

Song of Solomon

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Preacher: Collier, Gilbert (1900-1984)

- [0 : 0 0] And his banner over me was love. We got as far this morning in the meditation on these most precious, singularly blessed words to the first three words of the text, he brought me. And I intended in the morning service to lay emphasis especially on the me. We laid emphasis on he, he brought me. But what a marvellous thing if you and I come under this word. If this is true with us, it is me. This word is my word. This experience belongs to me. God has brought me and not left me out. Not permitted me to wander and to become totally estranged from him. By life and practice and by every other possible way.
- [1 : 3 3] But he has brought me. What an amazing amount of wondrous grace. And eternal love is in these words. And I want us from that point this evening, keeping our minds very much fixed upon that personal aspect of the truth. That word me, to go on into the further wonders of this word before us. He brought me to the banquet, a banqueting house. We want to find, first of all, the progress to this house. What kind of experience the beloved bride would have in being brought to this banqueting house. Secondly, we want to see perhaps what kind of clothing she would wear. How she would be adorned. And how she would come.
- [2 : 5 1] And thirdly, we want to discover, if we may, where this banqueting house is. And what it is. And perhaps I might go as far as this to say who it is. Now, for a sinner such as this poor bride was, and she tells us quite clearly and plainly in the first chapter, that she was black. As black as the tents of Kedah. And the tents of Kedah were black enough, indeed. They were scorched by the blazing sun. They were skins that had been exposed to the heat and blazing sunlight day after day. And they had become parched and blackened by the light of the sun. And by all the atmosphere around them. And this poor bride, this one person of which our text is speaking, and who is speaking in the text, she says, I was as black as the tents of Kedah.
- [4 : 1 0] And she says, I was as black as the tent. So, you see, she knew what she was. And anyone to feel like that, and then to be brought to a banqueting house, is an amazing change, indeed. A wonderful experience. An unspeakable reality. And a precious portion, indeed. And this is the case with her. She said, he brought me. Now, I want to think a little of this, because it's a very important part of the experience of all true seekers after the Lord. There will be times, there's no doubt whatever, there will be times in every seeker when that soul feels to be totally unfit.

Totally incapable to ever come to the place where the Lord entertains his own people.

[5 : 22] Where he shows them his wonderful mercies and provides for them the provisions of his grace. Why me, they say?

How can ever I come to that place? How could the Lord ever take any notice of me? Base and black I am. A foul creature, indeed.

From head to foot. Massive, putrefying sores. And wounds and bruises. With sins against the law of God.

And more than that, sins against the holy love of God. Sins against every precept of the gospel. And every mercy that has been received.

I have even sinned against and in the light of those things, those mercies. Now, who could be more base? Who could be more unworthy?

[6 : 24] Who could be more leprous than such a case and character as this? And yet, these are the people who can say this and will say this.

He brought me. He brought me to the banqueting house. So they are therefore unworthy creatures that come.

They do not feel that they are the people that ought to be invited. There are times and occasions, I suppose, when there are invitations sent out to celebrities of all kinds and perhaps some are left out and then they complain because they think they ought to have had the honor and they haven't.

But I can tell you this very firmly tonight that every one that enters into this banqueting house never has expected for one moment to receive an invitation let alone ever to find their place singled out and prepare and prepare for them at such a glorious feast the banqueting house of the love of him who is love itself and altogether glorious in that love they never could have believed that they would be one of those who would be brought in so wonderfully blessed and so richly favored now that's the first thing I want us to think upon tonight and all God's people are the same they come from the far off you look at that wonderful chapter in Isaiah where God gives to us three kinds of people whom he welcomes into his house and what are they oh the rich powerful the great the wealthy no the stranger the eunuch who has said of himself

I'm a dry tree I'm no use I've got no fruit no future there's nothing about me that can ever be admired or received and then the third one is this the outcast three great characters the stranger who feels totally separated from God's people who feels that to be a stranger to God and a stranger to godliness and a stranger among the people of God a threefold experience of what stranger a stranger really means and then that unity I do not doubt for one moment that you if you were a real on a real quest after Christ you felt as if you were a totally insufficient and unfruitful kind of person you cannot see whatever God can take delight in in you and there is nothing whatever that appears upon you or within you or in your life that is worthy of credit or worthy of acceptance you say

[10 : 02] I'm a dry tree and then there's the outcast of Israel the one that is right out far off exiled the exiled captive that is what how Isaiah how God describes his people you know in the prophecy of Isaiah the captive exile not only a captive that's bad enough indeed but he's exiled he's not only changed chained by the chains of captivity but he's banished but oh what rich and wonderful grace the grace of God is that makes his banished ones to rejoice and brings back again from the depths of disgrace and ruin those whom he loves and brings them to the banqueting house now what will be their garb all their garments

God says put on thy beautiful garments oh Jerusalem for they will not be garments that you've been buying with your merits they will not be those garments that you've adorned yourself in your human experience they'll be the garments of the Lord the righteous garments the garments of his righteousness those perfect garments where faith comes in so wonderfully to wrap up the sinner the soul in those garments to put them on that is what faith does God gives them he provides them he has woven them every one of them and he has a perfect fitting for every one of his people and then he comes and he works faith in the heart to put on these wonderful garments and they see that when they're adorned in these garments that they have something on them that is perfect even in the son of God they're dressed in garments not their own in garments dyed in blood they're dressed in that needle work that cost the dear son of

God all the pain the agony the suffering of the cross that beautiful psalm the 45th psalm which speaks about the adornment of the church of God the bride and beloved one of the king what does it say she shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle work and you think of that the needle that has gone in and out thread by thread right through that whole garment what does it mean the needle work of pain that the dear son of God suffered in order that his people might be clothed and adorned in garments of beauty shining garments my friends these are very vital and important things for you and me have we those garments one of the most solemn parables the Lord

Jesus gave was the parable of the king's wedding feast and the guests were all invited and if you notice it says this they that were not worthy were left out you see they thought that they were worthy but they were never brought in to the feast but the servants of the king were sent out to bring in all that they could find in the ways the highways and the hedges and in every possible lane and avenue in the world from the very far distant places they were all brought in and when the king comes finally to view his guests they were all clothed with a provided garment when he comes to view them there's one man without a wedding garment and the king asks him this question how camest thou in hither without a wedding garment and what was the reply that wasn't one he was speechless and the king said cast him out into outer darkness he brought me to the banqueting house what a wonderful truth this is it means to say he's brought me rightly adorned clothed in the right garments put on thy beautiful garments oh

Jerusalem and they are king garments worthy of a king's daughter there's nothing to compare with them because they come from him they come from his own hand they are the outcome of his own love and every one of his people shall by precious faith find in Christ's righteousness their hope their comfort their confidence and their salvation now those are the garments we're coming now to the vanqueting house itself and where is it it's not the church if any person thinks that to be brought to God or to be brought into salvation blessings is to be brought to the church they're woefully deceived you'll see in the church a good many defects you'll see people who are really hypocrites and not real believers would you be able then to banquet where such a condition prevails the church is to be brought to the church never will be here on earth and it's a sad thing if people have only one object and one thought in their mind if only they can be brought to the church church it's not even the gospel the gospel is the wonderful instrument and the method which

[17 : 25] God uses to bring his people and to prepare them and to fit them and to guide them into the very place itself but it's not the gospel the banqueting house is Christ it is to feast upon his love by faith to partake of his sacred body and his blood except a man eat my flesh and my blood there is no life in them and my word said the Lord Jesus is life in spirit is life in deed yes the banqueting house is Christ he's there there's no other place to compare with him where he is it's a glorious place where the

Lord Jesus is where he is to be found no palace on earth can be compared with the place where Jesus holds his court where he entertains his guests where he meets out his portions where he shows his favourites and those he loves all his dentists and all his beauties yes it's where Jesus is this is where you will want to be this will be a banqueting house for your soul it will be totally unlike the banqueting houses of the world you won't relish those or even desire ever to enter into them when once you have found this glorious banqueting house where Jesus holds his court and where he smiles and receives so willingly and so joyfully every repenting sinner yes that's the banquet he brought me to the banqueting house and what about the internal experiences and provisions in this banqueting house what a place it must be where every favour and every mercy and every good that God has stored up for his people is to be experienced may not be all at once here a little and there a little is God's plan for his people but to be brought to the banqueting house to be made a subject of that wonderful grace that brings to this banqueting house to be made fit to enter into it what a marvellous thing that is and though we may only have but at first but a scant experience of it it will go on ever expanding always enlarging never exhausting full and free flowing o'er with wonderful love binding it all together at banqueting house i say my friends let us ask ourselves these questions have we ever feasted on christ has any portion any morsel of divine love ever dropped down into our hearts if we have we ever had i think i said this last lord's day as we were considering the former verse have you ever had a taste of jesus christ the fruits of his death and of his life because if you have they've been the most unoutstanding reality and wonder that you've ever experienced and i can say this with a certainty you will want more you won't want less you'll want more and more you'll say give me christ or else i die you'll say i must have more that precious peace of the divine things of divine truth of the preciousness of jesus christ i must have more if i am to live

you'll see this the need for this in order that you may live he brought me to the banqueting house all the wonderful provision and the original word i suppose suggests that it was the house of wine and god speaks a good deal in the word of wines well refined on the leaves beautiful precious wines bringing to the heart of those that receive it joy and gladness making the soul that was once low and cast down to be revived putting new life into the soul and the very being of the believer that enables them to run again in the race that is set before them and look indeed to jesus christ with all eagerness and earnestness wine banqueting house of wine i am the vine ye are the branches says the dear redeemer and that means that the precious fruits of that union between the root and the branch the fruit that comes and hangs on those wonderful branches are the wine of life the wine of love and can only be had in the banqueting house he brought me to the banqueting house and his banner over me was love you see the great canopy that is spread over every saint is this wonderful canopy of divine love the love of christ oh how complete it is there's nothing no blemish whatever there's nothing that needs to be completed by in it or by it it is absolutely his banner over me over all that i am all my ways all my needs all my path yea everything my times are all in his hands all my wants and all that i ever had and ever will have whilst travelling through this veil of tears it all covered in the glorious canopy of the love of christ his banner his banner over me his love there are quite a few things you know that are suggested by a banner first of all it's a sign isn't it a real sign of importance it's a sign a focusing point when the armies went forth to battle it was an important point the banner the rallying point the standard the end sign if you like and that sort of inspired the forces that were under the command of the captain to go on and to keep together and to be united and to bring their whole endeavour and focus it in the

direction of the enemy it was a wonderful thing a needful thing was a banner his banner does all this for the warriors of Jesus Christ it keeps them together it causes them to see how they need to go forth against the enemies to strike a blow for the defence of the gospel of Jesus Christ we need this we need it today we are passing through the church is passing through times of jeopardy and distress and evil and disruption we want we want a banner we want the banner of truth we want that banner that will unite us in the glorious attempts and purposes of serving

Christ and his holy gospel and his truth well that's one great thing then a banner was a sign it was displayed as the psalmist said thou hast given a banner to thy people to be displayed because of truth yes my friends let us show our banners let us not hide our credentials or our profession let us not be secret believers people are very content today to be neutral in these things they are rather they purpose to be a kind of on a no man's land they don't want to offend the world they don't want to be too much zealous in the cause of

[28 : 35] Christ but they want to take a middle road that's the great evil today a middle road oh let us avoid it at all costs let us be out and out definite decisive in our profession of God and godliness these are the people that the church of God needs and this is the cause that Christ honors and those who honor him in this way he will honor indeed let us therefore display our banner we ought to do more of this hide not thy light under a bushel my friend set it on a high set it on a candlestick let all who would observe it see it and know what they see this is the great thing any uncertainty in profession is a very terrible blot indeed we want clearer testimony we want clearer light and we want the banner this is one of the great purposes great significances of the banner he spread his banner over me that banner of his love his banner over me was love and then it has this aspect of it it has the inscriptions on it that give heart to the weary traveler and the warrior the inscriptions of the dear captain himself who is the king of kings and lord of lords he that has trod the wine press alone he that has suffered and gone before and obtained the victory and he who conquers them is conquering more than a conqueror and his people are more than conquerors through him that loved them it has a sign an inscription on it of the love of

Christ to his people banner that was spread over them is the banner of love love immense love intense love inconceivable love inexhaustible the everlasting love of Christ oh how wonderful it is my friends we shall drop into it if we are his if we are saved by his grace we shall drop into the ocean of it presently we may feel we only have but a sip here and perhaps that is true but we will not have any sips when we come to glory there will be an unbounded ocean there of everlasting love but have we felt it do we want to feel it this is the great thing he brought me I come back tonight to this first expression in our text he brought me this is a real experience a vital experience the beginning of all experiences it embraces every experience he brought me

I hardly knew how I was going to go through this service tonight I felt exhausted really mentally and the Lord has opened the door lotteries and I feel grateful to him abundantly so and I acknowledge that it is not of my doing it is all of his grace because he spreads the canopy of his love over his people the weakest is as dear as the strongest of him and he never leaves any out he makes a provision for everyone that comes under the canopy of his love and you will be brought in poor believer you will be brought in you will be tangled on the knees of consolation you will be entertained at the best peace that ever you could have ever entertained be entertained at you may feel to be like poor Mephibosheth lame on both his feet never expecting his feet to see

Jerusalem again let alone King David if he thought if he ever saw King David it would only be to be destroyed but what happened to him he was brought to the king's table and feasted there for the rest of his days with the best that the royal table could provide and my friends this is how you will be if Christ is yours and if you have been brought by sovereign mercy to him you'll be brought to his banqueting house and you will know what his love really is may that be your portion I earnestly desire it and pray for it by God's good grace amen amen and we habl of could maybe help