

Sabbath School Lesson #6 – The Royal Love Song – 4-10 May 2019

Christ inspired Solomon to write the royal love song. Therein we read: “Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love *is* strong as death; jealousy *is* cruel as the grave: the coals thereof *are* coals of fire, *which hath* a most vehement flame” (Song of Solomon 8:6). Pure unfeigned love is as strong as death. Many married couples even among Seventh-day Adventists know not of this pure love. Often they profess love but know not the pure love of an unpretending heart. Only when Christ’s love fills our hearts can we have unquenchable love. “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned” (verse 7). “Love is a precious gift, which we receive from Jesus. Pure and holy affection is not a feeling, but a principle. Those who are actuated by true love, are neither unreasonable nor blind” {FLB 255.2}. “Hearts that are filled with the love of Christ can never get very far apart. Religion is love, and a Christian home is one where love reigns and finds expression in words and acts of thoughtful kindness and gentle courtesy” {FLB 255.5}.

Sunday: Invisible Life – Only when Christ is the indwelling invisible life can man truly be said to have life and find true meaning in life. In Genesis 2:7 we notice what we are made from. Man is made from the dust, that he may remember that he is nothing in himself; but also in the image of God, that he may know the infinite possibilities before him – association with God Himself; of himself, having no more might than the dust upon which he walks, but capable of the greatest things through the power and goodness of God. And, strange as it may seem, his capabilities are the greatest when he is most sensible of his weakness. “When I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10). “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Not even here can men claim superiority. The beasts of the field breathe the same air that he does, the same “breath of life” (Genesis 7:22). Every living creature is a “living soul” (see Revelation 16:3). Life is also to them, the same as to him, the gift of God. Indeed, the very fact that his breath is in his nostrils is a proof of his frailty. “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?” (Isaiah 2:22). It is the breath of life which God has given him, but how feeble a hold he has of it. “For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4:14). How can this be, since the life was given him from God? It is not that life from God is a slight thing, but because man has so slight a tenure of it. In the hand of God is the breath of every living thing, and if He were to withdraw it, they would perish. “If He set His heart upon man, if He gather unto Himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust” (Job 34:14, 16). “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Not yet have we found anything in which man can boast. Therefore the exhortation comes, “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psalm 146:3-4).

Monday: The Loves of the Love Song – Very few even among Seventh-day Adventists experience true love – the kind of deep love penned here: “His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem” (Song of Solomon 5:16). Most people experience self-love they mistake for true love. It is just on this vital point that everybody in the world is making or has made a mistake. Happy are they who have found out their mistake, and have come to the understanding and practice of true love. Love “seeketh not her own” (1 Corinthians 13:5). Therefore self-love is not love at all, in the right sense of the word. It is only a base counterfeit. Yet the most of that which in the world is called love, is not really love for another, but is love of self. Even that which should be the highest form of love known on earth, the love which is used by the Lord as a representation of His love for His people, – the love of husband and wife, – is more often selfishness than real love. Leaving out of the question, as unworthy of notice, those marriages that are formed for the purpose of gaining wealth or position in society, it is a fact, which all will recognise when their attention is called to it, that in nearly every case the parties to a marriage are thinking more of their own individual happiness than of the

happiness of the other. Of course this condition of things exists in varying degrees, and in proportion as real, unselfish love exists, is there real happiness; for it is a lesson that the world is slow to learn, that true happiness is found only when one ceases to seek for it, and sets about making it for others. True love leads men to heed the command: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

Tuesday: A Loving Knowledge – True love in marriage is only possible if Christ reigns in the hearts of the couple. Christ celebrated the first marriage in Eden. This Edenic marriage was to be a model for all marriages down to our present generation. When the Lord took a rib out of Adam and formed Eve, He brought her to Adam, and looking at her, Adam said, "this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." This should be the same for every couple. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:22-24). This oneness is echoed by Solomon in the Song: "my beloved is mine, and I am his" (Song of Solomon 2:16). How can couples have this love, this oneness, and truly say: my flesh is your flesh? Only when each one of the pair accept the loving knowledge of Christ. If each experience the love of Christ, the love between the couple will be the natural outcome. Any other way will only produce counterfeit love. Here is an illustration by one wedding prayer, that was shared in the 1980s, written by a bridegroom: "That I may come near to her, draw me nearer to Thee than to her; that I might know her, make me to know Thee more than her; that I may love her with the perfect love of a perfectly whole heart, cause me to love Thee more than her and most of all. Amen. Amen. That nothing may be between me and her, be Thou between us every moment. That we may be constantly together, draw us into separate loneliness with Thyself. And when we meet breast to breast, my God, let it be on Thine own. Amen. Amen." For those already married and have not had such prayer, seize the opportunity to thus pray. Christ says, "without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5); without Christ we cannot truly love.

Wednesday: Love at the Right Time – By love at the right time, the Lesson writer likely is referring to sexual intimacy. In the Bible, sexual intimacy is only holy between married male and female. Premarital sex is referred to as fornication, and it is sin. Those who continue in fornication, and repent not, will be counted with the wicked. "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). All sex outside marriage is condemned in the commandment that says, "thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). Writing to a particular youth who was having premarital sex, Ellen White wrote: "Your acts and conversation are offensive to God. The angels of God bear record of your words and your actions. The light has been given you but you have not heeded it. The course you have pursued is a reproach to the cause of God. Your behavior is unbecoming and unchristian. When you should both be in your beds you have been in one another's society and in one another's arms nearly the entire night.... You give occasion to our enemies to judge our people as being loose in morals" — Letter 3, 1879. {TSB 118.1}.

Thursday: Safeguarding the Creator's Gift – The seventh Commandment forbids adultery (Exodus 20: 14). In magnifying this law, Jesus clearly taught the spirit of the law, showing that the evil thoughts or looks to be as truly sin as is the unlawful act of adultery itself. Looking at the letter of the law, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery', Jesus gave the spirit of the law, that lust was adultery. Jesus put it this way: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:27, 28). The Bible clearly teaches that, man is as his thoughts are (Proverbs 23:7); and for that reason: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

So, if you allow yourself to look lustily at others as your sexual targets, or look at certain sexy pictures whilst passing time between break and whatever your occupation, you deceive yourself, for you are on road to develop adulterous passions and end up transgressing the law. The counsel of God is: "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (1 Corinthians 6:18). In safeguarding the Creator's gift of marriage, flee from temptations, and play not with sin.