

**Song of Solomon 8: 1 and 2; “Longing for Christ, My Brother”, Sermon # 66 in the series – “I am My Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

The Song of Solomon, as I have attempted to show you all along, as I have preached to you from this blessed book, is a book portraying in spiritual word pictures, the relationship between Christ and the Church. It pictures the Church as a Bride in a spiritual mystical love relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, the One who is to her, her Bridegroom-Shepherd-King. When I say that it is a spiritual mystical love relationship I mean that your relationship with Christ, if you know Him, is a heart relationship with Him. Literally physically, you are here upon the earth and He is in heaven. But since He is raised from the dead, and alive forevermore, there is an actual spiritual union which exists between you and Him, which He has established.

In order to develop this spiritual love relationship with Christ, you need to see that there are various aspects of your relationship to Him which He takes cognizance of; which He recognizes. These verses are telling us that our Lord Jesus recognizes our desires to have a greater brotherly spiritual familiarity with Him. This is one of the major aspects of our love relationship with Jesus Christ; not only spiritual intimacy, where we hold sweet fellowship in our heart with Him as a bride does with her husband, but also holy, and even playful, spiritual friendship such as a sister does with her brother. This is why the Bride says in verse 1 – “Oh, that you were like my brother, who nursed at my mother’s breasts!” “If I should find you outside, I would kiss you; I would not be despised.”

Since these verses portray this kind of interaction with Christ to be desirable, we need to discern whether we indeed have these longings, these religious affections in our own heart. For if we have them, we can conclude that we are spiritually healthy Christians and that Christ is pleased with our fellowship with Him. There is this brother-sister relationship of close friendship which can exist between Christ and His Church, and Christ and every individual believer, and so we want to discover whether we are experiencing it. And if we are not, we ought to pray that we would come to recognize our need for developing this kind of a relationship with Christ, so that we might have this kind of free interaction between ourselves and Christ, on a daily basis.

And so 1<sup>st</sup> of all – I will open up for you the longing of the believer for this brother-sister relationship. 2<sup>nd</sup> – I will open up for you the holy affection of this brother-sister relationship. And then 3<sup>rd</sup> – I will open up for you the truth of the sister-spouse of Christ leading Him into the house of her mother. May the Lord open our hearts and our eyes to this glorious aspect of our brotherly relationship with Christ.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – The Longing of the believer for this brother-sister relationship with Christ.**

Verse 1 – “Oh, that you were like my brother, who nursed at my mother’s breasts!” Now, we should understand from these words the kind of relationship that the one betrothed to Christ is asking for. She is asking to have that kind of relationship which a sister has with her own brother; the one who himself also nursed at their mother’s breasts. She wants that kind of free relationship in which she can express her mind fully to Christ in the presence of others, and no one suspects that they have some sort of an illicit relationship, but one in which everyone understands, that a brother looks out for his sister in every way. He not only guards her from everything that might be in the least, indecent or immoral, but he is also able to be her friend in the highest sense of that word; looking out for her and being a strengthening, encouraging influence in her life. That is what she is talking about here.

Now this is what the Church and every thoughtful believer is longing for, as well, in their relationship with Christ; that everyone around them would see their love for each other, and the holiness of their relationship; and what a good, and wholesome, and righteous thing it is. They want to identify themselves with Christ as their Redeemer and Friend, and to have all unbelievers who are curious about their relationship to Christ, to know what a great thing it is, and how it is that this brother-sister relationship with Christ is the best and highest of friendships; that there is nothing to

compare with it. There is everything wonderful about it, and nothing impure or immoral or false about it.

But “it is not good to cast your pearls before swine,” as Jesus says in Matthew chapter 7, verse 6, “lest they turn and rend you in pieces”. And yet, every sincere Christian knows, that this is the thing that they long for; that Christ would be seen in their life, as their Brother and their Friend. And, indeed, we know that there is Friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18: 24) There is a right way to portray this ultimate friendship relationship, and there is also a wrong way. The wrong way is for a believer to hide the truth about their being spiritually united to Christ; that is, to hide the truth that they needed to be converted to Christ by repenting of their sins and trusting in the gospel, the truth of what Jesus had to do for them if they were ever to be saved.

The wrong way is to tell people that knowing God through Jesus Christ our Lord is simply a matter of intellectual persuasion of the good things that Jesus does for people, to help them only in a human and an earthly sense; that somehow it is the ultimate good thing in life to have Jesus for a human “brother”, without being joined to Him by faith. That somehow, you can have Christ by you, yourself, becoming a humanly sympathetic person. If you let on, by your words and actions, that being a Christian is simply human brotherly love, and that somehow we are all brothers of Christ because we have a common human cause of wanting to help people around us, that will lead many people astray. No, it will not do, and true Christianity is much more than that.

You remember in Genesis Chapter 12, verses 10-19, what Abraham did when he came into Egypt to dwell there, because there was a famine in the land of Canaan? It says – “And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai, his wife, ‘Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance.’ “Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, ‘This is his wife’; and they will kill me, but they will let you live.” “Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you.” Well, Abram’s strategy worked for a time. It says in verse 14 – So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful.” “The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh.” “And the woman was taken to Pharaoh’s house.” “He treated Abram well for her sake.”

But in verse 17 it says – “But the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife.” “And Pharaoh called Abram and said, ‘What is this you have done to me?’ “Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? “Why did you say, ‘She is my sister?’ “I might have taken her as my wife.” You see, this was not a good witness because Abram was concealing the truth about his true relationship to Sarai. They were married, and Pharaoh and the men of Egypt might have made a terrible blunder by marrying her when she was already married. Similarly, when we cover up the fact that our relationship with Christ is one of being married to Him spiritually, we put unbelievers in the great spiritual danger of falling under the judgment of God, by our conveying to them that somehow becoming a Christian is only a matter of being a brother to Christ.

So then, what is the right way to communicate this truth of our being spiritually married to Christ? Well, turn with me over Matthew chapter 12 and verses 46-50. “While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him.” “Then one said to Him, ‘Look, Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.’ “But He answered and said the one who told Him, ‘Who is My mother and who are My brothers?’ “And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, Here are My mother and My brothers!” “For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.” So this is how you communicate to Christ and to others, the fact that you want Him to treat you like He was your brother. You make it a point to declare before Him and them, your allegiance by faith to Him, by saying that because you love Him, you want to keep His commandments; you are determined by Christ’s grace, to do the will of your Father in heaven. “Oh, that you were like my brother....”

**2<sup>nd</sup> – I want to open up for you the holy affection of this brother-sister relationship.**

“If I should find you outside, I would kiss you; I would not be despised.” I think that it is good for any believer to realize that when they go out in public, they take Christ with them, and therefore, they must ask themselves: Is my affection for Christ noticeable to others? Is the Christ who is with me, and in my heart, manifested by me and through me, to those around me; even like a sister who has her brother standing by her, and walking with her? Is your holy affection for Christ known to people in a public way; not simply a private way? Are you able to manifest your love to Christ in words and deeds when you come into contact with the people of the world around you, so that they can see that Christ is indeed with you, and that you are enjoying the benefits of His presence with you? Christ is not ashamed of you, dear believer. Why should you be ashamed of Him? People who are deeply in love do not mind their affection for each other being seen by others around them, do they? Not unless they are shy! But the righteous is as bold as a lion to show forth their love to Christ!

This is the way that Christ was, and is, with us – He is unashamed to call us His brethren. Listen to Hebrews chapter 2, verses 10 and 11. “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” “For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: ‘I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.’” Christ took upon Himself human nature and in His Incarnation He became our brother in human flesh. Those who are being sanctified and He who sanctifies are all of one human nature. Christ having a true and perfect human nature was made perfect through His sufferings, so that He could atone for our sins. He is not ashamed to call us brethren. It was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured the cross and despised the shame. His joy was in being able to purchase our salvation and now to be able to apply it to us by means of His Spirit. Our joy as believers is to receive this great salvation and to walk in the benefits that He purchased for us; with Him in our life.

People do not look askance at a woman who has a brother she is close to, if they are thinking together about the subject which is foremost in their minds, of what she might be blessed by, in terms of her upcoming marriage, or something that she might do for her husband to be. Or, that out of sheer joy and delight of the things which she is sharing with her brother concerning these things, she impulsively kisses him? I think not. Even so, there ought to be the resolution in your heart, dear believer, to show your affection to Christ your Brother, while you are out in public; that, in your words, and by the way that you carry yourself, you would show people around you your delight with Christ’s being with you, even though they cannot see Him. You cannot see Him either, but yet you love Him.

You and Christ are often thinking of the things of His kingdom and His glory and how His cause can move forward in the world; how spiritual truth and righteousness can make progress in this fallen world of woe, and how it eventually will conquer in the world. But how does it conquer in the hearts of people around you, except by your personal witness? These things really and truly are the joy and delight of your heart, and in this delightful spiritual way, it is kissing Him. Unbelieving kings are exhorted in Psalm 2, verse 11, to – “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.” “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” If unbelieving kings are told to kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and they perish in the way, how much more blessed a thing it is for you, as the believer in Christ, as a priest and a king before God by Christ’s grace, to show your joy and delight in Him in this wonderful way of spiritually and publicly showing your affection for Him! You kiss Him by trusting in Him, and you kiss Him by joying and rejoicing that His presence is continually with you, day by day. “I will kiss him, and I will not be despised.”

Listen to Proverbs chapter 24, verses 26 and 27 – “He who gives a right answer kisses the lips.” “Prepare your outside work, make it fit for yourself in the field; and afterward build your house.” Here we are told that when you give a right answer to a king, you as it were, are kissing his lips. You are pleasing him with the answer that you give to his questions, his commands, and his requests. It is

no different with our King of kings, our Lord Jesus Christ. When you give the right answer to the gospel and believe in Him, you are kissing His lips. You are kissing His lips when you give the right answer to His statement – “He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me.” “And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” You are now ready for further work and service for your King. You can prepare your outside work of evangelism, and go about to make disciples. You can plow with the word, and sow seeds in the rows of men’s hearts. You can plant and water by the power of the Spirit, and God will give the growth. You can make your relationship with Christ, fit for yourself in the field of this world, and you can help in the building of the house of the Lord.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> – The sister-spouse of Christ leads Him into the house of her mother.**

Verse 2 – “I would lead you and bring you into the house of my mother, she who used to instruct me.” “I would cause you to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.” I think that these verses indicate the holy desire of every believer to bring Christ with them into the worship and fellowship of their church in their conscious experience. The church is the mother of believers here. The church is the place where many first hear Christ’s word preached to them. It is where they received the foundations of their spiritual instruction from the Bible, and from their parents and teachers. They heard the word and they believed it, and they were saved. They were born again by the Spirit of God in relation to other church-going Christians. Now, let me ask you whether, when you come to church, if you pray to lead Christ into what we are doing here? I am speaking of this from your human perspective, not Christ’s divine perspective. He is always beholding all of His churches from the right hand of the Father, and He is in their midst.

But in terms of your conscious experience of your relationship to Christ, do you think of leading Him into the service that you will give to here in this place; to Him and through Him, to God the Father? Because when you come here, you are coming to meet together with Christ, and with others in these services of worship. And so it is also true that you are bringing all of the fruit of your private thoughts and devotions and in this holy way you are leading Christ into your mother’s house where He will confirm and receive every holy thing that you think, and every holy action of worship that you will perform, and every holy word and work that you will do in His name, for this is what glorifies Him. But I believe that what this text is saying is that the joy and delight of public worship in the house of God is found in your knowing that Christ is right there with you, and that you are leading Him to the place where together with others of your spiritual family, you shall worship Him in the beauty of holiness, and also, then, over time, you will come to help in the building of His Church, by means of evangelism and good works which will flow out of this worship.

This often begins with a wish and a prayer. Psalm 116, verse 1 – “I love You, Lord, because You hear my voice and my supplications.” “Therefore I will call upon You as long as I live.” It comes out in your lips when, before other Christians at church, you publicly confess that you have believed in Him for eternal life. Verse 12 – “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?” “I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.” “I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people.” And then it comes out in front of others as well, as the Psalmist says in verses 18 and 19 – “I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the Lord’s house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.” “Praise the Lord!”

When these things are taking place, then you are causing Christ to drink of spiced wine. Of the juice of your pomegranate you are giving Him to drink. You give Him the best entertainment that your heart can afford. Together as a church we give Him the most reverent and joyful worship and service that we can bring to Him; everything that our gifts and graces working together can bring forth, from hearts that love Him. Ah, I hope that you can catch the vision of the brotherly relationship with Christ, my brethren. For there is a Friend who sticks closer than any human brother and His name is Jesus.