



gracefellowship

Song of Solomon 3
The Royal Wedding
March 8, 2020

:: Song of Solomon 3

We have been following the love story between Solomon and the woman he has asked to marry him- we know her as only as the Shulammite Woman. Today we are going to see them take the plunge from dating and courtship into marriage! We get to be part of the crowd at the royal wedding!

People love the idea of elaborate royal weddings. I think over half the Hallmark Christmas movies involve an American girl falling in love with the Prince of some small island and then getting married...not that I watch Hallmark Christmas movies or anything!

And it actually happened in our country a few years ago! Meghan Markle, an American actress, married Prince Harry. By show of hands how many of you tuned in to watch that blessed event? You weren't alone! 29.2 million Americans watched the ceremony carried by 15 US networks! There is something we romanticize about when it comes to Royal Weddings.

However, before we get to the wedding today we are going to see another snapshot that reveals the fear and insecurity the Shulammite woman has leading up to her wedding. The book is arranged like snap shots of the relationship between Solomon and his bride. Let's read this together and start back in chapter 2.

:: Song of Solomon 2:16-3:5

She

16 My beloved is mine and I am his; he browses among the lilies.

17 Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the rugged hills.

1 All night long on my bed I looked for the one my heart loves; I looked for him but did not find him.

2 I will get up now and go about the city, through its streets and squares; I will search for the one my heart loves. So I looked for him but did not find him.

3 The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. “Have you seen the one my heart loves?”

4 Scarcely had I passed them when I found the one my heart loves. I held him and would not let him go till I had brought him to my mother’s house, to the room of the one who conceived me.

5 Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.

THE NIGHTMARE

In Chapter 3 the Shulammite woman is describing a nightmare scenario. I believe she is expressing her fears through a dream she had. In her dream, once she is married to Solomon, he doesn’t come at night. She looks for him, but he isn’t there. She feels scared and alone.

She is expressing fear that his responsibilities as King will take priority over his responsibilities as husband.

But notice something, she is proactive rather than reactive. She doesn’t just sit in her fears and not do anything about them, in her dream she confronts the issue with action.

Here is my encouragement to us in our marriages and really, in all of our relationships: Be solution-centered not problem-centered. (From Dr. Kurt Trucksess, *Solomon on Sex*) She doesn’t assume the worst, or sit and stew, letting her anger rise because her expectations weren’t met, she gets up and goes looking for her love.

She asks for help in verse 3:

3 “The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city, ‘Have you seen the one my heart loves?’”

Encouragement: **When problems arise in your marriage don’t hide it and feel like you have to deal with them alone. Get the help of a loving third party.**

I always tell couples as they are doing premarital counseling with me that there is a ton of benefit from preparing for marriage by getting biblical counseling before the wedding. There is even more benefit in getting biblical counsel from people who love you once the rubber hits the road and you are dealing with all the issues marriage can and will bring to light!

- Let me tell you that I didn’t realize how selfish I was until after we were married and had to truly learn to share my life with Heather! I needed some men I could trust to speak into my life and guide me to Scripture and the power of the Holy Spirit to deal with my selfishness!

Don't be afraid to ask for help dealing with issues in your marriage! We all need it!

Homework #1: Talk together about someone/a couple whom you would both agree to give access to your life and talk with when a problem arises in your marriage. Be sure to choose people who will give you wise, biblical counsel.

If you're single this applies to you as well. Who do you have in your life that you can go to for wisdom and counsel? Don't attempt to do life alone. Pursue God's best for your life with the help of others.

Look back at the passage with me to see what happens next. The guards couldn't help her find Solomon, so she kept looking on her own.

4 Scarcely had I passed them when I found the one my heart loves. I held him and would not let him go till I had brought him to my mother's house, to the room of the one who conceived me.

In her dream, the Shulammitte says once she found her beloved, she did not let him go! In fact, she took him to her mother's house!

Here is what I think is going on here: She is country girl and is afraid that in moving to the palace she will never see her husband. He will be busy with work and she will be sleeping alone most nights. She wants to bring him to the country, where she grew up and where they will be together without the busyness of palace life. In the country she has him all to herself!

I want you to notice how she refers to Solomon throughout this passage; she calls him "the one my heart loves." Four times we see her refer to him with in that way. Solomon has captured her heart. This is so much deeper than simple physical desire. We said in the last chapter that as their love deepened, so too did their desire for sexual intimacy. But true intimacy is so much more than two people mixing it up sexually.

Solomon won the heart of this woman by building emotional intimacy.

He spoke to her insecurities and reassured her of her beauty and worth. She felt emotionally safe with him. Solomon and his fiancé were probably able to talk with one another about anything without fear of rejection.

Solomon won her heart by providing physical and relational security for her.

In chapter 2 she described him as a noble fruit tree in the forest with his branches covering her. She feels completely safe with Solomon and can rest under his protection.

Solomon won her heart by pursuing spiritual intimacy with her.

They did things God's way prior to marriage. In chapter 2 and again in the next verse we will see there is a phrase about not awakening love until it so desires-

which in this context means, don't bring sexual intimacy into the relationship until you are married and in a covenant relationship with your spouse.

Why is it important for us to bring these things to light? Because marriage can't be built solely on physical attraction and sexual desire. If your spouse doesn't feel emotionally safe with you, they won't feel free to become vulnerable at a heart level.

- Husbands, our wives find intimacy through safety and security. This doesn't mean you have to be an action hero or fortify your house like a compound. It simply means your wife opens the door to physical intimacy much easier when she feels the security of your exclusive love.
Make her feel safe in knowing she is your highest priority, second only to God.
Make her feel safe by working to provide financial security.
Make her feel safe by pursuing spiritual health in your home.

Solomon is about to demonstrate all these things to his fiancé again leading up to the wedding! It is very important to know where we are headed: chapter 4 will open the door to the honeymoon suite; but prior to this couple experiencing physical intimacy they have spent 3 chapters developing spiritual intimacy, emotional intimacy and relational security.

Then again, for the second time this phrase occurs:

5 “Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.”

Different translations credit this being said by different people. My NIV has this being spoken by the Shulammitte. However, I think I agree with other people who put this as Solomon's voice. It may still be in the dream, or she may have told Solomon and her friends about the dream, but the response is that Solomon repeats what was said earlier: men and women need to approach sexual intimacy the way he and his fiancé have- with godly integrity.

Desire for sexual intimacy in a relationship at this stage is a good and godly thing. Sexual attraction is celebrated, but it is also given boundaries to be enjoyed best and most fully. He doesn't warn the young women not to have sexual feelings or attractions to the men they are courting, he warns them not to take sex outside the covenant relationship of marriage. Sex is a gift to mankind. But God, who created the gift, gets to define how it is best used. Too many people have the opinion that the Bible says sex is bad. The Bible never says sex is bad! The Bible says sexual immorality is bad! When we take sexual intimacy into a relationship without emotional intimacy, physical and relational security as well as spiritual intimacy, we abuse the gift God has given to us to enjoy. These are the things the covenant of marriage is meant to create and grow.

THE WEDDING

:: Song of Solomon 3:6-11

6 Who is this coming up from the wilderness like a column of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and incense made from all the spices of the merchant?

7 Look! It is Solomon's carriage, escorted by sixty warriors, the noblest of Israel,

8 all of them wearing the sword, all experienced in battle, each with his sword at his side, prepared for the terrors of the night.

9 King Solomon made for himself the carriage; he made it of wood from Lebanon.

10 Its posts he made of silver, its base of gold. Its seat was upholstered with purple, its interior inlaid with love. Daughters of Jerusalem,

11 come out, and look, you daughters of Zion. Look on King Solomon wearing a crown, the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day his heart rejoiced.

Question: Do you have a favorite memory from your wedding day? Heather and I were married on July 12th- middle of the summer. In Atlanta, GA. Outside at a botanical garden! We just knew it was going to be 100 degrees that day. But God shined down on us in grace and gave us overcast skies, a morning rain and 70 degree temps! Because of the overcast skies our pictures in the gardens were beautiful. And no one passed out from having a heat stroke! We still talk about that day and marvel at the weather God gave us.

Homework #2: Married couples, sit down together and share favorite memories from your wedding day, reliving that occasion.

Singles, put some thought into what you hope that day will be like. Journal some ideas for how you envision your wedding day. Then don't be afraid to ask God for the right person to share that day with. Pray specifics and don't be shy in continuing to ask God for that mate who will be a perfect fit for you. Your Father wants to hear from you about the things that are the desire of your heart.

As we get back to the wedding of Solomon and the Shulammitte...

Historically, the bride-to-be would wait for the groom to build onto his family's home a room for them to live in. The groom would come for the bride when everything was prepared. The bride did not know when that moment would come, so she waited in daily expectation of his arrival.

This day, the Shulammitte woman looks out and sees the smoke rising, and she smells the incense burning, signaling the arrival of her groom and her wedding day!

This is where I want you to see how Solomon once again works to develop intimacy with his wife in a way that will allow her to be prepared for the next step in their relationship of enjoying marital bliss.

First, we are told there are columns of smoke coming out of the wilderness. The smoke is said to be perfumed with myrrh and incense. This was meant not only to draw attention, but to be an offering to God. I think this speaks to Solomon leading spiritually and keeping the pursuit of God at the front of their relationship. This always brings images to mind of the way God led His people in a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire as they went through the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. Solomon is making sure to keep God in view as their wedding approaches.

Second, Solomon sent a motorcade for her! The text says Solomon's carriage, but it was not a horse drawn carriage, it was a large wooden box, or potentially even a bed decorated lavishly. This speaks to the value he places on her. This gift is Solomon providing emotional security for his bride- he's saying, "In case you still doubt your worth/value, you're worth the very best I have!"

Third, the carriage is escorted by 60 warriors- all wearing a sword! Solomon made preparations for meet her need for physical security. I'm just guessing she had no issues climbing onto that bed and letting those men carry her to the wedding!

The route to carry her would have probably gone from the region of the Dead Sea, the lowest place on earth and progressed with a 15 mile climb to the city of Jerusalem.

In the middle of verse 10 we see that all the attention to detail Solomon has taken and the expense and trouble he has gone to pays off in the eyes of his bride!

She calls the women to come out and see.

"Daughters of Jerusalem, come out, and look, you daughters of Zion."

She is pumped up about this being her wedding day and it overflows with her doing something out of the ordinary for her thus far in the book: she calls attention to herself! Solomon's love and lavishness has changed her. But she isn't just calling attention to her, she wants to brag on her man, too!

11 Look on King Solomon wearing a crown, the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day his heart rejoiced.

The wedding is a public declaration of love. This is the time they will enter into a covenant agreement to stand by one another's sides until death do them part. In the New Testament Jesus said,

7 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,
8 and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh.
9 Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."
(Mark 10:7-9)

This is the wedding day. This is the day that brings rejoicing! This is the day a man and woman stand together in front of their family and friends and make vows to one another as they enter into a covenant relationship. And that's exactly what marriage is- a covenant. Marriage isn't a contract. In a contract if someone doesn't keep their end of the agreement, we nullify the deal and walk away. If you sign up for a phone contract and they stop providing you service, you stop sending them money! A covenant operates differently. A covenant says I will pledge to love and honor you even if you don't keep your end of the deal. We talk about being in covenant relationship with God and the Bible even describes the Church as the Bride of Christ. Jesus initiated the covenant through his death, burial and resurrection. When we accept His covenant love we can be sure that God remains faithful to us even when we are unfaithful to Him. Our sinful nature will continue to wage war against our love for Jesus. But Jesus is resolved in His covenantal love to pursue us and draw us back to Him no matter what we have done. And one day, we will stand in the presence of Jesus at what the Bible calls the Day of the Lord. This is the day the Lord returns and initiates His eternal reign with His bride by His side. We are even told in Revelation that we will share in a wedding feast with Jesus! In Jewish culture they didn't just have a wedding celebration that lasted a few hours; their wedding celebrations lasted a week! When Jesus was at the wedding at Cana in Galilee the host of the celebration ran out of wine. That's because the party had been going on night and day for a week!

The Bible tells us that God exists outside of space and time- to God a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a day. What if the wedding supper we share when we are finally united with Jesus is a 7,000 year celebration to kick off eternity? What a day of rejoicing that will be!

Life Group Discussion Questions:

Ice Breaker: Describe a great memory you have from attending a wedding- yours or someone close to you.

Has anyone attempted any of the homework over the past 3 weeks you would be willing to share about?

Read Song of Solomon 3 together as a group.

1. What stood out to you from this passage or from the message on Sunday?

2. There are two “snapshots” in this chapter: the Shulammitte woman has a nightmare about being alone in her marriage to Solomon and then we see the wedding ceremony.
 - a. Did you have any fears entering your marriage? How did you address those things?
If single, what fears exist in your mind about marriage?
3. Last week and again this week we saw this couple asking for outside help to deal with things in their marriage. Who has permission to speak into your life and help when personal or marital issues arise?
4. Solomon was careful to build intimacy in every aspect of his relationship with the Shulammitte woman. Looking at verses 6-11 how do you see Solomon addressing the needs for intimacy with his fiancé?
5. Why is it important to develop emotional intimacy, spiritual intimacy and physical security in a relationship before expecting strong sexual intimacy?
6. What steps do you feel like you are taking in your marriage to develop these different forms of intimacy?
7. We talk about marriage as a covenant relationship. What is the difference between a contract and a covenant?
8. How are our marriages meant to reflect the covenant relationship we have with Jesus?

Pray: If your group dynamic allows, consider having couples find a place they can pray with one another privately. Otherwise, pray as a group. Remember to pray for marriages at our church, especially those who may be going through difficult times.