

Cries Of The Heart - Searching Love

Song Of Solomon 3: 1-5

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Marriage - ah, we are hearing a lot about it these days. There are those who want to deconstruct its function in society, and reduce its nature to a mere symbol of commitment between two human beings, be they of the same or opposite genders.

We, on the other hand, seek to uphold the understanding that marriage is the covenant bond between two opposites, a bond that forms the basis of society, a bond within which future generations are born and nurtured.

The debate goes back and forth - deep and intense.

I hope that you've made your views known and not sat silent on the sidelines.

Marriage - yes, we're hearing a lot about it. What we don't hear too much about, though, is the deeper, more mysterious and wonderful level of the character of marriage - its very essence. Marriage is far more than one man, one woman, one lifetime. It is a deeply spiritual symbol, almost sacramental symbol, about the depth and passion and nature of the relationship between God and humanity.

St. Paul writes in Ephesians 5 that a *man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh...*

Then he says, "*this a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church.*" (v.32).

When a man and a woman join together in the covenant of marriage, they are symbolizing the deep, eternal, from the heart, irrevocable way that God seeks, woos, loves and bonds Himself to the Church throughout time.

God the bridegroom.

We the bride.

In Old Testament and New, this image comes up over and over and over and over - one of the most predominant in all of Scripture.

Hence also our reading from the book *Song of Solomon*.

Far more than merely being some sort of kamasutra-like marriage manual, the Song not only celebrates the purity, greatness and depth of passion and love between man and woman, it also points to the deep mystery of the relationship between God and humanity.

This love poem is attributed to King Solomon - one whose name is related to the Hebrew word *shalom* - peace, wholeness; shalom, peace, wholeness found in a deep, wedded relationship between God and His beloved. From the earliest time Rabbis have been interpreting the book this way.

God's courtship of Israel from the time she left Egypt is a theme running through the Bible. In this view, Deuteronomy can be considered the wedding contract between Yahweh and Israel. The Song of Solomon is the celebration of the courtship and wedding. On the other end of the scale, in contrast to the purity, joy and vitality of the Song of Solomon, the book of Hosea gives us the striking contrast of latter-day Israel as the unfaithful and adulterous wife of Yahweh.

As Christians we read the Song as referring to God's people throughout time - and today applying to the Bride of Christ, the Church. The bride of Christ is a picture found several times in the Book of the Revelation. It is what 2 Cor 11 speaks of:

"I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband." (2 Cor. 11:2)

Song of Songs is intimate. It is passionate. It is singular in focus.

The love shown there is **SO** deep.

And so we are given a taste of the intimacy, passion, singularity and depth of the love relationship between Christ and the believer. There are many other places in the bible where we find the intellectual descriptions and doctrinal dimensions of the believer's life. Here we get the emotion and experience.

Chapter 3 of the Song is a dream event. The bride lays on her bed and dreams of her lover. She is separated from him, and feels the passionate agony of that separation. So, in her dream she runs to search. And, as dreams are want to do, movement is exaggerated. So she is tugging at the city guards doing night watch. "*Where is he, where is he?*" she begs of them. And then rushes off to search further. Frantic. Passionate. Empty and restless till she finds him. Her heart crying out.

Ah - and then - THERE he is!!

And, in her dream state, she returns to her home, locked in embrace with her beloved - and falling back to quiet sleep, not wanting that protective, quiet, beautiful secure sleep of love to be disturbed. Leave it be. Let it rest. Don't stir it.

Peace.

Chapter 3's dream is the cry of the heart from one lover to another.

It is the cry of longing to be together.

It is the restlessness of being apart.

It is the relief and bliss of being reunited.

It is the cry of a very determined heart.

Ah, the longing of humanity to be with God

Ah, the restlessness that we feel when we are apart.

Ah, the relief and bliss of being reunited with Him.

This is beyond the academic assent.

This is the level of passionate emotion and feeling.

And passion, friends, is a key part of being human.

Not to be ignored.

It is a key part of even being alive.

It is part of how God created us when He made us in His image.

God made us passionate people because **HE** is passionate.

Our passion for him is but a reflection,

and a faint reflection at best

of His deep, unyielding, unending passion for us.

His heart longs, cries, desires to draw us to Himself and hold us.

How much?

Well,

you can look at the passion in this love Song.

You could also look to another scene -

- the scene on earth of one who came to seek and save that which was lost.
- searching until He found.

Only this scene is not a dream.

It is very real.

It is the scene of Christ's travel through the streets of Jerusalem on the *via delorosa*, the way of suffering.

His heart love for us drove Him to go through those streets.

And he, too, was met by guards.

Only they did not let him go. They arrested him. And rather than returning to his mother's chamber, he was murdered on the cross and laid in the burial chamber.

All for our sin.

He did that all so that he would be able to gather us into His arms and take us into the great heavenly chamber of

His home,
His Father's home,
what will be one day our home.

We are entering Holy Week, and will gather in services throughout the week, and especially next weekend -

Good Friday, Easter Sunday.

It is a time of deep emotion and passion.

The tears, sorrow and suffering of Friday.

The elation, jubilant joy and celebration of Sunday.

All these become experiences we can enter in a wholehearted way

FIRST OF ALL

because of the wholehearted, determined deep passion demonstrated towards us by the Son of God - the great heavenly Bridegroom.

It is a week of remembering the depth and breadth of love.

Divine love to us.

And it is a week of pledging in return a deep, broad love.

Our love to Christ.