

January 17, 2016

"The Song of Songs"

Song of Solomon 1:1

This is Solomon's song of songs, more wonderful than any other.

From the third grade to the eighth grade I went to a Catholic School; Blessed Sacrament in Valley Stream. Most of the teachers were nuns. In the fifth grade I had Sister Leoba. Most kids dreaded getting Sister Leoba ... maybe all kids dreaded getting Sister Leoba, but that's another story. Sister Leoba informed the class on the first day of school that we were to purchase a Catholic Bible which we would be using in class. So I told my mom and we went to a Catholic religious articles store and purchased a Bible. It was not only the first Bible I ever had, it was the first Bible my family ever purchased; come to think of it I don't think even my grandparents had a Bible. I still have that Catholic Bible on my book shelf in my office.

Well, everyone in Sister Leoba's fifth grade class had a Bible, not that we had any interest in reading it, but we all had one. That is, we had no interest in reading it until one day Paul Casey told us that we should read "Canticles," as it was called in our Catholic Bibles or the Song of Songs by Solomon because it had some sexy things in there. Someone said, "No it don't, there can't be any sexy things in the Bible." To which Paul Casey replied, "oh yeah listen to this!" And he took his Bible and turned to the middle of the book, which is probably how he found Canticles in the first place, and read a few lines. Let me read a few lines from the NLT:

Song of Solomon 1:2-4 (NLT)

Kiss me and kiss me again,
for your love is sweeter than wine.
How fragrant your cologne;
your name is like its spreading fragrance.
No wonder all the young women love you!
Take me with you; come, let's run!
The king has brought me into his bedroom.

And we fifth graders thought, "Oh yeah, we got to read more of this!"

Well, I don't know how Sister Leoba found out, probably one of her brown nose stool pigeons, but she told everyone to put there Bibles away and we never opened them again in her class for the rest of the year; as a matter of fact I didn't opened a Bible again for about 15 years.

We don't have to read very far in the Song of Solomon to realize that it is a love song with sexually explicit lyrics... and now some of *you* are thinking, "Oh yeah, we got to read more of this!"

You know we have been preaching through the books of the Old Testament. Now I don't know how Pastor Nick and John worked this out, or if it was just by chance but

somehow I get to preach on the Song of Songs; Song of Songs; that means it's the best of Songs, the most excellent song, the song of all songs. The best love song ever written.

Many love songs have been written since. I found a website that listed the top 20 best love songs ever written... the Song of Solomon was not on the list.

I also came across this love song called "I Won't Give Up 'til I Win Your Heart," by Bryant Oden: (I'll read just a few verses)

From the moment that I met you
I have been hoping I would get to
Be the one that you adore
so I've been trying more and more

I gave you two dozen roses
Honey bees went up our noses
I bought you some fancy chocolate
Melted right through my back pocket

I said I'd walk your cute little doggy
I forgot now your carpet is soggy
I know so far I'm not off to that great a start
But I won't give up 'til I win your heart

I brought you a cup of cocoa
Hey nice new white shoes oops oh no
You let me use your ipad
I've never seen one melt so bad

I bought you some fine perfume
Turns out Febreze is just for rooms
I carried you across a puddle
We fell into a big mud hole

Last year I put a funny fake tattoo
On your cheek it still looks brand new
I know so far I'm not off to that great a start
But I won't give up 'til I win your heart

Then I bought you some ice cream
In it I hid my grandma's ring
You bit down and a tooth came out
Now you sound so cute when you shout

My friends tell me I should give up

There's no way that I'll win your love
But I've only just begun
I won't quit til your heart is won

Today I gave you fifty big red balloons
Looks like you'll be landing soon
I know so far I'm not off to that great a start
But I won't give up 'til I win your heart
No, I won't give up 'til I win your heart
I won't give up 'til I win your heart

Well, it's cute but it'll never be in the best love song category as the Song of Solomon has been designated.

Song of Solomon is an alternate title for, "The Song of Songs." This is because, based on chapter 1 verse 1, this song was written by King Solomon. And, well, notice what else verse 1 has to say about the song:

Song of Solomon 1:1
This is Solomon's song of songs, more wonderful than any other.

This song is about love especially the sacredness and depth of the marriage union.

In his introduction to the Song of Songs Eugene Peterson writes, "The Song proclaims an integrated wholeness that is at the center of Christian teaching on committed, wedded love for a world that seems to specialize in loveless sex. The Song is a convincing witness that men and women were created physically, emotionally, and spiritually to live in love."

A new study by the Barna Group on, *What Americans Believe About Sex* concluded the following:

"Whereas practicing Christians still overwhelmingly tie sex to marriage, the move among the greater U.S. population—most evidently among younger generations—is a de-linking of marriage and sex. Sex has become less a function of procreation or an expression of intimacy and more of a personal experience. To have sex is increasingly seen as a pleasurable and important element in the journey toward self-fulfillment."

Sexual relations within marriage are holy and good, and pleasure is assumed, but pleasure should be regulated by the key principle of pleasing our partner not just ourselves.

In the book of Genesis we find God's blueprint for marriage. After God created the woman He brought her to the man and it says:

Genesis 2:24

This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

Let's look real briefly at God blueprint for marriage found here:

1. A man and women leaves their father and mother

What does that mean? It certainly doesn't mean that you abandon or utterly forsake them. It also doesn't mean you move away from them (you can leave your father and mother and still live right next door or even in the same house. You can also live hundreds of miles away from your parents and not leave them. You may not have left your parents even though they have died).

To leave your parents means that your relationship to your parents must be radically changed. It means you make the husband – wife relationship top priority. Your main concern is being a good husband/wife. If you are a parent and your children are not married then your goal should be to prepare your children to leave some day, not stay. They need to see you demonstrate to them how to face and solve problems and how to be good husband or wife. If you are a parent and you have married children, you must not try to run their lives. A man and women (1) leaves their father and mother and

2. Are joined to their spouse

God intends that the marriage relationship be a permanent relationship and a couple be faithful until death. Marriage is a deliberate choice, and so when there is a problem a husband / wife must be determined to work at the marriage. It's a covenant relationship based not on feeling but commitment.

3. The two are united into one

Two united into one refers at the most elementary level to sexual relations or physical union; which, within the bounds of marriage is holy, good and beautiful. But without the first part of that verse, without the "leaves" & "joined" - leaving of father and mother and being joined in marriage sex instead of holy, good, and beautiful, becomes unholy, sinful and ugly.

Hebrews 13:4 (THE MESSAGE)

Honor marriage, and guard the sacredness of sexual intimacy between wife and husband. God draws a firm line against casual and illicit sex.

Guard the sacredness of sexual intimacy. There is so much temptation out there today. Stay committed and close to Christ, be faithful to Him and you will be faithful to your spouse. Be careful what you look at and allow into your mind, and heart. Fill your mind with His Word. Love and respect your spouse. Obey what Paul says in

Romans 13:13-14

We must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and

jealousy. ***Instead***, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

But in marriage being united into one involves more than sex. It is a total giving of yourself to another person. I once heard this definition of marriage (I don't know who wrote it)

"Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death."

There is no place where this total sharing is more beautifully pictured or fully experienced than in the sexual relationship of a husband and wife. God intends that when two people get married they should share everything – their bodies, their possessions, their insights, their ideas, their abilities, their problems, their successes, their suffering, their failures etc.... everything.

They are a team and whatever each of them does must be for the sake of the other person or a least it must not be to the detriment of the other person. Each must be as concerned about the other person's needs as they are about their own (even during sex).

But if this more complete oneness is not a reality, sexual relations lose their meaning.

Song of Solomon 2:15
Catch all the foxes,
those little foxes,
before they ruin the vineyard of love

Don't allow resentments, selfishness, and neglect to nibble away at your relationship and your home. These are the "little foxes" that ruin love. Little sins can produce big problems and small acts of love can produce lasting blessings.

Sinfulness is the barrier to love and marital oneness. Love and marital oneness are destroyed by the sins of: selfishness, pride, bitterness ingratitude, stubbornness, unwholesome speech, neglect, impatience, harshness, cruelty. Sin destroys oneness.

That brings us to the need for Jesus. First of all we need Jesus to bring us into a right relationship with God. But we also need Jesus to bring us into a right relationship with each other as husband and wife. If you are going to experience the total oneness that is essential for love and a good marriage you need to come to Jesus Christ. He cleanses sin, and breaks down barriers and he gives the Holy Spirit who produces the fruit of ...

Galatians 5:22-23a
But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

As a matter of fact some commentators agree that the Song of Solomon is an allegory / parable of God's love for us. From around A.D. 150 to 500 that was a common belief among the Jews – that this was a song of God's love for His people. Following this pattern Christians have seen the Song of Solomon as a picture of Christ's deep love for His Church – His people and how Christians love his and her Lord.

Ephesians 5:31-32

As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.

The New Testament even calls us - the church - the Bride of Christ.

Revelation 19:7-8 NIV

Let us rejoice and be glad
and give him glory!
For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready.
Fine linen, bright and clean,
was given her to wear."
(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

The Song of Solomon is a collection of romantic love lyrics. And so the ancient Jews read the Song of Solomon devotionally, even today they read it at the Passover season.

Song of Solomon 8:6-7

Place me like a seal over your heart,
like a seal on your arm.
For love is as strong as death,
its jealousy as enduring as the grave.
Love flashes like fire,
the brightest kind of flame.
Many waters cannot quench love,
nor can rivers drown it.
If a man tried to buy love
with all his wealth,
his offer would be utterly scorned.

For us too it can be a way of understanding and developing a daily life of intimacy with God. When we fall in love it changes everything. We adore the one we love, by analogy God's love and our love for Him makes our lives mean something. We adore God and He delights in us and because of Jesus it is an eternal love.

Romans 8:38-39 NIV

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all

creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Fall in love with Christ and live a life of love.