

Love and Power

Song of Songs 2:1-17

Intro:

As we continue with our series here, it's important to note that we're not talking about sex to try and be trendy or catchy, to try and bring in a crowd. While the series is definitely super relevant and we hope people who aren't used to coming to church will come, the main reason for our series is Growth.

- To mature in our sexuality whether we be singles or marrieds. To mature in loving others, becoming more like Jesus in it all.
- To mature in our love of God. (remember, this speaks of our relationship with God)

You'll remember from last week: marriage is the context of sex. We have a story about it today. Jared shares (visit www.ethnos.us for testimony)

Thanks Jared...

We're in chapter two today, a chapter that is most likely the chapter describing their love prior to the marriage. (We know this because in the next chapter various catch phrases seem to describe a wedding happening there, and also the story here seems to imply the man and woman do not live together yet). And as we read it we'll be discovering how love is in relation to power.

Read Text:

3 Things about love and power:

Love is called to protect

We this as the chapter gets started. The woman begins by describing herself as a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valley. A better translation of "rose" is actually just wildflower- note your footnote. A couple reasons for this. In the only other usage of this word, it's general. Also, Roses weren't around till later. So it's better understood as general, and I think what the woman is doing is being real modest about herself.

The man, of course, thinks she is the world- and states it.

And the woman reciprocates- apple or more generally fruit trees aren't typically in forests, so it's pretty unique. The woman praises the love they have together, but in the midst of this she notes something unique: I sit in his shadow, His banner over me is love... Shadow- used in protective sense. In fact, it is used of God- Ps. 36:7, 91:1. Banner- from the military terminology.

These are unique phrases that speak of how love, as 1 Corinthian says- always protects.

And notice the rest of the chapter has other allusions to it.

Catch the foxes- get rid of all that would come and ruin our love (v.15). This is a request made by the man to the woman- get rid of everything that comes between our love.

Physically, emotionally, spiritually.

Marrieds:

Protecting your spouse physically? Emotionally, being wise about how you share, perhaps how your parents treat your spouse? Spiritually in prayer? Easy when you were dating, perhaps, but you doing it now?

Singles:

Are you ready to do this, especially men?

Last week I made a comment about how there are very eligible women here... Men, you ready to step to the plate? And I'm not talking just machismo.

All:

Do we know God is like this?

Love is a powerful thing that can overwhelm us- taking away and stoking desire

Love with its power is supposed to protect. But the power of love can also take away...

This is what the woman goes into next. Read v.5. She is in need of raisin cakes, and apples- both known to give energy to people, but also known as aphrodisiacs as well back then. So she's saying- ah, this is so draining, to love, but I want it more! Love has this tension!

Those of you who have ever ventured into romantic relationships know this- it is hard work, absolutely draining. And it's not just because it's so emotionally overwhelming- the difficulty comes with trying to be consistent, to be focused and faithful. Even trying to figure out your sex life- marrieds, you know this. Singles- realize this, realize you will get worked as you get in a relationship!

Yet there is something about true love that makes you want it and desire it more...

In fact, the desire of love is so powerful that the woman, at the end of this song expresses it in the most erotic of ways.

Gazelle- calls him this because these are beautiful creatures, sleek, quick and graceful. But also because the word in Arabic for it sounds like beautiful.

v.16-17.

Excurses:

This leads to a question that I think it's important to address for those of us who are Jesus followers: can you have desires for sex, perhaps even daydreams of sex, and remain godly as a single person? It's obvious that for marrieds, you should be thinking about it- desiring, daydreaming, about your spouse. But for singles- can you? Especially if we understood the woman here to not be technically married to the man- notice he is calling her out, and in chapter 3 it speaks of their marriage?

Some of you who may not be Jesus followers may be thinking- man, why do Christians seem to freak out about this? But the reasons Christians freak out is because Jesus and his followers said some real hard things:

Matt. 5:27-30.

Explain.

Now, here's the deal. Many of us Jesus followers take this and apply it to ourselves by saying- any sexual feelings we have, it's something we automatically have to get rid of, and we call it a sin. And I think that's a good thing in many ways because our minds can be pretty crazy taking people into bed and all.

But I do think there are times where it may not be sinful. Here's the thing- the Bible says sex is in for a marriage relationship, and you're not to take anyone else to bed other than your spouse, both in heart and mind. Here's the deal: I believe that some times a single people we can long for sex and imagine it in a married context without taking an actual person in our minds with us to bed. We can daydream about it, perhaps, when our hormonal level is high, and daydream about it like "ah, I wish I was married!" and we picture ourselves being having sex or being sexual in a married situation (so that is in line with the marriage requirement) with a genuinely faceless person (in line with the second requirement- we're not taking somebody into that bedroom that does not belong to us!).

But you may say the woman clearly is desiring the man. Yes, true, but she's engaged to him- which is a way more serious commitment back then, and they're headed toward marriage. So if you're engaged, not just dating seriously, but seriously committed and planned for marriage, then you may be able to think about it and be alright.

But here's the deal- if my proposition is true, the fact of the matter is having those moments where we daydream about sex in a way that does not sin are few and far between, rare, if ever! And you can't stay in this sort of zone forever- I mean, sexual desire is ultimately supposed to be acted out...

Which leads to the 3rd point we need to make here about the power of sex and romance:

Beware! Beware of Love's power, and don't let it come until you're ready.

This is what v.7 is about, and it's a key verse because it is repeated 3 times in the book.

Daughters of Zion- those single woman looking in on the relationship.

By the Gazelles and Does- for the sake of all lovers out there (Gazelles- men, Does- women)

Don't get started until it's ready- the fruition of all love- sex- is ready, until you're ready for marriage. Don't rush into it. There is a timing to it all. That's why the talk of winter and spring- alludes to it.

Application:

- Dating- are you getting in it too quickly?

- Are you doing things that are stoking love and sex when you're not ready?

- Are we waiting too long to get married

Remember: God is wanting the best. (jared's story!)

Questions/Reactions

Challenge:

- Get your sex life in order, turn to God
- Pursue the power and restraint God is calling you to.
- Know God's great desire to protect you, know the extent He has gone for you.
- Know that there are always second chances...