**PP Signed, Sealed, Delivered (I’m Yours)**

**Song of Solomon 8:5-7 7/14-15/2023**

The Song of Solomon is a musical, and one that has been loved by God’s people for centuries

It’s Latin title is *‘Canticles’* which means “songs” and it was one of 5 books of Scripture read at

the annual Passover along with Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes and Lamentations

The musical has two threads woven throughout: the love between Jesus and His bride, and the

love between a husband and wife, Solomon and a woman called the Shulammite

When it sings of marriage, it is full of passion, love, emotional and sexual intimacy

What may surprise you is that in this book, the Shulammite has the first and last word

53% of the song is sung by her, 34% Solomon, and the rest is sung by others

Proverbs, with its forty uses of the word ***‘son’***, offers wisdom to boys to prepare them for life,

but the Song of Solomon has a message of wisdom primarily for girls

The book opens with the Shulammite singing of her desire for Solomon

**PP *“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!”* Song of Solomon 1:2**

Did you know that a normal kiss can burn 6.4 calories per minute, but a passionate one up to 20

calories a minute, and how long, you ask, is an average kiss...20 seconds

Kissing strengthens our immunity system, and it is shown that drivers who kiss before they

drive, drive less aggressively

Those interesting facts aside, this couple’s courting relationship had begun, and their love grew

quickly and with it the overwhelming desire to consummate that love intimately

I would be surprised and concerned if you cannot identify with that if you have been in love

Yet 3x’s she sings a warning, **PP *“*[Do] *not stir up or awaken love until it pleases.”* 2:7, 3:5, 8:4**

This is sexual love she’s warning about for it belongs only within marriage, but it was a desire so

fierce for her, that she even dreamed of being with Solomon intimately in chapter 3

Their wedding day arrived in chapter 3, that night they finally enjoy each other fully chapter 5

But it isn’t long before their first fight in chapter 5, and they work through the conflict and then

settle into their marriage, and instead of the intimacy dimming into routine, the flames of

their desire for each other actually increase in chapters 6 and 7

When we get to our passage in chapter 8, it is what feels to me an anniversary trip they take and

their love is so deep, so strong, it will once again take the poetry of music to express it

To really capture love, poetry and song are what is needed, but not just any song or you might

have a marriage that sings Pat Banatar’s *Love is a Battlefield*

What we need is this song, the Song of Songs, to show us the way to a marriage that endures in

love that is alive and satisfying and stays fresh even while we grow old

The title of a song by Stevie Wonder and Aretha Franklin will provide our outline as we look

more closely at Song of Solomon 8:5-7

**PP 1-Signed**

It started in the 1960’s, when New Zealander Kim Groves wanted to express her love to her

soon to be husband Roberto Casali

She would draw a single frame picture of a modestly naked boy and girl and captioned in the top

left corner, ‘Love Is…’ with the answered completed at the bottom

She would put these little drawings in his lunch box, fishing tackle box, car, pillow, and he would

find them

They were eventually published into booklets, and then in daily newspapers even to this day

Love demands expression, it yearns to be communicate, it desires to be known by the one loved

We have a brief chorus that in this great musical, sung by those who observe their marriage

***“Who is that coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?”***

Love is a journey and here we have Solomon and his wife coming out of the wilderness either

walking together or riding in a chariot together and I believe they have taken perhaps an

anniversary trip back to where she grew up, where there love was kindled

An observer notes that she is pressed against him, leaning on his shoulder, affectionately

It's amazing how often I see couples who never touch each other, no arm around her shoulders,

 no holding her hand, often at restaurants they hardly look at each other or talk

They are older, their marriage is seasoned, yet they have lost none of their desire for physical

intimacy, in fact she sings a song down memory lane of when their love began

***“Under the apple tree I awakened you. There your mother was in labor with you; there she***

***who bore you was in labor.”* 8:5**

They are so comfortable with each other that talking of their sex life is part of their conversation

She didn’t point at a literal apple tree remembering that they made love under it, she was saying,

 husband of mine, I am the one who awakened your desire the night of our wedding

Apple trees were called the *‘sweetheart trees of the ancient world’* and here she is saying to her

husband that the same act that brought him into being, they are now enjoying

They had kept that desire bound, unawakened until it’s time, which was their marriage

She’s looking back down memory lane, when they had signed their proverbial wedding license

together, consummated their marriage, and it leads her to look up at him with a request

***“Set me as a seal upon your heart…”* 8:6**

**PP 2-Sealed**

Married love grows, or it should at least, but it isn’t linear or constant in its growth

It is common for a marriage to ebb and flow, to have times when each partner are at rest and

secure in their love, but then they get busy, or have children with sports, and band and to

drift apart a little

There are ups and downs, and the truth is, being married is, for most, the hardest thing you will

ever do, but it can bring the greatest satisfaction possible on this earth

Here this woman is married to the king, with all of the demands on him, with concubines in the

palace, and it seems she has a moment where she needs to be affirmed by his love

I’m not sure if Kung Fu master Bruce Lee was a Christian, but he actually summed up this

verse when he wrote, **PP** *“Love is like a friendship caught on fire. In the beginning a*

*flame, very pretty, often hot and fierce, but still only light and flickering. As love grows*

*older, our hearts mature and our love becomes as coals, deep-burning and*

*unquenchable.”* Bruce Lee, *Artist of Life*

The love of this couple is about to grow, and burn even brighter, and she initiates it’s growth

***“Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm”* 8:6**

A seal indicated ownership of a person’s valuable possessions

She would be the seal, but placed ‘upon your heart’

In that day it was often custom to wear a signet ring or cylinder on a cord around the neck to lay

against the chest, near the heart

Put in today’s language, she is saying to him, wear our wedding ring,don’t take it off, make sure

everyone sees that you belong to me, I possess you and you possess me

And she gives a reason for her request: ***“for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the***

***grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the LORD. Many waters cannot***

***quench love, neither can floods drown it.”* 8:6–7a**

Ladies, have you spoken like this to your husbands since your wedding?

Are you, like this woman, taking it on you to make sure your marriage is burning bright

Remember that this book is written primarily to women, young girls really

Throughout this musical there are friends, ***‘daughters of Jerusalem’***, bridesmaids perhaps and

they sing as well

In that preparation culture, they are very likely younger girls, students, looking on this couple to

see how marriage should be

She’s determined that her marriage they would seen by them as exciting, satisfying, and burning

bright with ***‘the very flame of the LORD’***, Yahweh

It was a permanent love that could truly say, *‘til death do us part’*, and it unquenchable

Usually enough water will put out any fire, but not when the fire is the flame of Yahweh

She was determined that the Lord’s love would live in their hearts, and it would never go out!

If only we had time to bring out the love of Jesus for His bride, the church, who’s **PP** ***‘love never***

***ends’* 1 Corinthians 13:8**

**PP 3-Delivered**

***“If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would be utterly despised.”* 8:7b**

The Beatles had it right when they wrote the song, ‘Can’t Buy Me Love’

You cannot give a person material things with the hope they will have this kind of love in return

Love must be given freely, without price, without purchase, not demanded

Appreciated for its value and not taken for granted, and that is where many of us need correction

Have you taken your marriage for granted, having fallen into a dull, lifeless routine?

Let me tell you something I have found interesting

One study showed that 80% of couples who live together and engage sexually end in separation

60% of those married by a justice of the peace end in divorce, while 40% of those married in a

church eventually divorce

But listen to this…those who read their bibles together daily divorce only at the rate of 1 out of

every 1,050

Money can’t buy me love, but centering your marriage on Christ can grow that love to be be

unbreakable

Does this song resonate through your heart as it did the wife of Solomon, who’s heart was

filled with the knowledge of our final point

**PP 4-I’m Yours**

***“I am my beloved’s, and his desire is for me.”* Song of Solomon 7:10**

When Denise and I were dating, we talked about how we wanted to grow old together still

holding hands

In fact, I wrote a song that my sister sang during our wedding about that very thing

Almost 33 years into marriage, we are still walking through life together, hand in hand

This word ***‘desire’*** is one that is rarely found in scripture, only 3 times in fact, and the first time

we find it, it is part of the curse and judgment of God: **PP *“Your desire shall be for your***

***husband, and he shall rule over you.”* Genesis 3:16**

**PP *‘Desire’*** here is a word for a clingy, controlling attitude from a wife toward here husband,

and the statement that ***‘he shall rule over you’*** is a harsh, oppressive ruler

In our passage, it is as if the curse has been lifted and she sings in joy, ***“I am my beloved’s,***

 ***and his desire is for me.”* 7:10**

**PP** *A Christ-honoring marriage works to undo the devastating effects of the curse*

Is your marriage like that which is sung about in this great musical?

Can you and your spouse both say, we are *signed, sealed, delivered, I’m yours?*

Let me close with an appeal and my very personal request for your consideration

Our church has never put together a marriage weekend before but we are this year, and I want to

tell you why

Our church seems to be a hospital for broken people, and I would have it no other way

We have a great many struggling marriages, marriages that have stagnated, that are embroiled in

conflict, where husbands and wives are joyless and unsatisfied with each other

Yet the foundation of a healthy church is made up of healthy marriages

Would you consider being part of this marriage weekend March 17-19

Our speaker is Pastor Brian Cooper, the setting is the beach, and the group is our church, and we

will learn to help each other have marriages that are beautiful and strong

Pray