

Hymns: 51 Love Lifted Me 54 Oh, How I Love Jesus
33 Roll Is Called Up Yonder 25 Sweet Bye and Bye

Psalm 42: 1-8

Good morning.

Well, Valentine's Day's come and gone. But we're going to continue **on with** our theme of romantic love. Today, we'll see the Song of Solomon begin to come alive. Have you ever heard the expression "the theater of the mind"? Can anyone tell us what that means?

How many of you remember listening to radio serials? I recall Dad talking about:

- Tom Mix
- Green Hornet
- Amos and Andy – even I heard that one

Did you listen to them or perhaps some others? What's nice about this kind of theater, is you don't even have to watch. Your mind creates the images: just for you. Before our show begins, here's a brief review of the introduction we did last time:

Review

We learned that the Song of Solomon:

- makes **no reference to God** and is not referenced by other Bible books
- it's short and sweet -- only 117 verses
- it's written in Hebrew which is very compact
- it contains no direct indications of who is speaking, scenes, setting, etc.
- *The Song of Songs is perhaps the **most difficult and mysterious** book in the **entire Bible**.* (BKC)

Clearly, we have our work cut out for us as we venture into this book.

Then we looked at the two main characters:

Solomon

- became king of Israel as a young man, asked God for wisdom, God gave that and more
- his name means peace, shalom – that familiar Jewish greeting
- he reigned 40 years during the glory days of Israel
- he was a master builder constructing the temple and palace from the cedars of Lebanon
- he was a prolific writer authoring Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, two Psalms, Song of Solomon, and much more
- finally, he fell into idolatry and lost favor with God who withheld judgment until his death

Shulamite was:

- the most beautiful woman
- from Lebanon
- an only daughter
- praised by all

- she had a passionate love for and devotion to Solomon
- wife of Solomon

And significantly, while lavish praise for each other flows from the lips of these two characters, neither speaks **one word** of criticism.

Jewish Wedding Model

You may recall that when we met back last June, we looked at the topic of the Bride of Christ. At that time, we considered the Jewish wedding customs. Because this knowledge is **critical** to understanding the Song of Solomon, we will review it now:

Historians tell us that the Jewish wedding was a year-long process that involved two parts:

First, came a solemn agreement or **covenant** by a man and woman **to become** husband and wife. The man paid a price to purchase his bride, and the bride freely chose to enter into a marriage covenant with him. Then the husband left his bride for an unspecified period of time to prepare a place in his father's house for the couple to live. The exact day and hour (or even month for that matter) of **his** return was unknown to the bride.

Second, the bridegroom returned with a group of his friends to **claim** his bride (usually at night), shouted, and she, being ready and waiting, answered his call, veiled herself, and met him. He took her with him to the place he prepared **where** they united as husband and wife and friends celebrated at a great banquet.

With this information in mind we will move ahead. Here then is the broad outline **as I see it** of this song. It has the following six scenes:

1. Bride waits for groom – sharing her dreams and longings
2. Groom arrives and takes his bride home
3. Couple unites and consummates their marriage
4. Bride drifts into an elaborate dream
5. Groom and bride ride off together into the sunset
6. Bride speaks of the power of love and her commitment to it.

With that background, we're ready to roll.

- **Let's turn down the lights**
- **Turn on the camera**
- **And let the story begin...**

Song of Solomon

Cant.1

[1] *The song of songs, which is Solomon's.*

The narrator introduces the song. It's author is Solomon. This is his greatest song.

The spotlight flashes on the dark stage. In it's center, **a beautiful** young woman with long, dark hair **stands** wearing a white, flowing gown. She speaks as it were into the darkness...

Woman 3

[2] *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.*

[3] *Because **of** the savour of thy good ointments*

*thy name is as **ointment** poured forth,
therefore do the virgins **love** thee.*

[4] *Draw me,*

we will run after thee:

the king hath brought me into his chambers:

The light moves, leaving the woman in darkness, and flashes in the balcony above the stage.

Virgins / Daughters

we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine:

This choir that refers to itself as *we* and asks questions in this song is usually the “Daughters of Jerusalem.” While they are located in Jerusalem, on this stage they're in the woman's view and she's able to communicate with them.

The spotlight shifts back to the beautiful woman.

Woman

the upright love thee.

She's describing her betrothed, beloved husband, the **one** she is **waiting for**, the one she's **longing** for. He, though **not** present, is there
in her heart and
in her mind.

She continues...

Woman 1

[5] *I am black, but [lovely], O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.*

[6] *Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.*

Women know their every flaw. This woman was no different. She will soon **hear** her betrothed husband tell us she has no flaw.

The reference to her *vineyard* speaks metaphorically of her personal appearance.

Having shared with us her flaw and the reason for it, she moves on and again speaks into the air.

[7] *Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: ...*

The woman **seeks** to be near her beloved. If only she knew where he went she would meet him there.

The spotlight moves again – this time to a **far** corner of the auditorium. The beautiful woman is left in darkness. The spotlight is dimmed this time. We can only make out a shadow of a man in its light. He too speaks, as it were, into the air.

Man 4

[8] *If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, [follow the tracks] of the flock, and feed thy [little goats] beside the shepherds' tents.*

[9] *I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.*

[10] *Thy cheeks are [lovely] with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.*

This image of her beloved Solomon answered her question, spoke of his love for her, and praised her. He then expressed his desire to decorate her beauty with the finest jewelry.

The spotlight moves back to the balcony.

Daughters

[11] *We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.*

The Daughters of Jerusalem chime in with their desire to decorate her beauty also.

Focus then moves back to the woman as she longs to be with her husband and hold him close to her all night.

Woman 2

[12] *While the king sitteth at his table, my [perfume] sendeth forth [its fragrance].*

[13] *A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; he **shall lie all night** [between] my breasts.*

[14] *My beloved **is** unto me as a cluster of [henna blossoms] in the vineyards of En-gedi.*

The light stays fixed upon the beautiful woman who quickly covers herself with her veil. A second spotlight dims as it moves to that far corner of the auditorium as the woman, in her mind's eye, hears her beloved Solomon speak again.

Man 4

[15] *Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes.*

Eyes would be about all he would be able to see of a veiled woman in that culture. But even her eyes betrayed her **dazzling** beauty.

The dimmed light goes out. Focus returns to the veiled beautiful woman as she expresses her heart's attraction to her beloved and her anticipation to live together with him in their new home.

Woman 2

[16] *Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant:
also our bed is green.*

[17] ***The** beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.*

She then introduces a couple of new metaphors to describe herself.

Cant.2

[1] *I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.*

The dimmed light returns to the corner of the auditorium.

Man 1

[2] *As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.*

That's a stark difference. Other women are **thorns**. This woman is **a lily** in comparison.

The dimmed light goes out.

The sole spotlight shines brightly on the beautiful woman.

Woman 6

[3] *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.*

Just as he saw her as without equal, she too sees him – sweetness that stands out from all others.

I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

[4] *He brought me to the banqueting house,
and his banner over me was love.*

[5] [Strengthen]me with [raisins],
[refresh] me with apples:

for I am sick [with] love.

[6] *His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.*

The woman imagines the scene of their sweet **communion** and tender love. She tells how **she longs** to finally be with her true love.

[7] *I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles, and by the does of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.*

Despite her great passion to fulfill **this** desire for her husband, she waits patiently for him, in his timing, to come for her.

Next, she envisions how it might happen:

[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 [looks through] the windows,

[showing] himself through the lattice.

[10] ***My beloved spake**, and said unto me,*

Man 7

Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

[11] For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;

[12] The flowers appear on the earth;

the time of the singing of birds is come,

and the voice of the turtle [dove] is heard in our land;

[13] The fig tree putteth forth her green figs,

and **the vines with the tender grape** give a [fragrant] smell.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

[14] O my dove,

that art in the clefts of the rock,

in the secret places of the stairs,

let me see thy countenance,

let me hear **thy voice**;

for **sweet is thy voice**,

and thy countenance is [lovely].

...

The woman speaks once more of her beloved.

Woman 2

[16] My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.

[17] Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a gazelle or a young stag upon the mountains of Bether.

The woman continues her longing into the night.

Cant.3

[1] By night on my bed I sought **him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.**

[2] I will rise now,

and go about the city in the streets,

and in the broad ways I will seek **him whom my soul loveth:**

I sought him, but I found him not.

The now unveiled woman runs across and around the stage with outstretched arms as the spotlight follows her.

[3] The watchmen that go about the city found me:
to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?

[4] [Scarsely had I passed] them,

[when] I found him whom my soul loveth:

I held him, and would not let him go,

until I had brought him into my mother's house,

and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

[5] **I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles, and by the does of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.**

After sharing her elaborate day dream, the woman again urges the Daughters of Jerusalem to allow her beloved his own timing.

The spotlight moves again to the balcony where the daughters ask a question:

Daughters

[6] Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?

Could it be her beloved, Solomon?

Unfortunately, just like with your favorite radio serial, we have run out of time for today. But, you can always read ahead and, of course, you are welcome **to join us next time** to pick up where we left off.

Application:

Do you share this same longing to be with your true love? Perhaps at times you feel unloved. I know there were times in my life when I had Valentine's Day without a sweetheart. Perhaps you've lost your sweetheart or you sorely miss your loved ones or your best friends. What comfort does the Bible have for you?

As we consider this story of true love between a man and a woman, let us not forget the great love our God has for us and that we love Him because he first loved us.

The Bible says "For God so loved the world..." John 3:16

We're told:

to cast all our care on Him for He cares for us I Peter 5:7

the Lord is near the brokenhearted ... (Psalm 34:18)

God is our refuge and strength ... (Psalm 46:1)

And as we heard read earlier today. We're challenged to consider that our desire needs to be first and foremost to our God:

Psalm 42

[1] As the [deer] panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

[2] My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:

Are you, like the bride, longing for your loving bridegroom the Lord Jesus Christ who will take you, His bride, to glory **to be with Him**. That indeed is a blessed hope.

Behold, the Bridegroom cometh. (Matthew 25:6)

The beautiful woman waited for him with great anticipation. What about you?

Benediction

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1:5b-6)

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