

# Song of Songs

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon  
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 2010

## Intro-

- Name 5 of the most popular pop songs of all time. Most likely there will be more than a few which are about love. No one asks people to keep writing love songs- it is something people do spontaneously to express deep emotions and longings. There was a man who according to 1Kings 4:32 wrote 1,005 songs/musical pieces. He could have chosen any one of these pieces as his best, but he chose a love song. We are going to look at this love song this morning and see why it was chosen as his best song and how it still speaks powerfully to us today. Let's look at Solomon's Song of Songs, which speaks of his courtship, marriage and life with the woman of his dreams.

## Read Song of Songs

### (1:1, 4:1-7) The best song a human can sing is a love song- be expressive

- The Hebrew expression 'Song of Songs'- like 'holy of holies' and 'king of kings'- means the most significant, most important, best, the crème de la crème.
- Genre of this writing- certain style-Egyptian love songs & mesopotamian love songs- read examples. The arabic Wasfs. What makes this unique is the wisdom and godly perspective on relationships.
- Worship-our expression of intimacy towards God.
- Marrieds- to express romance to one another in creative ways- flowers, notes, texts, surprises, treats, meals etc.
- Verbal expression- to each other & God- how expressive are you? What are you like at expressing love to family? Friends? Non-verbal communication?
- The church- creative ways to express you care for one another+ the lost. Creative, supernatural ways of expressing God's love- catching the coin in the fishes mouth, feeding 5,000. The giving of gifts- Paul longed to be with the Roman's that he might impart some spiritual gift to them.
- Q. What is it you admire about people? God? Tell Him/them
- The teacher asked the pupils to tell the meaning of loving-kindness. A little boy jumped up and said, "Well, if I was hungry and someone gave me a piece of bread that would be kindness. But if they put a little jam on it, that would be loving-kindness."
- Ancient Greek poetry tells of a warrior, the hero of Troy, dressed in all his military armor, stretching out his arms to embrace his little son before going into battle. His child was frightened as he looked at the helmet and full military dress, and instead of falling into his father's arms he screamed in terror. However, under all the battle array was hidden a heart of fatherly love. The warrior threw off his armor, gathered his little boy in his arms, and held him tightly against his chest where he could hear the beating of his father's heart, as if saying, "I love you, I love you."

### (1:5-6) Love your own body despite its faults

- 'I am dark but lovely'- 'my own vineyard I have not looked after'- she had let herself go because she was forced to work in her brothers' vineyard, hence she was black from the sun and had the appearance of a labourer rather than a palace dweller, however she bigged herself up to the king.
- God wants you to love your body- forgiveness for times you've messed up. Love for yourself despite imperfections. Woman with no arms posing nude for sculpture. Woman on Cbeebies. How to look good naked. God never made no trash.
- Solomon did not see her imperfections- he just loved her.
- 'I loved you when you were bald'.

- As the squad stood in formation at the Naval Air Station, the flight instructor growled, "All right, all you worthless morons fall out!" As the rest of the squad wandered away, one pilot in training remained at attention. Without a word, the instructor walked over until he was eyeball-to-eyeball with the courageous young Marine. Cocking an eyebrow, he demanded, "SO?" The threatened pilot-to-be smiled and said, "Sure was a lot of 'em, wasn't there, sir?"

## (2:3-7) Sexuality is a blessing from God to be handled correctly

- Apple trees were not local to Israel at the time-they had to be imported- a delicacy- she longs to taste of his unique fruit. Here her sexual desire is increasing ('lovesick') and she longs to be with Solomon, but is conscious of maintaining her purity- in **4:12** she is described on her wedding day as '**a garden enclosed**'- she has saved herself for her man- then on the wedding night-**4:16** she says '**let my beloved come into his garden** and eat its pleasant fruits'- there is release and full abandon.
- God is good and the author of sex. He wants us to enjoy it within the right context, but when we do it our way rather than God's we spoil it, feeling guilty, ashamed, defiled rather than satisfied. Warning in verse 7- love is like a burning fire ('Many waters cannot quench love' 8:7)- great in the grate, not so great out of it- people get hurt. Heb 13:4- honour marriage & keep bed undefiled.
- Sex is not dirty, but holy- the two shall become one flesh- uniting 2 people in love-like glue. Man who confessed to masturbation & wanted to pray for no sexual desire- takes away 'you' and the good reason for getting married. Respect your body- 1Cor 6:18- sexual sin is sinning against your own body because you are defiling it-. Delayed gratification- not instant like society- fast food. Learn to control bodies- 1Thess 4:3-8. Self-control is one of the results of the Holy Spirit working in us- be filled & read the Word.
- Masturbation not specifically mentioned in the bible, however Jesus says that looking at someone with lust is committing adultery with them in your heart (Hebrew for 'mind')- Matt 5:27-30. If we stoke the fire it gets hotter, but if we put water on it the flames are subdued- we each have a responsibility to keep the fire in the grate- monogamous marriages between male and female. Eye-gauge-hand cut off- Distraction therapy is useful- Satan finds work for idle hands- keep yourself busy- distract with other things. Deal with loneliness through building some key, strong, healthy relationships. Be accountable to someone you can trust.
- Pornography- not good- addictive, progressive. Job 31:1- make a covenant with eyes not to look with lust. Rom 6:10-14- consider old man dead and present your parts to God in His service instead.  

"Pornography is now considered as addictive as drugs, leading, as with any addiction, to a need for escalated 'doses' and intensity," Swaggart wrote in a 1987 column in the Baton Rouge Morning Advocate. "That, in turn, breeds desensitization, which leads to the acting out of the roles that have been at the heart of the nation's most sensational murder and serial rape cases. Women and children, portrayed as nothing more than debased objects on screen and in print, pay a particularly high price when fantasy turns into reality." Yet, since his youth, Swaggart has given into the urge to watch unnatural sexual acts, according to a fellow clergyman. "There has been a history of it for a good while," the Reverend Glen Cole revealed to reporters. "It would stop for a time and then rise up to happen again." "Something got hold of him and he just couldn't shake it," said Cole, a member of the national governing body of Swaggart's church. Swaggart's inability to kick the porn habit no matter how hard he tried isn't unique. Experts say it is a compulsion every bit as addictive as any drug - and far more dangerous. "There has not been a sex murder in the history of our department in which the killer was not an avid reader of lewd magazines," said Herbert W. Case, a former Detroit, Michigan, police inspector. (Phil Brennan)
- A preacher in San Jose, CA told this sobering tale. He went to Argentina on a mission trip--1000s of mile from home. One afternoon he was reading by the pool at the hotel he was staying. Attractive woman in a skimpy bikini laid down in the lounge chair next to him and started to flirt. He tried to ignore her. Suddenly she screamed, "There's a bee on my bathing suit!" He got up and brushed the bee with his book and went back to his room. The next day when he got on the plane to go home, guess who one of the stewardesses was? The next Sunday at church a man said, "I have a sister who is a stewardess, and she was just in Argentina too. I've been trying to get her to come to church." This preacher said: "Here I was, thousands of miles from home, thinking that nobody would know. And it could have been that two or three weeks later that woman would have walked into the church where I am the preacher."

- Bob Russell, in his book TAKE COMFORT, tells about a friend of his who saw a wrecked car being towed away. The front end was smashed in. On the back was a bumper sticker that read: "Don't Bother Me; I'm Having a Sexual Fantasy." We need to understand that when we get involved in a fantasy it invariably ends up in wrecked lives.
- Q. How are you handling your sexuality?

### **True love is more than a feeling- 2:8-12; 5:2-6**

- The progression of love from the wow of courtship and honeymoon to the familiarity breeds contempt- Must I put my garment on again?
- She rejected his approaches because it became a chore, but then he became offended and left and she panicked. In v10-16 she recalls what first attracted her to him- she brings to mind his good qualities.
- The world says that when feelings fade move on, but love is a decision we make rather than a feeling we have.
- There is a progression that happens in their relationship, seen in the Shulamite's attitude to Solomon: 3:16- 'My beloved is mine and I am his, 6:3- 'I am my beloved's and he is mine', 7:10- 'I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me'- the emphasis is away from possessing the other to serving them. This is Paul's emphasis in 1Cor 7:3-5 (married's bodies belong to each other) and also 1Cor 6:13,20 (the body is for the Lord so glorify God with it). Also Eph 5:28- husbands love wives as their own bodies
- How good are you at forming long-term, quality relationships? How many relationships have stood the test of time? Are there things you need to put right?
- The bride strolled slowly down the aisle, as beautiful as any bride could be. At about the halfway point she noticed the groom had his golf bag and clubs by his side. Arriving at the altar, she sternly demanded, "What are your golf clubs doing here?" He looked her straight in the eye and said, "This won't take all day, will it?"

### **The ultimate relationship in life is between Christ and His Church**

- Is 5:1-7 Isaiah sings to God as his beloved and about Israel as the beloved's vineyard.
- And His banner over me is love. Wedding feast of lamb- Rev 19:7-9. Bride of Christ Rev 21- New Jerusalem- a people prepared- bride prepared in jewels- precious gemstones
- Zeph 3:17- God sings over us. Rejoices over His bride Is 62:4; Deut 30:9
- This is supposed to be a true story from the time of Oliver Cromwell in England. A young soldier had been tried in military court and sentenced to death. He was to be shot at the "ringing of the curfew bell." His fiancée climbed up into the bell tower. Several hours before curfew time and tied herself to bell's huge clapper. At curfew time, when only muted sounds came out of the bell tower, Cromwell demanded to know why the bell was not ringing. His soldiers went to investigate and found the young woman cut and bleeding from being knocked back and forth against the great bell. They brought her down, and, the story goes, Cromwell so impressed with her willingness to suffer in this way on the behalf of someone she loved that he dismissed the soldier saying, "Curfew shall not ring tonight."
- You are loved more than you can imagine. - Eph 5:26-27, 30-32 ('I am speaking about Jesus and the Church')
- To be young, wealthy and in love - all in the third century. And to be a Christian. Such was young Valentine. He would consummate his great love by taking her as his bride. Soon he would be wed. But his pleasurable, orderly world came crashing down around him when the Roman emperor declared all Christians illegal citizens and guilty of treason. All they had to do was say, "Caesar is Lord!" But all they'd say was, "No, Jesus is Lord!" Rather than deny Christ, young Valentine was arrested in the crackdown. In jail, awaiting execution in the arena, he wrote love letters to his girlfriend. Beautiful, passionate letters assuring her of his great love for her. But theirs would be a love not lived out. Arms never entwined in the embrace of husband and wife. On February 14, 269, young Valentine was put to death, martyred for Jesus Christ. Since then, Christians have celebrated his fidelity to Christ and romantic love on the 14th of February by sending our own love letters to special people. And as we do so this year, let us, too, resolve to live for Christ unashamedly. Let us recall that still in our lives, as with young Valentine, there will be unfairness, unfulfilled longings, loneliness, and yet, love. Love more powerful than a tyrant's sword, more lasting than the centuries. For in Christ and in heaven we shall love God and one another for all eternity. And nothing can stop us.

## Summary

- Learn to be creatively expressive of love to God and others.
- Love your body despite it's faults- God does
- Your sexuality is a blessing- learn to glorify God with it
- True love is not dependant on feelings- choose to keep on loving
- God desire relationship with you- you are so precious to Him.

**Song:** *He brought me to His banqueting table. I have heard so many songs*

## **Egyptian love song- taken from a 3000 year old papyrus:**

She is one girl, there is no one like her.  
She is more beautiful than any other.  
Look, she is like a star goddess arising  
at the beginning of a happy new year;  
brilliantly white, bright skinned;  
with beautiful eyes for looking,  
with sweet lips for speaking;  
she has not one phrase too many.  
With a long neck and white breast,  
her hair of genuine lapis lazuli;  
her arm more brilliant than gold;  
her fingers like lotus flowers,  
with heavy buttocks and girt waist.  
Her thighs offer her beauty,  
with a brisk step she treads on ground.  
She has captured my heart in her embrace.  
She makes all men turn their necks  
to look at her.  
One looks at her passing by this one,  
The unique one.

## **Egyptian Love Poetry (Middle Kingdom c2000BC)**

Your love has penetrated all within me Like honey plunged into water,  
Like an odor which penetrates spices, As when one mixes juice in... ..  
Nevertheless you run to seek your sister, Like the steed upon the battlefield,  
As the warrior rolls along on the spokes of his wheels.  
For heaven makes your love Like the advance of flames in straw,  
And its longing like the downward swoop of a hawk.

Disturbed is the condition of my pool. The mouth of my sister is a rosebud.  
Her breast is a perfume. Her arm is a.....bough Which offers a delusive seat.  
Her forehead is a snare of meryu-wood.  
I am a wild goose, a hunted one, My gaze is at your hair,  
At a bait under the trap That is to catch me. (etc.)

## **The Wine Of Love (New Kingdom)**

Oh! when my lady comes, And I with love behold her,  
I take her into my beating heart And in my arms enfold her;  
My heart is filled with joy divine  
For I am hers and she is mine.  
Oh! when her soft embraces Do give my love completeness,

The perfumes of Arabia Anoint me with their sweetness;  
And when her lips are pressed to mine  
I am made drunk and need not wine.

When we kiss, and her warm lips half open,  
I fly cloud-high without beer!  
What paradise gained, what fulfillment,  
what a heavenly turn of affairs!  
Oh, raise one to Menkat, Our Lady of Liquor,  
but keep your mouth tight on the girl!

Love, how I'd love to slip down to the pond,  
bathe with you close by on the bank.  
Just for you I'd wear my new Memphis swimsuit,  
Made of sheer linen, fit for a queen--  
Come see how it looks in the water!  
Couldn't I coax you to wade in with me?  
Let the cool creep slowly around us?  
Then I'd dive deep down and come up for you dripping,  
Let you fill your eyes with the little red fish that I'd catch.

*Our oldest written records come from the civilization of Sumer, which arose in around the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in what is now southern Iraq. Sumerian cuneiform documents dating as far back as 3100 BCE have been found and a flourishing literature developed, which reached its peak in the centuries around 2000 BCE. This literature contains a large collection of love songs:*

### **Ancient Sumerian Love Song: Man Of My Heart**

Man of my heart, my beloved man,  
your allure is a sweet thing, as sweet as honey.  
Man of my heart, my beloved man,  
your allure is a sweet thing, as sweet as honey.

You have captivated me,  
of my own free will I will come to you.  
Man, let me flee with you—into the bedroom.  
You have captivated me;  
of my own free will I shall come to you.  
Lad, let me flee with you—into the bedroom.

Man, let me do the sweetest things to you.  
My precious sweet, let me bring you honey.  
In the bedchamber dripping with honey  
let us enjoy over and over your allure, the sweet thing.  
Lad, let me do the sweetest things to you.  
My precious sweet, let me bring you honey.

Man, you have become attracted to me.  
Speak to my mother and I will give myself to you;  
speak to my father and he will make a gift of me.  
I know where to give physical pleasure to your body—  
sleep, man, in our house till morning.

I know how to bring heart's delight to your heart—  
sleep, lad, in our house till morning.

Since you have fallen in love with me, man,  
if only you would do your sweet thing to me.  
My lord and god, my lord and guardian angel,  
my Cu-Suen who cheers Enlil's heart,  
if only you would handle your sweet place,  
if only you would grasp your place that is sweet as honey.  
Put your hand there for me  
like the cover on a measuring cup.  
Spread your hand there for me  
like the cover on a cup of wood shavings.

### **Ancient Sumerian Love Song: My Honey-Sweet**

"My dearest, my dearest, my dearest, my darling,  
my darling, my honey of her own mother,  
my sappy vine, my honey-sweet,  
my honey-mouthed of her mother!

"The gazing of your eyes is pleasant to me;  
come my beloved sister.  
The speaking of your mouth is pleasant to me,  
my honey-mouthed of her mother.  
The kissing of your lips is pleasant to me;  
come my beloved sister.

"My sister, the beer of your barley is good,  
my honey-mouthed of her mother.  
The ale of your beer-bread is good;  
come my beloved sister.

"My desirable one, my desirable one,  
your charms are lovely,  
my desirable apple garden,  
your charms are lovely.  
My fruitful garden of *mes* trees,  
your charms are lovely,  
my one who is in himself Dumuzid-abzu,  
your charms are lovely.  
My holy statuette, my holy statuette,  
your charms are lovely.  
My alabaster statuette adorned with a lapis-lazuli jewel,  
your charms are lovely."