



to the
season
princess

A LOVE STORY FROM THE
SONG OF SONGS

FALL SERMON SERIES GUIDE
BY PASTOR MARK DRISCOLL

How does a godly, poor young woman working long hours in the hot sun to help support her single mother and brothers become the wife of a king and one of the most renowned passionate, loving, and enjoyable women the world has ever celebrated?

The answer is found in the biblical book, the Song of Songs, where we meet this glorious Peasant Princess. She speaks first, is spoken of last, and speaks most frequently throughout this sacred love story. We also meet her friends, brothers, and mother as we follow her life through childhood, the teen years, engagement, and marriage.

As we study the Song of Songs, our primary focus will be how the Peasant Princess became an exemplary wife; our secondary focus will be the intimate marital relationship she shares with her husband. Through her example, God has much to teach us regarding his plan for sex and marriage. While the Song of Songs is not entirely about sex, the book does contain some very important lessons on the subject. In fact, this 3,000-year-old collection of love letters is extraordinary in its timeliness. In our day, people devote an extraordinary amount of time, money, and energy in pursuit of sex, making it the most popular religion in the world.

God tells us that people attempt to satisfy their thirst not by drinking from his streams of living water, but instead by drinking from man-made toilets (Jer. 2:13). This disturbing metaphor is particularly apt to describe the current thirst for smut and sin.

In Romans 1:24–25, the Apostle Paul says that people either worship God their Creator and enjoy his creation—including our bodies—or people worship creation as God, and in sexual sin offer their bodies as living sacrifices (which is the definition of worship in Romans 12:1). Paul goes on to explain that those who worship creation invariably worship the human body because it is the apex of God’s creation. In this upending of rightful worship, sex becomes a religion and the sex act a perverse sacrament.

**With my body,
I thee worship.**

—Traditional Anglican wedding vows



Every man who
knocks on the
door of a brothel is
looking for God.

-G. K. Chesterton



More money is spent each year on
pornography than country music, rock
music, jazz music, classical music,
Broadway plays, and ballet combined.

(US News and World Report)

Christianity today is comprised of three basic denominations: Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox. Likewise, the religion of Sex also includes three “denominations”: Straight, Gay, and Bisexual. Like Christian denominations, the Sex denominations have web sites (social networks, chat rooms, classified ads), designated houses of worship (bars, clubs, and strip joints), and followers who vigorously evangelize and recruit new members.

In sum, the greatest threat to Christianity is Sex. Perversion of every sort and kind is the worship that defines which denomination of Sex one is in. In Paul’s day, he accused some people of worshiping their stomachs as their god (Phil. 3:19); in our day it appears that our god has simply moved slightly south. And everyone who settles for the worship of Sex is deep down truly seeking an intimacy, joy, and connection that is only found through faith in relationship with God. As G. K. Chesterton said, “Every man who knocks on the door of a brothel is looking for God.”

In Scripture, we see that God is our Creator and that he created us male and female with bodies created for pleasure and marital oneness (Genesis 1–2). God’s original intent was chastity before and fidelity in heterosexual marriage; we worship God in part by obeying him in pure pleasure. A fictitious demon in *The Screwtape Letters*, by C. S. Lewis, admits the origins of sex: “Never forget that when we are dealing with any pleasure in its healthy and normal and satisfying form, we are, in a sense, on the Enemy’s [God’s] ground. I know we have won many a soul through pleasure. All the same, it is His invention, not ours. He made the pleasures” (44).

Through the story of the Peasant Princess, we can learn how to have sex that is free—free from sin, idolatry, guilt, shame, condemnation, death, and separation from God—by having free and frequent marital intimacy. We will study the Song of Songs to learn how to worship God the Creator and enjoy his creation and not worship his creation (our bodies and their pleasures) as a false god.

Christians throughout history have struggled to determine how this can be done. Some have chosen to essentially kill their sexual desires out of a fear of temptation to sin. Some lead destructive lives of secret sin that are eventually exposed, causing much embarrassment. Still others are simply confused and uncertain of how to speak to their spouse and children about sex, unsure of what is compatible and incompatible with the teaching of Scripture.

Our study of the Song of Songs is meant neither to kill our desires nor permit them to flow into deadly sin. Rather, this series is an attempt to cultivate our desires and channel them toward our spouse according to the wisdom God gives us in his Word. We will learn about gender, dating, marriage, and sex as God intends.

Our example in this matter will be a peasant girl who became a princess. Her

It's good
old-fashioned
monogamy that's
really sexy.

-Comedian Garrison Keillor

biblical love story moves from engagement to her wedding day and on into her married years, closing with a glimpse back at her life as a child who was raised by a single mom and brothers. Subsequently, this preaching series will have insight for young and old, parents and grandparents, singles and the engaged, and of course, husbands and wives.

The Song of Songs is a series of poetic love songs that not only describe the relationship between a husband and wife, but also serve as an illustration of the eternal heart of God, for those who are married to Christ, our beloved. And as the book title suggests, the Song of Songs is perhaps the greatest lyric ever composed—a warm dialogue between two lovers, a conversation of the heart that crescendos into a beautiful duet. This poetic exchange reflects the very heart of our Trinitarian God from whom love, intimacy, and musical expression flow.

SCHEDULE

September 21, 2008

"Let Him Kiss Me" (Song of Songs 1:1-7)

September 28, 2008 ***

"Sweet to My Taste" (Song 1:8-2:7)

October 5, 2008

"The Little Foxes" (Song 2:8-3:5)

October 12, 2008 ***

"His Garden" (Song 3:6-5:1)

October 19, 2008

"My Beloved, My Friend" (Song 5:2-6:1)

October 26, 2008 ***

"My Dove" (Song 6:2-10)

November 9, 2008 ***

"Dance of Mahanaim" (Song 6:11-7:10)

November 16, 2008 ***

"Into the Fields" (Song 7:11-13)

November 23, 2008

"Do Not Awaken Love" (Song 8:1-7)

November 30, 2008

"I was a Wall" (Song 8:8-14)

***These sermons cover the more controversial/sexually descriptive topics in the text.



COMMON QUESTIONS

The Song of Songs deals frankly with matters of physical intimacy in the context of marriage. At Mars Hill Church, we believe that “all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable” (2 Tim. 3:16), therefore we do not hesitate to discuss anything that the Bible addresses. Since the topic of sex can raise a host of questions in any context, however, provided the following answers are meant to help our congregation understand the purpose, objective, and importance of this sermon series.

Why did you choose to preach Song of Songs?

In the first year of our church, when we were maybe one hundred people, I preached Song of Songs. I’ve wanted to preach it again for a while. After much prayer and discussion with the Executive Elders we decided that the time was now. The wonderful example of the Peasant Princess is incredibly important in a day when Britney Spears, Paris Hilton, and Lindsay Lohan are promoted as examples for girls and porn stars like Jenna Jameson are featured in video games for boys. Furthermore, the majority of our pastoral counseling cases relate to sex; sexual abuse and sexual sin are an epidemic that needs to be addressed from the pulpit, from the Bible, to the masses both in our church and listening online. This sermon series may be challenging for many who struggle with matters of sexuality. By following up the message with the work of Redemption Groups (created to help people deal with sin and sexual abuse in a way that is biblical) and gospel community, our hope is to help people experience freedom from sin and freedom to worship.

What is unique about this series?

We will be video-streaming the sermon live from Ballard to the other campuses for every service (except Olympia, which will still be on one-week delay). This will allow people from every campus to text message questions for me to answer live from the stage via satellite at the end of each sermon. Because the book is a series of exchanges between a husband and wife, on some

Sundays I will bring my wife, Grace, on stage with me after I preach the sermon to help answer the questions from a woman’s perspective. Please pray for us because the work will be akin to juggling knives before a crowd—exciting but dangerous to be sure. Also, those questions I am unable to answer on Sundays due to time constraints will be answered on the church blog during the following week.

How graphic will the series be?

The Song of Songs has perplexed many of its students because of the graphic nature of its content. Jewish commentator Robert Gordis puts it well: “The description of physical beauty [in Song of Songs] is frank without crassness.” Like the book itself, the Peasant Princess series will be frank but not crass. We can take some counsel from the early Jews who first received this sacred work. They, unlike many Christians, were not prudish in matters of sexuality. The Song of Songs was read at the Passover liturgy, and certain passages were often sung to celebrate marital love and intimacy within a covenant relationship. Such a healthy and God-honoring frank celebration is precisely the kind of cleansing so desperately needed in our dirty age. The series is intended for a general audience, so the exposition will not be as graphic as it might be for a married couples class or a men’s retreat, for example. The Peasant Princess series will be quite informative but also appropriate for my own eleven-year-old daughter who attends the church.

Will the content be appropriate for teenagers?

Yes. In biblical times many people married in their teens, but today’s generation is waiting longer than ever. Most young people don’t marry until their mid to late twenties. This extended period of temptation coupled with increasing access to pornography and the culture’s approval of premarital sex creates a very difficult climate for people who want to heed Solomon’s advice to not awaken love before its time (Song 2:7)—and still maintain a healthy view of marital sexual intimacy. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the average American adolescent will witness nearly 14,000 sexual references per year on television, yet only 165 of these references address birth control, self-control, abstinence, or the risk of pregnancy and STDs. According to the most recent data, 61 percent of all high school seniors have had sexual intercourse, about half are currently sexually active, and 21 percent have had four or more partners. Adolescents also have the highest STD rates. Approximately one fourth of sexually active adolescents become infected with an STD each year, accounting for 3 million cases; people under the age of twenty-five account for two-thirds of all STDs in the United States. The latest trend with junior high and high school students is to send naked photos of themselves to one another via cell phone. Teens are informed. The church needs to inform them biblically, and their parents need to discuss these matters one-on-one with their kids.

Will the content be appropriate for children?

Children under the age of ten would likely be best served by attending the children’s ministry during this series. Parents should note that the more controversial sermons will take place on September 28, October 12, October 26, November 9, and November 16. A preview for each sermon will be published at marshillchurch.org so that people can know ahead of time what the subject matter for the following Sunday’s sermon will be.

What do you hope to accomplish with this series?

1. I hope to honor God by faithfully teaching what the Bible says.
2. I hope to serve our people by opening up for them a biblical view of gender, relationship, and sexuality.
3. I hope to help people struggling with sexual sin to be free in Christ.
4. I hope to present people with a compelling alternative way of life that is superior to what the culture has to offer.
5. I hope to serve our many families by encouraging chastity before marriage, fidelity in marriage, and frequent, free, and satisfying marital intimacy that acts as a safeguard against sexual sin.
6. I hope that our marriages would be enduring and endearing to God’s glory and our joy.
7. I hope to honor a woman whom God honors by telling her story as found in the inspired pages of sacred Scripture.



RESOURCES

Commentaries on the Song of Songs

God on Sex: The Creator's Ideas About Love, Intimacy, and Marriage
by Daniel L. Akin

The Song of Solomon by G. Lloyd

Solomon on Sex by Joseph Dillow

Mastering the Old Testament: Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon by David Hubbard

The New Century Bible Commentary: Song of Songs by John Snaith

Song of Songs New International Commentary by Tremper Longman

Books on Marriage and Sexuality

For men:

Fidelity by Douglas Wilson (theological)

How to Give Her Absolute Pleasure by Lou Paget (very frank; not Christian)

For women:

Intimate Issues by Linda Dillow (theological)

How to Be a Great Lover by Lou Paget (very frank; not Christian)

For men and women:

A Celebration of Sex by Douglas Rosenau (the best practical book by a Christian and the number one book to buy)

Intended for Pleasure by Ed Wheat (practical)

For the abused:

The Wounded Heart by Dan Allender (Christian advice for victims of sexual abuse)

Mars Hill resources:

Mission & Vision. Visit the Mars Hill Church blog for sermon notes and other resources related to The Peasant Princess series (voxpopnetwork.com/vision).

Community Groups. Pastor Brad House will be writing a curriculum series based on The Peasant Princess teaching. This curriculum will be available for all community group leaders to help facilitate sermon-based discussion.

Redemption Groups. Mars Hill Church has trained Redemption Group leaders to help people who have suffered due to abuse, addiction, and other effects of sin. For more information, email care@marshillchurch.org.

HOW TO INVITE A FRIEND

From the content to the visuals to the text message technology, the Peasant Princess series is sure to be unique. Use this opportunity to invite friends and family to come to Mars Hill and hear the gospel. Here are some ideas of how you might extend the invitation:

- Go to peasantprincess.com and look for the email invitation for the sermon series.
- Take a stack of postcards to use as invitations.
- Point out the advertisements Mars Hill Church will be running in the UW Daily and on Facebook.
- Sex saturates our culture. Use the countless references as a conversation starter to discuss the Bible's perspective in the Song of Songs.
- Say, "Do you want to come to church with me on Sunday?"

Love is the
works of love.

—Søren Kierkegaard





PEASANTPRINCESS.ORG