

July 16

Scriptures: Read Song of Solomon 4, 5 & 6

Key Verse: "... Yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend..."
(Song of Solomon 5:16)

Overview

As the Shulamite and her bridegroom enter Jerusalem in their wedding procession, they are accompanied by a large royal and military entourage (3:6-11). The bride's beauty is descriptively expressed by the bridegroom in chapter four. She is truly fair to behold and she is adorned with a golden necklace of coins which the Bridegroom likens to bucklers (small shields, 4:4).

He finds her without spot (Eph. 5:27), for if she were otherwise she would not be a worthy bride for the king. Now that the marriage ceremony is over, he refers to her as his spouse (4:8). He also calls her "sister", meaning she is even closer to him than a friend (4:9). With mutual love, they give themselves totally to each other in the consummation of their marriage, finding the greatest pleasure in each other, as God intended it to be for a married couple (5:12-16 to 6:1). The wedding guests continue to feast as they celebrate this new union of two lives.

Once again the Shulamite has a dream about her husband that was prompted by his absence (first dream in 3:1-4). Although she is asleep, she tells us that her heart is awake with love for him as she continually thinks about him (5:2). Likewise, we can pray without ceasing when our hearts are awake with love for the Lord Jesus.

In this dream, she had just retired for the night when her husband came and knocked on the door to her room. She made excuses and hesitated to unlock the door, but with the sight of his hand through an opening beside the door, her heart was thrilled and she got up to open the door, no longer caring if she soil her freshly washed feet. When she found him gone, she went to search for him, but in this dream the night watchmen beat her, likely thinking she was an evil woman prowling in the night (5:2-7). At this point, it appears that the dream ended. The dream made her realize how much she missed her husband and likely taught her to never make excuses when he desired to be with her.

The Shulamite, called the fairest among women by the daughters of Jerusalem, describes the excellence and superiority of her husband to them. The aim of her description of him is to show that he is perfect and unblemished from his head to his feet. After comparing his body parts to many beautiful things, she concludes that her beloved and her friend is "altogether lovely". Our Lord Jesus, however, is the only truly unblemished man that ever lived. He is our beloved, our friend, and the altogether lovely One. Just as He was yesterday, He is today and will be forever.

The Shulamite had asked the daughters of Jerusalem to tell Solomon of her love for him, if they should see him (5:8). Now they question her about his whereabouts, but her answer is evasive. Solomon owned much land and flocks, so he could have been in a number of places. It may have been while she was still talking that her beloved returned. He describes her loveliness, perfection, and superiority over all his other wives and concubines which at this time were relatively few in number compared to the large number he attained toward the end of his life (cf. 1 Kings 11:3).

The humble Shulamite, however, was his true bride and true love. The Lord's intention from the beginning was for there to be one man and one wife, but because of the hardness of men's hearts, they abandoned God's desires and followed the custom of polygamy.

The Shulamite's response is to relate her astonishment at being elevated to such a high and honoured position. Everyone admired her and asked that she stay with them, that they might gaze upon her beauty, but she humbly asks them: "What [beauty] would you see in the Shulamite... ?" (6:13). The bride of Christ is truly beautiful because they are to reflect the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Dear Lord, please grant us Your favour. Like the Shulamite, we recognize that we don't deserve Your love, but we also recognize that You have chosen to love us. Help us to love You more and more, showing everyone how wonderful You are.