

Sunday AM Service ~ August 20, 2023

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome

The writer of Psalm 47 says these words,

"Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. ² For the LORD Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth. ³ He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. ⁴ He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. ⁵ God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets. ⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. ⁷ For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. ⁸ God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne."

Song – All Creatures of Our God and King

[\(1\) All Creatures of Our God and King \[Official Lyric Video\] - YouTube](#)

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| 1. All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam! | 2. And all ye men of tender heart,
Forgiving others, take your part,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
Praise God and on Him cast your care! |
|---|--|

*Refrain: O praise Him! O praise Him!
 Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

3. Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship Him in humbleness,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One!

Prayer

Father, we want to come today to offer our praise to you. We need you to quieten our busy minds as we come humbly, struggling to understand the enormity of who you are and your love for us. We know Lord that you have always been here, the beginning and the end. Your creation reminds us that you are all powerful, that you hold the stars in your hands. You give us life and breath; you sustain us, pursue us and redeem us. You are the truth in a world full of lies, light in darkness, the giver of hope through grace. You offer us wisdom, comfort and healing through your overwhelming love.

We come today to claim forgiveness, forgiveness that we don't deserve. We allow ourselves to be pulled away from the truth that you have given us. We stray in so many directions and fail to stop and remember you. We forget that you are eternal, and focus instead on the here and now. We are sorry for not doing what we should do, for allowing our pride, self-centredness and sinful nature to guide the way we live. And yet, in spite of all this, you continue to love us as you always have. Help us to remember that this morning and open our hearts and minds to your leading. Amen

Bible Reading – Song of Songs 2:8 – 3:5 (NIV)

"Listen! My beloved! Look! Here he comes, leaping across the mountains, bounding over the hills. ⁹ My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look! There he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattice. ¹⁰ My beloved spoke and said to me, "Arise, my darling, my beautiful

one, come with me. ¹¹ See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. ¹² Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. ¹³ The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me."

He ¹⁴ My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely. ¹⁵ Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom.

She ¹⁶ My beloved is mine and I am his; he browses among the lilies. ¹⁷ Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the rugged hills. **3** All night long on my bed I looked for the one my heart loves; I looked for him but did not find him. ² I will get up now and go about the city, through its streets and squares; I will search for the one my heart loves. So I looked for him but did not find him. ³ The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. "Have you seen the one my heart loves?" ⁴ Scarcely had I passed them when I found the one my heart loves. I held him and would not let him go till I had brought him to my mother's house, to the room of the one who conceived me. ⁵ Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.

Announcements 20/8/23

Focus for the month – Commitment. Have you ever thought about how many one another sayings there are in the Bible? Love one another. Live in harmony with one another. Serve one another. Forgive one another. Pray for one another. Submit to one another. Build one another up. God's word is clear that if we are committed to the Lord and to his kingdom we also need to be committed to God's people. How are we going with this commitment?

Directory Update. We are currently updating our church directory. An Elder will be circulating with a copy of the directory. Please check that your contact details are correct.

100th Anniversary meeting. Our very small 100th anniversary team is organizing a worship service for 12th November followed by a lunch/dinner. So please keep the date free. We also want to invite people who have previously been attached to our Church to come back celebrate this milestone. If you know of anyone who might be interested in getting an invitation could you please send their details to Sarah Baldwin sarbear20@aapt.net.au Or Stephen Taylor (sktaylor1997@gmail.com.au) in the next 2 weeks. We will need some help with social media, catering and logistics so if you can help with any of these things, please see Peter H (Sunday @ 6), Sarah, Annette, Cath J or Stephen.

Fuel for Father's Day - Father's Day is coming up fast. Want a meaningful but no less manly gift for your important man? Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) transports food, medical aid, health workers, missionaries and God's Word into the most remote parts of the planet. Buy your Dad a jerry can of fuel that keeps the MAF planes in the air and your man grounded. Talk to Sam Collyer for more information.

Recharge Men's Convention | Saturday 9th September 8:30am-3:00pm. On "A reconciliation that works". Cost \$40 early bird or \$50. To register or for more details go to <https://www.hgm.org.au/recharge#currentConference>

Community garden working bee, Saturday 2 September from 8-10 am. It's spring, a great time to celebrate and care for God's Creation, and grow our witness to the community. All welcome. Contact Stuart B for info.

Please pray for the Committee of Management as they meet this week to talk about buildings and finances as well as the Hunter Presbytery as they consider Hamilton, the Samoan congregation, Women's Engagement within the Presbytery, Trials for license for a theological student, as well as a few other items.

Hamilton. Just a few dates to remember

- Wed 23rd Aug Hunter Presbytery Working through more of the details
- Sun 3rd Sept David Robertson preaching at all three services

Pastoral Prayer Points

Pray for Mozambique. (Pop 33m, Christians 18 m). Violence targeting Christians in the north has become more widespread and brutal. The presence of drug cartels in some areas is making the lives of Christians difficult – especially for churches who work with youth. Pray that Christians would live boldly, despite the risk of attacks. Pray for wisdom and compassion towards the traumatised and vulnerable.

Pray for the NSW government as it begins a consultation process relating to sexuality and gender conversion practises. Christian groups, religious schools and other faith groups are still very concerned about what the legislation will involve and how it may interfere with normal activities of pastoral care, especially for people with unwanted same-sex attraction and gender confusion. Pray that their concerns will be heard and legislated for..

Pray for the upcoming 100th anniversary of the Charlestown church, that we will be able to make contact with people who used to go to our Church (especially those who are now going nowhere) and that they might come back for the anniversary and reconnect with God's people here.

Pray for the people of Walaha in Vanuatu. For their plans to repair their Church and the funds to do this work. For their desire to more regularly visit the homes of the old and needy. That the Lord would raise up more young people to come to Church. And for unity amongst church leaders.

Song – King of Kings (Teach) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSnGYGr7sPg>

1. In the darkness we were waiting
Without hope, without light
'Til from Heaven You came running
There was mercy in Your eyes
To fulfill the law and prophets
To a virgin came the word
From a throne of endless glory
To a cradle in the dirt

Chorus:

Praise the Father, praise the Son
Praise the Spirit, three in one
God of glory, Majesty
Praise forever to the King of Kings

2. To reveal the kingdom coming
And to reconcile the lost
To redeem the whole creation
You did not despise the cross
For even in your suffering
You saw to the other side
Knowing this was our salvation
Jesus for our sake you died

Chorus

3. And the morning that You rose
All of Heaven held its breath
'Til that stone was moved for good
For the Lamb had conquered death
And the dead rose from their tombs
And the angels stood in awe
For the souls of all who'd come
To the Father are restored
4. And the church of Christ was born
Then the Spirit lit the flame
Now this gospel truth of old
Shall not kneel, shall not faint
By His blood and in His name
In His freedom I am free
For the love of Jesus Christ
Who has resurrected me

Chorus

Bible Reading – Song of Songs 3:6-5:1 (NIV)

⁶ Who is this coming up from the wilderness like a column of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and incense made from all the spices of the merchant? ⁷ Look! It is Solomon's carriage, escorted by sixty warriors, the noblest of Israel, ⁸ all of them wearing the sword, all experienced in battle, each with his sword at his side, prepared for the terrors of the night. ⁹ King Solomon made for himself the carriage; he

made it of wood from Lebanon. ¹⁰ Its posts he made of silver, its base of gold. Its seat was upholstered with purple, its interior inlaid with love. Daughters of Jerusalem, ¹¹ come out, and look, you daughters of Zion. Look on King Solomon wearing a crown, the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day his heart rejoiced.

He **4** How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes behind your veil are doves. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from the hills of Gilead. ² Your teeth are like a flock of sheep just shorn, coming up from the washing. Each has its twin not one of them is alone. ³ Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon; your mouth is lovely. Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate. ⁴ Your neck is like the tower of David, built with courses of stone; on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors. ⁵ Your breasts are like two fawns, like twin fawns of a gazelle that browse among the lilies. ⁶ Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of incense. ⁷ You are altogether beautiful, my darling; there is no flaw in you. ⁸ Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, come with me from Lebanon. Descend from the crest of Amana, from the top of Senir, the summit of Hermon, from the lions' dens and the mountain haunts of leopards. ⁹ You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride; you have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace. ¹⁰ How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much more pleasing is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your perfume more than any spice! ¹¹ Your lips drop sweetness as the honeycomb, my bride; milk and honey are under your tongue. The fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon. ¹² You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain. ¹³ Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with choice fruits, with henna and nard, ¹⁴ nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with every kind of incense tree, with myrrh and aloes and all the finest spices. ¹⁵ You are a garden fountain, a well of flowing water streaming down from Lebanon.

She ¹⁶ Awake, north wind & come, south wind! Blow on my garden, that its fragrance may spread everywhere. Let my beloved come into his garden and taste its choice fruits.

He **5** I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine and my milk.

Friends Eat, friends, and drink; drink your fill of love.

Sermon: Four Seasons of Love – (Stephen Taylor)

Sermon Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1yiGmgEgCU>

In 1996, my favourite artist at the time Sting, brought out a new album, Mercury Falling. I bought it almost immediately. On it he had a track called "All Four Seasons" which instantly became one of my favourite songs. Let me give you just a taste.

*"With her smile as sweet as a warm wind in summer
She's got me flying like a bird in a bright June sky
And then just when she thinks that I've got her number
Brings me down to the ground with her wintry eye
That's my baby. She can be all four seasons in one day*

*And when the night time comes with no interference
To our warm summer love with all its charms
But like a thoroughbred horse she can turn on a sixpence
And I find that I'm back in Mistress Winter's arms
That's my baby. She can be all four seasons in one day"*

Changing the metaphor slightly, this morning I want to talk about how when you are in love you experience all four seasons but not necessarily in any order. Spring that time of hope, where life & love grows is wonderful. Summer where there is warmth and heat is an absolute pleasure. But Autumn where things seem to be dying all around you is disturbing. And Winter it sends a shiver down our spine. So, when we turn back to our two lovers in the Song of Songs chapter 2 we see the season is certainly

Slide 3

1. Spring (Chap 2:8—17)

"Listen! My beloved! Look! Here he comes, leaping across the mountains, bounding over the hills. ⁹ My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look! There he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattice. ¹⁰ My beloved spoke & said to me, 'Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me. Slide 4 ¹¹ See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. ¹² Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come; the cooing of doves is heard in our land. ¹³ The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me."

Can't you smell the freshness of spring, the season of love? Can't you see in this song the energy, the enthusiasm, the eagerness and excitement of new love? The long, cold winter has gone. The flowers are blossoming, the sights and smell of spring are everywhere. And it's obvious that this young couple want to make the most of this springtime! They want to be together. The guy is coming with a swagger in his step. The girl is at the window waiting for his appearance and then they head off hand in hand enjoying each other company.

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But spring has its dangers. New love, fresh love has its challenges. The girl is not free to go wherever she wants to go. ¹⁴ *"My dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely."* The girl can be seen but not entirely. She is not ready to come out of her place of safety just yet. She stays in the cleft of the rock until the danger goes.

And he is aware of the foxes, the little foxes. ¹⁵ *"Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom"*. The growth on the vines is tender, it can be easily damaged. This love looks like it could well bear fruit but it is easy for little things to come in & destroy their budding love. Things like jealousy, lack of self-control, selfishness, mistrust, criticism and an inability to forgive can harm their fragile love. All of us have baggage. So when two people come together you don't halve the baggage, you double the baggage! For just as from little things big things grow so from little foxes, big foxes grow.

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But what seems to be growing in this relationship is their love not the foxes. So, in this springtime, she can say to Him. ¹⁶ *"My beloved is mine and I am his;"* This is another turning point for these two lovers. It is a milestone in their relationship. What we might call an engagement. They are now committed to each other, exclusively. So, he browses among the lilies, but not for too long. ¹⁷ *"Until the day breaks and the shadows flee, turn, my beloved and be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the rugged hills"*. Then the man is again gone.

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There is a level of intimacy here but they don't go too far. In the words of one preacher. Her no at this stage is "No, not yet" rather than "No, never." You see summer has not yet come.

Friends when we are in love it is like springtime. There is a lightness about our step. There is a smile on our mouths. There are warm fuzzy's inside our heart. Everything is alive & bright. But that doesn't mean we can let our hearts go wild; spring is still a time to wait.

Because one particularly dangerous fox is to give yourself fully to someone when its spring time and not being willing to wait for summer. Our hormones will often be screaming to us the opposite message. "Now is the time. It feels so right". But true loves waits. More on that later. For in our passage the freshness of spring suddenly morphs into the emptiness of

Slide 8

2. Autumn. (Chap 3:1-5)

3 *"All night long (or the Hebrew could mean night after night) on my bed I looked for the one my heart loves; I looked for him but did not find him".* There is so much pleasure in love but there is also so much pain. The road to love is not without its twists and turns. The arrival of love never seems to come in time. There are some long nights, there are some lonely nights, where we wish the one that we love would be there with us right here, right now.

Here the woman is in love but this love is not the delights of spring but the barrenness of autumn. And this love, this painful love has overcome her thoughts. Night and day it fills her thoughts. She tosses and turns pining for her love. Finally, she does something about it. ² *"I will get up now and go about the city, through its streets and squares; I will search for the one my heart loves. So, I looked for him but did not find him.*

³ *The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. "Have you seen the one my heart loves?"*

When you are in love it is pure agony being away from the one you love. When you are pining for love it is even more heart breaking when you are looking for love and love doesn't seem to be looking for you. This woman is searching, searching everywhere. She is putting herself out there. She is not being sensible; she will even expose herself to the dangers of the city in the middle of the night. But she doesn't care. She has to find love; she has to find her love.

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Love is like that. It is a roller coaster of emotions. In the words of Missy Higgins in her song Nightminds, *"The highs would make you fly & the lows make you want to die."* The feelings of love are so intense that you can go up & down like a yo-yo. It can make you feel bullet proof & it can take you to a world of pain, pain so great you don't think you can handle it.

Slide 10

So, when she eventually finds her lover, she doesn't want to let him go. *"Scarcely had I passed them when I found the one my heart loves. I held him & would not let him go till I had brought him to my mother's house, to the room of the one who conceived me"*

She is no longer a dove in a cleft of the rock. Now she doesn't care. She won't wait, she says to herself. I am his. He is mine. Let's take it to the next level. Now is this a dream, or did this really happen? Once again, we are left wondering. But not for long. For we are just about to end the second stanza of this Song of Songs and hear the chorus for the second time.

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⁵ *"Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires".* Like we saw last week this isn't the preacher telling her to wait or her parents telling her to wait. She is saying, she is singing, she is telling everyone who would listen. Don't do it. The time has not come. Autumn is not the time to give yourself away, just as Spring isn't the time to give yourself away.

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And I think when love is blossoming and even when you become engaged it becomes harder to wait. Spring is hard because there is life and vitality everywhere. Autumn is hard because you feel alone and you need someone to fill that gap. But God's way is to wait for marriage.

It is a bit like setting concrete. It takes time. After a few hours it looks like it is strong but you can't start using it or building something on top of it. For it has to cure. And also, with love you have to wait. But if you do wait, it will be a stronger foundation to build other things on.

Now this isn't God being a kill joy. This isn't God stopping you from having the pleasure you desire; you think you deserve. God wants you to have sex with the maximum enjoyment, in a place where you are best protected with a partner that has committed themselves to you for life, through thick & in thin, in sickness & in health & that occurs only within marriage. Marriage is the right place at the right time with the right person. And that is where our song goes next, to the wedding day of this man and woman where their love is now in

Slide 13

3. Summer (Chap 3:6-4:15)

In highly poetic language our bride sings of the arrival of her husband on their wedding day & using poetic license, she compares him to a king. But not just any old king, King Solomon. ⁶ *"Who is this coming up from the wilderness like a column of smoke, perfumed with myrrh & incense made from all the spices of the merchant?"* ⁷ *Look! It is Solomon's carriage, escorted by sixty warriors, the noblest of Israel,* ⁸ *all of them wearing the sword, all experienced in battle, each with his sword at his side, prepared for the terrors of the night".*

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Her fiancée is like a king to her. And he will protect her like a queen. But there is more than just protection there is also extravagance. ⁹ *"King Solomon made for himself the carriage; he made it of wood from Lebanon.* ¹⁰ *Its posts he made of silver, its base of gold. Its seat was upholstered with purple, its interior inlaid with love. Daughters of Jerusalem,* ¹¹ *come out, and look, you daughters of Zion. Look on King Solomon wearing a crown, the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day his heart rejoiced".*

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This is her wedding day. Where her Prince Charming, no her King Solomon has come to sweep her off her feet. In the last chapter the woman felt vulnerable, now she knows she will be safe with him. In chapter 1 she felt like she was an ordinary lily, now she feels as special as a queen. They feel like royalty in each other's presence.

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And as the wedding carriage arrives all the bride's attention is on the groom but when we get to the wedding night all the groom's attention is on the bride. The glory of the carriage gives way to the beauty of the bride *"How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful. Your eyes behind your veil are doves. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from the hills of Gilead* ² *Your teeth are like a flock of sheep just shorn...* ³ *Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon; your mouth is lovely...* ⁴ *Your neck is like the tower of David".*

Now that is not how I would describe a beautiful woman today. I don't think any woman wants to be compared to a flock of goats or some sheep or even the Tower of David. Something has been lost on the translation. But I think it is obvious what is happening here. The man and woman are finally alone. On their wedding night. The dove is out from the cleft of the rock. The time to arouse and awaken love has finally come.

And the man is looking at his bride, his beautiful bride. And there is no flaw in her. She's perfect. He starts with her face – her eyes, her hair, her teeth, her cheeks, her lips and tells her how stunning they are. And then he works downward praising each part of her body.

Slide 17

For the husband, the standard of beauty should be his wife. The way he will define beauty of any kind is by starting with the one he loves. The one who has given herself to him. This is how American preacher Mark Driscoll puts it *"Have your spouse be your standard of beauty... if she is your standard of beauty then there*

is no flaw in her because she looks like her... This is why we tell you 'Don't cohabit. Don't fornicate. Don't look at pornography.' Don't create a standard of beauty that is not your spouse and compare your spouse to the standard of beauty'. Have your spouse be your standard of beauty. "

You get it? Keep your eyes on your marriage partner. Don't compare them with someone else. She's the one. He's the one. They are not perfect but neither are you. But they are the ones you have promised your future to. Jesus will say you commit adultery not just when you do a physical act but when you think and desire someone other than your marriage partner. Have your spouse be the standard of beauty & they will always reach that standard.

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On their wedding night the groom **describes** his wife and then he **desires** his wife. ⁸ *"Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, come with me from Lebanon. Descend from the crest of Amana, from the top of Senir, the summit of Hermon, from the lions' dens and the mountain haunts of leopards".* Up until now you have been inaccessible to me, my love. Out of my reach. Head & shoulders above me. Above my pay grade.

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But now, ⁹ *"You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride; you have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace. ¹⁰ How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much more pleasing is your love than wine, & the fragrance of your perfume more than any spice! ¹¹ Your lips drop sweetness as the honeycomb, my bride; milk & honey are under your tongue. The fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon".*

But now things have changed. Now they can awaken and arouse the love that they have for each other. You drive me crazy, the bridegroom sings to his beautiful bride. But notices what he is doing here. He is not demanding that she do something for him. He is inviting her to join him. To leave her fears behind. For he will care for her. He will love her. He will protect her. She is his bride.

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And then we come to one of the key verses in the book. ¹² *"You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain".* In the previous chapters we wondered whether these two had gone too far. Whether they had waited for this moment. Yes, in the chorus we twice heard the bride saying "Wait, it is better if you don't arouse or awaken love before its time." But was she saying that out of regret or was she saying that because she was glad that she did wait. Here we get the answer. She did wait for her groom.

She was still a garden locked up. But now her garden and all its fruits. Now her fountain with all its flowing water is no longer locked away. The garden which was off limits to all is now available for just one man and one man only. Her husband. The one who truly loves her. And together they get to feast in not her garden of delight but their garden of delight.

What a wonderful picture of sex within marriage. It is not dirty, it is beautiful. It was made for pleasure and procreation. It was created by God to make the two one, in marriage. Our world says, do it, scratch that itch, fulfill that thirst. And God's word says, wait until you find your king or queen. Wait until God gives you access to their garden of delight.

Now that doesn't mean that sex is always magical in marriage. For it involves the blessings and baggage of two different people coming together. But when we let more than one person into our garden that only increases the baggage. As Christians sex within marriage is the ideal even if it isn't always the reality. Yes, it requires work, like any garden, but it is the God ordained way to enjoy the fruits of the garden at the right time and in the right season.

And it is interesting that a recent study in America found that the people who are experiencing the best sex have had a certain number of sexual partners in the last year. And that number was 1. And here in Songs of Songs, we see the right time has come, for it now

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4. The Height of Summer (chapter 4:16-5:1)

It is often said the Church's only teaching on sex, is don't do it. But that is not true, in the right place, at the right time, with the right person, the Bible teaches that sex is good, very good. Sex is a good gift to us from God. Sex is to be enjoyed. And here we see the right time has come. The man and the woman are married. They have kept themselves for each other and they get to enjoy the garden and all of its fruits.

They have waited until love has been awakened but now the lock on the gate can be unlocked and the gate to the garden can be opened. So, the lover says to his bride *"I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine and my milk."* And the friends say *"Eat, O friends, and drink; drink your fill O lovers"*

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It's hard to wait for the right season. In CS Lewis books on the fictitious land of Narnia, when the people are under the rule of the White Witch it is always winter but never Christmas. It is always cold. A time where there is no life. And there isn't even the Christmas season to liven things up. And at times life for us seems like winter. Never summer, never autumn, never even spring! Love is passing you by. Love is slow to arrive. Love is not coming on time.

I know what that feels like. I was never good at love. And when I found someone that I thought was the one, they never seemed to like me. When I went into ministry training, I was going out with someone & we made the decision to go into ministry together. So, I left my job and then soon after we broke up! Three years later when I graduated and was sent to Tweed Heads, I was going out with someone and after about a month or so she flew up to see me and to say this wasn't working any more. I remember I even paid for her flight!

I ended up being married at 31 years of age. It had been a very long winter season for me. But it is worth the wait. Love for me is still at times a roller coast of emotions. There are the highs and lows. There is the pleasure and the pain. But it is worth the wait. Even if love will never find you and you never get married, it is still worth the wait, to wait for love.

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But remember marriage is just the foretaste of the greatest love story in the world. It is just the entrée but the main course and the dessert is far, far better. That love story is the love of God that he shares with his people. A love so great that even when we are ugly God sees us as beautiful. And he was willing to send his one and only son Jesus to come to this world and even be crucified on the cross in order to secure our love.

And God says that heaven is like the marriage supper of the lamb, when Jesus finally gets married to the One that he loves, the church, the people of God. That is the love you want to experience more than any other. He is the groom who will protect us, keep up, care for us and love with an everlasting love.

You know when you are at a restaurant and see how big the portions are sometimes you decide you won't have an entrée, just the main course & dessert. And that is what it will be like for those who never married or who never had sex or who did have sex outside of marriage or who had unhappy marriages. They still have the chance of having the main meal of love at God's last day banquet. They can be a part of the wedding feast of the lamb.

Slide 24

For sex and marriage is designed to point us to something even bigger and better. And that is the union of God with his people. Where we become one with Christ. And as we read through the Song of Songs we read and understand the longing of the bride for her groom and it should make us long for our bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Slide 25

Sometimes life feels like spring and it's hard to wait. When will God get rid of this sin in my life. I wish he would do it now. When will the blessings of life come, come Lord Jesus come. Then there are times of autumn and winter with its coldness and loneliness. Where the Christian life is hard. When things are tough. When God seems far away. When we begin to doubt God's love. But friend's summer is coming. The Lord Jesus is coming. And he will be worth the wait. So come Lord Jesus come. Your bride awaits groom.

In the meantime, we should prepare ourselves for our own height of summer. For the final day where the church will marry King Jesus. That will be the main meal that makes every other meal seem like a snack. When God's love is fully shared with us, now & forever more in heaven. Let us look forward to this day. Let's us be willing to wait for this Day. And let us keep ourselves for Him and Him alone. And if we do that. God says it will be worth the wait!

Song – See Him Coming

[See Him Coming \(Acoustic Lyric Video\) -- Emu Music.mp4 - Google Drive](#)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Glory and power to the One Who loves us
Honour and praise Him forever
Come Lord Jesus, Come Lord Jesus</p> | <p>3. Glory and power to the One Who made us
Kingdom of priests for God's service
Come Lord Jesus, Come Lord Jesus</p> |
| <p>2. Glory and power to the One Who freed us
From all our sins by His blood
Come Lord Jesus, Come Lord Jesus</p> | <p>Chorus
Bridge x2
Jesus is the Living One Who died and came alive
Jesus is the Mighty God Who was & is to come</p> |
| <p>Chorus
See Him coming on the clouds of heaven
Every eye behold Him now
He's the Living One, the First and Last
Who once was dead but now He lives forever
And ever</p> | <p>Chorus</p> |

Benediction *"My lover is mine and I am his."* (Song of Songs 2:16)