

Series: The Greatest Song of All, #2  
Valley Community Baptist Church  
Avon, CT

Texts: Song of Songs 1:2-7, 9-11, 15, 16a  
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Pastor Jay Abramson

### **It's Not Just a Love Song, It's a Love Story**

How many romantic movies have you seen or books have you read, where amnesia is a central part of the plot? You know how it goes: a couple meets and falls in love and then there's a car accident or a person falls down a flight of stairs and when they wake up in the hospital, they don't even recognize their boyfriend or girlfriend anymore. How many movies like that have you cried through? (By the way, since movies began, there have been hundreds of films where amnesia is a central part of the story.)

Why do I bring this up? I bring this up because these stories demonstrate the fragility of love relationships. In these amnesia movies we strongly identify with the person who is forgotten. Why? Because most of us have known the sting of falling in love with someone who later forgets us, rejects us. Pain like that is hard to forget.

So, as we come to this Bible story of love that eventually speaks about our love relationship with God, we can't help but be a bit gun-shy and wonder how it will all turn out. Remember this: With God there will never be any amnesia. God says:

**Can a mother forget the baby at her breast...?**

**Though she may forget, I will not forget you!**

**See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands. (Is. 49:15, 16)**

On the surface, this storyline is a classic "chick-flick" drama: a country girl meets a shepherd one day. Their friendship blossoms into a committed love but the shepherd suddenly has to leave town. He promises to return but doesn't come back for a long time. The country girl wonders if she's been forgotten. One day it is announced that the king of the country himself has arrived in this little, country town and wants to meet this girl. She can't believe it and then is even more astonished when she meets the king and – it's her shepherd boyfriend!!!

Now, that's more of the story than is revealed in chapter one! So, let's go back and examine the beginning of this story. What we do see in chapter one are three important things: his attractiveness, her attributes and his kiss. So, first...

#### **I. His Attractiveness and Her Attributes.**

Most love relationships between men and women begin with a mutual attraction, don't they? How did your love relationship begin? Oscar Hammerstein described one possibility with the words:

*Some enchanted evening, you may see a stranger*

*You may see a stranger, across a crowded room*

*And somehow you know, you know even then*

*That somewhere you'll see her again and again. <sup>i</sup>*

In the Song of Songs, the young woman, whose words are labeled as those of the *Beloved*, spends a great deal of ink extolling the attractiveness of her shepherd boyfriend. In chapter one she says:

**How handsome you are, my lover! Oh, how charming! (S of S: 1:16)**

But in later chapters she goes on... and on and on and on –

**My lover is radiant and ruddy,  
outstanding among ten thousand.  
His head is purest gold; his hair is wavy and black as a raven.  
His eyes are like doves by the water streams,  
washed in milk, mounted like jewels. (S of S: 5:10-12)**

And she goes on to his cheeks, his lips, his arms, his body, his legs... okay, you get the picture! And Solomon is no slouch himself when it comes to the romantic poetry about HER attributes. Chapter 7:1:

**How beautiful your sandaled feet, O prince's daughter!  
Your graceful legs are like jewels, the work of a craftsman's hands.**

And he goes on and on... your navel, your waist, your neck, your eyes, your nose “...is like the tower of Lebanon looking into Damascus”? You know, some of you might be thinking, “Hey, Valentine’s Day is coming up – maybe I should use some of this for a special biblical Valentine’s card!” Be careful! Solomon also says, back in chapter 1:

**I liken you, my darling, to a mare harnessed to one of the chariots of Pharaoh. (S of S: 1:9)**

You see, some things just won’t translate well from 900 BC to today!

But, I think we all know the intent of these words. And let’s face it, these words are nearly 3,000 years old! How about if we drag out some of your love notes to your sweetheart from 20 or 30 years ago and see what everyone thinks about them? There might be some things there that don’t translate well either.

So, what’s the application of this to us today? Well, one thing is simply this: physical attraction because of someone’s physical attributes is not inherently bad. God created men to be attracted to women and women to be attracted to men! This is His idea. It’s not an evil attraction but a righteous attraction when channeled by biblical boundaries. There’s an old Jewish saying: “It’s right for the man to chase after the woman. After all, she has his rib!”

However, we live in a world where sexual attraction is used to sell everything from automobiles to soap, and the apostle Paul says that is using this power of attraction outside of God’s boundaries. He addresses that in his letter to Timothy:

**I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. (I Tim. 2:8-10)**

Is Paul saying that women should try to hide their beauty? Would Paul prefer to see Christian women wear burqas like strict Muslim women? No, that’s not what he’s saying. He IS saying, however, that women should dress modestly. Do you know what “modestly” means? It means “moderately; not frumpy, but not with showy extravagance.”

And to men he’s saying, “Hey guys, listen. Your image in the community shouldn’t be your physical power displayed by a short fuse. No, your image to the world should be strong arms lifted in prayer.” The bottom line for both men and women is that your image should be dictated not by your sexual attractiveness but your spiritual attractiveness.

What's the most attractive part of you? Is your spiritual persona more attractive than your physical persona?

Going back to what is being symbolized in the Song of Songs, what eternal reality is being symbolized there? Our desire for physical intimacy with another human being is a mere shadow of every person's much, much deeper desire for intimacy with God. This is what the rabbis saw in this book. That is why they called this the "Holy of Holies" of the poetic literature of the Old Testament. They understood that they were the female voice speaking to the male shepherd of their souls and they used the words of the maiden in the Song of Songs to call to God:

**Take me away with you – let us hurry!**

**Let the king bring me into his chambers.** (Song of Songs 1:4)

Our culture today subscribes to a different source of salvation – sexual salvation. Popular music, films, websites, even commercials for health products promote the idea that, unless you have physical sexual intimacy with another human being until the day you die, you will not have a satisfying life. In fact, you will soon become so frustrated that you will become a pervert or a mass murderer or both. That's the message, is it not? And it's a lie! It's an absolute lie!

Jesus Christ never had sex in His whole life and He was the most vital, the most manly, the most joy-filled man who ever lived! The apostle Paul wrote the incredible description of love that we find in I Cor. 13. He could only have written those words out of a life of experience of that ultimate form of love – and he was never married! Is physical marital love a good thing, a blessing from God? YES!! Is it the ultimate experience of love in this world? NO!!! Do you need physical sexual intimacy to stay sane, satisfied and healthy? No, you do not!! Are single people to be pitied? Far from it!! The apostle Paul says that it is preferable for single people to stay single because they are potentially of much greater value to the kingdom of God. Listen:

**What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short... An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs – how he can please the Lord... An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit... I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.** (I Cor. 7: 29, 32, 34, 35)

Whether married or unmarried, we need to put our intimacy with God as a higher priority than our intimacy with another human being. That's the full truth of Scripture. So, what does that look like? This brings us to...

## **II. His Kiss.**

The opening verse of this book starts with a bang:

**Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth – for your love is more delightful than wine.** (S of S: 1:2)

One of my favorite films is "*The Princess Bride*." The film begins with a young boy, 8 or 9 years old, who is home from school, sick in bed. His grandpa comes over to help him pass the time by reading him a book. After hearing just the first few paragraphs, where the hero and heroine are about to kiss, the boy stops his grandpa and says, "Whoa, whoa, wait. What is this? Is this a kissing book?" Isn't it amazing how a young boy's attitude towards kissing radically changes as the years go by?

Who invented kissing? Have you ever thought about that? I mean it's kind of a strange thing when you think about it. The first instance of a man kissing a woman in Scripture is in Gen. 29 where Jacob first meets Rachel and it says:

**Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud.** (Gen. 29:11)

Then in the next verse it says:

**So she ran and told her father.** (Gen. 29:12b)

I guess things haven't changed much in 4,000 years, have they?

Do you know what a dictionary definition of a kiss is? Listen:

*To touch or press with the lips slightly pursed in token of greeting, affection, love, reverence.* (Webster)

So, that's pretty much all we need to know about kissing, right? You know, it's one thing to intellectually describe a kiss and a very different thing to experience a kiss, isn't it? Do you remember your first kiss - of someone that wasn't your relative? Why did you do it? Weren't you trying to communicate something beyond words? What exactly was your message?

Edmond Rostand, in his play, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, wrote:

*A kiss is a secret which takes the lips for the ear.*

Ann Voskamp writes about how time for kissing in a marriage seems to diminish over the years and why that's a problem. She writes:

There are 3 kids with piano lessons on Mondays, 2 with pick up basketball on Wednesdays, and one kid who has to get back to the doctor this week to have his stitches taken out, and *when do I just get to take you out?*

When does a woman get to sit across the table from the man she gave her "I do" to - and not think about her to-do list?...

When is there time for us to do what will undo our coupled stress?...

I met a guy last week who only refers to his wife as his bride.

Like he remembered a moment when he wanted her and he had never gotten over it, never stopped wanting her.

Call the woman that you're married to your wife it can sound like you're naming something that you own.

Call the woman that you're married to your bride and you remember the moment you kissed her slow...

And you whispered it back in the dark: *Bride*.

And then the kiss came long and slow. And you've done it every day since.

You grin and call me *Bride*. And I roll my eyes and blush but don't think for a moment that it doesn't do something or I don't remember and you don't look wildly young all over again...

So we're the married fools committed to it now every day, like our dance step through life's minefield: *Bride, Kiss*. A long and slow 10 seconds...

The 10-second kiss for wedded bliss...

I have no idea why we haven't done this before. No idea why they don't tell you on your wedding day that there is a "disproportionate amount of brain space taken up with processing information from the lips compared to the rest of our bodies - how even a light brush of the lips lights up a large part of our brain..."

How didn't we know that cortisol levels, which determines our stress levels, decreases after kissing?...

Who knew that locking of lips unlocks oxytocin, the hormone that makes us bond and keeps us bonded, keeps us attached, keeps us connected...

Who knew that the 10-Second Kiss of wedded bliss nixes hours of stress?...

And we take the 10 seconds longer [now] to let go of everything else and to just give each other the ministry of presence, the longing of the slowing kiss. <sup>ii</sup>

If you're married, that's your assignment this week – go practice the 10-Second Kiss for Wedded Bliss. But let me also ask you this: have you experienced the kiss of God? Oh, you can recite verse after verse of His love for you and you can list all that He has done for you from providing food and clothing and shelter to His work of salvation on the cross, but that's not what I asked, is it? I asked if you had experienced the kiss of God, the expression of His affection and love for you that transcends words of intellectual definition?

In the New Testament, Jesus tells the parable that we often call "The Prodigal Son," but could also be called "The Loving Father." The father in that story is God and we are his two sons. When the one who wandered off comes home, Jesus, in describing the action of the father, is actually describing the action of His heavenly Father when we come home after spiritually wandering off. Jesus says:

**But while he [us] was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. (Luke 15:20)**

Where are you in your "love story" with God? Have you wandered off? Or, like the son who stayed home, are you dutifully working hard, checking off your spiritual to-do list but never having time, taking time, to be "kissed and hugged" by your Father. All you must do is one thing: turn and start home or turn, put down your work and face your Father. And He will smile and see you "a long way off," and come running to you, throw His arms around you and kiss you.

**Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth –  
for your love is more delightful than wine. (Song of Songs 1:2)**

Let's pray...

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- <sup>i</sup> Oscar Hammerstein II, first verse of *Some Enchanted Evening*, "South Pacific," 1949
- <sup>ii</sup> Ann Voskamp, [aholyexperience.com](http://aholyexperience.com) "Unlock your marriage? The Daily Vow of a 10 Second Kiss for Wedded Bliss/April 23, 2014