



April 22, 2018

“God’s Love”

Song of Solomon 6–8

Pastor Gary Hamrick

The book of Song of Solomon is a literal love story between King Solomon and his one true love, but it’s also a story that can be viewed as an allegory, which is a literary tool that communicates a hidden meaning. As an allegory, Song of Solomon can be seen as God’s love story for us. Some people have a hard time believing that God loves them, and some find it difficult to receive God’s unmerited, unconditional love. In this message, the third and final message in the Song of Solomon series, Pastor Gary examines the different examples of God’s love in this story.

Historical Background

1. Pastor Gary said: “[There are] people who have a hard time accepting God’s love. There are people who either don’t understand [God’s love] for lack of interest or don’t receive it because [they] may be plagued by [their] past and what [they’ve] done... Maybe [they’ve] had poor representation [of love] on a human level... [so that has skewed their understanding of God’s love].”
2. There are a number of examples in the Old and New Testaments that present God’s relationship to us symbolically like a marriage.
 - a. Old Testament – God’s love for Israel
 - i. [Isaiah 54:5](#) – *“For your Maker is your husband – the LORD Almighty is his name...”*
 - ii. [Isaiah 62:5](#) – *“... as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.”*
 - iii. [Jeremiah 3:14a](#) – *“ ‘Return, faithless people,’ declares the LORD, ‘for I am your husband.’ ”*
 - b. New Testament – Jesus is the bridegroom and the Church is the bride
 - i. [Matthew 9:14–15](#) – *“Then John’s disciples came and asked [Jesus],*

'How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?' Jesus answered, 'How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while his is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.' "

- ii. **Ephesians 5:31-32** - "*'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a profound mystery - but I am talking about Christ and the church.'* "
- iii. **Revelation 19:7** - "*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.*"
- iv. The Parable of the Ten Virgins, in **Matthew 25:1-13**, is about the return of Christ for the Church.

A Drawing Love

- 3. The love of God is the kind of love that woos and attracts.
- 4. **Song of Solomon 1:4** - "*Draw me away!*" - NKJV
 - a. The Hebrew word is mashak, which means, to draw, to lead, and to attract.
 - i. **Jeremiah 31:3** - "*... 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.'* "
 - ii. **John 6:44** - "*'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him...'* "
- 5. We don't know Christ as our Savior because we come to him first; we respond to the Lord, who initiates the relationship because of his love for us!
- 6. **Romans 5:8** - "*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*"
- 7. Many people have a misunderstanding about the Lord's love, which causes them to think that they have to "get cleaned up" before they can come to him, but the truth is that he loves us in our messed-up, broken-down condition!
- 8. Pastor Gary said: "Some of you will struggle with [the fact that you don't clean yourself up first, and that's because of some of the kind of things you've done. You don't think that God can love you because of the kind of things you've done]. ... Is God grieved when we sin against him? Of course, he is. He's grieved when we sin against him, but he does not stop loving us."
- 9. The Bible teaches us that it's God's kindness that leads us to repentance.

- a. **Romans 2:4** - *“Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness leads you toward repentance?”*

10. “There is no pit so deep that God’s love is not deeper still.” - Betsie ten Boom ¹

A Dependable Love

11. **Song of Solomon 2:4** - *“He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.”*

12. A banner is representative of the military unit to which a person belonged.

13. She remarked about the fact that Solomon’s love was so real, genuine, and public, that it was as though he had put a banner over her that stated that she belonged to him and he belonged to her.

14. In an allegorical sense, God places a banner over Believers, which is a statement that we belong to him and he belongs to us, because of his dependable and everlasting love!

15. **Psalms 136:1** - *“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever.”*

16. **Isaiah 54:10** - *“ ‘Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,’ says the LORD, who has compassion on you.”*

17. Pastor Gary read the lyrics to the song, *One Thing Remains*. ²

A Devoted Love

18. **Song of Solomon 6:3** - *“I am my lover’s and my lover is mine...”*

19. Pastor Gary said commented on the fact that this verse was part of the reason that Fanny Crosby wrote the hymn, *Blessed Assurance*, in 1873. ³

20. **Romans 8:38-39** - *“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*

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https://www.christiantoday.com/article/a_war_story_there_is_no_pit_so_deep_gods_love_is_not_deeper_still/110251.htm

² <http://www.klove.com/music/artists/kristian-stanfill/songs/one-thing-remains-lyrics.aspx>

³ <https://hymnary.org/media/fetch/97642>

the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

A Dying Love

21. **Song of Solomon 8:6** - *“Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.”*
22. **John 15:13** - *“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”*
23. Pastor Gary said: “[Jesus gave his life for you and me]. That is the supreme expression of his love for us. He didn’t just talk about it. ... He demonstrated it by dying on a cross. God is perfect; we are flawed. God is righteous; we are sinful. And, sin must be judged...”
24. **Romans 3:10** - *“As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one...’ ”*
25. **2 Peter 3:9** - *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*
26. **John 3:16-17** - *“For God so love the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*
27. **1 John 3:16a** - *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.”*
28. **Ephesians 3:17-19** - *“... And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s remarks about the fact that people can’t accept or don’t understand God’s love. (See #1 above)
2. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about the ways the Holy Spirit drew them into a relationship with God. (See #3 and #4 above)

3. Spend time talking about the fact that we are not the initiators of this relationship, and how misguided some people are because they think they have to do the “cleaning up” work in advance. (See #5 through #10 above)
4. What are some of the ways you’ve experienced the dependable and consistent love of God? (See #14 and #15 above)
5. Read and discuss [Psalm 136:1](#) and [Isaiah 54:10](#).
6. Read and discuss [Romans 8:38–39](#).
7. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary’s remarks about the dying love of Christ, and the Scriptures he shared. (See #22 through #28 above)
8. Read the account of the dying testimony of Nancy Thornwell.⁴
9. Ask someone in your group to read [Ephesians 3:17–19](#) and ask the Holy Spirit to bring a full understanding of the Scriptural truths contained therein.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).

⁴ “In 1859 the great Presbyterian preacher James Henley Thornwell had the opportunity to announce the wedding of his daughter, Nancy. In the weeks leading up to this event, the hundreds traveling would end up at a funeral, not a wedding as she took ill from cholera typhoid and began a rapid demise. Thornwell, overcome, came to his daughter’s bedside in her waning moments and said, “Oh my dear daughter, such tragedy!” She replied, “Father, do not weep. I know my Savior.” He said, “But this was to be your wedding, your whole life now before you.” She, the youth, yet with greater maturity said, “Father, but I now go to a greater Groom that I am prepared to meet.” Nancy Witherspoon Thornwell was laid to rest in a wedding gown, and the tombstone reads: “As a bride prepared for her Groom.’ ”

http://gospeltranslations.org/wiki/The_Song_of_Solomon:_The_Bride_and_the_Bridegroom