

SESSION 8: Challenging The Comfort Zone (2:8-17)

SONG 2:8-17

- 8** *The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.*
- 9** *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.*
- 10** *My beloved spoke, and said to me: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.*
- 11** *For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.*
- 12** *The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.*
- 13** *The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!*
- 14** *"O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely."*
- 15** *Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.*
- 16** *My beloved is mine, and I am his. He feeds his flock among the lilies.*
- 17** *Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bethel. (Song 2:8-17)*

I. OVERVIEW OF SONG 2:8-17

In 1:5-7 she faced her first spiritual crisis, which was sin as a veiled woman with the unkempt vineyard. In 2:7 the Lord says, "Don't disturb her." He is disturbing her. It is the voice of God Himself. In 2:8 she confronted her second spiritual crisis which was fear. He is awakening her now. We don't know how much time has elapsed between verses 7 and 8. He did not want anyone else to disturb her. He told the daughters, "Let her sleep." But now, He is awakening her. This is the third revelation of Jesus in the Song. Jesus knocks on the door of her heart to bring her out of the comfort zone and into mature partnership with Himself. This season brings changes in her life. The time frame between 2:7 and 2:8 could be a week later, a month later, or 10 years later. It is different in everybody's life.

In 2:17 she refuses to leave the comfort zone.

The issue before her: "Is Jesus Christ a safe God?", "Is it safe to obey Him 100%?". In the flesh, it seems safer to be in the boat without Jesus instead of on the water with Him.

II. THE 3RD REVELATION OF JESUS— THE SOVEREIGN KING

“The voice of my Beloved! Behold He comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.” (2:8-9a)

- A. The young Bride has an entirely new revelation of Jesus as the sovereign king. She sees Jesus as the “Lord of all” who effortlessly conquers all opposing mountains. Up until this time she only understood Jesus as the counseling shepherd and the affectionate Father sitting at the table lovingly feeding her grapes and apples. But now He is skipping and leaping on mountains. It is unknown how much time elapsed between 2:7 and 2:8. He is revealed as leaping on mountains. Up to this point, she thought He just rested under shade trees. She'd never seen Him in this light.

- B. Jesus is now awakening her heart with His voice.

“The voice of my Beloved!” (2:8a).

- C. She sees Him as the beautiful God that she loves.

“my Beloved” (2:8a)

- D. He wants her full and undivided attention.

“Behold, He comes” (2:8b)

- E. Jesus is seen as the Lord of the nations, and the harvest. Jesus, the King, overcomes human and demonic obstacles. Mountains speak of obstacles that hinder her full faith and obedience.

“He comes leaping upon the ‘mountains’, skipping upon the ‘hills’”. (2:8c,d)

1. “Mountains” are symbolic of human or demonic obstacles. They also speak of natural or spiritual governments. Jesus taught us to speak to “mountains of adversity”, commanding them to move.

“... whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart...he will have whatever he says.” (Mark 11:23)

2. The Scripture also speaks of mountains in context to natural and spiritual governments. Since a mountain is very large and immovable, it provides a good picture of government. Why? Because a government is very large and unmovable. It is permanent. The obstacles in the world are as nothing before Him.

3. Mountains speak of spiritual governments as in powers and principalities. Jesus triumphed over all demonic powers and principalities.

***“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.”
(Isaiah 2:2)***

- a. This speaks of the mountain of the house of the Lord being greater than all the other mountains. This refers to the government of His kingdom as being greater than all other governments. Communism was a mountain that He skipped over and brought down effortlessly. That means the authority of the government of God's house will one-day be greater than the authority of any nation.
- b. The prophet Daniel uses the picture language of a mountain to prophesy that God's kingdom will triumph over all the governments of the earth.

“...the stone...became a great mountain and filled the whole earth...the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. In as much as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands.” (Dan. 2:35,44)

- c. The prophet Zechariah instructed Zerubbabel to speak grace to the mountains of adversity.

“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!’” (Zech. 4:7)

4. “Hills” speak of personal difficulties in our lives. They are much smaller than the mountains of oppression in the nations. Mountains speak of the largest obstacles.

- F. This is her third new revelation of Jesus. She sees Him as a gazelle or a young stag leaping and skipping on mountains. Jesus is pictured in His effortless victory over all His enemies and all their authority structures, whether on the earth or in the heavens (Col. 1:13). He is seated far above all power, thrones, dominions and names (Eph. 1:22). He has authority over all nations. Jesus is revealed as leaping over these enemies with ease in His victorious resurrected life.

“He comes ‘leaping upon’ the mountains, ‘skipping upon’ the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.” (v.8c-9a)

1. A gazelle is an animal that is fast and especially swift in their sudden energetic movements. A gazelle can run easily in the high places. The gazelle is the picture of effortless ascending up the mountain.
 2. This is a new revelation of Jesus as a triumphant leaping gazelle with boundless energy and agility to overcome obstacles. This gazelle is fast and swift, with tremendous movement leaping from place to place. It is no challenge for Him to leap over all mountains (enemies, obstacles, and demonic dominions).
 3. The heavenly Stag speaks of fearlessly conquering all opposition.
 4. Summary-This is not the fragile and easily distracted gazelle that was used in verse 7. The gazelle here is associated with the fearless young stag. Great agility and fearlessness is the main point of the metaphor, combining the gazelle and the young stag.
- G. She is weak and about to compromise, yet continues to relate to Jesus as her beloved.

“My beloved’ is like a gazelle.”

1. Each time the Bride speaks to Jesus she calls Him “my Beloved”. When she speaks about Jesus to others she refers to Him as the One she loves.
2. Each time Jesus speaks to the young Bride in the SONG, He uses one of 2 words. He either calls her, “My love”, referencing His affection, or He calls her “fair one”, referencing her beauty in redemption.
3. The name “my love” is used 22 times in the SONG. The name “beloved” is used 22 times in the SONG. See appendix at the end of this session.

III. “WALL” OF SELF-PROTECTION AND ISOLATION

“Behold, He stands behind our wall He is looking through the windows, gazing through the lattice.” (2:9b,c,d)

- A. He is standing, pictured as ready for action. The Lord is normally pictured sitting in the Scripture. He is especially pictured as sitting in heaven, as sitting in a place of rest and dominion but here He's standing. He is pictured as sitting calm and in victory with His enemies under His feet.

“Behold, ‘He stands’ behind our wall.”

1. Earlier she was sitting at the table with Him in great delight.
 - a. The point is that He is ready for action. He stands. In other words, the great commission is being introduced (Matthew 28:19). He is commissioned to conquer the nations.
 - b. When Stephen died the Lord stood up.

“Stephen...being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" (Acts 7:55-56)

- c. The Lord stood to receive the first martyr. He was taking action. He poured out a great revival. When the Lord is pictured as standing, very powerful things are about to happen.
 - d. God stands to knock on the door of the church.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone...opens the door, I will come in to him" (Revelation 3:20).

2. He is not actually ever outside the church. But when He pictures Himself as standing on the outside, He is saying, “I want in. I want a new level of ownership.” I believe this includes a prophetic statement of the end of the age. When God says, “Behold”, the nations will shake. When He knocks on the door of the church, the church will shake. It is not an accident that when He comes in Rev. 3:20, He wants to dine at His table. He wants to feed His people at the table again just like here in the Song.

- B. Jesus is seen as standing behind a wall. She thinks that He is behind a confining wall but He is out in the vast open world conquering mountains and hills as a fearless stag. She is the one that is behind a confining wall.

Behold He stands “behind” our wall

1. She is sitting in security behind a wall. It is a wall of self-protection that shuts out the world with its problems and the needs of others. It is a wall that keeps her from the risks of walking in faith.
2. She thinks He is behind a confining wall but actually He is out in the vast open world. She is the one sitting on the inside behind a confining wall. He is standing on the outside for the first time since she was awakened to fervency.
3. She sees it as a wall of their making. It is not her wall; it is their wall.

He stands behind “our” wall.

4. She has been properly led to the table, to the shade tree, that brought her so much enjoyment in 1:12-2:7. The Lord really did commission her to stay there until He awakened her. It is a wall that they built together. Initially, He put her in isolation. He built windows in the wall. He put her behind that wall.
 - a. It is a new season of maturity with a new revelation of Jesus.
 - b. She prayed, “Draw me and I will run with You.” He is now re-introducing the “Let us run” phase of her life.
 - c. Jesus put her in that little room, feeding her grapes at the table, revealing Himself to her in love and spiritual pleasure.
- C. He was looking and gazing at her, intending to draw her forth from her private world of self-concern. It was the gaze enticing her to come forth. Jesus gazes upon her with eyes of fiery love (Rev. 1:14). He wanted her to catch His vision for the nations.

He is “looking” through the windows, ‘gazing’ through the lattice (2:9c,d).

- D. He built the wall with strategic openings so He could deeply touch her.

He is looking “through the windows”, gazing ‘through the lattice (2:9c,d).

1. The “windows and lattice” speak of openings in the strategic wall that God builds around each of us. In other words, the wall is His strategic personalized plan to train us in bridal partnership. His Divine plan focuses on the best way to reach her heart in the deepest way. In other words, the wall speaks of the ways where she, in a holy way, is vulnerable to Jesus touching her. The Lord created windows in His plan to transform our heart. He is wooing her in love. He knows how to really touch her in a way that will bring her out.
2. But He is gazing at her right now. Those are the openings that He Himself created when He built that wall.

IV. CALLED OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE TO CO-LABOR WITH HIM

***“My Beloved spoke, and said to me: Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away.”
(2:10a)***

- A. Jesus continues the Divine romance as He trains her.

Rise up, “My love, My fair one...” (2:10a)

1. He speaks to her in love. He calls her His fair (beautiful) one. He regularly calls her, “My love and my beautiful one”. At every step in her journey He calls her either “beloved” or “beautiful”. He uses endearing language to motivate her. He communicates, “You are so dear to me. You mean so much to me. I want to rule and reign with you at my side.”

2. He speaks tenderly to her. She is still beautiful to Him, as she was back in 1:8 when her vineyard was unkempt. She knows that He enjoys her while she is growing, not just after she is fully mature. It is while she is still on the bed, under the tree, and behind the wall, that He says, “You are fair” (beautiful). Jesus knew what was in her heart. He saw that she wanted to obey Him. Jesus knows that in time her immature love will bud into maturity. He sees the fervent love in immaturity and calls her beautiful while she is in the process of growing in attainment. The responsive heart is what the Lord enjoys, not the particular stage of maturity that we are at. God knows that maturity is inevitable to all His children for all eternity. He calls us “My fair one” or “My beautiful one” at each stage of growth.
 - a. Some are content to run in ministry without being drawn into the Divine romance. They seek to do the work of ministries but with a slave mentality. In other words, they serve in a task-oriented way, instead of a love-oriented way. Running without intimacy is the work of a slave. They minister without spiritual intimacy with Jesus. They primarily want to be used in ministry. However, He primarily wants her heart in intimate partnership. He enjoys working with her towards this end.
 - b. It is easy to seek to do tasks without being established in the love of God as a worshipper. Bridal partnership is so different from the work of slavery. A bride is refreshed as she labors. As we adore the Lord in our work and obedience, we can be free from striving.
- B. Jesus calls her to arise in order to come with Him on the mountains. In this He challenges the comfort zone in her life.

“Rise up...and come away.” (2:10a)

- a. She was still sitting at Jesus' table under the shade of the tree (2:3) and lying on her bed (1:16). However, Jesus is ready for action. He wants her off the bed, out from behind the wall, out from under the shade tree. It is time for war. She wants to stay in the bed to be fed with apples.
- b. God challenges the comfort zone in our lives in many different ways. He challenges us in new relationships, new ministry endeavors, new jobs, new moves, new issues in church life, etc.
- c. His Father promised Him a Bride that would be equally yoked with Him as a mature partner.

- C. There are three difficult aspects of leaving the comfort zone:
1. She doesn't like the risks of walking by faith. She does not want to go to the high places. She is afraid of the mountains. John Wimber said that faith is spelled, "R I S K". Faith is the way of the Kingdom. God, in His infinite wisdom, has ordained a Kingdom, which operates by confidence in invisible things (2 Cor. 5:7; 4:18). The way of faith is a mysterious way to operate a Kingdom. The kingdom operates on confidence in God. We honor God when we have confidence in His integrity, although we can't feel anything. It reflects devotion and commitment, much more than seeing and feeling does.
 2. She does not like the struggles of spiritual warfare. She does not want to fight the lions and the leopards that are on the mountains (4:7-8). This partnership involves spiritual warfare. It is an involuntary war. The devil roars at us as he seeks to devour us.

"Your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8)
 3. The young Bride did not yet want to be a warrior. She wanted to sit under the shade tree the rest of her life and enjoy loving and worshipping Jesus. She did not want to war against darkness. God wants us to be worshippers and warriors. He wants a worshipping, warring Bride. He wants us to both love and fight, because He is a warrior. He is the Captain of the host, which is the Father's army.
- D. Jesus' actions are necessary to bring her to mature partnership (2:8 – 10). He does 7 distinct things, in this new season, to awaken her to get ready for the great harvest. These 7 verbs intensify as He lovingly establishes her as His active partner.
1. He comes
 2. He leaps
 3. He skips
 4. He looks
 5. He stands
 6. He gazes
 7. He speaks

V. ENCOURAGED BY SIGNS OF FRUITFULNESS

Jesus prophetically encourages her by revealing that it is the time for fruitfulness (2:11-13). The Lord is equipping her to overcome fear so that she will be able to rise up to follow Him. She is still immature in her understanding that He is a “safe God”. He is appealing to the signs of the times. The prophetic signs are right before her. It is springtime in the Spirit. He is warning her that the season of harvest is not far away. She must learn to trust and obey Him right now. He is saying, “The harvest is around the corner.”

“For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!” (2:11-13)

A. Jesus reminds her of His faithfulness to her in the past.

“For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.” (2:11)

1. He tells her that the winter is past. He encourages her by recalling how He has been faithful to her in past winter seasons. He reminds her that He helped her in the cold bitter winter. He is saying, “I was faithful to you in the past bitter winter. Those trials are past, and here we are. We still love each other”.
 - a. The winter speaks of trials as the north winds do (4:16a). Very few things grow in the harsh winter. The winter season is dark, cold and difficult. However, the fruitfulness from the winter season is now apparent in her life. The fig is a winter fruit (2:13a).
 - b. He is saying, “I helped you in your past trials (in the dark of winter). Why do you think I'll forget you when we go up the mountain together? Why are you so afraid? Why are you hiding behind that wall? The winter is past. I took you through it.”
 - c. He is saying, “If we were together in the past difficulties, we will be together in the future ones.” One reason the Lord takes us through difficult seasons is to give us our own personal history in the faithfulness of God.

- B. He is reminding her of His past interventions and past faithfulness to her in the early parts of her journey. He wants her to develop a personal history in the faithfulness of God. This speaks of the seasons of difficulty and inconvenience.

“The rain is over and gone” (2:11a)

1. He is saying, “I helped you in past trials during the bitter cold winter rains. Why do you think I will forget you when we ascend the mountains?”
2. The Lord is forcing us to develop a private history in His faithfulness. Someone else’s faith cannot make us stable in a time of crisis. What makes us stable is our own personal history in God’s faithfulness. He calls her to arise and face the difficulties.

- C. The prophetic signs of a soon coming harvest

1. He is saying that the signs of the soon coming harvest are before her. Therefore, now is the time to mature in faith, because the first stages of the harvest time have already begun. He is urging her not to remain as an immature girl. He wants a mature Bride.

2. Jesus encouraged the 12 apostles concerning a soon coming harvest.

“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” (John 4:35)

3. The fields were white and thus ready for harvest. The apostles had just given up their fishing business and their homes. However, in 3 short years, the Jerusalem revival was to begin on the day of Pentecost, followed by the book of Acts revivals. At that present time they had not led many people to the Lord. They evangelized multitudes in the book of Acts. Jesus said, “The harvest is now,” although it was 3 full years away.
4. What Jesus was saying was, “Acts 2 and the day of Pentecost are sooner than you think. Sell everything you have now. Follow Me today! Learn my ways now, because in 3 very short years you will need to use all the training that you are currently receiving.”

- D. God's harvest is in the beginning stages now.
1. There is an urgency for us to get ready now because a new measure of God's power and presence is about to be released across the earth. Today is the day to get prepared for the soon coming, great worldwide harvest.
 2. We will be ready to stand then (as the 12 apostles did on the day of Pentecost) as we obey in the preparation years now. We don't have 5 years to waste. The first stages of the end time harvest time have already begun. The full harvest is just around the corner.
- E. The appearing flowers are signs of the soon coming harvest in the natural realm. When flowers appear on the apple tree, then we know that the apple is coming next.

“The flowers appear on the earth” (2:12a)

1. The flower appears on the vine just before the fruit comes. These flowers are prophetic signs of a soon coming harvest in fullness.
 2. The first stages of the harvest time had already begun. Jesus was alerting her to prepare with urgency for the soon coming season of fullness.
 3. He is saying, “it is not quite time for the fullness of the fruit, but the flowers, just before the grapes, have already appeared in the land.” The flowers are already showing up. The signs of the harvest are right in front of her. It is not quite time for the grapes, but the flowers that appear just before the grapes, are on the vine.
- F. The joyful celebration associated with the harvest.

“The time of singing has come” (2:12b)

1. The winter is over. There is singing as the celebration of the harvest begins. The celebration in the Spirit is already beginning.
2. The singing is beginning. This is the time for God's shepherds to develop a deep history in God. It is a very short season, whether it is 3 or 20 years. From a historical perspective, it is a very brief time before we shall see the full-scale revival.

3. I believe right now in 1999, He is saying to the earth, “The flowers are budding. The full fruit hasn’t yet appeared on the tree, but the flowers have come.”

G. The first stages of the harvest time have already begun.

“Voice of the turtledove is heard in our land” (2:12c,d)

1. The voice of the turtledove was heard in the land of Israel at the harvest time. Any person in Israel knew that this signified the soon coming harvest.

2. He is calling her off the bed to come with Him.

H. The winter fruit has matured through testing in the winter season.

“The fig tree puts forth her green figs” (2:13a)

1. Figs grow even in the wintertime. The fig puts forth the green figs just before the mature figs.

2. Such winter fruit has matured through the winter season.

I. The signs of the promised fruitfulness are multiplying in abundance to all that look for progressing evidence of the harvest.

“The vines with the tender grapes give a good smell” (2:13b,c)

1. The fragrance of tender grapes is starting to come forth. They are still tender.

2. In other words, they are still immature grapes.

J. The Lord repeats for urgency.

“Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away!” (2:13d,e)

1. We can make it to heaven with “comfort zone Christianity”, but we can not bear fruit with it. This is not the time to draw back into the comfort zone. Step out in faith in God's unfailing goodness.

2. Jesus reveals His passion for the young Bride. The way in which the Lord reveals Himself also is effective in guarding her passion for Him.

- a. He allows her to discover the darkness of her heart in order to remove all her self righteousness and spiritual self-congratulations. The result is her passion for Jesus strengthened with gratitude. This is in contrast to passion with a triumphant spirit of pride.
 - b. This reveals one reason why the Lord allowed Peter to stumble. So that Peter's heart of passion would not be tainted with self-righteousness. Rather, it would be filled with gratitude that results in humility. He guards our passion by strategically revealing the darkness of our heart as a part of the journey. In the end, we are mature partners with Him and not self-righteous Pharisees.
- K. Her beauty before God and the Lord's affection for her as she discovers her weakness.

Rise up, "My love, My fair one", and come away! (2:13)

- 1. She's beautiful even in the immaturity. The Lord reveals what He thinks about her while she struggles.
- 2. Jesus, a second time, calls her, "My love" coupled with "My beautiful one" (2:10, 13). He consistently motivates her by love and affection. He is wooing her with the bridal paradigm and promises of fruitfulness.

VI. EMBRACED IN HER WEAKNESS

The Lord reveals His tender heart of affection as He declares her beauty in her struggle of fear. He calls her to confidence in a time of weakness. He knows in 2:14 that He will be refused in 2:17. Like Peter, the Lord could say to her, "I know that you will deny Me three times due to your fear. I know that your flesh is weak, but I also know that you have a willing spirit" (Mt. 26:41). This passage reveals the tenderness of God's heart.

"O My dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let Me see your face, let Me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely." (2:14)

- A. Her sincerity and beauty to Jesus is revealed.

“O, My dove” (2:14a)

1. He knows that she is going to compromise in 2:17, however, first He calls her, “My dove.” He could say, “I know you are struggling, but you are still My dove.”
 - a. A dove is a guileless bird that speaks of purity, innocence and loyalty.
 - b. A dove never mates after its partner dies. Thus, they are unique in loyalty.
 - c. A dove has no peripheral vision this speaks of a singular focus of devotion.
 - d. The Holy Spirit is also pictured as a pure and innocent dove.
2. He didn't call her a deceitful snake, but rather His dove. He is endeared with her sincerity. God embraces her in her fear with tender affection.

- B. He sees her through the finished work of the cross.

“O My dove ‘in the clefts of the rock...’(2:14a)

1. Jesus is the rock of God. A rock is immovable. It is a foundational material that is strong and durable.

“...you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18).
2. Paul taught that Jesus was the spiritual Rock, which followed the nation of Israel in Moses' day.

“They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4).
3. The “cleft of the rock” is the place where God hid Moses, when the glory of God passed by him. When the Lord revealed His glory to Moses there was still one problem. If God showed His unveiled glory to Moses, then there was a need for a protective buffer to save Moses from the glory of God. The glory of God kills sinful human flesh because it is so pure.

"So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by." (Ex. 33:22)

4. Moses would have died if he saw God face to face. Therefore, the Lord caused there to be a cleft in the rock, or an open space in the mountain. He hid Moses in this cleft. Then God put His hand over Moses, in the cleft of the rock, to protect him as the Lord passed by. This was a foreshadowing of redemption. Moses could not see God's face. Therefore, God hid him in the cleft of the rock.
 5. Moses hiding in the cleft of the rock, was a symbol of salvation through the cross. He was being hidden, figuratively, in Christ's redemption.
 6. Jesus is the rock that protects us in our sinfulness from the glory of God. As God put His hand over Moses and hid him in the cleft of the rock, so God laid His hand on Jesus in judgment to cover our sin so that the glory of God would not kill us.
 7. The cleft of the rock speaks of the wounds of the crucifixion in the side of Christ Jesus the rock of God. Jesus' death on the cross resulted in wounds in His side, or a "cleft in the Rock".
 8. The cleft of the rock speaks of the death of Jesus Christ. God protects us from His glory through the cleft or wounds in the side of Jesus. The only safe place to relate to God is on the basis of the "wounding", crucifixion of Jesus.
- C. God wants us to hide in the cleft of the Rock which is the Lord Jesus Himself. Hide in Him. He sees His dove in the cleft of the rock.

"O My dove...in the secret places of the cliff" (2:14b)

- D. He sees her through His resurrection.

1. The “secret places” speak of the mystery of the resurrection. The resurrection is the secret place in God. The mysterious resurrection is a secret that nobody understands. This secret cliff is a place of mystery that speaks of the resurrection.
2. “Of the cliff” is translated several different ways.
 - a. The King James translates it as “the secret place of the stairs.”
 - b. The NAS translates it as “the secret place of the steep pathway”.
 - c. The NKJV translates it as “the secret place of the cliff”.
 - d. The cliff (stairs/steep pathway) ascends upward (resurrected life).
 - e. This secret ascension upward is the stairway up to heaven. This speaks of Jacob's ladder that ascended to heaven (Gen. 28:12-17).
- E. Jesus calls her to come to God with confidence even in the midst of her weakness. The Father sees you through the beauty of the cross and resurrection. She was to find her safety in God's grace in 2 places: the cleft and the cliff.

“in the clefts...in the secret places of the cliff...let Me see ‘your face’ and...hear your voice” (2:14c,d)
- F. God wants her to run to Him in confidence, instead of from Him in condemnation. In other words, she is to present herself to God in confidence in His death and resurrection. He wants to see us trusting His work on the cross by coming out of the condemnation of religion. In other words, “Come to Me in your weakness, with confidence, for I see you through the cross and resurrection.”

“Let Me see your face” (2:14c)
- G. God wants to hear her “adoring worship” and her “prayer for help” in this crisis of her soon coming compromise. Don't run from God in shame.

“Let Me hear your voice” (2:14d)
- H. Jesus wants us to know how the cross has changed the way that He evaluates us, including our times of weakness. God wants her to run to Him not from Him.

“for your voice is sweet and your face is lovely.” (2:14e,f)

1. Her voice in prayer is sweet to Jesus, instead of repulsive as the spirit of religion suggests. Your prayers are “sweet” to the Lord.
 2. Her face in worship is “lovely” even though she is immature.
 3. Why does God want to see your face and hear your voice? Because your voice is sweet and your face is lovely. He knows she will compromise, but He also knows that it is because of fear not rebellion.
- I. God wants to hear her adoring worship and her sweet prayer for help in the crisis of her temptation and spiritual failure. This was the same situation that Peter was in, when Jesus urged him to pray for Divine help in Gethsemane.

Then He...said to Peter...“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Mt.26:41)

1. Jesus in essence was saying, “Pray to Me, Peter, I want to hear your voice. I want to help you.”
 2. We think that when we are struggling with sin that our voice is repulsive to God and that our face is ugly to Him. Therefore, we run from Him not to Him.
 3. He says “Stand with confidence in the cleft of the rock and the secret places of the cliff. You are My dove. You are My pure one. The harvest is around the corner. You love me. You are beautiful. Let me hear your voice. Cry out to Me for help. Do not draw back with shame. Cry out for help!”
- J. Summary - This is one of the most powerful passages in the Scripture. He says, “I want to hear your cry for help. I know you are trembling right now. Ask Me to help you. Invoke My partnership to help you to become faithful.” He is saying, “Don’t try to do this alone with only your own might.”

VII. HER PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE FROM COMPROMISE

- A. She prays for deliverance as she cries out for help with the little foxes. You can see her sincerity of heart in this desperate cry. She is not rebellious. She is immature. He just said, “Let Me see your face, let Me hear your voice.” That is exactly what she does here. She prays, “Lord, please catch us the foxes.”

“Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grape” (2:15).

- B. Her desperate cry to God for deliverance from small areas of fear and compromise in her life. She is under conviction.

“Catch us the foxes, the ‘little’ foxes that spoil the vines...”(2:15a,b)

1. Foxes are cunning little animals that destroy the vineyards in Israel under cover of the night.
2. The foxes are not bold, strong lions that attack during the day. They are quick, subtle, and crafty animals that are hard to catch. They come to destroy during the night season. The fox is crafty and subtle. Therefore carnal believers often miss catching the “little foxes” in their lives. They catch the bear, but not the fox. She says, “I’m not in immorality anymore. I’m not the shamed woman. My problem is now some of the more subtle issues. It is not sins of commission, but sins of omission.”
3. These speak of the little areas in her life that are hard to catch. These sly little foxes like things that make my speech impure. This speaks of all the fears that hold her in bondage.
4. “Catch...the foxes”. In other words, “I can't do it alone.” She cries, “Lord, we are in this together. Catch these crafty destroyers of my vineyard. They escape too quickly. I can't catch them by myself.” She longs for these compromises to be “caught.” She is asking the Lord to help her “catch” the little areas of compromise, such as the fears in her life, that she does not yet know how to subdue.
5. We must pray continually for the Lord’s help in these areas. The Lord is so willing to help us. She acknowledged the presence of the little foxes (her compromise). She says, “Jesus, I see the foxes in my vineyard. My heart is grieved. I beseech You to help me”. There is no defiance or rebellion. She is taking the command in 2:10 to “arise” seriously, but she has not yet found the strength to obey.

“Catch us...the little foxes that ‘spoil the vines’...(2:15b).

- C. She had a vision to go deep in God.
1. The little areas of compromise that hold us back from the deepest experiences in the love of God are serious. She now sees these small areas as important because they are destructive to her life of deep intimacy.
 2. Now, she is keeping her vineyard in contrast to 1:6. However, these little foxes, kept sabotaging her fruitfulness. She acknowledges the fears and insecurities as destructive to a deep life in God. Now she must learn to find God in the subtle sins of her life that spoil her intimacy with Jesus.
- D. She longs for help to go deep with Jesus.

“Catch us...the little foxes...for our vines have “tender grapes” (2:15c).

3. Our vines speak of areas in our lives that impact our spiritual life flow. Just as the natural vine contains the life sap, so also the spiritual vine in our lives speaks of the spiritual life flow. Jesus spoke of these vines and branches in Jn. 15.
4. Her tender grapes speak of her immature spiritual life. For just as the natural branch has tender grapes that need time to blossom, so our spiritual branches have budding virtues that have not yet matured. In other words, she knows she is not yet a mature vineyard. She is not mature, yet she has a serious vision to go for the deepest things that Jesus will give her.

VIII. HER SINCERE LOVE IS EXPRESSED

- A. Her sincere love for God is expressed in the midst of stumbling. She is saying, “I love You and I know that You love me.”

“My Beloved is mine, and I am His. He feeds his flock among the lilies.” (2:16)

1. She cries out that she belongs only to Jesus.

“My beloved is mine”

- a. She has confidence that she has not lost her place in God's heart. She knows that Jesus is still hers.

- b. The Lord did not cast her aside because of her struggle. She is saying, “I know that You still love me”.

2. She is not rebellious. She is not a hopeless hypocrite. The truth is that she is a lover of God and God loves her. She is committed and sincere, yet not fully victorious and mature.

“I am His” (2:16)

- a. His ownership over her is coming to light for the first time in a deep way.

- b. She acknowledges her conviction to live totally for His sake when she says, “I am His”.

IX. FOUR KEY STATEMENTS OF PROGRESSION

A. The SONG describes her progression from being self-centered to being God-centered in 4 key statements. Four times through the book she changes and redefines her experience. She starts from being only self-conscious and ends up with a mature God-centered focus. We can follow her maturity throughout the SONG through these four statements that are in strategic places. They are statements of the progression of her maturity. Notice the transition from a "self-centered" to a "God-centered" focus in the 4 inheritance statements (1:14; 2:16; 6:3; 7:10). In the beginning stages, her own enjoyment of Jesus is her only focus. She talks about what He is to her without much awareness of what she is to Him. In 2:16 and 6:3 and then finally 7:10, she uses this same language but changes the order to express her concern about what she is to Jesus. Jesus is her inheritance.

B. Her initial focus is **only** upon her spiritual pleasure. This is acceptable to Jesus as a beginning place in the grace of God. Her only focus is that she is loved and has an inheritance in Him. She has little regard at this stage for His inheritance in her.

"My Beloved is to me" (1:13-14)

C. In her second focus she is saying, "He is mine, He belongs to me. However, I now realize that I also belong to Him." She now adds a new dimension of His ownership of her life. She now sees the necessity of loving Him because she is His inheritance. However, it is her secondary concern at this stage of maturity.

"My beloved is mine and I am His." (2:16)

D. In her third focus she is saying the same words as in 2:16. However, she changes the order. She says, "I belong to Him and I continue to acknowledge that He is still mine. He belongs to me. My beloved is mine." The third progression says the same 2 truths but the order changes. She says, "It's His agenda first and my agenda second." She reverses the priority of her concern. His inheritance in her is now first in her heart. Her inheritance in Him is vital, yet secondary.

"I am my Beloved's and He is mine." (6:3)

E. In her fourth and final focus she is saying, "I belong to Him and what He desires is all I focus on. The fact that His desire is for me makes me want to make sure that I am 100% His. He owns me entirely. His concerns are what I care about most."

"I am My Beloved's and His desire is toward me." (7:10)

F. She acknowledges that Jesus longs to feed her from the deep things of purity.

“My Beloved...He feeds His flock among the lilies” (2:16)

1. The lilies speak of pure white innocence (also, 2:1-2; 5:3,13; 6:2-3). Lilies also speak of the glory of God.

***“So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”
(Matt.6:28-29)***

- a. Jesus compares Solomon, in all of his glory, to a lily.
 - b. She saw herself as the lily of purity before God (2:1).
 2. Earlier she asked Jesus, “Where do you feed your flock (1:7)? Where do you make it lie down?” He gives her the initial answer in 1:8, which consisted of one general affirmation and 3 specific answers.
 3. In 2:16 she discovers the fourth answer. She says, “I know where You will feed me. You will feed me among the lilies as I seek for deep purity of love and obedience.”
 4. She says, “I also know where You will feed me. You will feed me among the lilies in the plural.” They are described as the lilies in the plural.
 - a. In 2:1, “I am the lily of the valley.” The lily is in singular as she discovers her personal identity in the Lord.
 - b. However, here the lilies are in the plural, which speaks of the corporate people of God outside the wall of isolation, who are also seeking the life of extravagant love for Jesus.
 - c. She says, “I know where you’ll feed me, among the community of believers that desperately want You. They also are like me, weak yet willing to go all the way with God. Therefore, they are pure before God as lilies.”
 5. “I know you will only feed me the on the fullness of Jesus when I’m among others who are seeking You in a deep way. I know that you won’t feed me your fullness alone.” She acknowledges that others, who are seeking Jesus in a deep way, are essential to her journey.
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X. HER PAINFUL COMPROMISE

- A. She refuses to obey Him because of fear that is due to her spiritual immaturity, not rebellion.

“Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bethel (2:17)”.

- B. Her compromise is seen in that she tells Him to turn and go away to the mountains without her.

...“turn, my Beloved, and be like a gazelle...upon the mountains...”(2:17).

1. He does turn and goes on without her for a brief season. Immediately, He is painfully absent. She sought Him and could not find Him (3:1). This is a new experience for her, who has been lovesick.
2. The Lord honors her voluntary decision to draw back. Our relationship with Jesus is based on voluntary love.

- C. She refuses Him until she finds victory in the dark places of her heart.

Until the “day breaks” and the “shadows flee” away, turn...(2:17a,b).

1. It is dark until the day breaks to bring new light. The time when the day breaks, is the time when full light (maturity) becomes present.
 - a. The day breaks in the morning when new light is present. It is the time when the shadows and gray areas are finally gone.
 - b. She is saying, “I need Your help as we conquer these areas in my heart.” I can't go on the mountains, until the light of day breaks in, and the shadows, the gray areas, disappear.
2. It is dark in the shadows. She prays that Jesus would cause the shadows to flee away. She acknowledges the dark areas in the shadows. These are areas in her life that are not fully in the light.
 - a. She acknowledges that the dark areas still exist in the form of unbelief, fear, and selfishness (foxes - not overt disobedience).
 - b. She says, “God, until there is more light and I'm more mature, You are going to have to turn. I can't rise.”

3. This must break her heart. She says “I want You to go without me until the day breaks and the shadows flee.” She knows in her heart that she was created to live on the mountains with Jesus in extravagant love and bridal partnership.

D. She acknowledges that Jesus must continue to do the Father's work without her.

Turn...and be like a “gazelle or a young stag” upon the mountains of Bether (2:17).

1. With sadness she acknowledges that Jesus must go and be like the gazelle of 2:8. Jesus can not ever change His personality, nor His mandate from the Father to leap over mountains (2:8-9). Jesus is on these very mountains at the end of the SONG.

Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices. (Song 8:14)

2. She tells Him to be like the young stag who conquers all, as He runs freely on the mountains without her.

E. She understands the coming and inevitable separation.

Be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the “mountains of Bether” (2:17f).

1. The word ‘Bether’ in the Hebrew literally means “the separation”. This means literally “the mountains of separation”. Several Bible translations use the word “separation” instead of ‘Bether’. The mountains are the obstacles that bring separation.

2. She acknowledges that there will be a separation.

- a. In ch. 3:1, He leaves her. He separates from her, until she cries out in obedience in v. 2. She says, “I arose.”

- b. She meets Him and she says, “I will never ever do this again. I will never let go of Him again.”

F. She knows that her weakness does not mean that her love for Jesus is false. She continues to call Him “my Beloved Jesus”.

“turn, my Beloved” (2:17)