

# Our Little Sister

Song of Solomon 8:8-10

6 February, 2022

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

## **Introduction:**

Please turn to the Song of Solomon.

- Today we will be looking at chapter 8, verses 8-10, though mainly verses 8 & 9.

Over the course of our study of this book, we have seen the how the church is presented to us as the bride of Christ.

- This way of presenting His relationship with us was a wonderful addition to God's revelation...
  - It is a very delightful and helpful way to depict and understand the love that He has for us and the love that we have for Him.
  - Prior to the writing of it, the church's relationship had been referred to as a son to a father, a servant to a master, subjects to a king, and as priests to God, but once this Song was written, it was also known as a bride to a loving husband.
  - After the writing of this Song, the prophets and apostles take up this analogy again and again.
    - Notable examples include Psalm 45, Isaiah, Hosea, Ezekiel, John the Baptist, Jesus Himself, the Apostle Paul, the Apostle John who speaks of the final consummation as the church's marriage to Christ (as Isaiah and Jesus had done before him).
- As we draw near to the end of the book, we have seen the bride's delight and security in her relationship with Him escalate!
  - She is seen as a very happy bride, leaning on her beloved Jesus who brings her out of the barren wilderness of this world to live with Him forever.
  - Last week, we saw her asking Him to love her forever, recognising that indeed He would—
    - because it was He who was shaping her for His house into a perfect bride, and who already delighted in her with affectionate love that was unquenchable and most precious—love that would never be willing to let her go.

We, the bride, finding this delight in His love, now turn to think of others.

- That's how it works when you have the assurance of His love.
  - You yearn for your little sister, that she might also come to enjoy His love.
- Already, she has spoken several times to those who are called "the daughters of Jerusalem," encouraging them to seek this love that she is enjoying—
  - to be patient and accept no substitutes, nothing short of love from her gracious Lord.
- There is nothing inappropriate here.
  - I have explained to you how the bride is different from other brides because she wants everyone to come and experience her husband's love.

- His bride is one bride, but she is made up of many members, and those members want to help each other grow in their love for Him and they want to bring people from all nations to join them and become members who join them to make up His bride.
- Keep in mind, marriage is an allegory of our physical relationship with Christ.
  - Just as the Jews were wrong when Christ told them that He was bread from heaven whose flesh they must eat; and just as it would be wrong to think that when He says He is the door that He is a wooden panel with hinges on it; so it is wrong to think that our marriage to Him involves a physical sexual embrace.
    - It is rather that that is an excellent way to express the spiritual intimacy that we have with our Saviour—just as bread represents how He nourishes us and a door illustrates how He gives us access to the Father from whom we were shut out, so the most intimate human experience illustrates our relationship with Jesus.
- So when we see the bride in our text today concerned for her little sister,
  - understand that she wants her sister to grow to spiritual maturity so she can experience intimacy with Jesus like she does.
  - Listen as I read the passage to you. Again, it is Song of Solomon 8:8-10:

**Song of Solomon 8:8-10: We have a little sister, and she has no breasts. What shall we do for our sister in the day when she is spoken for? 9 If she is a wall, we will build upon her a battlement of silver; and if she is a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar. 10 I am a wall, and my breasts like towers; then I became in his eyes as one who found peace.**

May the Lord add His blessing to the reading of His holy, infallible, and inerrant word.

What we find in this text is:

- I. An important observation: “We have a little sister, and she has no breasts.”
- II. An excellent question: “What shall we do for our sister in the day when she is spoken for?”
- III. An encouraging answer: “If she is a wall, we will build upon her a battlement of silver; and if she is a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.”

Let’s look at these for our edification and encouragement in Christ.

### **I. An important observation:**

- **Song 8:8: We have a little sister, and she has no breasts.**
- A. Here we, the bride of Christ, having grown in our relationship with Him, recognise that there are many who have not yet done so.
  1. When you grow in Christ, it is a good thing.
    - You know Him better
      - love Him more
      - lean on Him more than you did at the start
    - You love His ways more, rejecting the ways of the world
      - more holy and conformed,

- more obedient,
  - more willing to suffer for His sake.
  - You are more secure with Him (sure of Him)
    - more certain of your hope,
    - more desirous than ever to live in His house.
2. But when you grow, you realise that there are others who have not grown.
- That is what is depicted here,
    - a little sister with no breasts.
  - She is not able to enjoy His love the way you do.
    - She is still a babe on milk
    - She doesn't know the delights of marital love.
3. This is something you ought to notice and speak of.
- You need to be aware of and concerned about those who are not mature.
    - Don't pretend that we are all the same (so as not to make others feel bad).
    - That would destroy hope of growth.
    - We should be growing and maturing.
  - Certainly beware of pride...
    - but also beware of a false humility that denies these differences.
    - This is especially a problem today: envy is sanctioned—privilege is denounced.

B. The Bible often speaks frankly of these differences.

1. Some are immature because they are children in actual age (Gen 18:19, Eph 6:4)
  - **Gen 18:19: "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."**
  - **Eph 6:4: "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."**
2. Some are immature because they are new to the faith, just getting started.
  - Paul made a point of returning to new churches, so that they might be "established and encouraged" in the faith (He sent Timothy to the Thessalonians: 1 Thess 3:2)
    - **1 Thess 3:2: "and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith..."**
3. Some are immature because they have not been taught sound doctrine.
  - Jesus accused the scribes and Pharisees hindering the progress of their disciples (Matt 23).
  - Paul asked the Galatians who had hindered them—
    - **Gal 3:1-3: O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? 2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are you so**

**foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?**

4. Some are immature because they have not been diligent
  - **Heb 5:12-14: “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. <sup>13</sup> For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. <sup>14</sup> But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**
5. Some are immature because they have been rebellious
  - Compare Israel under Moses with Israel under Joshua.
  - Paul rebuked the Corinthians for their rebellion. It kept them from being able to make progress with Christ. He had to call for repentance.
6. Some have yet to hear the gospel.
  - They are elect, but they are yet to be called.
    - The Lord has sent us to make disciples of the nations (Matt 28:18-20).
    - He has many sheep that have not yet been called (John 10).
  - We are to yearn for these sheep to enjoy the relationship we enjoy with Jesus.
    - Paul wanted this for his own brethren: **Rom 10:1: Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.**

TRANS> So you see that we, the bride, do well to recognise that we have a sister who has no breasts—

- That there are those in the church who are not mature.
- So next, we see that the bride asks:

## **II. An excellent question:**

- **Song 8:8: What shall we do for our sister in the day when she is spoken for?**

A. What does this mean?

1. In those days, a young woman was said to be “spoken for” when she was betrothed to be married.
  - Betrothal is similar to our engagement, but also different in some ways.
    - If you broke a betrothal, or if you went with someone else when you were betrothed, it was considered adultery.
    - We don’t consider it adultery when some break an engagement, because there haven’t been vows that have been made.
      - With a betrothal, there were vows.
    - In our weddings, we do the betrothal and the wedding in the same service.
      - We have that part at the beginning where we say, “Will you have this man to be your husband? Will you have this woman to be your wife?”
        - That is the betrothal right there.
        - But we only have betrothal for ten minutes or something, and then we have the wedding vows, “for better, for worse, in sickness and health.”

- Even at the time of the Westminster Assembly, they did betrothal and wedding separately and talked about adultery from one who is betrothed.
  - The Bible sometimes presents us as fully married to Christ (with children).
    - Often, however, we are seen as betrothed and waiting for the wedding when Jesus returns.
2. The question here expresses a concern about how to help our little sister.
- She is not mature and we want to help her...
    - In short, we want her to learn to lean on Christ.
  - “In the day that she is spoken for” certainly includes the time after she professes faith.
    - From profession till full marriage when Christ returns
  - But “in the day” can also be understood as “regarding the day when she is spoken for (or betrothed).”
    - In other words, it could include both preparing her for betrothal as well as leading her to maturity in her relationship after she is betrothed.
      - eg. Titus 2:3 & 4: older women to admonish the younger woman **to love their husbands, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands...**

TRANS> So I said that this question, **Song 8:8: What shall we do for our sister in the day when she is spoken for?** is an excellent question.

B. How is it an excellent question?

1. First, it is an excellent question because it is spoken out of a love for our sister.
  - We love her and want her to experience intimacy with Jesus like we do.
  - Jesus is pleased when we love our brothers (our little sister)
    - a mark of maturity.
    - a mark that we really know Jesus!
  - We should also love unbelievers and desire them to be saved and enjoy the same experience that we do.
    - Jonah was wrong not to want the Ninevites to hear because he didn’t want God to forgive them.
      - It is understandable, because these were very cruel people!
      - They had invaded the land of Jonah’s people, and would do things like flay people alive and pile up the heads of the leaders at the gates.
      - Jonah wanted God to go ahead and burn them, but God said, “No, I want them to repent.”
      - God wants us to have this love and care!
2. Second, because it is spoken out of our deep love for Christ—this honours Him.
  - We praise what we love.
    - We want others to love and praise it, too.
    - Oh, that they might see His glory!
  - It honours Him for us to praise Him and speak of our delight in Him.
3. Third, it is an excellent question because it is a practical question—

- We want to know what we can **do** for our little sister.
  - Love is defective if it stops with well wishing.
    - It can make you feel better about yourself,
    - but James and John say that love without action is worthless.
      - Real love finds ways to bless the one it loves.
      - It is busy and creative.
4. Fourth, it is an excellent question because it looks to Christ for help.
- The question is not “what shall *I* do,” but what shall *we* do.”
    - Here is one who knows what it means to lean on Jesus!
    - Here is one who knows that without Him, we can do nothing (John 15:5)
  - This also reflects our understanding of our union with Jesus so that,
    - our sister is His sister, His sister is our sister.
    - We are His wife, so we have the same relatives now.

TRANS> Jesus our husband is pleased with this question.

- He shows His pleasure by giving us:

### III. An encouraging answer.

- **Song 8:9: If she is a wall, we will build upon her a battlement of silver; and if she is a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.**

A. This is an encouraging answer because Jesus shows that He is ready to help us.

1. He answers immediately and warmly.
  - When wives ask their husbands in this world about how we can help our little sister, they often get at least a bit of resistance.
    - “Why does she need our help?”
    - or “I don’t know.”
      - Not so Jesus—
2. Look at how He picks up on the “we” language (“we will build,” “we will enclose.”)
  - We are not left along to lead others to maturity.
    - This is good.
    - This gives us hope of success!
    - He is with us, working by His grace, sending His Spirit.
  - Did He not assure us of this in Matthew 28:18-20?
    - “I am with you always...”
3. Remember: Moses refused to go to the promised land without Him.
  - We do well to pray for His grace and help—for His Spirit to work.
  - It honours Him for us to lean on Him in disciplining the nations (our little sisters).

B. Jesus’ answer is also encouraging because He presents a wise plan.

1. He tells us that we will find our little sister sometimes to be a wall, and sometimes a door.
  - What is the difference?

- A wall keeps things out.
  - A door lets things in.
  - Keep in mind that, like us, she is complex.
    - She consists of many members—all the elect who have not yet reached maturity.
2. Jesus makes no assumptions about her.
- This is talking about her chastity—and she may have some issues!
    - Chastity is full devotion to Him as her only husband.
    - The Bible often speaks of Christ’s betrothed running after other gods, looking to Egypt or Assyria for help, turning to idols.
      - See Judges, Kings, Chronicles, Isaiah, Hosea, Ezekiel, Jesus, James calling us adulteresses, John saying keep yourselves from idols, the harlot in Revelation...
    - Sometimes our little sister may be very faithful, sometimes not!
      - Contrast Israel with Moses (a door), and Israel with Joshua (a wall).
      - Contrast Galatia (exchanging the gospel for legalism—a door),
        - with Philadelphia (stood firm against the synagogue that was a synagogue of Satan—a wall).
      - Contrast the Hebrews who wavered (a door), with the Thessalonians who received the gospel under much affliction (a wall).
3. We who are mature have to deal with her sometimes as a wall, sometimes as a door.
- We want to teach her to lean on Jesus along to come out of the wilderness.
- C. Jesus tells us what we must do (we and Him together).
1. If she is a wall,
- build her up—make her stronger,
  - adorn her with silver,
  - encourage her to press on—remind her of our hope and the goal,
  - feed her with the word.
2. If she is a door,
- enclose her with boards of cedar,
  - admonish her to put away her idols,
  - warn her of the danger,
  - go after her (leave the 99),
  - rebuke her and lead her to repentance.
3. Jesus uses warning and teaching to keep us chaste.
- a. Paul says;
- **2 Cor 11:2-4: For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. <sup>3</sup> But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in**

**Christ. <sup>4</sup> For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!”**

b. His goal:

- **Col 1:27-29: To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. <sup>28</sup> Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.**
- This is Matthew 28 in action.

c. This is the work that belongs to the whole church

- **Eph 4:11-16: <sup>11</sup> And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; <sup>14</sup> that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, <sup>15</sup> but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.**
- We all have roles to play.
  - Ministers, elders, deacons, women,
  - we are to pray earnestly because it all depends on Christ.

4. How eager we ought to be to see our sister grow to maturity!

- Go without relenting to help her: **Acts 14:21-23: <sup>21</sup> And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, <sup>22</sup> strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” <sup>23</sup> So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.**
- He could not stay away from the Thessalonians:
  - **1 Thess 2:17-3:4: Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, <sup>2</sup> and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, <sup>3</sup> that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. <sup>4</sup> For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. <sup>5</sup> For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.**

D. This is talking about helping our little sister to be a chaste virgin to Christ.



1. The Bible often speaks of pursuing other gods or pursuing idols as spiritual adultery.
  - Isaiah, Hosea, Ezekiel, James the Lord's brother, and John in Revelation.