

General Subject:

Considerations Concerning the Initial Stages of the Sisters' Experience
of the Overcoming Life as Portrayed in the Song of Songs

(An application from outlines of the fall term of 2005 messages for the Full-Time Training)

Message One

Loving the Lord and Being Subdued by Him
for our Transformation

Scripture Reading: S. S. 1:1-4, 9-16a; 2:1-4

- I. The overcoming life in the Song of Songs is the life of God in Christ whom we receive as a seed of life when we believe into Him (1:1; Col. 2:6; cf. 3:4 and notes; 1 John 5:11-12; 1 Pet. 1:23).
 - A. Regeneration brings the gene of God into us; all the experiences of our whole Christian life are in this gene—1 John 3:9; Mark 4:26; 1 Pet. 1:23 and Notes 1 and 2.
 - B. In principle, all the spiritual high points in Song of Songs are ours already because they are in the gene of God, the life of God, which has been dispensed into us and will grow in us—Rom. 8:10; Col. 2:19).
- II. Life is a person, Christ Himself, and there is no other way to enjoy this person but by loving Him—Mark 12:30:
 - A. Since the Lord as our life is a person, we must contact Him; we need the present presence, the present person, of Christ all the time, no matter how much we have experienced Him and enjoyed Him in the past—John 8:12; Phil. 3:13-14.
 - B. If we love Jesus, Jesus loves us and the Father loves us also; when the Son manifests Himself to us, the Father comes with Him to make an abode with us for our enjoyment—cf. 1 Cor. 2:9-12; John 14:21, 23.
 - C. The beginning of our love toward the Lord is a vision of His person; we cannot go on without new knowledge with fresh spiritual impressions of the Lord and a new vision of Him—Acts 26:14-19; 2 Cor. 4:6-7; Phil. 3:8-10a, 13; cf. Deut. 4:25 and footnote 1.
 - D. Christ visits us spiritually because He is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit; our spirit is the Holy of Holies, the chambers of the pneumatic Christ as the Lord of lords and the King of kings—1 Cor 15:45b; Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22.
 1. In order to contact Christ and enjoy Christ for the Body of Christ, we must exercise our mingled spirit—Eph. 1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18.
 2. We need to contact the Lord privately in a secret, definite, and prevailing way, opening our entire being to Him for His enlightening and infusing—Matt. 6:6.
- III. Our personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual relationship with the Lord causes us to love Him for His purpose, leading us into the church life where we can be transformed and perfected by being constituted with the Triune God for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem—S. S. 1:7-11; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 3:12a.
- IV. In the first stage of overcoming (S. S. 1:2-2:7), the seeker of Christ overcomes the attraction of the world by being attracted and captivated by Christ—1:2-4; Matt. 4:16-20; Luke 9:23-24; Heb. 12:2; 13:13; *Hymns*, #437.
 - A. Our love for the Lord does not depend upon our ability to love Him—it depends upon His loveliness—S. S. 5:10-16.
 - B. We cannot love the Lord without seeing His beauty; once we see His beauty, we cannot help loving Him—S. S. 1:2-4; Mark 12:30; 1 Cor. 2:9.

- V. After we have been attracted by the Lord's beauty to love Him, we must learn one unique lesson—to be subdued—S. S. 1:9-11:
- A. Song of Songs speaks not only of love but also the subduing of the will—v. 10; 4:1, 4.
 - B. The more our will is subdued and voluntarily submissive, the more we will be transformed:
 1. In 1:10 the Beloved appreciates the seeker's loveliness in her submission to Him (cheeks lovely with plaits of ornaments) and her beauty in her obedience to the transforming Spirit (neck with strings of jewels); in 4:1 we see the beauty of Christ's lover in her submission and obedience through God's feeding (hair like a flock of goats reposing on Mt. Gilead); and in 4:4 the lover of Christ is beautiful in her having a will that is submissive to Him (neck like the tower of David).
 2. In the New Testament the role of the sisters follows the pattern of the lover of the Lord in the Song of Songs: the wives are to be submissive to their own husbands (Eph. 5:21; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1-6) and the sisters in the church life are to lead a quiet and submissive life with a deportment that expresses restriction in soberness and discreetness (1 Cor. 11:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:9-15).
 - a. The writing of the apostle Paul is not acceptable to many, perhaps the majority of both men and women in our present-day culture, but we need to consider soberly what the Bible reveals concerning God, His calling, and His purpose, together with our role and function according to His calling (Eph. 1:3-6; 17-18; 2 Tim. 1:9-10).
 - b. Paul's statement: "But she will be saved through her childbearing, if they remain in faith and love and holiness with sobriety" (1 Tim. 2:15) indicates that the well-being of the family, the testimony of the local churches, and even the peaceful survival and security of a people in any country depend greatly upon the comportment, attitude, and living of the women in a manner that fits the admonition of the scriptures.
- VI. The lover of Christ is beautified through the process of transformation in the church life—S. S. 1:7-2:4.
- A. Whether we are overcomers or defeated ones depends on the transformation of our soul and on our attitude toward God's transforming work—Rom. 12:2:
 1. God's transforming work is actually His exercising of His kingdom to subdue every negative thing in humanity and bring it into oneness with the will and purpose of God.
 2. Transformation is a heavenly, spiritual, divine metabolic change in our being—S. S. 1:9-11, 15; 2:1-2.
 - B. Transformation in the church life is carried out by the transforming Spirit through our turning to be unveiled in order to behold and reflect the Christ revealed in the Scriptures—2 Cor. 3:16-18
 - C. The lover of Christ is transformed from a strong natural person (mare) into a person who looks to the Lord with a single eye (eyes like doves—Matt. 3:16; 10:16) and into a person who lives a life of not relying on herself but trusting in Him (lily—6:28-29, 33).
 - D. In this transforming work there is the need of the coordination of some "transformers"—the perfecting ones who help the seeker to know God in His nature and to experience Christ—S. S. 1:11 and Note 1; Eph. 4:11-12.
 - E. The love of Christ's lover toward Him as spikenard spreads forth its fragrance—S. S. 1:12; Mark 14:3; John 12:3; cf. Matt. 26:6-13.

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Message Two

Seeing Christ in His Resurrection, Having Visions of the Cross and of the Self,
and Living in His Ascension to be the Beautified Lover of Christ as the New Creation

Scripture Reading: S. S. 2:8-3:5; Matt. 16:24; Phil. 3:10; S. S. 3:6, 9-10; 4:1-5

- I. Called by the vision of Christ in His resurrection—Christ empowers His lover by showing her the power of His resurrection by the gazelle's leaping upon the mountains and the young hart's skipping upon the hills—2:8-13; Eph. 1:17-21.
 - A. It is by the power of Christ's resurrection that we determine to take the cross by denying the self—Matt. 16:24.
 - B. It is by the power of Christ's resurrection that we are enabled to be conformed to His death—Phil. 3:10; S. S. 2:14 and Note 1.
 - C. The reality of resurrection is Christ as the life-giving Spirit indwelling and mingled with our regenerated spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17.
 - D. In the mingled spirit we experience the resurrection of Christ, which enables us to be one with the cross to be delivered from the self.
- II. To be empowered with the resurrected Christ, we need to see a vision of the cross—Gal. 6:14; 2:20; 3:1; 1 Cor. 2:2.
 - A. In His economy God has given us one person—the all-inclusive Christ—and one way—the cross—1 Cor. 2:2; Phil. 2:5-11.
 - B. The cross is the centrality and the universality of the way to accomplish God's economy; in order to progress spiritually and to have the church life, we need to experience the cross—Col. 1:20; 2:14-15; 1 Cor. 1:2, 9, 18-23; 2:2; 3:6, 9; 12:27.
- III. We need to see a vision of the self—Matt. 16:22-24; Luke 9:23-25.
 - A. The self is the embodiment of Satan—when the mind, the thought, of Satan was injected into the human soul, the soul was corrupted and became the self—Gen.3:1-6; Matt. 16:23-24.
 1. The self is the soul plus the satanic mind, the mind of Satan—v. 23
 2. To be in the self is to be incorporated with Satan—vv. 22-24.
 - B. The self is the soul declaring its independence from God—Gen. 3:1-6.
 - C. The self is the greatest problem to the building up of the Body—Matt. 16:24; Eph. 4:16.
- IV. In Song of Songs 2:8-3:5 the Lord calls His lover to be delivered from the self through the oneness with the cross:
 - A. The cross is signified by the clefts of the rock and the covert of the precipice—2:14a.
 - B. To be delivered from the self means to be saved from the self through becoming one with the cross of Christ—S. S. 2:8-3:5
 - C. The New Testament testifies that through Christ's death on the cross, "our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day"—2 Cor. 4:16-18 and footnotes.

- V. The issue of our being delivered from the self through our oneness with the cross is that we experience the flourishing of resurrection life, we experience and enjoy Christ, we grow in the divine life, we are beautified through transformation, and we become conscious of the Body of Christ and live in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body—Phil 3:10; Col. 2:19; Rom. 12:4-5, 15; 1 Cor. 12:12-27.
- VI. In Song of Songs 3:6–5:1 the lover of Christ is called to live in ascension as the new creation in resurrection.
- To live in ascension is to live continually in our spirit; when we live in our spirit, we are joined to the ascended Christ in the heavens—Eph. 2:22; Gen. 28:12-17; John 1:51; Rev. 4:1-2; Heb. 4:12.
 - We must learn to hide ourselves in the secret place of the Most High, to hide ourselves in the ascended Christ, taking Him as our dwelling place—Psa. 91:1, 14-16; cf. S. S. 2:14.
 - To take God as our eternal dwelling place is the highest and fullest experience of God—Psa. 90:1-2.
 - “In everything and in all things I have learned the secret...I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me” (Phil. 4:12-13; cf. 5-7); the secret is to be in Him, and the secret of the secret is to be in our spirit (Eph. 2:22).
 - We dwell in God by dwelling in our spirit, the dwelling place of God; in our spirit and in the church, we can behold His beauty and be infused with His beauty to become the beautified new creation—2:22; Rom. 8:6; Psa. 27:4; Isa. 60:7b, 19b; 62:3; S. S. 3:11; Prov. 12:4a.
- VII. “Who is she who comes up from the wilderness / Like pillars of smoke...?”—for the seeker to be a pillar of smoke means that she is absolutely in the spirit and stable, flexible, and strong in the unshakable power of the Spirit (Rev. 3:12); in experience she has become the same as God, who is Spirit, and the same as Christ, who is a ladder, bringing heaven to earth and joining earth to heaven—1 Cor. 2:15; Rom. 1:9; Phil. 3:3; John 1:51.
- VIII. “King Solomon made himself a palanquin / Of the wood of Lebanon.”—S. S. 3:9-10.
- In order to become the moving vessel of Christ, we are rebuilt with the Divine Trinity so that our external structure is the resurrected and ascended humanity of Jesus and our interior decoration is our love for the Lord—S. S. 3:9-10.
 - Through our loving the Lord in a personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual way, our natural being is torn down, and we are remodeled with Christ’s redeeming death, God’s divine nature, and Christ’s kingship as the life-giving Spirit ruling within us—S. S. 3:10; cf. Rom. 8:28-29; 2 Cor. 4:16-18,
- IX. Song of Songs 4:1-5 reveals the beauty of the lover, the bride, as the new creation for the Lord’s delight—2 Cor. 5:17; cf. S. S. 3:11 and notes.
- The beauty of Christ’s lover is seen in her spiritual insight and discernment and in the singleness of her heart—2 Cor. 2:12-17.
 - The beauty of Christ’s lover is seen in her submission and obedience through God’s feeding (hair like a flock of goats)—S. S. 4:1b.
 - The beauty of Christ’s lover is seen in her speaking with Christ’s redemption and with His authority (lips like a scarlet thread)—S. S. 4:3a; Josh 2:21; Matt. 27:28-29; Isa. 6:6-7; 2 Cor. 4:5.
 - The beauty of Christ’s lover is seen in her having a will that is submissive to Christ (neck like the tower of David) and that is rich in the defending power (bucklers and shields of the mighty men)—S. S. 4:4; Phil. 2:13.
 - The beauty of Christ’s lover is seen in her tender faith and love that are strengthened twofold (two breasts—Gal. 5:6; 1 Tim. 1:14) and nourished (feed) in the environment of a pure and trusting life (among her lilies—Matt. 6:28)—S. S. 4:5.