



Biblical Manhood

Remembering Our Legacy, Fulfilling Our Destiny

July/August, 2014

East of Eden

You may be wondering about the title of this edition. In **Song of Solomon 1-4**, we have seen the ideal – the ideal courtship, the ideal love, the ideal marriage. Now in **Song of Solomon 5:2-8**, we get some realism. We now go “East of Eden” – we see what love and marriage are like in the real world. Solomon points out the realisms of married life in fallen world – real life after the honeymoon.

At the same time, we are introduced to the realisms of walking with Jesus. We get to see reality of living in a relationship with Jesus Christ. It will not always be “smooth sailing” in our relationship to Christ. There will be tough times – times of indifference, coldness, and distance. This text reminds us of the struggles we will have and gives us encouragement to persevere through these times.

In this text, I would encourage you to notice three actions:

An Invitation (5:2)

In **5:2**, we see that Abishag is asleep. It appears to me from the text that these

two had scheduled a night of intimacy. It was supposed to be a special “date night.” Abishag got ready and waited for him to come home. Yet, Solomon is late getting home. Abishag gave up and goes to bed, “I slept but my heart was awake.”

When Solomon gets home, he finds that the door is locked. He knocks on the door and calls out to her, “Listen! My lover is knocking: ‘Open to me my sister, my darling, my dove, my flawless one.’” Solomon is locked out and is getting wet in the night air, “My head is drenched with dew, my hair with the dampness of the night.” Even though he is late, he wants to come in. He still wants to have their special night. He invites Abishag to open the door and to carry on with their night.

A Refusal (5:3)

What is Abishag’s response? She refuses to come and open the door! She says, “I have taken off my robe – must I put it on again? I have washed my feet – must I soil them again?” She is upset with

Solomon and will not open the door for him.

She was half asleep and half awake. Yet, she will not open the door for Solomon. Do you see “East of Eden” in these verses? We have seen the ideal; we now get a glimpse of reality. The previous chapters exalted their love and marriage. Now, this text displays to us what love and marriage in the fallen world looks like in a fallen world. You can almost hear the crunch of the thorns and thistles and the slithering of the serpent in the background. When sinners say, “I do,” there will be struggle and difficulty.

A Departure (5:4-8)

In this day, the keys that they used tended to be much larger than those we use. Often there was enough room to fit your hand in the keyhole. Solomon attempted to open the door for himself, “My lover thrust his hand through the latch-opening (5:4a). This stirred the heart of Abishag, “My heart began to pound for him. I arose to open for my love” (5:4b-5a). Her hand got wet from the myrrh from Solomon’s hand (5:5b).

Tragically, when she opened the door, Solomon was gone, “I opened for my lover, but my lover had left, he was gone” (5:6). If only she had reacted sooner! He leaves and she does not know where he has gone. She is devastated, “My heart sank at his departure” (5:6b). She went to look for him but could not find him anywhere, “I looked for him but did not find him. I called him but he did not answer” (5:6c).

It is difficult how to interpret the words of 5:7. Apparently, she suffered mistreatment at the hands of those who were there to protect her. However, I believe that the main point is that without her beloved, she feels defenseless and defeated. The departure of her beloved has devastated her. This leads her to cry out in agony, “O daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you – if you find my lover, what will you tell him? Tell him I am faint with love” (5:8). She passionately longs to be reunited with her love Solomon.

Application To Marriage

What does this text teach us about marriage?

This text calls us to have a realistic view of marriage.

Many people worship the idol of a perfect marriage. Yet people must be realistic about two sinners saying, “I do.” Unmet expectations are the undoing of a marriage. Love and marriage are wonderful gifts of God but they are awful idols. Marriage is a commitment to love in all circumstances and situations. It is a covenant love – a love that is faithful through the ups and down of life. Difficulties can stretch it but it cannot sever the bond of covenant love. We have to remember that marriage is for sanctification. God uses it to transform people and to make them more like His Son Jesus Christ. This text calls us to realism concerning the marriage relationship.

This text points out the great enemy of intimacy is selfishness.

In this text, we see both Abishag and Solomon acting selfishly. This shows us that selfishness can destroy intimacy in a relationship. Yet, self-denial can overcome obstacles to intimacy. The following are prayers that you can pray for yourself to labor against selfishness in your relationship:

Father, open my eyes with love toward _____ because love covers all offenses.
 Father, enable me to speak kind and affirming words toward _____.
 Father, empower me to focus on _____'s need and help me minister to him/her.

Application To Our Relationship With Jesus

This text reveals that we must not have an unrealistic view of our relationship to Christ.
 When you first come to Christ, you will overflow with joy, hope and love. You will have zeal to be with Christ and to serve Him. Yet, over time, this can fade. There will be many temptations and many struggles. There is within us a terrible tendency to become neglectful and indifferent towards Jesus Christ. We must be prepared for this. We must guard ourselves against this evil. No matter who you are or how long you have walked with the Lord, this is a danger. We must realize that we will have to battle this. We must realize that we will need to repent when we become indifferent and neglectful to Jesus.

When we grow cold toward Christ, we must repent and seek Him with all our being.

At first, Abishag was indifferent toward Solomon. She neglected his pleas to open the door and allow him in. Yet, when her heart was stirred, she got up and went straight to the door to open it. This can illustrate how we must respond when grow indifferent or neglectful in our relationship with Jesus Christ. We must repent. We must seek after Him. We must pour our hearts out to Him. We must expose ourselves to His Word. We must ask others to pray for us. We are to take advantage of every opportunity to worship Him. We must respond to His conviction. When His people grow cold and indifferent, He calls to us (**Revelation 3:20**). He longs to renew our fellowship. He desires to return to an intimate relationship with us. Seek Him with all your being. You may say, "I don't really feel it. I feel far away." Keep seeking Him. Don't give up. Continue to pursue Him through the Word, prayer, worship, and fellowship. If you will seek Him, you will find Him!

World Prayer Plan

September

- 1-Poland-The Lost
- 2-Portugal
- 3-Puerto Rico
- 4-Qatar
- 5-Reunion
- 6-Romania-The Church
- 7-Romania-The Lost
- 8-Russia-The Church
- 9-Russia-The Lost

10-Russia-Mission Efforts
 11-Russia-Freedom and Peace
 12-Russia-Spiritual Awakening
 13-Rwanda
 14-Western Sahara
 15-Samoa
 16-San Marino
 17-Sao Tome
 18-Principe
 19-Saudi Arabia-The Church
 20-Saudi Arabia-Open Doors
 21-Saudi Arabia-Persecution
 22-Senegal
 23-Seychelles
 24-Sierra Leone
 25-Singapore
 26-Slovenia
 27-Solomon Islands
 28-Somalia
 29-South Africa-The Church
 30-South Africa-The Lost

October

1-South Africa-Political Future
 2-Spain-The Church
 3-Spain-The Lost
 4-Sri Lanka
 5-St. Helena and Ascension Island
 6-St. Kittis and Nevis
 7-St. Lucia
 8-St. Pierre and Miquelon
 9-St. Vincent
 10-Sudan-The Church
 11-Sudan-Persecuted Believers
 12-Suriname
 13-Svalbard
 14-Swaziland
 15-Sweden
 16-Switzerland

17-Syria
 18-Tajikstan
 19-Tanzania-The Church
 20-Tanzania-The Lost
 21-Thailand-The Church
 22-Thailand-The Lost
 23-Togo
 24-Tokelau Island
 25-Tonga
 26-Trinidad and Tobago
 27-Tunisia
 28-Turkey-The Church
 29-Turkey-The Lost
 30-Turkey-Mission Efforts
 31-Turkmenistan

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