

# The Offer Of Love • Song of Solomon 5:2-8

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. *The Background*

1. The Song of Solomon is a love poem that tells the story of Solomon and one of his wives - more than likely, the one he loved the most
2. We can say that because while 1 Kings tells us he composed over 1,000 songs, in the opening line of the poem, he calls *this* one the Song of songs
3. And the story behind it sounds like something straight out of Hollywood . . .
4. Solomon had extensive tracts of land in Israel that he had leased out to families who worked them and paid him by giving the royal court a portion of their produce
5. In his pursuit of wisdom and learning and in his desire to experience every kind of life and occupation,
  - a. Solomon would sometimes take off his royal robes and put on the garments of a common man
  - b. then he would go incognito out among the people
6. On one such trip, dressed as a shepherd, and leading a flock of sheep, he decided to go check on the vineyards he had leased out in the central highlands of northern Israel
7. And there he encountered a young girl working on one of his vineyards
8. Of course, she didn't recognize him for who he was, and so they began to talk as equals
9. Being attracted to one another, they kept this up for several days as the love and attraction grew
10. Solomon kept his identity a secret; it was probably deeply gratifying to him to find someone who would love him for himself, not because he was the king
11. And she was thankful that she had found someone who could love her, though her skin was so deeply tanned by the hard work of being outdoors
12. And so - they talked of marriage - and determined that they would be wed.
13. The shepherd told his love that he would return his flock to his home and prepare their new home, when it was ready, he would return for her
14. When he did, he came dressed in all the finery of his position as king
  - a. he had his attendants and body guard
  - b. he rode on a special royal chair, gilt with gold and silver, and carried on the shoulders of several men
  - c. and when he arrived at the village, he called for her by name
15. She answered the summons and when she lifted her eyes to the eyes of the king, she realized - this was her young shepherd
17. So they returned in joy to Jerusalem and the day came for their wedding

### B. *Time Has Passed*

1. As we come to Chapter 5, the wedding is over and Solomon and his new wife have settled into a routine

2. In fact, by this time she is no longer his *new* wife
3. Months, maybe even years have passed and they have both settled into the routine of being married
  - a. Solomon is busy with his work - being king; running the nation
  - b. she is busy with her role as a member of the royal harem
    - 1) she had the responsibilities of raising the children
    - 2) of teaching the new recruits to the harem about how to live in the palace
    - 3) of taking care of the details for the court banquets
    - 4) of making sure the needs of the family were being met
    - 5) to put it in modern terms - she was a *domestic engineer* - a housewife; though her house was a palace!
4. But because the Song of Solomon is a poem that celebrates the joy of marital love, it deals with the inevitable challenge that *routine* can present to the relationship between a husband and a wife if they are not careful
5. A Routine can be good if it helps us remember what needs to be done so that we can take care of business
6. But *sheer* routine, can also sap the sense of excitement and the joy of love
7. We see that here . . .

## II. TEXT

### A. Vs. 2-8

**{2} I sleep, but my heart is awake; It is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, "Open for me, my sister, my love, My dove, my perfect one; For my head is covered with dew, My locks with the drops of the night."**

**{3} I have taken off my robe; How can I put it on again? I have washed my feet; How can I defile them?**

**{4} My beloved put his hand By the latch of the door, And my heart yearned for him.**

**{5} I arose to open for my beloved, And my hands dripped with myrrh, My fingers with liquid myrrh, On the handles of the lock.**

**{6} I opened for my beloved, But my beloved had turned away and was gone. My heart leaped up when he spoke. I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.**

1. It's late one night and she has gone to bed
2. While in that place between wake and sleep, Solomon comes to her room and calls from outside the door for her to let him in
3. If you've been in that place between wake and sleep, you know how you can hear something and wonder if you really heard it or just dreamed it
4. Then you wake up a bit more and realize you actually did hear something
5. That's what happened to her - But she is snuggled warmly under the blankets
6. And her first thought is the bother of getting out of bed, putting on her robe and slippers and opening the door
7. So she makes a lame excuse
8. But by the time she does, she is awake enough to realize how really lame an excuse it is
9. So she gets up and puts on her robe, and slips on her sandals

10. And by the time she crosses the room to open the door, her heart has changed from reluctance to intense desire
11. Now she's ready for him and anticipating the love they will enjoy
12. But he is not there - in her delay, he has turned away - all that is left is the fragrance of his presence
13. Realizing her error in refusing him, she runs out into the street to find him
14. She calls out his name in the night
15. But the city watchmen find her and rebuke her for disturbing the peace . . .

**{7} The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me; The keepers of the walls Took my veil away from me.**

16. So she returns to the palace and goes to the other women of the harem and tells them . . .

**{8} I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, If you find my beloved, That you tell him I am lovesick!**

17. In other words, if any of the other women see Solomon to tell him that she realizes her error and is anxious to be reunited with him

### **B. The Practical Meaning**

1. What we see in this passage is a realistic reflection of married life
2. Newlyweds are passionate in their love for one another
  - a. they are constantly touching
  - b. making goo-goo eyes at each other
  - c. and there is an intense joy and delight they share
3. But as the months and years pass - the passion cools, the intensity fades
  - a. they stop hugging and holding hands
  - b. instead of making eyes at each other, they hardly look at each other
  - c. and the joy and delight have turned into a kind of ho-hum, everyday routine
4. The excitement of the early days, the sense of hunger and desire that marked their first love diminishes
5. And when he says, "Tonight?" She says, "I've got a headache!" or "I'm almost asleep."
6. And the next morning, when he seems more quiet than usual and leaves the house without their usual embrace and goodbye kiss, she remembers back to the night before and a pang of guilt rips her heart
7. So she determines that tonight she will make up for it
  - a. she prepares a special candle-lit dinner - and puts on her most appealing dress
  - b. she changes the sheets and gets herself ready for a really wonderful night
8. But he calls at 5:30 to say that he's going to go to the show with the guys from the office and won't be home till late.
9. She's hurt, but what can she say? - She knows why he's staying out late!
10. And like the woman in the song was hurt by the watchmen, she aches with the sense of regret at the loss of the *passion* that marked an earlier time
11. Where did it go? How was it lost?
12. I would venture to say that every couple here this morning that's been married

- for over 5 years knows precisely what I'm talking about
13. So as we apply this passage *practically*, what are we to do?
  14. The answer is simple: **Don't let passion cool! Don't let desire die!**
  15. Love in marriage needs to be nurtured and cultivated. It needs to be fed
  16. Keep growing in relationship as lovers as well as friends
  17. Work at it, put time and effort into it
  18. Don't let life slip in to auto-pilot while you go to sleep at the wheel
  19. Stay awake and alert and never allow yourself to become so *comfortable* that comfort turns into *boredom*
  20. Now, here's the problem - in marriage, we hear something like this and immediately agree, but start thinking of all the things our *mate* needs to do and to change
    - a. if the spark has gone out of our marriage, we blame it on our mate
    - b. if passion has cooled, it's their fault
  21. Quite frankly, there is no profit in this
  22. Ask yourself what you are *doing* to keep love alive and desire active

### **C. The Spiritual Meaning**

1. But there is another way that we can apply this passage - and it has to do with our relationship with the Lord
2. Both Jewish and Christian scholars have long recognized how the Song of Solomon is a broad picture of the relationship between God and His people
  - a. in the OT, God calls Israel His wife
  - b. and in the NT, the Church is the Bride of Christ
3. In Ephesians 5, the Apostle Paul uses marriage as an illustration of our relationship with Jesus
  - a. we are the bride,
  - b. and He is the bridegroom
4. I think the story behind the song of Solomon is rich with symbolism of Christ and the Church
  - a. the first time He came, He came incognito, *disguised* if you will, to check on His vineyard, the nation of Israel, to see how the keepers were doing with it's fruit
  - b. but they rejected him
  - c. but a small group of the common people fell in love with Him, and He betrothed them to Himself
  - d. then he went away, back to His home to prepare a place for them
  - e. one day he will come again - but this time in all His royal finery and He will take His bride to her new home, where they will be wed and enjoy a joyous marriage feast
5. Our lives now, are lives of waiting for Him to come
6. We are betrothed, engaged, and long for the day that He comes to take us home
7. *While* we wait, we serve, and enjoy a relationship with Him by the Holy Spirit
8. The question is - has that life of waiting and service become *mere routine*?
9. Has the passion and desire that marked us when we first came to faith dimmed?

10. Is our relationship with Jesus just a "going through the motions" - a day-to-day hum-drum?
11. When He calls us to rise and join Him in a time of intimate worship and devotion, are we sleepy and reluctant?
12. Is our service lethargic and lifeless?
13. Are we just going through the motions of going to church, reading our bibles, praying, serving meals at the park, going to the jail or the Rescue mission?
14. When we worshiped this morning, were they love songs? Did you even sing?
  - a. or was your mind on what you have planned for this afternoon?
  - b. cutting the grass, mowing the yard, baking those cookies, playing that computer game
15. Friends, one of the reasons we have to have a steady stream of fresh converts into our fellowship is because they remind those of us that have become jaded of the joy of being saved - of having Jesus as our Lord and Savior
16. What a tragedy it is when the zeal and the passion die; when the desire for Christ cools and a desire for lesser things takes over
17. You see, God has designed us so that desire will always be present in our lives
18. It is this desire in the human heart that moves us to seek Him
19. How sad, when after desire has found it's focus in the only one who can satisfy, we then let it slip to those things that can never satisfy
20. Martin Smith of the group Delirious wrote a song about this
  - a. how our relationship with the Lord can become so routine it blinds us to the kind of intense intimacy Jesus wants to share with us
  - b. the chorus is the cry of one who has been reminded and restored
  - c. all I want is You, all I want is You, all I want is You, Jesus!
21. In Revelation 2, we find a letter Jesus wrote to the Church at Ephesus
  - a. He commended them for their diligence in service - they were the church of the 10 page bulletin they had so much stuff going on
  - b. He commended them for their doctrinal purity and how they refused to put up with error
  - c. from all outward appearances, they were a right on, faithful church
  - d. but they lacked something so critical, that Jesus said if they didn't repent and return to it, in His eyes, they would not even be a church, they would be nothing more than a crowd of good, religious people with busy day-planners
  - e. that one thing, the one *most important* thing, the one thing they had left behind and must recapture - was their first love
22. First Love - you remember what it was like - it was passionate, desirous, keen, intense, it burned with longing

### **III. CONCLUSION**

#### **A. In Love With Jesus**

1. Friends - being a Christian means being in love with Jesus!
2. If it doesn't mean anything else, it means *that*
3. If your walk, your Christian life has become a mere routine, then rekindle the

- fires of your first love
4. Keith Green wrote,  

*Oh Lord, please light the fire  
That once burned bright and clear  
Replace the lamp of my first love  
That burned with holy fear*
  5. Remember who it is who loves you and how great is His desire toward you!
  6. Think about that - Jesus loves you so much, He came and died for your sins so that you could be forgiven and become His bride
  7. The desire of a young person in love palls in comparison to His love and desire for you

### **B. Keep It Burning**

1. Jesus told the story of 10 virgins who were waiting for their bridegroom to come
2. They only knew the season of his coming, not the hour, so they waited
3. It was late at night and they all had their oil lamps lit, attentively listening for his voice calling them
4. But after a while, 5 of them ran out of oil
  - a. they had become careless and instead of trimming their lamps and attending to the flame, they had let it burn without care
  - b. they had turned to other activities and turned up the light so they could see to do these other things
  - c. and so they ran out of oil
  - d. so they asked the other five for some oil
  - e. but there wasn't enough to go around
  - f. and when the bridegroom eventually came, it was only the 5 with their lamps burning who were awake to hear Him call
5. I wonder if Jesus was thinking of this passage in Song of Solomon when He told this parable
  - a. you see, we only have so much life and time and desire
  - b. there are many ways we can spend them
  - c. what better way is there to spend our lives and time and desire than loving Jesus?
6. When He comes, will He find us waiting and ready?
7. Will we be burning brightly for Him?
8. Will must take the time to nurture and cultivate our relationship with Jesus

### **C. Cassie Bernal**

1. We have a course on Sunday evening on the *History of Christianity*
2. Last week we covered the first 300 years of the Church and looked at the persecution those early believers endured
3. It comes as a bit of a shock to realize that the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was seen more martyrs for the Faith than the previous 1900 put together!
4. And when we hear about the steadfast faith of those who went to their death rather than deny Jesus, we are stirred and we ask - if a gun was put to my head

and I was asked if I believed in Jesus, would I have the courage and faith to say "Yes."

5. No doubt 17 year old Cassie Bernall asked herself that same question, but little did she think she would have to answer it
6. Cassie went to school this last Tuesday thinking it was just another day
7. At lunch time, while studying in the library, two young men entered - one stuck a gun in her face and asked, "Do you believe in God?"
8. She replied, "Yes, I believe in God." It was the last words she spoke!
9. Friends - persecution of Christians has come to our shores - how long till it comes to our own city?
10. It's time to wake up and love Jesus with all our heart, soul, mind and strength