

Feeding and resting in the flock of Christ (Quality: Good)

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[0 : 00] the song of solomon chapter 1 verses 7 and 8 tell me o thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon for why should i be as one that turneth aside thereby the flocks of thy companions if thou know not o thou fearest among women go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock and feed thy kids beside the shepherd's tents tell me o thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon for why should i be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions if thou know not o thou fearest among women go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock and feed thy kids beside the shepherd's tents we often say as we read any portion from this book the song of solomon that one has to be careful to trace who the speaker is because there's such a contrast in even in one chapter one or the other is speaking we have no such burden today who does not need me to tell you whom the speakers are in these two verses and as we are reminded in this book there are for the most part a conversation between two people and they are the bride and the bridegroom they are Christ and the poor sinner and the language may seem strange some of it and I'm sure of this that where it is not understood may the Holy Spirit so teach us the meaning and interpretation and purpose of such words but as I said for the most part it is between the bride and the bridegroom it is in these two verses earlier in the verse 5 we have that conversation between the bride and the church

I am black but comely O ye daughters of Jerusalem as the tents of Kedah as the curtains of Solomon look not upon me because I am black because the sun hath looked upon me but then we come to these two verses and what a precious two verses they are how they reveal to us the exercise of the soul of a poor sinner of those who constitute the bride of Christ the inquiry first that is made in these words and to whom the inquiry is made and the relationship between the inquirer and the person that she speaks to the question that is on her lips and in her heart the desire that flows from within that speaks of her condition and her exercise so all these things we may look at and meditate upon as the Holy Spirit may now help us and let it be let the Lord appear in this that it might so find an echo in our hearts your hearts and mine as you sit in the Lord's house this morning now then there is of course that preparation as it were for these verses the bride the sinner the church of Christ individually collectively all shall come into this pathway all shall be found in this inquiring state in this desiring pathway that which shall be for the soul's profit and benefit and for blessing now the preparation then is this that they are nothing more than poor sinners nothing to commend themselves however you read the first six verses she cannot the bride cannot commend herself unto Christ for anything she's nothing in her own eyes she's nothing she's poor she's destitute in and of herself she's not at all in any way of merit or attraction unto Christ for the blessings that she seeks for she's made to feel her standing as a sinner she looks within you know my friends and so will you and I if we're taught by grace we look within what will we see that hymn that we sometimes sing here comes to mind you know that's a lovely hymn that says nothing but sin

I thee can give nothing but love shall I receive tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth there is then tell me this desire this exercise this question that must be put out a question there is this hunger this thirst this drawing to was Christ for the answer to her soul tell me you know there's that lovely hymn we sing at the ordinance sometimes Lord in thy house I read this room and venturing hard behold I come but tell me tell me can there be amongst thy children room for me well this is the same question and then it is addressed to Christ oh thou whom my soul loveth how did you come to love Christ how did you come to love Christ my friends because he loved you oh if it's in your heart a love to Christ now love as I've often said oh love in the want of him desire in the want of him you're not blessed you would say with what the Lord's people would talk about the presence of the Lord the revelation of the Lord the pardon of sins you're not blessed with those blessings you would say but in the heart and upon the spirit tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth oh what a blessed communion there is between a sinner and a saviour he is one whom her soul loveth and that is why she goes out after him in desire this is where she would be this is the person that shall we say is the the most precious person to her soul and she seeks him tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth my friends we didn't love him in unregeneracy he was a root out of a dry ground he had no form nor comeliness and when we beheld him my friends and when we do we beheld him in the word of God or we beheld him in the preaching of the gospel but there was nothing attractive of Christ to our souls at all but then my friends when God begins a work by his spirit in our soul it is for this purpose that the Lord

Jesus Christ may become the one thing needful and the altogether lovely and now this soul can see a loveliness in Christ that he never or she or he never saw before tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest I thought of this yesterday I've had this word on my mind throughout yesterday and I thought my mind went to so many ways in which this could be realised by the Lord's people first of all you may say well it speaks of the Lord's house it speaks of his people dear friends it speaks of where Christ is that's what it speaks of where thou feedest you know indeed it speaks of the gathering together of the Lord's people in his sanctuary but what is the gathering of the Lord's people if the Lord isn't there you know there's plenty of sanctuaries if we may broaden the term and there's plenty of places of worship and there's plenty of gatherings around the word of

God I see this word my friends as the church of Christ indeed it is but there is two things which are necessary that where a soul shall desire for Christ must indeed be proved tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon where his flock is he is my friends that's where you would want to be and that's where I'd want to be if we are under divine grace and if Christ is the altogether lovely to our soul if it is out of desire and it is to my mind a sense of urgency that the blessing may be known my friends is not just to gather with his people it's to gather where Christ is what is the place my friends what is the building we've got a lovely chapel it's in order it's in good order and all that and that's right and proper but my friends the house of

[11 : 03] God is where God is the place of worship is where Christ is the gatherings of his people is one thing but he gathers with his people and that is the question that is being asked of the bride of the seeking soul of the church here tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon and there's something else my friends we must never lose sight of here and that is where he is there is food where his flock gather thy flock they are a purchased people they are a people who are blessed with eternal life I give unto my sheep eternal life and they shall never perish all this flock and it sounds like a sweeping statement but it is a true statement this flock is going to heaven my friends don't make any mistake about it the flock of Christ is heaven bound and it is going to glory it is to be with

Christ one day which is far better this is where this dear soul wanted to be this is the inquiring spirit of a seeking soul this is the pathway of the church this is a people that now who is in love with Christ because Christ is in love with them this is a people who find Christ to be precious and whom they to Christ are precious now my friends it is also a place where he will be and his flock will be and it is where there's food a child of God must have food spiritual food you know my friends where you are in your right place in a house of God there will be food if you're in your wrong place there will be no food but there is another side too we must remember who maketh thee to differ in this respect my friends who made you to hunger who made you to hunger never had

I sought thy name never felt the inward flame had not love first touched my heart given the painful pleasant spot in that hymn that we sang as introduction to this service there was that wonder of wonders communicated by the good hymn writer Mr.

Wals while all our hearts and all our songs join to admire the feast each of us cry with thankful tongues Lord why was I a guest why was I made to hear thy voice and enter world's room when thousands make a wretched choice and rather starve than come towards the same love that spread the feast that sweetly forced us in our sweets still refuse to taste and perish in our sin my friends if you have in your heart a desire for Christ your desire for the things of Christ and if you have a soul that is in exercise my friends you'll have a hunger and a thirst for the things of God tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest I flop to rest and know well my friends what a mercy then it is if you and I have this exercise here and that we're found here even on this

Lord's Day with that inquiring spirit within with that desire which is as a question which is put before the Lord Jesus and it is this too that the dear soul itself must have food you can go to chapel you know and when you're not hungry well there won't be any food because there's no desire in unregenerate days we went to chapel some of us and we never hung it we went because there was it was duty so to do we feared perhaps our parents lest we should resist and go away or there was something that would cause embarrassment to us because we weren't found there we didn't want somebody to question us on a Monday why we want in the Lord's house on a Sunday but if grace has touched our soul my friends you'll come to his house hungry and you'll want to know too the food for your soul which is beneficial comforting confirming strengthening and blessing tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon the church of Christ now lest you think and I don't believe you will but lest you think that the place where he shall feed his flock is only the house of God my friends the Lord has raised up a means of grace and as the desire is found and as the drawing of the spirit is within us we meet together in his house as often as we can and if your soul is in health then it will be at times hungry and thirsty it is where

[17:00] Christ is you remember the promise where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them that is the promise we plead and that is where he will be that is where we would be where thou makest thy flock to rest anew but I have to say this my friends there are other spots and places and the Lord knows the spots and places in experience of the Lord's people I don't want a religion my friends that runs around this building I don't want such a religion as that I don't want a place in my heart where I know that there and there alone is where the Lord will be my friends he will be where he will be and he will bring his people to their places in their experiences where he will bless their soul I don't want a chapel religion my friends I want a real one because there are places and the

Lord knows because there are appointed places where he meets with his people and he meets with them one by one here is the exercise the good exercise a gracious exercise my friends where a child of grace desires to be where the people of God is doesn't want to be anywhere else wouldn't be anywhere else because that's the place where the Lord is but I know this with experience and you know with experience I trust that there are other places where he meets with his people tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon are there not places in your pathway can you not look back some of you to spots and places where the Lord's drawn near the most unlikely places we could elaborate of course we could describe this place that place but you know a house of prayer is indeed the place where he's promised to be but he's not bound to the house of prayer a bed of affliction a hospital ward going about your business in the home in the night seasons upon your bed in all these places and many more the Lord knows my friends he has appointed places and appointed times where he will meet with his people a sinner and a saviour will come together and for this purpose that their soul may be fed tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon and it is quite relevant that it is spoken about at noon the hottest time of the day a place may be found in the appointed ways of God my friends where it is to the soul of the waiting one as it is a refuge for the oppressed and for a place of comfort and of shelter from the heat and from the enemy and from those things that oppress and distress the soul tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest let me say this also her condition didn't bar her you know she looked at herself the church looks at itself a soul that's under grace has indeed views of itself and it is bad views of itself sometimes it gets to such a pitch you know when we look at ourself and almost would think that we are or cannot be found amongst the people of God because of our indwelling sin and our inclination sin and a sinful heart and a rebellious heart past sins will be presented to you as those things that would hinder any divine communion my friends what she was didn't bar her for asking the question what she was in her own eyes was one thing what she was in the eyes of Christ was another but it didn't it didn't bar her from asking the question it wasn't it didn't prevent her from desiring in fact my friends the more you know of your own heart if you're a sinner that is if you're aware of your sinnership the more you know of your own heart and the

Lord's soul be pleased to sanctify that knowledge will draw you closer unto Christ remember the case of the prodigal everyone knows the story of the prodigal but you know how he went away from his father's house and spent his substance in righteous living and he began to be in want when he came to himself he said how many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare his sin didn't prevent him Satan will try to prevent the natural state of man will try to prevent my friends but his exercise was this that he must get back to his father's house and to his love and to all the benefits that were found in his father's house and that didn't prevent him my friends true repentance true confession is found in the soul of the prodigal

I will arise and go to my father how did he come back he came back unworthy but he came back my friends how did he come back in want but he still came back he didn't wait till he got a little bit better he didn't accumulate a little bit more finance so that he came back a bit more respectable my friends some of the sinners that we meet with I have to say this and I say it in the right spirit I hope are respectable sinners these sinners that are spoken of here are ruined sinners are black sinners are totally devoid of comfort in themselves and they hunger and thirst for that which will put them into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and whose comforts that they desire who shall be fed with the finest of the wheat and shall be blessed with the blessings of the flock of slaughter tell me oh thou whom I so loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at new

I've often I remember in early days and maybe this is a word that is out of place but you know when God begins to deal with you you know and brings you into trouble of soul there is only one there is amongst desires of course this desire the Lord would hasten the Lord's day the Lord will hasten the time or perhaps in the weak times when you can be found with his people under the gospel because he'll teach you this you know what you need is in Christ and he'll teach you this that that gospel that is preached that gospel which has as a substance Jesus Christ and him crucified this is the food and drink that you'll want if you're a sinner you'll need saving if you feel to be an outcast of Israel you need that restoring mercy if you feel to be black within by reason of sins that are past you know my friends this that nothing but the blood of Christ can wash tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest we may sing in our hymn tonight this word the sure provisions of my God attend me all my days oh may thy house be my abode and all my work be praised there will

[25 : 42] I find a settled rest while others go and come no more a stranger or a guest but like a child at home previous to that it says this thy hand inside of all my foes distil my table spread my cup with blessings overflows thy oil anoints my head that is where you'll be found that is how you will come you'll come just as you are where the flock of slaughter is you'll come as needy and poor and as destitute as the Holy Spirit will teach you but you'll still come tell me the place the desire will be that the Lord will show you the place of mercy that the Lord will show you where his flock is where is the flock of slaughter my friends it's I want to be very careful I want to be very reverent my friends it's bound up with

Christ in a covenant which is ordered in all things and sure it is safe it is secure it is in the heart of Christ it is in a covenant which is ordered in all things and sure and can never never be removed this is where the flock is you see their safety you see their security you see them in a path of blessing you see them in the ways of God and you see them as travelling home to God and you see them my friends as one of the most blessed people on the face of the earth the church of Christ blessed with blessings that the world can never enter into and are all free blessings they're all free mercies and they're all free favours they are the condescended mercy of God they are a people whom God hath chosen unto himself this people have I formed for myself they shall show forth my praise this is the church this is the flock and you will feel to be like an outsider in that flock your desire will be that he may draw you nearer you know there's a wonderful word in if I can find it

I've not got the right Bible all my Bibles are the same but I can find things better in my own Bible but or where it is located in that in my Bible but my friends the comfort of the Lord's people is to be where they are in the 8th chapter of the Proverbs blessed is the man that heareth me watching daily at my gates waiting at the posts of my doors for whoso findeth me findeth life and shall obtain favour of the Lord what a blessed people then well this is this people that's in this text this is the soul the seeking soul who writes hard things against themselves but who within their soul is about need of Christ where there is feeding my friends there is union where there is union there is communion you know a soul that hungers and thirsts for the things of God a soul that desires the company of the people of

God a soul that desires us to be where Christ is not only needs and will be supplied food and drink to the soul but they'll seek that union and they'll seek that communion you remember what Ruth said in the first chapter of the book of Ruth entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee for whether thou goest I will go where thou lodgest I will lodge thy people shall be my people and thy God my God my friends that is what they wanted that is the place they want it's not only the company of the Lord's people but it is the company of the Lord himself this is the place where they want to be then tell me thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon where is it my friends we must look at two things before we come to the end this morning where it is that they will rest

I know we've quoted here may I find a settled rest while others go and come no more a stranger or a guest but like a child at home but there is a place of rest but then again we must also look at this what is it they feed on my friends you won't you'll find this if you hunger for the things of God nothing else will satisfy tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon in the Hebrews we have that word of the apostle there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God in the margin it says a keeping of sabbaths where is it that a child of God finds rest it's not in this world of sin and woe that's for sure isn't it it's not in this world of sin and woe change and decay and all around

[31 : 31] I say oh thou who changeth not abide with me it is in Christ my friends where that rest is where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon is in him you know oh the Lord grant us that grace the Lord grant us faith my friends you can leave all you can leave all leave all with him the very soul your eternal state your walk and pathway and pilgrimage through this world of sin and woe you can leave it all with him but on the matter of salvation that urgent pressing case that lies within every child of grace my friends you will only find rest concerning that matter in the person and work of Christ Jesus if you are led into his sufferings if you are led into his pathway if you have made be made known to you and made over to you an interest in his love and blood my friends you can leave your soul there you can leave your soul for all eternity there oh it is it's not just the settling down you know amongst the people of

God it's the state of your soul the condition of your soul and the peace of your soul and it is of the security of your soul and Christ is the place my friends it is so you can leave your soul there it's safe in his hands and to this point too my friends having died for his people and having rose again for his people having gone to the end of the law for righteousness sake having sealed the covenant with his own precious blood my friends every soul that's in Christ is safe there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit tell me thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon and then my friends you will rest on his word his word will be your strength and comfort his promises which are yea and amen in

Christ Jesus will be a place of rest you will rest upon what he said the psalmist in the 119th psalm said this thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path my friends what else did he say remember unto thy servant the word upon which thou hast caused me to hope my friends it was his comfort in his affliction and such precious promises as the lord Jesus Christ is pleased to speak into your soul concerning his eternal salvation you know if he said to you what he said to the woman who came to the pharisee's house you could rest there daughter go in peace you can rest there it's his peace and what was the peace it was a peace that passes all understanding and what was that peace it was the forgiveness of sins you can rest there my friends because the blessings of God the blessings that flow to the church from God through Christ are without repentance there's no change in them no one can alter it none none can pluck thee from the strength of Israel's hand where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon you rest on his word those precious truths you rest on his revelations those blessings of times past those blessings at this time those seasons of blessing that he's made known you can rest on them oh they'll be tempted they'll go in the fire my friends but it'll stand the fire and it'll come out of the fire too but then we must say this where thou feedest what is it they feed on well my friends they won't feed on chaff they'll find nothing substantial chaff is to be burned up in one of the prophecies

I think it's the prophecy of Isaiah the holy spirit can as it were bring to our remembrance this truth what is the chaff to the wheat saith the lord what is the what is the ungodly to the godly what is to the gracious to the wicked what is to the lost to the found my friends it's like chaff and wheat but when it comes to spiritual food my friends you won't feed on anything else for your souls profit and good but that which is of Christ in the again turning to the parable of the prodigal he said he would have filled his belly with the husk that the swine did eat but no man gave unto him my friends what is there a comparison what could there be a greater comparison to the food which was in his father's house to the husk that the swine eat what could be my friends what could you describe out of this world of sin and woe that will be beneficial to your soul in comparison with a word from the lord or a little crumb from the master's table oh these are blessings indeed these are soul blessings these are mercies my friends which will stand you in good stead all the days of your life and upon which you can die upon the feeding of the flock the exhortation you know in the first of Peter was to his servants and it was this feed the flock of God which is among you first epistle of Peter and chapter 5 feed the flock of God which is among you take in the oversight thereof not by constraint but willingly not for filthy lucre bit of a ready mind my friends it's a very deep exercise when the lord lays those words upon a servant of God his responsibility his commission his pathway is to feed the flock now where does he get his food from the eternal source my friends from heaven that's where he gets his food from and who is the giver of that food it is the holy ghost and if the flock of slaughter is to be fed it is to be fed with food from heaven you know we often describe the ordinance table as the table of the lord my friends the means of grace is the table of the lord and the spiritual food here the word of God is here in this place the spiritual food the holy spirit direct you and I into this into this glorious truth my friends and it speaks of Christ from Genesis to Revelations and that is what you and I shall feed on if we are hungry give me Christ the poet said or else

I die tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon go back to some of them places that some of you have known spots and places in your pathways afflictions hospital wards times of deep sorrow great trials trials that you thought were going to sink you my friends go back to those places and many other places which the lord is pleased to lead you in to guide you and to and to appoint for you and to deliver you from as well my friends has he not come and sanctified the path to your soul that it has been profitable to you you ask a person in the world who is in affliction and ask him or her whether it's been any profit and he would think he was speaking a foreign language but you talk to a child of God about the deep paths that they walk in the deep trials and the fires that come against them you consider my friends the path of affliction or the loss or the cross that you're caused to bear the bereaving paths and so on my friends there's a multitude of them but the lord comes in the midst of these from time to time in his people's lives and pathways where he makes them a blessing to their soul there's just but one comes to mind or two comes to mind my friends the dear apostle laid in prison and he wrote to the church at Philippi and he said he reminded them of a sacred truth

[40 : 57] I would not that she should lose sight of this he said that it was for the furtherance of the gospel and I thought then for a moment of the of those Hebrew children in the fire that were sent to kill them that killed their captives by the very heat of that fire and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace and there was one with them like unto the son of God my friends this is the place these are the places not only in the means of grace and there are other spots and places appointed times and seasons in the lot of God's dear children where he's called them to be where they shall be fed where they shall prosper where they shall profit where they shall benefit and where they shall come out of it my friends to the honour and glory of their God and to their soul's eternal benefit tell me oh thou who it's where

Christ is you see Christ and the sinner together my friends is the most blessed spot and what else lies around them in in the pathway what trial it may be what affliction it may be it matters not in that respect my friends it's a place of blessing because the Lord's there tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions now you wouldn't be my friends I'm not asking questions I'm saying it's a truth is it not to a hungry soul what to turn aside well it would be like death wouldn't it to turn aside from the rock of your salvation to turn away from where God has a means of grace do you know what

Boaz who was a type of Christ said to the gleaner Ruth go not to glean in another field my friends you can't glean in another field and feed off the truth and you can't be blessed with the truth in another field the ways of grace and the ways of mercy the house of the church of our God this is the place where the hungry shall feed why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions why should I be my friends to turn aside from where food and drink is of a spiritual nature to turn aside from where the great shepherd of the sheep is Jesus Christ the righteous well my friends it's like turning from light to darkness you know how often it seems like that when you go from Jerusalem to Jericho my friends you go from light to darkness you go from paths of pleasantness and paths of peace into times of darkness distress and trouble to one's soul tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions one thing more we'll conclude the service then my friends it is an appointed place there's many let's just go back for a moment to the

Lord's house there are many places which are the Lord's house but I do believe this my friends that there is but one place for his people it is where he directs them it is where he feeds them it is where he establishes them and it will be there where he keeps them you know in this I suppose now for many years we have the means to roam we have the means to roam my friends there's another expression for where I come from down in Kent you know you find these characters who go from house to house and they're nothing more like gypsies you know they've got no foundation they've got no home but a child of God's got a home and that is a place where he should be fed and watered where he should be blessed where he should be strengthened and encouraged but it's where his

Christ is that's where it is when the two come together it's a sacred spot my friends a sinner and a saviour is a sacred spot that's where it is but we must close then tell me thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions amen