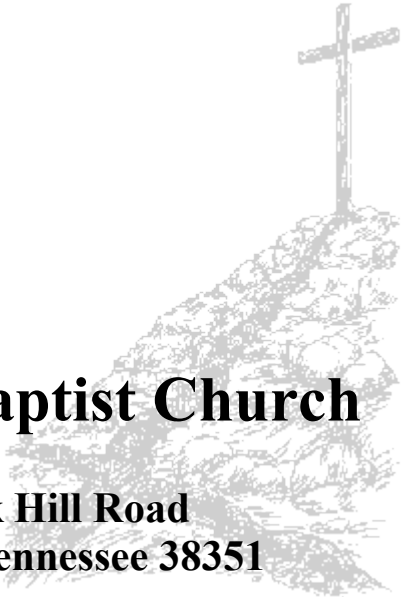


# Can You Smell The Rain? Song of Solomon 2:1-4



## Rock Hill Baptist Church

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(Song of Songs 2:1-4 KJV) "*I am* the rose of Sharon, *and* the lily of the valleys. {2} As the lily among thorns, so *is* my love among the daughters. {3} As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so *is* my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit *was* sweet to my taste. {4} He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me *was* love."

There is an *identity problem* that exists within Christianity today. There are many who *profess* to know Christ as Savior, who claim Church membership, but there are few who understand what it *means* to be a Christian and a part of God's Church. This is not an uncommon problem, though. The first century Church had a number of problems – you can see them listed throughout the New Testament in Galatians, Corinthians, James, and so on. The Church always has an identity problem when those who are its Blood washed membership begin to *blend* or *mix* with the world. Let's look at this beautiful text and see what God has to tell us.

### **1. Jesus Christ Loves And Nourishes His Beloved**

(Song of Songs 2:1 KJV) "*I am* the rose of Sharon, *and* the lily of the valleys.

As we begin to examine our text we see one of the names given to Jesus Christ in the Scripture, “the **lily of the valleys**”. You remember this best from the beautiful song:

**I have found a friend in Jesus,  
He's everything to me;  
He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul;  
The Lily of the Valley, in Him alone I see;  
All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole ...**

And yet a second song, **Jesus Rose of Sharon**, declares:

**Jesus, Rose of Sharon, bloom within my heart;  
Beauties of Thy truth and holiness impart,  
That where'er I go my life may shed abroad  
Fragrance of the knowledge of the love of God.**

When the Christian thinks of Jesus he cannot help but feel his heart swell with love. Jesus has provided so much for us - especially in this country. Many of you will go home today to barbecues, nice homes, family and friends. You'll do this in the blessedness of freedom. You were free to come to Church this morning without fear of being attacked for being a professing Christian. Jesus has truly provided for us all - believer and unbeliever alike. Most of you rarely recognize that the beautiful world all around us is provided by a loving God - provided so that you can survive to accept Jesus Christ as Savior. The Scripture says:

**(Romans 2:4 NASB) "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"**

We are free in this country - a country founded on Biblical principles - to choose or reject Christ. Even those who have rejected Him - and if you are one of those who has rejected Jesus Christ as your Lord and

Savior - enjoy the blessedness of God's goodness. As Jesus said:

**(Matthew 5:45 KJV) "... he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."**

You hear so many people curse God for the trials and tribulations that come on man, yet you rarely hear anyone praise God for His goodness. God calls you through His love to salvation in Jesus. He woos you to become part of His Beloved.

1. There are *two levels* of God's goodness and love. The first level is given to *everyone* because God wants man to \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 2:4; Matthew 5:45)
2. The *second level* of God's goodness and love is reserved for whom? (Song of Songs 2:1)

There is one level of goodness that God gives to the unbeliever, extending his life so he may accept the Gospel message. If you're unsaved you're here today on God's Love Plan. But there's a deeper level of goodness that God offers to His Beloved, His saved by Grace, His washed in the Blood of the Lamb. God, though He loves *the stranger*, He is *devoted* to His Bride.

Though Jesus died to bring salvation to *whosoever will*, the ones who have accepted Him as Savior are closest to

His heart. To everyone else my wife is named “Sherry”, but to me she has a special place in my heart, and I have given her loving nicknames. So it is with the Christian - not just the *professor*, but the one who has truly come to know Jesus Christ in their hearts. To all others He is “Jesus” or “Jesus Christ”, but to you who love Him He is the “Rose of Sharon” or the “Lily of the Valley”. You

3. Does our Beloved guarantee that we will never suffer hurt?

4. If I am a Christian my Beloved expects me to be \_\_\_\_\_ to Him. (**Song of Songs 2:2-4; John 14:15**)

can take a Rose and pull each petal from its Body, and yet each petal retains the sweet and alluring smell. You can take a Lily and share its beauty with others. Jesus is that Rose, that Lily for the Beloved. To all others He's just a man, just a prophet, but to you who are Beloved He is the Bridegroom, the King of Kings. There are times when our Rose allows pain to come in our lives. But for us who know Him in our hearts, who are in love with Him, we know the pain is only temporary. As **Beth Moore** said:

**A crushing hurt comes to our heart and the sympathizing, scarred hand of Christ presses the wound; and just for a moment, the pain seems to intensify, ...but finally the bleeding stops. (Beth Moore)**

## **2. Jesus Christ Wants His Beloved Devoted To Him**

**(Song of Songs 2:2-4 KJV) "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. {3} As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved**

**among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.**

Though a Christian who is a Christian indeed sometimes falls down in loving Jesus - and we have all fallen at times - the Beloved must always realize that you are called to devote yourself to Him. Jesus tells us:

**(John 14:15 KJV) "If ye love me, keep my commandments."**

You cannot find any instance in Scripture where true love exists *apart from devoted living*. **Edward Bedore** wrote:

**The knowledge of Christ's love for us should cause us to love Him in such a way that it is demonstrated in our attitude, conduct, and commitment to serve God. Spiritual maturity is marked by spiritual knowledge being put into action.**

5. Is there any place in Scripture where *true love* for God exists apart from *devoted living* for God?

The Church and the Christian who loves the Lily of the Valley *ceases to look like the world, but instead looks like Heaven*. It is (**verse 2**) **a lily among the thorns**, not another thorn among the thorns. The thorn, the *unbeliever and his world*, has none of the scent of the Lily of the Valley. The Christian, that lover of Christ, is the (**verse 3**) **apple tree among the trees of the wood**. As you walk through the forest of life you may look like other people - the trees - but unlike the other trees the Rose of Sharon has caused your life to bloom. Like the

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**apple tree** you have fruit, and all those who come in contact with you enjoy the fruit of your life.

6. A Christian is to be a \_\_\_\_\_ among the thorns, and an apple tree among the other \_\_\_\_\_. What does this mean to me? (Song of Songs 2:2-4)

The founders of our country were *unashamed of the Rose of Sharon* and were not afraid to stand up for Him. America is a free country today because men and women passionate about Jesus devoted themselves to Him in all that they did. **Patrick Henry** wrote:

**It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great Nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ! For this very reason peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here.<sup>1</sup>**

It is God's Will that all men and women be given a peaceful opportunity to accept or reject Jesus Christ as Savior - and those who are devoted to Him have helped make this possible. **John Jay**, the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States wrote:

**Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.<sup>2</sup>**

And even our Tennessee State Constitution, in **Article 9, Section 2**, was written to say:

**No person who denies the Being of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments, shall hold any office in the civil department of this state.<sup>3</sup>**

To the world and the lost - the **thorns** - these things are intolerant, wrong, bigoted. Yet what would a thorn know of beauty? Can any person preparing to lay under the knife of a surgeon say that he would rather have a Godless abortionist cutting on his chest, than have a *Christian in love with Christ*? The freedoms of this country were secured by true Christians who, *in love for Christ, acted out their faith*. These were people who loved Jesus and loved their country, **lilys among the thorns**. Jesus wants His Beloved as devoted to Him as He is to her. No half devotees need apply! Look further in the Solomon text:

**(Song of Songs 2:10 KJV) "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away."**

Come away from the world, come away from compromise with the thorns. Focus on the Lily of the Valley, the Rose of Sharon. Sit **(verse 3) "down under his shadow with great delight"**. As you love Him His love will show in your walk and your talk - and the world around you will understand why you love Him.

### **3. The Bride Following The Groom Will Overcome**

We have a tendency, as Christians - if you are a Christian - to be overwhelmed by the world around us. Perhaps it is the age we're living in. But Beloved, I want you to know that the Rose of Sharon has never changed. Read these words with me:

**(Song of Songs 2:4 KJV) "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me *was* love."**

America has been through a long, dry spell. Years ago many who should have known better became like the Church of Laodicea - they left their *first Love* and began to merge with the thorns. Believers compromised with unbelievers. Jesus told the Laodiceans:

**(Revelation 2:4 KJV) "Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."**

When a Christian grows cold in his love for Jesus he ceases to be salt and light for the world. Jesus Christ **brought us to the banqueting house**. He gave us a place that even the angels do not occupy. He made us kings and priests unto God (**Revelation 1:6**). He has promised us a mansion (**John 14:2**) - and even now works on this place so we will have somewhere we can call home when we leave this earth. You have been filled and clothed, and will be clothed, in a new glorified body (**1 Corinthians 15:53**). Can you even count all the blessings you received through the precious Blood of Christ, if only you have believed? Above all this the Scripture says:

**{4} ... his banner over me *was* love**

The King James Version puts things in *italics* when they were added by the translators and not part of the original text. Notice the word *was* is *italicized*. With all due respect to the translators, I think that was a poor addition to the text. The New American Standard says:

**(Song of Songs 2:4 NASB) "He has brought me to *his* banquet hall, And his banner over me is love."**

The banner, the flag that flies above every Christian and every Blood bought Church **IS** love. Our banner must not be *compromise* with the **thorns**. Love would never tell

7. What is the *banner* every Church and every Christian should be walking under? (Song of Songs 2:4)

8. When I align myself with the wrong banner, what am I causing or contributing to? I Christ pleased with this? (Revelation 2:4; Matthew 12:25)

another person to continue doing something harmful to themselves. Our banner must not be *dissension*, *argument*, or *fighting* among ourselves. Jesus our Rose has told us:

**(Matthew 12:25 KJV) "... Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:"**

Neither must our banner be *silence* when we should be *servicing*. America is free because our forefathers - many Christians - loudly protested against godlessness. Love does not watch a fool put a gun to his head and pull the trigger, nor does love remain silent when Christ bids us speak. If those around you go to a place of eternal

damnation because you failed to tell them that Jesus is the Only Way to Heaven (**John 14:6**) what will you tell the Beloved when you see Him?

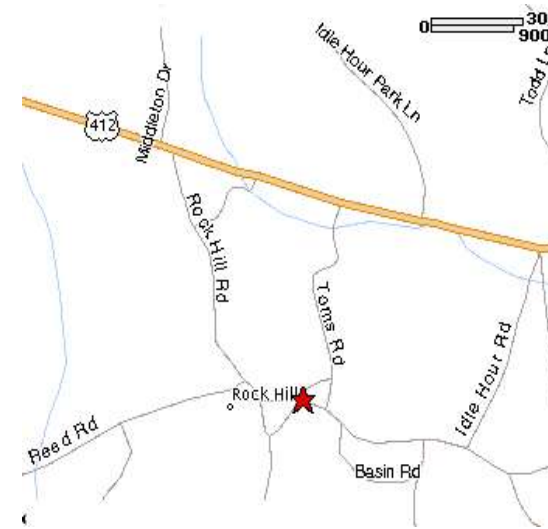
**(Song of Songs 2:10-13 KJV) "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. {11} For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; {12} The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; {13} The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."**

There's been a smell of rain in the air for some time. God is blessing Rock Hill and many of its members. Can you smell the rain? The time of drought has passed, and Christ bids us walk under His banner of love.

<sup>1</sup> Steve C. Dawson, *God's Providence in America's History*, Rancho Cordova, CA: Steve C. Dawson, 1988, page 9.6

<sup>2</sup> John Jay, *The Correspondence and Papers of John Jay*, Henry P. Johnson, ed. New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1890, Vol IV, page 393, October 12, 1816

**Rock Hill Baptist Church is located between Parsons and Lexington, Tennessee, on Highway 412. Look for our sign! We have services on Wednesdays (Adult, Youth, and children's Bible studies) at 7:00 PM,**



**Sundays at 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Rock Hill is a family oriented Bible believing Church - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever! Our Pastor, Brother David Buffaloe, will answer any questions you**

**have about our Church if you contact him at 731-845-6104, or through his website at bibleteacher.org; or e-mail him by writing**

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**Rock Hill is an independent Church affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, and is a regular contributor to missions through the Cooperative Program.**