

Song of Solomon 5:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

Analysis

I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? (pashatni et kutanti eykhah elbashena rachatsti et raglai eykhah atanaphem, **בְּשַׁבְּתִי אֶת-כְּתָנָתִי אֶת-בְּשָׁנָה בְּמִצְתִּי אֶת-רְגָלִי אֶת-כְּהָבָדָה אֶת-נְפָם**)—this verse depicts the bride's reluctant hesitation when her beloved knocks (verse 2). She's prepared for sleep, undressed, feet washed. Her excuses reveal comfortable complacency: "how shall I...?" questions express unwillingness to inconvenience herself.

This poignant moment captures spiritual danger: responding to Christ's call with "not now" because of comfort, tiredness, or settled routine. The excuses seem reasonable—she has legitimate nighttime preparations—yet they reveal priority problems. Convenience trumps devotion. This teaches that comfortable Christianity resists disruption, even when the Beloved knocks. The bride will soon regret her hesitation (verse 6). This moment warns against complacency that delays response to Christ's immediate invitations.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern homes typically had simple sleeping arrangements. Removing outer garments and washing feet (dusty from sandals) were standard preparations for sleep. The bride's excuses reflect genuine inconvenience—but also reveal misplaced priorities. Early church fathers saw this as the soul's tragic reluctance to respond immediately to Christ's call—making excuses (too

comfortable, too tired, too settled) when He invites deeper fellowship. This pattern appears throughout Scripture: Felix saying "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25)—convenience never came. The Reformers warned against presuming on grace—responding "later" to spiritual conviction often means never responding. The Puritans emphasized immediate obedience to the Spirit's promptings—delayed obedience is disobedience.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What comfortable routines or convenient excuses keep you from immediate response when Christ knocks, inviting deeper fellowship or obedience?
2. How does the bride's soon-coming regret (verse 6) warn you about the cost of delayed or half-hearted response to spiritual invitations?
3. What practices help you maintain spiritual alertness and readiness to respond immediately to Christ, even when inconvenient?

Interlinear Text

אַתָּה	רְמַטְתִּי	אַלְבָשׁ	בָּהּ	אַתָּה	פָּשׁ	טָהֹתִי
I have put off	H853	my coat		how		shall I put it on
H6584		H3801		H349		H3847
I have washed	H853					
						H7364

אַתָּה	אַלְבָשׁ	בָּהּ	רְמַטִּתִּי
my feet	how	shall I defile	
H7272	H349	H2936	

Additional Cross-References

Luke 11:7: And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

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