

**A Shadow to the Weary**  
Song of Solomon 2:3; Isaiah 25:4  
August 18, 2019  
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On a clear sunny day when the sun is beating down upon you as you work outside, there is nothing quite as refreshing than to find a shady tree under which you can find shelter from the scorching sun. The sun can be relentless in sapping you of your strength, but to rest under the shadow of a leafy tree renews your strength. People who have found themselves lost and wandering in desolate places have often been saved because they were able to find some shade in the shadow of a large rock or some isolated bush or tree. What is true physically is true spiritually.

The children of Adam are living under the scorching heat of God's holy wrath and curse due to sin and rebellion against a most just and good God. They know this to be true (even if they do not acknowledge it to be true) because God has made it clear to them by way of the light of nature impressed upon their own consciences (which they try to escape, but cannot escape). There is only one shadow that will permanently save you—the shadow of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 25:4).

You who have been rescued and delivered from the everlasting wrath and condemnation of an absolutely holy God certainly know all of the places you have tried to find that shade. They promise much, but they don't deliver. Having run from that vanishing shade, you sought another shadow and another, but to no avail. Only Jesus can forever hide you from the guilt and punishment which your sins deserve.

Let us consider today how the chosen bride of Jesus Christ rests under the shadow of Jesus Christ from the condemning wrath of a holy God and from all of the trials and afflictions of life. The main points are: (1) The Delight of Christ's Shadow; and (2) The Sweetness of Christ's Fruit.

**I. The Delight of Christ's Shadow.**

A. Jesus has just commended Himself to His chosen bride as "the Rose of Sharon" and as "the lily of the valleys" (Song 2:1). He exalts Himself for there is none like Him—fully God and fully man and the only Mediator between God and man sent with everlasting love to purchase and irresistibly draw His chosen bride to Himself by the unbreakable bonds of Divine love. Jesus then likens His beloved bride to a "lily among thorns", and He distinguishes His love for her from the daughters of the world (Song 2:2). Outside of that infinite love that the members of the Godhead have for one another, there is no love like the love that God has for you who have been chosen in Christ Jesus and brought to faith in Him. You, His beloved bride, are His lilies. The world, the flesh, and the devil are "thorns". His special love for you makes the difference (John 17:9).

B. Now as we come to Song 2:3, Christ's chosen bride extols her beloved Jesus who alone is the tree of life that gives shade from the heat of God's condemning wrath and from the heat of attacks from the thorns (the world, the flesh, and the devil) and who feeds her with the everlasting fruit that gives spiritual life and health now and for all eternity.

C. To you, His chosen bride, Jesus is "as the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons" (Song 2:3).

1. The bride of Christ praises her beloved Savior and prefers him above all others trees in the forest or sons in all of creation. No creature (whether angelic, human, or any handiwork of God) surpasses the Lord Jesus in beauty, glory, grace, power, holiness, wisdom, or love (Psalm 45:2). No creature or combination of all creation is more glorious than Jesus—He is Lord of all and is exalted above all (Psalm 89:6).

2. He alone is all sufficient for whatever the thorny problem or trial you face in your life. He is the apple tree that alone provides the shade and food that satisfies forever. There is no salvation to a sinner who simply sees Jesus as one tree among many trees—one prophet among many, one good man among many, one moral teacher among many. Those who do not see Jesus as the one and only Son of God who alone died in order to deliver a sinner from the scorching heat of hell are not saved (John 14:6). If you believe the path to heaven is broad and your good intentions will get you there, or if you believe there are many ways to God and to heaven, you are not saved (Proverbs 14:12). The redeemed bride of Jesus Christ sees and receives Jesus as alone the apple tree that shades one from the wrath of God and alone feeds one the food that gives and sustains life forever. If you profess this, but do not practice it, humble yourself under His almighty and gracious hand, repent of your hypocrisy. Many profess Jesus, but deny Him by their works (Titus 1:16).

D. The shadow of Jesus is the chief delight of the Christian.

1. As was stated earlier, where there is no shadow for shade in oppressive heat, there will eventually be death. And likewise, to find no shade from the scorching heat of hell will bring eternal death. It is the cross of Jesus Christ that became a tree of life to all who will trust Him alone as Savior and Lord. Upon that tree of life, Jesus bore all of the sins of His chosen bride and all of God's holy wrath against her. As God made Aaron's dry rod to bring forth life to point to Moses as God's prophet, so God made the cursed cross of Jesus a tree of life to remove the scorching heat of hell and to bring forth life to everyone who will look in faith to the Son of God as Savior and Lord. Only in the shadow of the cross of Jesus Christ is their salvation.

2. Dear ones, there are many people and things in the world which promise you shade and satisfaction, pleasure, and comfort from sorrow, heartache, and afflictions—but they all fall short in resolving the most basic and fundamental need of man—escape from the holy judgment of God. Sin and rebellion against God are the root problems that lead to every other misery that man faces in this world. From Adam to the present, the hatred, pride, false religion, murder of unborn children, greed, anger, racism, sexual immorality are all due to the rebellion of man against Jesus Christ, His commandments, and His gospel. No man, woman, or child will seek out Jesus Christ as the only One who can be a shadow to them from the condemning wrath of a holy God. They will rather look to many trees in the forest to heal their guilty conscience or at least to help them to forget they have a guilty conscience. Ultimately, they will turn to that which pleases them (sex, power, addictions, money, success, false religion, sports, music, or people). But inevitably they will fail to find a shadow that will protect them their guilty conscience before God. Only Jesus can do that.

3. Where are you looking for your shade from the heat of problems in your marriage, with your children, with work, and with temptations from the world, the flesh, and the devil? Where will you find shade when you or loved ones walk through the valley of the shadow of death? Dear ones, where you run to find shade in all of the problems that you face in life tells you in whose shadow you are trusting—Jesus or sex, addictions, bank account, approval of man, government, work, pleasures, family, or friends? Who is your shadow from the heat of afflictions, trials, loneliness, persecution, and temptation? A chief characteristic of the chosen bride of Christ is that she finds true, lasting shade, help, comfort, grace, love, mercy, patience, and strength to persevere under the shadow of the Almighty (Psalm 57:1; Psalm 91:1).

4. Note carefully that the bride of Christ does not simply look at the shadow of Christ from outside the shadow, but she "sat down under His shadow with great delight" (Song 2:3). Dear ones, it is not enough to know there is shade from God's wrath under the shadow of Christ. It is not enough to profess with your mouth that under the shadow of Christ one will find mercy, forgiveness, repentance, help, comfort, strength, and love. You must by faith come and sit down and receive the shade that Jesus promises. Your mere knowledge of the truth must be mixed with faith in Christ's promise. You cannot have one foot under the shadow of Christ and one foot outside the shadow of Christ. You cannot act as though you are under the

shadow on the Lord's Day and act as though you are under the shadow of all of the other trees of the forest the other six days of the week. You must come and sit under His shadow trusting Him to save you, preserve you, provide for you, sanctify you, and bring you to the everlasting shadow of Jesus in heaven.

5. That delight does not mean that you will be removed from every trial, affliction, persecution, and temptation, but it does mean that you have been removed from the evil and from the power and from the hopelessness of them. The world would tell you there is no delight in sitting under the shadow of Jesus. The world, the flesh, and the devil are liars. There is no greater delight and refreshment than under the shade of Jesus Christ. His shadow is not like that of Jonah's that was eaten by a worm. There is not shadow of changing with Jesus (Hebrews 13:8). Are you under the heat of a guilty conscience, some besetting sin, some fear or worry? Flee to the shadow of Jesus where you will find true comfort in His promises and in His mercy. Here alone is a lasting shadow.

## **II. The Sweetness of Christ's Fruit.**

A. Not only is there shade from God's wrath and from the destructive power of the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, but there is also under the shadow of Jesus the fruit of fellowship and communion with Jesus ("and his fruit was sweet to me taste").

1. Dear ones, you must first come and sit by faith under the shadow of Jesus and then you will enjoy the fruit of communion with Him. Though union with Christ by faith is your entrance to His shadow from wrath and condemnation—that is not the end of your salvation. That is simply the beginning that guarantees all that follows. The end of your salvation is to commune with Jesus, to enjoy Him, to learn of Him, to be like Him, to love Him, to delight in Him, and to bear His fruit. You have not simply been saved from hell. You have been saved to enjoy Jesus Christ and to bear His fruit forever and ever. If Jesus, His fruit, His graces, and His ordinances are not sweet to your taste, something is wrong. If you don't care, something far worse is desperately wrong. The Christian is called to enjoy Jesus Christ—to find His shadow a delight and His fruit sweet to the taste.

2. Just as one must by faith sit under the shadow of the Almighty, so one must by faith take and eat of the fruit of the Almighty. You will never find the fruit of Jesus to be sweet if you do not eat of it. The eating of it is by faith to partake of Jesus and all His gracious benefits purchased for you in the Covenant of Grace. The grace and power to overcome sin and temptation in your life begins by sitting under Christ's shadow, but it continues and is strengthened by eating of His Word, receiving His sacraments, and calling upon Him in prayer.

B. As I close today, I want to apply what has been said to the sacraments.

1. Sitting by faith under the shadow of Christ is to find everlasting shade from the heat of the condemning wrath of God. This is accomplished through your union with Jesus Christ by faith at the time of our conversion. That sitting by faith under the shadow of Christ is signified and sealed in the sacrament of baptism which points to your union with Christ. Baptism points to the promise of God's cleansing from sin and the removal of God's condemning wrath in Jesus Christ. Baptism is not repeated ("there is one baptism" Ephesians 4:5), just as union with Jesus is not repeated.

2. Eating the fruit from the tree of life while sitting under the shadow of Christ is to enjoy communion with the Lord Jesus. This eating of the fruit is signified and sealed in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Just as you eat not once of the fruit under the shadow of Christ, but having found it sweet to the taste and nourishing to the body, so you sit at the Lord's Table, eating of the bread (which signifies the body of Christ broken for His beloved bride) and drinking of the wine (which signifies the blood of Christ shed for His beloved bride). Though the actual sacrifice of Jesus Christ for His elect bride happened only once, the benefits of that one-time offering continue now and forever as you commune with Him at the Lord's Supper. The

Lord's Supper is repeated ("For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup" 1 Corinthians 11:26), just as communion with Jesus Christ is that which is ongoing in the life of the Christian.

3. As you prepare for the Lord's Supper, examine yourself as to whether you are sitting by faith under the shadow of Christ from the heat of God's condemning wrath. Are you fleeing to the shadow of other trees to find the shade of help, comfort, pleasure from a guilty conscience and from the heat of temptations from the world, the flesh, and the devil, or are you fleeing to Jesus Christ alone? As you prepare for the Lord's Supper, examine yourself as to whether you are eating by faith daily and enjoying His loving communion. Be not like those who sit under the preaching of Christ's shadow, but eat not the fruit that falls from the tree of life.

4. From our text, what is the evidence that you are by faith sitting under the shadow of Jesus from the condemning wrath of God? It is your eating of Christ's fruit in communion with Him. Not eating once, but eating regularly and finding His fruit to be sweeter the more that you eat (Psalm 34:8).

5. Your fruitfulness in the Christian life comes from your eating the fruit of Jesus (in your communion with Him in His ordinances). This is a reason why many who profess Christ fall away from Him. They are not by faith sitting under His shadow and are not daily tasting the sweet fruit of communion with Jesus Christ. No communion—No life.

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