

“A Deeper Love” | Rev. Josh Keller | November 17, 2019

Song of Solomon 1:2-3,5-7 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine; 3 your anointing oils are fragrant...

5 I am very dark, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon. 6 Do not gaze at me because I am dark, because the sun has looked upon me. My mother's sons were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept! 7 Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon; for why should I be like one who veils herself beside the flocks of your companions?

Revelation 19:6-9 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; 8 it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. 9 And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”

John 4:16-19, 39-42 Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” 17 The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband.

What you have said is true.” 19 The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet... 39 Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.” 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his word. 42 They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

Intro Question

In his book *Seculosity*, David Zahl talks about trying to find our “enoughness” in romantic love, that each of us is searching for the reassurance “not that we're loved, so much as lovable” (19, italics Zahl's). The possibility that we might be rejected in our search sparks the question: How does a Christian deal with this kind of rejection?

Background

(1) *The Darkness Song of Solomon*

Song of Solomon speaks of the euphoria of love (the Yin) and the insecurity and darkness of doubts (the Yang). The king's lover knows she is beautiful, but she is also dark, a metaphor for feelings of insecurity and inferiority. The tents of Kedar represent the darkness in her life, referring to the black cloth tents of the descendants of Ishmael, the rejected son of Abraham. Julie Martinez reflects this human fear in her poem, “Am I not Lovely Enough?” We want, we need the transcendent thrill of finding out that despite our darkness, we are lovable.

(2) *The Limits of Romantic Love*

The search for a “soul mate” involves deeply religious terminology. We seek the completer, the match, the missing part that makes us whole, the fixer of our souls, placing a crushing weight on the soul mate. Ernst Becker says that the soul mate myth implies “apocalyptic romance” in which the love partner “becomes the divine ideal.” Thus, romance replaces religion. Esther Perel says we ask someone to cover the darkness in our souls.

What may happen:

- (a) We may never find someone. We assume we are permanently looking.
- (b) We may never really settle because of impossibly high expectations.
- (c) We may meet someone, but we may hide all of our darkness for fear that we might lose him or her if we reveal our own souls.

(3) *A Deeper Love John 4*

The Samaritan woman announces that Jesus “told me all that I ever did.” He saw into her darkness and offered her a deeper love. This deeper love encompasses access to and a relationship with the God who created the world. When the townspeople meet Jesus, they conclude, “Surely this is the savior of the world.”

God declares through the cross and resurrection that we are his beloved, and that romantic love is but a picture, a taste, the tiniest participation in the deeper love we have from God.

Conclusion/Application

Two responses from Revelation 19

First, rejoice and celebrate. His love brings our other loves into right order. Next, prepare by putting on the wedding garments, which are the righteous deeds of the saints. Live for others, not off of others.

Discuss

What values do secular stories in film and on the television communicate about romantic love? How does this secular love differ from God's love for us? Are you living, or have you influenced someone else to live in the shadow of an unfulfilled search for love by perpetuating the myth of “apocalyptic romance”? What can you do to redirect both yourself and that other person towards the love that God gives through Christ? Discuss Josh's statement that the deeper love brings all other loves into right perspective. What does this proper perspective look like? What “wedding garments” are you putting on to prepare for this divine love?