

The Song of Solomon 8:6,7

In recent years marriage has been on a fast decline. It is not always understood nowadays to be a lifelong commitment. Sometimes, it is considered that cohabitation is a better option, especially as far as the finance is concerned.

Consequently, the word 'love' has taken on many connotations. It often is associated with a way of life that is sordid and promiscuous. I believe that churches and Christians have much to answer for because we haven't always emphasised the commitment that is to be involved.

I only mention this in passing this morning because we are going to concentrate again on God's love, ... a precious love, a true love, an eternal love. It's the kind of love that we talk about when we say,

- * For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,
- * We love him, because he first loved us.

How beautiful is the love that is so eminently portrayed in the Song of Solomon.

Here was a woman who had all her friends around her (vv.8,9), and we have already seen that they don't fully understand the relationship between the Bride and the Bridegroom.

- * We have also seen that what they didn't completely understand they tried to fabricate, - but that's another angle we could study, ... we'll leave it for another day!

You go out from this church and tell the first person you meet of your love for the Lord Jesus Christ. They would take a look at you! They would think you were mad! They wouldn't, - couldn't, - understand. So it was with these friends, - they just couldn't comprehend the love between our two main characters.

And here she is, - the Bride, and she turns to her Beloved again and she makes ...

A SINCERE REQUEST

“Set me as a seal upon thine heart, ...”

- * On June 15th, 1215 King John [*of Robin Hood fame*] met with a group of barons at a place called Runnymede, in a meadow just outside London.
- * He was unpopular, he had pushed his authority too far, and his power was being curbed/limited.
- * A document was set in front of him to sign, ...the *Magna Carta*.
- * Also on the desk in front of him was a royal seal, - the most important imprint in the whole of the kingdom.
 - * lands and subjects were bartered and controlled by that seal,
 - * lives were committed to prison and to the executioner by way of that seal,
 - * that was an important implement lying on the desk before him.
- * Much as he didn't want to on that particular occasion, King John had to take the seal and make his royal mark on that document.
- * When he stamped the *Magna Carta* his seal was applied and nothing, nor no-one, could remove it.
- * You see, when you *seal* something you put a mark upon it that can never be erased/rubbed out/changed.
- * And here, ... in the Song of Solomon, the Bride is calling for her Bridegroom to place upon her heart his indelible, unmoveable royal seal.
- * Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ that was what God the Father did when you were sealed by the Holy Spirit,
 - * The Bible tells us that you were immersed, - not sprinkled, - you were baptised in the Holy Spirit.
- * Do you catch hold of what that means?
 - * It doesn't mean you go jumping around, jiving about, and swinging your arms in the air like an idiot,
- * Here's what it means, - it means that when you are baptised in the Spirit He has placed 'His seal upon your heart' and you are His, ... *and not an other's*,
 - * God has put His imprint upon your life,
 - * And you are born again of the Holy Spirit, *you are God's!*
- * He has given you a deep, deep love for Himself and a desire to come to know Him better through His Word.
- * Yes, this woman made a sincere request as she looked to Him,
- * ... and oh! How He would have looked at her! How He would have seen her beauty, ... for this is the One He loves.
- * And the request she made in the garden mentioned in the Song of Solomon was answered at Calvary,

- * Eph. 1:13,14 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
- * There's another beautiful thought behind this seal/earnest/deposit,
 - * It used to be when you went into a shop and you saw something you wanted, but you couldn't afford it, you put a deposit on it so that when you had the full amount you could return and claim it for your own.
 - * Similarly, if you know Christ as your Saviour you are sealed in Him by the Guarantor Who is the Holy Spirit,
 - * - you are God's; He has His mark upon you,
 - * and someday soon He's coming back for you, to claim you, and He will take you to Himself for all eternity.
 - * You are 'set aside' for Christ, - you have the mark of God, - and you will rise to meet Him when He soon returns to *rapture* His Church.
- * Indeed, this is a beautiful and *a sincere request*,
 "Set me as a seal upon thine heart ..."

A SIMPLE REASONING

"... for love is strong as death."

- * Many of you have lost a loved one; ... and isn't it true that the love you had for them never dies?!
- * You are so looking forward to being reunited with them in glory.
- * That is how the Bride could say, "for love is strong as death".
- * Isn't death the place where love was proved the strongest?!
 - * ... when our Saviour died for people who were steeped in sin,
 - * ... when the people to whom He had shown the goodness of God stretched Him out on a cross,
 - * ... when He faced all the fires of hell as He atoned for our sin,
 - * surely, at the cross, Jesus Christ demonstrated that "love is as strong as death".
- * Would you have done it? Would you have hung there at the cross and died there for people who mocked you?
- * Would you even have hung on the cross for the person in front of you this morning, or the person behind you?
- * The Bride says to her Bridegroom, "*our* love is as strong as death".

- * Through the love of God on the cross Christ broke the back of Satan (a fatal blow/wound).
- * There is coming a day when the self-proclaimed god of this world:
 - * ... who causes governments to concoct laws in opposition to Biblical principles,
 - * ... who sets up men who are adulterers and the like in high places,
 - * ... who uses the apostate and ungodly ecclesiastical prelates to pollute the church of our day,
 - * aye, ... there is coming a day, - *praise God*, - when that old enemy, the devil, will be taken along with the false prophet and the antichrist, and they will be cast into the eternal lake of fire, ... *and hell won't be full until they are in it!*
- * That is the love God demonstrated towards those who are His,
 - * He loves them with a special love,
 - * He loves them with a protecting love,
 - * He loves them with the love of One Who died for our sins on the cruel cross of Calvary.
- * Far from defeating Christ on Calvary, with the last nail that was hammered into His precious body Satan and his kingdom was crushed below the hammer of God.
- * God's love on Calvary was the final blow in the devil's defeat.
- * Do you *feel* the victory? Do you *know* the victory?
- * Aye, can you say with the agreement of your heart, that Jesus died for you on Calvary?
- * ... and, as a consequence, "love is as strong as death".

She is getting so excited now this woman, - and if there is not even a wee tremor of excitement in *your* heart you make sure to talk to God about it today! She is getting so excited, ...

A SOUND RECOGNITION

"Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it"

- * Didn't I hint at this earlier? Death cannot quench love, much less "many waters"!
- * Such is the depth of their love.
- * I love Church History, especially the early period up to 325 A.D.

- * Later on, in Church History, I love reading about the faithfulness of the men and women of God in their fight against Rome and the other pagan and anti-Christian authorities.
- * They unflinchingly and unhesitatingly laid down their lives for the sake of Christ, - such was their love for Him.
- * I was reading about a man from Paris who hid many Christians in his home during the time of John Calvin and who faithfully preached the Gospel.
- * This man was taken and hauled in front of the Roman authorities and condemned to death,
 - * before they burned him to death they cruelly cut out his tongue.
- * Yet that man, and many others before and since, was *bound* in Christ by an unshakeable love.
- * Not all the fiery floods of hell can quench the love that God by the work of the Holy Spirit implants in the heart of the believer.
- * Ah! ... this Bride loved her Bridegroom, - nothing, NOTHING, could weaken that love!

Conclusion.

- * It's a tremendous picture that is drawn for us here throughout the Song of Solomon.
- * I hope that you have enjoyed looking at this 'love affair'.
- * And I trust you haven't seen a soppy story with no depth to it,
- * No, I trust that God has warmed your heart as this Song has caused you to treasure the love you have with the Saviour.
- * If it hasn't, and you say you are a Christian, look again!
 - * I'm not talking about my ability or otherwise to draw the picture, no, because how your heart is touched is not by me, - I'm only the instrument, - it's God that brings the light.
- * If you say you are a Christian but there's nothing of the love of God in your life you come to Him today and cry out to Him to do a work of regeneration in your life.
- * Tell Him you see how undeserving you are,
- * Tell Him you recognise His love and you understand that you are a sinner in need of His grace;

* C.H. Spurgeon recorded,

There was a day, as I took my walks abroad, when I came hard by a spot for ever engraven upon my memory, for there I saw this Friend, my best, my only Friend, murdered. I stooped down in sad affright, and looked at Him. I saw His hands had been pierced with rough iron nails, and His feet had been rent in the same way. There was misery in His dead countenance so terrible that I scarcely dared to look upon it. His body was emaciated with hunger, His back was red with bloody scourges, and His brow had a circle of wounds about it: clearly could one see that these had been pierced with thorns. I shuddered, for I had known this Friend full well. He never had a fault; He was the purest of the pure, the holiest of the holy. Who could have injured Him? For He never injured any man: all His life long "He went about doing good"; He had healed the sick, He had fed the hungry, He had raised the dead: for which of these works did they kill Him? He had never breathed out anything else but love; and as I looked into the poor sorrowful face, so full of agony, and yet so full of love, I wondered who could have been a wretch so vile as to pierce hands like His. I said within myself, "Where can these traitors live? Who are these that could have smitten such an One as this?" had they murdered an oppressor, we might have forgiven them; had they slain one who had indulged in vice or villainy, it might have been his desert; had it been a murderer and a rebel, or one who had committed sedition, we would have said, "Bury this corpse: justice has at last given him his due." But when Thou wast slain, my best, my only-beloved, where lodged the traitors? Let me seize them, and they shall be put to death. If there can be torments that I can devise, surely they shall endure them all. Oh! What jealousy, what revenge I felt! If I might but find these murderers, what would I not do with them! And as I looked upon that corpse, I heard a footstep, and wondered where it was. I listened, and I clearly perceived that the murderer was close at hand. It was dark, and I groped about to find him. I found that, somehow or other, wherever I put out my hand, I could not meet with him, for he was nearer to me than my hand would go. At last I put my hand upon my breast. "I have thee now," said I; for lo! He was in my own heart; the murderer was hiding within my own bosom, dwelling in the recesses of my inmost soul. Ah! Then I wept indeed, that I in the very presence of my murdered Master, should be harbouring the murderer, and felt myself most guilty while I bowed over His corpse, and sang that plaintive hymn –

"Twas you, my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were;
Each of my crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear.