



TRINITY
CHURCH

Song of Songs

Bible Talk Guide

September - October 2022

Song of Songs

The Greatest Song

For 3 Sundays (18 September, 2 October and 9 October) we will dive into a neglected and tricky part of the Bible, Song of Songs.

For those familiar with it you'll probably understand why it gets neglected by preachers. At first reading, it's difficult to work out why it's in the bible at all. The images it uses are odd, and there is not discernible structure and it doesn't explicitly mention God.

Church history has, for the most part, seen this only as an allegory to the love of Jesus and his people - often doing some exegetical gymnastics to make a point. Some, more modern thinkers, read too much

in the desire and see sexual activity on every page, doing hermeneutical ballet this time!

However, I think there is a much simpler way to read this Song. It's in the Bible as wisdom literature, celebrating, though romantic Hebrew poetry intimacy in the context of marriage. So, it's really about two people who desire each other. And, given that it is in the Bible, and with some of the key themes in the song, it also helps us grasp the extent of Christ's love for the church.

Therefore, it's a song affirming God's good gift of sex within marriage, and encouraging God's people to live wisely in the world he has made,

knowing more fully the love of Jesus for us.

Key Themes

We will touch on the following themes during our time in the Song.

Their love story begins

1 in a garden. In the Biblical narrative, and, especially in Hebrew literature, this helps to clue us in to the bigger theme of garden. After all, it was in the first garden, that God showed his love for his people in creation and making them in his image. Yet, the love story in Songs is often elusive. A repeated refrain is that as close as they get, we never see their desire realised. Each time they get close, the

poem snatches us away. A little like our story outside of the garden. But, as Song 8 reminds us, there is a love, stronger than death. A love that isn't temporary or elusive, that he finds in the garden we await for. With God, our Saviour.

Human love is an image of the

2 love Jesus has for his church. Often in the OT this love is spoken of as broken and spoiled - like Ezekiel 16. But, here, it's a beautiful delight. This means Song isn't only about sex. And it means that it's not expressly about desire. It's actually telling us about the love of two people, that God has a love for his people as intense as this, and, it's fully realised in Jesus. Not

elusive and not something that can be snatched away.

It will be helpful for us to all be aware that as we cover themes of intimacy and desire, many in our midst will find that difficult or uncomfortable for all sorts of reasons. As such we want to discuss these themes with great respect and sensitivity for one another.

It really is about love and desire! That's good. But, it's

2 more than just that too. It is one of the 66 books of the scriptures, where God speaks to us, though the pages, about life and himself, about his vision and purpose for us as his people. Song's therefore speak into this in a helpful way, addressing our desires that we have to be loved, to be desirable and to receive it and giving us God's wisdom as we navigate this. After all, Song of Songs is part of the wisdom literature in the OT. This means, if this song is a snapshot of your life, or a photo of the past, or a future you want, remember the God who sits behind it all. And how, all loves that we have, will

one day fade away, and, in their place, will remind God and his love for us. The desires we have, or find elusive now, are simply the trailer, to the full motion picture of an eternity of love and intimacy and relationship with Jesus, our Saviour and Lord.

A Song For All Of Us

Song of Songs will be helpful for all of us to engage in, regardless of our stage of life, our history, our hurts, difficulties or insecurities. Song of Songs itself is not unaware of these issues, nor is our good heavenly Father, who, in Christ, has promised to fulfil our deepest longings, and heal our hurts.

I hope and pray that the next 3 weeks will help us live well from God's world and point us once more, to our loving Saviour, Jesus.

- Luke Dahlenburg



Big Idea

The Song wants to make us wise in love, teaching us it's power, preciousness and showing us how desire and romance fit into God's intent for us - ultimately being revealed in the almighty love of God for his people.

Resources On The Song

- Philip Graham Ryken, *The Love of Loves in the Song of Songs*, 2019.
- Douglas O'Donnell, *The Earth Is Crammed with Heaven: Four Guideposts to Reading and Teaching the Song of Songs*, 2012, *Article from Themelios*.

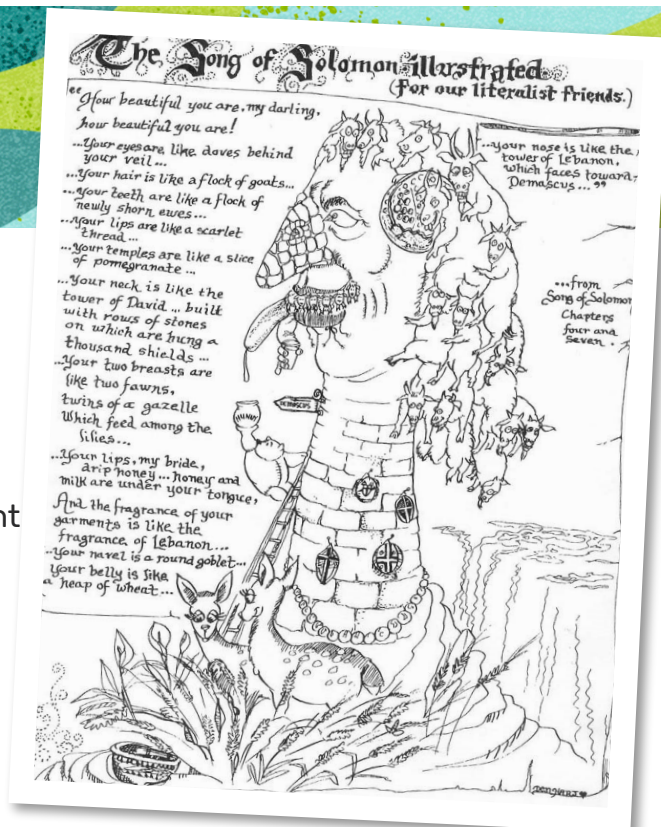
Resources On Relationships

- The Good Book Company has really great list of books that cover just about every topic relating to relationships and sexuality. Have a browse to find something specific by going to: www.thegoodbook.com.au/christian-living/marriage-and-relationships



Song of Song Illustrated

Hebrew metaphors aren't meant to be visual, like this crazy picture! They are meant to get your reflecting on the meaning of the images as they relate to the man and women.



Love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.

Song 8:6

When Desire Hurts

Song of Songs may bring up or awaken desires and hurts in us and because sexuality and desire is such a strong and God given part of us, it can be really hard to navigate and hear about God's good intent for something that has caused you so much pain and hurt.

Below is a list of resource that may be of help to you, We'd also recommend seeking professional support too and, knowing that Jesus is always full of grace and fresh starts for whatever has happen to you, 1 John 1:9-10

Help for those struggling with pornography

Tim Chester, *Captured by A Better Vision*

Vicki Tiede, *When Your Husband Is Addicted to Pornography: Healing Your Wounded Heart*

Tim Challies, *Sexual Detox: A Guide for Guys Who Are Sick of Porn*

Accountability Software

www.covenanteyes.com

Help relating to sexual abuse or domestic violence

Emergency: 000

Rape and Sexual Assault Service: 1800 817 421

1800 Respect: 1800 737 732 or visit www.1800respect.org.au

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Men's Referral service: 1300 766 491. This service from No to Violence offers assistance, information and counselling to help men who use family violence.

www.whiteribbon.org.au

www.saferresource.org.au

A brief summary of what to expect from each talk.

1. Listening To The Song

Bible: Song 1:1-2:7

We will do a quick overview of the song to orient ourselves to this unique part of the Bible and then look at 1:1-2:7 focusing on the desire and intimacy they have as well as the refrain that love is to be awoken at the right time. The good news for us is that Jesus understands our longings and desires and how he awakens us to God's love in the fullness of time.

Themes: Awakening Love

2. Her Song, His Song

Bible: Song 5:9-6:13

This week we did deepening into the themes of joyful desire and seeking and longing. Our experience of love can be joyful, like their songs shows us, but it is often far from ideal. Our longings and desires are not matched, we are broken in our desires, betrayed, hurt and feel the loneliness of lost relationships. We are all in need which can only be fulfilled in Christ, with a now-not yet tension involved.

Themes: Joyful Desire, Seeking and Longing

3. God's Song

Bible: Song 8:6-14

Our couple have come to realise the power and pull of love. Our hearts are idol factories, the only thing that can overcome our wayward love is a greater, more powerful love. The Song help us grasp God's love for us as the woman and Solomon offer a final exchange of words on love; it's power and the pull it has on us and how, for all of us, one day, there is the hope of a transformed creation when God's love permeates though all his word and we live with him in his forever garden.

Themes: Garden, Strong Love

My beloved is mine
and I am his; he
browses among the
lilies.

Song 2:16

Daughters of
Jerusalem, I charge
you by the gazelles
and by the does of the
field: Do not arouse or
awaken love until it so
desires.

Song 2:7

I have come into my
garden, my sister, my
bride; I have gathered
my myrrh with my
spice. I have eaten my
honeycomb and my
honey; I have drunk
my wine and my milk.
Eat, friends, and
drink; drink your fill
of love.

Song 5:1

You Are Heaps Good!

Song 4:1-7 as written by someone from Adelaide.

While this modern attempt doesn't capture the beautiful Hebrew poetry, it seeks to relate the intent of Song 4:1-7 in language that we may be familiar with. Sure, it may make you laugh, but, can you also see the desire, intensity, creativity and thought behind the Song? How creation is pulled and stretched to describe how strong a desire and beautiful the women is in the eyes of her man?

The bold font is the original so you can see the contrast.

I belong to my beloved, and his
desire is for me.

Song 7:10

4:1 How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes behind your veil are doves. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from the hills of Gilead.

- How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how heaps beautiful you are! Your eyes behind your veil are like a rainbow lorikeet, dancing around the gum tree blossom, Your hair, reminds me of the descent down McIntyre road at sunset, while the long train of Piping Shrikes circle overhead.

4:2 Your teeth are like a flock of sheep just shorn, coming up from the washing. Each has its twin; not one of them is alone.

- Your teeth, are like the whites of Boomer beach, yet, your perfect smile, softens me, just like the gentle waves of Horshoebay.

4:3 Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon; your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate.

- Your lips are like a Barossa red; your mouth is like exploring the hidden paths of the Botanic gardens on a Spring morning. The joy of seeing you, is like the excitement of The Fringe and finding that hidden show.

4:4 Your neck is like the tower of David, built with courses of stone; on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors.

- You are beautiful and strong, as if your neck was both the SAHMRI building, and, the sunrise at Glenelg. You are matchless in beauty and wisdom from the Fleurio to the Flinders.

4:5 Your breasts are like two fawns, like twin fawns of a gazelle that browse among the lilies.

- Your breasts are like the Malls Balls, the twins of Rundle Mall, that are a delight to me.

4:6 Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of incense.

- Until my alarm goes off at and I gotta' head to work, I'll spend it with you, my delight, my comfort, the one I want to watch Netflix with all night long.

4:7 You are altogether beautiful, my darling; there is no flaw in you.

- You are altogether beautiful, my darling; you are heaps good.