



Love's Suppressing Restraint

Sweet Nothings Are Often Just That

| Song 6:4-13

Introduction

The Shulamite had been telling the worldly women of Solomon's harem about her shepherd and had even been able to spark some kind of an interest. Now came the fiercest time of testing found anywhere in her experiences with the king.

It would seem Solomon had been moved to jealousy by the hold the shepherd had upon the heart of the woman he coveted. Perhaps the king noticed a change among his wives and their attitude toward the unseen shepherd?

He had to know that any opportunity he might have of making headway was slipping away. Without the fanfare and the public display that usually accompanied him, the king appeared suddenly and aggressively pursued the Shulamite. He began with words of *flattery* (6:4-7:9), and when he could not succeed in that manner, he tried *firmness* (7:10-8:4).

Note: In this section of *Song of Solomon*, some of the romantic language is repeated. This might lead us to believe the shepherd is actually speaking. In this story, Solomon is a type of the devil: he does not use originality in his approach, he copies God (Isaiah 14:14). In fact, satan does not hesitate to quote scripture when it suits his needs (Genesis 3:1-5; Luke 4:9-11), although he does not quote it accurately. Likewise, when read carefully, there is a hint of intimidation to be found in the words Solomon used. In the same manner, the devil desires to control the church, but is prevented from doing so.

Solomon's Flatteries Resound 6:4-10

The Shulamite was not taken by surprise at what Solomon had to say. Even so, the king presented an air of assurance and confidence, and why not? Had not the whole world run after him? Why not this simple country girl? In his flatteries, he took a two-fold approach: *You are fair* and *You are first*.

You Are First 6:4-7 Some things Solomon said in his appeal were within the bounds of propriety and were certainly true. In fact, they were the kinds of things the shepherd might have said about his bride-to-be. Again, that should not surprise us. The tempter is rarely original. His most clever appeals are gross imitations of the realities offered by Christ.

That which is imperial (=befitting a king...6:4). Everything about this country girl struck Solomon as royalty. She was an uneducated vineyard worker with none of the airs of the harem beauties. Yet, this Shulamite outshone them all with her stately grace, simplicity, and uncompromising dignity.

He compared her to **Tirzah**. Located in a beautiful part of the country, the place later became the royal residence of the kings of Israel after the division of the kingdom (until Omri built Samaria). The name means *delightful* and defined the natural beauty of the young girl.

The king also compared her to **Jerusalem**, the Holy City. So not only was she *delightful* in her beauty, but she was *divine*, as well. In comparing the Shulamite to Jerusalem, he was all but telling her she deserved to be worshiped.

Keep in mind, Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem and it was the center of worship for all the Jewish people. It was the city of The Great King (**Psalm 48:2**). How could any human compare?

Additionally, the king compared her beauty to a well-equipped and fierce (*terrible*) **army**, its battle flags flying high. Picture the scene: uniformed troops marching in steps that shake the earth. Trumpets are blown and weapons glisten in the sunlight. Above it all are the banners, the identifying flag for which the army fights. In this, the Shulamite was devastating in her beauty.

In other words, Solomon told the Shulamite she had vanquished him, devastated him, conquered him, and marched all over him (ugh!).

It should be apparent to the reader that Solomon is putting much effort into winning the heart of this beautiful girl. He is a handsome and wealthy king, who could have any woman he wanted. So why is he trying so hard to win this one girl? As a Hebrew king, he was fully aware he answered to Almighty God for his actions. As vile, and yet sociably accepted, as some things were, there was one line he was not willing to cross.

In much the same way, satan knows he does not stand a chance against the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus said the gates of Hell would not prevail against her (**Matthew 16:18**). The devil cannot touch the church or force its membership to do anything. He can, however, tempt her with everything in his arsenal. So often, flattery does the trick.

That which is impossible (6:5a). It is shocking for the king of Israel to admit this fact. All she had to do was to look at him with her clear, pure, fearless eyes and he was utterly vanquished.

Let her look! The longer she gazed, the more disgusted she would get. He could not stand her gaze when she looked at him like that. Others fawned over the king and his courtly trappings, but she could see through to the shallowness of his soul. She saw the king he would become in *Ecclesiastes*.

In the Garden of Eden, Eve never looked upon the serpent that way. In fact, the snake was considered more subtle than all the created beasts (Genesis 3:1). Surrounded as she was by sinless beauty, all the devil had to do was shine a little brighter. Eve never stood a chance against that deception. But the Shulamite? She knew better.

If only the church would remember this. If only we would take a good look at the seducer of our souls. Let us get beyond those high-sounding titles of his: *star of the morning, prince of the power of the air, god of this world*. Instead, look at him calmly and knowingly. He is *the old serpent, the devil, satan, the deceiver, the murderer, the liar, the lawless one, the spirit who works in the children of disobedience*.

Take a good look at him with an eye trained in the truth of God's Word. He cannot abide that gaze.

That which is impeccable (6:5-7). Solomon gazed upon the Shulamite and enumerated those things that stood out as near-perfect. In doing so, he borrowed the love-language of the shepherd (*cf 4:2-3*). Hair like a flock of goats...pomegranate temples.

But wait, how did Solomon know about this? No doubt, the Daughters of Jerusalem had been reporting back to the king. They must have told him how the young girl rambled on, talking about this unseen man and his poetic ways. Solomon must have reasoned that if it was poetry she desired, he would give it to her.

But didn't Solomon compose songs and poetry himself (**1 Kings 4:32**)? Yes, but in a time of desperation, he could not trust his artistic manners to sway the Shulamite. He would fall back on that which was tried and true.

Note: In this passage, we get a glimpse of what appealed to Solomon. The Shulamite was impeccable in her *glory*, her *gladness*, and in her *goodness*.

her glory = her hair

her gladness = her smile

her goodness = her blush

It is the same with the church in this world. Her glory is displayed so as to bring honor to her Head. The church derives her joy and gladness from sources other than the world. Her goodness is of such caliber it cannot be found among the unregenerate sons of men.

'You are fair,' the king proclaimed. How he longed to bend her to his will and make her one of his possessions. She saw past his flattery, and he was forced to try another approach.

Of course, satan desires to reduce the status of the church, to make her just another religious organization. The world, at times, pays lip service to the church. After all, the church has admirable qualities. But for all those exceptions, the world rejoices most when the church fails.

You Are First 6:8-10 With something of a leer, Solomon told the Shulamite he had plenty of women. *But you*, he says in effect, *can be the first*. There were sixty queens, eighty concubines, and an innumerable number of other young girls waiting in the wings...but the Shulamite would be given preference over all of them. This would have been a flattering offer to many in the kingdom, but for the Shulamite, it held no sway. After all, she was already first in the heart of her beloved shepherd. What sort of pure woman would want to preside over a harem?