

Everlasting Love

Text: Song of Solomon 6:3; 7:10; 8:6,7

Jeremiah 31:3: "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

There is a beautiful story that comes to us from the serene area between the coastal plains and Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina, known as the Piedmont. Founded mostly by the common people, yet even here there was a scattering of barons that lived comparatively comfortable compared to the populace. Among one of those families was a young man bereft of stunning features that would not place him in any stretch of the imagination into the category of "handsome." Frankly, he would be deemed quite the opposite. Neither did he possess a personality that would be referred to as magnetic and definitely not charismatic. With his type of personality, he was able to have friends as any young person within the ranks of privilege or poverty. When he became of "marrying age," as the old timers would say, he found that he now seemed to have acquired an unnatural attraction from the female population. It seemed this new attraction revolved not around who he was, but rather what he was perceived to have. His family began to put pressure on him to consider becoming friendly with one of the fine debutantes and carry on the family business with the prestige in which he was reared.

He asked his family to please be understanding of his plan, as he was about to move to a place distant from his community and live as common as possible among the people of the Piedmont. He abandoned his luxury late model vehicle for a well-worn used car of high mileage and questionable reliability. He went to a secondhand shop to buy clothes that would never capture attention on the street. He found a cheap apartment near the factory where he had recently been employed under the guise of a poor boy, just trying to get ahead. He went to work and soon the blisters developed into callouses and he happily become immersed in this new arena of life. He adjusted seamlessly and was soon accepted among his peers as one of the "good-old-boys." His high morals would not permit him to party like some of his acquaintances and he soon found good company in the boys who were the definitive examples of those who basked in the environment of the Bible-belt. Within a matter of months, he developed a friendship with a young lady that not only worked in the same factory, but also attended the church he was attending. After about a month and a half of casual conversation, he became bold enough, defying his inclination to shyness and asked the young lady for a date. One date followed another date (always modest--hamburgers not steaks). It did not take long for love to blossom. To him, she was a princess in her disguise as Pygmalion. And he was her knight in shining armor beneath his homely looks.

During their courtship, he never took her back to his home. He asked his parents to please understand his method in his madness. Therefore his parents came to his community, met the young lady in their best homespun look in neutral territory near the young people's factory. They genuinely liked her and quickly observed her Christian character shining through her modest demeanor.

Their love blossomed into plans of a life together joined by Holy Matrimony. He proposed and she eagerly accepted. With playful excitement he helped her plan their

humble marriage, understanding the age-old tradition that it is the bride's ceremony. The day came, the country church was as decorated as best as her poor parents could afford. She dressed as sweetly and beautifully as her grandmother's old gown allowed.

The young man had previously told her that he would like to make the plans for the honeymoon--he wants it to be a surprise. She agreed, but she warned him not to go beyond his budget. She reminded him, God willing, they will have a lifetime together and it doesn't matter how humble the honeymoon.

The glorious day came, their vows were said and the old upright piano played as the couple exited the rustic old church house. At the base of the stairs was a beautiful limousine waiting. The door was opened by the driver with as much pomp and splendor of Cinderella's coachman. After the first embrace and kiss upon entry, the young bride looked distressed and said, "Oh dear, we cannot afford this!" As they travelled mile after mile, periodically she questioned him, inquiring how this was possible. He just gave her a knowing smile assuring her that all was well. The trip came to an end as the limousine pulled into a huge circular driveway stopping at the door of a palatial mansion. She stared in wonderment, yet confusion. The bride no sooner took her first step out of the vehicle than he swooped her up in his arms and approached the door, which opened courteously by a butler. He carried his bride across the threshold and set her down. Distressed, she asked, "How are we going to afford all this?" The bridegroom burst into a huge smile and replied, "Because, it's all yours." And with that statement, he handed her the keys. He then explained, "You loved me for who I was, not for what I had. You loved me just as I was." The bridegroom continued, "I did not want all of this to be in the way of true love. And now, this is not love; it is love's reward. Because you have loved me for who I am, this is all yours and I, my dear, am yours."

The Song of Solomon is a most beautiful romance revolving around Solomon, the Shulamite Maiden, The Shepherd Lover and the Daughters of Jerusalem. To mock the very plain language of this Song of Songs would be akin to making catcalls at a sacred wedding. The Old Testament is replete with prophecies of Christ and His Church. This is one of the most mystical yet understood expressions of Christ and His love for His Bride. I have used the above story to set the ambience for our message today. I don't want to give too much away by my outline; therefore my outline shall withhold some pertinent information until the end.

1. THE PLACE WHERE LOVE IS KINDLED

Song of Solomon 1:7

True love is activated by our spirit. Proverbs 20:27: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly." Then the love God is birthed and nurtured in the soul. Hebrews 10:39: "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

2. THE SIMPLICITY WHERE LOVE IS HOUSED

Song of Solomon 2:1

The Holy Spirit inspired Solomon to write these words, prophetic of our Lord. The rose of Sharon does not grow on the high, lofty unattainable mountain cliff. The lily grows in the ever more attainable valley. These wildflowers in the Holy Land grow on

the open plain and deep valley where even a child or a cripple may take them and enjoy them. Luke 12:27:

“Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Christ is available for all.

3. THE GRACE THAT SEES THE BEAUTY BEYOND THE BONDAGE

Song of Solomon 2:2; Song of Solomon 4:9

Deuteronomy 7:7: “The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people.”

Romans 5:6-8:

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

4. THE UNCOMPLICATED APPEAL OF CHRIST ALONE

Song of Solomon 2:4, 5

There is an illustration entitled “The Old Orchard” that I shall share with you of Charles Spurgeon and George H, Morrison, one Victorian and the other Post Victorian, commenting on this text. There is the humility of Christ and His kingdom that cannot be duplicated by this world.

5. THE ELIMINATION OF ALL THAT HINDERS INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP

Song of Solomon 2:15

The little foxes are small enough and agile enough that they can grab hold of the choicest grapes without disturbing the vine. It is the little things that accumulate and rob us of intimate fellowship with our Lord.

CONCLUSION:

What does the Shulamite see in the shepherd? - Song of Solomon 5:9, 16.

Where is the Shepherd to be found? - Song of Solomon 6:2, 3

-Pastor Pope-