

Song of Solomon 3:1-4

Do you ever lie awake at night, ... and you just can't get to sleep? You think of something someone said and it is going over and over in your mind? Perhaps there is something you have to do the next day and already you are trying to plan ahead?

Here, in our Bible reading, we have a young woman who cannot get to sleep. Her mind is so preoccupied, - taken up, - with the One she loves. She is tossing and turning, from one side to the other, and she cannot sleep because she is constantly thinking about the One she loves.

Yes, the picture that we are met with in 3:1 is common to many of us. A sleepless night.

What is the context we have here? The Beloved is tired. It is the end of the day, ... night-time. But yet she wants to be up-and-doing for her Master. However, the reality of the situation is this, - she is not able because of the darkness! And what does she say? ...

I SOUGHT HIM

v.1

- * The reason she cannot sleep is because she is so much in love,
- * Her every thought is taken up with the One she loves,
- * At the moment, it's dark outside, ... it's dark all around her,
- * and she's frustrated because she cannot go out into the streets and be busy searching for Him.

- * Do you ever feel like that? Here's what I mean.
- * You can look back to a time when you were so busy for the Lord Jesus Christ,
 - * You loved coming out to the prayer meetings,
 - * When a meeting/service was on in the church you were at it,
 - * It didn't matter what time of the year, nor whether the heating was on in the church, ...
 - * You can remember when you walked to church in all weathers,
 - * ... - nothing would hinder you from meeting with God's people.

- * However, in recent times, your years have crept on you and illness has set in and hinders you from playing a more active role in the Master's Service.
- * Maybe it's not particularly your age, perhaps illness limits your activities at the moment,
- * ... and you are just like this woman, - wishing for the time when you can do more for your Saviour,
- * but, just for right now, - if you like, - you are confined to 'lying all night in the bed'.
- * You want to be used by God in His work, but ...

- * I know what it is like to be lying all day, and wishing you were fit enough to get up, go out, and work, ...
- * but often the reality is, ... you are just not able.
- * And that was the reality that faced this woman as she lay in her bed.
- * In the middle of the night, she said,
 - * I sought him, but I found him not. (v.2)

The good thing that this woman was aware of was that there is an end to the night. The darkness always has to give way to the sun, ... and then there is light. And we find this woman is not happy to stay in her bed when there is the opportunity to do something that may be able to change her situation.

I WILL RISE NOW

v.1

- * It is now the morning, - the night is behind, it has passed.
- * The rising of the sun brings new hope.
- * She begins to see that she is able to do something about the predicament she finds herself in.
- * *She is not in a hopeless situation!*
- * Sometimes when you are in the middle of something that threatens to keep you down, what you want to do is *to do nothing!*
- * You don't want to see anyone, go anywhere, do anything, ... and it is so easy to do the opposite of what this woman did, - it's so easy 'to pull the blankets over our head and keep the world out'.

- * Here is a woman and she will be tired, for she didn't get any sleep all night, - and yet she is determined to get on with living her life for the Master.
- * What does she do? What does she say?
 - * I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth.
- * Do you feel the determination in her words? She is going to do it, - *no matter what!*
- * Remember that this is a 'country girl' in a city, ...
- * She is going to walk through the city, searching every street and across every square, for she is going to find the One she loves,
 - * Ps. 42:1-4 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.
- * And the reality of her situation was this:
 - * no matter how hard she looked, ... how far she walked, ... she couldn't find Him.
- * What would you have done? Would you have given up?
- * In the past, - perhaps even today, - God seems so far removed from you, and you have pleaded with Him in prayer to make Himself known to you, ... but He hasn't, what did you do?
 - * Did you give up, or did you keep on going?
- * This woman got up and kept on going.

I PASSED

v.4

- * As she was walking through the town, - through all the streets and across the squares, - she met other people,
 - * "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?"
 - * "Have you seen Him? Have you seen the One my heart loves?"
- * Do you see what she is doing now?
 - * She is trying to get others to help her, - but the reality at the end of the day is this,
 - * *She herself – and not another – has got to find Him.*

- * If you are going through a dry patch in your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, you can have the company of others meeting here in the fellowship,
 - * But at the end of the day you yourself, - and none other, - have got to look and, sometimes, look hard for Jesus.
- * And this woman had to do something very difficult, - she had to leave these folk behind, because “she passed them”.
- * You know, other folk cannot live your Christian life for you.
- * ... and she had to keep on going, until ...

I FOUND

v.4

- * yes, all her efforts were rewarded, - she found Him,
 - * I found him whom my soul loveth
- * ... and you can see her, - flinging her arms around Him, the smile stretching across her face and right down deep into her heart.
- * It took much time, it took much effort,
 - * It meant getting up and doing, - yes, even when she was tired!
 - * But she found Him and it was all worth the effort.
- * You can almost feel the joy in her heart as the story is being told.
- * The Person Who had been missing from her life was now found,
- * ... and look now at what she says, ...

I HELD

v.4

- * “I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother’s house”
- * “Mother’s house” – that’s significant, isn’t it?
- * Remember the other occasion when the ‘mother’ was mentioned, -
 - * It was at the mother’s house where we heard about the vineyards (1:6)
 - * - one of which belonged to this Beloved, this woman, - she had neglected it.
- * Do you see what is happening here?
 - * The Beloved is setting to rest an area in her life that had been defeated by the enemy, - *neglect*.
- * By bringing her Loved One home to her mother, - back to that vineyard, - she was facing up to an old defeat, - she’s burying the past failures.
- * Sometimes past failures keep us from enjoying God,

- * Sometimes past failures continue to haunt us,
- * Sometimes past failures keep us from enjoying the blessings that God has stored for us,
- * ... and they have to be dealt with, ... *honestly, and to the face.*
- * This woman dealt with them by facing up to it along with her Master.
- * She held on to Him and wouldn't let Him go!

Conclusion. Is this a picture you can learn from? It's as if everything is against you? But then you resolve to get up and search avidly for God so that you can deal properly in the situation. Yes, at first, it's as if He is nowhere to be found. But as you continue on in your search your joy is complete when you find Him.

You will find many of the Biblical characters going through 'dry' periods in their lives, - periods when God seems so far away. But when you come to realise that He was there all the time you are taken up with Him even more than you had been before.