

Sermon Notes

Song of Songs 5:2-6a; 2Corinthians 11:1-4
 "Spiritual Purity"
 A Sermon Meditation Series on the Song of Songs
 February 16, 2020

Literal Reading of Song of Songs 5:2-6a

- 1) Today's text, when taken in a literal fashion, is pretty straight forward.
- 2) In SoS 5:2 the woman is either dreaming about, or is awakened by, her beloved knocking on her door because he wants his darling to be "open" to him.
 - a) He expresses his love for her in very intimate language.
 - i) *"My darling", "my dove", "my perfect one!"*
 - ii) *"My sister"* is an ancient way of expressing affection. SoS 4:9-10,12; 5:1-2
 It is not stating they are biologically related.
 (Which, of course, is forbidden in Scripture.) Lev 18; Amos 2:7; 1Cor 5:1
 - b) The man has braved the elements and traveled throughout the night to come to her.
- 3) The woman responds with enthusiasm, coyness, while being flirtatious. SoS 5:3
 - a) Befitting a woman!
 - b) From the Garden of Eden until the 1960's it was assumed that men should pursue women and that women have a societal responsibility to be discerning about whom they give themselves to.
- 4) In SoS 5:4, the man continues to pursue his beloved (he *"extended his hand through the opening"*).
 - a) This excites her. SoS 5:4
 - b) She is perfumed with myrrh, which is a very expensive cosmetic and a purification oil for women, especially for royalty with romantic/marriage implications. Num 5:15; Esther 2:12; Ps 45:8; Prov 7:17; SoS 1:13; 3:6; 5:1,5,13
 - c) Thus she stands and goes to him to "open" herself up to her beloved. SoS 5:5-6a

Allegorical Reading of Song of Songs 5:2-6a

- 1) SoS 5:2-6a is a great example of why one cannot read it literally.
 - a) They are not married!
 - b) A literal reading would teach against the core biblical teaching on sexual morality: Ex 20:14; Matt 19:4-6,18; Rom 13:13; 1Cor 6:9; Gal 5:19-21; 1Tim 3:2,12; Heb 13:4; 1Pet 4:3
 Total abstinence before marriage
 and total monogamy within marriage.
- 2) Pastor Doug strongly believes in reading the Song as an allegory.
 - a) It is really about desiring spiritual union between Christ (the man / Bridegroom) and His Church (the woman / bride).
 - b) It is the only book in the Bible one reads as an allegory, so it is unique.
 - c) This means it is about meditating on a work of art instead of reading it as a manual to get systematic doctrine.
 - d) As long as you ponder about something biblically then you're meditating on it correctly.

- 3) This requires maturity:
- a) Maturity in handling its earthy romantic imagery.
 - b) Maturity in having a strong understanding of the rest of Scripture and a strong, mature biblical theology to set orthodox parameters.
- 4) An example of a bad allegorical reading would be . . .
- a) Since the woman is being coy and the man is being the pursuer it is okay for “Christians” to be coy when Christ’s grace pursues us.
 - i) Therefore someone can have a true faith in Christ while keeping it “private.”
 - ii) “Private” meaning someone who’s “faith” never is shown by their words, doctrines they hold, or works that focus on loving God.
 - b) If you’re creating a doctrine from the SoS that is not only not found in Scripture but is contrary to biblical teaching you’re reading the SoS wrong!
 - c) It is okay to be an introvert (there is no personality type command in Scripture) but it is not okay to have a faith that doesn’t impact your thinking, speaking and actions.
 - d) The Lord Jesus harshly teaches against such a “private” faith.
 - i) *“For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”*
- Matt 12:37
 - ii) *“But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.”* – Matt 10:33
 - iii) Or Christ’s warning to the church at Laodicea, *“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.”* – Rev 3:15-16
- 5) A good allegorical reading of the SoS would not create any new doctrine but would encourage one to ponder a doctrine(s) taught elsewhere in Scripture.
- a) For example: The woman in SoS 5:2-6a clearly wants union with her beloved but there is still a sense of feminine coyness befitting her gender.
 - b) The purpose of the Christian life is “union with Christ.”
 - c) This is about both passion and purity.
 - d) This imagery makes one (at least for Pastor Doug) think about 2Cor 11:2

2Corinthians 11:1-4

- 1) Paul writes in 2Cor 11:2, *“For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.”*
 - a) He has an intense desire for the church at Corinth to be godly, holy and fully in Christ.
 - b) As he began in 1Corinthians, *“For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”* – 1Cor 2:2
- 2) Paul equates this desire as being like a good and godly father who desires to protect and provide the best for his beloved daughter.

- a) [What is listed below is highly offensive to our godless, secular, morally insane & irrational modern culture. However, it is the assumption of Solomon (the author of the SoS) and Paul (the author of 2Corinthians). It is also the norm throughout all history, until the 1960's, and most importantly is biblical. See last week's sermon for more details.¹]
- b) This means protecting her honor by protecting her virginity.
- c) For it is a special, high and godly calling for a woman to be a wife and mother.
- d) Because women have a special strength and calling to promote and protect chastity and domesticity.
- e) A father guides his daughter from the protection of his house to the protection of her husband's house; giving her to a godly, strong and kind man.
- f) Where the new couple becomes one and creates a new family, because men and women need each other and their different strengths compliment the other's weaknesses.
- 3) So the apostle's, or any godly Christian leader's, main purpose is to protect and provide for the flock, with the end goal of having the saints be ready to be with Christ for eternity.
- a) Because the church is the "bride of Christ." Rev 18:23; 19:7-9; 21:2,9
- b) And church leaders are to shepherd the flock like a father would protect his daughter. 1Cor 4:15; Gal 4:19; Philem 10; 1John 2:1,12,28; 3:7,18; 4:4; 5:2
- c) With a "godly jealousy" as Paul describes it. 2Cor 11:2
- 4) But what is this "purity" (as a "pure virgin") Paul talking about with regards to the church?
- a) Our "purity", our "spiritual virginity" (as it were), is of course not from ourselves but from Christ's perfect righteousness imputed/credited to us, which we receive by grace alone, through faith alone, on account of Christ alone.²
- b) However, Paul is focusing on sanctification here in 2Corinthians, that by-product of our justification, that daily walk of dying to sin and living for Christ.
- c) Yet what good work in particular is Paul talking about in 2Cor 11:2?
- i) True, Christians should be sexually pure, for the "*marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*" – Heb 13:4
- ii) And certainly, Christians must do good works in general: "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*" – Eph 2:10
- iii) This is not what he has in mind, however; instead it is something more foundational.
- 5) Look at the context of 2Cor 11:3 Paul's concern that just as Eve was led astray by Satan, the Corinthians minds will be "*led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.*"
- a) This is about the mind, getting one's thinking and doctrine right!
- b) Because where the mind leads words & deeds follow.

¹ Gen 2:7,18-24; 3:17; 3:15-16; 38:11; Ex 22:16-17; Num 30:16; Deut 22:16-19; Prov 31:10-31; Is 3:4,10; Matt 1:19; 19:5; Mark 10:7-8; 1Cor 6:16; 7:25; 11:8ff; 14:35; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1Tim 2:9-15; 3:2-5; 5:2,8; Titus 2:5; 1Pet 3:1-7.

² Matt 16:16-17; John 6:28-29; Acts 8:22; 13:39; 15:11; 16:14; Rom 1:16-17; 3:20-21,24,28; 10:3-4; Gal 2:16; 3:11; Eph 2:8-9; Phil 1:29; 3:9; 2Tim 1:9; 2:25; Heb 12:2; 1Pet 1:5.

- c) As Paul writes elsewhere, *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”* – Rom 12:2
- i) It is a tragedy that many modern Christians think of *“simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ”* as being the opposite of doctrine.
 - ii) One of the great deceptions of Satan in this present age is the doctrine that feelings and experiences trump clear biblical systematic thinking.
 - iii) Everything is doctrine, the only question is whether it is good or bad doctrine.
- 6) This is not what Scripture has in mind, which Paul makes clear in the next verse:
- a) *“For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.”* – 2Cor 11:4
 - b) Note what being a “pure virgin” spiritually means: Discerning between correct and false teaching, based on biblical apostolic authority, which is primarily concerned about getting the doctrines of the Gospel right.
 - c) How many modern Christians are concerned about getting the Gospel right?
(There are whole books in the Bible about this! Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, etc.)
- 7) This purity of doctrine is a major theme throughout Scripture.
- a) The main job of a pastor is to preach and teach the word correctly. 2Tim 3:16-4:5
 - b) Christians are called to be good Bereans, to test all teaching by Scripture and support and encourage correct teaching. Acts 17:10-11
1Cor 16:15-16; Heb 13:17
 - c) The first and greatest commandment is to “love God” which requires us to know which God to love, to avoid worshipping Him in a false manner, to use His name with fear, never putting words into His mouth He has never said, and to find our rest in the correct worship of Him alone by His Son! This is the first four of the Ten Commandments, this is doctrine! Matt 22:36-40;
Ex 20:1-17;
Deut 5:5-21;
Heb 4:1ff
 - d) This is why the Scriptures equate idolatry with spiritual adultery. Judg 2:17; 8:27; 1Chr 5:25; Ps 106:39; Jer 3:1;
Ezek 6:9; 16:15ff; Hos 4:12; James 4:4
- 8) If our spiritual purity comes from Christ’s Gospel it is imperative we get the Gospel right!
- a) As John wrote, *“And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him (Christ) purifies himself, just as He is pure (like a virgin).”* – 1John 3:3
 - b) This means having a concern and zeal for correct doctrine.
 - c) This drives our worship (again the first four of the Ten Commandments), how we love each other, do good works, and the whole of the Christian life.
- 9) We must be very concerned who we give ourselves to spiritually,
- a) Like a virgin waiting for her true beloved.
 - b) Because we are to have full union with the Bridegroom, Christ.
 - c) Praise God that He gives us the church to guide us like a Father protects His beloved daughter.