

God's Message to Us in Song of Solomon

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Introduction

Today in our sermon series in which we are going through all the books of the Bible,

- we have come to the Song of Solomon.

This is very unique book.

- I have been saying this a lot lately, but only because it is true...
 - Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon...all of these are books in the Bible that are one of a kind.
 - The epistles are all epistles, and the history books are all history books... but Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon have no other book like them.

The Song of Solomon is a song written by Solomon, as we are told in the first verse...

- Notice that in fact it is called the song of songs.
 - That means that it stands out among all songs—
 - We use this form of expression to say that something is superlative... Jesus is the King of kings... the inner sanctuary is the Holy of Holies.
- And so among songs, the *Song of Solomon* is *the Song of Songs*.
 - How so?

It is the song of songs because it is a song about the very highest thing of all human experience... marital love!

- Now someone will say—
 - “Hey, that’s idolatry!”
 - “You can’t put marriage above God.”
- But I didn’t.
 - I said that marital love is the very highest thing of all human experience.
 - And the highest form of marital love is found between Christ and His bride, Christ and His church!
 - God is indeed our highest good, and Christ’s love in His marriage to us is our highest experience.
- Don’t you remember what the Bible says—that we are the bride of Christ?
 - The believing church is already betrothed to Him and we will be married to Him and brought into His house when He returns at the end of the world!

There is a great debate that goes on about this song—

- Some say this book is about the love of a man and a woman in marriage.
- Others say that it is about the love of Christ for His bride the church.

Rather than having a debate, why not just recognise the obvious... it is about marriage!

- And if that is so, it is surely about the most important marriage of all that all other marriages point to—the marriage between Christ and His church!
- Certainly it describes the love between spouses, but much more it describes the relation between us and Christ.
 - That is what makes it the Song of Songs!
 - It is about something that is indescribably wonderful.

That is one of the reasons we write songs, isn't it?

- to connect us with the things that we experience that can't be described.
- We put things to verse using metaphors and similes and all those other figures of speech that we learned about in high school to connect with things that delight us.
- And I tell you, the highest and greatest of all experiences is the love of Christ.

We are not supposed to read the Song of Solomon and then do a seminar on the twelve steps to finding fulfilment in your marriage...

- Or even worse to say: "Here we have six techniques to better sex."
- No, this is a book we are to read and come away in delight and awe—marvelling at marital love, and most of all at the love between Christ and His church.

And another thing... don't come away from this book all discouraged, saying:

- "My marriage is not like that—neither with my spouse nor with Christ."
- The great delight in love described here is not something that we will experience all the time—the song even recognises this.
 - There are seasons when there is less of it and seasons when there is more.
 - And we won't fully have these delights until the last day when Christ brings His bride into His house forever.
- Yes, this rich love is something to pursue in our marriage to Him and to each other.
 - If sin is interfering with our communion with Christ and with each other, we need to repent—but there is the reality that we can't control what others do—and we continue to struggle with our indwelling corruption.
 - The goal is to grow into the inheritance we have in Jesus.

With that in mind, let's turn to the Song of Songs.

- I strongly encourage you to follow along in your Bible—if you don't have one, you can find one under the pew in front of you.
 - To find the Song of Solomon, open your Bible to the middle and you will soon find Psalms.
 - Flip ahead and you will see Proverbs, then Ecclesiastes, and then the Song of Solomon.

This Song is written from the bride's perspective.

I. The Song begins with her describing the excellence of her husband's love.

A. Look at verse 2...she is yearning for Solomon's kisses.

- **So 1:2-3: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is better than wine. Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, your name is ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love you.**
- Throughout the Song,
 - both love and lover are compared to excellent things like wine and ointment...
 - The virgins mentioned here are her friends who delight to see her in this relationship. They love her choice.
- The bride says to her spouse (v. 4) "**Draw me away,**"
 - She yearns to be drawn into the delight of his embrace—in his love!
 - Just as we do who know Christ... "Lord, take us up in your love!"

- And her friends pledge that they will come with her... **“We will run after you,”** [*you* is masculine—they will run after Solomon].
 - Here we have believers rejoicing to see someone yearning for Christ and being drawn in to seek Him too.
- B. And look, she is brought in to his chamber to the delight of her friends.
- Still reading in verse 4: **The king has brought me into his chambers.**
 - Her friends reply: **We will be glad and rejoice in you (her). We will remember your (his) love more than wine.**
 - And she replies: **Rightly do they love you.**
1. How wonderful it is to be invited into his loving embrace!
 - In verse 5, she thinks about how wonderful it is to be accepted by Him when she reflects on her past... she says: **I *am* dark, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon. 6 Do not look upon me, because I *am* dark, because the sun has tanned me. My mother’s sons were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept.**
 2. It is remarkable to her that one so great as the king should love her so!
 - She had to work in the vineyard—she was not able to spend her time with all the beauty treatments—rather she was weathered from working in the sun.
 - She also remembers her brothers being angry with her about this and that.
 - But now her bridegroom loves her!
 - Think of it—now she is in the loving embrace of the king.
 - Think of it, Christ our bridegroom has accepted us.
 - He has welcomed us into His house...
 - This is one of the greatest of blessings of marital love—
 - that you are accepted as you are—weathered skin—a nuisance to your brothers—but now a cherished vessel in the arms of the one who loves you.
- The Song flows along like our thoughts—like a dream—moving from one thought to another...
- C. As she thinks about his delight in her, she thinks about what happens whenever she goes to find him.
- She knows where to find him... he will be tending to his flocks, just as our Lord Jesus is found among His people when they go to church to feed on His word.
1. In verse 7, she says to Him: **7 Tell me, O you whom I love, where you feed your flock, where you make it rest at noon. For why should I be as one who veils herself by the flocks of your companions?**
 - And in verse 8 he replies: **If you do not know, O fairest among women, follow in the footsteps of the flock, and feed your little goats beside the shepherds’ tents.**
 - We are invited to go where Jesus is feeding His people and to feed our little ones.
 2. In verse 9, she thinks of how warmly he receives her when she finds him.
 - He says: **9 I have compared you, my love, to my filly among Pharaoh’s chariots.**
 - It doesn’t sound so great to be compared to a horse—until you realise that here is a filly (a female horse) among stallions—she stands out among them.

- He goes on praising her, comparing her to precious things (v 10): **Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments, your neck with chains of gold.**
 - Her friends are excited and want to help her acquire more jewels:
 - 11 **We will make you ornaments of gold with studs of silver.**
 - What a joy it is to help each other to be adorned with those things that Christ delights in—to help each other grow.
- 3. The bride can't get over the fact that he loves her so!
 - In verse 12 she says: **While the king is at his table, my spikenard sends forth its fragrance.**
 - She compares him to the things she loves— 13 **A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts.** 14 **My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of En Gedi.**
 - And then he responds to her (v. 15:) **Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes.**
 - Then she responds to him and it keeps going back and forth...

TRANS> As her thoughts flow on about her relationship with him,

II. She considers how he betrothed her and married her with rejoicing.

- The thoughts are not ordered—she is thinking about it all at once...meeting him, bringing him to her house...
- A. First, she thinks of their wedding feast...
 1. In chapter 2, verse 4, she says: **He brought me to the banqueting house** (perhaps their wedding feast), **and his banner over me was love.**
 - Here is a public declaration of his love... he has marked her out as his own.
 - Unlike many men in our day, he publically affirms His love to us—He declares it with His covenant and with covenant signs.
 - The result of the wedding is that now she is in his embrace.
 - She is in a swoon—marvelling that she is in his embrace—so she asks: v. 5: **Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick. 6 His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.**
 - What a thing it is to be in his embrace—to be loved by him!
 2. She has some advice that she repeats throughout the Song: 7 **I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.**
 - In other words, don't try to force love.
 - You will only come up with an artificial substitute if you try.
 - Certainly we can believe God's promises of acceptance in Christ and of the forgiveness of sin through Him.
 - And we can see His great love in giving His life for us.
 - And we can draw tremendous encouragement from this.
 - But to actually experience the sweet communion of His love... that is something that we should seek, but cannot force.
 - In verse 8-14, she speaks of how he comes when the time is right.

- First, she remembers how he pursued her and what a delight it was to be pursued by him: **8 The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. 9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, gazing through the lattice.**
 - What a delight it is to have Him calling us to come and commune with Him: **10 My beloved spoke, and said to me: “Rise up, my love, my fair one, And come away.”**
 - But you see that it is at the proper time...there is winter and summer that He often brings us through, so He says: **11 “For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over *and* gone. 12 The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. 13 The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines *with* the tender grapes give a *good* smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away! 14 O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret *places* of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice *is* sweet, and your face *is* lovely.”**
3. Surely in such times, we want nothing to break our communion with Him!
- **Verse 15: Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines *have* tender grapes.**
 - But here is the great blessing of marital love—in verse 16:
 - **16 My beloved *is* mine, and I *am* his. He feeds *his* flock among the lilies.**
 - It is to belong to someone—to truly be theirs and they yours!
 - To know this of Christ is the blessing of blessings.
 - I belong to Him forever!
 - She asks him to keep seeking her out: **17 Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bether.**
- B. As her musings continue, she remembers the time when she didn’t know if it would work out with him.
- Look at chapter 3, verse 1: **By night on my bed I sought the one I love; I sought him, but I did not find him. 2 “I will rise now,” *I said*, “And go about the city; in the streets and in the squares I will seek the one I love.” I sought him, but I did not find him. 3 The watchmen who go about the city found me; *I said*, “Have you seen the one I love?”**
 - Very often there are times of uncertainty in a courtship when you do not know what the outcome will be... many of us had this when we sought Christ.
 - Will He have me? It is a dark night of seeking...
 - But then she remembers how she found Him and brought Him to her house. **3:4: Scarcely had I passed by them, when I found the one I love. I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him to the house of my mother, and into the chamber of her who conceived me.**
 - And again she repeats her advice, that she could not force it—she had to wait to experience the assurance of His love... **5 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.**

- C. Then she seems to think again of her wedding...when his love was pledged to her.
- She speaks of the wedding procession...in verse 6: **Who is this coming out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the merchant's fragrant powders? 7 Behold, it is Solomon's couch, with sixty valiant men around it, of the valiant of Israel.**
 - She goes on describing the details, and then in verse 11, you can see that it is the wedding she is thinking of: **11 Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and see King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day of the gladness of his heart.**
- D. And then she considers again the outcome of the wedding... how He delights in her and rejoices over her.
- This is the subject of all of chapter 4!
 - 1. And lest any of you should think that this is could not pertain to us and Christ, hear Isa 62:5: **For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.**
 - And Zephaniah 3:17: **"The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."**
 - 2. Hear are the words of the bridegroom in chapter 4 as like Christ's Words to us: **"Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead. 2 Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep which have come up from the washing, every one of which bears twins, and none is barren among them. 3 Your lips are like a strand of scarlet, and your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like a piece of pomegranate. 4 Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory, on which hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. 5 Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies. 6 Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense. 7 You are all fair, my love, and there is no spot in you. 8 Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards. 9 You have ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; you have ravished my heart with one look of your eyes, with one link of your necklace. 10 How fair is your love, my sister, my spouse! How much better than wine is your love, and the scent of your perfumes than all spices! 11 Your lips, O my spouse, drip as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue; and the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon. 12 A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. 13 Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard, 14 spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices— 15 a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon."**
 - What a marvellous thing—to have Him delighting in our love...
 - For Him to see us as a garden shut up and reserved for Him.
 - For Him to delight in our fruit—the fruits of the Spirit that He Himself has given us in His grace... things like love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

- She wants the wind to blow on her garden so that the scent of these spices will fill the air for his enjoyment... v. 16: **Awake, O north *wind*, and come, O south! Blow upon my garden, *that* its spices may flow out. Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its pleasant fruits.**
- And He responds in 5:1: **I have come to my garden, my sister, *my* spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends! Drink, yes, drink deeply, O beloved ones!**

➤ What a beautiful thing marital love is—what joy the bridegroom has in his bride!

III. But there is the reality that there are things that must be worked through.

- **There are trials in marital love that have to be worked out in this fallen world.**
- You will remember what I said before—we must not expect that we will constantly have great delight in the love of our spouse—even in Christ.

A. In chapter 5, verse 2, the bride remembers a time when she pushed him away.

1. He came to her and she did not receive him.
 - She recounts: 5:2: **I sleep, but my heart is awake; *it is* the voice of my beloved! He knocks, *saying*, “Open for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.”**
 - She makes lame excuses—the way we do...³ **I have taken off my robe; how can I put it on *again*? I have washed my feet; how can I defile them?**
 - And so He passes on His way just as we realise how foolish we have been: 4 **My beloved put his hand by the latch *of the door*, and my heart yearned for him. 5 I arose to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped *with* myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the lock. 6 I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away *and* was gone. My heart leaped up when he spoke. I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.**
2. She goes to the watchmen—in the church, these are the elders of the church who see that she has resisted the Lord...and rebuke her... verse 7: **The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took my veil away from me. 8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I *am* lovesick!**
 - This is the beginning of her restoration. She tells her friends that she wants him back!
3. Her friends speak to her when they see her desperation...
 - They do the best thing they could do... They say to her (v. 9): **What *is* your beloved more than *another* beloved, O fairest among women? What *is* your beloved more than *another* beloved, that you so charge us?**
 - What a brilliant way to get her thinking about the one she has snubbed!
 - “Why do you want him?”
 - This gets her to think about how wonderful he is (Verse 10): **My beloved *is* white and ruddy, chief among ten thousand. 11 His head *is like* the finest gold; his locks *are* wavy, *and* black as a raven. 12 His eyes *are* like doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, *and* fitly set. 13 His cheeks *are* like a bed of spices, banks of scented herbs. His lips *are* lilies, dripping liquid**

myrrh. ¹⁴ His hands *are* rods of gold set with beryl. His body *is* carved ivory inlaid *with* sapphires. ¹⁵ His legs *are* pillars of marble set on bases of fine gold. His countenance *is* like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. ¹⁶ His mouth *is* most sweet, yes, he *is* altogether lovely. This *is* my beloved, and this *is* my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!

- After she finishes describing his excellence, they are ready to go with her to find Him (6:1): **Where has your beloved gone, O fairest among women? Where has your beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with you?**
 - He is, of course, (as we saw before) to be found with His flock—in the sanctuary—feeding His people and rejoicing in their fruits (6:2): **My beloved has gone to his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed *his* flock in the gardens, and to gather lilies. ³ I *am* my beloved's, and my beloved *is* mine. He feeds *his* flock among the lilies.**

B. She remembers how he received her into the communion of his love again!

1. He launches into praise of her again... 6:4: **O my love, you *are as* beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as *an* army with banners! ⁵ Turn your eyes away from me, for they have overcome me.**
 - And so He continues...
2. What a wonderful thing it is for her to be back!
 - In verse 13, her dear friends encourage her along: **Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon you!**
 - They are so happy for her back in his arms.
 - They are rejoicing with the angels.
3. There follows this wonderful communion of mutual delight...
 - It begins in chapter 7, with him praising her beauty...
 - **How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! The curves of your thighs *are* like jewels, the work of the hands of a skillful workman. ² Your navel *is* a rounded goblet... and so on...**
 - until verse 9 where he says: ⁹ **And the roof of your mouth like the best wine.**
 - to which she responds: ***The wine goes down* smoothly for my beloved, moving gently the lips of sleepers. ¹⁰ ¶ I *am* my beloved's, and his desire *is* toward me.**
 - And then they go out together in the fields to enjoy being together again.
 - What delightful communion restored communion is! What beautiful communion restored communion is!
 - Our bridegroom expresses His love in restoring us, and husbands and wives do that in restoring each other.
 - It is one of the best things about marriage.
 - If you have drifted from Christ... or from your spouse—follow the advice of the your true friends: **Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return!**

IV. The song ends (chapter 8) with her musing about taking him home with her now that she is married—the contrast of before and after marriage.

A. See considers how different it would be to bring him to her house.

1. If she found in the fields where her brothers would wander now, she could kiss him (8:1): **Oh, that you were like my brother, who nursed at my mother's breasts! if I should find you outside, I would kiss you; I would not be despised.**
 - In other words, now that they are married, she could kiss him without any objection from her family who jealously guarded her purity.
 2. She dreams of doing what she used to do at home, but now with her husband there!
 - **2 I would lead you *and* bring you into the house of my mother, she *who* used to instruct me. I would cause you to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.**
 - She is now in his loving embrace—she waited for him.
 - **v. 3: His left hand *is* under my head, and his right hand embraces me.**
 - She waited for him, and she gives her advice again... not to force love: **4 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, do not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases.**
 3. She thinks of her friends and relations back home seeing her with him and saying:
 - Verse. 5: **Who *is* this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I awakened you under the apple tree. There your mother brought you forth; there she *who* bore you brought you forth.**
 - We love to be seen with our bridegroom—we love to show him off.
 - That seems to be what is going on here.
- B. This is all possible because she kept herself pure until she married.
- She has not been running around with every dog in the neighbourhood—she has waited for the covenanted love of marriage.
1. She speaks of this beautiful commitment, saying to her husband: **v. 6: Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love *is* as strong as death, jealousy *as* cruel as the grave; its flames *are* flames of fire, a most vehement flame. 7 Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised.**
 2. She remembers, with gratitude, how her brothers jealously guarded her so that one day she could give herself to a man.
 - They said (v. 8): **We have a little sister, and she has no breasts. What shall we do for our sister in the day when she is spoken for? 9 If she *is* a wall, we will build upon her a battlement of silver; and if she *is* a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.**
 - A girl who is a wall is one who lets no man in until marriage... she is decorated with silver as a precious virgin.
 - A girl who is a door is one who would be unchaste and has to be boarded up with cedar.
 - She explains that she is not a door, but a wall.
 - In verse 10, she says it: **“I am a wall.”**
 - As she is thinking of having him at her house, she remembers how she had reserved herself for him.
 3. And now she warmly invites him to come and enjoy her garden.

- Verse 10-12: **I *am* a wall, and my breasts like towers; then I became in his eyes as one who found peace.** ¹¹ Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon; he leased the vineyard to keepers; everyone was to bring for its fruit a thousand silver *coins*. ¹² My own vineyard *is* before me. You, O Solomon, *may have* a thousand, and those who tend its fruit two hundred.
 - And He responds... v. 13: **You who dwell in the gardens, the companions listen for your voice—let me hear it!**
 - And she says... v. 14: **Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices.”**
 - The language we heard before of her inviting him to come after her.
 - She belongs to him now.
- My brothers and sisters in the LORD, what a marvellous thing it is to now belong to Christ and to be a chaste virgin reserved for Him!
 - Even though we may have run after other gods—many of us did—when we have been cleansed by His blood, shed on the cross,
 - all our sins are washed away and we are like a pure virgin who is just for Him.
 - What a grand thing to have fruit for Him that He delights in.
 - He relishes our fruit.
 - What joy it gives us.

Conclusion: Marital love is wonderful.

- It cannot be explained—it is something to sing about.
- Let us yearn, as His bride, to have the joy of sweet pure communion with our Lord.
 - Let Him lead us away!