

Song of Solomon

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon on the Song of Solomon explores the sacredness of love and sexual relationships in marriage while drawing parallels to the relationship between Christ and the Church.

Duration: 55:13

Scripture: Genesis 22:1, 1 Timothy 4:16, Revelation 14:3

Topics: "Song of Solomon"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of finding godly older people who can guide and teach us in our devotion to Jesus Christ. He shares his own experience of not having such mentors in his younger days, but finding Christ himself. The speaker also highlights the growth in love and maturity in the relationship with God, as seen in the bride's increasing ability to listen and communicate with the bridegroom in the Song of Solomon. The sermon emphasizes the need for appreciation and communication in marriage, as well as the reality of ups and downs in feelings, but the enduring love that can overcome them.

Transcript

Now we come to the third book that Solomon wrote, the Song of Songs or Canticles as some people call it. And some people are embarrassed to read this book, but I believe that that's because we've got so many wrong ideas of the place of sex in marriage from the world. This book, as I see it, basically teaches two things.

The first is that the sexual relationship in marriage is essential. God created it and he said after creating it and telling Adam and Eve to multiply, he said in Genesis 1.31, it's very good. And if God says it's very good, I don't want to listen to any second opinion on the sexual function that God created and pronounced very good in Genesis chapter 1. But we also see here, this is the first thing which I'm trying to emphasize, is that love must be coupled with that sexual relationship.

Otherwise, it is not right. Any sexual relationship without love is demonic, satanic, belongs to hell. And that is unfortunately what we see a lot of in the world.

That is completely evil. See, God has created something and the devil has misused it. God created the atom, but the devil can use it to make a bomb to destroy people.

And whereas it can also be used to give electricity to a whole city. God created that from which dynamite is made. But you can use dynamite to kill people or you can use dynamite to blast a rock to build a foundation for a house.

Many things, a knife. A knife can be used to cut meat or vegetables. It can be used to kill a person.

So what God has created, sex, can be used in a bad way or a good way, like all the other things God has created. And we shouldn't think that it's always bad, that a knife is always used only for evil purposes. No.

A knife is a very useful instrument in a kitchen. And when God has created something, you remember when Peter saw that vision of a sheep coming down from heaven and God had to tell him one word three times. What God has cleansed, don't call unclean.

And I would say that to you also, that when God has created something and says, very good, we have no business to say it's unclean. What the world does with it is unclean. The murderer taking that knife and killing somebody, he is unclean.

The knife itself is not unclean. He has used that knife for a wrong purpose. And when the world uses the sexual function wrongly, then of course it's evil.

But otherwise it's a very holy. It's not only good, I would say it's holy, pure, and binds a husband and wife together. And in this section, I mean, I would really encourage husbands and wives to read this to each other.

Song of Solomon. It's a wonderful book. You know, it expresses appreciation.

In our Indian culture, unfortunately, husbands and wives don't appreciate one another. They just take each other for granted. And of course, in India also, husbands and wives have sex, as we all know.

But they don't appreciate one another sufficiently. It's a very sad thing. And Song of Solomon, Song of Songs, teaches the necessity of appreciating one another.

Very, very important. And the importance of communication, of speaking to one another in marriage, in a loving way. All these things are in this book.

And very practical advice. And also, it's a very realistic book. It shows that there are times when there are ups and downs, like in marriage.

Feelings will go, but the love remains, and how these up and down feelings can be overcome, and how revival can come in a marriage. Very, very down to earth, realistic, practical. The second thing about, the first is, as I said, marriage relationships, and sex and marriage, and communication, and love and all that.

The second thing that Song of Solomon pictures is Christ and the Church. And I would say we must see both, as we read this book. You can read it through in one way, as a husband-wife relationship.

And then you can read it through another way, as Christ-Church relationship. And in both cases, you can get a lot of profit. And I would encourage you who are married, to read it through husband and wife, as a husband-wife relationship story.

And all of us, married or unmarried, can read it through as Christ and the Church story. And there's a lot in that. I remember, it's one of the first books I studied in my Christian life, when I started studying the Bible.

And I was alone on a ship, just baptized a few months earlier, far away from all contact with believers, for weeks on end. And I studied this book, about 40 years ago. And it deepened my devotion to Jesus immensely.

And I learned in those days, because I didn't have contact with believers, to trust in the Lord, and to love Him, and to rest in His love for me. And that deepened my walk with the Lord. And I've always valued this book, since that time.

It's a picture of Christ and the Church. It's called a song. And I want to point you to a verse, in Revelation 14, verse 3 in this connection.

Revelation 14, 3 says about, those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. And those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes, it says about them, they sang a wonderful new song. And no one could learn that song, except this group of people.

This 144,000, the bride of Christ, those who follow Him. See, like a bride who follows the bridegroom wherever He goes. They are the only ones, who can learn this song.

You can follow this Bible study for the next, 50 minutes or so. But you won't learn the song, until you follow Jesus. If you follow Jesus, you can learn the song.

And you got to learn it, on this earth. It says they learned it on earth, before they reached up. They learned it on earth.

Now is your time, brother, sister. Ministry is not everything. Let me give you my testimony.

After preaching, for 38 years at least, and serving the Lord full time for 34 years, my devotion to Christ, is the basis of all my ministry. My ministry would be zero, the moment my devotion to Christ goes down. This relationship with Christ, described in Song of Solomon, is the basis, on which your service for the Lord, whether evangelism, or teaching, or whatever you do, social work in Jesus name, medical work, planting churches, whatever it is, this relationship with Christ, should be the basis of your ministry.

This is a song we got to learn. It is a song that Jesus sings to us, the bridegroom singing to the bride. And it's also a song, that through the Holy Spirit in us, we sing to the Lord.

It's the opposite of Ecclesiastes. In Ecclesiastes, it's knowledge, knowledge. Here it is love, love.

And many seek knowledge, but the Lord seeks for those who love. It's only then that our knowledge is useful. And in the song, Song of Songs, we see, there's a growth of love.

In the first chapter, we see the beginning of love. We could say it's like infatuation. A lot of young people today, when they say they are in love with each other, it's actually not love.

It's infatuation. Love is very selfless. If you want to see the purest expression of love in the world, it's not what you see in the cinema screen.

It's not what you read in the romantic novels. It's not even what you see in a boy and a girl who so-called love each other. The purest form of love that you can see on earth, is the love of a mother for its helpless child.

Particularly when that child is sick. How that mother sacrifices everything. All these young couples who say they fall in love with each other, they won't do like that.

As long as everything is going well, we love each other. But a mother's love is not like that. The purest, the love which is closest to God's love, is the love of a mother.

And that is how God's love is. And when a husband and wife can love like that, they have really understood love. But that takes time to grow to that maturity.

In the beginning, we are selfish. We want something from the other person. The man wants something from the girl, the girl wants something from the man.

The man usually wants sex, and the girl usually wants security. But they want something. It's a selfish type of thing.

That's how it begins, infatuation. But it must grow to love. In the same way, in our relationship with the Lord, it begins with, Lord, I don't want to go to hell.

Can you heal me? Can you bless me? Can you give me prosperity? Or at least can you anoint me so that I'll be a mighty preacher? See, all this is selfish love. But when you mature, you say, Lord, I don't need anything. I don't need property.

I don't need money. I don't need health. I don't even need a ministry.

I have you, and that's enough. How can you get more out of my life? Not what I can get out of the Lord, but what the Lord can get out of me. That is maturity.

In an immature, infatuation type of love, a girl is thinking, what can I get out of this man? And the man is thinking, what can I get out of this girl? And the believer is thinking, what can I get out of the Lord? Now when Jesus came to earth, he didn't think, what can I get from man? He thought, what can I give to man? That is mature love. And that's the mature love we finally come to in Song of Solomon chapter 8. But in the beginning, we come to the Lord for going to heaven, for healing, for blessing, and so many things, for ministry perhaps. But finally, we come to the place where we love the Lord for who he is.

Whom am I in heaven but thee? There's nothing on earth I desire beside thee. Thou art enough. I don't care for ministry, health, wealth, prosperity, nothing.

So keep that in mind as we move on. Verse 1, it is Solomon's song. That means it is primarily Jesus' song to us, not our song.

First, we love him because he first loved us. We did not love him first. Because he first loved us, because he sang the song to us, we sing it back to him.

And in the initial part, as it says, it talks about falling in love. It says here, there's no name mentioned, it's assumed this person, this bride, is so taken up with the bridegroom, and says, your love is better than all the wine on the earth. And your name is like, how pleasing is your name, verse 3. I'm reading here from

the New Living Translation, which is an advancement on the Living Bible, or a further development of it.

And some of these verses are a little clearer here, that's why I read from it. I want you to see one thing here. It says here, draw me and we will run after you.

Verse 4, love does not push, it draws. And there's a difference between pushing and drawing a person. You know, like a magnet draws iron filings to itself.

I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto myself. The Lord never pushes. Is that all you want to go? Okay.

He goes ahead and draws us. The good shepherd always goes in front of the sheep. And a husband must always go in front of his wife to draw her, not push her, and say, why aren't you doing this, and why aren't you doing that, and why aren't you doing the other thing, like out in the world.

But to go ahead as an example. You find some fault in your wife, be a good example, so that she can follow your example. So, that's one very important thing that applies even in our human relationship.

And it says here in verse 4, my king. The bride calls her my king. And from that, I want to mention this, that you have to know Jesus as your king, before you can know him as your bridegroom.

You cannot know him as bridegroom, if you don't know him, first of all, as king, and you are totally subject. And that's the reason why many people do not enter into this love relationship with their Lord. They do not know him as king.

We read also here about the daughters of Jerusalem, or women of Jerusalem in verse 5. Now the women of Jerusalem, I would say, refer to the half-hearted believers. They are in Jerusalem, but they are not the bride. They are not in Babylon, they are in Jerusalem, but they are not the bride.

They want to be part of the church, but they are more taken up with healing, and ministry, and preaching, and teaching, and activity, and Bible study, and things like that. They are not taken up with devotion to Jesus. They are believers.

They don't do any terrible things, but the Lord is looking for those who have the heart of a bride, who are devoted to him, and whose service comes out of that heart of love. So those are the women of Jerusalem. And she tells them, I am dark, but the Lord has accepted me.

I am dark and beautiful. See, that has a number of things that we can learn from, that this bride felt that she was unattractive. You know, the Bible says that God has chosen the poor of the world.

Not many mighty, not many clever, not many good-looking people. Some of us feel, Oh Lord, I am not so capable like other people. I am not so intelligent.

I can't speak like others. I can't do so many things. I am so limited.

This is exactly how this bride felt. I am dark. I am unattractive.

I am not from a very educated background. I am a little foolish, and I do so many things wrong. That I am dark could comprise a whole lot of areas, where we feel ourselves inferior to others.

You know how a dark person feels inferior to someone who is very much fairer. An ugly person feels inferior to a beautiful. And God has chosen the ugly person.

God has chosen the dark one. There were many prettier women of Jerusalem, but the bridegroom picks on this dark one. That is Jesus.

Only Jesus would do that. Because He looks for qualities of the heart, not appearance and gift and capability and all that. And we got to learn a lesson there.

This is what the Lord looks for, when He picks out someone to be His servant. All your natural abilities, background, family background, accomplishments, are not really of any value to God. It's the heart of devotion that He looks for.

And He says, So, even if I am dark, in the Lord's eyes, I am beautiful. That means there is a sense of acceptance. See, a lot of women, married women, suffer, because they don't feel that their husbands really rejoice in them.

I rejoice in my wife. And I hope all your husbands do. I think it's very important that your wife knows that you rejoice in her.

And the same way, we as believers don't realize that the Lord rejoices in us. Zephaniah 3.17 says, The Lord your God in your midst is mighty. He shouts over you with shouts of joy.

He is so happy to have you. Do you realize that? Do you realize that when you were accepted in Christ, God is so happy to have you? It's very, very important. This sense of acceptance.

I'm ugly maybe, but I'm beautiful in God's eyes. See that combination. That is so important to understand.

Verse 6. Don't look down on me, you beautiful fair city girls. Because she's like a village girl. You know, uncultured.

These refined city girls of Jerusalem look down upon this girl who's come from the villages. But that girl from the village is the one the bridegroom has chosen. The bridegroom has bypassed all these smart, charming city girls and chosen that village girl.

That's how he's chosen you and me. Praise God. So he said, don't look down on me.

That means the other believers maybe look down on this person. And maybe other believers look down on you in your life. Don't get discouraged.

Ezekiel chapter 16 is another beautiful chapter that describes how God picks up the rotten, the one that's fallen by the wayside. Okay. One of the verse here.

It says, verse 6. They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept. Now, we could apply this this way. The other vineyards are my ministry.

My vineyard is my life. My walk with God. And this is a common mistake that many, many preachers and servants of God make.

They keep the vineyards, but they don't keep their own vineyard. They are busy in activity. This vineyard, that vineyard.

I've got to go here. I've got to do this. I've got to.

But their own vineyard. Their close walk with the Lord. They have not kept that.

That's like a wilderness. And they're always thinking in terms of statistics and activity. I brought so many people to the Lord and I did this here and did that there.

Remember, this book right at the beginning warns us against that. You keep your own vineyard first. Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4, 16.

Take heed to yourself and to your teaching. Thus you will save yourself and you will save those who hear you. It's a very common mistake that people make.

Verse 7. There are two things she looks for here. Where are you feeding your flock? And where do you make them rest? There are two things the Lord needs to give us. Food and rest.

And that's what she's looking for from the Lord. And notice here, the king praises her. The bridegroom.

Verse 15. How beautiful you are, my beloved. But I believe we need to hear words like that from the Lord to ourselves.

Expressions of appreciation that the Lord really delights in us. I believe wives need to hear that from their husbands. Expressions of appreciation.

A wife looks for security just as much as a husband looks for sex. And both are right. It's right for a wife to give her husband the sex he needs.

It's right for a husband to give the security that a wife needs. See, we can talk about these things openly because these are spiritual things. And so often the devil is the only one who talks about these subjects.

And godly men in the pulpit don't speak about it. The result is all the people have only heard what the devil says. And I decided many years ago that I'm going to speak very openly about these things from the divine standpoint.

So that we have a proper understanding of God's view on these subjects. So that's the beginning of love. It's a lot of infatuation and a lot of delight in the fact that God's accepted me.

I'm so blessed or my bridegroom has accepted me. That's all. It's all how I feel.

Infatuation is always like that. But that's okay in the beginning. But then we read from chapter 2 to chapter 7. The growth of love till finally it culminates in chapter 8. We come to that.

In chapter 2 we see right on to chapter 7 there are ups and downs. There are times when feelings go. And here in verse 1. This is the bride speaking.

I am just a rose in Sharon. I'm just a lily in the valley. Now I'm sorry to disappoint some of you.

But that does not refer to Jesus Christ. Like we sing in a lot of songs. We call Jesus the rose of Sharon.

And the lily of the valley. But that is not scriptural. It is totally unscriptural.

It's the bride saying to the bridegroom. I'm just an ordinary rose in Sharon. There are thousands of rose in Sharon and I'm just one of them.

I'm just an ordinary lily in the valley. But the bridegroom says yes. That may be true.

But you're a lily, verse 2, in the midst of thorns. A whole lot of thorns. All these fair, attractive women in Jerusalem.

They're good looking on the outside. But they're like the Proverbs 11, 22. It says about like the pig with the golden ring on its nose.

They are attractive. But like thorns. But in the midst of that you're a real lily.

So there's that expression of appreciation. Verse 4. He's brought me to his banquet hall so that everyone can see how much he loves me. I believe we must always recognize that the Lord brings us to his dining table.

He brought the prodigal son right up to the table. And Jesus was very frequently sitting with his disciples around the table. And this table speaks of fellowship primarily.

You know, when you're sitting at a table, you're not doing ministry. You're having fellowship. When you sit together, you're eating together, talking together.

And the New Testament places a great emphasis on that. It's good. Later on the bride goes to the bridegroom to the fields.

But don't ever attempt going to the fields before you've sat at table with him. Throughout the scriptures you'll find this emphasis. Fellowship first.

Adam's first day fellowship, then go to work for six days. The bride sits at the banquet hall. We're going to have a celebration.

And sit at the table. And she says, Oh, feed me with your love, for I'm utterly lovesick. It's a beautiful expression.

I'm lovesick. That means the world is no longer attractive to me. Jesus is everything to me.

The tremendous expressions of devotion in this song, which if you apply to Jesus, you find your relationship with the Lord deepens. And the world you find is no longer so attractive. Verse 7 is a wonderful verse which applies to marriage, I mean, boy-girl relationships as well.

Promise me, oh women of Jerusalem, verse 7. Not to awaken love until the time is right. Don't awaken, don't try to stir up love until the time is right. Don't try to stir up emotions.

Hang on. Don't let your suddenly falling in love, like they say, love at first sight. Hang on there, be a bit careful.

Particularly in boy-girl relationships, it's very, very important that we don't get taken up by emotions and feelings. Keep those emotions under control. If you want to be a godly young man or a godly young woman.

You may have feelings, but don't let those feelings just take over and lead you off in a direction which afterwards you will regret. It happens very, very often. So many people, young people, called by God to a unique ministry in their teenage years.

And the devil's got his eye on them. He says, that fellow is going to be a danger to my kingdom, the devil says. That girl is going to be a danger to my kingdom.

How can I destroy them? Get them married to the wrong person. He does that and I know numerous cases like that. India has lost godly homes because godly people did not get married to godly people.

So don't stir up love until the time is right. Wait. Infatuation cannot wait.

Must have it now. Sex, people who are after sex, I like that. I must have it now.

I can't wait till I get married. That's the devil always. Whereas those who are godly can wait.

They have a control over themselves. And be very, very careful, dear young people, whenever you see some feelings arising in you towards someone whom you are attracted towards, spiritually or physically, whatever it is. Be very careful with your feelings.

Don't awaken that love until the time is right. Until you are within about six months to a year of the possibility of getting married, I don't think you should ever awaken love in your heart. It can cause you serious problems in your study of the scriptures, preparation for the Lord's work.

Many people cannot study the scriptures because they are always daydreaming about somebody. You may not be thinking evil, but you can't concentrate on what the Lord is trying to say to you. So, this is very practical, this book.

And verse 7, verse 8, sorry. I hear him, my lover, comes leaping on the mountains and speaking of the way of the Lord. Comes to us and I want you to see here verse 14.

The bridegroom says, my dove is hidden in the rock, like we sing in that song, rock of ages cleft for me. It's a beautiful picture of our being hidden in Christ. Now, verse 15 is what I want you to notice.

Catch the little foxes quickly, before they ruin the vineyard of your love. For the grapevines are in blossom. I think this is a word from the Lord to us.

There are little foxes, you know the big foxes we can easily see. But the small teeny weeny baby foxes that creep into the vineyard and eat up the vines, the grapes. The little, you know in married life, it's not the big calamities, the husband hitting his wife with a stick, those things and all we may avoid.

But it's the little irritations, little sharp voice there. Those little foxes are the things that destroy a marriage. Catch those little foxes, the little irritations of daily life.

Catch them, throw them out of the vineyard. Your marriage is like a vineyard, your marriage is like a garden. Preserve it, like any farmer would take care of his put scarecrows to drive the crows away, drive the foxes away.

In the same way, your relationship with the Lord is also similar. Little, little things, little sins. It's not the big sins, it's not adultery and murder that drive us away from the Lord.

It's the little, little, little things that come between us and the Lord that can ruin our relationship with Him. Catch them and drive them away. In chapter 3, she says about the time when she lost that sense of His presence.

One night as I lay in bed, I yearned deeply for my lover, my Lord, but He didn't come. So I said to myself, I'll get up and roam the city searching for Him. She was seeking for those feelings of His presence.

And my search was in vain. The watchman, the watchman in this book referred to other preachers, like the preachers in the book of Job, who don't know God but who know all the facts. They could even be elders in churches who don't know that devotion to Christ that this young one who loves the Lord is seeking for.

He goes to some older person in his church for advice and that chap does not have a devotion to the Lord. How can he guide you? So the watchman, she goes to the watchman and I said to him, have you seen Him whom I love so much? They couldn't guide you. It's a very sad thing that it's very difficult to find now many older people who can guide you in this life of devotion to Christ.

They can teach you how to do evangelism, how to teach and maybe a lot of things in the scripture. But can they teach you how to be devoted to Jesus Christ? These watchmen, unfortunately not. If you're an elder of a church, it's not enough teaching people the Bible.

Are you leading them to devotion to Christ? That's a good watchman. But then finally verse 4, he says a little while later, I found Him myself. That's how I found in my life, my younger days.

I never had the privilege to have godly older people to guide me. But I found Him myself. And sometimes that may be your lot also.

Some of you may be in places where you don't have godly people to guide you and lead you. You can find Him yourself. Seek Him.

And when I found Him, it says, I did not let Him go. I would not let Him go. Now let me go on to chapter 4. Now notice one thing that up until this time, it's the woman speaking most of the time.

I don't know whether you noticed that. It's occasionally a sentence that the bridegroom says. But chapter 4, you find a long message from the bride.

This is a mark of growth in love, I told you like in our earlier session. The more we grow spiritually, the less we talk and the more we listen. And one mark of spiritual growth is that we learn to listen to the Lord.

And now we find she's growing to maturity. She's not just talking, talking, talking, talking to the Lord. She's now listening.

And then she says here, the bridegroom expresses his admiration. I just want you to notice one thing in verse 8. Come with me from Lebanon. Come down from the top of Mount Ammonah, Mount Sinai, Mount Hermon, where the lions have their dens and the panthers growl.

Spiritually speaking, this speaks of a life in the heavenlies. The Lord says, don't look at things from this low earthly standpoint. Come with me to the high places.

And the things of earth will grow strangely dim as you go to the high places with Him. You know how when you go up in an airplane, the things of earth look so small. The cars look so small.

You're not so attracted to earthly things. So that's the way. The Lord says, let me lift you up to a higher plane.

Yes, there are lions and panthers there in the heavenly places. There are demons and principalities and powers. But you and I are together there, the Lord says.

We'll overcome them and we'll be strong. Here is a bride who's moved with her bridegroom to the heavenly places and who's willing to encounter these demonic spirits and overcome them. In verse 12, the bridegroom says to the bride, you're like a private garden.

My treasure, my bride. Private garden means you're exclusively for me. You are mine.

You don't belong to anybody else. Just like a husband can tell his wife, you don't belong to anybody else in the world. You belong exclusively to me.

I want to ask you whether your relationship with the Lord is like that. Can the Lord say to you, you are my private garden. There are many things out in the world that attract you, like the opportunity to make money and get a name.

Those are like other men trying to attract his wife. But she's not attracted. She's taken up with her beloved.

Are you taken up with the Lord like that? Promotion in your job doesn't mean anything to you. The opportunity to make a lot of money in the world doesn't mean anything to you. There are very, very few believers like this.

And I believe that's the reason why they don't know the Lord. They don't understand His word. To me, I would say that the secret of understanding the whole Bible is having this type of relationship with the Lord.

Because the one who wrote it will explain to you what it means. That's what I've found through the years. And I want to encourage you to develop this type of relationship with Jesus Christ.

Walk with Him. Like the early disciples, walked with Him, those apostles, and heard Him speak. And their eyes were opened.

Their hearts burned. So, the Lord calls us to the heavenlies, expresses His appreciation for us. And the bride says, in similar words, she says, that's right.

Let the north wind come, verse 16. The north wind is the cold wind of suffering, adversity, trials. And the south wind is the wind of blessing, encouragement, prosperity, happiness.

And the bride says, it doesn't matter which wind it is. Let me have a cushy, easy time in life. Or let me have a difficult time in life.

From both winds, a perfume will come out of my garden. In other words, when God blesses me, a perfume of praise and thanksgiving and worship will come. When God allows trials and difficulties and pressures to come into my life, that's another wind which blows the same beautiful perfume of praise, thanksgiving and worship to God.

And let my beloved, verse 16, come into His garden and eat its choicest fruits. Everything I produce in my garden, in my life, is not to impress other people how spiritual I am. No.

It is for my Lord. It's for my beloved. It's for my bridegroom.

Let him come into my garden, into my heart, and eat the fruits in my life. See, this is another great secret of effective Christian ministry. Make sure that what you do is primarily for the Lord.

Not because you have to write a report at the end of the month and tell somebody what you did. Not because you want to impress somebody how God is using you. That means you're giving all the fruit in your garden to other people and the Lord gets nothing.

But this bride says, this is all for you, Lord. Here, did you use me to bring somebody to Christ? That's not for me to show off to other people how God used me. No.

I couldn't care less. This is for you. This convert is for you.

This ministry I did, this is for you. This sacrifice I made, which nobody knows about, that's for you. Why should I advertise to everybody the sacrifice I made? Why should a husband tell everybody in the world all the sacrifices he made for his wife or vice versa? There are so many secrets between husband and wife.

There should be secrets between us and the Lord. There are things we do which nobody should know about. There are times you spend alone with the Lord, which nobody should know about.

When a wife spends time with her husband, two people who are deeply in love with each other, they spend time with each other. Do they want anybody else to know about it? They don't want anybody to know about it. In fact, they try their best, young people who are in love, not to let anybody know that they're meeting somewhere.

Why don't we meet with the Lord like that? Shut the door. Get alone with the Lord. Nobody should know.

I am with my beloved now. You see, hardly anybody we find has this type of relationship. Everybody is busy doing this, that, and the other for the Lord.

This love relationship is not there. That's why I say the Song of Solomon is a secret of a deep relationship with the Lord. I'm personally very thankful that the Lord led me to that book first when I began my Christian life.

I believe this should be the basis on which we do all our work and service for the Lord. You may work harder than anybody else, but let it be based on a relationship like this. In 2 Corinthians 11, verse 3, Paul says to the Corinthians, I'm afraid, like the serpent led Eve astray, you also will be led astray from that simple devotion to Christ.

When are you led astray? Whenever you go away from simple devotion to Christ, you've already gone astray. You don't have to steal. You don't have to commit adultery.

You don't have to tell lies. When you've lost simple devotion to Christ, the devil has already led you astray. However much you may serve the Lord.

Okay, we go to chapter 5. And when the beloved now accepts the invitation of the bride to come into her garden and eat, and the bridegroom says, I'm here in my garden. Verse 1, my treasure, my bride. I'm going to gather my spices and eat my honeycomb.

And he invites others also to come in and eat with him. The bridegroom has got the right to give our fruit to others. And the bride responds, Oh, lover and beloved, eat and drink, drink deeply.

Then we go to verse 4. One night, as I was sleeping, my heart was awakened. And I heard the voice of my lover. You know, sometimes we don't expect.

The Lord comes without warning, suddenly. Because he wants us to be in a state of readiness all the time. Have you seen in the Old Testament sometimes, suddenly you read, the Lord said, Abraham, Abraham.

And he said, here I am. Then years later, many chapters later you read, and the Lord said, Abraham, Abraham. He said, here I am.

That really blesses me. Here was a man in the midst of all the other things he did. He could hear the Lord saying, once we read, we saw that for 13 years, the Lord said nothing.

Suddenly the Lord said, Abraham, he was ready. 13 years, he never heard, as soon as the Lord called, he was ready. I want to be like that, and I hope you'll be like that.

You know, asleep, and suddenly the Lord comes. Says, come, I want to tell you something. He calls us sometimes like that.

Like he calls Samuel in the middle of the night. But, and he said, open to me. My darling, my treasure.

I've been out in the night. And how is her response? Well, Lord, not right now. Verse 3, I've taken off my robe and do I have to get dressed again? If I wash my feet, if I go into the streets, I'll get soiled again.

And he tries, verse 4, to unlatch the door. And then he disappears. Because he, she did not respond when he called her first.

So I opened it. And the hands, my hands dripped with perfume. Verse 6, I opened to my lover, but he was gone.

That happens sometimes. The Lord says, Now drop all that you're doing. Stop reading that book.

Just stop that conversation. Get alone in your room and pray. Or go for a walk.

Talk to me. And you say, Lord, just wait. I've just got something very important to do.

In 15 minutes I'll be finished. And 15 minutes later, after you finish that important work, you say, Lord, I'm ready. But he's gone.

You can't find him. This is the experience of many, many, many believers. Because the Lord tests you to see whether he is more important to you than that conversation you're having with your friends, that book you're reading, that work you're doing.

He'll always test us to see, am I willing to drop everything and listen to him? You want to be an effective servant of God? Develop this way of life, where you're willing to listen, drop everything, and listen to him when he calls. Then when she couldn't find him, she again goes to the watchman, to the elders of her church, verse 7. And it says, they struck her and wounded her. They are all legalists.

She's seeking the Lord and she's speaking about love and devotion to the Lord. And they can't understand. They say, you've got to be practical.

And they rebuke her with their words because they don't know that type of devotion. And it says here, they even tore off her veil. That means they exposed her to public disgrace.

Like they got up in the pulpit and said, there are some brothers and sisters here who are always talking about loving the Lord and publicly humiliated them. Okay, you may face things like that from preachers who don't know the Lord. That's the meaning of taking away the veil.

Public disgrace and scandalizing you. And then, verse 8, she goes to the other half-hearted believers, the women of Jerusalem and says, if you find my beloved, tell him I'm lovesick. She speaks of her devotion to others and she says, verse 16, the last part, he's altogether lovely.

He is my beloved and my friend. He's not only my beloved, he's my friend. Is Jesus not only your savior, but your friend? Is your wife your best friend on earth? Is your husband your best friend on earth? It should be.

Very often, husbands and wives, they love one another, they say they love one another, but they're not friends. Their friends are others. I want my wife to be my best friend always.

I want to be her best friend all my life. That's a good marriage relationship. I want Jesus to be the greatest friend of all in my life.

Not only my beloved, but my friend. We move on to chapter 6. She finds her beloved herself. She was searching, you know, and she finally found him in his garden.

And here when he says, I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. This is different from chapter 2, and verse 16, where he says, my beloved is mine and I am his. Do you notice the difference here? She's progressing.

In chapter 2, 16, the initial stages of love, it is, my Lord is mine. In chapter 6, verse 3, it is, I am my Lord's first. That is a progression.

I think that the Lord has something for me. Like I said, an immature believer thinks, what can I get from the Lord? What can I get out of the Lord for myself? A mature believer thinks, what can the Lord get out of me in my one earthly life? So here's a progression. And then you find, there is this fellowship between both of them.

It says, the bridegroom says in verse 4, expresses appreciation for his wife. And he says in verse 8, Solomon says, there may be 60 wives, all queens, 80 concubines, but no one like this one, my dove, my perfect one. I choose her above everybody else.

I believe that a husband should have that attitude towards his wife, that there are so many attractive women in the world, but there's no one like my wife. She is number one in my eyes. That's what the Lord says about us, more than all the clever people in the world and everybody else.

He appreciates us more than anything else. And here also in verse 10, we read of the bride being like an army. See, this bride is not a soft sissy.

She's like a strong person who's like an army with banners. And in verse 13, she's called a shulamite, a young woman of shulam, meaning a person of peace. Selam is a word, shalom.

It's a Hebrew word for peace. And this is speaking about a woman who's peaceful. See, when we have this type of relationship with the Lord, in one way we are like soldiers in an army against the devil.

And with human beings, we are always at peace. It's this combination of battle with the Lord, I'm an army with banners and peaceful with others. Now we come to chapter 7 and we read about the admiration of the bridegroom and when you come to verse 10, it's still higher than chapter 6 verse 3. I'm my beloved's and I'm the one he desires.

He doesn't even say, I'm my beloved's and he is mine. I'm the one he desires. He desires me.

It's not just that he belongs to me, he's pleased with me. See, it's one thing for the Lord to say, OK, I love you. It's another thing for the Lord to say, I'm happy with you.

You know, a husband can love his wife, may not be happy with the way she does things. And the Lord may love you, but he may not be happy with a lot of things. So, this is a still further progression, mature love, where she's tried to please him, she longs to please him and his desire is towards me.

He's happy with me, he longs for me. Not just because he's having chosen me, but he's so happy with what I am. And now, verse 11, she becomes a co-worker with him.

She says, Come, my love, let's go out into the fields. Let's go into the fields and serve together. There's a needy world out there.

Let's you and I go together. My dear brothers and sisters, please listen to me. You who want to serve the Lord, don't go alone.

Don't go alone to the fields. Go with your beloved. Build up a relationship with him.

That is how I have served the Lord all these years. I walked with him and said, Lord, let's go out together to the fields. You and I. I never want to go anywhere alone.

If you're not going there, I don't want to go. You lead, I'll follow. See, a lot of people decide where to go and ask the, like the wife, telling, okay, we're going here, and ask the husband to come along.

That's wrong. The husband must say, let's go, and you come along. That's why I say, Lord, you tell me where to go, and I'll just come along with you, and we'll go together.

Then we don't compare our life or ministry with anybody else's. So, she's a co-worker, and verse 12, she's caring for the vineyards. See, she's matured now.

Now she's not just thinking of sitting at the banqueting table and enjoying his love. She said, let's go, get up early, go to the vineyards, and let's see whether the wines have budded. Let's see how these young believers are doing.

Let's see how the churches are developing. Have the blossoms opened. Are the pomegranates in flower? And there, even there, you and I can express our love for one another, Lord.

In the midst of all this ministry, I still want to walk with you. And, again, Lord, everything I have stored up there is for you, and you alone, verse 13. It is for you, my beloved.

And now we go to chapter 8, which is mature love, longing for perfect union in heaven. It's talking about the time when, you know, when we'll be raptured, verse 5. Who is this coming up from the desert of the earth, leaning on her beloved? This is the time when Jesus comes again, and the bride will be united, leaning upon the bridegroom, just like John leaned upon the breast of Jesus when he comes again, and we'll be united with him. This is talking about that time of rapture.

And she asks for a permanent place on his heart and arm, in verse 6. Put me as a seal over your heart, tells the bridegroom, and like a seal on your arm. Lord, I never want to be separated from you. I want to be like a seal on your heart and like a seal on your arm.

Like a tattoo that people have on their arms. Lord, I want to be like that, on your arm and in your heart. All the time.

A permanent place with you forever. And here he speaks about love and jealousy, verse 6. Wherever there is love, there is jealousy. Jealous that I don't want anybody else to own you.

You are mine alone. And the Lord is very jealous that you should not love money, that you should not love the world, that you should not love yourself, you should not love anything on this earth. He is jealous.

Where there is love, there is jealousy. He wants you for himself. Totally.

And this is the only place in this Bible where the word Lord comes. Jealousy is an enduring as the grave. Love flashes like the fire, the brightest kind of flame, or the flame of Yah.

The flame of the Lord. It's the only place in the Bible where, only place in the Song of Songs, where the word God comes. The Lord's name comes there.

Many floods cannot quench this love. Verse 7. The waters cannot drown it. And in verse 9, it speaks about a girl who can be like a wall or a door.

A wall is one who is very open, sorry, reserved. A door is one who is open. You know, some girls are like doors.

You can walk right in. Some girls are like walls, reserved. A godly woman will be like a wall, reserved.

But if a girl is like a door, then we have to sort of cut her off from other men by building a fortress around her. If a father has got daughters like that. Verse 11 speaks of the rewards that the Lord will give in the final day to different people who have served Him.

And finally it says in verse 14, Come quickly, come Lord Jesus. I'm waiting for you to come. Please come quickly.

And the Lord also says in verse 13, I'm waiting to hear your voice. What a beautiful song. I want to encourage all of you to live in the good of it all your days in your married life and in your relationship with Jesus.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we want to live like this and walk like this with You. Devoted to You.

Rejoicing in Your devotion to and love for us all our days. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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