

Jesus Brings Us through Winter and into Spring

Song of Solomon 2:10-13; Psalm 126:5

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The older I get the harder it is to pass through a long, cold, northern winter. It is harder to keep warm. There is less light. The trees are barren. The birds, crickets, and frogs grow silent. And the roads are more perilous. In the midst of that winter cold, I look forward to the signs of spring: blossoming flowers, budding trees, the singing of birds, and warmer days.

God appointed the various seasons (even winter), and so these seasons will continue as God has ordained despite what climate activists declare about global warming or global cooling (Genesis 8:22).

What God has appointed physically by way of winter (and other seasons), so He has appointed spiritually by way of winters in your life when your communion with Jesus has grown dark and cold, when trials and afflictions seem as though you are facing head-on a strong snowstorm and you cannot find your way, and when the signs of growth in your life seem to have grown dormant. Jesus is Lord over those spiritual seasons of your life as much as He is Lord over the physical seasons in the world. They are ordained for your good. Just as spring follows winter in the physical seasons of the year; so spiritual spring will follow spiritual winter for all those who are Christ's redeemed ones. It is that very hope that the Lord Jesus brings before us today as He promises to bring His elect bride through her winter of tears and into her spring of rejoicing (Psalm 126:5). The main points from our text are: (1) Jesus Brings His Bride out of Her Winter Cold (Song 2:10-11); (2) Jesus Gives His Bride Signs of Life for Her Comfort (Song 2:12-13).

I. **Jesus Brings His Bride out of Her Winter Cold (Song 2:10-11).**

A. By way of a brief review, the Lord Jesus had brought His elect bride into the banqueting house (the house of wine) and made her the guest of honor at His feast of love for her (Song 2:4-7). What a precious time of loving communion it was with Jesus! His presence was amazing.

1. After feasting in such close communion with Jesus and enjoying His presence with her, the feeling of that nearness of Christ's fellowship seemed to be more distant than when they were together at the feast of love. This is not an unfamiliar experience to us all. None of us lives on a constant emotional high in our experience of communion with Christ. Sin, hardships, trials, persecution, and busyness may seem to put a distance between us and the Lord (even when we continue to spend time with Him in prayer and in His Word—even when we attend upon the ordinances He has appointed in worship). However, this is not an actual distance, but only a perceived distance. Faith yet realizes Christ's nearness even when the feelings do not.

2. Then we saw that the Lord Jesus pursues His beloved bride and calls out to her in His Word that He is near, and He comes bounding over all mountains and obstacles in her life to come to her (Song 2:8). But He does so at times so gradually to form within her a hungering and thirsting for Him and a holy and loving desire for His nearness (Song 2:9).

B. We now turn to the words of our text in Song 2:10 where the bride recounts what the Lord Jesus said to her when He came near to her. This is a continuation and not a break from the previous scene where Jesus came to her gradually from behind the wall, looking with love upon her through the window and the lattice. She is recounting to others what Jesus her beloved Savior and King said to her at that time.

1. **“My beloved spake, and said unto me.”** Literally she says, “My beloved ANSWERED, and said unto me.” Jesus was answering her words in Song 2:8-9 in which she detailed how the Lord came to her after some period of perceived silence. This is important because even when she did not feel like she was

experiencing the nearness of a love feast, but rather hearing Him from behind a wall or through a window, He was not silent. He was answering her. He was speaking to her.

a. Dear ones, the Lord Jesus is always answering you. His Word is full of answers to your questions, to your cries, and to your desperate pleas. His commandments and His promises are always true. It is not that Jesus is not answering. It is rather that you are not listening to Him as He speaks to you in His Word. So many today in churches want to hear something new from God—they want to hear the audible voice of God now (as Moses did from Mt. Sinai). But the Lord Jesus has no new Word and His voice is never clearer or enduring than when He speaks to you through His Word and Spirit which He has preserved through time.

b. There is no real communion with Jesus Christ that is not firmly anchored in His Word (in Scripture). It is a deception of the enemy to make you think you are not communing with Jesus if you do not hear an audible voice or have some emotional experience. When He answers you, He does so with the words of Scripture. Are you reading and listening to Him? What did Jesus say to His chosen bride when He came to her and answered her?

2. **“Rise up and come away.”**

a. These are commands (not suggestions) from Jesus and imply the bride was in some discouraged state. It was a season of winter for her. She was not up and serving, but was lying down or sitting when Jesus answered her from behind the wall. The difficult trials, temptations, pressures, and anxieties of life had brought a coldness of heart with Christ and a feeling of distance from Him. The lack of feeling His presence had brought her down. She was so clinging to her past experience of His communion with her, that anything less left her downcast, disheartened, and rejected.

b. Dear ones, though those times of near communion with Jesus are beautiful and joyful, but they must not become the standard by which you measure every other season of your life. Your growth in Christ is not measured by those emotional highs in past experiences, but rather by the perseverance of faith in clinging to Jesus and His promises even when God brings a Job-like winter upon you in which you do not feel His presence. Yes, even as His elect bride, we all have struggled and fallen down when the winter of extreme hardships has blown upon us. But Jesus will not leave you in winter forever. He comes to you in His Word and commands you, “Rise up and come away with Me.” These are commands that true faith hears (Matthew 11:28).

3. Note that Jesus doesn’t berate and condemn her with fierce anger, but rather appeals to her to obey Him because of His great love for her—**“my love, my fair (beautiful) one.”** Remember how the Lord Jesus came to Elijah who deserted his post out of fear of Jezebel as He did to Peter? The motives to obedience are two: His authoritative command; and His infinite love.

a. Dear ones, learn to discern the source of that hateful, condemning recording that plays over and over again in your mind when you stumble and fall. Satan seeks to destroy you. He offers you no hope, no love, no forgiveness. He only berates you. But your beloved Jesus comes to you even when you have fallen and convicts you in love with these words, “Rise up. Yes, you have fallen, but rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away with me.”

b. The harshness and fury of Jesus was reserved for those who refused to repent, who refused to rise up from their sin of pride, rebellion, and self-righteousness (like the Pharisees). His mercy was reserved for all those who were crushed at His grace and love in commanding them to rise up and come away with me in loving fellowship. Dear ones, the only reason you have risen when you were laid low was due to His almighty and loving Word to you “rise up my love, my fair one, and come away with me” (just as it was with Lazarus).

4. The Lord Jesus then says to His beloved bride, **“For, lo, the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone”** (Song 2:11).

a. Here the Lord Jesus is giving reason why His beloved bride should arise and come

away with Him—the cold of winter that makes it so uncomfortable to brave the outdoors and the heavy rain of winter (or snow in the North) that makes it so difficult to travel (in ancient days where they did not have paved roads)—these trials and hardships of winter are past (at least for a season). Jesus is saying, “Get up and come away with me. Get out of the house. Don’t lie around depressed over the winter problems. Get active. Come with me in communion. Let your thoughts turn from yourself to me and my love.”

b. Dear ones, one of the worst things you can do when you are discouraged or depressed is to do nothing, but to lay around and to be consumed with that fall into sin, or to dwell on how people have disappointed or betrayed you, or to fall under the flood of discouragement because that for which you had hoped did not or has not come to pass, or to be paralyzed with fear of man or of circumstances, or to die a slow death of sorrow over the loss of a loved one (who has died or has backslidden). Your bed, your bedroom, or your house can become a grave to you if you do not arise and become spiritually active in communing with Christ. To remain in that same sluggishness, apathy, discouragement, or hopelessness is to live in winter when Jesus is calling you to arise because the winter is passed. I seek not to minimize how hormonal imbalances can affect your outlook on life (and the need to pursue help in that area—nutrition, exercise, rest, and work), but at the same time, I also recognize how often our spiritual winters are due to our not hearing Christ’s Word to arise and come away with Him and are due to focusing on ourselves, people, possessions, and circumstances rather than upon Jesus and His promises.

II. Jesus Gives His Bride Signs of Life for Her Comfort (Song 2:12-13).

A. When the bride is discouraged and feels hopeless about some situation she is facing, Jesus comforts her not only with His commands (which are promises to her that He will take her out of her winter) and His expressions of love (Song 2:10), but now He comforts her to arise and come with Him because He reveals to her that this winter was a season, but it will never be an eternal season for His beloved bride, for He will make her to see His life-giving work in her and all around her.

1. Although we can always see our failures, besetting sins, and lack of spiritual fruit in many areas of our life; do you know that Jesus desires you (in His revealed will) to look at His work of grace in your life? He calls you to especially see how He is turning your spiritual winter into a spiritual spring.

2. Where is the comfort and encouragement in the Christian life if you only remember the spiritual winters of failure, trial, sorrow, illness, and hardship? We all experience those winters in our life. But Jesus has come to every Christian in that spiritual winter and has given them His promise, His love, and His fruit to comfort you that you are His and your perseverance, repentance, faith, love, new obedience, and desire to commune with Him are evidence He has worked His amazing grace and life within you. Jesus calls you to behold the flowers of grace growing in your life and the life of others. He calls you to hear the sound of God’s praise arising within you in singing His psalms which is sweeter than the birds in spring. He calls you to smell the life of fruit trees and vines as they blossom in bearing forth the fruit of the Spirit (even if they are tender and are yet maturing—despise not the day of small things).

3. Dear ones, you need to plead with the Lord to reveal to you the signs of life within you as you plead with Him to reveal to you the sins into which you have fallen. The revealed will of Jesus according to this text of Scripture is that you live not continually in a spiritual winter of darkness and discouragement, but that you arise and come with Him to enjoy His spiritual spring of life and communion with Him. Hear His call to you today as He reaches out His hand and take it as He lifts you out of your winter and brings you into your spring.

B. I believe the Holy Spirit has chiefly given this text for the sake of the elect bride as you face those spiritual winters—reminding you that there is always hope that that Jesus will turn your winter into spring at His appointed time. But as I close today, there are three brief applications that further impress this

truth upon our minds today.

1. There is the winter and scriptural darkness in history which the Lord calls His people collectively out of and into the spring of light and life—whether it be in Jesus moving His Church from the winter of shadows and ceremonies of the Old Covenant into the spring of fulfillment in the coming of Jesus Christ in the New Covenant; or whether it be in Jesus moving His Church from the winter of antichristian darkness and coldness under the Pope of Rome and into the spring of Reformation light and heat in believing and standing upon Scripture as supremely authoritative rather than tradition; or whether it be in Jesus moving His Church from the winter of great persecution in the past or in the future into the spring of great gospel blessing (as He will do in the millennium).

2. There is the winter and darkness of death in every soul by nature, being dead in our trespasses and sins. But Jesus has come to you, His chosen people, and has spoken to you by His almighty and all-loving Word, “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away with me” (as He did physically with Lazarus, so He has done with every single sinner who has heard the saving voice of Jesus and has come to Him by faith alone—trusting not in any good work or self-righteousness at all). You, who hear His voice calling you, rise up and leave behind your winter of death and darkness forever that He may carry you into the spring of life.

3. There is the passing from the winter of corruption, sin, tears, heartaches, and pains of this world for every Christian into the spring, yea into the summer of His eternal life in heaven where only His love, holiness, joy, and uninterrupted communion reigns forever. Life follows death. Joy follows tears. Spring follows winter. Hope follows discouragement, hardship, trials, and pain for you who belong to Jesus.

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