

The Cross in The Song of Songs

Part One: Ecclesiastes

Preface

On my first trip to Ireland, the Spirit began to sing the Song of Solomon to my heart as I traveled across the island for the first time. The words of this sacred script flowed like rivers of Life from the heart of God into mine. It was like the Day-Spring from on high visiting me and gathering my being up into Divine Fellowship. I found Him whom my soul loveth above the earth where Life is untouched by the earth's dark trials and the enemy's fierce attacks. The Life that quickened me as I held these words deep within during that time will remain testimonies of the reality that we are in an uncontestable Life-union with the Living Son Himself.

And now, eleven years later, I find the voice of my Beloved singing to me again. With each verse, and every word within I hear Him I feel Him... drawing and wooing my heart to apply His Cross like never before. For twenty years I have been taught that life comes out from death. I have consistently listened to the preaching of the Cross throughout that same time. Although I knew it was true and had embraced it in some measure, in many ways it was like a shrouded mystery, still dim and unclear, like an image viewed through a mirror darkly. Yet God's timing is perfect, and only by His Spirit can we truly see and receive anything from His realm. Now, by the grace of God, the light of Calvary is dawning with more clarity, shining into my darkness to bring forth His life.

The writings that are found in these following pages flowed forth effortlessly from the Spirit. As soon as I put pen to paper, the Lord would begin to speak... to sing... to share His heart in these scriptures. With each line He would continue to guide my heart in the ways of the Cross as they are to be found at work in His Bride. My prayer is that these pages would bring you into the realm of His Face, where the Spirit can make real to your heart that which God has for you at this time.

Introduction

Much of what will be shared from these scriptures can be heard or received in a way that brings condemnation rather than the sweet drawing of the Spirit to know Christ more intimately. There is a "spirit" behind everything we hear, read and communicate. Even when the Lord opens up truth in the scriptures, there is still an attitude of heart in God that we need to receive concerning those things. We can bear witness to the truth in the scriptures, and still miss the heart and spirit behind it. We need to not only hear the truth, but receive the Spirit of Truth, which is another name for the Holy Spirit (John 14:17). Please seek to hear these things by the Spirit of the Truth as One Who is declaring the very heart of Jesus towards His beloved bride. We must press past our understandings until we hear the attitude of God's heart in all things. What He is saying is not

condemnation; it is pure love. If you are born again, you have already been accepted in the Beloved, you are joined to Jesus, you are the place where He dwells, and your salvation and position in Christ is secure and settled. Allow that foundation of love and acceptance in Christ to be laid in you so that you might receive these things from God's heart and not through your fears.

Much of these following articles will refer to the Cross. If there were ever a truth that was heard through a veil of misunderstanding and condemnation, it would be the Cross. There is a process and awakening that God must lead each of us through to show us the absolute blessedness of the Cross of our Lord Jesus as it relates to us every day of our lives. We cannot fully appreciate the Cross as God's tool of our decrease until we see just how beautiful Jesus is and just how horrible it is that our flesh (our old self nature of sin) would try to take His place in us. Many times as we listen to wonderful words of life about Jesus it may seem as if we are hearing the most beautiful song ever sung floating over a great chasm and tickling our ears for more. We want to be filled with that Song, but self is always in the way. It is at this point that we can begin to appreciate the ministry of the Cross. The Cross is the tool that God used to remove the self-life through crucifying it in His Son at Calvary. There is much to be embraced regarding the full work of Christ's Cross that the scriptures declare at length. This book emphasizes the believer's need to daily apply the reality of their death with Christ so that self will not hinder the flow of Christ's Life from within. With our own hands we must embrace the finished work of Calvary, and enforce its power over everything in us that is still drawing sap from that old dead tree. Only Christ could and did crucify that old nature on His Cross, our place is simply to enforce and apply that reality. The Cross is truly a tool for lovers! The ultimate expression of love towards the Lord is to love Him more than our own lives, even unto applying our death with Him through a daily embrace of His Cross (Rev. 12:11).

*“The Cross is truly a tool
for lovers!”*

Part One “Ecclesiastes”

“Not I...But Christ”

The book that comes before the Song of Songs is Ecclesiastes. Before we can properly enter the Song of Songs, we must pass through the book of Ecclesiastes. There is a divine order to this, for until we come to an end of ourselves we will never be able to truly hear His song. The wretchedly deceptive “I” will infiltrate every chorus and verse.

Ecclesiastes 1:2 “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.”

The great crisis of Ecclesiastes is an awareness of the emptiness and vanity of living by our own resources under the Son. The person (branch) in Ecclesiastes is shriveling under the heat of the sun as he/she strives to bring forth fruit while functioning separately from the Vine. All is unfulfilling and fruitless in an existence of separation from the Son.

Ecclesiastes 1:3 “What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun?”

As we labor and search for fullness apart from the indwelling Christ, we groan becoming increasingly aware of our deep and aching emptiness.

Ecclesiastes 1:8a “All things are full of labor; man cannot utter it.”

When someone strives to serve God and bring forth fruit through their own works, there is a fullness that is experienced. Everything is full of "labor" rather than being filled with Christ. These scriptures literally say that ALL things, are “full” of labor. “All things” are “full” of labor. Do you ever feel that way?

There are times when we may feel that we are doing all that we know to do, and yet where is the joy? Feelings come such as, “I am exhausted, I am so tired and I am still empty!” We are doing everything we know to do FOR God and we are still coming up empty, dry and unfulfilled. In our hearts we may wonder, “What is wrong Lord? What more can I do? What more can I try? What more can I be for you? Where is the problem?” The next sentence in verse eight says;

Ecclesiastes 1:8b “the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.”

Such a person could have such thoughts as, "Lord I am listening to all these sermons. I am looking at my bible, my eye is searching, my ear is listening, and I am not satisfied. There is no

satisfaction in it. I am empty and exhausted. It is all vanity of vanities.” The problem with all this is that it is all under the Son. All things are produced in a state of separation from the Son. Therefore everything is exhaustingly empty. It is important to remember that if we are born again, we are indeed in the Son. But it is possible to be in Christ and yet still relate to Him in ways of separation.

The Un-Crucified "I"

We may think that the remedy to such a condition of relating in separation is to stop working in the flesh and try to get closer to Jesus. But the real cause of this separation is not found in the realm of changing our actions or attitudes. The true mortal enemy of our deepest need for properly relating in Jesus is the UN-CRUCIFIED "I". It is our old nature that continues to press forward separate from the Son causing all these problems. Until this "I" embraces the cross of its own crucifixion, it will continue to usurp Christ as Source and fill everything with self-life instead of being a vessel filled with the Life of the Son.

We find evidence of this un-crucified "I" motivating all things that are being done in chapter two:

Ecclesiastes 2:4-10 "I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy;"

In these verses we find the word "I" used over and over again. Everything that is accomplished happened by the "I". We must remember that these are King Solomon's writings, and these accomplishments are pertaining to His service as the king of Jerusalem.

I made me great works; I builded me houses;

Only the Lord builds the house through His cross, yet this one is doing it through the great works of "I". Psalm 127:1 says, "*Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that built it*".

I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:

"I" is trying to bring forth the fruit... "I" is trying to produce water... "I" is trying to grow trees... Here the flesh is trying to produce and grow what can only come from the Life of God.

I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house;

"I" is trying to bring forth service through the arm of the flesh.

I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces:

"I" is trying to produce precious beauty, like silver, gold and kings treasure.

*I got me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men,
as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.*

"I" is trying to produce worship

We find in these verses that "I" is literally taking the place of God, and trying to produce what only God can bring forth through Christ in us.

The Ugly End of The Un-Crucified "I"

Ecclesiastes 2:9 "So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem"

The end of doing everything in the strength of our own flesh is heard in this verse ... "I WAS GREAT AND INCREASED". The ultimate end of living in such a manner is that CHRIST is not great and increased... WE are. We find these verses declaring that the flesh is trying to fulfill what only the Eternal Christ in us can produce.

To the eyes of man and much of the church-world, such an ambitious and prosperous minister as Solomon was in these verses could be held in high-acclaim. Such a person may be set forth as an example of Christian success in the things of the Kingdom. This one has been building great buildings, planting gardens, gathering many servants, organizing huge worship sessions, and doing all that any human could set forth to do for God. The real question must be, "Is God receiving an increase of His Son through it"? In other words, does our Father get Christ when we offer up the "I"? Although the ministry may be a best-seller on earth, it will never even touch the heart of the Father Whose only desire and satisfaction is in His Son. Therefore, we must question who is getting satisfaction from all these grand endeavors? The next verse will address that very thing:

All For My Pleasure

*Ecclesiastes 2:10 "And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them,
I withheld not my heart from any joy;"*

When someone functions through their own life rather than Christ's; the self life is deeply motivated for its own pleasure. There is a deep inward feeding of one's soul when it is yet "I" doing the living. Even the holy things of God will become a means for our own ends and pleasure. Yet the scriptures declare that all things were created for God's pleasure (Rev 4:11). A bride does not exist for her own satisfaction but to satisfy her husband. For a bride to come forth, the "I" must die.

On the surface we may feel that all we do is truly for God, but we must probe deeper into the motives and intents of our hearts. Where ever self remains, there will be the hidden motive of self-serving. We will be glorying in our own greatness, humility, abilities, accomplishments, sacrifices, and drawing strength and motivation to do more to continue sustaining the inward needs of self, feeding our ego and keeping self alive. The Cross goes right to the real problem ... "self" ... and lays the axe to the root. Once self is dealt with by the Cross, the Son can begin to live instead. Christ in us will always do that which pleases the Father, because He is the Son!

"No Longer I"

Before we are truly ready to enter into the realm of the Song of Songs, this point must become our experiential reality. We must be ready to say, "no longer I", no matter what the cost. The Cross must become more than a teaching, but a tool to break free from the motivation of self in all things. The cross did not fix or refine our flesh, it crucified it. We must apply His death to all that yet functions "under the Son" in us. Everywhere we find that it is "I" not Christ that is doing the living, we must apply the Cross. Paul said in Gal. 2:20 that it was "NOT I" but Christ living in Him. The "I" must be submitted to its death in Christ's Cross. As long as "I" lives instead of Christ, all will be vanity and vexation. Until the "I" dies, life will be an existence under and separate from the Son. There will be no Song or gardens of fruit... just a life full of labor and the works of the flesh.

"Unless A Man Hate His Own Life... "

Luke 14:26-27 "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

*Ecclesiastes 2:17 "**Therefore I hated life**; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit."*

Ecclesiastes 2:18 "Yea, I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun."

While still in Ecclesiastes there will be a sense of pride and self-righteousness that causes one to glory in their own flesh. But when we begin to awaken to the reality of what the self-life is and how it usurps Christ as Lord and Life, we begin to hate the "I" that once reigned supreme. We are no longer filled and satisfied with an existence "under the Son". The houses we built, fruit we produced, service we rendered, worshiped we offered, and precious things we made are all nothing because they are not filled with Christ but with our labors (Jn 15:5). We see them as vain, worthless things that have no eternal value because they are devoid of God's Son. What we once called incredible we now call pitiful. The treasures we held up as rare and precious are now worthless. All the fruit of our labors for God that we once took so much pride in are now weighed in the balances and found to be lacking... for they are devoid of the Son. We no longer want to

offer up the works of our hands (Hosea 14:3). We are ready to worship God through His Son and not our own virtues. The idol of self is beginning to fall in the heart of such a one. They are ready to die to self instead of offer it up to God.

"Not Failure but Finally Ready"

At such a time as this, one may feel they are further from God than ever before in their life. They feel like a supreme failure with no strength left. Yet this is exactly what God has been waiting for... someone who is ready for Christ to be all and in all! A vessel must be emptied of self before it can be filled with the Son, and that is just what has been happening to this person.

This principle can be better understood through the example of a drowning man. The lifeguard knows that the person needs to weaken before he/she can be saved, or they will still have too much fight left and start to drown the lifeguard with him. In like manner, we need to come to the end of our strength and striving to become something special for God. We need to be completely emptied of our own resources that God might fill us up with the resources of His Son instead

"Ready For The Cross"

It is often shared that the Song of Songs begins with a woman who is madly in love with the Lord. She is breaking loose from lethargy and dullness and encountering this time period of passion, intimacy and new life in her relationship with the Lord. Many times this way of sharing from this book leaves people with the impression that they must become extremely passionate and spiritual to be able to identify with the Shulamite. One may feel impressed to start earning a relationship of intimacy with the Lord based on increasing their affections and becoming more "spiritual". In a very real sense this is simply another version of Ecclesiastes! The "I" is still alive and trying to be passionate and affectionate. The person is yet filled with their own labors and therefore pride and superiority will flourish in them. They will make other maidens feel "lesser", and stir up jealousy, strife and competition in the midst of the daughters of Jerusalem.

I believe the person entering into the Song of Songs looks drastically different than the one described above. This girl is weak, empty, burnt out and finished. She has come to an end of herself, hates her old life, is burnt out with laboring under the Son, and has nothing more to offer the Lord, including any special affection. She sees her self-life as the enemy of God, and is willing to plunge in Calvary's sword that Christ may now have pre-eminence. She loves the Lord deeply, yet cannot bear to continue in a relationship that functions in separation and pride.

Rather than being depressed and obsessing over her own wretchedness, she is experiencing the blessed relief of finding her way out of Ecclesiastes. She has run out of fuel, and is ready to be energized by the power of an Endless Life (Hebrews 7:16). She has begun to see herself for what she is, desperately in need of another Life. As burn-out sets in she begins to confess that she is not the hope of God's plan, the strength of God's service, or the delight of God's heart. In fact, such a

one is crying out for "WHO" shall deliver me from ME!! (Romans 7:24). Before this point everything was centered on self as the term "I" is echoed all throughout Eccl. 2:1-9 and Romans 7. But by the end of it all, we are finally ready for the "I" to die. The cross that once sounded so offensive and harsh starts sounding like the best thing we have ever heard. We are ready for LIFE, for HIS LIFE. The righteousness and gain that we once clung to as our way of serving the Lord is now easily released at the foot of the Cross where Christ crucified it all and gave us His Life. When someone's heart really begins to be in this condition, God's reality begins to burst forth like the morning star rising from within.

Conclusion

And so we find that our exhausting days of relating to God UNDER the Son in Ecclesiastes are meant to prepare our hearts for the incredible relationship of oneness IN Son discovered in the Song of Songs. These things written thousands of years ago in the scriptures are for us ... TODAY... that our hearts might find comfort in knowing that God desires to bring us into a relationship with His Son greater than we ever dreamed of! The exhaustion, depression and burn-out you may be experiencing right now is simply a heart turn away from discovering a relationship of fullness in union with Christ beyond all we could even comprehend. The Cross is our friend, not our enemy. Be not ashamed of it! Do not run away from it in fear! Rather embrace the Cross of Christ with purpose of heart knowing that through His death "I" was crucified that Christ might fill the depths of our being with His unspeakably wonderful Life! AMEN!***

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