

Friday, September 6

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Song of Solomon 1:1 - 4:16

1 **1** This is Solomon's song of songs, more wonderful than any other. **2** Kiss me and kiss me again, for your love is sweeter than wine. **3** How fragrant your cologne; your name is like its spreading fragrance. No wonder all the young women love you! **4** Take me with you; come, let's run! The king has brought me into his bedroom. Young Women of Jerusalem How happy we are for you, O king. We praise your love even more than wine. Young Woman How right they are to adore you. **5** I am dark but beautiful, O women of Jerusalem— dark as the tents of Kedar, dark as the curtains of Solomon's tents. **6** Don't stare at me because I am dark— the sun has darkened my skin. My brothers were angry with me; they forced me to care for their vineyards, so I couldn't care for myself—my own vineyard. **7** Tell me, my love, where are you leading your flock today? Where will you rest your sheep at noon? For why should I wander like a prostitute among your friends and their flocks? **8** If you don't know, O most beautiful woman, follow the trail of my flock, and graze your young goats by the shepherds' tents. **9** You are as exciting, my darling, as a mare among Pharaoh's stallions. **10** How lovely are your cheeks; your earrings set them afire! How lovely is your neck, enhanced by a string of jewels. **11** We will make for you earrings of gold and beads of silver. **12** The king is lying on his couch, enchanted by the fragrance of my perfume. **13** My lover is like a sachet of myrrh lying between my breasts. **14** He is like a bouquet of sweet henna blossoms from the vineyards of En-gedi. **15** How beautiful you are, my darling, how beautiful! Your eyes are like doves. **16** You are so handsome, my love, pleasing beyond words! The soft grass is our bed; **17** fragrant cedar branches are the beams of our house, and pleasant smelling firs are the rafters.

2 **1** I am the spring crocus blooming on the Sharon Plain, the lily of the valley. **2** Like a lily among thistles is my darling among young women. **3** Like the finest apple tree in the orchard is my lover among other young men. I sit in his delightful shade and taste his delicious fruit. **4** He escorts me to the banquet hall; it's obvious how much he loves me. **5** Strengthen me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples, for I am weak with love. **6** His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me. **7** Promise me, O women of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and wild deer, not to awaken love until the time is right. **8** Ah, I hear my lover coming! He is leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills. **9** My lover is like a swift gazelle or a young stag. Look, there he is behind the wall, looking through the window, peering into the room. **10** My lover said to

me, "Rise up, my darling! Come away with me, my fair one! **11** Look, the winter is past, and the rains are over and gone. **12** The flowers are springing up, the season of singing birds has come, and the cooing of turtledoves fills the air. **13** The fig trees are forming young fruit, and the fragrant grapevines are blossoming. Rise up, my darling! Come away with me, my fair one!" **14** My dove is hiding behind the rocks, behind an outcrop on the cliff. Let me see your face; let me hear your voice. For your voice is pleasant, and your face is lovely. **15** Catch all the foxes, those little foxes, before they ruin the vineyard of love, for the grapevines are blossoming! **16** My lover is mine, and I am his. He browses among the lilies. **17** Before the dawn breezes blow and the night shadows flee, return to me, my love, like a gazelle or a young stag on the rugged mountains.

3 1 One night as I lay in bed, I yearned for my lover. I yearned for him, but he did not come. **2** So I said to myself, "I will get up and roam the city, searching in all its streets and squares. I will search for the one I love." So I searched everywhere but did not find him. **3** The watchmen stopped me as they made their rounds, and I asked, "Have you seen the one I love?" **4** Then scarcely had I left them when I found my love! I caught and held him tightly, then I brought him to my mother's house, into my mother's bed, where I had been conceived. **5** Promise me, O women of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and wild deer, not to awaken love until the time is right. **6** Who is this sweeping in from the wilderness like a cloud of smoke? Who is it, fragrant with myrrh and frankincense and every kind of spice? **7** Look, it is Solomon's carriage, surrounded by sixty heroic men, the best of Israel's soldiers. **8** They are all skilled swordsmen, experienced warriors. Each wears a sword on his thigh, ready to defend the king against an attack in the night. **9** King Solomon's carriage is built of wood imported from Lebanon. **10** Its posts are silver, its canopy gold; its cushions are purple. It was decorated with love by the young women of Jerusalem. **11** Come out to see King Solomon, young women of Jerusalem. He wears the crown his mother gave him on his wedding day, his most joyous day.

4 1 You are beautiful, my darling, beautiful beyond words. Your eyes are like doves behind your veil. Your hair falls in waves, like a flock of goats winding down the slopes of Gilead. **2** Your teeth are as white as sheep, recently shorn and freshly washed. Your smile is flawless, each tooth matched with its twin. **3** Your lips are like scarlet ribbon; your mouth is inviting. Your cheeks are like rosy pomegranates behind your veil. **4** Your neck is as beautiful as the tower of David, jeweled with the shields of a thousand heroes. **5** Your breasts are like two fawns, twin fawns of a gazelle grazing among the lilies. **6** Before the dawn breezes blow and the night shadows flee, I will hurry to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense. **7** You are altogether beautiful, my darling, beautiful in every way. **8** Come with me from Lebanon, my

bride, come with me from Lebanon. Come down from Mount Amana, from the peaks of Senir and Hermon, where the lions have their dens and leopards live among the hills. **9** You have captured my heart, my treasure, my bride. You hold it hostage with one glance of your eyes, with a single jewel of your necklace. **10** Your love delights me, my treasure, my bride. Your love is better than wine, your perfume more fragrant than spices. **11** Your lips are as sweet as nectar, my bride. Honey and milk are under your tongue. Your clothes are scented like the cedars of Lebanon. **12** You are my private garden, my treasure, my bride, a secluded spring, a hidden fountain. **13** Your thighs shelter a paradise of pomegranates with rare spices— henna with nard, **14** nard and saffron, fragrant calamus and cinnamon, with all the trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes, and every other lovely spice. **15** You are a garden fountain, a well of fresh water streaming down from Lebanon's mountains. **16** Awake, north wind! Rise up, south wind! Blow on my garden and spread its fragrance all around. Come into your garden, my love; taste its finest fruits.

2 Corinthians 8:16 - 24

8 16 But thank God! He has given Titus the same enthusiasm for you that I have. **17** Titus welcomed our request that he visit you again. In fact, he himself was very eager to go and see you. **18** We are also sending another brother with Titus. All the churches praise him as a preacher of the Good News. **19** He was appointed by the churches to accompany us as we take the offering to Jerusalem—a service that glorifies the Lord and shows our eagerness to help. **20** We are traveling together to guard against any criticism for the way we are handling this generous gift. **21** We are careful to be honorable before the Lord, but we also want everyone else to see that we are honorable. **22** We are also sending with them another of our brothers who has proven himself many times and has shown on many occasions how eager he is. He is now even more enthusiastic because of his great confidence in you. **23** If anyone asks about Titus, say that he is my partner who works with me to help you. And the brothers with him have been sent by the churches, and they bring honor to Christ. **24** So show them your love, and prove to all the churches that our boasting about you is justified.

Psalms 50:1 - 23

50 1 The LORD, the Mighty One, is God, and he has spoken; he has summoned all humanity from where the sun rises to where it sets. **2** From Mount Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines in glorious radiance. **3** Our God approaches, and he is not silent. Fire devours everything

in his way, and a great storm rages around him. **4** He calls on the heavens above and earth below to witness the judgment of his people. **5** “Bring my faithful people to me— those who made a covenant with me by giving sacrifices.” **6** Then let the heavens proclaim his justice, for God himself will be the judge. Interlude **7** “O my people, listen as I speak. Here are my charges against you, O Israel: I am God, your God! **8** I have no complaint about your sacrifices or the burnt offerings you constantly offer. **9** But I do not need the bulls from your barns or the goats from your pens. **10** For all the animals of the forest are mine, and I own the cattle on a thousand hills. **11** I know every bird on the mountains, and all the animals of the field are mine. **12** If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for all the world is mine and everything in it. **13** Do I eat the meat of bulls? Do I drink the blood of goats? **14** Make thankfulness your sacrifice to God, and keep the vows you made to the Most High. **15** Then call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory.” **16** But God says to the wicked: “Why bother reciting my decrees and pretending to obey my covenant? **17** For you refuse my discipline and treat my words like trash. **18** When you see thieves, you approve of them, and you spend your time with adulterers. **19** Your mouth is filled with wickedness, and your tongue is full of lies. **20** You sit around and slander your brother— your own mother’s son. **21** While you did all this, I remained silent, and you thought I didn’t care. But now I will rebuke you, listing all my charges against you. **22** Repent, all of you who forget me, or I will tear you apart, and no one will help you. **23** But giving thanks is a sacrifice that truly honors me. If you keep to my path, I will reveal to you the salvation of God.”

Proverbs 22:22 - 23

22 **22** Don’t rob the poor just because you can, or exploit the needy in court. **23** For the LORD is their defender. He will ruin anyone who ruins them.