

SERMON: A PRETTY LADY IN AN UGLY SITUATION (A Women's History Month Sermon)

Song of Solomon 8:10a

I am a wall.

Introduction

There are many great women recorded in the Bible. Many are well known; a greater number is not so well known. Rev. Jasper Williams calls them “sheroes.” We know about Jochebed, the mother of Moses. We know about Esther who took a chance in faith, went to the king, uninvited, and saved a nation from genocide. We know about Ruth and Naomi. We know about Deborah, the just judge and the fearless warrior. Of course we know about Mary, the mother of Jesus. I could list hundreds more, but I think you get my point. Today, I want to preach about one of the “sheroes” who is nameless and perhaps less well known. She is the Shulamite maiden in the Song of Solomon.

It has been said by some individuals that the most difficult book of the Bible to understand is Revelation; and the second most difficult book to understand is the Song of Solomon. Understanding the Song of Solomon is like understanding a classical ballet. There is a story line behind each ballet; when the story line is not known, then the performance is just a bunch of “pretty dancing.” The dancing makes a lot more sense when we know the story. The same is true of the Song of Solomon. The people of past centuries knew the story; in fact, it was common knowledge. It was so common until no one bothered to pass it down to the next generation. Now the story is obscure to many of us. Many theologians believe- and I agree- that this is a play with lost stage directions. The lost stage directions make it difficult to determine who is speaking to whom.

Here is the story. King Solomon had many great attributes; but he was a notorious womanizer. He had a thousand women at his personal beck and call. Yet he wanted one more. He abducted a beautiful, young Shulamite lady of the peasant class and brought her to his pavilion. He thought she would be “easy pickings” since she was a peasant. He wooed her, but she tactfully repelled his romantic advances. Solomon sweet talked her constantly and offered her lavish gifts. She did not yield to his advances because she was in love with a lowly shepherd boy. Finally, Solomon gave up. He had too much pride to take her by force. He released her and allowed her to return to her home and marry the shepherd boy. He wrote this play out of respect and admiration for this young lady; she was the only lady who turned him down. Then he thought, “If only Israel, God’s people, were as faithful to God, as this young lady is to the lowly shepherd boy?”

Remember, when you read the entire book at home, that this is a play in which the stage directions have been lost and it is difficult to determine who is speaking to whom. Sometimes Solomon is talking to the young maiden. Sometimes the shepherd boy and the maiden are exchanging “sweet nothings” after he had temporarily sneaked into the royal compound. There are also several soliloquies and several asides. Upon closer

inspection, it is possible to determine who is speaking to whom and the locations of the soliloquies and the asides.

In our text, when the Shulamite maiden declares she is a wall, she is telling the shepherd boy that she had been faithful to him. The sweet talk of Solomon went in one ear and came out the other ear. She had become a spiritual and moral wall that Solomon could not breach. Now let's extract a few truths from this stage play.

Exposition

- 1. Sometimes We Find Ourselves in Ugly, Sticky Positions.**
- 2. Sometimes Finesse Is More Effective Than Brute Force.**
- 3. People Skills Are More Important Than Many People Think.**
- 4. The Devil Will Woo You with Worldly Things.**
- 5. The Devil Will Try To "Wear You Down."**
- 6. We Must Remain Faithful to Our Savior, the Good Shepherd.**
- 7. Faithfulness Guarantees a Happy Ending (Eternity) to Your Story.**

Closing Thoughts

This book can also be seen as an allegory of the New Testament church. We are wooed by satan, but are awaiting the return of the Good Shepherd, at which time we will consummate the marriage of the church and Christ. Give God Glory! Give God All the Glory!

Related Scriptures

1st Kings 4:32

End Notes

1. There is nothing new under the sun. There may be more of it and it may be more intense, but it is not new. There are stories in the news right now of allegations of powerful men putting women in ugly, sticky situations. Just remember the Bible is timely and timeless. It is relevant in every age and era.
2. The Hebrew word for song, *sheer*, can refer to several artistic devices. It can refer to a poem, a musical song, or a stage play.

3. The book begins with the phrase, "The song of songs." This is how Hebraic syntax expresses the superlative. We see it all the time. King of Kings means the Greatest King. Lord of Lords means the greatest Lord. Likewise, Song of Songs means the greatest song. Think about it. Solomon wrote one thousand five songs, but he called this one the greatest because of his respect and admiration for the Shulamite maiden.

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