

Session 14: The Bride's Response To The 2-fold Test (5:9–6:5)

SONG 5:9- 6:5

- 9. What is your Beloved more than another Beloved, O fairest among women? What is your Beloved more than another Beloved, that you so charge us?***
- 10. My Beloved is white and ruddy, chief among ten thousand.***
- 11. His head is like the finest gold; His locks are wavy, and black as a raven.***
- 12. His eyes are like doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.***
- 13. His cheeks are like a bed of spices, banks of scented herbs. His lips are lilies, Dripping liquid myrrh.***
- 14. His hands are rods of gold set with beryl. His body is carved ivory Inlaid with sapphires.***
- 15. His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of fine gold. His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.***
- 16. His mouth is most sweet, yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!***
- 1. Where has your Beloved gone, O fairest among women? Where has your Beloved turned aside, that we may seek Him with you?***
- 2. My beloved has gone to His garden, to the beds of spices, to feed His flock in the gardens, and to gather lilies.***
- 3. I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine. He feeds His flock among the lilies.***
- 4. O my love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners!***
- 5. Turn your eyes away from Me, for they have overcome Me. Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from Gilead.***

I. OVERVIEW OF SONG 5:9-6:5

- A. The 2-fold test that produces a heart response of lovesickness as seen in SONG 5:10-16 is a necessary part of the progression of holy passion. Divine testing reveals our deepest motives and desires. This test reveals that her motive for service was to please Him. Such tests may occur several times in our life. The daughters of Jerusalem ask the bride 2 questions (5:9; 6:1). The questions are “Why do you love Him so much?”, and “How can we know Him intimately like you do?” Her first answer focuses on the beauty of Jesus (5:10–16), her second answer teaches the daughters how to grow in intimacy with Jesus. After the 2 questions by the daughters and the 2 answers by the Bride, Jesus breaks His silence giving her His evaluation of her struggle.

- B. In the midst of severe testing the Bride gives one of the most extravagant human love responses in the Scripture. After Jesus breaks the silence, He gives one of the most extravagant Divine love responses in the Scripture.
- C. She responds in perfect obedience with the heart cry, "Jesus is dazzling and chief among 10,000!" Instead of being offended with God, she responds as a lovesick bride as she describes the majestic splendor of Christ Jesus (5:10-16).
1. His head – His sovereign leadership over all
 2. His locks – His dedication to God and the Church
 3. His eyes – His infinite knowledge, wisdom, understanding, discernment
 4. His cheeks – His diverse emotional makeup
 5. His lips – His word
 6. His hands – His divine activity
 7. His body – His tender compassion
 8. His legs – His walk and administration of His purposes
 9. His countenance – His impartation to His people
 10. His mouth – Intimacy with Him
 11. He is altogether lovely – His comprehensive beauty
 12. "...my Beloved...my Friend"

Verse By Verse Study of SONG 5:9-6:5

II. THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM ASK THE BRIDE THE FIRST QUESTION

What is your Beloved more than another beloved, O fairest (most beautiful) among women? What is your Beloved more than another Beloved, that you so charge us? (5:9)

A. The daughters of Jerusalem ask the Bride the first question.

“What is your Beloved?” (5:9a,d)

1. The spiritually dull, passive daughters of Jerusalem ask the mature bride another question. They have asked her several questions throughout the SONG. The issue that provoked the daughters was the Bride's deep love for Jesus, more than her wisdom or her giftedness. It was the passion of her heart that captivated them. The daughters ask her because she just said, “Tell Him I'm lovesick. Help me find Him.” They didn't say, “You are so wise and so anointed.”
2. What they saw was the lovesick heart that adorned her and made her beautiful. It says in Rev. 21:2 that the Father is going to adorn the city of the Bride of Christ for her Husband. The Father adorns us for Jesus. The way He does it is by putting His love in our heart for Jesus. We are adorned and made beautiful by love, even more than by wisdom or power. Wisdom and power are helpful, but the lovesickness is what they saw in her that made her beautiful. They inquire with the question, “What *is* your beloved more than *another*?” They are a little taken back by her earnestness.
3. They saw Jesus as the One she loved insatiably. The daughters are perplexed and amazed by her response of being lovesick (5:8). They saw her affections for Jesus and concluded she must know something that they don't know. They can't imagine such passion for Jesus, even such passion for His church, because most people who are hurt write the church off. She goes to the immature members to be taught by them. Most people like the church at the beginning, but later despise the church when they are hurt by those that are within the body. This is not so with the Bride.

4. The essence of this question is, "How can you be so devoted to Him when He has seemingly treated you so harshly?" They say, "Tell us your secret. We follow Him, but not the way you do. He withheld His manifest Presence from you. He allowed you to be kicked out of the church. Why are you so tenaciously loyal ? What do you know about Him, that we don't know, that has led you to joyfully give all for Him?" (Phil 3:7) These daughters of Jerusalem do not understand this kind of dedication. They can't grasp it. They say, "What is your beloved?"

5. Note: this question is repeated twice in v.9a,d for added emphasis. The repetition expresses an earnest desire on their part to know the answer to this question. They really want to know the answer. They say, "We have to know what is motivating you! What do you know that we don't know?" It was not a casual question, but one that truly concerned them. This question is the beginning of fervency being awakened in the daughters, as they see spiritual reality in the fervent bride. We can see the sincerity of their question because in 6:1, they ask the follow up question of how they can know the Lord like she does.

6. The question of the hour is always the one that Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" (Mt. 16:15). This is always the most significant question in the foundation of the victorious church (Mt. 16:18-19). Ex. 5:2, Pharaoh asked Moses this question, "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?" Much of the church lacks a deep experiential knowledge of God, which impacts the way we endure such tests as 5:6-7. We can easily be offended at the Lord when we do not see His indescribable beauty. (Oh for those whose lives would be filled with such relentless agreement with God that they would provoke this question from those around them and would then also be equipped to answer the question by unfolding the beauty of God!)

7. "What is your beloved" - They did not ask, "who" is your beloved, because they already knew His name. Jesus was to them a way to get to heaven. Many believers know Jesus enough to be saved, but His majestic splendor is unknown to them.

- B. The daughters had "other beloveds" before the Lord Jesus.

"What is your Beloved more than another beloved" (5:9b,e)

1. The daughters had "other beloveds" in their lives ahead of the Lord Jesus; such things as money, pleasure, prominence and the comfort zone. They actually loved these things more than they loved the Lord, though they were sincerely saved. They are saying, "What is He more than all the other loves of life that He has so gripped you?" The "beloveds" that have gripped the Body of Christ more than Jesus are numerous. We mature as He becomes **the first** Beloved of our soul. Our goal is to make Jesus the prominent Beloved in our life, not necessarily the only one. The Lord doesn't mind that we love other people and things. He wants to be first. He wants the first commandment to be in first place.
2. The Bride is not gripped by the things that grip the daughters. Paul taught of denying acceptable privileges and pleasures for the sake of deeper fervency, undistracted devotion and service to the Lord (1 Cor. 7:29-31).
3. People often love the privileges of this world more than Christ Himself. This is only because they have not clearly seen the truth of who He is and what He has done.

- C. The deep respect the daughters have for the Bride

"O fairest among women" (5:9b)

1. Fairest is often translated as "most beautiful."—We see the deep respect the daughters have for the Bride. They see her as the most beautiful. They describe her as the "most beautiful" of all the people on the earth. They see her as beautiful in her devotion, godliness, and purity. This is in stark contrast to how the leaders (the watchmen) view the Bride. These Saul-type watchmen cannot see beauty in those who have the heart of David.
2. The fragrant aroma of the knowledge of God was emanating from the Bride to create hunger from one group (the daughters) and offense in the other group (the watchmen) 2Cor.2:15-16.

3. Notice that the controversy created by the watchmen does not cause the daughters to reject the Bride. Ultimately, false accusations against the godly do not impact the sincere members of the body over time. They see such maturity and Godly virtue, that they do not receive the accusations of the jealous watchmen. Sometimes the newest believers, who have sincerity and an open spirit, can see more clearly than the older, bitter, jealous leaders.

4. The Bride has captured the attention of the daughters in a way that the Lord Himself has not yet captured them. They can see the reality of God in her more than they can see it directly in their meditation of the scriptures. Often fervency is awakened in younger believers through the reality of Christ in others (2 Cor. 2:15 principle).

D. By the humility of the mature bride who sought their help

"That you so charge us?" (5:9f)

1. The charge was from 5:8 to help her find Jesus. They said, “Why do you so charge us to find Him? What do you know that we don't know?”. These immature believers were impacted by the humility of the mature bride who sought their help. They had never seen such maturity and humility. She had a teachable spirit towards them. A teachable spirit is a vital basis for fellowship. The mature can receive from the immature without any spirit of pride. Paul, as an anointed apostle, expressed this same humility when he told the saints at Rome that he came to give to them as well as to receive from them (Rom. 1:12).

2. “What have you seen in Him? You are the most beautiful woman on the earth, with the most beautiful heart on the earth.” They see her beauty. They see that she has been adorned with love for Jesus. She was adorned with such lovesickness. God the Father adorns the church for her Husband (Rev. 21:2).

III. THE BRIDE'S ANSWER: THE MAJESTIC SPLENDOR OF JESUS (5:10-16)

- A. Her first answer to “What is your Beloved?” is the majestic splendor of Jesus. This is one of the most powerful descriptions of Jesus and one of the most outstanding expressions of worship in the Word of God. This is the one time in the SONG where she pours out her worship to the King. It is a magnificent, poetic unveiling of the splendor of Christ Jesus. Knowledge of these ten attributes brings us stability in the midst of the storms of life or the "dark nights of the soul." She is giving us the key of what she understood and why she could be lovesick when everything was going wrong.
- B. The Holy Spirit uses metaphors of the human body to convey ten attributes of God's personality. Each of the ten attributes has two descriptions. She is consumed with focusing on Him and His majesty instead of being preoccupied with her own desires and pressures from the 2-fold test of 5:6-7. They came to her and said, “What is He to you?” She *could* have said, “I’m so beat up, but it will probably work together for good.” But she was preoccupied with Him and His majesty. She overcomes her self-focus and offers this mature expression of worship. First she starts with a general statement of His beauty. Then she develops this from verses 11-15. She goes attribute by attribute giving 10 of them, then she sums it up again in verse 16. Verse 10 and 16 are general statements. Then there are the 10 specific attributes one after the other in between the two general statements.
- C. She begins with a general statement of His beauty

My beloved is white and ruddy, chief among ten thousand (5:10)

1. “My Beloved is white,” the NIV translates it as “My Beloved is radiant.”
2. "My beloved" – She maintains her love for Jesus throughout the season of testing. This fire of love manifests itself by tenderizing our hearts so that we feel some of what He feels. The love of God is poured into the heart by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5).
3. "Chief among ten thousand" is a metaphor demonstrating that He is incomparably superior to all people, pleasures and experiences in this fallen world. He is the Chief or the ONE who is Superior among the whole human race in His superlative beauty.

D. His sovereign leadership over all

His head is like the finest gold.

1. "His head" speaks of Jesus' sovereignty or headship over all creation (Eph.1:10-21).
2. He is like finest gold to her. Gold speaks of the Divine nature. Finest speaks of the highest degree of quality and excellence.

E. His dedication to God and the Church

His locks are wavy, And black as a raven

1. His locks speak of His hair. NIV translates this as His hair. The Nazarite vow of consecration forbids the cutting of one's hair. The hair speaks of the vow of dedication. This speaks of Jesus' eternal vow of dedication to the Father and to the maturing bride.
2. "Wavy" - The KJV reads, "bushy". Thick wavy hair is the hair of a young man in the prime of life, as contrasted to an old man whose thinning hair has lost its vitality and fullness. His dedication is not weak or lacking strength and vitality. He does not grow weary in His dedication to us and to the Father.
3. "Black as a raven" - black hair speaks of His youthful energetic zeal. Black hair is in contrast to the gray hair of old men. His consecration to God is eternally vigorous.

- F. His omniscience, His infinite knowledge, wisdom, understanding, discernment

His eyes are like doves by the rivers of waters washed with milk, and fitly set. (5:12)

1. Eyes speak of the ability to see
2. "His eyes are like doves" – this speaks of singleness of vision. (SONG 1:15; 4:1).

- G. His diverse emotional makeup

His cheeks are like a bed of spices, like banks of scented herbs (5:13)

1. His cheeks reveal His emotional make-up including His passions and pleasures. His cheeks reflect the countenance of His face, which reveals His emotional makeup. The cheeks are the windows to the emotions enabling us to discern whether a person has joy, sadness or anger.
2. As a garden is filled with delightful fragrances, so Jesus' emotional life is like a bed of spices. Jesus' affections are fragrant like the garden beds of beautiful spices. Banks of scented herbs speak of the extravagant amount and diversity of fragrance in His affections.

- H. The power of His word

His lips are lilies, dripping with liquid myrrh. (5:13)

1. His lips speak of His Words.
2. His words are sweet and pure like lilies. Jesus' words contain myrrh, which refers to His exhortations to embrace death to self as He did for us.

I. His divine activity

His hands are rods of gold set with beryl (5:14)

1. NIV translates His hands as His arms. This speaks of His works and activities. His total power (omnipotence) to accomplish anything He pleases.
2. “His hands as rods of gold” speaks of Divine character in the accomplishing of His work.

J. His tender compassion

His body is carved ivory inlaid with sapphires. (5:14)

3. KJV translates His body as His belly. This speaks of His tender compassion.
4. In SONG 5:4 she says, “My heart yearned,” the word “yearned” is translated here as “belly.” It speaks of the deep feeling or tender compassion.
5. KJV translates carved ivory as bright ivory; NIV translates it as polished ivory. Ivory is clean and white. It is expensive because it is so rare. His compassion and patience are here described as rare like ivory. His yearnings for His people are like carved ivory. They are so rare and beautiful as carved ivory.

J. His walk and the administration of His purposes

His legs are pillars of marble set on bases of fine gold (5:15)

1. The legs provide the forward motion of the body. His walk is symbolic here of the way in which He fulfills His purposes. It is the administration of how He proceeds forth in His sovereign will.

2. His legs are like pillars of marble. Pillars speak of strength, orderliness, and beauty as in 3:10. Marble is a strong and permanent type of building material. The point is that God’s ways are strong, lovely, permanent, established and orderly.

K. His impartation to His people

His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. (5:15)

1. His countenance speaks of His impartation to His people. David prayed, “Lord lift up the light of your countenance upon us” (Ps 4:6). This is a prayer that the Lord would intervene by imparting the discernible manifestations of Himself to His people. The countenance of God shining on us means that God imparts His manifest favor to us and on us.
2. "Like Lebanon" – is symbolic of that which is glorious, stately, pleasing and honorable (4:8,11,15).

L. The communication of Divine intimacy

“His Mouth is most sweet” (5:16)

1. "His mouth" – speaks of the communication of intimacy as in "the kisses of His mouth" (1:2). His “mouth” is distinct from His words which are represented as His “lips” (5:13). Intimacy is associated with the mouth, which is the vehicle of kissing. His mouth is very different from His words throughout the SONG. The mouth speaks of the kisses of the mouth, the intimacy.
2. "Is most sweet" – nothing delights her soul more than intimacy with Him.

M. His comprehensive beauty

“He is altogether lovely” (5:16)

1. "Altogether lovely" – The Jesus depicted by the religious world is so different than the Jesus depicted by the bride.
2. They said, "Who is He? Why are you not offended?" She says, "He is altogether lovely. I've seen Him. I will never draw back from Him!" This refers to the garden of 5:1. This is the kind of holy abandonment that God will use to awaken the Body of Christ in the earth.

N. She personalizes her relationship to Him

"This is my Beloved and this is my friend"(5:16)

1. She is filled with love calling Jesus, "My beloved"
2. He is not only infinitely magnificent as the sovereign God, but He condescends to embrace us as friends. Jesus is both beloved (i.e. lover) and friend. Not only is she filled with love but also she adores Him as her Friend. She is both captured by Him and sees that He knows her heart.
3. She has completed her answer.

"Oh Daughters of Jerusalem!"

4. "Oh" - She is speaking of Him with great passion, urgency and feeling. There is deep feeling. This is not a casual thing. Deep heart felt urgency is being expressed. She does not point out their carnality. She doesn't say, "What do you mean 'what is He?' you backslidden people, open your eyes! You ought to know by now!" There is no condemnation or accusation in her approach. Their lack of dedication has not offended the Bride. She uses Jesus Himself to capture them. Rather than rebuking them, her method is to reveal Jesus to them.

5. "Daughters of Jerusalem!" - The daughters asked her a question (5:9) and she has completed her answer from vs. 10-16.
- N. John the Baptist said, “He must increase and I must decrease” (Jn. 3:30). When Jesus increases then we decrease. Some try to decrease by focusing on repenting more, rather than focusing on increasing their knowledge of Jesus. We fill our hearts with the knowledge of God, which then empowers us to repent more.
- O. The light enters the world and the darkness cannot overcome it.

And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (JOHN. 1:5)

1. When light shines in a room it overpowers darkness. If you want to remove darkness from a room you don't try to take buckets that are full of darkness and empty them. Rather, we shine a light in to drive the darkness out.
 2. The way to remove darkness from our hearts isn't by focusing on darkness. It is by turning lights on.
 3. I spend my time seeking a greater vision of who Jesus is. When He increases we automatically decrease. When light enters, darkness is overpowered in the presence of light.
- P. The Bride awakens and motivates the daughters by bringing them more light.
- Q. The Bride’s ministry to the daughters was orchestrated by the Holy Spirit to help her refocus on the splendor of Christ. This reinforced her affection for Him. The enemy was seeking to make her forget the excellencies of Christ in order to focus on the mistreatment of 5:7, so that she would be offended with God. The rehearsing of who Jesus is has actually empowered the Bride in the midst of this mission of answering the Daughters’ question.
1. This occasion to speak of Christ brought pleasure and satisfaction to her soul in the midst of great trial and affliction.
 2. The daughters say, “We need help from you. Your lovesickness is so adorning!” It is beautiful to them to see such love in the midst of mistreatment.

3. God's mercy is seen here. She wanted to learn from the daughters, but they turned it around and said, “No, you teach us.” This gives the opportunity for the Bride to speak what it is that has made her strong in the Lord.
 4. A heart that enjoys the Lord is significantly protected against offense towards God and added temptation.
 5. During times of personal dryness, we must imitate the wisdom of the bride, and recall the excellencies of Christ Jesus to ourselves and to others. This can revive our hearts and affections in times of testing and dryness. Each of the 10 aspects of His personality bring special refreshment to the soul. Each attribute has a particular ability to revive the soul under pressure.
- R. Jesus has been silent through this time. She has endured the dark night of the soul. He continues to be quiet. The Body of Christ is watching her closely.

IV. THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM ASK A SECOND QUESTION (6:1)

Where has your Beloved gone, O fairest among women? Where has your Beloved turned aside, that we may seek Him with you? (6:1)

- A. The Bride stirred them to seek after Jesus with greater passion.

"Where has your Beloved gone" (6:1a)

1. The same conversation from 5:8 continues. However, they change the question in 5:9 from "what is He" to "where is He." Her answer in 5:10-16 was anointed and effective to the point of convincing them.
2. "Where" - They want to know; "where she found Him" They no longer want to serve Him at a distance so they are asking the equivalent of 1:7, "Where does He feed His flock?" They have a new earnestness that imitates the Bride's first season of earnestness in 1:7.

3. The Bride’s testing becomes the opportunity for other people’s maturity. She was not only matured through it, but others saw her in the testing and they wanted to be like her. We don't know who is watching us, but there are always the younger believers, even though they might be older in the Lord, they might be younger than we are in the Spirit. They are watching you, and your faithfulness ends up awakening them to hunger for what God put in you. It is a very powerful reality. The Bride’s testing becomes the opportunity for the maturity and growth in the daughters because they are watching.
 4. "Your Beloved" – He is her beloved, not yet their beloved. However they will eventually say, "He is our beloved."
 5. The first question they asked was “What is your Beloved?”. She gave the first answer. Now they ask the second question, “Where is your Beloved? Where is He? We want to seek Him. We are convinced. We want to see what you see and to be like you. We want what you have.”
 6. In the very midst of this great testing what does the Lord do? He gives her the little goats to feed. Remember 1:8? He gives her a flock of her own to shepherd in the midst of persecution and in the midst of this treatment. When she is being kicked out and does not feel the presence of God, the Lord brings the very body that she doesn't reject.
 7. It really is the wisdom of God that we stay in the Body, giving the Word of God to others. Whether it is a home group, with our family or neighbors we must continue to feed others. Our own deliverance is found in delivering others. As we bring the knowledge of Jesus to them, our own hearts are refreshed.
- B. They saw her as a godly person filled with God's presence.

"O fairest among women?" (6:1b)

1. "O fairest" is often translated as "most beautiful."
2. They are using the same title as they used in 5:9 which is the same title that Jesus used in 1:8. They have the same opinion of the Bride as the Lord does.

- C. They repeat the question to show their earnest, sincere desire to know the answer.

"Where has your Beloved turned aside" (6:1c)

1. This is comparable to Andrew's response to John the Baptist

(Jn. 1:35-40).
2. The Lord is raising up multitudes of men and women who know Him in a way that will bring stability to others in times of turmoil.

- D. The Daughters of Jerusalem are now also seeking after her Beloved.

"That we may seek Him with you" (6:1d)

1. The Bride's proclamation of the majestic splendor of God's personality had its intended effect on the Daughters of Jerusalem. They want to know, "Where has your Beloved gone?" The same conversation from V. 8 is continuing. However, now they change the question. In V. 9 it was "What is He?" Now it's "Where is He?" Her answer in V. 10-16 was anointed. It was effective. It convinced them.
2. The Bride stirred them to seek after Jesus with greater passion. This is why we know that the Daughters are lovers of God. The Daughters want Jesus throughout the entire SONG. They just have other beloveds that are more important than Jesus. Everyone has other beloveds until the Lord reveals His splendor and then it seems foolish to have something else occupying first place. When Paul the apostle saw the excellency of the knowledge of Christ in Phil. 3:8, he probably couldn't imagine why he did it the other way for so many years. That is part of the mystery of the progression of holy passion.
3. "Seek Him" - This reveals their motive for the second question. In the first question (5:9) they were curious as they watched her with amazement as in 1 Cor. 4:9. Now, they are convicted as in Acts 2:37. They now desire practical instruction on how to seek Him. "Where is He?" They want to know where she found Him.

4. "With you?" – They want to seek Him with her. They want to seek Him "in the body", in a proper way, instead of in isolation without relationship. They have recognized their need of Him in 6:1d. They are humble and teachable with an open spirit.
 - a. The Lord wants His servants in the Body of Christ to be a voice, not just an echo. He doesn't want us just memorizing the right answer for when someone's in a crisis. He wants us speaking to other people out of our own life experience.
 - b. A message prepared in the mind only reaches the mind. But a message prepared in the heart, reaches hearts.
5. I can imagine her telling her story as follows: "A long time ago I was sitting with the King at His table when my fragrance was emanating, and He told me how beautiful I was. Then He had this mountain that He wanted me to climb. He took His presence from me and I suffered, and I promised never to let go of Him. He told me again how beautiful I was. Then I said, 'I'll go to the mountain.' Then He said He wanted to marry me." I believe she took them through each of the main revelations. In that context, her own struggles made more sense to her.
6. "That we" - they want to seek Him together. She knows how to bring the knowledge of Jesus to answer the question, "Where is your Beloved?" I've cried out with that question for years. Eventually we receive some of the answer.

V. THE BRIDE ANSWERS THE SECOND QUESTION (6:2-3)

My beloved has gone to His garden, to the beds of spices, to feed His flock in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine. He feeds His flock among the lilies. (6:2-3)

- A. She answers the question regarding how to find intimacy with Jesus.

"My beloved has gone to His garden"(6:2a)

1. Jesus is doing what He always does. He is feeding His people in the midst of His gardens. This is a fascinating and powerful answer to their second question. They will find Him in the garden.

2. There is the garden (singular) and the gardens (plural). They will find Him in His garden, which speaks of the worldwide universal church (singular) which is made up of the local churches (plural...6:2c) which is filled with individual lilies.
 - a. It refers to THE church in contrast to the gardens (plural, 6:2c), which speak of the various local churches in the Body of Christ.
 - b. It refers to “the Church” as in contrast to the local expressions of the church, the gardens all over the world.
3. They will find Him in His garden. This is, in essence, the same answer that Jesus gave the bride in 1:8. He is telling her, “Get involved in Body life!”.
 - a. Remember SONG 1:7, “Oh Lord where are You?” Then Jesus answers, “I’m in the midst of the flocks, I’m in the church. I want you to take care of the little one’s that I give you. Stay by the shepherd’s tents” (SONG 1:8).
 - b. His garden is the place of His enjoyment of her (5:1). He will never depart from His church. He said, “I am with you always even until the end of the age” (Mt.28:20). He will withdraw His manifest presence from individuals on occasion, but never from His whole church. The withdrawing of His presence in 5:6 was a strategy to mature an individual member of His bride so that she would be His garden of delight (4:16-5:1). He is always involved in “garden strengthening” work.
 - c. Her answer in Ch. 6:2a, “My beloved has gone to his garden,” shows she knew He did not really leave her in 5:6, because He is in the church. She understood the ways of the Lord. She knew it was a test because she prayed for the north winds (4:16). She knew He was in His garden (5:1). He’s in the midst of His people. When He removes His presence she knows that He’s preparing His garden to feast in it. She is His garden. She knows that He was attending her life. He was withholding His manifest presence from her individually, but He’s always in the midst of His church.
 - d. Deep in her heart, she knew the answer to the question that she was asking the Daughters in 5:8. She was heartsick with pain, but she was not afraid that theologically His presence had left her forever. But rather, His manifest presence was lifted.

B. Manifestations of grace

"My beloved has gone to the beds of spices." (6:2b)

1. "Spices" - speak of different manifestations of grace on different people or ministries of the Body of Christ. Some streams or denominations, or networks of churches in the Body of Christ have one spice while others have another spice in the grace of God.
2. "The beds" - The specific plots of ground (plural) within the one garden (singular) speak of the different parts of the one garden. The distinct areas where flowers and spices grow within the larger garden.
3. His whole church is one garden. There is one church in the earth, but there are so many diverse beds of spices. His cheeks were like a bed of spices. There are so many different reflections of Jesus' personality in the church. Nobody has the capacity to contain all that God has to give. There is no one little group of a million people that have the capacity to embody everything that the Godhead can give in fullness.
 - a. The garden of God has many beds of spices, or many streams (Ps. 46:4). The different streams within the larger body of Christ are like beds of spices.
 - b. Some of the "beds" in the garden have an exceptionally rich fragrance of Christ that is distinct from other beds of spices. Jesus loves the whole church, but He manifests Himself differently to different parts of His church at differing levels of intensity.

C. Jesus' purpose in manifesting His presence is to feed and strengthen His flock.

"To feed His flock in the gardens." (6:2c)

1. His purpose is always in feeding, whether He is withholding His presence or releasing it, He's always feeding His Bride to cause her to become stronger. Whether it's a strategic withholding or a strategic manifestation of His presence or whether it's a discipline of withholding...He is feeding His Bride.
 - a. He is always bringing us forth from strength to strength if we will go with it. One way He feeds us is that He pours the sweetness of affirmation and intimacy on our hearts (Ch. 1&2).

- b. Another way He feeds us is by His discipline. He takes His presence away because of sin, (Ch. 3).
 - c. Another way He feeds us is by withholding His presence again because of obedience (Ch. 5).
 - d. She says, “When I was in the bad times I knew that it was working together for my good. I knew that He was enlarging my heart in love, Rom. 8:28. He was feeding me.” He’s always feeding His people in the midst of His church. He just feeds us differently.
- 2. In 5:1, it delighted His soul greatly to come to His own garden to eat. This speaks of the deep pleasure that He gets from partaking of the love of His Bride. He takes pleasure in the different parts of His whole church. Jesus greatly enjoys *all* of His people (Ps. 16:3; 18:19).
 - 3. "His flock" - Jesus feeds His flock in the same place that He feeds His own soul. Jesus is deeply committed to feeding His people in the midst of the corporate kingdom community.
 - 4. "The gardens" - gardens (plural) are the same as the beds of spices and refer to the different ministries in the Body of Christ. Jesus is seen as walking among the candlesticks, which are the churches of God (Rev.1:13,20).

The Lord gathers believers to Himself in passion and unbelievers to Himself in evangelism. He wants to gather the lilies to Himself.

"And to gather lilies" (6:2d)

- 5. "Lilies" speak of purity. Jesus feeds His flock on purity and not the food of the worldly lusts that defile our souls.
 - a. Lilies also speak of individual believers who live in innocent purity and trust.
 - b. The Bride is called the lily. Also see SOS 2:1-2,16; 5:3,13; 6:2-3; Mt. 6:29, Hosea 14:5.

6. "To gather" - When Jesus gathers His lilies (2:16), it refers to the gathering together of the Body of Christ. He's always gathering those that are His to Himself. He's maturing the Bride so that she can gather more to Himself.
 - a. Jesus said, "I would have gathered you" (Mt. 23:37). Jesus wants to gather His scattered people (Mt. 9:38; Jn. 11:52). Only in the gathering together of His people into the body, will the people be properly fed and protected from the Evil One. Jesus will gather His elect from the four winds when He brings them to heaven (Mt. 24:31).
 - b. Jesus will also gather unbelievers who then become lilies. The urgency of Jesus to both gather unbelievers, and also to bring believers together is what is being stressed in this passage.
- D. She is fully committed to His purpose and pleasure.

"I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine" (6:3a,b)

1. "I am my Beloved's" - Her first interest is that she belongs to Him and is under His leadership. She sees that she is His inheritance. This is her first preoccupation.
2. "My Beloved is mine" - Her second interest is that He belongs to her. Therefore, she receives His promises as her own. Her second interest is what she receives. We never ever outgrow what He did for us, but in the early days of our lives in God we are so concerned about how He is going to bless us in our circumstances and in our spiritual lives. The reality of the cross is always primary. We never ever can love God more than He loves us. She sees that He is her inheritance.
3. Notice she has reversed the order from 2:16. Jesus' inheritance is now the top priority of her life instead of the second priority as in 2:16. Her benefits are now secondary instead of primary (2:16). This is another proof that she was obedient in 5:3-4 instead of disobedient. She was not in a place of compromise, but in a place of making the Lord the full delight of Her life.

4. 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 central 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. However, it is equally true that she is Jesus' inheritance.
- E. There are 4 transition statements. Each of the transition statements has 2 points
1. "My Beloved is to me" (1:13-14) – Her only focus is her inheritance in Him and how He can bless her. She is saying, "I have rights to enjoy Him." However, she does not yet acknowledge His rights to enjoy her. She has little regard at this stage for His inheritance in her.
 2. "My beloved is mine and I am His." (2:16) - She is saying, "He is mine, He belongs to me. I have rights to Him. 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.
 3. "I am my Beloved's and He is mine." (6:3) - She is saying, "I belong to Him. He owns me, yet He still belongs to me and I still have rights to Him." She reverses the priority of her concern. His inheritance in her is now first in her heart. Here the order is reversed. Her inheritance in Him is vital, yet secondary. She cares first about His inheritance. This is a significant reversal from Song 1-2.
 4. "I am My Beloved's and His desire is toward me." (7:10) - She is saying, "I belong to Him. He owns me entirely. His concerns are what I care most about." She is filled with the reality of her love toward Him and His total ownership of her. 7:10, she ends up with “I belong to Him and His desire is all I really care about and it happens to be me that He desires most. It is His desire that has captured me.” So she moves from being double concerned about herself to double concerned about what's on His heart which happens to be His burning desire for her. This only propels her into deeper levels of abandonment that reveal even deeper levels of His love for her, and the journey of lovesickness continues.

The Father's love for Jesus is continually being imparted to her (Jn. 17:26; Rom. 5:5). Her meat is to do His will. She exists for Him without any other consideration (Rev. 14:4). She unconditionally serves God with little concern for what happens to her. Her focus is now entirely on Him, without any self-interest.

- F. However, now she adds insight into what motivates her. She acknowledges the source of her great love for Him is rooted in her revelation of His passionate desire and enjoyment of her. There is another significant application of this truth of "His desire." She is committed to whatever He desires. He most desires her. Therefore, she must love and value herself for His sake, instead of for her own sake.
- G. This statement completes the answer to the question asked in 6:1.

He feeds His flock among the lilies"(6:3c)

1. This is the same principle that she understood in 2:16, but now she understands it with greater depth.
2. "He feeds" - She expresses her confidence in Jesus here. She is communicating her confidence that He does feed His flock, even though she has just experienced a time of spiritual barrenness from 5:7. She is fully confident the cycle of barrenness will change, and the Lord is faithful to feed His flock. He will not abandon her in the real sense.
3. "His flock" - We belong to Him even before we belong to ourselves.
4. "Lilies." - speak of purity and faith (Mt. 6:29, Hosea 14:5). Jesus feeds His flock on purity. She re-emphasizes the necessity of a commitment to the purity of the lilies, in order to be able to benefit from His feeding and nurturing.
5. "Among the lilies" – Lilies also speak of individual believers who live in innocence, purity and trust. The general flock of God is fed among the pure ministries (lilies).
6. Some of those desiring deep intimacy with Christ leave the church to seek Him. Some of the mystics through church history have sought to hide themselves in a cave to find deeper life with Christ. They wrongly neglect this principle of Jesus being present in the midst of His gardens.

VI. JESUS ANSWERS THE BRIDE (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.

- A. Jesus describes her beauty with these metaphors using the language of love: (6:4).
1. "O My love" - He hasn't spoken since Ch. 5:2. Jesus answers the Bride as He suddenly breaks His silence that He had continued through the time of divine testing which is now over. The difficult season does come to pass in time. Job's friends have got to put their hands on their mouths now because they completely misunderstood what was happening.
 2. He reassures her of His great love for her. This is His first utterance to her. "You said 'Yes!' to me in the severest testing of your life!" He is not rebuking her for disobedience in 5:3; He is describing her beauty to Him. His presence left because she was obedient. "O my love!"
 3. "You are as beautiful as Tirzah." Tirzah was to become the capital city of the Northern Kingdom. It was one of the most attractive cities in the ancient world. Tirzah actually means "beautiful". The city was named Tirzah because of its remarkable natural beauty.
 4. "You are as lovely as Jerusalem." Jerusalem was the capital city of Israel. It was the city that God ordained as the national center of worship. It was the place of Solomon's temple, the temple sacrifices and the Shekinah glory. Jerusalem was known for its spiritual beauty.
 5. The two strongest and most beautiful cities of Palestine were Tirzah and Jerusalem.
 6. He says, "You are beautiful through natural eyes." Even the carnal, the unbeliever can see you, and your beauty is the greatest that they will ever witness. She was most beautiful in her self-sacrificing love with pure motives. It is so compelling when somebody gives everything for love. Stories of courageous love and heroics are gripping even in the natural arena. So even in the natural sense she is made beautiful.

B. Her spiritual victory

"Awesome as an army with banners!"

1. Banners speak of a victorious army. If an army came back victorious from war, it marched down the streets with banners. A defeated army lost its banners. An army with banners is a victorious army leading a great procession. She is not just like an army, but He says she is like an army with banners, a victorious army.
 - a. He calls her a victorious army because she gained victory over the 2-fold test of 5:6-7.
 - b. In a time of testing, the Holy Spirit poured loyal love into her heart for Jesus. He declared, "You are as awesome to Me as a victorious army." In other words, "You have conquered the sinful passions of your own heart by the Spirit of God. You have struggled and defeated the enemies of your soul."

C. Jesus describes His affection for her.

"Turn away your eyes from Me, for they have overcome Me." (6:5a)

1. Her single minded "doves' eyes" of devotion are irresistibly beautiful to Him. Her eyes were fixed on Him during the 5:6 testing when He lifted His presence from her. By "eyes" we understand her love for Him and her faith during divine testing. Her heart of faith and love ravished His heart (4:9). She was looking to Him by faith and did not know the impact that her eyes were having upon His heart, because she felt nothing during the test of faith.
2. He says, "Turn your eyes of devotion away from me." Jesus is not actually asking her to literally look away. He is speaking poetically in the language of love. He is speaking in the most intense language of love. He doesn't literally mean, "Don't worship Me." He's saying, "I don't know how to say it more intensely; for your eyes have overcome Me." This is one of the most intense statements in the Word of God in my opinion. Jesus is overcome with irresistible love. The Lord expressed how attractive she was to Him during her time of testing. That's the key. Jesus is not rebuking her for the alleged disobedience, but He's overcome by her.

3. "For they have overcome Me" - Jesus is overcome with the irresistible love of His bride. In this age, we will never fully understand the powerful impact that we have on the heart of Jesus.
 - a. We do not easily understand the heart of Jesus being ravished. We have never seen such devotion from royalty anywhere in creation; because royalty has so much power they are not easily captured by any of their subjects. But *this* royalty is CAPTURED by His subjects. It's totally contrary to nature.

HE IS TOTALLY OVERCOME BY WEAK, BROKEN PEOPLE WHO LOVE HIM IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS!!!!

4. What could overcome Him? The stars don't impress Him. The vast oceans don't. The greatest armies of history don't impress Him. The demonic principalities and powers don't impress Him. No one conquers Him. No one overcomes Him. Yet, one thing has subdued Him, the love gaze of His bride as she obeys Him. He is the ultimate warrior, yet He is easily conquered by the devotion of His Bride. Jesus could not withstand her gazing affection anymore than one man could stand against an entire prevailing army.

D. Summary:

1. SONG 2:8, "Come to the mountains with Me." SONG 2:17 "No, I can't." SONG 3:1, He tests her and removes His presence from her. She then repents. SONG 3:6, He reveals how safe He is. She agrees to go on His chariot through the wilderness. SONG 4 He describes her beauty and says, "You are altogether lovely". Then in SONG 4:6, she commits to go to the mountain of myrrh. In SONG 4:8 He calls her "My Bride," and Ch. 4:9, He says, "You have ravished Me, My Bride." Now comes the test in SONG 5.

2. She is a locked garden reserved only for Him (SONG 4:12). She says, “Send the north winds, send anything! You're so safe, let Your winds blow upon my garden” (SONG 4:16). In SONG 5:1, He enters and says, “My garden, My Bride, My sister, My spouse, My honeycomb, My honey, My wine,” 9 times He takes full possession. He says, “OK now you want the north winds? You want to ascend? (SONG 5:2) Come with Me.” “Oh, but your hair is drenched in the dew of the night.” She rises up to go with Him. Suddenly SONG 5:6, He's gone. Suddenly, 5:7, the Body of Christ strikes her. SONG 5:9, the daughters say, “What is your Beloved?” SONG 5: 10, “He is dazzling, He is outstanding. There is none like Him. His mouth is most sweet to me. He is altogether lovely.” In SONG 6:1 the daughters say “Where is He that we can have Him?” She answers, “He's always feeding me even when He's testing me.” Finally, Jesus breaks the silence. He says, “O My Beloved, you are more lovely than Tirzah. You are more beautiful than Jerusalem. You are like an awesome army for you have prevailed in your own soul. In the great test you have come forth in victory.” Then He says, “Turn your eyes away from Me!”