma of a confused self-image. Her process of transformation continues here as she begins to agree with the King's assessment of her beauty and her character.

a) **The rose of Sharon** – probably a small white blossom that is very fragrant. This speaks of the Bride's purity and the pleasure that she provides for the King.

b) **The lily of the valleys** – the beauty and purity of the lily which stands out in contrast to the low, dark places of the fallen world.

There is power in agreeing with the King's declaration

Matthew 18:19 "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven."

We live out of our self-perceptions. As we begin to agree with the King's assessment of our lives, we grow into that reality one step at a time. There is great power in beginning to speak the truth over ourselves: "I am beautiful and intoxicating to Jesus. I am the one He came for, and the one He is waiting for. I am my King's Beloved!"

4. The King's response of further affirmation.

Song of Solomon 2:2 Like a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

Jesus affirms the unique beauty of the Bride, the one He has chosen for Himself. The lily among thorns – compared to the people of the world, those who have not chosen Him, you are not only like a lily, but everyone else around you is just a thorn bush in comparison. Though we find ourselves in the context of a fallen world, living among broken people, Jesus has infused us with His love, and causes us to begin to shine like lights in the darkness.

5. The Bride declares her preference for the pleasures of the King's presence.

Song of Solomon 2:3 Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

a) **Like an apple tree** – The Shulamite declares the King's unique beauty in her eyes. He isnow the source of all her pleasures, the fairest of 10,000, and she has chosen His company over any involvement with other pursuers.

b) **I sat down in His shade** – she has made the choice of the one thing, to sit at the feet of Jesus to feed on His Word and to contemplate His beauty.

c) **With great delight** – there is an eager anticipation of the transforming power of communion with the King.

d) **His fruit was sweet** – there is immediate reward as the Word of Christ begins to find its place in her heart.

E. THE HOUSE OF WINE: JESUS' ABIDING LOVE FOR THE BRIDE

Song of Solomon 2:4 He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love

The "banqueting house," or the "house of wine" is the place of deep communion through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The King longs for the Shulamite to know the joyful and empowering intoxication of the marriage wine, the release of the Holy Spirit in her life. Notice that the King Himself is her escort into this place of intimacy and delight. This is the place of the betrothal, the sharing of the cup of covenant between the Beloved and His Bride. The King establishes a banner over her life, a declaration that all His dealings with her are focused on developing full and mature love in her heart. Every step of the journey now will be interpreted through the lens of His love for her. If we understand that everything He does is about love we will live in freedom.

F. THE BRIDE'S CRY FOR DEEPER INTIMACY

Song of Solomon 2:5 Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick.

She asks to be sustained or strengthened with raisin cakes. This is a cry for greater capacity to receive the love of Jesus through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is similar to Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:16 that we would be ***"strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man,"*** unto the greater experience of the love of Jesus.

a) ***Sustain me with cakes of raisins.*** Raisins are simply dried grapes, and speak of the ongoing influence of the wine of the Holy Spirit. In that culture, raisin cakes were considered to be an aphrodisiac, a stimulus to romance. The Shulamite is asking that the Holy Spirit continue to increase her capacity to experience more of the love of Jesus.

b) ***refresh me with apples.*** She saw the King as an apple tree among the trees of the woods, and now is asking for the fruit of His life to refresh and comfort her as she grows in love.

c) ***for I am lovesick.*** The Shulamite is delighted in His presence, and desires to know more of His love.

G. THE SAFETY OF THE DIVINE EMBRACE

Song of Solomon 2:6-7 His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me. [7] ***I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.***

1. He is at work both in obvious ways and in hidden ways to bring her to maturity in love.

a) ***His left hand is under my head*** – this speaks of the hidden ways of God, His work in our lives that we are not aware of, establishing our lives in love. The Holy Spirit does His deepest work during times when we are not aware of His presence or activity. It is during dry seasons that the roots of a tree are pulled down to find the deep streams of living water.

Mark 4:26-28 And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, [27] and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. [28] For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

b) ***His right hand embraces me*** – this refers to the open, manifest activity of Jesus that shows His love in observable ways that delight and strengthen us.

Psalms 17:7 Show Your marvelous lovingkindness by Your right hand, O You who save those who trust in You from those who rise up against them.

Psalm 45:4 . . . Let Your right hand display awesome deeds. (NIV)

2. The King shows jealous protection over the Bride in this foundational season.

Song of Solomon 2:7 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.

The King places a "do not disturb" sign over the Bride during this essential and formative season of her life. All other dimensions of her journey are dependent upon the unshakeable foundation of the knowledge of His love for her.

a) ***Daughters of Jerusalem*** – the King guards her against the intrusion of immature believers who would influence her to another agenda.

Luke 10:40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

b) ***By the gazelles or by the does of the field*** – He likens her to the easily frightened and easily distracted animals that feed in the meadows. This lets us know how easy it is to be pulled away from this essential season of our lives.

c) ***Do not stir up or awaken love until it pleases*** – the KJV says ***"until He pleases."*** The point is that there is a timing for love to be awakened into activity. Jesus will do this at the right time, drawing His Bride into the partnership in ministry that He created her for.

Acts 1:4-5 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; [5] for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

The Shulamite lies like one helpless in the arms of the King; but to expire in Him is her life; to have lost herself in Him, and in Him to find herself again, is her happiness.

As fellow believers we must not distract her with our agendas – we need to allow her to rest in Him and become established in His love until He decides its time and calls her on.