

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE WORK OF GOD**

#### **(7:1-13)**

### **I. THE EQUIPPING OF THE WORKER (7:1-9a)**

#### **A. Recapitulation (7:1-5)**

Song of Songs 7:1 says, "How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman." Now the Holy Spirit answers the question posed in the previous section through the mouth of a third party. Apparently, these are the words of a third party. Actually, they reveal the mind of the Holy Spirit. The first thing that is mentioned is her feet.

"O prince's daughter!" This speaks of her noble origin. She is one of many in the royal household. In the Bible, "shoes" clearly refer to "the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15). The emphasis is on the preparation for work. Hence, the first thing mentioned is her shoes. The work of evangelism is indispensable. "Thighs" refers to the power to stand. It means that the power to stand comes entirely from God. If we want our thighs to be like jewels, the hollows have to be touched until they are out of joint (Gen. 32:25). The power of work forever comes from God. This is the meaning of "the work of the hands of a cunning workman."

Verse 2 says, "Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies." The navel and the belly refer to the maiden's inner being. "Liquor" can be translated "mixed wine." If liquor refers to the blood of the Lord Jesus, the heap of wheat must refer to His flesh. We are indeed those who eat His flesh and drink His blood. Mixed wine refers to the life that the Holy Spirit gives to us through the blood of the Lord Jesus. The heap of wheat is set about with lilies, which means that we receive this wheat by faith.

Verse 3 says, "Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins." There is no mention of feeding among the lilies in conjunction with the "two breasts." Therefore, it does not refer to her growth before God, but to her ability to feed others. Faith and love in this verse are the measure and power with which we feed others.

Verse 4 says, "Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus." "Thy neck is as a tower of ivory." This is different from the previous mention of a "tower," when her neck was like the tower of David. Now she has been dealt with by God; therefore, her neck is like ivory. But this does not mean that she is passive. When she has to stand for God, she is as strong as a tower. However, this tower is a tower of ivory, which speaks of suffering and dying for the accomplishment of God's purpose.

"Thine eyes like the fishpools." This is different from the previous description of doves' eyes. A pool is not hidden from light like a well, and it is not flowing like a spring. A pool

is open to the light, but it is also quiet. In other words, it is still water. For eyes to be like a pool means that such a one is pure in heart before God. Not only is there no more mixture, but there is complete rest. Consequently, the maiden knows God's will. "Heshbon" means intelligent, while "Bath-rabbim" means the daughter of many.

The nose has not been spoken of until now. The faculty of smell is found only with the mature ones. In spiritual matters, many have bright eyes and sensitive ears. But not many have a nose that can smell. This sense does not come from spoken words or visible things; it is an inward ability that reaches beyond senses and words, which enables a person to differentiate good and bad smells. This is a kind of spiritual intuition that enables a person to identify the things that are of God. It is not by reason or logic, but by a spontaneous and inwardly accurate feeling, which enables a person to discern spiritual matters. At the same time, this olfactory sense enables a person to identify bad smells as well. Many teachings cannot be considered wrong, and many people have nothing that others can find fault with, yet you sense that something is off. This sense is what the nose is all about. "Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus." This speaks of its height and sharpness. Today there are too many Christians with a flat nose.

Verse 5 says, "Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the King is held in the galleries." Mount Carmel is where Elijah demonstrated his power in the presence of Jehovah. There he fought for God, and God heard his prayer. For the head to be like Carmel is for the mind and heart to be for God. The "hair of thine head" again refers to the power of consecration. But this power is strong enough to hold the King in the galleries. This means that the believers are empowered by the Lord and strong enough to control Him and force Him to answer their prayers. At the initial stage of the maiden's development, she could not have this experience; God could not commit such power to her. Only after she has been fully delivered from herself, her consecration and power of obedience have been fully put under the Lord, and she is filled with the thought of the Lord's glory to the extent that her hair becomes purple, would God dare entrust her with the power that enables her to imprison the King. Actually, the King is not imprisoned by her, because she holds the King in the galleries for the purpose of accomplishing His own will and for the fulfillment of His own promise. She constantly prays to the King, "Accomplish Thy plan, and act according to Thy word." She has learned to sit on the throne and to control everything.

### **B. The Lord's Inserted Words (7:6-9a)**

Verse 6 says, "How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!" Now the Lord inserts His remarks. Since the Holy Spirit's word fully matches the Lord's will, the Lord is able to continue with the conversation, as if the previous words were actually spoken by Him. When He hears the Holy Spirit speaking in verse 5, He cannot help but insert His word and speak directly to the maiden, who is the subject of the discussion. This is an inserted exclamation of praise.

Verse 7 says, "This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes." In the past, there was no growth, there was no perfection, and there was no maturity; hence, there was no stature. Now she has become mature, and there is the stature. A palm tree is tall and straight,

and it represents the Lord in the Bible. Saying that she is likened to a palm tree is saying that she has the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13). The roots of the palm tree are in touch with the spring of living water, and although the leaves and branches are scorched by the sun, it still grows without any hindrance. Even though believers may suffer great trials in the wilderness, they are not affected, because of their union with Christ, and they can still grow.

"Thy breasts [are like] to clusters of grapes." This indicates once again that her measure is increased for the sake of others. Breasts are originally for feeding and not just an expression of love. When you are young, there is more of a sense of love than a sense of feeding. But when you become mature, the aspect of feeding is inevitably manifested. Here the emphasis is on the feeding; the breasts are like clusters of grapes, good for food and good for satisfying others.

Verses 8 to 9a say, "I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples; and the roof of thy mouth like the best wine." [Translator's note: The Lord's speaking stops here; see note in Darby's New Translation.] "I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof." It seems as if the Lord is trying to embrace Himself by taking hold of the stature of the believers. He wants to fellowship with the believers. It seems that this is not the time for believers to pursue after the Lord, but the time for the Lord to pursue after them. When such a Body life between the members exists (i.e., a life between the branches), the Lord is drawn to desire the believers and to communicate with them. How different this is from the initial condition of the believers sitting under His shadow (2:3)! The Lord speaks of three things in particular that satisfy His heart. First, He speaks of the maiden's capacity for feeding others. His word is a blessing in the hope that this capacity would increase. Second, He speaks of her intuition. But the emphasis is not on the function of the intuition, but on the fragrance that the intuition left in her through previous contacts. In order for the smell of the nose to be like the bergamot orange ("apples" can be translated "bergamot orange"), one must first eat the bergamot orange. Those who have eaten Christ cannot fail to give the flavor of Christ. Third, He says, "The roof of thy mouth like the best wine." This means that she has a foretaste of the power of the age to come (Heb. 6:5). The best wine should refer to the wine of the millennium (John 2:10; Matt. 26:29). She is able to provide the Lord with such a pleasant taste.

## **II. WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE LORD (7:9b-13)**

Verse 9b says, "...that goeth down smoothly for my beloved, and causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak." [Translator's note: See Darby's New Translation. This part is spoken by the maiden.] The Lord's speaking continues to the second part of verse 9. At this point, the maiden is able to continue where the Lord left off because she is so one with the Lord. The wine flows smoothly into her Beloved. This means that she and her Beloved have tasted a foretaste of this blessing. However, tasting this wine is not limited to the two of them. There are many others who are asleep who have tasted of this wine. Neither the word "asleep" nor the word "sleep" in 5:2 means something bad. The tone does not convey the sense that sleep is a bad thing. Moreover, the ones who are asleep are in the same position as the Beloved. Hence, the sleeping ones refer to those who are asleep to themselves. They have lost consciousness of themselves and are only living to God.

Verse 10 of chapter seven says, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me." Her attention is drawn toward who her beloved is. She has given up her obsession with herself. It seems as if she is willing even to lose her beloved if it would please him. She is only concerned with whether or not her beloved has gained her. She knows that she belongs to her beloved, and this is enough to satisfy her heart. The former grasping of the flesh is gone. In the beginning, the fact that she belonged to her beloved was a secondary thought. Later, it became her primary thought. She was unable to forget that her beloved was hers. Now, because of the depth of her experience, we no longer hear that her beloved belongs to her. Indeed, in our spiritual pursuit, the self is working constantly. Little do we realize that even in the matter of loving the Lord, there is the possibility of reserving a place for the self!

The matter now is not our pleasure, but His desire. We know that our existence is for the purpose of satisfying His desire. Our purpose for living is to be the object of His desire. We are to be the desired ones of the desiring One. The question now is not what we feel, what we gain, what we lose, or what our work is. What is of importance to us is that we are His, and His desire is toward us. This is all that matters.

When a believer reaches this stage, and when the self is dealt with in such a thorough way, he can begin to work with the Lord. Because he is so filled with the Lord, he can now initiate some work. Outwardly, it may look as if he is the one who initiates the work. Actually, it is the Lord within who is initiating the work. Since the union between the maiden and the Lord is so absolute, her movement becomes very dependable, and she can now speak the words in the following verse.

Verse 11 says, "Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages." "Let us go forth into the field." Now she is no longer acting alone, and the Lord is no longer acting alone. There is a joint work of "us." From this point on, we see the fellowship in the work. Since she is liberated from herself, she is also delivered from all narrowness and pettiness. Her focus is no longer on her meeting, her work, her church, or her group. Her attention is the field, the world. She has a world view, not just an "unworldly" view. She is interested in everything that happens in the world. She does not have a so-called work of her own, and she does not have a so-called region of her work. All of the Lord's work is the sphere of her work. The whole focus is turned to the field.

"Let us lodge in the villages." "Villages" is plural. She has fully taken on the sojourning nature of the Lord. Her desire is no longer for a home, but for sojourning, a sojourning that is not confined to one place, but that is from one village to another. She follows the Lord and seeks after lost sheep and wounded ones. A person who works together with the Lord should not only have a world view, but should have the nature of a sojourner and bear the mark of a sojourner.

Verse 12 says, "Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves." Her focus is no longer on her own vineyard, but on the vineyards. Actually, she can only focus on the vineyards. At the beginning of a believer's work, he has to be delivered from the temptation of

the vineyards, and he has to concentrate on the care of his own vineyard. But when a believer is delivered from the self, though he still needs to be responsible for the little part that God has entrusted to him, his heart is liberated from the work to care for the vineyards. Now the Lord's work is the maiden's work; it is not the same as when her work was the Lord's work. Everything that is for the Lord is part of her work. I do not say that she has lost her individuality, but she is more for the edification of others. These words are given to those who are already capable of guarding their own vineyards.

"Early." This shows her diligence. In the Lord's work, the work in the early morning is indispensable. Laziness is not a characteristic of the Lord's life. Only those who are spiritual can be diligent. There is a kind of movement and activity which is of the flesh. There is also a kind of passivity that is of the old creation. We should reject the extreme of being active in the flesh and also reject the other extreme of being passive, which is another name for laziness. Both are of the old creation. The difference between diligence and laziness lies in the use of time. This is why the apostle charged us to redeem the time (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5).

The maiden goes down with the Lord to the vineyards to "see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth." She is looking at the signs of life together with the Lord and considering together the areas that have the promise of fruit. She is liberated, and the affairs of every saint have become her interest. Even the most immature believer becomes an object of her concern as long as he has a little sign of life and a hope of fruit-bearing. The matter is not who these are begotten of and whether or not they are in our meetings, but what they can render to the Lord. This kind of fellowship with the Lord in the work is a consequence of an absolute union with the Lord in life.

"There will I give thee my loves." What does "there" mean? It means the fields, villages, and vineyards, that is, the Lord's work. In the midst of the Lord's work, "I give thee my loves." In the midst of the Lord's work, we give to Him our loves. How wonderful this is! In the past, work was something that was a distraction. Because of much serving, the maiden would lose the fellowship at His feet. To an immature believer, work does not improve his love to the Lord. On the contrary, it puts a barrier between him and the Lord. This is a sign of an imperfect union. But by this time, her experience has reached the stage of perfection, and she is able to relate the Lord's work to the Lord Himself and able to relate even the world to the Lord. She is able to relate the Lord's brother to the Lord Himself. Now she can express her loves to the Lord at the place of His work. She can make her work an expression of her love to Him. She has no condemnation after she works, and she is no longer afraid of losing something of the Lord through her work.

Verse 13 says, "The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved." The mandrake is a plant of love (Gen. 30:14); it signifies the union between husband and wife. In the midst of this scene, when the union has consummated to such a height, how can we say that the mandrakes are not giving their smell?

"Our gates." This is a convenient place. Although she sojourns from village to village, it does not mean that she has to go to a far place to search for fruit. The "gates" are the place that God has

assigned for us, and we will find fruit there. The maiden is not concentrating on just one kind of fruit, but on all manner of fruits. Before she was delivered from herself, she would not acknowledge the fruit in anyone who did not display signs that she recognized. Now she realizes that there are more than one kind of pleasant fruits; in fact, there are all kinds of fruits. There are new fruits and old fruits. She realizes that different people bear different fruits. She realizes that there is only one Lord Jesus and only one new creation, but not everyone bears the same kind of fruit. Indeed, the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth. The harvest of all these fruits is for the Lord's glory. The result of the work is not for one's own boasting. We work together with the Lord in His work, but all the glory goes to the Lord.