

The Song of Solomon 5:1-16

As we have been studying through the Song of Solomon we have seen that the two main characters are the *Beloved/Bride* and the *Loved One/Bridegroom*. In picture language they symbolise the relationship between the Church and the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt regarding the depth of love between the two. They 'crave' for each other's company.

Just for this morning we are going to look at another group of people who have already been mentioned; they are described as the '*Friends*'. These are people who are on the sidelines, - acquaintances of the Bride. Indeed, they share a certain amount of the joy that is being experienced between the Bride and the Bridegroom, - *between the Church and the Lord Jesus Christ*.

Notice that they are *distinct* from the Bride, - separate to the Church. Notice too that they just can't quite understand the relationship that they are looking in on. They don't totally understand the relationship that exists between the Bride and the Bridegroom.

I'll explain what I mean:

- * 1:4, - despite the fact that the Church is enraptured with Christ (vv.2-4) the 'Friends' want to give their rejoicing, delight, and praise to the Church, ... whom they can see; they don't have the capability to see any further than the Church, they can't experience what the Church is experiencing.
- * 5:1, - they react to what is going on around them.
- * 5:9, - the question we are considering this morning.
- * 6:1, - their eyes are not fixed upon the One whom the Bride fixes her gaze.
- * 6:13, - these 'Friends' are still fixing their gaze upon the Bride, not on the Bridegroom.
- * 8:5, - they still don't understand what is going on.
- * 8:8,9, - they are now trying to speak the same language, but just notice their lack of certainty: "what shall we do...? ... If ... If..."

- * So, let's take a look at this question that the 'Friends' ask in 5:9,
 - * A.V. What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?
 - * N.I.V. 9 How is your beloved better than others, most beautiful of women? How is your beloved better than others, that you charge us so?
- * Do you see what the Friends are asking, - in New Testament language they are asking,
 - * "What is there about your Jesus, whom you say you love? What is there about Him *that you charge us so*, ... that makes you any different from the rest of us? ... that makes you believe your relationship with Him is more precious than anything we have?"
- * Here is where I am working from this morning:
 - * There is *none*, - *not a one*, - that can satisfy the love of the sinner the way the Lord Jesus Christ can.
 - * *Jesus*, - *and Jesus alone*, - *can completely satisfy!*

In the song that is being sung from the hearts and lips of these Friends we see that ...

- I. There is a Note of Distress "What? ... What? ..."
- II. There is a Note of Distinctiveness "... than another ..."
- III. There is a Note of Disharmony "... that thou dost so charge us"

I. THERE IS A NOTE OF DISTRESS "What? ... What? ..."

- * There is something here that these 'Friends' cannot understand, "What ...? What ...?"
- * You are speaking to someone about your faith, and telling them that you have become a Christian, and it has totally changed you,
- * ... and people can't understand what you are talking about.
- * For them, church means:
 - * *Bore, bore, and more bore!*
 - * or it might mean, the place you go to get baptised, married, and buried.
 - * It might mean the social centre in the town or village where you go and meet with others, and play Bingo, or get caught up in some other social activity, completely devoid of the spiritual.

- * The ‘God-stuff’ is only kept for a few who want to get up out of their beds on a Sunday morning.
- * But what if you were to tell them about how Christ has changed your life:
 - * You used to live all for yourself, for the good times, no matter who it hurt, no matter whose heart it broke.
 - * But gradually all the glamour and glitter began to wear off, and the old way of living was no longer able to fill the gaping emptiness that was swirling around inside your life.
 - * You looked around to see if there was something that could help you, ... and then you came face-to-face with the Gospel,
 - * if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
 - * ... and you met the Person upon whom the Gospel hinges, - the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - * You came to realise that He died on the cross so that your sins would be washed away and cleansed by His precious blood.
 - * You invited Him into your heart and you were no longer separated from God.
 - * He then filled the emptiness in your life.
 - * You recognised that your sin was forgiven and forgotten because Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary for you.
- * Now, isn’t that what makes Him special to you?!
- * And, ... where the note of distress comes in with relation to what the ‘Friends’ are saying is that they don’t realise what has actually happened *for it hasn’t happened to them!*
- * If you like: they know the beginning of the story [*what you used to be like*] and they know the end of the story [*what you are like now*], but it is the in-between bit that they do not know anything about, ... *because they haven’t experienced it for themselves!*
- * ... and they sound the note of distress, “What is thy beloved more than another beloved?”
- * It’s the in-between bit that they don’t know anything about, and they can’t understand why you so love the Lord Jesus Christ!
- * What if there is someone here this morning, - it doesn’t matter whether you are a member, or a visitor, or what you are, - but do you see any similarity between these ‘Friends’ and you?
 - * You fail to be able to grasp how it is that someone gets so excited about Jesus,

- * You can't see why someone wants to spend so much time reading and studying their Bible,
- * You don't really see the priority of prayer,
- * In fact, when you think about it, you don't really have all that much interest in the things of God.
- * ... That's the way the 'Friends' were; ... and in the question they address to the Bride, **there is a note of distress.**

II. THERE IS A NOTE OF DISTINCTIVENESS “... than another ...”

- * These 'Friends' ... they know there is a difference.
- * You don't read about them having a sparkle in their eyes.
- * You don't read about how they describe the Bridegroom.
- * You see, they don't have an adequate picture of this Person about whom the Bride is so enraptured.
- * These 'Friends' are merely bystanders.
- * They can't see what is truly going on, and the picture that they have drawn up in their minds is totally inadequate.
- * They cannot see how the Bridegroom is better than any other.
- * ... And very openly in this conversation, a distinction is being made here, ... and it is also the distinction that is being made by the person outside of Christ.
- * 9 What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?
- * How would you answer? Is your love for the Lord Jesus Christ more precious than ever it was?
- * ... and that is what makes Him “better than others”,
 I've found a Friend in Jesus, He's everything to me,
 He's the Fairest of Ten Thousand to my soul;
 The Lily of the Valley, in Him alone I see
 All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole.

Now, it seems likely that the 'Friends' didn't altogether appreciate being told about the love that was being enjoyed between this Bride and the Bridegroom, because we notice that ...

III. THERE IS A NOTE OF DISHARMONY “... that thou dost so charge us”

- * The 'Friends' weren't too keen on hearing what the Bride had to say, because it put them in an awkward position,

- * “Here, ... we don’t have the relationship that this Bride has with her Bridegroom. We don’t have someone who we can speak about in the way she speaks about Him.”
- * And they repeat the question,
 - * what is thy beloved more than another beloved?
- * ... for they realise they don’t have any such relationship.
- * There is no-one they can approach in the manner to which the Bride has become accustomed.
- * And the emptiness of their relationships is shown up against the fullness of the love that is being shared between the Bride and the bridegroom.
- * ... *and they take it personally!* They ‘hit out at’ the Bride for allegedly bringing a charge against them, when really it is that part within each one of them that is crying out for the love that the Bride is speaking about.
- * ... The love that the Christian has for the Lord Jesus Christ has no comparison with any other type of love.
- * ... The love that the Christian has for the Lord Jesus Christ is a love that the world can never understand, nor neither will it ever be able to equal the love between the sinner and the Saviour.

Conclusion. So what can we say in conclusion, in the face of what these ‘Friends’ said to the woman?

- * How did she answer? What did she say?
 - * She looked again to her Master, her Bridegroom, - she didn’t take her eyes of Him;
 - * She concentrated upon Him fully, and she let nothing take her gaze away from Him.
- * Yes, isn’t that what we learn?
- * When the world tries to steer our attention away from our Saviour by whatever means it may throw up at us, do we keep before us the face of Christ?
- * ... there is nothing as precious as our relationship with Him.
- * Here’s a woman, - a Bride, - and despite her circumstances, despite her ‘Friends’, she became lost, - not in her problems, - but in her love for the Saviour.

May the Lord bless His Word to each of us today, and encourage us as we have considered this woman’s love for her Lord and Master.