

**Small Group Discussion Guide**  
**Sermon Date: November 14, 2021**  
**Speaker: Reverend Buster Soaries**  
**Sermon Title: “The North Wind”**

Sermon Text: Song of Solomon 4:16

***“Awake, north wind! Rise up, south wind! Blow on my garden and spread its fragrance all around. Come into your garden, my love; taste its finest fruits.”***

**Background Summary**

When the books of the Bible were being considered for inclusion, the Song of Solomon almost didn't make it. There were several problems with the text that gave the elders pause; the book doesn't mention God; it reflects secular and sensuous language and uses carnal images of love and glamour. But, after careful examination of the Christ-like nature of the writings, we see clearly that the author is writing a love letter that celebrates the beauty and passion of their lover and partner. The author writes from an agrarian perspective utilizing elements of nature to illustrate the divine, God, and a beautiful black woman that over the centuries has reaffirmed Christ's love for us and the roots of 'black is beautiful'. The speaker focuses the sermon around the contradictions yet essentialism of the North and South winds in order for his garden to flourish.

**Sermon Summary**

The preacher reflects on his struggle for understanding why the author of this text would summon the North wind. It is cold, uninviting, harsh, and leads to barren lands. Resources are scarce. On the other hand, the South wind is friendly, comforting, the warm wind flourishes the flowers and grass to grow; ground is fertile.

But why would anyone ask for the North wind? The writer understood he needed both to help his garden. It is the harshness that strengthens the garden to withstand the elements in order to survive. In the same way, the cruelty in our world is what causes great people to overcome adversity and show others, anything is possible. People do not usually welcome the North winds of life willingly: discrimination, racism, systemic oppression and rejection. While living with North winds seems never ending for many, the writer implores us to embrace them in order to make us strong. The preacher uses his parents as examples of the North and South winds growing up. His mother represented the gentle and nurturing South wind while his father was the harsh disciplinarian North wind, but both, he says, shaped his character and who he is today.

Both winds are needed to produce a fruitful garden, a fruitful life. We should not shelter ourselves or our children from the North winds. Experiencing obstacles, heartbreak, disappointment, and rejection help form our character, discipline, dedication, and even our purpose in life. Just like the writer's garden withstanding the harsh winds from the

North in order to build its formidable strength, we too build thicker skin, deeper faith, and greater prayer life, increased trust in one another and in God. Similar to how even Jesus developed his trust in God through death and rise up to overcome it; we also endure pain and suffering, only to overcome them, even stronger than before. Don't be afraid of the North wind, embrace it.

### **Questions**

1. How have you tried to shelter yourself or your children from the North winds of life?
2. In what ways does the sensual implication in the text enhance your spiritual understanding?
3. Do you think we need to have bad to appreciate good? Why or why not?
4. How do the North and South winds help our gardens to grow and sustain?
5. What North and South wind experiences have you had in life?
6. How do you think our faith would be shaped had the book of Song of Solomon was not included in the Bible?