Session 7 – The Bridegroom's Prophetic Declaration Over His Bride – Songs 4:1 – 6

A. THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF REDEEEMING LOVE

Song of Solomon 4:1a Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair!

Revelation 21:5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

1. As we move into Chapter 4 we see the King making prophetic declarations over the Bride. He announces the certainty of the outcome of this journey because He has made the way through His death and resurrection. It is not yet complete, the transformation has not yet been realised in the Bride's experience, but the certainty of that transformation has been established by the power of His suffering love expressed in Chapter 3:6-11, and fulfilled on the cross of Christ. The outcome is so sure that Jesus could reveal the end of the entire process to John in Revelation 21, declaring that the words of the testimony are true and faithful.

2. The whole of this description speaks of the beauty He sees in her and the delight He takes in it. He must see the doubt, the fear, the weakness but He never speaks of it. He only speaks of the potential of what will be revealed because of her heart's desire for Him and the price He has paid.. This is His prophetic nature – speaking forth that which is to come to draw her into the reality of it. He desires for her to know the fullness of her authority through intimacy. He draws her with His words of love and desire not drives her with commands and criticism. This is His prophetic nature and a prophetic community should function in the same way.

3. The devil assaults us with accusation to influence us to give up in despair (Rev. 12:10). The devil wants us to feel like hopeless hypocrites. He knows that accusation and the fear of being rejected by God will hinder our motivation to love. Being preoccupied with condemnation, failure, and shame hinders us from walking with the Lord effectively.

Rev. 12:10 [10]…for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

4. The Lord makes His people feel beautiful and loved in the grace of God, even while they are growing. When we feel cherished, we become confident in our love for Jesus. The whole truth about our life includes so much more than the wrong we have done. Our obedience begins when we sincerely set our heart to obey Him, not after we gain full victory in an area of our life. We can confidently feel His pleasure at every step of the growth process. Jesus does not define our life by our struggles. He sees more than our outward actions. He defines us by what we set our heart on and by our longing to love Him.

5. There is a magnificent reality about meditating on the person of Jesus and the work He accomplished through His earthly life, suffering, death on the cross, and resurrection. Jesus' loving obedience resulted in being given the place of highest honor and glory, the Name above all names (Philippians 2:10-11). As we gaze upon His glory, we are transformed into that same image by the power of the Holy Spirit.John 12:23 But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

Matthew 24:30-31 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [31]And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

6. As we behold (meditate, gaze upon) the glory of Jesus, the Holy Spirit imparts several elements of reality to our human spirit. This cannot come by being focused on ourselves or our needs. These things are imparted by the Holy Spirit as we focus on the glory of Jesus.

    a) The Holy Spirit releases to us the knowledge of the affections of Jesus. The more we consider Him, the deeper we come to realize His affections for us, and the wonder that He cares so deeply for us. The by-product of this impartation is that we begin to feel loved and lovely to Him.

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."

Psalms 8:3-4 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, [4] what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?

    b) The Holy Spirit releases to us the knowledge that we are chosen by Jesus for intimate friendship and partnership with Him as His Bride. This answers the longing of our hearts for significant identity and destiny.

Song of Solomon 2:10 My beloved spoke, and said to me: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, And come away."

Revelation 1:6 and has made us a kingdom of priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

    c) The Holy Spirit empowers us to receive the words of Jesus that declare how He sees us, words that transform us by their power. Blessings that come in the context of suffering carry great weight, because it is costly to bless someone else when one is suffering pain.

Psalms 45:2 You are fairer than the sons of men; Grace is poured upon Your lips; Therefore God has blessed You forever.

Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

B. THE BRIDEGROOM'S PROPHETIC DECLARATIONS OVER THE BRIDE

1. The King's declarations are powerful because He only speaks of how things are. These are not statements of wishful thinking; rather, they speak of the certain conclusion of the process the Shulamite has embraced. She is carried in His person, by His power, and the full realization of each character trait is sure.

    a) The King declares the Bride's beauty in the first phrase of Chapter Four – ***Behold, you are fair my love! Behold, you are fair!*** It is essential for us to grasp that the King is pronouncing His assessment of the Bride's condition before His eyes. He is the One who sees things as they are, not according to appearance, but according to the reality of the heart. This statement is rooted in the transforming power of His love that has captured her heart.

    There are several expressions of Christ's love that form the foundation of His declaration:

i. The gift of righteousness through the finished work of the cross. Righteousness (full conformity to God's vision of your life) has been granted to us as a free gift. It is not a result of our efforts, but an expression of God's perfect love.

Philippians 3:9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

ii. The gift of the Holy Spirit, who transforms our spirits into the image of Jesus. The Holy Spirit awakens our human spirits, and releases the longing to become like Jesus. His presence is the down-payment, the certainty that this process will be completed.

2 Corinthians 5:5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

Ephesians 1:13-14 . . . in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

iii. The nature of His personality. Jesus only interacts with us on the basis of the Father's heart, which is love and mercy at its deepest level. His emotions toward us are based not in our activity, but in the reality of His love and kindness. He gives us His own Spirit to strengthen our spirit, so that we might receive more of His love and be grounded in it.

Ephesians 3:16-17 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, [17] that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;

iv. The faithfulness of God to finish the process that He has begun in us. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all agree that we will be like Him, and so the full power of the Trinity is engaged in bringing us to glory.

2 Timothy 1:12 . . . I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

Philippians 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

2. Having pronounced the Bride to be beautiful, and calling all observers to behold her and be delighted in her beauty, the King makes **eight prophetic declarations** regarding her emerging character. He uses her physical attributes as a metaphor for spiritual beauty, the internal realities that make us suitable as His bridal partner. Again, it is important to see that these declarations are in the context of His suffering love that makes the whole thing possible.

a) ***You have dove's eyes behind your veil***. The King is speaking here of the devotion of the Shulamite's heart, established in the secret place of her own devotional life. She has a single focus to her affections, and has set her gaze only upon Him. Therefore –

i. Her level of revelation is growing deeper as she fixes her eyes only on Him. The Spirit of revelation is upon her, and she is growing in wisdom and understanding.

ii. As she sees more clearly and with a single focus, the power to love, to obey, and to become like Him is released in her life.

iii. Even though the veil that separates is still in place, she is developing the secret life in God that will bring ultimate freedom and liberty.

b) ***Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead***. This second character trait speaks of her dedication and consecration to God, symbolized by her hair.

i. In Scripture, hair is often a symbol of devotion and consecration to God. For example, a Nazirite was forbidden to cut his hair as an outward sign being devoted to the Lord (see Numbers 6:1-5).

ii. The King sees that the Bride's heart is set apart for Him alone. She has no other affections, and therefore is pure before Him.

iii. Proverbs 30:29-31 speaks of the stately majesty of goats as they walk. The Bride's dedication to Jesus is seen as splendid and majestic, filled with dignity and ordered by wisdom.

iv. Gilead was a mountainous region where sacrificial animals were fed and prepared as offerings to the Lord. The "balm of Gilead" was a healing ointment, and a prophetic picture of the Lord Jesus (see Genesis 37:25; Luke 5:31). The King sees the Shulamite in the fullness of her identity as an intercessor and healer, even though she has not yet ascended the "mountain of myrrh."

c) ***Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing, every one of which bears twins, and none is barren among them.*** The King speaks here of the Bride's growing ability to chew, or to meditate on, the Word of God and receive full nourishment from it.

i. Healthy teeth are a prophetic picture of the ability to receive truth, the meat of God's Word, to digest it, and fully apply it in life situations. Receiving the Word of God is called "eating the scroll" in the Scriptures (see Ezekiel 3:1-3; Revelation 10:9).

ii. Shorn sheep are those from whom the wool has been removed. The wool speaks of the energy of the flesh that is to be removed from our service to the Lord (see Ezekiel 44:17). The Bride is seen as having spiritual devotion without fleshly zeal. She is fully dependent upon the Word and Spirit of God for her growth.

iii. Ephesians 5:26 speaks of the "washing of the water of the Word." The Bride's meditation on the Word of God has washed her, transformed and renewed her mind. She is clean and fresh now through her life of meditation on the Word.

iv. There is a double portion of fruitfulness in her life now. There is no barrenness in her, and has a perfect balance of freedom and discipline, of mercy and grace, of creativity and wisdom.

d) ***Your lips are like a strand of scarlet . .*** . The lips speak of the speech of the Bride that is now anointed with the grace of redemption. The Bride's words now reveal what is deep in her heart, and releases the grace and mercy of God to others (see Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6).

e) ***Your mouth is lovely.*** The Bride's mouth is not synonymous with her lips. The mouth speaks of her intimate communion with the King, the "kisses" of intimacy with Jesus. The King and Bride are now sharing a depth of intimate communion in her times of worship and adoration. She is developing the capacity to return to Him the affections of worship, even as she asked Him to release the "kisses of His mouth" to her in the beginning.

Remember, the King is declaring things over her that are true, though not yet fully formed in her experience. She has said "yes" to Him, but she still must follow through in the actual steps of obedience for these character traits to come to full maturity.

f) ***Your temples behind your veil are like a piece of pomegranate.*** The word "temples" here is also translated "cheeks," and refers to the emotional life of the Bride. Internal emotions are expressed in the cheeks, or in the facial expressions of an individual.

i. When a pomegranate is broken open, it is red and sweet, full of seeds. There are many emotions that have the touch of redemption upon them. They are sweet, no longer bitter and dark, and they bring pleasure to the Lord.

ii. The redness also speaks of restored innocence that causes the Bride to blush in sensitivity to anything shameful.

iii. Again, these things are seen behind her veil. She is still separated from full intimacy with the Bridegroom, but is growing in her secret life of devotion. It is attractive to the King, and anticipates the full freedom that will come as the journey is completed.

g) ***Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory, on which hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men***. The seventh character trait that Jesus affirms in the Bride is her will. Her neck can be stiff (rebellious), or it can have the strength of humility and submission that provides leadership for an army.

i. The Bride's will is being formed like a tower of David, strong in humility and submission before the Lord. Humility is not weakness; it is the strength of agreement with God's perspective of your life. As her will is conformed to God's purposes, it becomes a strong defense against enemy strategies.

ii. The tower of David is an armory, a place where the weapons of warfare are kept for times of battle. All the resources of the Lord are available to her to defend against the attack of the evil one.

iii. There are a thousand shields, the equipment of mighty men. The Bride is not only able to fight her own battles; she is being prepared as a resource and leader of many. In the strength of her submitted will, the mighty people of God will find a stronghold and resource for spiritual warfare.

h) ***Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies.*** The final character trait affirmed by the King speaks of the Bride's ability to edify and nurture others. Not only is the Bride growing in maturity herself, but she is able to *nourish* and impart life to others.

i. This trait in her life is still young and immature, but she is beginning to be a resource for others in the Body of Christ. The "twin fawns" speak of an emerging balance in her approach, and there is plentiful nurture available through her.

ii. She is developing this trait by "feeding among the lilies," by building relationships with others who are pure in heart, and who feed on the presence of the King.

3. The King's affirmations are strength to our hearts as we continue on the journey to intimacy and authority. The Bride has not yet actualized her commitment, but the knowledge of how Jesus sees her is strength to her. As she hears His words of affirmation, spoken in the context of suffering love, she is empowered by His grace to take the next step of obedience, and follow Him to the mountain of myrrh, to the hill of frankincense.

C. "UNTIL THE DAY BREAKS" – THE MUTUAL COMMITMENT TO A LIFE OF INTERCESSION

Song of Solomon 4:6 Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.

There is debate among commentators as to who the speaker is in verse 6. Is it the King speaking to the Bride, or is it the Bride responding to the King's affirmations? There are wonderful strengths in both interpretations, so we outline both.

1. The King's statement of ongoing intercession (frankincense) and oversight. Jesus is always our leader and forerunner, and as such, He stands in a place of eternal intercession to pave the way for the Bride to follow. Having assured her of the certainty of what she will become He makes it clear that the way ahead is still onto mountains and hills. In the revelation of the beauty He sees in her He now reaffirms that He is going to the mountains and hills and longs for her to go there with Him and He has the ability to give His full attention to ensure she succeeds.

Hebrews 7:25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

a) ***Until the day breaks, and the shadows flee away.*** Jesus tells us here that until the day of His return, when the shadows of this present evil age are driven away, He will stand in the place of intercession, praying for us, drawing us forward into the Father's purposes. He is able to "save to the uttermost;" in other words, to empower us through His intercession to completely finish the journey that is set before us!

b) ***I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.*** Though the physical sufferings of Jesus were completed on the cross, He still bears the pain of our weakness as we move forward. He understands and feels what we feel as we move forward, and holds that before the Father in constant prayer. He is calling her into that place of conquering her fear and weakness by going with Him.

c) When we struggle to follow where the Lord leads us He will affirm us and cherish us but still calls us into the journey.

2. The Bride's statement of commitment to embrace the journey of full partnership with Jesus in His sufferings and intercession. This statement is the beginning of a major transition in the Bride's life that will culminate in her prayer of Chapter 4:16. She is now prepared to face life for His sake instead of for hers, to embrace His purposes instead of her agenda.

a) ***Until the day breaks, and the shadows flee away*** . . . In Chapter 2:17 she used this phrase as a reason to stay in the comfort zone. Now, she declares that she will face the night season and the shadows of death in full obedience and partnership with Jesus. She is no longer crippled with fear, but will go with Him, trusting Him to deal with all her imperfections. She will embrace the pain of the night by embracing the life of intercession.

b) ***I will go my way*** . . . She now sets her will to leave her comfort zone completely, and follow Jesus in the precise path that He has laid out for her. Jesus has prepared a way for each believer to walk, and we are to be only concerned with our own story. If we trust Him to lead us in the way He has prepared, we will certainly arrive at the desired destination.

John 21:21-22 Peter, seeing (John), said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man? [22] Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me."

c) ***To the mountain of myrrh . . .*** This is the embrace of the cross of discipleship. This is not Jesus' cross; He embraced His own cross and carried us with Him into death and resurrection (see 3:6-11). This cross is the believer's cross of discipleship, the place of abandonment to the will and strategies of God. Notice, it is a *mountain of myrrh*. It is no small commitment she is making here. The cross means the end of our personal will and desire, complete surrender to the Father's purposes in our lives. This was the path of Jesus, and it is our path as well to full bridal partnership and authority.

Luke 22:42 "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

Luke 9:23 Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

d) ***To the hill of frankincense.*** This phrase speaks of the place of intercession and devotional prayer in the Bride's life. When we pray, the incense rises to the throne of God (see Revelation 8:4). We can never ascend the mountain of myrrh without the hill of frankincense being established in our lives. No one is able to scale the mountain of suffering without a life of prayer and meditation on the cross.

Notice, the mountain of myrrh is conquered by establishing a hill of incense. A little prayer gives strength to conquer a great mountain. Jesus developed a life of prayer that enabled Him to move in the miraculous, and to face the darkest night of the cross. He instructed Peter that one hour of prayer would empower him to defeat the temptation of failure that was before Him.

Mark 9:29 So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."

Matthew 26:36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there."

Mark 14:38 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

CONCLUSION

The Bride has encountered the suffering love of Jesus in a powerful way, and has heard His affirmations over her life. By the power of His love, she will become all that He sees her to be. All that remains is for her to embrace the way of the cross, and to allow His Spirit to release in her the resurrection life that is necessary for her to reach her destination. There is no substitute for the way of the cross, empowered by a life of prayer. It is the way that God has established for us to go forward into fullness. It was the way that Jesus came into His authority, and it is the way that we will come into that which we have been created for.