

***THE JOURNEY OF THE BRIDE:
OUR PATHWAY TO INTIMACY AND AUTHORITY
– GARY WIENS***

INTRODUCTION: SEEING THE END FROM THE BEGINNING – THE DESTINY OF THE BRIDE

Revelation 19:6–7 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

Central thesis for this series of messages: God’s eternal purpose is to have a family of beloved sons and daughters with whom He can share His full authority and power as the Sovereign over all creation. In order for this to be reality, it is essential that human beings, of their own free will, choose to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength in the face of the enemy’s strategies to turn them away from the Father’s love.

Those who say ‘yes’ to God’s invitation to love in the face of the pressures that arise in life are brought into a relationship of intimacy and union with Him that is best described as bridal partnership. God the Father desires to have sons and daughters who will be qualified to be a suitable Bride for His beloved Son.

Our task in these sessions is to explore the journey, the pathway that He lays before us as His beloved, in making ourselves ready to rule and reign with Jesus the King. Our reference through the series will be the Song of Solomon.

I. ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE

- A. The King’s Initiative – we were created to live by the voice of God

Song of Solomon 1:2 – “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth”

Hebrews 1:1–3 God, ... has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds ... upholding all things by the word of His power.

1. The kisses of His mouth (words of love) break into our dead hearts and give life
Ezekiel 16:5–6 ... on the day you were born ... I passed by you and ... I said to you ... ‘Live!’ Yes, I said to you ... ‘Live!’

Hebrews 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith;

Romans 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

This is the ministry of the Spirit of the Father – Ephesians 3:16

Ephesians 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,

2. Chosen by the King

- a. John 15:16 – chosen for intimacy and authority

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

- b. Chosen in love before the worlds were made – Ephesians 1:3-6

Ephesians 1:3–6 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

Chosen in Christ – seen in the Son from the beginning, chosen to be conformed to His image.

- c. Objects of delight from the very beginning – Proverbs 8:22-31

Proverbs 8:30–31 Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in His inhabited world, and my delight was with the sons of men.

- d. The promise of the Father to His innocent children

Genesis 1:27–28 So God created man in His own image... Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Psalm 115:16 The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’s; But the earth He has given to the children of men.

We were created for authority over all creation in the context of intimate friendship with God.

B. Confronting our Broken Image

Song of Solomon 1:5 “I am dark ... like the tents of Kedar”

1. The root systems of self-hate and conflict – Genesis 3

- a. Questioning the promise of the Father

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ...”

- b. The choice of self-will – taking charge of our own destiny

Genesis 3:6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

- c. The judgment

Genesis 3:16 To the woman He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow ...; Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

The result of the distorted gaze is that we look to other sources than the Father to define us and give our lives meaning.

2. Breaking judgments and strongholds – 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

2 Corinthians 10:4–5 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

Our task is to turn away from other voices, receive the Word of the Father that defines us, and embrace the journey of living in the truth of what He declares over us and over all that concerns us.

- C. The Power of His Voice – Embracing and agreeing with the Bridegroom’s perspective concerning ourselves and others, since He knows the end from the beginning.

Song of Solomon 1:5 “I am ... lovely... like the curtains of Solomon”

Song of Solomon 1:8 “... O fairest among women ...”

1. Seeing the apostle in the fisherman – Mark 3:14; 2 Corinthians 5:16

Mark 3:14 Then He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles), that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach,

2 Corinthians 5:16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

2. Seeing the worshipper in the broken woman – John 8
John 8:11 She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”
3. The King’s “Banner of Love” – Song 2:4; interpreting the events of the journey
Song of Solomon 2:4 He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

In the House of Wine, the place of betrothal, we come to understand His covenant love that defines and helps us to interpret every part of the journey that is before us.

II. SUMMONED INTO ADVENTURE (CAUTION: DANGER INVOLVED HERE)

Song of Solomon 2:8–10 The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, gazing through the lattice. My beloved spoke, and said to me: “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

It is the King’s initiative, His strategic withdrawal that woos the Bride out of her comfort zone.

A. Introducing Strategic Withdrawal – honoring the human dignity of choosing to love

1. The Purpose – to deepen our hearts in trust and love

(God) is prepared to do a little overriding at the beginning. He will set (His children) off with communications of His presence which, though faint, seem great to them, with emotional sweetness, and easy conquest over temptation. But He never allows this state of affairs to last long. Sooner or later He withdraws, if not in fact, at least from their conscious experience, all those supports and incentives. He leaves the creature to stand up on its own legs--to carry out from the will alone duties which have lost all relish. It is during such trough periods, much more than during the peak periods, that it is growing into the sort of creature He wants it to be. Hence the prayers offered in the state of dryness are those which please Him best. We can drag our patients along by continual tempting, because we design them only for the table, and the more their will is interfered with the better. He cannot "tempt" to virtue as we do to vice. He wants them to learn to walk and must therefore take away His hand; and if only the will to walk is really there He is pleased even with their stumbles. **Do not be deceived, Wormwood. Our cause is never more in danger, than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys.** - CS Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, Chapter 8

2. First Adam and Last Adam – the Garden and the Wilderness

Luke 4:1–2 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, ... was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being (tested) for forty days by the devil.

Matthew 27:46 And ... Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ... “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

The prototype humans were left on their own to choose love in the face of the enemy’s strategy. The first Adam failed, the Last Adam prevailed.

B. Dancing on Mountains: The Clash between Destiny and Fear

1. The Mountains: places of failure turned into realms of victory and authority

Exodus 14:15–16 And the LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

Zechariah 4:6–7 So he answered and said to me: “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the LORD of hosts. ‘Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of “Grace, grace to it!” ’ ”

Mark 11:23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

2. The Victory of Jesus over the High Mountain – Matthew 16:13-17:9

Matthew 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 17:1–2 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

- a. These encounters were in the region of Caesarea Philippi, at the base of Mt. Hermon, the “high mountain” of Matthew 17:1

The high mountain may have been Mount Hermon, near Caesarea Philippi, for Jesus was in that region (Matt. 16:13).¹

¹ Louis A. Barbieri, Jr., “[Matthew](#),” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 59.

- b. Mt. Hermon was notorious as a place of demonic activity and worship, known as “the gates of hell.”

... the scene takes place on geography considered the gates of hell in Old Testament times, the domain of Baal, the lord of the dead, and at the mountain where the plot of the Watchers was hatched.²

Genesis 6:1–2 *Now it came to pass ... that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.*

And they were, all of them, two hundred, who descended in the days of Jared onto the peak of Mount Hermon.⁵³ And they called the mountain “Hermon” because they swore and bound one another with a curse on it.³

- c. Jesus’ transfiguration on Mt. Hermon was a prophetic sign of His victory over the demonic strongholds and the restoration of the creation to His purposes, all of which would be accomplished through the dark night of the cross.

Jesus goes to ground zero in biblical demonic geography to announce that Bashan (Hermon) will be defeated. It is the gates of hell that are under assault—and they will not hold up against the church. Hell has no claim on those who align themselves with Jesus. He will reverse the curse of death and His own will rise on account of Him.⁴

- d. When we are invited to come with Him to the mountains, Jesus is calling us to share in His victory and the authority that comes as fear and death are conquered.

Song of Solomon 4:8 *Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards.*

Notice: There are two ways to conquer seas and mountains – sometimes you part the waters, sometimes you walk on the water. Sometimes the mountain is cast into the sea, sometimes you leap and dance on the mountaintops.

3. Identity exhibited or identity exposed? Identity is revealed in the crucible of the tests of life.

² Heiser, Michael S.. Reversing Hermon: Enoch, the Watchers, and the Forgotten Mission of Jesus Christ . Lexham Press. Kindle Edition. Location 1624

³ 1 Enoch 6:6, quoted in Michael Heiser, Reversing Hermon, loc. 508

⁴ Heiser, Reversing Hermon, location 1638

“We’re not trying to humiliate the best players in the world; we’re simply trying to identify who they are.” – Sandy Tatum, past Chairman, USGA competition committee

C. Wrestling with God: the Revelation of Suffering Love

Song of Solomon 3:4 ... When I found the one I love. I held him and would not let him go...

There is a wrestling with God in which He seems to say “No!” to our seeking, but in which He is actually inviting us to fight with Him for our inheritance.

Matthew 11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.

What did it cost to win our hearts?

III. ABANDONMENT TO SOVEREIGNTY AND LOVE

Jesus was fully abandoned to the Father’s strategy, since He was completely confident in the power of God’s love to sustain Him in the test, to raise Him up in glory, and to complete the work He had sent Him to do. The Father’s desire and plan is to have a Bride that is qualified to be the reigning partner of this glorious Son.

Song of Solomon 4:6 – “I will make my way to the mountain of myrrh, to the hill of frankincense.”

Song of Solomon 4:16 – “Awake, O north wind, and come, O south! Blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out.”

A. Fixing our eyes on Jesus

1. Jesus’ unexpected path to glory – John 12:23-28

John 12:23–28 But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. ... “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour?’ But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”

John 18:11 “Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given Me?”

The glory of God is fully revealed through a human being who will trust the Father’s love and obey His command under the pressure of the enemy’s strategy of resistance.

2. Jesus' pathway to joy was the obedient endurance of the cross
Hebrews 12:2 ... looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
 3. Jesus' twofold joy: the pleasure of the Father and the reward of His suffering
Isaiah 53:10–12 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. ... I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong ...
- B. Invited into the Communion of Suffering where the Word is tested – Philippians 3:10; Song 5:2
Philippians 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship (communion) of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
- Song of Solomon 5:2 I sleep, but my heart is awake; It is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, "Open for me, my sister, my love, My dove, my perfect one; For my head is covered with dew, My locks with the drops of the night."*
- Song of Solomon 5:7–8 The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took my veil away from me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I am lovesick!*

The issue before us: Offended and heartsick, or unoffended and lovesick?

1. Abraham – Genesis 24

Faith demonstrated in the willingness to sacrifice his son. How did he do this?
Hebrews 11:17–19 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac... concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."
2. Joseph – Genesis 37-50; Psalm 105:16-22
 - a. God's promise to Joseph had no hint of the difficulty of the qualification process
 - b. Joseph was demonstrated as worthy to have authority and to be a prophetic picture of Jesus as the redeemer and King.

Psalm 105:17–19 He sent a man before them— Joseph—who was sold as a slave. They hurt his feet with fetters, he was laid in irons. Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the LORD tested him.

3. Mary of Bethany – John 11

Faith tested in the crucible of the dark night of faith, the cloud of not knowing.

4. Paul – Colossians 1:24

Colossians 1:24 I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,

- C. The Purpose of the Dark Night – a Bride who is worthy of this Bridegroom

Remember: A central idea to understanding the ways of God: His eternal purpose is to have a family, rooted and grounded in love, with whom He can share His full power and authority in the governance of the universe.

1. The Worthiness of Jesus was Demonstrated through the Dark Night of His earthly life – Hebrews 5:8-9; Revelation 5:8-14

Hebrews 5:8–9 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

Revelation 5:8–10 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”

Jesus came to earth to reveal the Father to us, but also to reveal true humanity to us. He came to fulfill all the Father’s will as a man empowered by the Holy Spirit, and then to impart His life to us by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Because He was perfectly obedient in the face of the enemy’s worst plans, He was exhibited as faithful and worthy of all honor, glory, power, and strength.

2. The Bride of Christ: A helper suitable for Him – Genesis 2; Ephesians 5

Ephesians 5:30–32 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

If we understand that Jesus’ life on earth was for the purpose of demonstrating His worthiness as a human to receive the Father’s promise of eternal intimacy and authority, then we can also begin to understand that through the redemption He provided this is His purpose for us as well.

- D. The Revelation of the Beauty of the King – He is worthy!

Song of Solomon 5:10, 16 My beloved is white and ruddy, Chief among ten thousand. ... 16 Yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, And this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!

Song of Solomon 5:11, 14 His head is like the finest gold; ... His hands are rods of gold...

The surprising and glorious result of enduring the dark night with a lovesick heart is the further revelation of the beauty of Jesus. We are rewarded with the self-disclosure of His character, His faithful love demonstrated to us in His perfect leadership of our lives. His love and obedience is the source of our strength for the journey.

Hebrews 12:2-3 ... Looking unto Jesus ..., consider Him ... lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

IV. THE BRIDE ESTABLISHED IN INTIMACY AND AUTHORITY

Song of Solomon 6:4–5 O my love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, Lovely as Jerusalem, Awesome as an army with banners! Turn your eyes away from me, For they have overcome me.

Having emerged from the dark night with a lovesick and unoffended heart, the Bride is now seen as a suitable dwelling place for the King to manifest His presence.

- A. Awesome as an Army with Banners – the Bride has overcome in the test of the dark night

1. There is a reality of overcoming that is required of the Bride in order to receive the full blessings that Jesus holds in His heart for us.

“To him who overcomes, I will give ...” – Revelation 2&3

2. We must not lose sight of the value that the Father places on overcoming the enemy and his strategies. This is especially in focus for our generation now as we approach the end of the age and the Day of His appearing.

Matthew 24:13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

The challenges of these days are the context in which the glorious and victorious Bride will emerge as the Army with Banners, engaging the enemy, occupying the gates of hell, and preparing the way for the King to enter.

B. Servanthood to Friendship – John 15:13-17

John 15:13–17 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another.

1. Faithfulness in the journey results in greater levels of revelation, love, and release in the life of the Kingdom.

Song of Solomon 7:6–9 How fair and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights! ... (the King) said, “I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches. Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, and the roof of your mouth like the best wine.” The wine goes down smoothly for my beloved, moving gently the lips of sleepers.

The fruit of overcoming faith in the life of the Bride is the presence and anointing of the Spirit of Christ that empowers our ministry to be like His, all in the context of intimacy.

2. The Father’s desire is to bring us to the place where when we pray, He has to answer.

CONCLUSION: At the end of the journey, there is a two-fold blessing for the Bride: we present the fruit of our lives to the King, and are invited to lift our voices to incite the King to return to take His place as Sovereign Lord over all.

Song of Solomon 8:12–14 (The Bride) My own vineyard is before me. You, O Solomon, may have a thousand, and those who tend its fruit two hundred. (The King) You who dwell in the gardens, the companions listen for your voice— let me hear it! (The Bride) Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices.

Revelation 22:17, 21 And the Spirit and the Bride say “Come!” ... “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”