

**Song of Solomon 2: 3; “I Sat Down in His Shade”, Sermon # 23 in the series – “I am My Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on January 17th, 2010, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

So far in this verse we have found the Bride describing her beloved to the Daughters of Jerusalem from an objective standpoint. He is like an apple tree among the trees of the woods. We looked into this last time and we saw that Christ's being an apple tree among the trees of the forest makes Him unique among all the sons of men. Just think of it this way. You are walking through a great woods, and there are trees of every description. There is the oak tree here and the ash tree there, and you look over there and there is a beech tree and a fir tree, and there are many other different trees there, but none of them are fruit trees.

These trees are the sons of men, all of them descended from their first fore-father Adam. But suddenly in the midst of this woods, you see a mighty apple tree. How very unusual it is. It had to have come there through a special planting. Someone deliberately came into the forest and planted this one tree. So it was with Christ. God the Father purposed from all of eternity past, that His only begotten Son would come into this world and be born among men in an obscure village called Bethlehem.

He grew up among the trees of the wood, but He was a different kind of tree altogether from every other man. When none of the other trees could bear fruit, His branches were laden with it. The fruit that He bore, we saw last time, was the blessings of salvation for all those who will trust in Him. This fruit grew out of His having lived a perfectly righteous life. This fruit came into being though His sufferings on another tree; at the cross of Calvary. This fruit of righteousness in the life that He lived became a tree of life, and our Lord who was wise won souls.

These are the objective truths of the gospel. These are the facts of history which anyone might see if they will look by faith into the Bible which is the Word of God. All those who make up the Bride of Christ have looked, or they will look, and see their Jesus as unique and they will love Him for it. But in the second part of verse 3 we find the Bride relating her own subjective experience in relation to this apple tree. This is what we want to think about together this afternoon.

There are 3 things which stand out in what she relates about her experience which show us that hers is a true and saving faith in Jesus Christ. 1<sup>st</sup> of all – She sat down in his shade. 2<sup>nd</sup> – She did so with great delight. And 3<sup>rd</sup> - His fruit was sweet to her taste. Let's learn more about the acts and experiences of saving faith through the Bride's relating what she did in relation to Christ.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – She sat down in the shade of the Apple Tree.**

“I sat down in his shade with great delight...” This apple tree, I said to you in the previous sermon, was not the usual kind of apple tree found in this country. It was the great pome-citron tree, a tree that would be great in height and breadth, and one which would provide a good shade to those who sit under it. Shade from the heat of the day. The King James and the American Standard Version of 1901 translate it this way: “I sat down under his shadow with great delight...” This tree was so great that it cast a great protective shadow over those who took refuge under its boughs. The heat of the sun in middle eastern countries is very intense, and so under the shadow of a tree would be a very safe and refreshing place to be. There are other places in the scripture where this word shadow is used to refer to a man who was seen by the people as their protector and defender.

Turn with me over to Lamentations chapter 4, and verse 20. Speaking of King Zedekiah, who the Jews, in the days of apostasy, placed their trust in and took refuge in his shadow, politically speaking; it says, “The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was caught in their pits, of whom we said, ‘Under his shadow we shall live among the nations.’” Their trust was that, somehow, they should have peace and blessing without repentance.

Their hope was a false one, but the verse is also hinting prophetically at our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the anointed of the Lord. He is the breath of our nostrils, spiritually speaking. He was caught

in the pits and snares that the leaders of the Jewish nation laid for Him. He was put to death on the cross, but He was raised from the dead, and His finished work on the cross became the shadow in which we take refuge spiritually by faith. "Under His shadow we shall live" among the nations. We find in Him a refuge from the heat of the wrath of God against our sins.

We have found an atonement. We have found a covering for ourselves, a place where we will never be smitten in judgment for our sins. Psalm 121, verse 5 – "The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand." "The sun will not smite you by day, nor the moon by night." "The Lord will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul." "The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever." (New American Standard version) The sun of God's intense judgments shall not smite you because you have an Advocate with the Father, the Holy and Righteous One whose blessed resurrection life has come to shade you.

1<sup>st</sup> John 2, verse 1 – "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin." "And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the Righteous." "And He Himself is the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." With the offering up of Himself on the cross and His resurrection from the dead, a great apple tree began to grow. When Christ acts as our Advocate in relation to any sins that we commit, then we find refuge under the shadow of His tree. Have you fled for refuge in Jesus to find refuge from the wrath of God?

Romans chapter 1, verse 18 tells us that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them for God made it evident to them." The heat is on! The sun of God's righteous judgment has begun to rise against all sin and all sinners has arisen and the only refuge is found by sitting down in the shade of Christ's finished work on the cross. There He suffered. There He bled. There He died for you to be able to find refuge. Will you not realize that the longer that you wait the worse the burn becomes? Some people do not realize how burnt they are when they go to the beach. They lie there too long and suffer for it.

Some people do not realize how the guilt and shame of sin burns. They think that they are doing fine and so they do not come to the shade of Christ for refuge. But these burns, the burns of sin are everlasting burns unless shelter is found. The burns begin now in this life and they will only increase unless you come to Jesus. Come out of the sun and take refuge in the shade of His great tree.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> – The Bride sat down under this Tree with great Delight.**

"I sat down in His shade with great delight." Once a person does come out of the sun to Christ; once they do come and sit in His shade; they are delighted with what they find. They find immediate forgiveness for all of their sins. Ephesians Chapter 1, verse 7 says, "In Him (that is in the Beloved) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound towards us in all wisdom and prudence...." A person who sits down in Christ's shade finds that instead of judgment, there is mercy that awaits. Instead of being driven away, they find a place to sit down together with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Ephesians Chapter 2, verse 4. "But God who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places (that is; under the Apple Tree) in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

Oh what great delights await the sons and daughters of God for all of eternity, simply because they took refuge in the shade of Christ! If you look up to verse 1 of Ephesians 2 you will see how all the other people of this fallen world have been deceived by Satan and their flesh into thinking that earthly and worldly delights are better than the delights found with Christ. "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience."

You see; that if you will come to Christ you will find new life, and you will come to have a different mind about what is truly pleasurable. When you come and sit in Christ's shade He takes away your deceptions and you are made quite willing to throw them off. You come to see that the what most of the world thinks about what is fun is, is really sometimes very deadly and a snare to your knowing God and living righteously and pleasing Him. It leads you away from God and turns the thoughts of your heart and mind to foolishness. But when you come in out of the burning sun of Satan's schemes, and into the shade of the Lord Jesus, you come to see things more clearly.

Turn with me over to Psalm 91. "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." "I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him will I trust.'" "Surely He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler (that is; one who catches birds in a trap or snare, like Satan does with unsuspecting sinners), and from the perilous pestilence." (That is; the disease of our sinful nature which threatens you with eternal death and ruin, and with misery in this life) But Christ becomes a refuge to each one who comes into His shade. He becomes your Protector from the snares of the Devil.

Verse 3 says, "He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence." "He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler." "You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that lays waste at noonday." All of this, verse 9 says, 'Because you have made the Lord who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place.'" How simple and how wonderful and how beautiful this is to the believer who rests His soul in the shade of the Lord Jesus. "Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," says the Lord Jesus.

Have you come to find rest for your weary soul, my listeners? Come to Jesus and you will surely find it. Some people, even after they have come to Christ do not find rest for their souls because they have a bone to pick with God. They think that they have found a reason why they cannot delight themselves in the shade of Christ. They do not like the way that God shows mercy to undeserving sinners, to turn them away from their sins. And so they are angry with God. If you will turn over with me to the book of Jonah we will find a prophetic picture of what we are talking about here.

You remember how the prophet Jonah did not want the Lord to be merciful or gracious to Nineveh, the people who had done such cruel things in battle to Israel. He thought that God ought to judge them and utterly destroy them because of their sins. But God had a purpose in mercy and so He commanded Jonah to go and preach to them. He fled from God's command that he go to Nineveh and preach, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown." He went to Tarshish instead. But on the way, God threw a great storm on the sea and eventually the men on the ship came to understand that Jonah was the reason.

So they threw him overboard as he had requested of himself. But God appointed a great fish and it swallowed Jonah whole and alive and took him down to the bottom of the sea. He prayed from the belly of the fish and he repented and God showed him mercy. He caused the fish to vomit Jonah up on dry land and so Jonah went and did as he had been told to do, and preached to Nineveh, and the greatest revival that the world has ever seen thus far took place. 120,000 people who did not know the difference between their right hand or their left repented. And God did not destroy them. Well, look at what Jonah did in response. "But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry." "So he prayed to the Lord, and said, 'Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country?' " "Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm." "Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better to die than to live!" (Well God says – We shall see about that, Jonah!)

"So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city." "There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city." "And the Lord God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to

deliver him from his misery.” “So Jonah was very grateful for the plant.” “But as morning dawned the next God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered.” “And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah’s head, so that he grew faint.” “Then he wished death for himself, and said, ‘It is better for me to die than to live.’” “Then God said to Jonah, ‘Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?’”

“And he said, “It is right for me to be angry, even to death!” “But the Lord said, ‘You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night.’” “And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and left – and much livestock?” You see, my brethren, we have much to learn about the ways of God. Let us delight ourselves in the shade which Christ gives us and be thankful for whatever He can teach concerning the ways of God. God’s ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts. But He is compassionate and full of mercy even to sinful and undeserving men.

Let us sit down and be delighted in Him. Let us find our rest and refreshment in Him. But let us not judge Him concerning whom He shows mercy to, and whom He hardens. Rather delight to know more about what God has already revealed to you concerning Christ, and how you may feed upon Him by faith. The fruit of His death brings life to all who will believe. The fruit of His resurrection life brings death to remaining sin and strength to do the will of God from a pure heart. This is what delights the believer; to be able to sit down under the shade which Christ gives, and to find that they are loved and will be cared for in every respect for all of eternity.

**And then 3<sup>rd</sup> – The Bride relates that her Beloved’s fruit was sweet to her taste.**

Let us ask ourselves; each one of us now if we have tasted of the fruit of Christ. Psalm 34: 8 says, “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Christ is a fruit tree laden with fruit; laden with so many blessings that He had to give you a new heart to appreciate them; a new mind to be able to take them in. There is an old hymn which we sing which goes, “Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take Him at His Word, just to know, ‘Thus saith the promise’, just to know ‘Thus saith the Lord.’” “Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him; how I’ve proved Him o’er and o’er.” “Jesus, Jesus precious Jesus; Oh for grace to trust Him more.”

There is another old hymn which I believe is very appropriate for me to quote the verses of in relation to what I am speaking about here. It is from the Divine Hymns or Spiritual Songs compiled by Joshua Smith who lived in New Hampshire in 1784. The tune was composed by Elizabeth Poston who was born in 1905 and died in 1987. It goes this way. “The tree of life my soul hath seen, laden with fruit and always green: the trees of nature fruitless be, compared with Christ the Apple Tree.” “His beauty doth all things excel: by faith I know, but ne’er can tell; the glory which I now can see; In Jesus Christ the apple tree.”

“For happiness I long have sought, and pleasure dearly I have bought: I missed of all; but now I see, ‘tis found in Christ the Apple Tree.” “I’m weary with my former toil, here I will sit and rest awhile: Under the shadow I will be, of Jesus Christ the Apple Tree.” “This fruit doth make my soul to thrive, it keeps my dying faith alive; which makes my soul in haste to be, with Jesus Christ the Apple tree.”