

Worldly Love vs. Loving God

‘... One night, a man decided to show his wife how much he loved her. After dinner he began to recite romantic poetry, telling her he would climb high mountains to be near her, swim wide oceans, cross deserts in the burning heat of day, and even sit at window and sing love songs to her in the moonlight. After listening to him go on for some time about this immense love he had, she ended the conversation when she asked, “But will you wash the dishes for me?”’

Cut to the chase, she did, didn’t she! Or we could say, “talk is cheap”, or “actions speak louder than words”. It truly applies in all areas of life, but supremely in our relationship with the Lord. We’ve been reading from Song of Songs, also known as the “Song of Solomon”. King Solomon is this unique book’s author. As we’ve been reading through it, we’ll complete it next Sunday, hopefully you’ve given it some thought. Many don’t quite know what to make of it, even questioning why it’s in the Bible. Others see it as the story of the romance of Solomon and a favorite wife. It is that, what with all the changes in speakers. The added speaker headings which Bible translations generally provide, help greatly in following who is speaking to whom, enabling us to follow the plot. But even then, it should be obvious that there’s more

going on here than what first meets the eye.

For this is Scripture. Though King Solomon was hardly the man his father, King David, was, in that God called David a man after God's Own heart, Solomon was David's son, the crown prince who became king after David died. All of which means that Solomon inherited the highest political position among the people. And as a leader of God's beloved, Chosen People, God's special favor and anointing rested upon Solomon, and on every future king, to the extent they each were faithful to the Lord. When God's purposes required it, He intervened in the ruler's life to accomplish what had to happen. Today's plain and prime example of this is our current president, Donald Trump. That he is God's chosen to be president now can be contested only by those who have no eyes or understanding of the facts of the world around. Thus, Solomon words here are more than just a simple romance novel. Truly their import is far more than their literal sense.

So, actually, the Song of Songs is describing and portraying the immense love that Father God has for the Chosen People, the Jews, and the incomprehensible love that Savior God, Son of Man God, Messiah Jesus, has for the Church. As the Scripture foretells, the Chosen People and the Church ultimately are united into one, the Bride of Christ, the Bride of God. In today's readings from Song of Songs, we see clearly how distraught the bride is when she can't find her husband, all while the other brides of Jerusalem find it unfathomable why the Shulamite is so hysterical

and frantic. For those Zion maidens' conception of love is limited to this world's perspective. But the love the Shulamite bride knows is far beyond the best this world has to offer.

This defective understanding of God's love is, in a very real sense, the root of all the maladies of this world that afflict people everywhere. To some degree, even us. For when we experience God's indescribable love, our literal breath is taken away. It's so immense, so huge, so all-encompassing, so literally full of power and life and light and truth, that we have no frame of reference to begin to understand it. That's why our Passion Translation of the Bible often uses the phrase "wrap-around love" in an attempt to convey some of the immensity of God's love. Those who have experienced God's love for them so experientially use the word "love", for in English that's the best word we have, all the while knowing that His love is so far above all that that word describes that it's literally like the difference between the lowest of earth and the highest of heaven, from the earth to the most distant galaxy. Truly there are no words to describe His love for us.

Those who have yet to so experience it can pray to Holy Spirit to show His love to you, but whether one experiences it experientially or not, one can rest assured that it is everything and beyond everything those who have, attempt to say about it. So try to imagine, after witnessing our Lord's unimaginable sacrifice on Calvary, all because of His "love" for us, the disciples came to develop a sense of just how much, how high, how deep, His love

for all of us is. And then, once they began to get a handle on that, how their own love for the Lord measured up in comparison. Their exploits in the days and decades following the Lord's ascension back into heaven provide a glimpse of how much their love for their Master and Lord had grown and matured as church after church was founded, and the glorious Gospel of Christ Jesus spread to all the then known world. Imagine what Peter felt when, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, as they ate the fish the Lord had grilled for them, the Lord asked him, not once, not twice, but three times if Peter actually loved Him. Yes, it was painful for him, but it explicitly enabled Peter to reverse the three times he had denied even knowing the Lord on the night of His arrest.

On that lake shore, Lord Jesus ate, proving again He had a physical body. You and I are human beings. We all have physical bodies. That makes us unique among all the blessed lifeforms God created. All the angels, archangels, cherubim, seraphim, all the rest, are spiritual beings. God Himself is a spiritual being. But He is far more than just that. Truly the spiritual realm is a different "dimension" than our physical dimension. I say "dimension" for lack of anything more suitable and accurate. But we humans are actually superior to the angels. This fact is in stark contrast to the myriad lies fed to us by the world at large. "Oh, we must become ever more spiritual!" "We need to rid ourselves of our physical bodies". "Our bodies get sick and die, but our spirits, our souls, live on and need to be 'liberated' from these decrepit bodies". "If

we could just live outside of these bodies, we could experience life without sickness, without physical limitations, why, we could be really free!” These lies go on and on. And so people are trying to capture our consciousness into huge memory banks, as it were. Believing, hoping beyond hope really, that a person’s consciousness, sentience, memories can all be extracted from one’s physical body in an idealized soon-to-be-realized future, enabling us to literally live forever, with or without any kind of body.

Thus, in sci-fi land, “people” can transfer from one body to another, like changing one’s clothes. Or not need any body of any kind. Indeed, we can live virtually, as it were. Or in Star Trek’s universe, inhabit a holodeck and live in fantasy worlds without end. Folks, this is even now beginning to come true for the millions spending more and more of their lives living in virtual reality simulations. For most, it’s “neat” and “cool” now, but when virtual takes over and becomes reality, well, the premise of the movie, “The Matrix”, will become reality for humanity, a living hell from which no one can escape, even if they want to. But even that “hell” is only temporary, for when reality comes knocking, they’ll find themselves relegated by God’s righteous judgement to the actual lake of fire which burns forever.

We who are actually “spiritual”, meaning having Holy Spirit living within, know at a glance how ludicrous and abominable the whole idea is that we can eventually abandon our physicality to live as liberated “spirit beings”. It’s all a lie from hell. Exactly

what the devil promised Eve and Adam. We'd become *like* God, knowing good and evil. We know how wonderfully that turned out! For all the billions who know not God in Christ Jesus, it all probably seems very appealing. The pell-mell race to harness the seemingly infinite, "glorious" possibilities of A.I. for such people can not come fast enough. And it's coming. But it won't be wonderful. Not in the least. Our human pride, learned from the devil who's a master teacher of evil, relishes the thought that we can, through our own ingenuity, ascend beyond our natural, created state, to "literally" become god-like, stroking our egos to climax.

But it will never be. The Bible has foretold us what will soon come. For as we're warned succinctly in I John 2:15-17: "Don't set the affections of your heart on this world or in loving the things of the world. The love of the Father and the love of the world are incompatible. For all that the world can offer us—the gratification of our flesh, the allurements of the things of the world, and the obsession with status and importance—none of these things come from the Father but from the world. This world and its desires are in the process of passing away, but those who love to do the will of God live forever." So that's it. God Who created us, giving us the privilege of having bodies, which, when we were raptured to be with Christ Jesus forever, will, in an instant, receive the replacement bodies, originally we were to have had, bodies just like Lord Jesus'! And in those bodies, we will know God's love, love like no other, love beyond all others, forever and ever. Amen.

