

Truth for Today

The Bible Explained

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Song of Solomon (Canticles), 1:1-2:7

The Assurance of Love

*[Please note: sections in blue type are not broadcast on every radio station.
The New King James Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]*

Introduction

Today we begin a series of talks on the book in the Bible called the Song of Solomon. It is sometimes known as the Song of Songs or as the Canticles. The Song is of a love story, which in poetic language and with different characters, expresses deeply the true and special love the Lord has for His people. The titles of the different talks have been taken from a book written by Hamilton Smith, who was an early 20th Century Christian writer. In the introduction of his book, he makes it clear that Christ is the great theme of all Scripture, and that the Holy Spirit delights to set forth special aspects of Christ and His glories. Here in the Song of Solomon, His great object is to present the wonderful love of Christ for His people. It is generally recognised that Solomon is the author of this book, and his name is mentioned seven times in its eight chapters. Solomon was a wise man, the wisest man that had ever lived, 1 Kings 4 v.30. As a young man, Solomon asked God for wisdom and God granted him his desire. Solomon was known to have written many songs, 1 Kings 4 v.32, one thousand and five to be precise, but this book is the most excellent of them all. Solomon became king of Israel after the death of his father David. David had always encouraged Solomon to serve the LORD, to walk in His ways and to keep His Word. 1 Kings 3 v.3 tells us that Solomon loved the LORD.

God's love for His people Israel

Throughout the generations, God's love has never ever faltered for His earthly people Israel. This is evident as you read through the Old Testament. On many occasions they let Him down and their love for Him was often cold. But He was always faithful to them and forgave them after they had repented. Israel had many dark times in their history when they left God out of their plans, but God never gave up on them. As we go through the Song of Solomon, we see the bride who through various experiences is brought into a full and affectionate relationship with the bridegroom. The bride could be seen as Israel and the bridegroom as a figure of Christ. Jesus came into the world to manifest God's love to His beloved people Israel. [Jesus entered Jerusalem and a large crowd gathered with joy and excitement and they took branches of palm trees and they cried out,](#)

["Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!" \(John 12 v.13\).](#)

[Sadly, the joy did not last long, and the Jews rejected their Messiah. Only six days later that same crowd cried,](#)

["Away with him, away with him! Crucify him!" \(John 19 v.15\).](#)

[Even after this God's love has not changed for His earthly people the Jews. In the future God's King, who is His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, will come back. He will be crowned King and](#)

He will restore the Jews to Israel, and He will rule and reign in Jerusalem. Then they will appreciate the unfailing love the Lord has for Israel.

God's love for all mankind

Although the nation of Israel was God's focus in the Old Testament, other nations were not held back from coming to experience God's love, His mercy, and His grace. Ephesians 2 vv.4-10 makes this very clear,

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **For by grace, you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**”

Ephesians 2 v.13, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

Since the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, every person can experience the love of God in a real and intimate way through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we (those who love the Lord) can put ourselves in the place of the bride in the Song of Solomon. As we go through the many ups and downs of life, we can experience fully the assurance of the love of the bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

The bride confesses her love, vv.2-4

The bride says, “Let him kiss me”, for his love is better than wine. A kiss is the expression of affection and love; and in the Bible, wine usually speaks of joy. There is great joy if we get to know, and appreciate, and experience, God's love for us. Our love for Him is in response of His love for us,

“We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4 v.19).

Have you ever considered the greatness, the wonder, and the extent, of His love for you? It's a love that cannot be measured, it is eternal, and it never fails. The bride realises that her beloved had arrived and heard her speech, so she openly expresses her love for him. The Lord Jesus loves to hear us telling Him how much we love Him. The bride continues to speak. She enjoys the fragrance of his good ointments and values His name like perfume poured out. There is a sweetness when we consider the many blessings that we have been given because of the death of the Lord Jesus. We have peace with God, eternal life, a home in heaven, faithfulness in our lives, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to name a few. When we hear the name of Jesus is it sweet to our hearts? And do we pour out our praises to Him? When Mary opened her alabaster box to anoint the feet of the Lord Jesus, it was said that the odour of the ointment filled the house. There was a wonderful aroma to her worship (John 12 vv.1-3).

The virgins of v.3 would stand for those who are pure, that is, everyone who has been washed clean in the precious blood of Christ. They love Him. Do we take time to express our love for the Lord? The bride says, “Draw me.” John 6 v.44 tells us that God the Father draws men and women to Christ. Jesus also said that if He was lifted up from the earth (speaking about His death on the cross), He would draw all men and women to Himself, John 12 v.32. In Hosea 11 v.4, God says,

“I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love.”

Every believer has been drawn to the Lord Jesus. After we are drawn to Him, we follow Him, and we should run after Him. We are welcome in His presence, we are brought near, we are brought as near to God as the Lord is. Like the bride in v.4, we have been brought into the chambers of the King, that's how near we are. By faith we can see His face, we can hear His voice, we can feel His touch, we can bask in His love. [Psalm 45](#), [Ephesians 2](#), and [John 14](#), all give us a fuller appreciation of what it is, and what it is like, to be in the chambers of the King.

The bride experiences doubt, vv.5-7

The bride looks at herself, “I am dark, but lovely.” She looks at her appearance, her inner battles, her family problems, and she is in no doubt of her unworthiness. She uses the picture of tents of the Bedouin tribe (Amp version), which were black in colour. [She is assured and comforted by the daughters of Jerusalem as she continues to tell her beloved that she is also lovely like the beautiful curtains of Solomon's temple.](#) She tells him not to look on her because she is dark because life has taken its toll. Her family have dealt harshly with her, and because of this, she has not looked after her own complexion. She has neglected her own spiritual life. She looks to the one who loves her, who cares for her, her shepherd. She is assured of his love as she says to him, “Tell me, O you whom I love.” She has affection for him, and she wants to experience the comfort and the assurance of his love and care.

From these three verses, we can see the beauty and attractiveness of our Lord as we contrast our unworthiness with His perfection. We can see our doubt in contrast to His constant love and care. We can see that the Lord wants us to communicate with Him. He wants us to listen to Him, to hear His voice speak to us, and to learn more about Him. How is your love for your Lord? Is your love as intimate and special as the day you first came to know him as your Saviour? I am reminded of the words of Psalm 23 vv.1-3,

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.”

Our doubts and our fears can be brought to the feet of our Lord Jesus, who constantly assures us of His love. Because we have been washed in the precious blood of Christ, we were dark but now are pure white, and we are lovely in His sight.

The bridegroom responds, vv.8-11

The bridegroom uses lovely poetic language to describe his love for his beloved. He tells her of his love for her as he addresses her as the “fairest among woman.” He calls her “my love” as he compares her to his favourite filly in Pharaoh's chariot. A filly is a female horse under four years old. His beloved is young and attractive, elegant, upright, and beautiful. He looks at her cheeks, her long neck decked with chains of gold. How attractive, how beautiful, how precious she is to him. It's hard to take in, but even with our faults and failings our beloved, the Lord Jesus Christ, finds us attractive. There is nothing to love about us, but He loves us. The Bible tells us that,

“We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4 v.19).

The Bible also says,

“The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2 v.20).

If we look within ourselves, we will be disappointed, but if we consider Him and His love, we will never be disappointed. He looks on us as His redeemed ones, who have been purchased by His blood, saints (those who have been set apart for Him). In verse 11, the daughters of Jerusalem join in to encourage the bride.

The bride continues, vv.12-14.

She is in his chambers. She is slowly beginning to enjoy, and appreciate, his presence. The king is at his table, he is near. Her affections have been stirred. Her heart is overflowing in love. She pours out her worship upon him. She twice calls him “my beloved,” in verses 13 and 14. When our hearts are filled with Christ we worship, “[Our] spikenard sends forth its fragrance.” The myrrh speaks of Christ and is a picture of His death. Considering the death of Christ brings our hearts affections out in thanksgiving and praise. The myrrh is close to her heart. The cross of Christ should never be far from our thoughts. The hymn says, “Jesus keep me near the cross”; another one says, “At the foot of the Cross”, it is a good thing to stay close to the cross. The henna-flowers in the vineyards of En Gedi would speak to us of the beauty and the glory of Christ. As our affections are stirred when our enraptured gaze is fixed on the beauty of the Saviour; and our hearts and voices worship Him.

The bridegroom is near, v.15

“Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold you are fair! You have dove’s eyes.”

The bride says, “I am dark.” The bridegroom says, “You are fair.” Christ looks at us and views us as fair. We are righteous in His sight. Our sins have been washed away in His precious blood. How precious it is that the Lord Jesus looks on us in this way. The dove, I am told, mourns, and languishes when separated from its mate. The dove has no eye for any other, only for its mate. Believers should have Christ as the only object of their gaze.

“Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
look full in His wonderful face,
and the things of earth will grow strangely dim
in the light of his glory and grace.”

Helen H. Lemmel (1863-1961)

But is my love, is your love, solely for Jesus?

The bride replies, vv.16-17 - Chapter 2 v.1

“Behold, you are handsome, my beloved!”

She tells him how handsome he is and how pleasant he is. She is now enjoying and beginning to appreciate the peace, the rest, the security, as she enjoys his shepherd care. She has experienced lying down in the green pastures and her soul has been restored. Her home has been well built by the finest wood. She sees herself differently now that her gaze is on him and not on herself. Not as one who is dark but as the rose of Sharon and a lily of the valleys. Although she still is thinking about her plainness and unworthiness as she thinks of these common flowers, she has moved on. She understands him more. She understands herself more. The Lord desires us to tell Him how much He means to us as we realise the assurance of His love, as we come to know and understand him more. We must move on to maturity. Yes, sometimes we see ourselves as black as coal. Our sins burden our hearts. But, as we bring them to Christ in confession, he forgives us. It is always good to remember our weakness, our humility as we desire to serve the Lord, but this should not hold us back. She confidently says, “I am the rose of Sharon.” The Lord tells us we are fair so we can, with confidence and assurance, say that we are.

The bridegroom continues, v.2

He brings out the beauty of the lily among the thorns. To her beloved she is like the lily that stands out in the field of thorns. The Lord delights in His own; and the beauty of Christ should be seen in every believer in this dark and evil world. We must stand out! Do you stand out in this world? Do others know that you are a Christian? Is Christ seen in your life? Every believer has been sanctified and set apart for Christ. We are salt and light in this world. One thing we must be always

careful about is that the thorns of sins can easily entangle the believer. So be on your guard, but remember the Lord always looks on us as the fair ones, the lilies among the thorns.

The bride's lovely response to her beloved, vv.3-7

To her, the apple tree stands out amongst the other trees of the woods. She sits under it, and it shades her from the sun. She is refreshed and fed by the fruit that falls from the tree. She is at peace and enjoying the rest, the comfort, and the peace. Her beloved stands out above every man, there is no one like her beloved, no one can compare. She feels differently now! Earlier she blamed the sun for her looks, now she is protected from the sun. He has brought great delight to her heart. Everything about Him is sweet. She turns to the daughters of Jerusalem and expresses her delight in him. She is full of love. Her heart is bursting. Her affection for all that he has done, his beauty and the wonder of his company make her lovesick. She is now not just in the king's chamber, she is now in his banqueting house, at his table tasting the delights that are all available to her.

Dear fellow believer, the Lord has brought us into His banqueting house and His banner over us is love. A banqueting house is somewhere that there is plenty of everything, a never-ending feast with a table that has everything that we will ever need or desire. He has opened His abundant stores and lavished us with goodness. Mephibosheth was one who was brought into blessing and always sat at king David's table. Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son was lame on both his feet and was shown kindness by David because he was the last of Saul's family. He did not really deserve to be there but for the kindness of David. Is that not like us? We don't deserve to be at God's banqueting table, but because we belong to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, we are welcome to sit forever at His table.

The bride's doubts are gone. Her beloved is near, so near he is touching her. He has moved from his table. She feels his left hand under her head, and his right hand holds her in an affectionate embrace. She is in total love. She never wants to waken from this love. She is so assured by his love. Dear friend, the Lord wants to hold us and embrace us as He assures us of His love. Remember that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. The words of a Hymn come to mind as I close.

“When I fear my faith will fail,
Christ will hold me fast,
When the tempter would prevail,
He will hold me fast.
I could never keep my hold,
Through life's fearful path,
For my love is often cold,
He must hold me fast.

He will hold me fast,
He will hold me fast,
For My Saviour loves me so,
He will hold me fast.”

Ada R Habershon (1861-1918)

Thank you for listening to the Truth for Today talk from The Song of Solomon – The Canticles, on The Assurance of Love, talk number T1258.

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