



Day One: Free to Tend Your Own Vineyard

We simply can't live our new, real life outside of His rest. We see this clearly in the Song of Songs, which is the analogy of our relationship with Jesus.

The foundation of our walk with Jesus is always about receiving His love for us and choosing to enter into the romance with Him (which is what we looked at through the devotional message, *'Chosen, Wanted & Loved'*). However, even when we understand that He loves us and have truly received His love for us, we cannot say, *'Yes I will be Your bride'*, until we also understand and have truly received our identity as His bride. And He calls us Royalty, honoured, desired, His equal, perfect and beautiful. Is that how we see ourselves?

Without the foundation His love for us, we go nowhere and we can receive nothing. It is the bottom floor of the building. But equally, we can't build anything beyond our sense of identity.

We will go no further in our relationship with God and His love for us, until we receive the identity that He gives us.

Our new, real life comes out of our identity and we don't find this identity while we are running. We find it in Him as He reveals it to us in the secret place. As we learn how to walk with Him and work with Him, we enter into His rhythms of grace. In those rhythms, we are one with Him. Yet, if we find ourselves out of sync with His rhythms, we are essentially trying to do it on our own. Far better it is to enter into His rest, hear His whispers, believe His voice, and emerge in the strength of true identity.

The Shulamite woman discovered this. We first find her as we have often found ourselves – running and insecure. She wants to know Him, but she's held back by the fact that she has never stopped long enough to just be with Him, and the fear in her heart that even if she does, she'll still never be good enough.

Song of Songs 1:5 – 4 (TPT)

[The Shulamite] Jerusalem maidens, in this twilight darkness I know I am so unworthy – so in need!

[The Shepherd-King] Yet you are so lovely!



[The Shulamite] I feel as dark and dry as the desert tents of the wandering nomads!

[The Shepherd-King] Yet you are so lovely – like the fine linen tapestry hanging in the Holy Place!

In the beginning, she struggles to accept His love and His opinion of her. She says she's unworthy, dry and dark. He says, "Yet you are so lovely." He's speaking identity to her, desiring to break her into the freedom of her new, real life, but she can't see it – she's been tending the ministry vineyards of her brothers for so long, focused on trying to avoid their angry glares, that she has never been still long enough to hear it, and she's already taken their judgments of her to heart. She has allowed others to form her identity.

Song of Songs 1:6 (TPT) *[The Shulamite to her friends] Please don't stare in scorn because of my dark and sinful ways. I have faced the angry glare of my brothers as they appointed me guardians of their ministry-vineyards, yet the care of my vineyard-within I've neglected.*

Oh, the darkness and weariness of running to fulfil the demands and destinies of others – and completely missing our own in the process! This is one of the tragedies of the modern day church – when people are required by 'leaders' to serve and fulfil vision, yet their own hearts are completely bypassed and in their busyness in serving the visions of others, what God has planted in their hearts remains cold and lifeless. This is not at all the desire of our Lord... and He has a plan...



Have you ever found yourself as guardian of the ministry-vineyards of others whilst neglecting the care of your vineyard-within (your own heart)?



Day Two: Our Resting Place

The Shulamite has a choice to make in this moment. She's been running. She's been ignoring her own heart because she thought she had to 'serve' where others wanted her to serve. Essentially, she has been doing stuff which is keeping her OUT of her new, real life. But the Shepherd-King (Jesus) has offered her a glimmer of hope. What does she do?

Praise God, she takes it! She's captivated by the glimmer that she's tasted and she's hungry for more. She's saved by her longing to know His love as she allows it to lead her - to follow Him. We can see that she's hungering for rest because the first question she asks of Him is:

Song of Songs 1:6 (TPT) *Won't You tell me, Lover of my soul, where do you feed Your flock? Where do You lead Your beloved ones? To rest in the heat of the day?*

And thus begins a beautiful journey of His whispers and her responses (please read it yourself through the first chapter of the Song of Songs in The Passion Translation). He tells her more of who she is and she gradually begins to believe Him. She lets go of the things that kept her from the care of her own vineyard-within (her heart) and she ventures to walk with Him. She starts to enjoy His love... and finds herself in the place of rest. And that's where she truly begins to come alive. Read this next scripture with the imagery that goes with it – SEE it! See what's happening and see yourself as the Shulamite as she says to her Bridegroom-King...

(p12) Song of Songs 1:16 *Our resting place is anointed and flourishing like a green forest meadow bathed in light. Rafters of cedar branches are over our heads and balconies of pleasant smelling pines. A perfect home!*

See how this place of rest has become not only hers but theirs! It's not a place where they come and go – she has called it their home! This is a place she is learning to abide, to live from. And when she does, look what happens immediately afterwards – she has a revelation:

Song of Songs 2:1 *I'm truly His rose, The very theme of His song! I'm His ever-fresh lily, thriving on His love, growing even in the valley!*



Out of that place of rest, she begins to see revelation of who SHE is! Up until this point, He has spoken identity over her, but this is the first time it's come out of her mouth because until she was in rest, she could not truly hear Him and therefore she could not really see it for herself. The moment that she realises she's *'truly His rose, the very theme of His song'* is profound! All the while she was running to guard the ministry-vineyards of her brothers, she'd never felt anything but unworthy, dark and dry. But now, in His rest, she is beginning to see her true worth. And it's absolutely pivotal to her life.

It's no less pivotal to yours...



Have you ever heard the Lord speak to you revelation about who YOU are? If not, why not take the time to just rest in Him and ask Him this question: *My Bridegroom-King, who do You say that I am?* Let Him show you... Rest... Relax...



Day Three: Suddenly

It only gets better from here! The Shulamite Bride discovers that living in His rest is a place of bountiful life and revelation.

Song of Songs 2:4 *My Beloved is to me as the finest, fragrant apple tree...Sitting under His grace-shadow, I blossom in His shade. Enjoying the sweet taste of His pleasant, delicious fruit. Resting with delight where His glory never fades.*

Wow, what's happening? They're just together. They're just enjoying one another... resting in a place that has become their home, their secret place. She's sitting under His shadow, simply blossoming in the shade that He offers her, tasting of His life, and resting with delight. And that's exactly where we find her when the amazing happens:

Song of Songs 2:4 *Suddenly, He transported me into His house of wine – I see His unfurled banner of victory covering me with His unrelenting love Divine. Revive me with Your goblet of wine. Refresh me again with Your sweet promises! Help me and hold me for I am love-sick! I'm longing for more – Yet how could I take any more? His left hand cradles my head while His right hand holds me close. I'm at rest in this love!*

She is at rest BECAUSE she knows she's loved. We can never rest while we think we still have to prove our worth or create significance. Yet in the place of rest, where she has nothing more on her mind than to enjoy Him, SUDDENLY, He transports her into His house of wine.

In the Bible, wine is indicative of the Holy Spirit and this house of wine is a place of Holy Spirit revelation. Suddenly, she sees things she's never seen before! The glimpse of understanding she earlier received about who she is, is just the beginning. Now she sees so much more – His unfurled banner of victory is covering her and she's so undone by it, she's begging for Him to refresh her, yet unsure if she can take any more. What a revelation!

Now the question is: What did she do to receive that revelation? How did she earn it? What did she have to do to be worthy of it? How did she have to position herself in order to receive it?



The answer is absolutely nothing! She didn't earn that revelation. Her worthiness was never a question in her Bridegroom-King's eyes. It was always contained within her, but would she stop long enough to actually see it? When she did... when she rested with Him and learned to live from that place... revelation was the inevitable result. Revelation which suddenly leapt into a heart, which had only been thinking about her King. There wasn't a work required on her part – not one!

Neither does the Lord require your works. He says to you today that He has so much to show you and reveal to you. All He asks is for you to lay aside the agendas and the to-do lists, untie your running shoes, and just allow yourself to rest and delight in Him.

Soak Time

What is Holy Spirit revealing to you about your life? How are you feeling about the concept of living your life from the place of rest?



Day Four: Live it From Where You See it

So we've just seen the Shulamite Bride receive sudden revelation as she is enjoying her place of rest with her Bridegroom-King, and we've realised that it's exactly the same for us. However there is even more to this story. The cool part is that rest is actually two-fold: Not only do we receive when we're in rest; we also get to live out what we receive, from the place of rest.

The same place from which you see it, is the place from which you live it.

The danger of rest is that because we start seeing things clearly from this place, we may get a glimpse of something incredible – and then default back to our previous running and striving life, thinking, *'What I've seen is so awesome, now I have to make it happen!'* No! A thousand times NO! What you see from rest, you'll never be able to live from any other place than rest.

The Lord once gave me a prophetic word that He saw me on top of a particular mountain. He talked about people running up the mountain and said, *'Many fall in the brush and in the valley but you won't. See yourself on top of that mountain!'* In other words, even though I had to go through the valley and the brush in my life, He wanted me to live as though I was already on top of the mountain, because that's where He saw me. In seeing myself already there, I could take the journey in rest, instead of in frenzied action, fearing I wouldn't make it to the top, and that I could miss out.

God may have already shown you where He sees you. Consider yourself already there – running will never make it happen!

The Shulamite Bride saw His banner of victory covering her but she didn't run off to make herself victorious. The last place we see her is cradled in His left hand while His right hand holds her close – completely at rest in His love! My friend, this is where He wants us to live out everything that we see.

Remember that we are SEATED in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. We are one with Him and we live there with Him and beside the Father, who we are told sits in the heavens and laughs (Psalm 2:4). Could it be that He just wants us to sit there and look at what's going on from His perspective and laugh with Him? The moment we see from His perspective yet start running, we've moved from the seated place. But the Lord doesn't do that.



Don't you think God sees a lot that could make Him set off at a fast pace? People think God is crazy busy, but that's not what the Bible indicates. It tells us that He is at rest. His work is finished because Jesus was able to say, "*It is finished*", and the rest is simply Holy Spirit speaking to our hearts to come into alignment with what has already been done. God knows the end from the beginning and He is very peaceful. He invites us into THIS life – His very life. The Bible calls it the Faith-Rest Life:

Hebrews 4:1, 10 – 11 (TPT) The Faith-Rest Life

V1 Now God has offered to us the same promise of entering into his realm of resting in confident faith. So we must be extremely careful to ensure that we all embrace the fullness of that promise and not fail to experience it....As we enter into God's faith-rest life we cease from our own works, just as God celebrates his finished works and rests in them. So then we must give our all and be eager to experience this faith-rest life, so that no one falls short by following the same pattern of doubt and unbelief.

Note that the invitation is to enter into His realm... God's faith-rest life. It's not about what we look like when we're at rest. It's about Who God is and the fact that He lives at rest and we partake of the fullness of His life. This is very important to God – we see that He actually considers it doubt and unbelief (which is sin – missing the mark and falling short of the reward), not to enter into the rest that comes with our new identity. He knows we can't truly abide with Him any other way and He longs for us to live in that abiding oneness with Him. He also knows how important it is to our identity and to our destiny and He wants us all to enter into rest because it's HIS realm – the realm in which He resides, the pace at which He functions. It's all about what Jesus has already done and has nothing to do with anything we think we can add to it. Why would we ever refuse such an offer?



Do you realise this offer is yours?



Day Five: Entering Into His Rest

Yesterday we asked the question, why would we refuse His offer of rest? It seems absurd... yet we've all done it.

The Bridegroom-King knew that the Shulamite staying in a place of rest was so important, that He asked those around her to promise Him... *'That you'll not disturb My love until she is ready to arise'* (Song of Songs 1:7 TPT). When I first read that, I thought *'what an interesting term'* but really didn't understand fully what it meant. Aaahhh, the lessons we learn as we walk out the journey for ourselves!

I soon discovered that when we've been used to running for a while, we need some time to learn how to quieten the voice of unrest in us, as we renew our minds and our lives to living from rest (grace) and not works. We need time to really KNOW Him – not just to know about Him. He calls us to settle in with Him for a while and just BE. It's a season of rest, where we learn to live FROM rest.

As the Lord was inviting me into this rest, I remember a time when I was pondering on an external manifestation of victory that I desperately wanted to see in my life. I knew it was truth to my inner man, but I wanted so badly to see it in my external environment. I almost said out loud, *"I won't rest until it comes out."*

Holy Spirit immediately said to me, *"If you won't rest, it will never come out."*

I was cornered! I knew there was nothing left to do but just to enter into His rest. Still, my flesh didn't want to. My beautiful friend received these profound words from Holy Spirit to minister to my heart:

"Instead of letting these words come upon you as an external driver, let them come upon you as a promise and enter into the rest and excitement that it IS going to happen... Grace is His job. Faith is your job."

I realised that when I had previously heard vision, I'd been driven by it and tried to make it happen. But God was saying to treat vision as a promise and to just enter into rest and enjoy the excitement of watching Him bring it to pass. This was certainly a world away from the way I had functioned my entire life!



However, I also realized that when He says in Jeremiah 29:11, *'I know the plans I have for you'*, that they're HIS plans for me, not my plans for me. If He's the one making the plans, He's quite capable of fulfilling them.

So I decided to enter once and for all into His rest, and leave my frenzied, works-harried life behind. This was a big step – I'd been a do-er all my life! Even my grandmother called me 'Bulldozer' because, in her words, *'I always said that if that girl wants to do something, she'll get it done! If there's something in her way, she'll just bulldoze over it.'*

Now I've never been on drugs so I can't verify this, but for the first few days of attempting to enter into His rest, I felt like I was going through withdrawals. Literally! My flesh was kicking and screaming! I was teary and everything in me wanted to run out and make something happen, or to prove my worth and verify the identity I'd spent a lifetime cultivating. I remember crying out to God, asking, *'Who am I if I'm not the go-getter; if I'm not the bulldozer?'* I felt like if I wasn't doing, accomplishing, and making things happen, I had no right to be here (on the earth). Like I was nothing without all my own efforts. Yuck! I sure didn't realise all that was hidden away inside me until I took the plunge into rest. It revealed much of where I'd placed my identity and it wasn't in Jesus!

But you know what, when the emotions subsided, and it all settled, and I'd stayed in rest and hadn't moved... oh I had the most incredible sense of peace! My goodness, I wouldn't know how to describe it! And those around me could sense the difference – when I walked into my precious friend's home she could see and feel it and she said, *'There's a difference presence about you.'*

And there was. Because instead of carrying the burdens and stresses and overwhelm of my life with me wherever I went, I lived from His rest and I carried His Presence. Oh, what a way to live!



Can you see any parallels in this story to your own? What is the Lord saying to you about entering His rest?
