

Sermon, July 10, 2011
“Love, Marriage, and God”, Song of Solomon 2:1-6
Pastor Thomas P. Bellhy

The Books of Poetry and Wisdom¹

- Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon are regarded as books of poetry; Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes are also books of wisdom.
- Job: cosmic struggle between the Lord and angelic enemies
- Psalms: the full range of emotions
- Proverbs: a father’s and mother’s wisdom sayings to their son
- Ecclesiastes: musings about the human condition
- Song of Solomon: love song of a bride and groom

Overview of Song of Solomon:

- Called the Song of Songs by the author.
- Solomon was the author.
- Like in the Book of Esther, the word “God” is never mentioned, but is prevalent throughout in a spiritually symbolic sense.
- Two people dominate this true-life, dramatic love song.
 - Solomon, whose kingship is mentioned 5 times (1:4, 12; 3:9, 11; 7:5), appears as “the beloved.”
 - The Shulamite maiden (6:13) remains obscure; most likely she was a resident of Shunem, 3 mi. N of Jezreel in lower Galilee.
 - Some suggest she is Pharaoh’s daughter (1 Kin. 3:1), although the Song provides no evidence for this conclusion.
 - Others favor Abishag, the Shunammite who cared for King David (1 Kin. 1:1–4, 15).
 - An unknown maiden from Shunem, whose family had possibly been employed by Solomon (8:11), seems most reasonable.
 - She would have been Solomon’s first wife (Eccl. 9:9), before he sinned by adding 699 other wives and 300 concubines (1 Kin. 11:3).²
- Through eight chapters and 117 verses, the two lovers admire each other’s physical beauty, expressing their love and devotion.
- **Overall Outline Song of Solomon³:**
 - I. The Courtship: “Leaving” (1:2–3:5)
 - A. The Lovers’ Remembrances (1:2–2:7)
 - B. The Lovers’ Expression of Reciprocal Love (2:8–3:5)
 - II. The Wedding: “Cleaving” (3:6–5:1)
 - A. The Kingly Bridegroom (3:6–11)
 - B. The Wedding and First Night Together (4:1–5:1a)
 - C. God’s Approval (5:1b)
 - III. The Marriage: “Weaving” (5:2–8:14)
 - A. The First Major Disagreement (5:2–6:3)
 - B. The Restoration (6:4–8:4)
 - C. Growing in Grace (8:5–14)

Major Themes of Song of Solomon:

- Married love is a beautiful thing worth celebrating.
- God made marriage for the husband and wife’s enjoyment—and that marital love can be a picture of God’s joy in His people.⁴
- God betrothed the people of Israel to himself; he entered into covenant with them, and it was a marriage-covenant. He had given abundant proofs of his love to them, and required of them that they should love him with all their heart and soul.⁵
- It is a picture of Christ and His church; a love relationship of a bride and groom.

¹ Mears, H., “What the Bible is All About”, p.182

² MacArthur, John Jr: *The MacArthur Study Bible*. electronic ed. Nashville : Word Pub., 1997, c1997, S. So 1:1

³ MacArthur, John Jr: *The MacArthur Study Bible*. electronic ed. Nashville : Word Pub., 1997, c1997, S. So 1:1

⁴ Kent, Paul (2010). *Know Your Bible: All 66 Books Explained and Applied* (p. 40). Barbour Books. Kindle Edition.

⁵ Henry, Matthew: *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1706.

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Song of Solomon shows you the love of God toward you, your loving response to Him, and the completeness and unity experienced in relationship with God.

1. The love of God is prevalent throughout the Bible

- From Genesis to Ecclesiastes God’s love is beyond question and is mentioned over 150 times.
- *Exodus 15:13* ¹³ *"In Your lovingkindness You have led the people whom You have redeemed; In Your strength You have guided them to Your holy habitation.*
- *Psalms 13:5* ⁵ *But I have trusted in Your lovingkindness; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.*
- Throughout the Bible God’s love is spoken of over 500 times.
- *John 3:16* ¹⁶ *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*
- *1 John 4:10* ¹⁰ *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*
- Like Solomon who dearly loves his wife and pursues her with a lovingkindness, so too does the creator of the universe reach out for you and me for a special loving relationship.
- And we must respond...

2. God wants us to respond to Him in the same loving relationship...

- *Song of Solomon 2:3* ³ *As an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among young men. With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*
- Jesus says there is no greater commandment than Deut 6:5...
- *Deuteronomy 6:5* ⁵ *"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*
- God initiates His love for us and in order to consummate the relationship we must respond back to Him in faith and love.
- *Ephesians 3:17-19* ¹⁷ *so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,* ¹⁸ *may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,* ¹⁹ *and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.*
- Love and faithfulness build the marriage relationship

3. Marriage is a lifelong relationship in devotion to one another.

- God created man and woman for the marriage relationship
- A lifelong bond between husband and wife, a unity ordained from the beginning of time.
- *Genesis 2:24* ²⁴ *For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.*
- God wants to make you complete in relationship to Him...
- *Song of Solomon 2:4-6* ⁴ *He brought me to the banqueting house, and his intention toward me was love.* ⁵ *Sustain me with raisins, refresh me with apples; for I am faint with love.* ⁶ *O that his left hand were under my head, and that his right hand embraced me!*
- This picture of longing after your true love, going with them throughout life to reap the bountiful harvest of love and enjoyment with one another is the vision God wants with you and your life to Him.
- He desires unity with you...
- *Colossians 3:14-15* ¹⁴ *Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.* ¹⁵ *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.*

Conclusion

- Love is who God is.
- Love is what God is all about.
- Love is how God through Christ reveals His desire for you and me.
- Love is not a feeling, but an active pursuit of affection, faithfulness, in relationship with someone.
- AND...Love is what God desires from you.
- Song of Solomon reveals the love of God toward you, your loving response to Him, and the completeness and unity experienced in relationship with God.