

# Christ's Love for His Vineyard

Song of Solomon 8:11-12

## Introduction:

1. One of Bro. Stalnaker's members came to him one day. He was despondent because he could not do much for the Lord. The man could not read and he could not do much in church. He asked Bro. Stalnaker what he could do for the Lord. Bro. Stalnaker told the man that, if nothing else, he could be faithful in attending church services. The man replied that he would determine to be faithful even if he had to crawl to church. Each Sunday and Wed. the man would come to the Lord's house. He could not drive, he got a ride part of the way to church and then walked the rest. This went on for years. As the man got older his health decreased but he was faithful. His mind began to leave him and he was faithful to attend each church service. He was in bad shape. He did not show up one Sunday. It turned out that he got a ride part of the way to church and began walking. He collapsed from ill health. He was found dead. Someone later commented at the funeral that after he had collapse he was seen crawling, trying to get to church. He kept his promise to be faithful.
2. I want to love our church like that
3. I want you to love our church like that man loved his church
4. I want you to see that our Savior loved His church

## **I. The Vineyard in God's Word**

### **A. The Vineyard Can Refer to the Jewish People – Isa 5:1-7 ←**

1. Isaiah composed a song about God's care for His vineyard
  - a) *Isaiah pictured his wellbeloved (God) planting a vineyard on a fertile hillside*
  - b) *Removed the stones – planted the best vines – build watchtower*
2. He delivered them from the land of Egypt
  - a) *He planted them in the land of Canaan*
  - b) *He fenced them with His protection*
3. He looked for fruit from his people – but got only wild grapes

### **B. Solomon's Vineyard Pictures Christ's Churches – vs 11 ←**

1. One commentary says that in the Song of Solomon, when we see Solomon speaking, it is Christ speaking to His church(es)
2. Likewise, when we see the Shulamite speaking to her beloved it is His churches speaking to Christ

## **II. Our Lord's Special Love for His Churches**

12 My vineyard, **which is mine**, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

### **A. The Earthly Solomon**

1. A farmer planted a vineyard - Think of the work it took
  - a) *He had to purchase the land, prepare the land, plant the vines*
  - b) *He had to take care of those vines*
  - c) *Guard them from bugs and disease*
  - d) *Keep the birds, deer out of the vineyard*
2. After all that work, the farmer has a special love for that vineyard
3. His reward is the harvest of grapes

### **B. The Heavenly Solomon – the Lord Jesus Christ**

Ac 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

1. Our Savior claims His churches as His own and declares His special love and care for them
2. His churches are his own special property
3. All things belong to our Lord Jesus Christ - Rev 4:11
4. All things are His by right of creation
5. All things are His by the prerogative of providence
6. Here our Lord claims a special interest in /possession of His churches
7. Christ's churches belong to him by a lawful purchase

### **C. He Nourishes and Cherishes His Churches – Eph 5:29**

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

1. The love of the Savior for His churches is an example to husbands
  - a) *His love is sincere, pure and constant – notwithstanding her failures*
  - b) *Christ's love for us is sacrificial and sanctifying*
2. Christ nourished and cherished his churches and husbands should cherish and nourish their wives
  - a) *The husband's love for his wife should be sacrificial / sanctifying*
  - b) *Cherish has the idea of warmth*
    - (1) There is a picture of a mother bird sitting on those eggs to keep them warm till they hatch.
    - (2) The husband should treat his wife with warmth, tenderness, care, affection and appreciation

#### **D. He Gave Himself For the Church – Eph 5:25**

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

1. Agape love is in view here
  - a) *A selfless and unselfish love*
  - b) *A love of the mind as well as a love of the heart*
  - c) *A love of affections and feelings as well as a love of will and commitment*
  - d) *It is a love that works for the highest good of the person loved*
2. Christ's love for his church is seen in that he gave himself for it.
3. He sacrificed Himself totally

#### **III. Our Lord's Constant Care of His Churches**

12 My vineyard, which is mine, **is before me**: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

##### **A. The Earthly Solomon**

1. Constantly cares for his vineyard
2. He watches over it
3. He has so much invested in the vineyard so that it is ever before Him
4. He is constantly working in the vineyard
5. He is constantly checking the young grapes
6. He is looking for fruit or problems that might prevent fruit from growing

##### **B. The Heavenly Solomon**

1. Here our Lord declares that His churches are the constant objects of His watchful eye and special care
2. These words are full of meaning for the comfort of our hearts
3. He says, "Fear not, my eye is upon you. I am engaged to do you good." - Isa 41:10, 14
4. His vineyard is so dear to Him that He never leaves it
5. We can be assured that our Lord is knowledgeable of His churches
6. He knows us – Jn 10
7. He is thoroughly acquainted with us and with all that concerns us
8. We are personally, particularly, distinctly and eternally the objects of his love and care

##### **C. Don't Mess With One of the Lord's Churches**

1. If the Lord loves his churches and cares for them this much, then I'd be careful to not mess with one of His churches
2. I'd be careful not to cause problems and divisions
3. I wouldn't want to cause a church split
4. I wouldn't want to take over a church and mess it up.

#### **IV. The Keepers Picture Pastors of the Lord's Churches**

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

##### **A. The Earthly Solomon**

1. A rich farmer might hire keepers to take care of the vineyard
2. King Solomon certainly was not out in the fields taking care of his grapes
3. In this example the keepers sold the grapes that they had grown and they kept 200 pieces of silver and gave 800 to the owner

##### **B. The Heavenly Solomon**

1. Christ is the proprietor of the vineyard, and the principal vinedresser; yet he makes use of "keepers"
2. His ministers take care of the vineyard
3. They watch and keep it in order
4. Gospel preachers are the keepers of the vineyard
5. God's servants all have the same commission to preach the gospel
  - a) *They have different gifts and abilities and their outward apparent successes differ*
  - b) *Some have greater and some have lesser success in their own eyes and in the eyes of man*
6. It is our responsibility as "keepers" of the vineyard to be faithful stewards over that which the Lord has committed to our care

#### **V. Fruitfulness is Expected in the Vineyard – vs 11**

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

##### **A. The Earthly Solomon**

1. The earthly Solomon expects fruit from his vineyard
  - a) *He bought it*
  - b) *He has worked hard for the vineyard*
2. A grape vine is useful only when it is fruitful
  - a) *If a grape vine is fruitless, it is useless*
  - b) *Other trees may be useful for lumber or firewood though they bring forth no fruit, but not the grape vine*
3. Like peach trees after the crop has frozen out

## **B. The Heavenly Solomon – Jn 15:1-8**

Joh 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

1. Our Savior expects fruit from our lives
2. To expect fruit trees to bear fruit is not unreasonable
3. We are his keepers
4. Bearing fruit is proof that we are in Christ
5. One pastor said, "I remember one house where we lived when I was a boy, the people before us had planted a big grapevine in the back. They had tended it, but we didn't know what to do with it. So we did nothing. It bore grapes, but they looked more like raisins than grapes. They were tiny, shriveled and tasteless. But they were grapes. They were the outward manifestation of the inward nature. I have to tell you, I have seen some Christians that you have to look hard to know if they are saved or not. They look more like raisins than they do grapes. They have no taste to them. But at least there is some manifestation of the character of Jesus."

## **VI. Our Responsibility Towards the Lord's Church**

1. If the Lord loves His vineyard, then we should love it too
2. Each member of a church has a responsibility to that church
  - a) *Attend the church*
  - b) *Commend the church (love it)*
  - c) *Defend the church*
  - d) *Extend the church*
3. The Silent Sermon ←

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## The Silent Sermon

A member of a certain church, who previously had been attending services regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the minister decided to visit him. It was a chilly day. That evening the minister found the man at home all alone sitting by a blazing fire.

Guessing the reason for the minister's visit, the man welcomed him and led him to a comfortable chair near the fireplace and waited. The minister made himself at home but said nothing.

In the grave silence, he contemplated the dance of the flames around the burning logs. After some minutes, he took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent.

The host watched all this in quiet contemplation. As the one lone ember's flame flickered and diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more.

Soon it was cold and dead.

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. The minister glanced at his watch and chose this time to leave. He slowly stood up, picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow once more, with the light and warmth of burning coals around it. As the minister reached the door to leave, his host said, with a tear running down his cheek, "Thank you so much for your fiery sermon. I shall be back in church next Sunday." - copied