

His Desire Is Toward Me!

Song of Solomon 7:1-10

5 December 2021

11:00 AM (Halifax); 3:00 PM (Glenholme & Livestream)

Introduction:

Please turn to the Song of Solomon.

- We will continue our sermon series in this book.

This beautiful Song presents the indescribably beautiful love of Christ for His church and His church for Him with poetic imagery.

- It is not technical, it is poetic.
- When speaking of God, the Bible often uses this device—comparing things that are spiritual with things that we know to give us a sense of God’s greatness.
 - He is called a rock to refer to His strength and stability, He is called a shepherd to describe His care for us, He is called light to show how He exposes what is true.

If poetry is needed to describe the person of God, how much more is needed to describe what is too marvellous to describe even in human relations—love and devotion!

- This song uses the love that a man (who is truly a loving husband) has for his wife and the devotion that she (who is a truly devoted wife) has for him to illustrate the love that Christ has for His redeemed people and the devotion that they have in response to Him.

Today in the Song of Solomon we come to chapter 7.

- I will read the first ten verses of this chapter.
- Give attention. I am now going to read the word of God.

Song of Solomon 7:1-10: How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince’s daughter! The curves of your thighs *are* like jewels, the work of the hands of a skillful workman. ² Your navel *is* a rounded goblet; it lacks no blended beverage. Your waist *is* a heap of wheat Set about with lilies. ³ Your two breasts *are* like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. ⁴ Your neck *is* like an ivory tower, your eyes *like* the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim. Your nose *is* like the tower of Lebanon which looks toward Damascus. ⁵ Your head *crowns* you like *Mount Carmel*, and the hair of your head *is*

like purple; a king *is* held captive by *your* tresses. ⁶ How fair and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights! ⁷ This stature of yours is like a palm tree, and your breasts *like* its clusters. ⁸ I said, “I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches.” Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, ⁹ and the roof of your mouth like the best wine. *The wine goes down* smoothly for my beloved, moving gently the lips of sleepers. ¹⁰ I *am* my beloved’s, and his desire *is* toward me.

May the Lord now add His blessing to the reading of His holy word.

In this part of the Song, He describes how lovely we (His bride) are to Him once we have fully returned to Him.

- Last week we saw how eager He was for us to fully return to Him—without any of the hesitation that we so often have, especially when we have sinned.
 - You remember how He showed us that as soon as we were ready to receive Him, He could not be kept away.
 - Our yearning for Him was like a chariot that carried Him to us with haste.

- And you will remember how He explained that He had desired us the whole time we were gone. Then He pled with us to return; saying in 6:13: **Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return, that we may look upon you.**
 - He wanted us to stop holding back because of our guilt and shame about the way we had wronged Him, unjustly resisting Him when He had come to us.
 - He wanted to see our sorrow turned to dancing full of joy—He wanted to us celebrate and delight in our restoration with Him.
 - He calls to His friends (the Father, the Holy Spirit, the angels, the saints in glory, the ministers of the gospel) to come with Him and see the thing He delights in the most about us: our love and devotion to Him!
 - He does not want the partial devotion that those have who do not realise the completeness of His forgiveness and acceptance of us.
 - He is ever and ever drawing us in, helping us to see how great His love for us really is so that we will abandon ourselves to Him as our Lord.
 - He wanted to see us dancing with joy because of our relationship with Him.
- In the passage we are looking at today, He describes how desirable we are to Him when we are dancing with joy, when we are delighted to be with Him.
 - Understand that this is the poetry.
 - He describes the beauty of a woman dancing to tell us how lovely we are to Him when filled with the joy of His salvation and of our relation to Him!
 - He deeply, deeply loves people as He made us.
 - He made us holy and upright, so that we were devoted to Him as our God—devoted to Him with the deep devotion that is fitting and right for us to have for Him as our loving Lord and Creator—the bedazzled admiration that makes the love of a woman in love with her husband look weak.
 - It is reprehensible—it is the most reprehensible thing of all—that we ever rejected Him as our God—for we were made to be His devoted worshippers.
 - Yet, how He loves us when we are simply what He made us to be, not the twisted, wretched rebels who rejected our God and became so defiled that, for justice to be maintained, we must be cast out into the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.
 - He could not leave us all to perish in that way. He loved what He had made.
 - He made us so that our love would be the free expression of our hearts, and so that we would be capable of falling away.
 - He knew that, being made such, we would fall away, but it was His intention all along to restore those that He had chosen out of the ruined mass of mankind, not because they were better, but rather to show His deep love for man.
 - In restoring us, the Son of God had to become flesh—with a true body and soul, and He had to live in the beautiful way we were created to live—
 - with appropriate delight in and devotion to God as our God.
 - And then, to restore us, He had to bear the full penalty of our sin so that justice could be satisfied.

- He did that because His love for us is so strong and so deep!
- In so loving us, He gives us even more reason to love Him.
 - He breaks the bondage that He cast us under and draws us back to Himself by the preaching of the gospel, calling us to come to Him to be restored; and by pouring out His Spirit on us to turn our hearts to Him.
 - And when, by His grace, we come, He works in us by His Spirit and by various means to draw us in to the complete devotion that He desires.
 - When we who have come to Him for salvation go astray (because we certainly still do), He remains faithful.
 - He chastens us and He sends His call to us to convict us and to call us to return again, and He works in us so that our love for Him and our devotion to Him is constantly increased.
 - One of the things He uses is the renewed revelation of His love and commitment toward us in the times when He restores us.
 - He is growing us up to maturity. We are, as we have seen, His garden and the fruit He is growing in us is our love and devotion to Him.

And so here, in Song of Solomon chapter 7, He is telling us how lovely we are when we are delighting in our relationship with Him so much that we are dancing with joy.

- He shows us this, not to drive us away and discourage us that our devotion is not strong enough, but rather to encourage us of how lovely our devotion to Him is to Him.
- Of course we may feel that we come short—because we do—but if we are devoted to Him, we are truly a new creation in Christ, and He cherishes that true devotion that is the fruit of His salvation and that will grow up to perfection.
 - We are not always full of joyful devotion to Him.
 - We saw in previous weeks how He expressed His love to us as His bride even the whole time that we were separated because of our sinful resistance. He still loved us even though we were not full of joyful devotion to Him. But the whole time He wants us to come back.
 - But when we are full of joyful devotion, He tells us how beautiful we are to Him.
 - You could see how it would delight a husband who loved his wife for her to be delighted to be with him and to pour herself out in loving devotion to him.
 - Well, how much more does it delight our Lord who loves us more than any husband ever loved his wife!

Let's turn now to His description of the beauty He finds us in when we are full of joy to be His wife.

I. He begins with exclaiming about the beauty of our feet when we are filled with joyful devotion to Him.

- Verse 1 says, “How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince’s daughter!”

A. Why does He begin with our feet?

1. If you look, you will see the opposite of what we have seen before where the wasf (praise) moves from head to toe. Here it moves from toe to head.
 2. One reason for this may be that we are now dancing for joy, so our feet are the first things where this is noticed.
- B. What is signified by beautiful feet?
1. Keep in mind as we begin our interpretation that the beauty mentioned here in physical terms is illustrating the beauty of our spiritual relationship with Christ.
 - We must consider, “What do lovely feet signify in the bride of Christ? What is being praised here?”
 - Keep in mind as well that the interpretation of these things is not technical or scientific, but impressionistic and artistic.
 - As I have explained before, in interpreting the song, we are to take the doctrines and precepts of our faith that are clearly revealed elsewhere and then illustrate them with the Song.
 - We have a doctrine such as full atonement in Christ for our sins, and the Lord enhances it by telling us that though our sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.
 2. So when we think of feet, we may think of what the Bible calls our walk.
 - We are told to walk, or behave, in a way that is pleasing to the Lord. We read that in Colossians 1 earlier.
 - We are told to walk in the way of God’s commandments, to walk in the light, His word informing and guiding us.
 - Isaiah speaks of the beautiful feet of those who preach the gospel—they come to us to bring us good news.
 - Beautiful feet here in the song are feet that are walking in joyful devotion to the Lord.
 - They go according to His call. They go to comfort the one who sorrows, they go to teach the one who is ignorant, they go to take bread to the poor, they go to fulfill their calling, to change a diaper, to help a neighbour.
 3. This is so important!
 - Why do you do what you do? Why do you go where you go?
 - It is because of devotion to Jesus your Lord?
 - Is your walk an expression of your joyful commitment to Him?
 - What could be more important?
 - What else do you have to live for that is worthy of your living?
 - In all things, aim to be pleasing to Him.
- C. But why does He mention the sandals—why does He say “How beautiful are your feet in sandals?”
1. People would go barefoot because they were poor, mourning, ashamed, or afflicted, and of course slaves would go barefoot.
 - She has her dancing shoes on because she is celebrating and rejoicing.

- Which signifies spiritually that we are walking in joy as those who have been accepted and who are filled with joy and sense of acceptance.
2. Notice that the beloved gives us a title here. He says, “How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince’s daughter.”
- We were in poverty and in shame when we were cut off from our God, but now He is our Father and He has put shoes on our feet.
 - We have been born of Him by the Holy Spirit, born from above, begotten of God. We are daughters of God.
 - You may remember the word for prince (nadib) that we saw last week refers to one who acts freely and generously.
 - Our service to our Lord is not as a slave, but as those who have been set free and who are totally devoted to Him because we want to do His will.
 - We recognise His supremacy, His glory, His majesty, His love for us, and there is nothing we want to do more than pour out our lives in joyful gratitude to Him.
 - He has rescued us from bondage to Satan and the flesh and the world and set us free to be His wife.
 - Our feet are lovely to Him because they are noble feet that are devoted to Him—our dance is our joyful walk for His pleasure.

II. Next, He praises the beauty of our thighs. He says, “The curves of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a skilful workman.”

- A. When we think of the imagery of the dancing woman, we think certainly of the movement of her legs.
- Many think the sockets and joints of her legs are in view.
 - She moves about with grace and agility.
 - There is a loveliness and a smoothness in the operation of her joints as that which has been designed by a skilful craftsman.
- B. What is signified here of relationship to Christ?
- Surely it is related to the feet.
 - The feet walk in the ways of joyful obedience—going where He wants us to go, going in obedience to His commandments and to our calling.
 - When He speaks of our thighs, He speaks, perhaps of the way that we walk, our manner of walking.
 - What we do is very important, but how we do it is also important.
 - Good works are no longer lovely works when they are done in ways that are not beautiful.
 - Someone can be diligent at work and get everything done on the list, but if they are harsh toward others and full of complaining and bitter judgement on others the whole time, their walk is no longer lovely.
 - The feet are taking the right steps, perhaps, but there is no grace or loveliness in the movements because the thighs are not working right.

- He delights in us because, by His grace, our love and devotion to Him causes us not only to obey, but to obey beautifully and gracefully.
- As James Durham says, not only do we do what is right, but we do it rightly.

III. Next, He describes our navel as “a rounded goblet” that “lacks no blended beverage.”

A. This has the interpreters in every age puzzled.

1. The word navel is rare, but it’s use in Ezekiel 16:4 where it speaks of the umbilical cord being uncut makes the meaning of the word undisputed.
 - And there is no widespread mention of the navel in other literature.
 - And how would it be like a rounded goblet with mixed wine inside?
 - There is no known practice of putting liquid in the navel.
2. One of the more helpful interpretations is that of George Burrows who suggests that the reference is to the entire lower trunk of the body.
 - The goblet refers to the entire lower body with the curvature of the hips making it like the shape of the rounded goblet.
 - The rounded goblet refers to a bowl that was often kept in a prominent place where the most important guests were seated, directly across from the main entrance to a room.
 - This goblet was used for mixing wine, a very common practice in the ancient world in many different countries.
 - Many large goblets that were used for this purpose have been found.

B. Looking at what is signified spiritually in the bride of Christ, it would refer to what we saw with the image of Christ—the inner affections.

1. This indicates that not only her walk is lovely, but also her passion.
 - The bride of Christ is tender and compassionate.
 - She knows what it is to rejoice with those that rejoice and weep with those that weep.
 - She knows what it is to love what is good and to hate what is evil.
2. Her affections are well mixed, not bitter, not soupy sentimental or sappy sweet, not sour, not melancholy, not superficial or giddy, not dry or cold.
 - Her affections have grown in the soil of Christ’s love and in her devotion to Him. There is a beautiful sweetness and empathy, a caring concern and beautiful tenderness that pleases Christ.
 - He is satisfied with this beverage. It is His drink.

IV. Next, He praises her waist as like a heap of wheat, set about with lilies.

A. Here again, there is some challenge in the interpretation.

- The word waist is usually translated stomach, and likely refers to the midsection, above the navel.
- The NET Bible says that a heap of wheat is visually appropriate because of the similarity of its symmetrical shape to refer to this area.

- B. Wheat was, of course, one of the main food sources in Israel.
- So this may be praise of her as the one who nourishes Christ with her love—especially by nourishing His people.
 - She is like mixed wine to make Him glad and like wheat to nourish Him and to feed His children... remember how often we have mentioned how the bride of Christ edifies herself in love because she is made up of many members.
 - With her goblet, she makes them glad, with her wheat, she nourishes them with solid food.
 - She does this in a way that is most pleasing to Christ when her life is devoted to Him with joy—when she is celebrating her salvation in Him and her restoration to Him.

V. Our breasts as the bride devoted to Christ are next on the list of things praised by Christ: v. 3, “Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle.”

- A. What a beautiful and delicate image this is—little fawns, twins of a gazelle.
- Here is one of the most lovely and praised attributes of the bride, depicted as a tender and delicate creatures.
 - Does Proverbs not exhort a husband to let his wife’s breasts satisfy him at all times and not to look to another, but only to his wife?

➤ Remarkably, a godly woman not only gives her breasts to her husband in an exchange of love, but also to her babes to nourish them.

- B. The spiritual analogy is obvious.
1. When we have dancing full of joy in our union with Christ, we welcome His love and His embrace... we freely give ourselves to Him.
 - Freely giving herself to Him was the very thing we saw that the bride did not do in chapter 5.
 - She pushed Him away when He came to embrace her.
 - But when she is joyful in her union with Him, she gives herself fully to Him.
 2. And at the same time, we also give our breasts to nourish His little ones which we have brought forth for His glory.
 - This requires no little sacrifice, no little effort.
 - He is greatly offended when children grow up who do not know Him because their mother, the church, has withheld their food as if it was not needed.
 - Fathers, you are to nourish the little lambs with the word of God—each day you are to give them their spiritual food. You are their mother and Christ is their Father.
 - And mothers, you are to nourish them all through the day, guiding them and nurturing them in the fear of the Lord, to see the Lord and to love Him, to trust Him, to seek Him, and to give thanks to Him.

VI. Next, Christ praises us for the beauty of our neck when we are rejoicing in our union with Him.

A. He describes our neck as being like an ivory tower.

1. Such towers were built as military strongholds.

- Josephus, the Jewish historian, describes some that were built of huge marble stones what were 25 feet in length, ten in breadth, and five in depth, and were precisely fitted together so that the joints could hardly be seen.

2. They were beautiful, but also strong and secure.

- There was a resilience in them that could not be overcome.
- We are told that the Lord Himself is a strong tower to His people where they take refuge and find safety.

B. So what is signified by Christ describing our neck as an ivory tower?

1. Perhaps it is resilience—the beautiful resilience we have as the bride of Christ when we are devoted to Him as our husband.

- It is in our refusal to go after other gods.
- To elevate the emperor or the state to the place of Christ, to elevate the pope or the church to the place of Christ, to elevate science or technology to the place of Christ... to be the one who orders us and in whom we have hope for wholeness.
- Of course it is not that the civil magistrate has no place in governing us, that the church has no place in overseeing us, or that science and technology has nothing to contribute to our welfare.
- It is rather that none of these should ever become Lord of our lives.
 - They must each stay in their lane.
 - If our hope for wholeness, for peace, for salvation, for welfare, is not found in Christ, then we are in gross error.
 - The world is in the mess that it is in because we forsook Him.

2. The true bride of Christ is the one who has been saved by Him so that she now looks to Him as Lord, as the one in whom she has the hope of salvation.

- In scripture, God's people, when apostate, are accused of being stiff necked.
 - Their neck is indeed like a stone tower that will not bend or be moved.
 - This is a very negative thing.
- But when that same resilience is in our fixed allegiance to Christ—in a neck that is set towards Him along and that refuses to look to another as Lord—then it is a lovely neck to Christ.
 - It is the stately neck of His devoted bride that He cherishes.
 - She is no adulteress; she has an anointing. By His grace, she is devoted to Him.

VII. Next, our Lord praises us for our eyes, declaring that they are like the pools in Heshbon.

- A. These pools are unknown today, but it is obvious that they were reservoirs that were noted for their virtue.
 - 1. They were fed by brooks in the area that, as Burrows says, were likely purer and fresher than the waters at Jerusalem.
 - 2. The woman's eyes are praised for the purity and clarity, for their beauty and depth.
- B. The spiritual analogy would speak of the devoted bride's purity and sincerity.
 - 1. She is able to see clearly because her eyes are for Him.
 - Not, as we just saw, for emperors, philosophy, the pope and the saints, or technology.
 - And certainly not for idolatry, adultery, selfish gain, greed, bitterness, anxiety—all things that, shall we say, muddy the pools—cloud the pure eyes.
 - 2. Sincerity has a simplicity that leads to clarity.
 - Instead of trying to discern what would be most politically expedient or what would put her in the best light, the bride devoted to Christ seeks to learn what His will is.
 - If she knows, for example, that gossip is wrong, it is no longer a consideration about whether it would be better or worse for her cause to gossip.
 - The fear of the Lord promotes understanding.
 - Her eye sees clearly.

VIII. In a similar way, the nose is next praised. It is described at the end of verse 5 as like the tower of Lebanon which looks toward Damascus.

- A. This is, apparently, a reference to a watchtower.
 - In the time of Solomon, Syria was one of Israel's worst enemies, and Damascus was the capital.
 - A watch tower was erected to keep a lookout for invaders that might come into the land to destroy God's people.
- B. Surely this represents the bride's beautiful devotion to Christ that causes her to jealously guard her relationship with Him.
 - 1. She wants nothing to spoil her relationship with Christ, nothing to come between Him and her.
 - She has a nose that is trained to distinguish good from evil—to discern what is helpful and what is hurtful to her relationship with Christ.
 - 2. It pleases Christ to see this allegiance in His bride that is a natural outworking of her love for Him.
 - Those whose allegiance is weak do not keep a careful watch over their heart or their lives.
 - They are easily led astray because they don't care that much about whether they are led astray.
 - They don't care about Christ the way His dancing bride does.
 - How lovely her nose is—how lovely her watchfulness is to Him.

- By it, she says, "I love you."

IX. In verse 5, He describes her head as like Mount Carmel.

- **He says, "Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel, and the hair of your head is like purple."**

A. First, let's look at the images here.

1. Mount Carmel was by the Mediterranean Sea.

- It rose about 1750 feet above the Plains of Sharon and Philistia which were to the south of it.
- 'Carmel' means 'fruitful fields' and was covered with olive groves, vineyards, and orchards or figs.
- It is often praised in the Bible for its fertility, beauty, and majesty.

2. Purple in scripture represents royalty and nobility.

- Purple or scarlet dye was very expensive, so only the rich could afford it.
- So here we have a majestic head with majestic hair.

B. What is Christ praising here about His bride?

1. He is praising her as one whose head is lifted up because of her association with Him.

- Before she was dancing full of joy, she surely hung her head in shame.
 - She was given over to despair, to anxiety, to fear, to insecurity.

2. But now she is united to Him and she knows that to live is Christ and to die is gain.

- She is here for Him and that gives her absolute hope.
- He has lifted her up from mire and established her feet on a rock.
- With His blood shed for sin, He has washed away all her sin.
 - Now she has, as Colossians 1:27 says, Christ in her, the hope of glory!

3. Christ hates to see a head lifted up in pride, but He delights to see a head lifted up in hope of glory through Him.

- Yes, He is our husband and He has plans for us, not for evil, but for good.
- We trust Him, even if He destroys our body, knowing that He will raise us up.
- We are secure because we are in His hands.
 - As long as we are rejoicing in Him, in our relationship with Him as our Lord and Saviour, nothing can make us afraid.
 - As our husband, it is hurtful to Him and His honour for us to act like He will either not care or not be able to protect us.
 - But how pleased it makes Him to see our head lifted up like Carmel, lifted up in hope, crowned with majestic hair that is like purple!

TRANS> There Jesus ends His description of our beauty as His bride when we are dancing with joy because of our restoration to Him.

X. See the effect that our dancing for joy to be His bride has on Him!

- A. At the end of verse 5, He explains that He is held captive by our tresses—our hair.
- Seeing now, our head lifted up because of our love for Him and trust in Him makes it impossible for Him to withdraw.
 - He was able to do that for a time when we were not devoted to Him—and He might do it even when we have ordinary fellowship with Him.
 - But when we are filled with joyful devotion toward Him, such is His love for us that it makes it impossible for Him to leave us.
 - I do not say this to make you think that you can maintain some joy that will keep Him from ever withdrawing to test you the way He tested job.
 - No, I say this to show you how great His love is to us... so great that when we are delighting in Him the way we will in eternity, He wants only to be with us.
 - He loves us so much.
 - It is sin that separates Him, and in this world we all have that.
 - But by His grace, we are growing in our allegiance to Him.
 - If we are His bride, His covenant is sure and He will always love us, but He will not necessarily manifest His love or have loving communion with us until we are glorified.
 - But see how He loves us and how delighted He is with our love.
- B. In the verses that follow, which we will take up next week, He declares how smitten He is with us when we are dancing with joy to be with Him.
1. In verse 6, He tells us how pleasing we are to Him: **“How fair and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights!”**
 2. In verse 7, He tells how all of our attributes hang together in a beautiful composition when we are devoted to Him.
 - He describes us as a palm tree, stately, and slender, well proportioned: **“This stature of yours is like a palm tree, and your breasts *like* its clusters.”**
 3. In verses 8 & 9, He resolves that He will embrace us in love, and that when He does, it will be most delightful and enriching.
 - His words here are, **“I said, [that is His resolve] ‘I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches.’ Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, and the roof of your mouth like the best wine.”**
- C. In verse 10, we, the bride, recognise the reality of the situation as expressed in these words...
- **I am my beloved’s**, [Indeed we are!]
 - **And his desire is toward me.** [Indeed it is!]
 - More about that next week.