

Guest Preacher - Rev Donald M Macleod

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Preacher: Rev. Donald M. Macleod

[0 : 00] We're looking at verses 8 down to verse 14. Let's take verse 10 as our text.

Song of Solomon chapter 2 verse 10. My beloved speaks and says to me, Arise my love, my beautiful one, and come away. For behold, the one for us passed, the rain is over, I'm gone.

So, I've been coming here since, well, this is almost 13, 12, 13 years. It's the first time I joined with you.

You're the second congregation I came to. I'm only saying that because I was wondering what we look at tonight. And this is one of the texts, and I hope you don't remember, because who knows what I was saying back then.

This is one of the texts I first preached with yourselves these 12, 13 odd years ago. The text hasn't changed, but the understanding of a text and the application certainly has.

[1 : 01] But just to say, when we come to this time of year, it's often hard what we do look to. Do we look back? Do we look forward? You've had your New Year's Day service.

You've had that encouragement to look forward, and I listened to it. It's a great encouragement for you as a congregation. For a short time this evening, it depends how far we get in the time, I want us to look from verses 8 down to verse 13, and touching on verse 14, if time permits, and we're looking forward, very far forward.

We're looking, in fact, to the new heavens and the new earth. We're looking to the Christian's future hope. Not this new year, but the new eternity that awaits ahead of us.

Now, just to refresh our minds, we've covered, I'm sure, and yourselves have covered, I know, Song of Solomon parts before. But just to remind us, when we come to this text, we are, of course, coming to a poem, a long beat of a poem that was written by Solomon to his bride.

We know that, we can read that, we understand that. This is a love song, and there's no shame in saying that. But if you spend any time at all in the Song of Solomon, you'll see there's something else going on.

[2 : 25] There's something deeper going on. And as you read it, you realize this is a strange love song. There's illusions being drawn here, there's things being said here, which can never apply, even the most romantic way, the most poetic way, to us, to humanity.

And as you look through the Song of Solomon, of course, we realize, yes, on one level it is a love song from Solomon to his bride. We don't deny that. We can't deny that.

But with that, and over that, and superseding that, eternally so, this is a song of love spoken by our Savior towards his church, from our Savior towards his bride.

Now, I know it makes us at times, perhaps, for many of us, uncomfortable using the words love song and some of the language used in the Song of Solomon. The sad thing is, that is a, well, mid to late Victorian problem.

If you go back before Victorians, go back to the Puritans, go back to the Reformers, go back to the early church fathers, they had no problem, not a single problem, using the most beautiful poetic language, even in their own sermons.

[3 : 46] They had no problem preaching through the Song of Solomon and looking at every illustration of how it pointed towards Christ and his love for his people. And we should have no problem either. We shouldn't be uncomfortable either.

Again, if no other reason, then we find out, of course, do we not, in Ephesians and Corinthians and other places, we find out that why do we have marriage? What's the theological reason for marriage?

Well, Paul reminds us, theologically speaking, marriage is there to show us, in human terms, Christ and his bride. That is what marriage is supposed to represent.

It's why the husband's call is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. That's no small calling. So why wouldn't this beautiful poem of marriage be representative of the greater reality?

I'm not here to convince you of that this evening. It's plenty of resources out there to convince you of that. But that's how we're seeing it. This is Christ speaking to his church. So if we take that to be the case, then as we come to our verses, verses 8 down to verse 13, this is Jesus speaking to us as he reminds us, as he tells us of what our future is.

[5 : 06] And really, verses 8 to verse 13, it's actually the bride speaking. And as she speaks, as she thinks, we're seeing and we're hearing her thoughts.

She's going over in her mind what was said to her by her beloved. What the king said to her at one point. She is here longing for him to come back to her.

She is here in her mind going over all the promises and reminding herself of what hope he has given her, what promise he has given her. And this evening, as brothers and sisters, those of us here who know and who love the Lord, verses 8 down to verse 13, this is us this evening.

As we spend time thinking of what our future holds. Let's be encouraged as we come to these verses. This is the hope of our future.

And for those here who as of yet can't call Jesus your saviour, you can't yet say that you know him or that you love him, these are the verses which could be your hope and your future.

[6 : 10] If only you would come and we'll address that again later on. So in short, where are we going according to these verses? Just three very simple headings.

First of all, seeing his beauty, then his call, then his promise. His beauty, his call, and his promise.

I know you're used to these things rhyming, but your minister is not here tonight, you're stuck with me instead. His beauty, his call, and his promise. First of all, the beauty of the beloved.

The voice of my beloved, behold, he comes, leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills, my beloved like a gazelle, a young stag. Note first of all, the voice of my beloved.

The king, our saviour, he speaks to his bride. He speaks directly to us. And brothers and sisters, how much we love to hear the voice of the beloved speaking to us.

[7 : 13] How much we long to hear his voice. How much we love joining together, I hope, to raise our voices as he speaks to us through his word, as we engage in that time of worship.

As we speak to him, as we pray to him, as he talks to us, and as we talk back to him, we engage in conversation with our beloved.

Now, there are many voices in this world, and we know that. Even as Christians, there are many voices which require and desire our attention. As Christians, there are many voices, some good, some necessary, or friends and family and responsibilities.

That's one thing. But there are many more voices which require and desire to distract us away from the voice of our beloved. And as we begin this new year and carry on this new year, it is our desire, isn't it, that we retune our ears once more, to tune out all the various voices of this world which want to take us away from him.

And we want to hear only the voice of our beloved. His is the only voice which is saying something special, to us. We'll see that in a second.

[8 : 28] His voice is glorious. But look, we see here, there's movement in this verse, verse 8. He's not just static. As the bride thinks of our beloved, she imagines him like a stag on the mountains, leaping, bounding towards her.

Verse 9. Well, we're all plenty used to seeing the stags. Even last week, I was down in Graver and they made a mess of the back garden and they're jumping higher and higher over the fences and there's more often jumping over the fences.

But if you ever watch a stag, you know, the size of that creature, however much they weigh, and you think, they won't clear that fence. And the second they clear that fence and they clear the wall behind the fence and you see the power and the beauty.

And that's an image we have here. As we think of our Savior coming towards us, as we think of His joy at His bride and His people, He's like a stag bounding over the mountains.

The vitality, the love, the majesty as He bounds towards us. Now, again, we might find this description of His love for us just a bit too much.

[9 : 38] This is a bit too heavy to have in a church on a Sunday evening, surely. What's in God's Word? Such is the love of our Savior towards His people. He bounds towards us.

He shows us the reality of His love for us. It is movement even towards us. Do you remember, dear sisters, this is not just here to paint a nice bit of poetry.

This is here to remind us of something. We don't come to a Savior this evening who is somehow reticent in drawing close to us. We draw close to worship our elder brother, to worship our friend, to worship our Lord and King, to worship our Savior.

Here, to worship the bridegroom who is leaping towards us. Why? Quite simply because He loves us.

And that's overused perhaps. And it's used perhaps in the wrong way. But that shouldn't stop us being reminded we have a Savior, brothers and sisters, who loves you.

[10 : 46] And in this verse, who is shown to be bounding towards us in His love for you. Such is His joy at drawing alongside us.

He doesn't need us. He doesn't need us. The second person of the Godhead who existed for all glory, of all power, and all majesty. The angel armies worship Him.

He doesn't need us. But He loves us. And His love towards us, He shows us His love. But look where He is.

Or perhaps look where He isn't. Behold, verse 9, He stands there behind our wall, gazing through the windows, looking through the lattice.

For now, His beauty is close. For now, He is close. But there is that separation, isn't there? There is that window. There is that lattice.

[11 : 44] We can almost see Him, almost touch Him, but we can't quite get there. And I'm sure, and I certainly do pray and hope, there have been times in your worship and times in your private devotion and times in your walk where you do feel as if He is that close to you.

But then there's plenty of other times where you feel, if not far away, then distant. If not distant, then a million miles away from that place of closeness. And even the closest times of fellowship, the closest times of worship, even then, we are aware there is always still that separation.

We're not quite yet there. Now, this morning in Tulsa, we're seeing the great doctrine that we're united in Christ. So in one sense, we are in Him eternally. In one sense, we are fully clothed by Him.

We're not saying that. That's true. And we love that truth. But for us, in our experience, it always feels like there's a distance between us and Him. Because there is. Whilst we're on this side of the veil, we could say, there's a distance.

But soon, soon that distance is closed. And we see that here in our second point, His call. Verse 10. We see His beauty, but then we hear His call.

[13 : 02] Verse 10. My beloved speaks and says to me, Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away. My beloved speaks and says to me, Arise, my love.

This is the call that we will hear one day. And for now, we will speak of our own individual passing from this world into the next. This is a call that the church at large will hear one day, of course, but for now, it's ourselves.

One day, we will hear words to the effect of, Arise, my love. A call to arise. One day, we will hear the call to leave this world behind.

To leave behind the world of chaos and tempest. The world of darkness and storm. Now, once, for all the Christians here, we've already been called to arise at some point, weren't we?

In our conversion, we were called to arise out of darkness to light. At some point in our experience, the Lord called out to us. For some here, I'm sure it was an instant thing.

[14 : 12] For others, myself included, it was a much more gradual calling. But either way, He called us out of darkness, out of sin and misery into light, into peace, into hope.

But here, we see the final call as He calls us to Himself on this side of the veil. He calls us to leave away the pain and the mourning we read in Revelation 21.

To leave this place where there's such sadness, this place of disappointment. We know this ourselves. I'm not coming here to list the ways that life is hard.

Life is hard. Now, time, I know for many here, life is pretty hard. We mourn. We cry.

We mourn recent loss. We mourn loss of many years ago. We are wronged by those closest to us. We see the sin in ourselves, the sin in our community, the sin in the world.

[15 : 15] We see death and destruction. We see our own decay physically. We see it all happening and we think, how much longer the day comes and will one day come for all of us when we hear the call.

And the grammar of the call is beautiful because it's not just a call, it's a command. Arise, my love. It's a command said in love, but it's a command nonetheless. And the Lord Himself, the only one who can call us, He declares us to arise.

It's almost as if in this life we've been in bed ill, in bed sick, and the call comes to arise, to wake up and to come and join Him.

This is a king calling his bride home to be with himself. But look how He addresses us. Look at the wording of His call. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.

The call is not just a generic call. It's a call to the one He calls beautiful. He calls us beautiful if we are His this evening.

[16 : 26] He considers us lovely. We'll see later on if time permitting. He calls our faces lovely. He calls our voice sweet. He calls us His beloved one.

When we are called from this life into the next, it is the voice of our Savior, the voice of our King, the voice of our friend who will call us beautiful, who will call us beloved, and He calls us from this world to the next.

I know many of us, I'm sure not most of us, we have seen, some here, I've seen up close the reality of physical death. And in most cases, there is nothing beautiful about it.

It is grim. It is horrifying to see for the family members. It is painful for the one going through it. It is so alien to us.

It feels so foreign to us. It feels so wrong to us. But even in the most painful of the partings of those who know the Savior, we have the hope that they heard word to these effects.

[17 : 37] As the bridegroom called to them and said to those who have left his world into the next, who died in the Lord, arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.

So where does He call us to? What is then His promise? Well, He calls us to glory. verses 10 down to verse 13.

As we're called out, what does He say? Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away. For behold, the winter has passed, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land, and so on.

For me personally, some of the most beautiful words in all of Scripture. This is the promise of our bridegroom to His bride. The day is coming, brothers and sisters, one day we will hear this voice, and this is the call we will hear.

Leave this world behind. Leave the darkness behind. Leave the winter behind. The winter has passed. Once you existed in winter, in the cold, icy bluster of sin, as you're battered on every side by your own mourning, by the pain of others, by the reality of the sin-sick world, all that now, all that winter, it's gone.

[19 : 03] It's all gone. Behold, the winter has passed. The rain is over and gone. No more floods of misery. No more floods of tears of your own or others.

There is no more bathing down on the walls of your life. The floods and showers of the misery of this world the winter is gone. The rain has gone.

You're being called now to where? To a place where the flowers appear on the earth. A place where they're singing. Where the turtle dove is calling.

It's spring. The imagery here is winter to spring. We live in what feels like an eternal winter at times, don't we? If you're familiar with C.S. Lewis with the Narnia story, this is the imagery he uses.

That once we lived in perpetual, ongoing winter, but with Savior coming, with Christ coming, he calls us to spring, to life, ongoing life.

[20 : 09] And this world at times feels like an ongoing winter, does it not? We're being called then here to an ongoing spring. The flowers appear on the earth.

There's no more decay. There's no more dying away. There's only freshness, only life to be found in the new heavens and the new earth.

There's only love to be found, only peace to be found. The time of singing has come. It's for me one of the most glorious images of our future hope.

But we leave this place where there is much singing. And our own culture proves, I think, this well for us. When you look to our culture, the Galic culture, and you see the songs that we have, and if you'll indulge me for a second, as part of my degree ten years ago, I looked into this.

I mean, when you do the statistics of it all, the majority, and it is a great majority of our songs in our culture, they are songs of mourning.

[21 : 20] They are songs of sadness. They are songs of pain. It's not because we're miserable, is it? It's because we live in a world with these things and what we experience day after day after day.

Think of even the most common Galic songs you know. Most common songs, most popular songs, they're songs of heartbreak and loss and pain. Here, there is no song of sadness here.

This is the songs of joy. This is the future of peace and of hope for the Christian. The time of singing has come. An ongoing sense here in the wording that this singing will be going on for all time.

This time won't end. Even our times of joyful singing and this side of glory, they end. There's no end to the joy on the other side.

The joy keeps going. The reasons to sing joyful songs keep growing forever and ever. There's new life, there's joy, and see verses 13.

[22 : 24] The fig tree ripens its figs, the vines are on blossom, they give forth fragrance. Grapes and vines and figs.

Symbols. Symbols to the people of Israel of plenty. Symbols of God's giving towards us. Symbols of God's peace in the land.

Symbols of God's blessing. When we are called from this world to the next, those of us who know and who love the Lord, we are called to a place of plenty.

There is no more lack. There is no more declension. There's only growth, only beauty. There is, as it were, grapes for all and figs for all, wine for all.

The images we have in the Old Testament of plenty, of God's giving and God's love towards us. Really, the image here is a return to Eden, but better.

[23 : 31] A return to how we first started, but better. That's read in Revelation 21. No more sin. No more falling away into sin. Only peace.

Only hope. Only joy. From this time and forever. And it ends the section with that call once more.

Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away. That's where we're going. We come to a conclusion briefly, just a reminder here of where we are now in verse 14.

See, verses 8 to verse 13 is where we're going. Our future hope and that is exciting and we look forward to these days. But the truth is, until we hear that voice to arise, that call to follow him, we are still in verse 14.

We sang, if you noticed in our Psalms, we saw the dove being described in a few ways in Scripture. Now, there's no time this evening for a study on that.

[24 : 33] We sang in Psalm 74 and in Psalm 55. And in both these places, we see the dove as an image of mourning. A dove as an image of fleeing away.

In other words, the dove as an image of one that is in great fear, whose life, whose safety is in danger. And that's the image we have of verse 14. When Christ calls to us and speaks to us, he says, O my dove.

He calls us his dove here. And where are we? We're in the clefts of the rock. We're in the crannies of the cliff. We're hidden away. We're hidden away from the tumult and the rain and the chaos and the wind of this world that batters up against us.

We are here hidden away. The days of blessing haven't come yet. Until these days come, we're still in the world like this mourning dove.

And that is what we are as a church. Of course, the dove is a symbol of peace. Yes, a symbol of hope. I think, back to Noah, but more often than not, the dove is a symbol. A symbol of sadness.

[25 : 42] A symbol of mourning. And here we are as a church and we're hidden away and we see the chaos and we see the sin in ourselves and the world and we long for verses 8 down to verse 13.

But whilst we're here in the rock, whilst we're here in this life, hidden away, seeking to serve as best we can, being battered by the winds and the rains of life, he doesn't leave us on our own here either.

Yes, one day he will speak to us. Yes, one day he will call us home to himself. But right now, at this moment, he is speaking to us. What does our Savior say to the church today?

He says to us, let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet and your face is lovely.

Can we think, well, surely in the future, yes, it makes sense, in the future, in our new glorified bodies, in new heavens, in a new earth, then, yes, of course he calls us beautiful, yes, then, of course, he calls us his love as we're glorified and perfected in the future.

[26 : 50] But no, right now, brothers and sisters, right now, as Christ addresses us, as Jesus calls out to us, he tells us that our voice is sweet and our face is lovely.

Brothers and sisters, we know ourselves, we aren't, either of these two things. We know ourselves, our face is often just covered in all the dirt and grime of our own lives and of this world.

Our voices are often used for many other things apart from worshipping our Savior. So how on earth can we be called sweet or lovely? How can he call us these things? Perhaps it makes us feel quite uncomfortable knowing our Savior calls us sweet, our voice sweet and our face lovely, but he does.

Brothers and sisters, as we still live on this side of the lattice, this side of that window, as we still serve waiting for verse 8 to be, verse 10 to be called out to us, we live a life knowing we have a Savior who loves us, who calls our faces lovely.

Why? Because he himself has cleansed us. He himself, by his precious blood, has made us clean. He himself has purchased for us with his own shed blood the perfection, the perfection that he gives us as we find ourselves clothed fully in his righteousness.

[28 : 24] Because we're clothed fully in him and washed clean in him, we are made beautiful. Our faces, as it were, are made lovely. Our voices do sound sweet.

Don't think for a second that this side of eternity, that the Savior of your soul doesn't want to see your face, as it were, doesn't want to hear your voice. We take that quite literally and apply it.

If you're feeling far away from him, if you're feeling as if your life isn't serving him as you should, our first temptation is to perhaps shy away from reading and prayer and attending the public means of grace, attending church.

That's the opposite of what we should be doing. As we feel ourselves perhaps in our witness and our walk slipping away, as we find ourselves perhaps making a mess of things this new year as we will, every one of us.

We are not reminded as to the punishment and wrath that hangs over us that's been removed for the Christian. So we're reminded instead of these words. Let me see your face.

[29 : 34] Let me hear your voice. Again, spoken in love, but still they are commands. They are commands from a holy Savior. It commands the eternal Son of God, commands the second person of the Trinity, commands we must obey.

Brothers and sisters, when you feel like you want to hide your face away from him, when you feel as if you have somehow gone too far, when you feel as if somehow you've been a rubbish Christian, an embarrassment to the church and to your Savior and to yourself, feel it all you want.

but come back to this verse and hear once more the Savior who calls your face lovely and your voice sweet. It may not make sense to you, fine, but it's the truth for you.

Until we join him in glory, we are, of course, liable to having very dirty faces and using our voices for things which are not sweet or lovely. But the command remains unchanged.

until we hear the command to arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away. We are in verse 14 where we hear the command to let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet and your face is lovely.

[30 : 57] Now that's all fine and well and I hope that encourages the brothers and sisters here this evening. But I'm sure you noticed this is all spoken to words of brothers and sisters, friends both here and at home.

What is there for you? I'll ask him as with you. We had a very simple sermon, a very simple look at the free offer, the simple offer of the gospel.

The gospel is for all who come to Jesus. Without qualification, for all who come to him, the hope of the gospel is for you. Church background, family situation, family history, your own knowledge, your own self-worth, all aside, it's for all who come to Jesus.

And this evening, the same gospel is brought before you again. it's not to those who are somehow special, the voice of the bride will come, the bridegroom will come, when he calls to arise, my love, my beautiful one.

It's not to those of us who have tried very hard in his life to serve him, not those who have tried very hard to live good or holy lives, it's to those who are his people. And if you one day want to hear that voice, the voice that says to you to arise and spend eternity with me in glory, then there's no secret handshake, there is no process I can teach you other than come.

[32 : 28] Your own minister said it to you for the many years he's been here now. Again and again, he faithfully reminds you of a simple gospel truth, just come.

It is that easy. It's not cheap. It was paid for by the blood, by the sacrifice of your saviour. But it's free for you to just come.

Come and have him as saviour. Come and have him as Lord over you. And come and one day, one day we pray, you'll hear the voice of the beloved as he says to you, arise, my love, my beautiful one and come away.

For behold, the winter has passed and the rain is over and gone. It's about our heads now, a word of prayer. Lord, we thank you for the gift of your word. We thank you once more this evening for the gift of fellowship together.

Lord, as we come and we leave this time of public worship together, we give you praise for it. Help us to go home this evening. I have nothing else for those here who as of yet don't know what it is to have Christ as their saviour.

[33 : 37] We can't yet call Jesus their king, their saviour, their lord or their friend. We ask this evening they would come to know him for themselves so that one day they would join with us in glory and know and see and experience for themselves the love and peace of what is promised before us as your people.

Help us as your people to have full confidence through all the days of this life, through all the days of this new year. Help us to find our hope in him, a reminder that our home is not here, that here we have no continuing city.

We are sojourners and pilgrims in this world but we await that glorious coming kingdom which one day we'll be called into, ushered into with the glorious words, the kind words, the loving words of our saviour to arise, arise and follow him, to arise and welcome to the rest of eternity spent with him.

Until these days come help us then to serve you well in our lives and in this place. Thank you once more for this time of worship. Thank you for those who have led the worship today. Lord, thank you for giving us these words to sing, these words we sing from you knowing that they are perfect and true because they're from your word.

Let's call these things. in and through and for Christ his precious name's sake. Amen.
Let's bring our time to a conclusion. Singing to God's praise in Psalm 126.

[35 : 11] Psalm 126 in the Scottish Psalter. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 126. Psalm reminds us through all the years of turmoil and trouble and service in this world, the Lord will bring all his work to bear and none of us, none of our service, none of our work for the Lord will be wasted.

Psalm 126, page 419. When Zion's bondage, God turned back as men that dreamed were we. Then thought of laughter was our mouth, our tongue with melody. They among the heathens said, The Lord great things for them have wrought, the Lord hath done great things for us, when joy to us is brought.

Psalm 126, the whole psalm to God's praise. Amen. When Zion's bondage God turned back As men that dreamed were we Then filled with laughter Was our mouth Our tongue with melody They among the heathens Said the Lord Great things for them hath wrought The Lord hath done Great things for us Whence joy to us is brought As streams of water

In the south Our bondage Lord recall Who so in tears Are reaping time Of joy and joy They shall That man who buried Precious seed In going forth The morn He doubtless Bringing back His sheath Rejoice He shall return The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father And the felisheble Holy Spirit For of you now and forevermore Amen Thank you

Amen Good Amen Good Day ■■■ Amen Good Good Amen Good Good Good Good