

Song of Solomon 1:12-14

I. Song 1:12-14 Threefold response of the Bride

(Song 1:12-14) “While the king was at his table, My perfume gave forth its fragrance. My beloved is to me a pouch of myrrh Which lies all night between my breasts. My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms In the vineyards of Engedi.”

- a. In these verses, the bride responds to Jesus’ affirmation of her beauty. Her life is filled with worship and adoration in the form of spikenard perfume that she gives forth in His presence (1:12). She meditates and feeds on the sacrificial love of Jesus in His crucifixion (1:13). She receives revelation of His beauty and delightfulness (1:13).
- b. The setting of this encounter is at the table of the king. The word for table here is “bimsibbow” which can mean “to surround” or “the surrounding area”. The inference here is that the bride is sitting at the King’s table with Him and His presence has surrounded her. We can partake of the table of the Lord at any time as His bride. Sitting at His table and allowing Him to feed our spirit comes from: (1) confidence in His love; that we are lovely to Him and (2) thankfulness in our hearts; that He has forgiven all our sins and has given us the gift of righteousness (Rom. 5-6).

(Song 1:12) “While the king was at his table, My perfume gave forth its fragrance.”

(Psalm 23:5) “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.”

(1 Corinthians 10:21) “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.”

- c. As the presence of Christ begins to surround her and He begins to feed her at His table, a spontaneous praise-perfume pours forth from her heart and fills the room. The fragrance of Christ surrounds us and mixes with the fragrance of our worship when we meet with Him at the banqueting table. Spikenard is the specific perfume listed here and was used both as an incense offering in the temple as well as to anoint bodies for burial. This is the same fragrance poured over the head and feet of Jesus by Mary of Bethany in John 12:3 and Mark 14:3. It is also the fragrance poured on Him by a prostitute in Galilee in Luke 7.

(John 12:3) “Mary then took a pound of very expensive perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.”

(Revelation 5:8) “When He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”

(2 Corinthians 2:15) “For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing”

II. Song 1:13 The Bride meditates on the Cross

(Song 1:13) “My beloved is to me a pouch of myrrh Which lies all night between my breasts.”

- a. The bride begins to smell the aroma of myrrh coming from her heart. The wealthy women of this time period would go to bed with pouches of myrrh hung around their neck to provide a pleasant aroma that carries while they slept. The King has given her a costly gift at His banqueting table to wear around her neck while she lies on her bed. This symbolizes her receiving revelation of the love and provision of Christ when He went to the cross. It is the aroma of His sufferings and it now overwhelms her while she lays at night. The cross was Jesus’ abundant offering on our behalf. What it cost speaks to our value to Him that paid the price.
- b. The Hebrew root word of myrrh is “marrah” which means bitter. Ancient Hebrew scholars described myrrh as bitter “tears from a tree”. In the same way that Christ hung on a tree and poured forth tears of redemption, the pouch of myrrh lying on our hearts is our remembrance of His love and sacrifice (Song 1:4 praise/remember your love more than wine).
- c. Myrrh is referenced eight times in the Song, signifying the importance of Christ’s sacrifice to those that are intimate with Him. Even the garments of Jesus were drenched with myrrh.

(Psalm 45:8) “All Your garments are fragrant with myrrh, aloes, and cassia...”

- d. As we smell the fragrance of His suffering, we are beckoned to take up our own cross. Can we share the sufferings of Christ? Will we deny our own reputation and our own personal agendas? Will we deny comfort to follow Him in sacrificial love? Even at the cost of our lives?

(Matthew 16:24-25) “Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”

(1 Peter 4:13) “but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that at the revelation of His glory you may also rejoice and be overjoyed.

(Revelation 12:11) “And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.”

- e. As we meditate on the cross, we begin to share the same fragrant aroma of Christ. His fragrance is his character and nature. As we draw near to the place of sacrifice, others will recognize the same character and will know that we have been with Him. The pouch of myrrh must lay on our hearts even in the night seasons of temptation and trial that we would keep His sacrifice ever before us. We will forever worship the Lamb once slain as a “pouch of myrrh” on our hearts. The most obedient and worshipful saints are also those who continually meditate on the cross.

(Revelation 5:12) saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power, wealth, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing.”

III. Song 1:14 A revelation of the delightfulness of Christ

(Song 1:12-14) “My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms In the vineyards of Engedi.”

- a. Like a cluster of fragrant flowers, Jesus is thrilling and intoxicating. This speaks to His beauty and splendor; a King who is thrilling to love and to know. This is counter to the religious and heavy handed deities of other worldly religions, who demand worship and perfection. This God draws us to Himself with the aroma of many flowers from the most fragrant gardens.
 - i. Roman soldiers that were garrisoned in Jerusalem would comment that the best time to visit poor areas of the city were when the Henna had blossomed because they would completely mask the putrid odor of those areas. The thrilling beauty and kindness of God drowns out all other aromas, even that of death, and draws us into His presence.

(Romans 2:4) “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and restraint and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”

- b. Henna blossoms were grape-like clusters of small white flowers that grew on a shrub or low tree. These plants were extremely fragrant and were typically grown around the border of a valuable crop or vineyard. The Henna trees would guard the contents of the vineyard from prowling animals. In the same way, Jesus guards the vineyards of our hearts and encircles our heart with His fragrances. He is not just a fragrant flower, but a *fragrant bouquet; His beauty comes from every aspect of His character*. This speaks to the diversity and abundance of His beauty and glory.

(Philippians 4:7) “And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

- c. The Hebrew word for Henna is “kopher” which translated means “ransom” and refers to the price of atonement for a single person. The cluster would signify atonement not just for one, but for many. Ancient Jewish scholars believed that the phrase “cluster of henna blossoms” is a reference to the Messiah and would instead translate the phrase “a man who atones for all”.

(Matthew 20:28) “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

- d. En Gedi was an oasis on the western shore of the Dead Sea. It was known for producing some of the greatest fragrances in Israel. En Gedi literally translated means “fountain of the lamb” or “spring of the kid(young goat)”. This vineyard of beautiful fragrance is knit to Jesus’ eternal identity as the Lamb of God, once slain, who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).
- e. The beauty of His character, the fragrance of His atonement, reveals to us His great love for us. When we meditate on the cross and the one who died there, we can see that He gave everything for us before we did anything for Him. He loves us as we are, where we are, without holding anything back. This fragrant aroma intoxicates us to give everything we have to this Lamb.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1) What was one point of tonight's session that was profound to you? How will you live differently as a result?
- 2) How does meditating on Christ's sacrifice on the cross affect the life of a believer?
- 3) Have you ever considered that the crucifixion is a direct representation of your value to God? How does this truth affect the way you see yourself and others?