

Song of Solomon 2

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[0 : 00] Let's turn now to the Song of Solomon, chapter 2, a passage we read together there, and we'll look at verses 8 to 14 in this chapter.

Chapter 2 of the Song of Solomon, reading at verse 8. The voice of my beloved, behold he comes, leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills.

My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, there he stands, behind our wall, gazing through the windows, looking through the ladders. My beloved speaks and says to me, Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.

And so on. The Song of Solomon is obviously a love poem. It's an expression of love between this young woman, this young country girl as she is, and this shepherd who she is in love with and he in love with her.

And it has some of the most beautiful language of any of the books of the Bible, and whatever we make of it in terms of its interpretation.

[1 : 12] And there are different ways of approaching it. Some people feel that it is just that and nothing more. That it is just an expression of love between two people. As that love finds in different circumstances in life, its expressions.

It has, at times, a painfulness to it. Other times it speaks about exhilaration. But whatever way we take it, and I'm not saying that's how we should take it, but it always leads us in some way or other to Christ.

Every book of the Bible, in some way, in its own way, leads us to Christ. And you remember in the New Testament, in Ephesians, for example, that Paul there uses the human marriage itself as an illustration of the relationship between Jesus and his people.

And how we should think about that relation of Jesus and his people whenever we think about marriage and what marriage is between a man and a woman. And that's why you can trace from this book, you can trace the lines of Christ's relationship to his people as a relationship of love where he expresses his love for them and where they express their love for him.

And the various circumstances that are mentioned by those two people here in love are themselves applicable. It's very easy to overdo the application, and we can have some very fanciful interpretations of the Song of Solomon.

[2 : 44] But if we keep to principles and if we keep to things that are elsewhere in the Bible very clearly revealed, then you can extract from the Song of Solomon these principles and these experiences in terms of our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, his with his people, that relationship of love.

Now in this passage, the young woman is hearing the voice of her beloved. He's been away for some time.

He's a shepherd. He may have been away with the flock or whatever, but he's on his way back and she hears his voice. And that time when they've been apart is now going to be something that is overcome by his presence.

It's going to come to an end because he's back here with her where she is. And there are two things there that really pretty much sum up for us what is precious to us in our relationships.

Even in a physical sense, you've got the voice and you've got the face. She describes his voice and his face. He describes her voice and wants to see her face.

[4 : 05] And that's really when people who are in love are apart. These are two of the things that really matter most during that time when they are apart.

That they don't hear the voice or if they do, they don't see the face until they're back together. Even if you're on the phone to somebody that you love, the very sound of the voice brings into your mind

the image of their face.

The face is so much part of our identity as indeed is our voice. It's amazing the difference you see in voices even when you see it on a screen in a kind of graph or a chart.

Such as when you have it played through a computer or whatever. The different voices have different types of shapes and appearances to them. So obviously does a person's face.

It's part of their identity. And what she is saying here is it's the voice of my beloved. And there he stands, gazing through the windows, looking through the ladders.

[5 : 16] So when you're actually apart from someone you love, you miss their voice and you miss their face. And even if you find that you're able to communicate by video, for example, it's not the same thing, is it, as the person actually being present with you where you are.

Because even if you see the face and hear the voice by a video, it's nevertheless not the same as being able to touch the person. And being able to have that particular experience of a person beside you.

And able to pick up the various nuances of expression, the look in the eyes, all that sort of stuff. Is really very difficult, if not impossible, when you're at a distance, even if you're able to see on a video screen the person you love.

And perhaps that element of touch is as important as any other. Jesus, in the Gospels, we're told, very often touched people that he was going to cure of an illness.

And the touch was very important, especially to somebody like a leper, for example, who would be ostracized and who would be held as socially outcast and untouchable.

[6 : 35] For someone like Jesus to come and touch them was not just an indication of his laying his hand powerfully upon them, but an indication, too, of a touch that really meant, in a physical sense, his concern, his own presence, if you like.

And that's what it's like in this passage as well. The face, the voice, the touch, everything is now being restored as you find it described here. What, then, can we make of that?

Well, first of all, it tells us something about how fellowship with Christ is precious to his people. And secondly, how fellowship with his people is precious to Christ.

Because there's two sides to the relationship, and mutually they share in that fellowship one with the other. Fellowship with Christ is precious to his people.

What's the first note that you hear as you read verse 8? What is the first word we should think of when you read verse 8? The voice of my beloved! Exclamation mark.

[7 : 43] What we should think of is a word like excitement. She's missed him. He's been away for some time. And now he's speaking to her, and as he approaches, he's calling out her name.

He's telling her, I'm back. I'm here. And as she detects his voice, and knows it's his voice, because she is in love with him, and she knows immediately whose voice it is, she's filled with excitement.

That's why there's an exclamation mark there. Just look at the exclamation marks in your Bible, because they're important. They're conveying to you certain sentiments, such as excitement.

There's a thrill going through this young woman, because her lover is back. Her beloved one, who's been away, is now drawing near.

She's excited at the prospect of meeting up with him again. And shouldn't that be an aspect of our relationship with Jesus as well?

[8 : 52] Shouldn't it be something that we constantly think about in terms of whether we are or not excited with him? And if our excitement has waned, how can we get that back again?

How can we actually have this excitement that we ought to have in our relationship restored?

Because that's really something that comes into the passage as well. You know, the Bible speaks very often about God hiding his face from his people.

Now, God can do that sovereignly. God can choose to do that for no apparent reason to us. But more often than not, God hiding his face from us is an indication that something has come between us and himself that's of our making.

And that, of course, is our sin or our neglect. There's such a thing in the New Testament, in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, as grieving the Spirit of God.

And attached to grieving the Spirit of God is God withdrawing his presence or the sense of his presence or the assurance of his presence from us.

[10 : 01] This is something that belongs to believing experience. Which is why, in the past, some of the great theologians of the past, people like Samuel Rutherford, for example, whose letters are

so world-famous and so filled with his love for Christ and expressions of Christ's love for him, that's when he found himself very often in the terminology of the Song of Solomon.

Because there were times when he wasn't just aware of the presence of Christ as he would like. When he knew that something had come between himself and the Lord. When he would exclaim of his own sinfulness, holy man though he was, that still he didn't have the enjoyment of Christ's presence that had come a distance between him and his beloved.

That's how it is for you and for me too. This relationship with Christ is real to us. There will be times when you are not as aware of his presence as you should be.

And that's something that should actually fill us with concern. When you don't hear his voice as clearly as you once did in the scriptures when you read them. Or in church as you hear sermons. When you don't have the sight of his face in a spiritual sense. Of course I mean as you once had when you read the word. When that image of Christ and the image of his beauty comes across to you.

[11:26] And when that comes to be restored there is an excitement isn't there? And there's a longing until that note of excitement reappears in your life.

And you get it back by doing what this woman had to do in another part of the song. She went out looking for her beloved.

She went out and spoke to people. Have you seen my beloved? That's what we're doing in the gospel. We're setting out in search of our beloved.

We're looking for Christ in the gospel. We're seeking to detect his voice speaking to us from the word. We're longing to hold fellowship with him in our souls.

To know that sense of his touch upon our lives. Once again through his spirit. These are such real things. As real to God's people.

[12:27] As their very physical appearance is real to them. Or the appearance of someone else physically is real to them. So there's this sense of excitement. As the separation is now coming to an end.

At least at this time. She is filled with excitement. And she recognizes him. That's the second thing. There's recognition. It's the voice of my beloved. Why is she excited?

Because she knows who it is. Because she sees that this in fact is the one that's been separate from her for some time. And now he's back. And she's excited. And she recognizes him.

And you know how you see how she describes it here. My beloved is standing behind our wall. Gazing through the windows. Looking through the lattice. If you look at these windows just now. You can see a kind of a lattice on them. And you can't see clearly through the glass as you could other types of glass. But you could still see somebody outside of the window. You could see the shape of the person.

[13:25] You might even, if they were close to the window, make out some features of their face. You might even be able to recognize who it was if you knew the person well. And what she's saying here is that through this lattice that's on her window, she recognizes that this is him, not only by his voice, but by his very appearance.

And that's what you do in the gospel. You recognize the appearance of Christ. What I mean by that is you recognize what this person is like. And there's a wonderful word here, gazing through the windows.

Looking through the lattice. Because in the Hebrew language that the Old Testament was written in, that word literally means sparkling.

Sparkling through the windows. As he looks through the lattice through the window, he is sparkling. There's a sparkle about him. If you look into the eyes of someone you love, isn't that a feature of their eyes as they look into yours and you look into theirs?

Isn't the sparkle of love actually something that you're aware of? And it's not in the eyes of someone that's not in love with you or you're not in love with.

[14:53] It doesn't just have to be a spouse. It can be a child. It can be someone else that you love. But it's there. That sparkle of love. And when you see that person looking into your eyes and that love comes across to you, there's a sparkle about it.

And that's what she's saying here about this loved one, this beloved one who's back. He's sparkling. He's outside the lattice. He's showing himself through the lattice. And he is sparkling as he comes towards me.

When did I, when did you last look into the eyes of Jesus and know that sparkle for yourself? Isn't that what you're here today for? To look into the gospel, into the word of God.

To wait upon the spirit of God for the Lord to draw near to you so that you will recognize him. So that you will recognize how precious he is to you and you are to him.

[15:57] So that you will actually see the sparkle of his eye as he looks in upon you and realize, wondrous though it is, that he loves you. And that he loves you despite what you are.

And that he loves you with a love that will never let you go. And that he loves you with a love that restores when things have come between you. That's today what you want and I want to come to know from this gospel.

The sense of excitement in this fellowship with Christ and this wonderful recognition of him as he reveals himself to us through the word.

And as he shows us his beauty. You know, that's what really the sparkle is about, isn't it? It's not just the sparkle of a love that's beautiful. It's a sparkle of a person that's beautiful in every way.

The beauty of his grace. The beauty of his patience. The beauty of his own perfect life. The beauty of his righteousness.

[17:00] The beauty of his holiness. The beauty of his care and his pastoral concern for you. Everything about him, as the song of Solomon says elsewhere.

This is my beloved. He is altogether lovely. There's nothing ugly about him.

He is all beauty. And it's that beauty that's coming across to her. And therefore that we apply to our relationship with Christ. This beauty in our recognition of him as to who he is.

How beautiful is Jesus to you today? How much do you recognize beauty? The beauty that is his. In the terms of the gospel. In the word of God. In your own relationship. To God's people.

[18:04] Fellowship with Christ is precious to his people. There's an excitement in it. There's a recognition in it. But there's also an invitation here from him to her. Arise my love.

My beautiful one. And come away. And then he describes the conditions that now prevail. For behold the winter has passed. The rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth.

The time of the singing has come. The voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land. And so on. Right down to verse 13 there. Arise my love. My beautiful one.

And come away. Well you can apply that in different ways. Even if you're here today in fellowship with Christ. And nothing has come at this moment between you and himself.

And you're enjoying that fellowship. Yet this occasion today is itself an opportunity to enter more fully into that relationship. To enter more fully into that love relationship that you have with him.

[19:05] And as you renew fellowship with him in the gospel. That's today what his call and his voice is about. Rise up my love my beautiful one.

And come away. But maybe you're here today. And your relationship with Jesus is not quite what it should be. Maybe there's a coldness crept in.

Maybe something has come between you and the Lord. And you know that. And you're aware that he is not as present. That he's not as near.

As he once was in your life. Maybe you know why that is. Maybe you're able to pinpoint exactly what you have done. To put him at a distance from you.

To cause him to hide his face from you. In the language of scripture. Well listen to his voice today. And listen to what he's saying. If that is the case with you indeed.

[20:11] This is what he is still saying to you today. Rise up my love my fair one. My beautiful one. And come away. For behold the winter is past. The rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth.

The time of the singing of birds has come. What he's saying is. What's changed with me? What's changed with the conditions that I've provided for you. For this relationship to be fostered and nourished and brought onwards.

It's still there. Everything that Christ has done is still there waiting for us. As we come back to him. As we come into renewed fellowship with him.

He's describing for us. That there is no reason why we should doubt. Whether or not we can renew that fellowship. Renew that acquaintance.

Nothing's changed as far as he's concerned. As far as his work is concerned. And then maybe today. You've not yet been in a living fellowship with Jesus.

[21 : 15] Maybe you're not yet saved. Maybe you're seeking for this relationship to begin. Maybe your interest is there.

But still you haven't yet progressed towards. Entering into this relationship with him. Where you are aware of his presence in your life.

His touch upon your life. Well he's saying this to you as well. Rise up. Come away with me. Look at the conditions that he is saying exist.

Beyond. Behind this lattice. Outside where he is. This is a time of spring. A time of early summer if you like. A time when the conditions are warm and favorable.

And there's growth. And there's beauty. In the creation as he's describing it. And you apply that spiritual. And what is God saying to us? Well he's saying to us that Christ's resurrection itself.

[22 : 13] That glorious resurrection. That wonderful resurrection where the power of death is broken. That's the spiritual springtime into which he's calling us by the gospel.

The results of his death and resurrection. The favorable conditions that actually are provided for us now by God in Christ. It's to that that he's calling us.

It's into that that he's calling us. It's into the enjoyment of that that he's calling us. I know there's much more to our relationship with God and with Christ and our enjoyment of things.

And we mustn't ever really put that above bringing glory to his name and giving praise to his name. But there is still nevertheless in our chief end.

The very purpose of our creation. That important element of enjoying God. As well as glorifying him. And he's calling us today.

[23 : 19] If we haven't already done so. To what he's done for us. The gloom. The dark winter gloom of sin.

Has been taken away. He's dealt with it. The very condemnation that stands upon us. As God views us as sinners. Christ has dealt with it.

This wonderful springtime. Summertime of salvation.

It's there. And he's saying just listen. Listen to the sounds of summer. What God has done.

What exists for sinners like you and I to enter into. Through faith in Christ. We don't create these conditions. We don't have to.

[24 : 17] We would only spoil it anyway if we tried to. But it's already done for us. And he's calling us today into it. To share together and to share with him.

This fellowship. That's precious to his people. You know when you are at the airport very often. You'll hear flights being called. And a number of times.

And then there will always be. Or usually this as well. Whether it's easy jet to Amsterdam.

Whatever. Final call. Final call means the gate is about to be shut.

It could be for you or for me today. This is Christ's final call.

The doorway to summer is still open. And his voice is calling us to enter it. To experience this wonderful warmth.

[25 : 22] Of life. With himself. It's precious to his people. But fellowship with his people.

Is also precious to Christ. I want to close with this just very briefly. Because notice what he's saying. To this one that he's in love with. As well as arise my beautiful one and come away.

He says all my dove and the cleft of the rock. And the crannies of the cliff. Let me see your face. Let me hear your voice. For your voice is sweet. And your face is lovely.

You notice the two elements mentioned again. The voice and the face. The voice of Christ. And the face of Christ in the gospel. So precious to his people. But the voice of his people.

And the face of his people. So precious to Christ. Isn't it an amazing fact today. That God desires. To hear our voice.

[26 : 22] To see our face. To hold fellowship with us. With the likes of us. But that's what this is saying to us.

That's what else. That's when the Bible is made very clear. That God has a delight in salvation.

That God has a delight in restoring us to fellowship with himself.

That God has a delight in forgiving sin. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. But that we should turn from our way and live. And God has that delight. In this relationship.

That he establishes in Christ for us. And today. There is no greater wonder. Than that God delights in the likes of us. Enjoy that delight.

Enjoy that delight that God has in you. Where you delight in him. Because that's why he's done it. Restoring that fellowship means that constantly through the gospel.

[27 : 22] Christ is assuring us how he loves that fellowship that he has with his people. We can say that of this gathering today. It's not for anything that we ourselves deserve.

But it's still a great fact nevertheless. That the Lord Jesus Christ. The King of creation. Himself takes delight today in being here.

In being here in fellowship with his people. Wonder of wonders. That that God. That Jesus. Should say. Of us today.

Let me see your face. Let me hear your voice. For your voice is sweet. And your face is lovely. We should constantly be amazed.

That Jesus finds us lovely. Because that's not what we are in ourselves. Because. The ugliness of sin.

[28 : 32] Is very much part of the description of the Bible. Of every one of us. But that didn't keep God away did it? It didn't keep the father of the prodigal.

From throwing his arms around him. That he'd been away. That he was filthy. That he was still in his rags. He smothered him.

In his welcome. He was so glad to hear his voice again. And so pleased to see his face. And there's the heart of Jesus for you.

This man receives sinners. And eats with him. That's why that parable was told. And today. Whether we've known him for many years. And are in a love relationship with him.

Today you can be assured. That he loves fellowship with you. If we've gone away from him. If we need that relationship restored. Be assured that he's calling you back.

[29 : 34] Be assured that he himself. Has no desire you should stay away. Or that that gap between you and himself. Should get wider. But that you should come back to him. And restore it.

And confess your fault and your sin. And beg and plead. And plead with him. Until again you know the touch of his hand. The sparkle in his eye.

The sound of his voice. And of course. At the end of it all. This is what Christ will say.

To all those that he will bring home to heaven. Because heaven is a place of eternal summertime. Where these conditions are perfected.

And where he says to his people. Come my beloved. Rise up and come away with me. For I long to see your face.

[30 : 33] And to hear your voice by my side. And when you go to Revelation. The last book of the Bible. That gives us some. Descriptions of heaven.

Two things strike us there as well. First is the voice of Christ. Second is the face of Christ. They shall see his face.

And his name shall be in their foreheads. They shall belong to him. And they shall be with him forever. Fellowship with Christ. Precious to his people.

Fellowship of his people is precious to Christ. Perhaps the most wonderful thing of all. Is that that is never going to end. That is what heaven is about.

Our enjoyment of fellowship with him. And his enjoyment of fellowship. With his saved people. Whatever it was like for you here today.

[31 : 39] Whatever condition you came here today in. However you have been struck by these words or not. Our prayer for everyone is.

That you will know him. And that he will know you as his. And that you will always have. The preciousness of his love.

Occupying your mind and heart. Let's pray. Lord we thank you today for your love. A love which we cannot adequately describe.

Or find words in our lives. That will be in any way adequate. To convey the sense of that love to others. We thank you for the way in which your love has embraced your people.

And for the way that they experience it. In that fellowship and relationship they have with you.

Forgive us Lord we pray. For the times that we stray. For the times that we cause.

[32 : 45] A separation to come. Into our relationship with you. Cover our sin from your sight. We pray. As the one who restores our souls. Lord we pray that you would shepherd us this day.

And that you would lead us on. In this life everlasting. Hear us we pray now. For Jesus sake. Amen. Let's conclude by singing.

In Psalm number 68. Psalm 68. The traditional version. In the Scottish Psalter. Verses 32 to 35. That's on page 305.

The tune is Lloyd. O all ye kingdoms of the earth sing. Praises to this king. For he is Lord that ruleth all. And to him praises sing.

The four verses there to the end of the psalm. Let's stand to sing. For he is Lord that ruleth all.

[33 : 54] Sing praises to this king. For he is Lord that ruleth all.

Unto him praises sing. To him the price on ends of ends.

Which he all bolded by. Glories and sun.

His voice avoids. In might of the power.

Strength unto God. Do ye not strive.

[34 : 56] On his excellency. His strength. His strength. His strength.

Is in the blood's most high.

Thirt from thy temple. Strength unto the Lord. Strength unto the Lord. His strength.

O Lord is he. Earn his strength. Earn his strength. Strength unto the Lord.

All let God bless it be. One thing I forgot to mention.

[35 : 53] It's not on the intimations. But those ladies who applied to go to the event. The WFM event in June. There are confirmation slips available today.

Just to confirm your place. If you see Donna please in the hall. Just now or sometime later today.

She's got the confirmation slips for you. So if you apply to go. There's a confirmation slip for that.

And I'll go to the side door here just now. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God the Father. And the communion of the Holy Spirit. Be with you now and always.

Amen.