

## SONG OF SOLOMON

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Song of Solomon chapter 3 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Keep in mind that what happens here in chapter 3 is based on what has already transpired in chapter 2. Now that is not how the whole book flows, it tends to jump back and forth but here in chapter 3 we see what transpires is the result of what the Shulamite woman did or really didn't do back in chapter 2.

For some reason Solomon was out for a period of time, on business or something, and when he returns home he calls for his love to come with him to take a trip to the mountains, the mountains of Bethel or separation. He wants to be alone with her. Now as much as she wants to get alone with him, it is not the most opportune time. It is too early in the morning, she is too tired, and so she rolls over in bed and tells him to come back at a more convenient time.

Now, as chapter 3 opens up she is now ready to go with him. The time is right, but she is going to find out that he is not around and that is going to scare her!

Think about that for a minute. When a skydiver instructor tells you to "Jump!" you jump. Why do you do that, why do you obey him? Because he is the instructor and you are the student. When the Lord calls to us to arise and come away with Him because He wants to show us something, we can't say, "I am a little busy, maybe later!" If we do we will miss out on what the Lord has for us and we will see that with this Shulamite woman who did not respond to her husband's call to come away.

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Song of Solomon chapter 3 starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

### SONG OF SOLOMON 3

#### VERSES 1-3

1. It is the middle of the night and she wakes up and she is ready to go with her beloved. Why in the middle of the night? Who knows but she is ready and he can't be found. So now she goes looking for him in the streets but she is unsure where he is at.

2. Let's apply this to our relationship with the Lord. Maybe the Lord has called you to go and spend time with Him, to get away with Him and you are very busy, you are very tired, it just is not the right time for you because Jupiter is not aligned with Mars or whatever excuse you may have!

You are going to just wait for a more opportune time, one that fits your lifestyle better or whatever and when you do find that time you find out that He is not speaking to you! In other words, like the Shulamite woman, you can't find Him!

Now does that mean that God hides Himself from us? No, God does not play hard to get but He will allow us to search for Him with all of our heart so that we don't take that relationship with Him for granted. He wants us to go, in a sense, to the mountains of Bether or separation to be alone with Him so He can show us what we are to do, so that He may guide us, so that our relationship with Him will grow! In Proverbs 1:28 we are told, "**Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.**"

Now do not be dismayed by that because the Lord said in Jeremiah 29:13, “**And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.**” Yes, if you are not seeking Him, if you are walking away from Him, if you don’t have time for Him, then He will not answer you. It is when you surrender your life to Him and seek Him that He will be found by you!

Don’t wait until you are ready, go when He calls and spend time with Him, even if it is in the middle of the night! He is the one who opens doors of opportunity for us; all He asks us to do is step through them. It is as Jesus said in Revelation 3:8, “**I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.**” Don’t miss those opportunities that the Lord has for you!

3. The Shulamite woman is very persistent. She does not know where he is at so she asks the watchmen if they have seen him. But they could not help her!

4. Today we have or should have pastors and church leaders that are, in a sense, the watchmen, those who are protecting the truths of God and teaching them to the people. They are to be on the front lines. Then why do we see these watchmen not able to help the Shulamite woman find her love? Because I can’t restore that fellowship with the Lord for you and no one else can help you. You must go to Him! I can point you back to the Lord, but you must seek Him with all of your heart!

Also, if they are not teaching the truths of God found in the Word of God they are not going to be able to help you either. Both apply here!

VERSE 4

1. As she is searching for “**the one I love**”, a phrase she uses several times in these verses she finds him. He wasn't too far away and now that she has found him she is not going to let him go. Now why does she take him to her mother's house instead of going home? Instead of traveling all the way home to be intimate with him, she goes to the closest place and that was her mother's home, and she enjoys the love of her husband.

2. Let's apply this spiritually now. Do you have to wait until Thursday evening or Sunday morning to have an encounter with God? I hope you don't wait until then because anytime, anywhere you can fellowship with Him! While you are driving in your car you can listen to a Bible study, you can pray, and the wonderful thing about our Lord is He is there with us wherever we go. And I think we should hold on tight to Him, not that He would ever leave us or forsake us, but more that we don't leave Him or forsake Him.

Remember the story of Mary in John chapter 20. She goes to the tomb of Jesus and His body is gone. And she asks the person standing there, who she thinks is the gardener, but is the risen Lord, “What happened to the body of Jesus, the one I love?” And Jesus said to her, **“Mary!”**

Now as soon as she heard her Shepherd's voice, the one that she loved so much, she called Him **“Rabboni!”** and gave Him a death grip, clinging to Him, never wanting to let Him go. She lost Him once, but never again! May we have that kind of passion, may we have that kind of love for the Lord because He loves us more than we will ever know!

VERSE 5

1. Some see this as Solomon speaking and saying not to wake up his bride until she is ready.

That is possible but I also think this could be the Shulamite once again calling to these virgins or these daughters of Jerusalem to not go kicking down the door looking for a man. Allow love to happen in God's timing. Be satisfied in the Lord and He will give you the desire of your heart.

2. As we move on we are going to have a flashback to the wedding period. Keep in mind that after the engagement there would be a period of time, usually a year, where the man goes and builds a home where they will live. It seems that some may have doubted Solomon's return and as she waits, not knowing the day or hour of His return, always prepared, ready to go with him, here he comes for his bride. She believes by faith as she is out working in the field, and in the distance she will see her bridegroom coming for her.

3. Does that sound familiar to you? It should because Jesus said in John 14:3-4, "**And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.**" God is preparing for us a home. And as we work out in the field, the world, not sure the day or hour He will return for His bride, we keep ourselves ready, prepared to meet Him. And yes, the world tries to discourage us by telling us, "Where is His coming?" But we can begin to see the heavens preparing to open as Jesus prepares to come and take His bride, the Church home!

It is interesting to see so many in the Church today unaware or not caring about the Lord's return. I am not sure what their hope is in if it is not in the Lord's return. I have a feeling, because what is being taught in many churches today, that we see people embracing a social gospel and thus, they are trying to make this world a better place to live. But you can't do that apart from Christ and there is the problem. The heart of man is evil and if you doubt that look at world leaders today and what they are doing.

Paul said in Titus 2:11-15, "**For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.***"

Notice that it does not say that the good works of man bring to him salvation but that it is the grace of God, unmerited favor that God extends to us that brings us salvation through Jesus Christ! Because of what He has done in us we need to live for Him in this ungodly world. We should make a difference by the way we live out our faith. And our hope is not in some leader of this world, it is not in this world at all. Our hope is in the return of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Don't let anyone discourage you or cause you not to share His soon return. We should be excited. I wish more people were as excited as they were in the 1970's and early 1980's but you really don't hear much excitement about His return. I don't know about you, I can't wait!

VERSES 6-8

1. Picture what is going on here. They are out working in the field along with the Shulamite woman. And as they are working they see off in the distance this smoke rising and a large group of people coming towards them. I don't think they are exactly sure what is going on initially and I think the Shulamite woman is unsure as well. Could this be her bridegroom coming for her?

And here comes Solomon riding on "**Solomon's couch**" or what was known as a palanquin. This was a huge portable enclosed chair that was carried upon the shoulders of Solomon's men. And as she looks in to see what all the pomp and circumstance is about, she sees her shepherd-king. He had come back to take her with Him! All of this pomp and circumstance was for her, his bride!

2. What about these sixty valiant men that are there with Solomon? We might call them groomsmen and they were most likely Solomon's bodyguards. They were there to protect Solomon and his bride because the journey could be dangerous. And this should have brought great comfort to his bride, knowing that Solomon could protect her from any danger that they might encounter.

VERSES 9-11

1. Notice the description of this palanquin or portable chair, how beautiful it was. Wood from Lebanon, pillars of silver, support of gold, the seat was purple cloth and this place was filled with love! As you read this you can see two important things that Solomon was able to provide for his bride, protection, safety for her and he was able to provide for her. I am not saying that before you get married you need to make \$100,000 a year because no one would get married. But how are you going to support your spouse? “Our love will provide all we need!” That is wonderful and then reality hits when the bills start coming in and love can’t pay the bills. I think that is just being wise, know how you will protect and provide for your wife before you marry her!

2. As we move on into chapter 4 we will see that as they are traveling home that they are going to exchange some beautiful words of love to each other. Now let me say this. Do you still speak words of love to your spouse or has that fallen by the wayside, “Hey, we’ve been married for a year already!” If you let that fire go out in your marriage you are going to be in trouble. Keep it burning; keep the love between you growing. Say those words of love to your spouse, they need to hear them!

Also, as we are reading through this section picture the words of Solomon, the beloved, as beautiful words that the Lord is speaking to us. Jesus sees us as beautiful and He loves us dearly!



## SONG OF SOLOMON 4

### VERSES 1-5

1. Do you think Solomon loves her? You bet he does and he tells her that there is no one who can compare with her! He is showing her how much he loves her by what he is saying to her.

Now what I want you to notice is that this love is not conditional. He does not say, "I'll love you if you do this." Or "I'll love you when you do that." Or "I love you but . . ." He tells his bride "***I LOVE YOU - PERIOD!***"

It is as Paul said in I Corinthians 13:4-8a, "**Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.**" If that is the kind of love we have for each other in our marriage then we would not have any problems. But once we move away from this Agape love, this unconditional love and start focusing on self, there are many problems. But Solomon shows unconditional love here for his bride!

There is great comfort in that. That kind of love removes fear. The wife can be who she is and does not have to live up to his standard. She sees his love for her and she can rest in that. That is how it should be in marriage men! It is as John said regarding God's love for us in I John 4:18. He said "**There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.**" May we have that kind of love for our wife!

2. Now I would not encourage you to use the phrases he is using to describe your wife, but back then they meant something and I guess something better than they do today. I am not sure if dove's eyes are beautiful, I have never looked that closely but to Solomon they were!

In regards to the goat's hair, their hair was black and as they gathered on the mountain side it looked like black silky hair. It was beautiful. If you say that about your wife today, that her hair is like goats hair, she might be a little mad. But back then, it was thought of as beautiful.

She has beautiful white teeth that were straight and she wasn't missing any I think is the idea here. Her lips were beautiful, no Botox here! Her temples were beautiful, her neck like "**the tower of David**" may be speaking that it was long! And he even speaks of her breasts as being satisfying to him.

Solomon is in love, he is head over heels in love with her! He is not embarrassed by speaking of her beauty and we should not be embarrassed to let others see that we love our wife! Now this might blow you away but God is head over heels in love with us!

#### VERSE 6

1. We are not sure who is speaking here. Some feel it is Solomon and he is just expressing his desire to be alone with his bride. It could be. But I lean more to this being his bride speaking, maybe embarrassed by what was said of her because as you get to verse 7 you see Solomon speak of his bride once again and how there were no imperfections in her, none at all!

I think this is also a beautiful picture of how we feel. We feel we don't deserve God's love and we don't. We don't think we are beautiful and I guess we are not in our own eyes but the Lord sees us as beautiful. But as we read on and see what Solomon says and as a picture of Christ and what He says to us, His bride, it does fit.

VERSES 7-8

1. Men, here is a lesson for us to learn. Our wives need to be comforted and that is exactly what Solomon is doing here. He comforts her insecurity by telling her she is perfect; there is no spot or blemish that he sees in her.

Now I also like that because that is how God sees us. Not as we are, but what we will be in glory. We have not reached that perfect state, God is bringing us to it, as Philippians 1:6 tells us, **“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”**

Notice that I am not confident in myself that I will complete the work, but in God that what He began in my life He will complete. He began the work of my salvation some 30 plus years ago and what He started He will finish. You see, we should not have confidence in our flesh, only in Him. He chose me, called me, and will perfect me in Christ and the same with you. He will complete the work He has begun as Jude 24 says, **“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”**

2. We are told that he has come to pick up his bride in the area of Lebanon and is now bringing her home to Jerusalem. Glickman sums what is going on here for us as he wrote, “In asking her to come from such fearful places, he is really asking her to bring her thoughts completely to him and leave her fears behind and perhaps to leave the lingering thoughts of home behind as well . . . he wished her to leave her fear and anxiety about the new life of marriage and simply come to him . . . So he calls her from her fears to his arms.”

VERSES 9-11

1. Do you think Solomon is in love? You bet he is, Solomon is love struck! Was Solomon physically attracted to her? You bet he was but that love was even deeper than that, he loved the beauty that was in her and that overflowed outwardly.

One of the things that attracted me to my wife, well, it was everything but there was one thing that drew me to her and that were her eyes. They are beautiful. “Pastor Joe, you were drawn to Julie because of her outward beauty?” Yes, you bet! I know, some will tell you that physical attraction is wrong. They will say that it is of the flesh. I disagree.

I think we should be physically attracted to the one we love, and as that relationship grows, it no longer is just a physical attraction, but runs much deeper. If it doesn't, the relationship will fade away, break up. Solomon was attracted to her beauty and like I have said, that beauty was not only outward!

2. Solomon is so excited that the one he loves is going to be his bride. And he speaks of this love that they had together and the word used here for “**love**” speaks of romantic love expressed with physical contact. He is telling her that the love they share together was more refreshing and more intoxicating than wine. All their senses were involved in this romantic love; sight, smell, touch and sound!

I can't imagine being married to someone that you did not love that way. Coming home day in and day out and there is no spark, there is nothing. That would be horrible. I realize that some would have you believe that intimacy, this kind of love is wrong, some even go to the extreme and feel that sex is wrong between a husband and wife if you are not trying to have children. Give me a break. God has given us sex to enjoy between a husband and his wife. Do I have Scripture to support that? You bet I do, for Paul tells us in Hebrews 13:4, "**Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.**" So if you are not enraptured with your spouse, why not?

#### VERSES 12-15

1. That phrase, "**A garden enclosed**" is a euphemism speaking of her virginity. He speaks of how much he valued her purity. I wish people would value their virginity today. The world has taken something that God has given us, the joy of sexual relations between married couples and has cheapened it, there seems to be no real value to being a virgin prior to your marriage today. And if you are people make fun of you, go figure!

How wrong a concept that is and I wish people would understand that. For those of you who aren't married, don't believe a person who tells you they love you and then want to have sex with you outside of marriage. They don't love you, they lust you! The relationship between Solomon and his bride was rich and deep and they did not have sexual relations until they were married.

VERSE 16

1. Keep in mind that they are married and she is calling for him to come and enjoy the fruits of her garden, to be intimate with her. Please understand what is going on here. The wedding ceremony began with a procession of the bridegroom coming to pick up his bride at her home. They were then escorted to the home he had built for them to live in, and that night the couple consummated their marriage. Then, the feast would continue on, sometimes lasting several days. It is on this first night that she is beckoning for him to come into her and consummate the marriage.

2. In a spiritual sense, we are to let the beauty of the Lord come upon us so that His fragrance may flow through us and touch the lives of others. And the only way that the fragrance of the Lord is going to permeate your life is if you come in contact with Him.

Paul tells us in II Corinthians 2:14-17, **“Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.”**

I think many times, because we are so far removed from that culture we miss what is going on. Paul takes this illustration from the Roman Triumph Parade that was given to generals who were successful in battle, returning home in victory. Of this Barclay tells us:

In a Triumph the procession of the victorious general marched through the streets of Rome to the Capitol . . . first came the state officials and the senate. Then came the trumpeters. Then were carried the spoils taken from the conquered land . . . Then came the pictures of the conquered land and models of conquered citadels and ships. There followed the white bull for sacrifice which would be made. Then there walked the captive princes, leaders and generals in chains, shortly to be flung into prison and in all probability almost immediately to be executed. Then came the lectors bearing their rods, followed by the musicians with their lyres; then the priests swinging their censers with the sweet-smelling incense burning in them. After that came the general himself . . . finally came the army wearing all the decorations and shouting lo triumphe! Their cry of triumph. As the procession moved through the streets, all decorated and garlanded, amid the cheering crowds, it made a tremendous day which might happen only once in a lifetime. . . . That is the picture that is in Paul's mind. He sees Christ marching in triumph throughout the world, and himself in that conquering train. It is a triumph which, Paul is certain, nothing can stop."

- William Barclay

As Christ marches in He is leading us, and as we are close to Jesus the fragrance of our Leader, Jesus Christ permeates our lives and those around us will smell the fragrance of Jesus. The question is, "What kind of smell are you leaving behind?"

Now how does the world respond to the aroma that we leave behind? Paul says that to all we are the aroma of God just as the incense burnt to the gods in a Roman Triumph Parade spoke of the aroma, the power of the Roman general and Rome itself. This smell though did affect people differently. If you were part of Rome it was wonderful, joyous but if you were the defeated enemy it was the smell of death! For those that believe and receive Jesus into their lives it speaks of life, but for those that reject Jesus it is the smell of death, eternal separation from God!

We also need to remember that we were created for His pleasure, for God to enjoy, and the fruit that is born in our lives is for Him to enjoy, it is for His glory. We think it is all about us and it isn't. I am not saying that God does not bless us, He does. But what we tend to do is put the cart in front of the horse and seek after all that we want, all that we desire instead of bringing God pleasure. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, "**But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**" He is first and if we have that right God will take care of our needs, not our wants. Focus is everything and our focus needs to be on the Lord. Remember what we are told in Revelation 4:11, "**Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**" (King James Version).



You see, people can't find satisfaction in their life even though their life is filled with all kinds of things because they are not doing what they have been created for, to bring pleasure to God! Folks, I can't imagine not coming to worship the Lord, I would be here every night if I could, but that is not the only way we worship the Lord. We worship the Lord in all that we do! And thus, if you want true satisfaction in your life, if you want peace like a river flowing from your life, if you want true fulfillment in your life, you need to submit your life to the King of kings and Lord of lords! He has created all things and for His pleasure we are and were created, may we not forget that!

### **SONG OF SOLOMON 5**

#### **VERSE 1a**

1. Here he is just speaking poetically of the joy he had in consummating the marriage. And remember, this is the first night, and as he gets up in the morning his guests are still partying and I believe that in the last part of verse 1 Solomon comes out and he tells them to enjoy the party, to eat and be filled. Let's read on and I think you will see what I mean.

VERSE 1b

1. There is some debate about who is speaking here but I see this as Solomon coming out of the marriage bedroom and speaking to the guests who are at their wedding party. Adam Clarke put it like this and I think he is right. He wrote, “These are generally supposed to be the words of the *bridegroom*, after he returned from the *nuptial chamber*, and exhibited those *signs* of his wife’s *purity* which the customs of those times required. This being a cause of universal joy, the entertainment is served up; and he invites his companions, and the friends of both parties, to eat and drink abundantly, as there was such a universal cause of rejoicing.”

VERSE 2

1. Keep in mind the chapter divisions and the verses were not in the original writings, they were added later for clarity. Thus, what we see here is that some time has passed by, we aren’t sure how long but this we do know, the honeymoon is over and the bridegroom was out all night. And he is going to call for her to come and follow him once again. He arrives back home early in the morning and he wants her to get up so they could go away together. We will see in a minute her response to the request.

2. In Revelation 3:20 we are told, “**Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.**” I think the picture fits perfectly here. Our Lord knocks on the door of our heart, calling us to come away with Him but many times the response is like the response of Solomon’s wife. Let’s read on and see what happens.

VERSES 3-6

1. She is already in bed and to get up now is just not worth the trouble. Yes she has lots of excuses why she can't get up but for the most part, she is comfortable, complacent and indifferent or apathetic to his calling. Perhaps she was simply not willing to be inconvenienced; perhaps she did not appreciate the unexpected nature of the beloved's visit; perhaps he came much later than she had expected him, and therefore she felt annoyed. Perhaps this was her effort to control the relationship ("Why should I run as soon as he knocks? He can wait a little while.") Whatever the specific reason, she refused to promptly rise from her bed and open the door.

After some time, as she was there in bed and thinking about this, she decided to get up and go with him. But when she opened the door he was gone and all that she found, in a sense, was his calling card or the fragrant oil that he had left behind. She knew it was him by the fragrance he left behind. She wanted to do what she wanted and when she wanted and then when she came to her senses it was too late, he was gone.

VERSES 7-8

1. The watchmen of the city, for some reason, did not recognize her and they beat her and punished her. She knew she was wrong, she didn't need to be abused, but restored. What a great lesson for us to learn about a brother or sister in the Lord who may have gone astray and when they come to the end of themselves we are to restore them and not destroy them. We are to help them come back into the fellowship!

2. Now these watchmen can be a type or picture of pastors and leaders of the church as we have seen. And, unfortunately, some tend to beat the sheep instead of encouraging them and seeing that they are restored. It is not that we ignore sin or false doctrine and just accept what everyone does or says. Not at all, but we are to encourage them and help them to be restored and not destroyed.

Paul put it like this in Galatians 6:1-2, **“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”**

You see, it is all about restoration not demolition, not destruction. Jesus did not tell Peter, “Peter, if you love Me, beat My sheep!” But he said, **“Peter, if you love Me, feed My sheep!”** Let the Word of God bring them back into that deep relationship they once had. Let the Word of God keep them spiritually strong so they don’t go astray. David said in Psalm 119:9-11, **“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.”**

3. Now in verse 8 we see her call for the virgins, the daughters of Jerusalem to keep their eyes open and try to help her find her beloved. We will see in verse 9 how they respond to her request.

VERSE 9

1. This seems a little sarcastic in the way they are saying this, “What makes this guy so special? Why should we bother to look for him? Why do you love this guy so much?” And as we move on we are going to see how she responds to their question, she is going to tell them why he is so special, why he is so important to her.

2. Let me ask you these questions. “What makes Jesus so special to you? Can you give others a reason why you love Him? Can you tell others why they should look for Him?” You see, you should be able to give a defense for what you believe, why Jesus means so much to you. If I were to ask you why your spouse is so special to you I am sure you would give me a list of reasons. But what about the Lord, the One who created you and loves you, why do you love Him, why is He so special to you. Peter put it like this in I Peter 3:15, “**But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.**”

We should be able to defend our faith and not say, “Just because!” That is not an answer.

J. Vernon McGee summarizes it like this in regards to Jesus and how others may see Him. He wrote,

Who is this Jesus anyway? What makes you think Jesus is different from anyone else? There have been other great religious leaders. Why do you think that Jesus is different from them? Why do you think that He is who He claims to be? Jesus was only a man. That is the kind of skepticism we hear.

May I say to you, there has been a lot of discussion about Jesus. There has been more controversy about Him than any person who has ever lived. He is the most controversial figure in history. Let me ask you a question. If someone today tried to show that Julius Caesar was a real rascal, would you get all excited about it and rise to his defense? If someone tried to show that Julius Caesar was a saint, would you be all excited about that and try to argue about it? It wouldn't excite me. I'd let anyone think whatever he wanted to think about Julius Caesar. I wouldn't argue with him. But the minute you mention Jesus Christ, the whole human family chooses sides.

It is interesting that God forces us to make a decision about His Son. He wouldn't let Pilate off without making a decision. Pilate tried to evade any involvement. He called for a basin of water and washed his hands, saying, “. . . I am innocent of the blood of this just person . . .” (Matt. 27:24). How wrong he was!

The oldest creed of the church, which has been recited for over nineteen hundred years by multitudes of people, includes these words: “Crucified under Pontius Pilate.” Pontius Pilate, you didn't wash your hands; you made a decision. God forced you to make a decision. Pilate thought that he was the judge and that Jesus was the prisoner. He didn't realize that Christ was the judge and he was the prisoner.

And still in our contemporary society every man must make a decision. “What is thy beloved more than another beloved?” In anthologies of religion, great religious leaders are listed who are called founders of religions: Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Ghandi, Buddha, and all the rest. According to Tertullian, the early church father, the Christians in the early church would rather have died than have Jesus put down on a plane with the heathen deities of the Roman Empire. They refused to even take a pinch of incense and place it before the image of Caesar. They wouldn’t do it, because their Beloved was different; He was *God*.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Vol. III, pp. 173-174

#### VERSES 10-16

1. The challenge by the daughters of Jerusalem was “What makes your beloved so much more important than anyone else’s?” And she tells them. She does not hold back but lays it all out why she is in love with Solomon, her beloved. And her summation of all this is given in verse 16, **“Yes, he is altogether lovely.”** Did you notice that he is not just lovely from this angle or that viewpoint but **“he is altogether lovely.”**

Did he have faults? He is a guy, of course he did but her love for him covered all those faults and she only saw how lovely he truly was. Peter tells us in I Peter 4:8, **“And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’”**

In regards to our love covering a multitude of sins, Grudem tells us, “Where love abounds in a fellowship of Christians, many small offences, and even some large ones, are readily overlooked and forgotten. But where love is lacking, every word is viewed with suspicion, every action is liable to misunderstanding, and conflicts abound – to Satan’s perverse delight.” Let us be wise and obey the will of God for our lives and forgive others as God has freely and graciously forgiven us!

May we not only have that kind of love for each other but especially for our spouses! I think many times people are forgiving, they let things go with their friends but when it comes to their spouse they hang them out to dry you might say. They let them have it and they love finding imperfections in them. But if we are honest with ourselves, we have many, many imperfections in our own lives and our spouse does not point them out, but true love overlooks these things. I am not speaking of ignoring sin, but things that are not sin that grind at us and irritate us, and the cure is love, the love of Christ not only indwelling us but overflowing and touching the lives of those around us, especially our spouses!



2. Now let's apply this to our relationship with the Lord. If someone came up and said, "Why is your God more important than what everyone else believes?" Could you give them an answer?

Listen to what J. Vernon McGee had to say regarding this. He wrote,

My friend, if you are going to defend the Lord Jesus Christ today, if you are going to witness for Him, you must know Him. Not only do you need to know who He is, but you need to know Him enough to be able to wax eloquent on His behalf. When I say be eloquent, I don't necessarily mean eloquent in language. I mean full of enthusiasm, excitement, love, and zeal for His person. You and I need not only to know Him, but we must *love* Him. That is the challenge that we find here. The bride knew Him. She knew Him and she loved Him. She says that He is the chiefest among ten thousand.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Vol. III, p. 174

As a body of believers we should feel this way about our Lord. That He is so special to us that we want to tell everyone. He should be so lovely to us that others should see that love that we have for Him because He first loved us. We should let people know that He is our friend! You see, there is no other like Him that can truly satisfy our lives and because of that we need to be able to share that with others.

As David said in Psalm 27:4 and as you listen to these words may it be the desire of your heart. He said, "**One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.**"

He was able to speak of the beauty of the Lord because He experienced the beauty of the Lord himself. You can't share that which you don't possess! Spurgeon put it like this, "The vain world cannot see in him a virtue to admire. It is a blind world, a fool world, a world that lieth in the wicked one. Not to discern the beauties of Jesus is an evidence of terrible depravity. Have you, my dear friend, frankly to confess that you were never enamoured of him who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, and went about doing good?"

Let me leave you this evening with these words from Pastor Jon Courson. He said, "Most of us believe that Jesus loves us generically. But the message of Solomon's song is that Jesus loves us individually and is in love with us radically." May we have that kind of love for Him and let others see it. May we be able to defend what we say we believe! And as we come to see, as we come to know, as we experience that "**he is altogether lovely**" may we share that with others!