

His Chambers

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[0 : 00] Let's go back then to the passage of scripture that we read, the Song of Solomon and the first chapter. And we can read again from the beginning, the Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for your love is better than wine. Your anointing oils are fragrant, your name is oil poured out, therefore virgins love you. Draw me after you, let us run, the King has brought me into his chambers.

And particularly the words there that we find in verse 4. Draw me after you, let us run, the King has brought me into his chambers.

Some of you probably were thinking when I read this, or we've heard this before, that I was preaching the last time I was here, I preached on this particular chapter and on verse 5.

And having laid the foundation for that and explained again in that sermon the structure of the Song of Solomon, I'm not going to go through that again.

[1 : 15] Except briefly to say that the Song of Solomon, of course, is a song which to the church is precious, because it is a song, and rightly called the Song of Songs at the beginning, a song which shows the covenant bond between the church and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it is mirrored in the terms of this allegory then of the King and his bride, the Shulamite, who appears as a tree throughout the Song of Solomon.

Last time I dealt a little bit with the character of the Shulamite, and they're spying by a very dark but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedah, like the curtains of Solomon.

But this time I want to look particularly at the attraction that is between the bride, the Shulamite, the church, and the King, Solomon, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And what we see is that the bride is familiar with the King. We see that in verse 3, your anointing oils are fragrant.

[2 : 30] That the fragrance of the bridegroom has drawn the attention of the bride. And she has therefore been drawn, as we see in verse 4, Draw me after you.

This is the first step, of course, that happens to any believer. That he is drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ. In the same way that she is drawn to the King here.

And you notice the progression, that once you are drawn, then you are led and you begin to run. Let us run.

And you notice that it's in the plural. Draw me after you. Let us run. That although the relationship that the individual has with the Lord Jesus Christ is personal, nevertheless, it is not a relationship in which you are alone.

There are others involved in this as well. And this is what we see in the following part. Therefore, if you are using the ESV, you see how it's broken down into the others. We will exult and rejoice in you.

[3 : 42] We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you. But I want to concentrate with you this evening, particularly on the last part of verse 4.

The King has brought me into his chambers. And I want to take you, as far as possible, on a tour of some of these chambers.

Now I want you to bear in mind that this is here on earth. This is not what Jesus speaks of in John 14.

That he goes to prepare a place for us. That in his Father's house are many mansions. That is the heavenly glory that is to come for the believer.

And you notice that one of the interesting things in the New Testament is that we are not given an awful lot of description of the heavenly mansions.

[4 : 45] We know various things about it from the vision that John has given in the book of Revelation. But the details are not open to us in the way that they are here on earth.

And there are probably very good reasons for that. Probably one of the main reasons is that at this stage in our pilgrimage, in our sanctification, in our progress through the Christian life, is that we are unable to understand much of what lies ahead of us in glory.

It is beyond our expectation. It may even be beyond our understanding. And we have an eternity in which we will be learning and understanding of what the real glory of the triune God actually is. But he gives us a test of that here on earth by bringing us into his chambers. Obviously to have chambers you must have a place where there are chambers.

And when the king brings us into his chambers, he does so in a very special way. First of all, he brings us in by the door.

[6 : 10] And you will remember that Jesus himself says in John 10, that I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be.

And he goes on to explain in great detail what he shall be. But this is a door like no other. It is guarded by angels.

You may not be aware of them. But they are there. In the same way as they were there at the Garden of Eden, the children with the flaming swords are there, guarding the door so that no one can enter except with the king.

It is a personal tour that you are given. We don't go in here in groups. We go in individually. And we go in solely with the presence of the king.

He alone has the king. No one else can open this door except him. And the only way that you can enter in is through this door.

[7 : 20] There is no other entrance to this mansion, to this house. No other entrance except through the front door accompanied by the king.

And as you enter into this house, you turn round to see the door being closed behind you. And as you turn round and you look, you see that there is something written above the door.

And it says, Only the elect shall enter here. Or you might have had no interest in election or no knowledge of election before you entered.

But now that you are inside, you begin to understand what it means. Only the elect shall enter here. Election is such a problem to so many of us.

I'm not going to spend time on election this evening. It's another subject altogether. Except perhaps to say this. Perhaps one of the best explanations I ever heard of election was this.

[8 : 33] And it might sound a little bit rude. And maybe it is. Election is none of your business. It's God's business.

Not yours. It's a simple side. We struggle with it. We argue about it. It puts so many people off. And yet, it's none of your business.

We can add none to God's election. And we can take away none from God's election. It's a mistake. It's so difficult for so many people to understand. But yet, it's there. Only the elect enter here. And as you come in, you come in like in any great house, you come into a hall.

And the thing that strikes you about this hall is the number of portraits that are hanging in the hall. There's nothing unusual in that itself.

[9 : 37] There are so many halls that we go into in so many houses. And there are portraits there. And what are they? They are portraits of the family. But the thing that catches your eye is you recognise some of them.

And you recognise some of them from pictures and paintings of years gone by. That at the far end of the hall, there are still portraits unveiled.

They haven't been brought in yet. They are still perhaps not even born. Still to be brought in to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the hall is full of them. And you stand there with such a sense of wonder. Because as your eye follows along the hallway, you realise that there are millions and millions and millions of them.

It's an enormous morning. Aren't you so glad that there are others still to come in? And perhaps you wonder if among these portraits that are still unveiled, there are members of your family that you've been praying for for years.

[10 : 58] You have no way of knowing. The only thing you can do is to keep praying. Keep praying in the hope that the Lord will answer your prayer.

And from there, the king leads you to show you other parts of this mansion. And off from the hall, he leads you into the armoury.

And here you see displayed in the swoon a complete set of armour. There is the breastplate of righteousness.

There is the helmet of salvation. There is a shield of faith. There is a belt of truth. And above all, the sword of the Spirit.

And you notice that there is a set of personal armour ready for you. And you require the whole armour of God.

[12 : 09] Not just bits and pieces of it, but all of it. The whole armour of God. Those of you who wish to look at further details of the armour, have a look at Ephesians chapter 6.

And there you will find the armour laid out. And the armour reminds you of a couple of things. that when you go back out of this house, you need to be fully equipped for the spiritual warfare that is coming.

That you have an enemy outside the door. An enemy who is seeking to devour you, as Peter puts it, like a low rolling line. That the armour is for your protection.

And you need all of it. And particularly, you need the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

You need to be immersed in it. You need to be familiar with using the sword.

You need to know how to defend yourself against the fiery darts of the devil. And this armour will protect you wherever you go and whatever circumstances you are in.

[13 : 26] And Paul reminds us that we wrestle not against fresh and blunt, but against principalities and powers and rulers of the spiritual darkness of this world.

Oh, it's such an important room, this, the armoury, that you really need to be fully armoured for the struggle that is in front of you in this world.

And the king, then having outfitted you with your armour, he leads you into the next chamber.

and he leads you into a chamber that is full of mirrors. These are not the mirrors of a fairground.

It's not that you see yourself here in distorted shapes where you look fat in one and thin in another, etc. No. These are the mirrors that show you in reality, that show the king in reality exactly what you are in this world.

[14 : 35] The body of sin is seen from every angle that you look in. Your clothing that you thought was so beautiful as you were preparing to be brought in by the king.

You now find that it is nothing other than filthy rouse. Filthy rouse. That there is nothing good in you from the bottom of your foot to the top of your head.

God shows you in reality what you are like compared to the king himself. But he tells you not to worry.

He reminds you even as Zechariah saw in chapter 3 of his prophecy Joshua the priest standing before the Lord being accused by Satan clad in filthy rouse.

And he reminds you that he has commanded that you be given new rouse. New clothes. You are given a robe of righteousness. And it covers up your sinful nature.

[15 : 54] Oh, it doesn't eliminate it. It's still there. It will be there with you until you are fully sanctified and brought into glory. But it's covered up and washed clean by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, the mirrors have given you a fright. You've seen yourself as you really are. but he tells you again fear not fear not fear not that henceforth is laid up for you a crown of righteousness that you will be clothed in the most beautiful garments when you come into his glory.

and so with that reassurance he leads you on and he leads you into the trophy room. Well, there are many interesting trophies here but every single one of them is a trophy of grace and as you start to look around you see some famous names from the past brought in to be trophies of grace in most wonderful ways.

I'm sure all of us can think of examples of that. Perhaps the most surprising thing to you is that your own picture is there that you are a trophy of grace and that you are worthy of a place here in this particular room.

The king's trophy. Then you are led to the diamond and we see this even in chapter 2 he brought me in verse 4 he brought me to the banqueting house and his banner over me was love sustain me with raisins refresh me with apples for I am sick of love.

[18:02] it's quite an amazing room this dining room when you look at the feast on the table everything that you could imagine is there to delight your taste there's a feast there that everyone who is inside can partake of but you notice of course that there are different kinds of food there is meat but there is also milk here the two things are at opposite ends of the table but they're there and you wonder why the milk is there well don't you remember that when you started off as a believer you were fed with the sincere milk of the world why because you were never ready for the strong meat some are never ready for strong meat they find it difficult they feed on milk at all times but again if we follow the analogy if you keep feeding a child on milk and never bring him on to solid food you will stunt this growth and it's exactly the same with you and I we need to go from the milk of the world to the meat of the world

Paul puts it like this when he's writing to the Corinthians I have fed you with milk and not with meat for hitherto you are not able to bear it you are not able to bear it but as you go on in your Christian life more and more you begin to feed on the meat of the word of God that's what we need to do we need to mature spiritually we need to grow in this we need to grow in the substance and the food that we take from God's word it's not an overnight process it doesn't happen in nature with the young children in an overnight process it's a gradual process that bit by bit you begin to understand the depth of the word of God the depth of scripture the depth of the riches of the fear that he has provided for you sustain me with raisins refresh me with apples for I am sick with love and there are times where that's what you need you need the sweet things of the word of God the sweet fruit of the word of God but there are other times when you need the milk and other times when you need the meat and the diet has been so carefully prepared for you where is it being prepared but in the kitchen of course and as we look in the kitchen we see just how carefully the different menus are being prepared for different people in different parts of the world it's quite an interesting thing that there are so many believers in the Lord Jesus Christ spread across the world and yet they have different menus in different countries in different places their beliefs in some things their theology might not be the same as yours and mine some of the practices that they have may be quite different they may have music they may have worship worship bands as they call them they may have leaders for this and leaders for that they may have particular rules and regulations that are different from ours they may be more legalistic than we are and it's a good thing sometimes to examine ourselves to see if we are legalistic in some of the things that we do that the food is coming from the same kitchen and it's being prepared by the same people and it's being fed in the same way and each one is growing in their knowledge of the word of God and from there of course once you have been satisfied with this food from the kitchen it's time for a little bit of rest and relaxation and you are led into the room the chamber with hanging texts and you see so many texts on the wall there texts that perhaps have been special to you at particular times in your life other texts that perhaps didn't really mean much to you but they meant plenty to others isn't that the way it is with us sometimes the words that mean one thing or are particularly special to one person don't mean very much to someone else because they are different experiences and perhaps you've even had it this way in your own experience that there are times that you read scripture that a verse that never said anything to you before suddenly leaps out and almost smacks you in the face that's an experience that the Lord's people have quite frequently texts that you may have read a hundred times before that you may have even heard sermons of didn't really say much to you but all of a sudden they become relevant according to the spiritual growth of the situation that you're in each one of us as we go through our daily walk with God we come with different texts but be careful there's someone else in this room

Satan is present to you and he's whispering at you all the time don't believe these texts they're not really true they're just hanging there as they are in so many moments or used to be in homes in our island they're just hanging there as ornaments you can't really trust in these texts it's not exactly what he did with Eve he put the word of doubt in our mind did God really say that you are not to eat of the fruit of the tree did he really say that and you see the result what does Adam do he blames God the woman that you gave me she gave me to eat the word Scotch your fault God oh Satan has such a way of twisting scripture for us even Shakespeare recognised that you find in several of the Shakespearean plays particularly if I remember correctly I think it's in Hamlet where Horatio says what can the devil cite scripture to his own means yes he can isn't that how he tempted our law in the temptation by using scripture against him but you notice how the Lord responded to him it is written it is written and you and I have to have our knowledge of these texts

and we have to know that these texts are true doubts will come of course they will even as we were speaking about this morning with Asaph's experience that there are times when we feel in deep doubt until we come into the sanctuary and it's when we come into the sanctuary that we come again to God's work and the texts begin to make more and more meaning to us from there we require a rest and so we move on to the drawing room or the sitting room as we usually call it when the day's work is done the evening meal has been consumed and you are feeling satisfied normally we sit down and before the television destroyed conversation wasn't it so often then that we contemplated and discussed and meditated upon the things of the day and the things of the word of God hardly happens nowadays perhaps even time even it was a time when there was a time of family worship something else which is disappearing from our homes and here we have fellowship with the king and we have a period of communion and relaxation with him oh it can be a very blessed time when we retire to the drawing room perhaps in the evening the end of the day to meditate for a while and to have union and communion with our

[27 : 49] Lord Jesus Christ but of course as the day draws to a close tiredness will set up and the king leads us to the bedroom it is necessary for us to have periods of rest and relaxation that is what bedrooms are for but they are also for something else you see we can never forget here that the song of Solomon is showing us the intimacy between the king and his bride as an analogy of the intimacy between Christ and his church marriage in the human relationship in the sanctity of marriage it is in the bedroom that the intimacy of love is felt to its deepest depth there is nowhere else where the bride and the groom will spend so much time in deep intimacy together watchman knee the Korean writer puts it like this he says that it is a union of body soul and spirit not just a union of bodies not just a union of minds but it is a spiritual union as well in which every single muscle every cell in your body every neuron is involved in this love in this act of love and it's exactly the same way that this house has intimacy with your lord and saviour with your king you require periods of deep intimacy with him you require periods where you feel his love where he demonstrates his love to you so that what song of solomon is all about is that what we see so often here while the king was on his couch my nard gave forth its fragrance we read in verse 12 my beloved is to me a sachet of my that lies between my breasts in the garden in our house in

Peru we had nard now I don't know if it's the same nard as was found in Israel or not but it has a peculiar feature it's a spiky bush not with thorns on it at all but with spiky leaves but it has this peculiarity it only flowers once a year and the flower opens at night time and it lasts exactly 24 hours and we used to sit quite often in the patio watching the nard opening it only opened in January of course the middle of summer and as it opened leaf or whatever you call that part of the flower the petals I suppose it would be as they opened one by one the smell the perfume from it just invaded the whole garden it was absolutely amazing and I so often wondered if it was the same nard as is referred to here spike nard my nard gave forth its fragrance my beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh that lies between my breasts my beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of

En Gedi the picture of love the depth of love that we are given throughout the song is quite amazing quite amazing it's mirrored of course in the covenant relationship between the man and the wife but it's only faintly mirrored we cannot understand the depth of love that our saviour has for his people that the king has for his church that a plan was put into place before time ever began that you and I might be saved that the lamb was slain from the foundation of the land oh the depth Paul says the depth of the slump the marble of the slump and it's only in the bedroom that we see it in its fullest in this house but there are other rooms that we need to look at briefly as we move around as time is passing there is of course next to the bedroom there is a bathroom and there are two particular taps in the bathroom one that is pure cleansing water it is there that you of course see the water of baptism and whatever your belief on baptism whether child baptism or adult baptism

I'm not going to go into that it doesn't make any difference but all believers are baptized by this water and don't confuse that with the baptism of the Holy Spirit that's a different thing and it may occur at a totally different time but here there is this clean water symbolized so often through the Old Testament by the water of water but there is another source of water in this bathroom it is a fountain of living water this is the living water that the Lord spoke about to the woman of Samaria and you remember what she said give me of this water give me of this water living water remember that she said that I'm thinking that she wouldn't have to come to the well anymore but anyone who gets a drink of this living water wants more and more and more of it every single day it's what keeps us

alive you can't live without water you can do without food for a while but you require this living water day by day there are other places in this house that again

I can only mention briefly you can see outside that there is a patio very attractive patio and there is a fountain in the patio and as you come closer as the bride is led closer to this fountain by the groom you realise that it's not water that's in this fountain in the patio it is blood there is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's pain and you forgot and I forgot that the most important thing in the trophy was the cross that the cross was there at the end of the trophy and it is because of this cross that there is a fountain filled with blood the blood that cleanses you from all sin and you remember that without the shedding of blood there is no remission from sin but there are other rooms he leads you into a home and he shows you and he says this is the room of special treasures not everyone gets in here some of the things in it are only revealed in the most difficult and desperate situations to God's people there are treasures here that are locked and only the king can unlock them and he will only do so in certain circumstances hidden riches of secret places [37 : 04] Isaiah tells how the Lord used Cyrus and the marvellous story of how he conquered Babel in order to restore later on the Jews to Jerusalem without knowing what he was doing perhaps special treasures special providences special ways in which the Lord works using circumstances for the good of his people sometimes we wonder at some of these circumstances sometimes we wonder particularly when we hear a report of another shooting in the United States in which a gunman has targeted Christian believers we wonder we wonder why the Lord has allowed these things to happen why does he not protect his people he does he's simply taking them home to glory perhaps not in the way that you and I would imagine or perhaps not in the way that we would like to go but how often has blessing come out of tragedy how often has the

Lord used circumstances like that in order to bring others into this house and to show others the chambers that are there you see this chamber works through grace and grace can never be extinguished never put out you remember how John Bunyan saw a mission of water being poured on a fire to extinguish it but yet behind the fire there was someone pouring oil on it to keep the fire going that's the way it is with you and I the Holy Spirit is pouring out his oil at all times to keep you going through whatever difficulties and trials and circumstances but nevertheless even the most tragic circumstances can be used sometimes to God's glory that's next to the chamber of sorrows and very often the King himself is a visitor to the chamber of sorrows sorrows oh he's well to go there remember how Isaiah puts it that he's a man of grief and acquainted with sorrow and sometimes when we have particular sorrows in our lives perhaps bereavements perhaps tragedies that happen then this is where he goes with us he accompanies us in the chamber of sorrows and then time has gone by and I'll just mention one or two others quickly there's a chamber of loneliness and forsakenness many older

Christians perhaps particularly in advanced states of years and perhaps with debilitating health situations will find themselves in this chamber and yet he visits there regularly nobody else nobody knew what loneliness was like compared to the Lord Jesus Christ abandoned by all his friends denied by his closest disciple perhaps alone to face everything from Gethsemane through his humiliation to the cross itself no one knew loneliness like our Lord Jesus Christ my God my God he cries on the cross why have you forsaken me why because of the love that he has for the bride because of the love that he has for his people the love that he has for the child and there's a chamber that's very close to this the chamber of old age and infirmity some of us never get to that chamber but many do and it's a very difficult time sometimes for us as faculties begin to fail as we can't perhaps read

God's word like we used to do but we can still remember it in our memories but perhaps even as our memory fails we're not aware of the Lord's presence in the way that we were before but he's still there he's still visiting that chamber so frequently and then perhaps finally one of the most difficult chambers of all the waiting room when you are waiting for God's promises to be fulfilled when God is put you through a trial through a difficulty and you know that he will take you through it but yet it is so difficult to thrust and wait so difficult this is where Satan whispers to you even more and more that you doubt that you doubt the words you doubt scripture that you see nothing happening that your prayers seem to be as symbols clanging that the heavens are like brass there is no response to your prayer and you are waiting to see the

Lord's promise fulfilled Lord's love but remember Simeon when he took the babe in now let us thy servant depart in peace peace and it's that peace that you are looking for so often in the waiting

room that the Lord would give you peace in whatever circumstances and whatever you are waiting for each waiting room has different circumstances and different individuals and sometimes it can be the most difficult room but as you go through remember the other rooms remember all the other rooms in this house and remember that these are the promises that scripture gives us of what the believer will experience here on earth so many have tasted and seen that God is good so many can testify to the wonder of these children and yet when we think of these things what will glory be like in my father's house are many mansions

[44 : 39] I go to prepare a place for that place is prepared for each and every believer oh how wonderful it will be if the taste of the things that we have had from the king here on earth has been so sweet to our taste what will an eternity of being with the Lord Jesus Christ and seeing him face to face what would it be like meditate on that take that with you and spend your evening thinking of the wonders that wait for the Lord's people I was going to say in the future but it's not really the future it's an eternity an eternity an eternity is perhaps beginning and much closer for some of us than we actually realise let us pray

Lord Lord we thank you for your provision for us we thank you how your word shows us what you have prepared for you and the wonder of it and the love with which it is all done that we would constrain others to come to a knowledge of this God to taste and see that God is good and we pray for any here who would like to come into this house and yet are sort of holding back at the front door we pray Lord that you would take them that you would grasp them by the hand that you would minister to them by your Holy Spirit to come to a saving knowledge of you we thank you for your work blessed to us this evening through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen our final praise then will be in Psalm 133 and we're going to sing it in Gaelic just for a change Psalm 133 O faith to mine is to make and both fun rather than be a money grand cheese in New York and all the three shall the count way in the years that face all ■■■■■■ how Do me

Thank you.

Thank you.

[48 : 49] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forever. Amen.