

Song of Solomon 2:14-17

I. Song 2:14-17 Jesus affirms the maiden and embraces her in weakness

(Song 2:14-17) “My dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the hiding place of the mountain pathway, Let me see how you look, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is pleasant, And you look delightful.” 15 “Catch the foxes for us, The little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, While our vineyards are in blossom.” 16 “My beloved is mine, and I am his; He pastures his flock among the lilies. 17 Until the cool of the day, when the shadows flee, Turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle Or a young stag on the mountains of Bether.”

- a. Review: Lord Jesus calls the maiden out of comfort into deep partnership
 - i. Jesus is revealed as Lord of the Nations as He leaps over the mountains(obstacles). He easily triumphs over obstacles, both human and demonic, and now beckons her to join Him in full obedience. He declares to her seven prophetic signs of the upcoming harvest. He has been with her in the Winter of hidden growth and deepened intimacy. Surely, He will be with her now in the Spring of exposed growth and increased dependency.

II. Song 2:14a Jesus affirms sincerity and acceptance

(Song 2:14) “My dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the hiding place of the mountain pathway, Let me see how you look, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is pleasant, And you look delightful.”

- a. Jesus can see that the maiden is not going to leave the comfort of her hiding place. The Lord is never surprised by our weaknesses. He expects to find us frozen in fear, and His response is not what we would expect. When others would call her a deceitful snake or a cowardly rat for responding in fear, He calls her **“My dove”**. In the midst of her weakness, in the face of her fear, and fully aware of her immaturity, Jesus chooses to highlight her pure and sincere devotion to Him. He does not reject or ridicule. Instead, He embraces her, even in her weakness. His heart reaches for us even when we hide from Him in fear (or shame).
 - i. We are sincere in our love and devotion to Jesus much earlier than we become mature. Here we can see that God is not after obedience as much as He is longing for adoration from His beloved ones (all creatures will obey God in the last judgement). *The most precious desire of God’s heart is our heart’s desire toward Him, not our obedience.* He knows that possessing the human heart will ultimately cause us to live for Him, even in the face of fear and pain, because of our love for Him.

(Revelation 12:11) “And they overcame...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.”

- b. Jesus is displaying the safety of His grace in which we dwell. (Seated in Christ in heavenly places, accepted in the Beloved). The grace that comes from the finished work of the cross is described in two ways: as the **“cleft of the rock”** and the **“hiding place of the mountain pathway”**.

(Ephesians 1:6) “to the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He favored[accepted] us in the Beloved.”

- c. Jesus was the Rock of Moses and also the Rock in which Moses was hidden. When Moses asked the Lord to display His glory to him, God hid him in the cleft of the rock to protect him from seeing the face of God and being struck dead. Just as Moses was hidden in the cleft of the rock, we are hidden by the wounds in Jesus’ side as a picture of salvation. We hide from the judgement of God’s wrath in the atoning death of Christ.

(1 Corinthians 10:4) “and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.”

(Exodus 33:20-22) “He further said, “You cannot see My face, for mankind shall not see Me and live!” 21 Then the Lord said, “Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; 22 and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by.”

- d. The hiding place of the mountain pathway speaks to the mystery of Jesus’ resurrection. This is the secret hiding place that all believers have access to. Just as Jacob’s ladder ascended to heaven, we have a place of ascension in His resurrection to the very presence of God.

(Ephesians 2:6) “[God] raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

III. Song 2:14b Jesus calls the maiden into grace

(Song 2:14b) “Let me see how you look, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is pleasant, And you look delightful.”

- a. Jesus wants us to worship Him in the midst of fear and insecurity. While others would push us away for our despondency, Jesus calls us closer to Him. He knows that all we need is found in His presence. He wants to see our face and spiritual appearance even when we think we are spiritually dark and grotesque in compromise. He wants to hear our voice and our prayers even when we are overwhelmed with unbelief and confusion. We are to stand confidently in the grace of God as we ask Him for help.

(Mark 9:24) “I do believe; help my unbelief!”

(Hebrews 4:16) “Therefore let’s approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need.”

- b. Just as Jesus foresaw the weakness in Peter’s flesh, He also sees when we are going to respond in fear due to weakness and immaturity. He instructed Peter to watch and pray. This is the same instruction for the maiden to let Him see her face and hear her voice. God’s prescription for

weakness and immaturity, is leaning on His strength and pressing into the place of worship (revealing our face) and prayer (lifting our voice).

(Matthew 26:34, 41) “34 Jesus said to him, “Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times...41 Keep watching and praying, so that you do not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.””

- c. The Lord loves when we approach Him in our weakness **“your voice is pleasant and you look delightful”**. He knows and sees our sincere desire to obey and know that as we approach Him in weakness, our love will mature into wholehearted devotion. He longs to break off the shackles of introspection as we lift our gaze to His face and sing our praises to Him.

IV. Song 2:15 A Prayer for deliverance from compromise

(Song 2:15) “Catch the foxes for us, The little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, While our vineyards are in blossom.”

- a. The maiden (and the Holy Spirit) responds to His exhortation to reveal her face and hear her voice. She finally steps out of hiding so that He can see her from outside the wall. She cries out for help and asks Him to deliver her from small compromises (foxes) that hide under the surface.
 - i. Foxes or jackals are cunning animals and come out at night and are hard to catch. These are not the lions of rebellion that are easily found during the day. If they can gain access to the vineyard, they will slowly destroy the entire harvest of grapes before the fruit is ripe.
 - ii. These “little foxes” in our heart’s vineyard represent small compromises that live under the surface of our inner life (thoughts, desires, motivations). The call of God to greater things will often expose these small compromises such as fear, unredeemed thought patterns, attitudes, speech, and misuse of resources. In this case, the call to “arise” has exposed fear and unbelief in the maiden’s heart. She knows that if they foxes are there **“while the vineyards are in blossom”**, they will be there to consume the fruit of righteousness before it is ready.
- b. The vineyard speaks of our fellowship with God in our hearts. We are grafted into the vine of Christ as His Bride and are called to remain in Him, the true vine (*John 15:1-11, Romans 11:17*). The vineyard in blossom displays the immaturity and newness of the maiden’s connection with God. In Song 1:6, the maiden wasn’t even tending to her vineyard. Here, she sees for the first time, an issue with the vineyard of her heart that she *has been tending*. The foxes keep destroying her fruitfulness.
- c. It is the *little things* that will prevent us from going deep in God. We desire more than just living a life without blatant disobedience or scandalous sin, we want to love God with our whole being. As God calls us out of comfort in different areas, we can be sure that small foxes of compromise

will be exposed that we were unaware of before. We can cry out to God, who will help us catch them.

(Psalm 139:23-24) “Search me, God, and know my heart; Put me to the test and know my anxious thoughts; 24 And see if there is any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.”

V. Song 2:16-17 Sincere love with painful compromise

(Song 2:16-17) “My beloved is mine, and I am his; He pastures his flock among the lilies. 17 Until the cool of the day, when the shadows flee, Turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle Or a young stag on the mountains of Bether.”

- a. The Bride states her spiritual identity as a lover of God. “He is mine and I am His.” She declares that Jesus is the owner of her heart and affections. Her heart for God is expressed *in the midst of her stumbling*. When we struggle with fear or compromise, we do not cease to be a lover of God. Our face does not lose its beauty to Him and our voice in worship and prayer does not become offensive to Him. *We are not sinners who struggle to love God, but are lovers of God who occasionally struggle to overcome sin.*
- b. She knows that Jesus will feed her in this area of purity as sure as **“He pastures his flock among the lilies”**. The lily speaks of purity and obedience to God’s leadership (**Song 2:1-2, 5:3&13, 6:2-3**). The plural form refers to the corporate body of Christ that will love Him in wholehearted obedience. She knows that her life purpose is to live in the purity of the lily of the valleys in every area of her life as she catches all the little foxes of compromise. *He will have His inheritance in her heart.*
- c. She now gives her answer to Jesus’ call to arise and join Him on the mountains. She refuses and instead tells him to **“turn, my beloved”** and leap on the mountains without her. She refuses to obey Him because of fear, rooted in immaturity, not out of rebellion. In pain, she knows that Jesus must be like a young stag and overcome as the Lord of the Nations, but she is not secure in her own ability to join Him. There are still foxes in her vineyard, she is still growing in spiritual maturity. She does not feel qualified to follow Him on the conquering path.
- d. She sees the darkness in her heart; the closed areas that are not in the light, but under shadows. The cool of the day refers to the morning, when new light is present and shadows flee. This phrase is used twice in the Song and once in Genesis as well and is translated as the cool of the day. The word for cool: “ruah” is also the word for “wind” or “spirit”. She is longing for the wind of the spirit to blow on her garden, resulting in great purity and obedience. She wants to obey, but believes that she must be pure *before* she can walk in partnership with Jesus.
- e. She sends Jesus to the mountains of Bether, which can also mean “mountains of separation”. She immediately feels the pain of separation from God as she chooses to disobey Him. He will separate the awareness of His tender presence from her until she decides to obey Him fully.

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) Are there "little foxes" that you need to catch with the help of the Holy Spirit?
- 3) Have you ever experienced "separation" from the presence of God? In light of this session, what do you think was the cause?