

**January 10, 2016
A Beautiful Bride
Song of Solomon 6:4-12**

He

⁴You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my darling, as lovely as Jerusalem, as majestic as troops with banners.

⁵Turn your eyes from me; they overwhelm me. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from Gilead.

⁶Your teeth are like a flock of sheep coming up from the washing. Each has its twin, not one of them is missing.

⁷Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate.

⁸Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number;

⁹but my dove, my perfect one, is unique, the only daughter of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her. The young women saw her and called her blessed; the queens and concubines praised her.

Friends

¹⁰Who is this that appears like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the stars in procession?

He

¹¹I went down to the grove of nut trees to look at the new growth in the valley, to see if the vines had budded or the pomegranates were in bloom.

¹²Before I realized it, my desire set me among the royal chariots of my people

Good Morning My Sisters and Brothers in Christ! I greet you this second Sunday of a brand New Year with these words:

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. (Acts 2:17)

I believe that we are on the threshold of the time that Peter was referencing as he spoke to the Jews at Pentecost. I believe that God is pouring out His spirit and we just need to be ready to receive it.

The lesson for consideration this morning is one that has caused me a great deal of time in research and reading. I have reviewed the writing of some of the classic Commentaries, like Matthew Henry and Jamieson, Faust and Brown. I have read some of the great sermons such as Wesley, Spurgeon, and Smith. The one thing that has remained constant is the fact that no two sources, within my reach, can agree on how best to interpret the Songs of Solomon; the Song of Songs.

There are four schools of thought.

Christ and His love for the church - redemptively

God and His love for Israel - dispensationally

Christ and His love for the sinner – spiritually

Beauty of wedded love – literally

The David C. Cook International Sunday School lesson commentary outlines 3 schools of thought and uses yet another set of names to describe them.

Allegory – the lovers are not historical figures, but are symbolic characters

Jewish – God and Israel

Christian – Jesus and the church

Typological – the lovers are historical but there is a second meaning

Christians see the love relationship as Jesus and the church

Face Value – a case of romantic love

Now, I must admit that I am not sure where I fall within these schools of thought for I have no memory of being taught anything from this book or of hearing a sermon, taking a class on this book and clearly not preaching from it. So I found myself doing what I have taught you to do: who, what when, where, how and finally is there a lesson for me.

- Who – Solomon
- What – a love poem
- When – early in his reign as King
- How – written as an opera with a role for male, female and chorus
- Where – Jerusalem

As Baptist we believe that:

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the servant of God^[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

So where is the teaching in these 8 verses that will help to equip us for every good work. I will begin by saying the teachings I am about to outline are not the only teachings, for as you study and pray, God's Holy Spirit will reveal to you what you need, just as He has done for me.

Please pray with me and for me as I talk about:

GOD'S KIND OF LOVE

SHALL WE PRAY?

Father God even now as I lay out the foundation of this sermon I am open to your direction and guidance. I know that the thoughts I have may not be what the people **want** to hear, but I am asking that the words I speak be words from you and be the words that **need** to be heard. Abba, I ask that you use me in your service and allow what I have to say to be a blessing, a revelation, a transformation in the life of your people. Grant me what I need in this preaching moment, in the name of your Son Jesus the Christ. Amen and Amen.

GOD'S KIND OF LOVE

In the Greek there are many different words for the word we translate as love. There was one word for sexual love, another word for brotherly love, another word for love of family and still another word for love of God. But within the English language we have this one word – LOVE – and

- we use it to cover the act of sex;
- the emotion we feel as romantic love;
- the love we have for family and friends and
 - the love we have for God.

Because of the language difficulty sometimes we need to stop and think about just what we mean when we use the word love.

Based on reading this as a song of romantic love, my **first teaching point** is **God intended the act of sex to be within the bonds of marriage**. Send somebody a #sex is for marriage. God made us and knows us and wishes to be involved with us. But when we ignore Him in any aspect of our lives we are in fact saying that we know more than God. Why was sex to be limited to those who are married?

- because God said so
- because sex can result in children and God wanted children to have two parent
 - (He provided Joseph for His Son)
- because sex is powerful and can mess up your mind.

Now someone is listening to this and thinking the Pastor is talking about sex from the pulpit. Yes, that is right! There are 77 verses in the bible that talk about sex and they are each very clear about the kind of sex that is pleasing to God. The fact that I am talking about it from the pulpit is really not the problem. The problem is that society has taken something created by God for our enjoyment and expression of love and turned it into something else.

Our scripture passage when taken within the context of the entire Song of Solomon teaches us a few things about romantic sexual love

- it takes time
 - it needs to be attended to
- it is not about slam, bam, thank you mam.

Now this is not new information for the songs of my youth expressed a romantic sexual love that did not disgrace women, call them out of their names, or treat them as disposable.

Ain't no woman like the one I've got
 Ain't no woman like the one I've got
 Ain't no woman like the one I've got

Every day the sun comes up around her
 She can make the birds sing harmony
 Every drop of rain is glad it found her
 Heaven must have made her just for me
 When she smiles so warm and tender
 A sight for sore eyes to see

There were also songs that women sang about their men that celebrated them.

Nothing you could say could tear me away from my guy,
 Nothing you could do 'cause I'm stuck like glue to my guy.
 I'm sticking to my guy like a stamp to a letter,
 Like birds of a feather we stick together,
 I'm tellin' you from the start I can't be torn apart from my guy.
 Nothing you could do could make me untrue to my guy,

Nothing you could buy could make me tell a lie to my guy.
 I gave my guy my word of honor to be faithful, and I'm gonna,
 You best be believing I won't be deceiving my guy.
 As a matter of opinion I think he's tops,
 My opinion is he's the cream of the crop;
 As a matter of taste to be exact he's my ideal as a matter of fact.
 No muscle-bound man could take my hand from my guy.
 No handsome face could ever take the place of my guy.

First Teaching Point:

God intended the act of sex to be within the bonds of marriage.

Second Teaching Point

Love requires attention

Both Jewish and Christian theologians hold the Song of Songs or the Song of Solomon in high esteem. The Jews see in it an explanation of how God loved Israel. Christians see it as how Christ as the bridegroom loves his bride the church. In both instances what you can see is the constant attention that is needed to keep love strong. The stages within the entire song cover courtship, the wedding, the consummation of their love and various later occasions in which they renew their love. It is not a great stretch of the imagination to view our Christian relationship with Jesus as following similar stages.

Courtship – checking out a church – church hopping

Wedding – join and our baptized and fellowshiped into the family

Consummation – where you find your place within the family and begin to work

Wandering and Renewal – backsliding and returning

Other the years I have received calls to come and see what I could do to repair a marriage. Although I try to enter each situation with an open mind I have begun to see some patterns that cannot be ignored. Allow me to explain them using the language I just introduced.

The marriage is in trouble because it does not continue like the **courtship**.

on time, whispered sweet things, candy, flowers, cards, frequent contact

The marriage is in trouble because **the family you met and joined** have taken off their screen savers and you see a different side

The marriage is in trouble because one or both are wandering

Can you switch gears and see how this troubled marriage is like the church, the bride of Christ?

we forget after the wedding who the bridegroom is
not the preacher, not the deacon, not you,
but Jesus the Christ, the Son of a Living God

we forget after the wedding that the family/the church family we joined had on their company manners and now we are seeing them as they really are – not saved, sanctified and set aside – but selfish, jealous, and prone to outburst of anger

we forget after the wedding that the love that got us there has to grow and mature to keep us there.

Love of God – Love of family – Love of spouse requires some attention.

Teaching Point #3

God is love, God loves you, and God will take you back

Addendum for website

Here are some scriptures you might find helpful.

1Jo 4:19 We **love** because he **loved** us first.

Joh 15:12 My commandment is this – to **love** one another just as I have **loved** you.

Rom 13:10 **Love** does no wrong to a neighbor. Therefore **love** is the fulfillment of the law.

1Jo 4:8 The person who does not **love** does not know God, because God is **love**.

1Co 13:4 **Love** is patient, **love** is kind, it is not envious. **Love** does not brag, it is not puffed up.

Joh 13:34 "I give you a new commandment – to **love** one another. Just as I have **loved** you, you also are to **love** one another.