

Song of Solomon Prayer as Communion

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer as communion with God, and how God's unconditional and immeasurable love for us makes us beautiful in his eyes.

Duration: 59:19

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the audacious love of God. He uses the analogy of a lover coming unannounced to highlight the unexpected nature of God's love. The preacher also discusses the consistency of God's character, contrasting it with the inconsistencies of earthly fathers. He encourages the audience to believe in and meditate on the immeasurable and unconditional love of God as described in the Bible. Additionally, he warns against pride and vanity, urging listeners to journey down from their high places and focus on what truly matters.

Transcript

Song of Solomon, chapter four. I want to talk to you about prayer as something more than intercession, even something more than getting grace, but prayer as communion. Song of Solomon, chapter four, verse seven.

You are altogether beautiful, my darling. There is no blemish in you. Do you know why you can come into the courts of God? There's only one reason.

The blood of the lamb. The lamb went to the tree and became accursed of God and his father turned away and all the wrath of almighty God that should have fallen down on your head throughout all of eternity fell down on the lamb. And when the lamb died, he satisfied justice and appeased the wrath of God.

He paid for every one of your sins, past, present and future. They were all imputed to him and he took them away. He paid for them.

And now, therefore, there is no condemnation like Esther, who wanted so much to walk into the throne room, but she had to do so with fear, because if the king did not extend the scepter, she would die. In Christ, to the believer, the scepter is always extended. Always.

He always sees you as you are altogether beautiful, my darling, and there is no blemish in you. Now, I want you to understand something, the justification that will really, really help you. You see, you've got to

understand this.

If there was just one blemish in you, you would go to hell. You see, God doesn't see you as sinful enough to go to hell. And then a little bit better, so sinful enough, but still you can be kept and better than that so that you can come a little closer and not quite as many sins so you can get a little closer and not quite as many sins so you can get a little closer.

You go to hell if you have one blemish in you, which also must show you that if you are invited into the throne room of God, it's because there are no blemishes in you, that you are altogether lovely, altogether perfect. And that's why you can come to him even on that day when you commit sins and the dullness of your heart does not even allow you to see those sins. You are still forgiven and can still come.

Yes, there is a need to deal with that sin. But what I want you to see is this. Because of Christ, you are altogether beautiful.

There is no blemish in you. And if there were one blemish in you, you could not come. That should give you great encouragement.

When God looks down at you, you know, we have this almost mechanical view, you know, this legal view, and it is a legal thing, justification. But we almost have this thing of God, because of what Jesus did, he must accept me now. And it is not because of what Jesus did.

God looks at you and says, you're altogether beautiful, my darling, and there is no blemish in you. Do you see the passion? Can you see the love that's there? Can you see the desire and the wanting? You see, you can't because you've never seen it in anything else. We live in a conditional world.

You meet all the conditions, you get in, you fail at some of the conditions, you're out. But Christ has met all the conditions, and therefore, when God looks at you, he says, you're altogether beautiful, my darling, and he must see you that way or you go to hell. But he does see you that way because of Christ and he always sees you that way.

His disposition toward you does not change. That is so wonderful what Christ has done for us. You are altogether beautiful, my darling, and there is no blemish in you.

That should be the greatest encouragement for you to pray. That should be the greatest encouragement for you to ask God, examine me, oh, Lord, show me my ways. That should be the greatest encouragement for you to confess your sin.

Because it is not a judge who comes to you and a judge will never come to you again. Only a father, only I believe it was Brother Mike Morrow that was telling me about this, that that you're not just justified, you're adopted. You know, when someone goes before a judge and a judge acquits him, the judge then doesn't invite him to go home with him.

You know, God's not only justified you, he's adopted you and he looks at you with such love, with such endearment. With such joy at what he has made possible, that because of the power of the blood of the Lamb, when he looks at you, you're altogether beautiful and there is no blemish. Then he says in verse eight, come.

Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, may you come with me from Lebanon, journey down from the summit of Amman, from the summit of Sinai and Hermon, from the den of lions, from the mountains of leopards, come. God is always calling his people to come. And Satan is always telling them you can't go.

Look at you. I mean, how can you go? He knows what you've done. He knows your sins.

He knows how vile you are. He knows the dullness of your heart. Don't go to him.

But those are the words of the liar and the deceiver, and oftentimes you believe him because it is so hard to believe God with regard to his love because his love is so great. It's like I'm fond of telling people this, who doubt the love of God. I always my charismatic friends, they're always telling me that the greatest act of faith is being able to raise the dead.

I tell them for Baptists, that's nothing. We do that every Sunday. They say to raise the dead that man, anybody who can really raise the dead, they've got so much faith.

I said, no, that's not the greatest act of faith. Do you want to know what the greatest act of faith is? I'm going to tell you, the greatest act of faith for the Christian is to look in the mirror of God's word and see all their failings and then to believe by faith that God loves them as much as he says he does. That is faith, because you have to believe something you've never even seen anywhere else in the world.

No one is like God and no one's love is like God's love. When he tells you to come, don't you know the one who just spoke the word knows everything about you? He knows everything. You've done everything you're going to do.

So if he says come, then the invitation is come. So many believers are constantly staying away from God, or you've done this, haven't you? You've really blown it. You've really sinned.

You're convicted about it. And that's good. You confess it.

That's good. And then you realize that you need to stay away from God for several days until you win enough brownie points to get back. That's a lie.

He says, come, come. One of the most beautiful things in my life was when one day in Peru on the third floor of a house in Mia Flores. I came to believe that God really loved me, all my spot, all my blemishes.

All the things I've done that before him, they were removed in Jesus Christ and that he could only love me and would only love me and never stopped loving me. And that I did not know enough, I did not know as much about myself as he knew, and yet he still loves me. Jude says this to keep yourself in the love of God.

Now, many preachers will turn that around and turn it into legalism. You need to keep loving God. That's not what it means.

I don't know anything about plants, but if you told me you had a dying plant and I said, well, let me take a look at it. And I went to your house and you took me to the inner room in the closet of the inner room, which is pitch dark. And you open the door and there was the plant.

I would say to you, well, I don't know much about plants, but I can tell you this. You need to keep that thing out in the sunshine, because the further you get that thing away from the sunshine, the more it's going to

wilt. I'll tell you that, believer.

That's a problem. You need to keep yourself in the love of God. And how do you do that by faith? How do you do that? The word of God.

One of the things that would one of the things that would probably help most people in this room right now is to find every verse in the Bible that talks about God's immeasurable, unconditional love, memorize it, meditate on it until you believe it. Keep yourself in the recognition, keep recognizing, keep believing that God loves you as much as he says he does, and you'll not fear to come into his presence. He says, come with me.

But also look what he says, journey down, journey down. We're so full of pride. We're so full of vanity.

We're always walking in high places where we don't belong. Vanity Fair is where our flesh wants to live, mesmerized by trinkets and things that sparkle and make noise, mesmerized with things that don't matter, worried about clothing and little signs on them, worried about the kind of car you drive, worried about whether or not your kid gets to enough soccer games during the week. You spend every bit of your life on that which does not matter, and you end up ruined and broken and distraught and weary.

And God is saying, come by for me, come, come down, come down from those places that cannot feed you, come down from those places that can do you no good and come down from those dangerous haunts. Look what he says. He says from den of lions and mountains of leopards come down.

Those are dangerous places. Dangerous fear is a good thing. You should fear what this world can do to you.

You should fear what sin can do to you. You should fear what self can do to you. Come down, get away from it and get away from people who are mesmerized by it.

You say, well, I want to be with them to save them. Save your own self now. Get away.

Walk with people. People who have eyes that are not evil, that are not full of darkness, people who are always directing you towards eternal things. The problem is that's the way the church is supposed to be, but because gospel is so weak and no church discipline is practiced, the church is filled up with wicked people who love wicked things, and it's hard to find anyone in the church who'll direct you towards something eternal.

It's almost as though in Wesleyan Whitfield's day when you got to go within the church and make a holy club, come down from those things. Don't you know that inside you and your flesh, your flesh has the keenest ability to make an idol out of absolutely anything your flesh can take the Bible and use it and create an idol out of knowledge, create an idol out of ministry, create an idol out of almost anything, even that which is good and holy and right. He says, come down.

And look at this in verse nine, you have made my heart beat faster, my sister, my bride, you have made my heart beat faster with a single glance of your eyes. Now, if that won't get you praying, I don't know what will. What does that tell me? I go like this and you can hear the divine heart beat faster.

With a single glance of my eyes. Guys, you remember when those of you who are married, your spouse, before you married her, she just kind of cut her eyes over at you while you're sitting there in church. From

across the room, you felt like you're just going to faint right over, remember that? Well, you ought to remember what's wrong with you, you ought to still have it.

Amen. She looks at, you know, it was the power of that it's spoken of as a dangerous thing when it's a foreign woman, but when it's the woman God has for you and she cuts those eyes at you and your heart falls out on the floor and rolls down to the aisle, down to the front of the church. Man, that's a good thing, the power of it, God loves us so much, just a glance of our eyes upward in prayer, his heart beats faster.

His heart beats faster. I'll never forget after my little boy and was born, I had a very difficult childhood, to say the least. And but when my little boy was born, I'll never forget he was old enough, finally got to the point where he could smile and hug and lift his arms up in the air.

And I'll never forget he was laying there on our bed upstairs and I walked around the corner and came into the room and when he saw me, you got to understand my boy could have a heart attack. He gets so excited looking at a blank wall that he he looked at me and the moment he looked at me, he went. There was not one doubt in that little boy's mind that his father was going to run over there, grab him, pick him up and hug him.

There was not one doubt, I mean, you took a self-esteem or self, he had no doubt that he was loved, he knew he just had to cut those eyes at me and I was a goner. Oh, gosh, I hope my wife doesn't give birth to a girl, I'll be dead. But what I want you to see is how do you think those things happen? Do you think that they come out of creation or they're birthed out of human nature? Why do those things even exist in creation? Have you ever wondered about that? God put them there.

And why did he put them there? To tell you about him. How can you love a child? How could you dare think that you love a child more than God loves you? You can't even begin to look upward. He said, oh, brother Paul, you don't understand, son, you don't understand how powerful is the blood of Jesus Christ.

It's one glance. See, the fear of the Lord, you have to understand this. A little boy can fear his father because one day he runs to his father with a picture he drew and says, look, dad, and his dad grabs the picture and says, oh, that's absolutely wonderful.

And the little boy goes on, plays, everything's happy. Next day, the little boy comes, same dad, same different picture, gives it to his dad. His dad's in a terrible mood.

He grabs the picture, slaps the boy around and sends him across the room. The little boy trembles. Why? He fears his dad.

Why? Because of the inconsistencies in his father's character. That doesn't happen with your heavenly father. His character is set in perfection.

Because of the work of Christ, he cannot love you more, will not love you less. One glance of your eyes, you've got him. You've got him.

You've got him. One glance of your eyes and his heart beats faster, look what he says, you have made my heart beat faster, my sister, my bride, you have made my heart beat faster with a single glance of your eyes. Now, look at this with a single strand of your necklace.

Let me ask you this. Where'd she get the necklace? She got it from him. You see all that beauty you've got.

It's a gift. You see, your elder brother. He's not like Joseph, he's one greater than Joseph.

Joseph had a coat of many colors that he would not share with his brothers. But our Joseph. Our Jesus has a coat of many colors.

A righteousness upon him that is his own by his own doing, and he gives it to you. You see, he looks down at you and sees no spot, no blemish. He sees these beautiful adornments hanging all off of you.

They're the very things he gave you. It's what grace is all about. And it's so wonderful.

So wonderful. He has saved you and not only cleaned you. He's dressed you up with his own grace and every time he looks at you, this is what he sees.

You say, well, Brother Paul, now hold on for a second, what about all the sin? You know, Brother Paul, there's just as much, you know, adultery in the church is outside of the church and there's just as much lying and cheating and stealing and fornication and pornography and everything in the church is outside of the church, because that's what our evangelical leaders tell us. That's a lie. That is a lie.

There is not as much pornography, fornication, adultery, lying, cheating and immorality in church is outside of the church. Your problem is you don't know what the church is. The church is not made up of all the people who are going to gather together tomorrow morning.

No, the church is not perfect, but she is being perfected and sanctified. He who began a good work in her will finish it. And he guards her zealously in the spirit that is within her, guards her zealously and he disciplines her zealously because he loves her zealously.

I'll tell you what, a lot of men are going to have to answer for what they've called the Church of Jesus Christ. So they've looked at a bunch of unconverted, lost, carnal people who happen to be members of the church and identified them with the church and in so blaspheme their God by talking so harshly against his bride, his bride's beautiful. She's not perfect, but she's broken and she's walking and she's growing and she's changing and he's making something of her.

So he says, how beautiful. Is your love in verse 10, how beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride, how much better is your love than wine? Now, I want you to look at something. I find it very hard sometimes when everyone is singing, oh, how I love Jesus.

I find it very hard to sing along. I do. I look at my love and I don't see a whole lot we're singing about, to be honest with you.

I look at a heart that's sometimes cold. I'd rather sing, oh, how Jesus loves me than know how I love Jesus. And in a sense, that's very, very good.

But we have to be very careful here because look what it says. How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride, brother Mike again this morning was talking to me about the how the high priest sanctifies our holy things. Jesus shared that with me this morning.

Fits right in here, our priest, our mediator, our intercessor, our Christ, our captain. The man before God for us. Seems that he sanctifies and makes holy all our offerings to God.

Even that love that is so dull and so impure and it passes through him. It is lovely. Don't you see, saints, what he's done for you? He's done so much, he's done it all, he's he do it all things well, he's left not one part out.

So he says. How much better is your love than wine and the fragrance of your oils, then all kinds of spices I want to drop down, I'd like to preach through all of this, but look at verse 12, a lot of garden locked is my sister, my bride, a garden locked, a spring sealed up. Now, what does this mean? She's chase.

She's a garden locked up. I tell young ladies that I that I teach when I'm teaching university students and such, I said this is the text for you and for young men, it's the same. You should be a garden locked up.

Young people, they've got the idea that they're sexually pure if they've never had intercourse, if they've had everything else, no, to be chased is to be a garden locked up. No one's touched the fruit, much less tasted it. No one's even looked at it.

It's a garden shut up. And in the same way, the Church of Jesus Christ, we should be a garden shut up, a garden locked up, close our doors to all other lovers. They only want to hurt us anyways.

They only want to tear at us like wolves and lions. And for those of you who are pastors out there, let me let let me tell you something. Learn this.

Your number one job as a pastor, God has entrusted his bride to you. You protect her. You protect her.

That's what's wrong with church growth. That's what's wrong with dropping the bar to get as many people in as possible. That's what's wrong with not practicing church discipline.

Your main job is to protect the bride of Jesus Christ and to present her before him, a pure and a chaste virgin. You can't make a bride. He makes it.

So stop trying to make one and start doing your work of protecting her and feeding her and guarding her and loving her and presenting her one day before him. But look at this, this is the way we're supposed to be, church. You have been invited to have communion with the living God.

Why would you seek to other things? Why would you seek to give your wares to other things, to give your very being to other things, close yourself off from everything else and give yourself to him, to Christ alone, to God alone. It's wonderful. Give me give me a young man who is shut up.

So many men, so many young men, they're all about fellowship and group hugs and getting together and singing Kumbaya and trying to look radical. Give me a man who break away from all of them, shut himself up to God. Friend of mine was talking to Leonard Ravenhill one day and he told Brother Ravenhill, he says, Brother Paul Washer, a dear friend of mine is really going through some struggles and some terrible times.

And Leonard Ravenhill sent me a little track. It's got written on Brother Paul and the track is Others Can, But You Cannot. And what it says is simply this, OK, let everybody else go walk through the mall all day long.

Let everybody else watch television. Yeah, let everybody else go to some silly Christian concert God's not in. Let everybody else go on Christian retreats and ski trips, but if you really want to be God's man, they can, but you cannot.

When I was called into the ministry, I went and told my pastor. In Texas and very, very, very, very used man of God, and he looked at me and the first thing he said is, boy, can you be alone? And I thought he meant that if I preach the truth, I would be alone. That's not what he meant.

What he meant was, can you break away from the rest of these boys and go see God? Can you shut yourself up to him? We can spend time learning how to crochet, we can spend time sitting in a tree stand, you can spend time on a golf course, you can spend time fellowshiping and eating doughnuts and doing everything. But why is it so hard to spend time? To shut yourself up to the one who loves you most. It does show that although we have been thoroughly redeemed, there is an aspect of us called the flesh that has not been redeemed.

Now, I want to skip through that and I just want to go quickly to 16. The bride is speaking and she says, Awake, O North wind and come wind of the South, make my garden breathe out fragrance. Let its spices be waved abroad.

May my beloved come into his garden, eat its hoist fruit. Now, here's a young lady who has done all this work, all this preparation, and there's only one reason for it. Her only desire is that the wind will come and blow the fragrance of what she's done to the one that she's loved and that he getting a whiff of that fragrance would come in and take from her the gift she has prepared.

It's her greatest desire. I remember when I was like this. I remember first saved.

Hopefully you remember the same. The only thing you wanted was his eye. The only thing you wanted was his attention.

You pray, read the word, be half crazy most of the time. Overzealous, wild, no theology, no anything, but the only thing you wanted, you go out soul winning, knocking on doors, read your Bible, stand upside down on your head and quote the Westminster Confession. Anything it would take to the Lord.

Look at me. Oh, Lord, be with me. Lord, do anything to have your Lord just come into this room.

Don't leave me this way. Take my life, but give me your presence. Is he looking, is he looking to remember when you were that way? And then it says in verse one of chapter five, I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride, I have gathered my mirth along with my balsam, I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey, I have drunk my wine and my milk.

You know, it's so wonderful. This king has has no need of a garden of a little girl. He has 10,000 men working around the clock to make him gardens, hanging gardens, flower gardens, vegetable gardens, every kind of garden you could possibly imagine.

He's the king, but this king. Comes to Zion riding on the foal of a donkey. This king is a humble king, this king is a loving king, and this king gives her the very desire of her heart, her greatest desire, her heart's desire is that he simply take from her what she offers and he does.

I've come into my garden, he says. My sister, my bride. We're always saying I want to be his.

He says, you're mine. I want to give him this, he says, I'll take it. The boldness of his love is just unbelievable.

People. He says. All of it, I've come into my garden, I've gathered my mirth, my balsam, eaten honeycomb, honey, drunk wine, milk, everything you offer me, I give it to you.

This is so amazing. I'm never going to be Charles Spurgeon. I'm never going to be George Mueller.

I'm never going to be anything but just who I am. Some guy who's going to live and die in that sitting. You know what? It doesn't matter.

You don't have to be John Piper. You don't have to be Jonathan Edwards to be in the inner circle, because if you're in Christ, you're in the inner circle. We live in a world where Christianity has such a pecking order, it's unbelievable.

It doesn't exist in the kingdom of heaven. All your life you've been shut out. You have this place.

You don't have enough money to go. There's places you don't have enough brains to go. There's places you're not good looking enough to go.

Trust me, there are places all over where you're shut out. There's inner circles you can't be a part of. You walk by them, you see them, you drop your head, you keep walking.

Some of you, you go to pastors conferences and you see quite clearly pastors. They don't have signs. Pastors of churches of over 5000, please stand over here and talk.

Pastors of churches from twenty five hundred to five thousand. You're assigned this section from from 2000 on down. You must go here.

Guys with 50 to 100. The bathroom is right around the corner. Pecking orders.

And what's amazing, the guy with 50 in his church has never asked to preach in a conference, unless, of course, it's a heart cry conference because that pecking order doesn't exist. It doesn't exist. He's not saying, well, why should I? I mean, I've got Spurgeon over here and I've got this over here and that over here.

What? I need you. He doesn't need anybody. He never says he does, but he loves you.

He loves you, you say, but I've done so much. You don't even know half the much you've done. He loves you.

I love that passage, a bruised reed, he'll not break smoldering wick, he'll not throw out. Make a reed breaks in your hand, it's a delicate thing. It's got a flaw.

Throw it out. There's all kinds of cane everywhere. Don't work with that thing.

Throw it away. Jesus doesn't. You're breaking his hands.

People look, say worthless. No music's coming out of that. He says, just watch me.

Mends you back up and plays the most beautiful music you could ever imagine out of the most broken reed. Smoldering wick, a little boy and the lights would all go out, ice storm. We'd have all these kerosene lamps and since we didn't use them very often, we would always forget.

You don't want to let one of those things run out of oil because once they run out of oil, the wick starts burning, stinkiest thing you've ever smelt in your life. Open up the window, throw it out. Jesus doesn't.

You grieve the Holy Spirit. You stink. Make a mess of everything.

Everyone stands there and says, throw him out. Christ takes the lamp, holds it to his chest, cleans away the wick. Fills it with oil, sets it on fire.

You got a God, you have a savior. So he says, I come. What's amazing here is what's been happening to me these last few days.

It says, eat, friends, drink and imbibe deeply. Old lovers. I've heard men, very imperfect men, get up in this pulpit and preach something of the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon their lives.

And I've just eaten along with them. It's amazing when someone falls in love with Jesus Christ, it just sets a banquet table for everyone else around them. Have you ever noticed that? Just everybody, let's eat, let's just eat.

It's an absolutely wonderful thing. And then he says in verse two, we come down and we see something. I was asleep, but my heart was awake.

A voice, my beloved, was knocking open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my perfect one for my head is drenched with dew. My locks with the damp of the night. Here comes here comes this wonderful lover.

Here comes this wonderful spouse. Here comes the king. And something that only one thing I want to point out, even though there's seven lectures in this verse, there's only one thing I want to point out.

And it is this. He comes unannounced. He comes at a time not expected.

And why would he do that? Because love is audacious. Is there an angel standing behind me singing? I mean, whoever is in charge of. Please shut that guy off.

He's still going. You know, if we were in Peru, I'd just get a rock and my one chance to have an angel appear. Tom Clay's a really small guy.

Is he hiding up there somewhere? Someone says, oh, brother, Paul, you shouldn't have done that. God was working and he's, you know, now you listen. If God's working, he'll continue to work when I get back to this sermon.

OK, someone told Spurgeon you need to strike while the iron's hot. And Spurgeon said, well, if it's God heating up the iron, it'll stay hot. That comes on again.

I'm shooting somebody, Lord. Yeah, you can't have church without all this multimedia stuff. He shows up unannounced, completely unannounced.

Why? Because love believes it can. You need to take Jesus at his word. But make no mistake, he's going to take you at yours.

I love you, Lord. You know what that means? He's just. Believing enough to say, OK, that means I can come by at two in the morning, knock on your door.

That means, Pastor, when you've got all kinds of stuff to do, you can come by and knock on your door. And Sam here. Terry with me a while, that's what it means.

Now he comes by unannounced and she says, I've taken off my dress. How can I put it on again? I've washed my feet. How can I dirty them again? Now, here was a girl who literally would go to the market 37 times a day for no reason at all for her mother, just the hope that she would bump into this guy.

This was a girl who just would do absolutely anything to get his attention. But here's what happens when you get someone's attention, when you've won someone's love, love often becomes quite common. I remember going through the Andes Mountains the first time in my life over the highest railroad pass in the world, and I'm sitting there marveling at all the beauty of the Andes Mountains and the old missionary Homer Crane is sitting there snoring.

I thought, how can he be so dull a heart not to see all this beauty of God's creation? A few years ago, I took a group of college students across that same place, and as they were oohing and aahing, I was snoring. Why? Because when you see something over and over and over because of sin, it no longer is special. Husbands, this is a rebuke for us and our wives.

That same glance that stopped your heart should stop your heart today. It's not that her glance has changed, your heart has changed. But we look at this and he says, she says, it seems like a drudgery now to love.

It seems like a drudgery to love. Do you remember those times, Saint? Do you remember those times when you would pray, when you would call people and they would pray with you and you'd read your Bible and you'd want to walk in the truth? And if you had thought that you grieved the Holy Spirit, it would break your heart. You'd cry out for God and you'd just do anything.

You'd seek him, you'd plead for him. You want his presence in everything. But now he shows up at 10 o'clock tonight and you go, Lord, I mean, what do you want? I've been in a Bible conference for three days.

Haven't I given you enough? Look how terrifyingly sad that is. Lord, I'm tired, I mean, and pastors are the worst. That's why pastors should not have televisions, because it's literally, Lord, I'm mentally and everything else, I'm just totally and completely drained.

I mean, you feel that nudge that the Lord says, slip away with me. I know it's Sunday night and I know you're drained. Slip away with me and let me fill you and give you peace to that mind of yours that's so tired.

Oh, Lord, that'll never do. I mean, I should just sit here and just watch something for what really, please, Lord, I've paid my dues, haven't I? There was a time when, oh, it's so funny, you know, when you're a brand new Christian, I mean, everywhere you look, you see the face of Jesus. Every, I mean, you eat too much pizza, you have a dream at night, you're trying to interpret the thing.

It's Jesus. Everything is Jesus. You're just wanting to see Jesus.

I mean, wind blows against the back of your neck, you know, Jesus. You just make up things. All you want is just Jesus.

Now, Jesus truly comes as a lover in your maturity and tugs on your heart and says, slip away with me. And you deny that it's him. You don't want it to be him.

Oh, that wasn't him. That wasn't his voice. That's just my imagination.

There was a time that even if it was your imagination, you would have gone and prayed. You'd have used it as an excuse. Oh, did you call me? Look how cold the heart can become.

And so he says, well, we read in verse four, my beloved extended his hand through the opening and my feelings were aroused for him. I arose to open to my beloved and my hands dripped with my and my fingers with liquid myrrh on the handles of the bolt. I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and had gone.

My heart went out to him as he spoke. I searched for him, but did not find him. Do you know what happens? Jesus is always the God who is passing by.

You're out there struggling in a storm. He walks on the water. He walks as though he's passing by.

You must call to him the road to Emmaus. He's going to keep going. You have to call him back.

No, Lord, carry with us a while. I want you to know something. True love is very sensitive as a Holy Spirit.

The symbol of the Holy Spirit is a dove, the sensitivity of the love of God. Love of God will tug and by grace, tug again and by grace, maybe tug a few times more. But sooner or later, the tug will cease.

And you know what you're left with, don't you? What many of you have. Most of your prayer life is nothing but getting down on your knees and praying as though there were brass over your head and you're crying out the whole time. Oh, God, give me your presence, your presence, your presence.

Oh, Lord, I want your presence and the presence never comes. And then you get up and you just go to bed. You see, love can be quickly offended.

It will tug and it will tug. You know what I'm talking about, don't you? There were times when you would stay with him. And then it got to the point where that became common and he would call you and you would not come.

And then he stopped calling you. And you remembered you went for him. He looked for him, but you didn't find him.

I'll never forget when Charo and I did something very unbiblical one time. She went to the States for about 82 days to finish her classes. And I stayed in Peru.

I was in the jungle most of the time, came out of Peru. I was like, I don't know what day it was. It was long into those 80 days.

And I was sitting there in this little apartment we had and she wasn't around and everything else. And I was missing her so terribly. And I went over into the drawer there and I pulled out a sweater of hers.

It smelled like her. So I sat there on the bed and I just held it up to my face. I don't know if it helped or hurt.

Because all there was was a lingering fragrance, the person was no longer there. It's the same way in most of our prayer lives often. Just a lingering fragrance of love denied.

Christ came by. And one too many times we said, oh, Lord, I'm in bed. Oh, Lord, I've been ministering all day.

And I said, oh, Lord, I've been ministering all day. You know, the offense to know, do you know how offensive it is for love to be rejected, what a hurt it is, it's better that a lover be a bull in a china shop, as long as that lover be passionate, but dullness of heart towards another person is the very thing that kills that person. We talk about offending someone because we sin against them.

Yes, I sinned against God. I shouldn't watch that television program. I sinned against God.

I shouldn't have spoke that way to my brother. I sinned against God. The thoughts in my heart aren't right.

Well, try this one on for size. God comes around to visit you and you say no. And talk about offense that is an offense.

So she goes and searches for him and something terrible happens. She calls out for him. But he did not answer her seven, the watchman who make the rounds in the city found me, they struck me and wounded me in the guardsmen of the walls, took away my shawl for me.

I want to tell you something. These fellows are acting pretty cocky, aren't they? If the king had been walking beside her. They would not even have dared to look her in the eye.

They would have dropped their heads and trembled. You see, my dear friend, we're not a whole lot. We've been cleaned off by the king.

We've been dressed by the king. We constantly need the king's presence. The devil out there is not afraid of sheep.

Many TV evangelists ought to learn that. Devil's not afraid of sheep. He's afraid of the shepherd standing over them.

Watchmen on walls are not afraid of little girls. They're afraid of kings. When the church leaves her king, when her love towards her king becomes dull and she's mesmerized by all sorts of stupid things, because anything other than the king is a stupid thing.

When she's turned her eyes towards anything but him, she puts herself in a very precarious position. The high mountains of her pride, they're filled with lions and wolves, leopards, the streets where she must walk are not safe places. She needs the presence of her king.

Verse eight, I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved as to what you will tell him, for I am lovesick. Verse nine, what kind of beloved is your beloved? Almost beautiful among women. What kind of beloved is your beloved that thus you adjure us? I wonder if they're saying this.

Well, why should we go look for him? I mean, he can't be all that, can he? He came to your door. You couldn't even get out of bed. You want to walk us to walk around this city at night and look for someone that came to your door and you wouldn't even open it to him.

I mean, obviously, the way you're acting, he can't be all that. I'm not one of those people that say if we would just live like Jesus or live for Jesus, the whole world would be converted. If we did that, we'd be crucified.

World hated Jesus, and if we start living like them, they'll hate us, too. But at least they'll know something's going on, won't they? We go out there and say the world needs Jesus. And they say, now, does the world need him as much as a three car garage or an SUV or soccer? Does the world need him as much as this in your life and that in your life? Because obviously there's a lot of things in your life you need more than Jesus.

So would you please just help me understand just how much the world does need Jesus and how special Jesus is? Well, would you please explain that to me? I'm rather confused at looking at the lot of all of you because it doesn't seem like you need him much. It doesn't seem like he's that special to you. So why should I even give this a second thought? It's a very hard rebuke, but it opens her.

It cuts her heart. It makes her see. Rebuke is a wonderful thing.

It is a wonderful thing because all of a sudden she comes to her senses. And really, that's what repentance is all about, isn't it? Coming to your senses, coming to your senses. What's wrong with you? Either you have lost your mind or you have forgotten him or you have never seen him.

It can only be one of the three. Now, have you never seen him so that he's never been delightful to you? Have you forgotten how delightful he is because you filled your life with so many other things that it's dulled your heart? Or have you absolutely lost your mind that you would turn away from the living God and communion with him in order to have fellowship with things that made out of wood and steel and plastic? And she comes to her senses and she said, my beloved is dazzling and really outstanding among ten thousand. His head is like gold, pure gold.

His locks are like clusters of dates and black as a raven. His eyes are like doves beside streams of water bathed in milk. She goes on and on and on.

And in verse 16, she says his mouth is full of sweetness and he is wholly desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend. Oh, daughters of Jerusalem.

She goes wild. She just goes wild. And that's a part of Christianity, I believe, that apocalyptic literature, I guess you're all familiar with that term, but the Book of Revelation, some of the things in Ezekiel, apocalyptic wheel within a wheel, all of these frightening and amazing symbols that make no sense.

I have a theory about all of that. I believe that these things occur when the following happens, when a man is so engulfed in a revelation of God that it goes so far beyond his mind to comprehend and so far beyond his ability to communicate that he comes to the very point of breaking the very point of losing his mind. He sees what his mind cannot comprehend.

He tries to tell what even his mind does not know. He seems almost like a madman. Shouldn't that be the way our Christianity dwells in this world? We are those who have seen what our mind can't even

comprehend, what to speak, what we can't even tell is what she does.

His head's black as a raven. It's gold. It's all these things, all these contradictory terms.

The woman is at the point of breaking. She's trying to describe a beauty that is so great. It almost drive a person to the end of madness.

I believe that to be in heaven, I believe even to be saved and to have the Holy Spirit dwelling within you, you must be supernaturally strengthened, because if not, the very glorious presence of his beauty would drive you mad. This takes me up on another topic. I am so sick and tired of hearing proper, theologically correct reform preaching.

Well, we're all amazed at dotting every I and crossing every T and explaining everything coldly and calculating as though God were a mathematic formula. Listen to me, the worst thing that can ever happen to a preacher is for him to become civilized and respectable. There ought to be a sense that any man who proclaims God ought to be somewhat of a madman because he's speaking about the glories of God, us, our lives.

We should be enthralled. We should be obsessed. We should be engulfed.

We should be besot as John Piper says, with God. And then what happens? Verse one, a chapter six. Where has your beloved gone? Oh, most beautiful of women that you where has your beloved gone that we may seek him with you when the church goes wild about Jesus Christ? It'll cause a ruckus when the church turns her eyes away from all that cannot delight.

And in the church, his eyes fall upon Jesus and the church becomes just emboldened and maddened by his love. I don't know exactly what will happen, but something will happen. Now, here's the wonderful thing.

She has scorned his love. She has treated it as common. She's been soiled by the hands of another.

She's been mocked by others. She has hurt him in every way that she can possibly hurt him. Now, what kind of reaction do you think she deserves? Well, I don't know exactly what kind of reaction she deserves, but I know what kind of response she's going to get.

You would think that her beloved has gone to where? Well, to get a good attorney, divorce court. I've had enough with you, I'll write you off. Or maybe he's gone to gather arguments against her, to put her down, to manipulate her, to prod her, to show her just how displeased and disgusted he is with her so that she'll start walking the straight and narrow like she ought.

Well, she goes back. Verse two, my beloved has gone down to his garden, to the beds of balsam, to pasture his flock in the gardens and gather lilies. What has he done? He's gone to pick flowers so that when his erring, cold hearted bride returns to him.

He can give her a gift. You see, the devil, my dear saint. Well, so lie to you.

You've done it now. Yeah, you've done it now. I knew this day would come sooner or later.

He's had enough of you. What you can really need to realize is he can never get enough of you. A single glance from your eye and his heart beats faster.

And when you've done all you can do to come to him or run from him with a cold heart, you're looking for ways to flee and then ways to make excuses. And as soon as you depart. He's looking for gifts to give you, and that's hard to believe.

But then again, this whole gospel thing is hard to believe. Let's pray. Father, I hope I hope that I will never.

I would wish that I would never hear your voice. I sense a tug on my heart. That I would not run joyfully knowing that I have been summoned by the king, and I hope that this will lead us to pray to recognize that prayer is more than work.

It is more than intercession. It is more than gathering grace, it is delighting in you, how delightful you are. Open our eyes, Lord, in Jesus name.

Amen. Amen.

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