

# Song of Songs 2:8-3:5

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Preacher: Arthur Jackson

- [ 0 : 00 ]     Good evening to you. It's good to be back with you in this particular service. Pray with me as we get started this evening's word from the Lord.
- Lord, we bless you and give thanks to you for your word. And Lord, I was really struck as Kara, after reading Song of Songs 2, 8-7, led us in saying, this is the word of the Lord.
- And indeed it is. And we come to it as such. Open the eyes of our hearts. Enable us to see wonderful things from your word that we may live them. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.
- And had you intercepted a letter between Shirley and me back in the early days of our relationship, you would have noticed on the back of the envelope six particular letters. Code, if you will.
- TML. WML. To my love with much love. And every now and then it may have been sealed, Joan, with a kiss.
- [ 1 : 27 ]     Some of you know what I'm talking about, huh? Such was a simple, yet very sincere way for two young people to express their feelings for each other.
- But the Lord willing, in July, we will celebrate 46 years of marriage together. Since 1968, our love has been tested.
- And our love has matured over those years. There have been times when we have expressed our love, our romantic love to one another, in words.
- I'm the more verbal person among us, but occasionally my wife will get a card that says it so well, like the one that I'm going to read to you this evening.
- Check it out. Check it out. To my husband. You are my good thing. A strong, kind man who knows how to do right by his family.
- [ 2 : 36 ]     I'm proud to be your wife. Honored to be the woman who gets to walk by your side through life. You're my good thing. Tender.
- Understanding. Who gives me all the love my heart could ever want. Love that I can lean on in good times and bad. Love that makes me feel safe.
- Love that stirs my soul. You're my good thing. And on and on. Back in 1968, this card would have gone for less than a dollar.
- Five dollars and fifty nine cents. And I've purchased one as expensive as nine dollars. Cha-ching for Hallmark and American Greetings these days.
- Celebration of romantic love within the context of marriage. That's what Song of Solomon does. It's a celebration of love.
- [ 3 : 39 ]     It is a series, if you will, of love poems. That are likewise expressed with words. An honest evaluation of this book says one thing.
- It sizzles, if you will. As a matter of fact, from the beginning to the end. Look at chapter 1, verses 2 and 3. May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.
- For your love is better than wine. Your oils have a pleasing fragrance. Your name is like purified oil.

Therefore, the maidens love you. Look at the last verse of the book. Chapter 8. And I believe it is verse 14.

Look at there. Make haste, my beloved. And be like a gazelle. Or as a young stag on the mountains of spices.

[ 4 : 49 ] Here we have, friends, from kissing to consummation, if you will. And everything in between.

This is the kind of language that fills these eight chapters. And it's quite interesting that even in this evening's text, we hear the language that we heard at the end.

Particularly a reference to a gazelle. Or a young stag. Look at chapter 2. We see it in verse 9. As a matter of fact, it frames this particular portion.

We see it again in verse 17. And it appears again in chapter 3 and verse 5. We'll talk about what that means a little later on. But let me give you the structure of the verses that we have before us for the evening.

You've heard or seen read in papers or periodicals, men seeking women. You know about that. And sometimes it's men seeking men.

[ 5 : 57 ] But what we have here is man seeking woman in verses 8 through 17. In chapter 3, verses 1 through 4, we have woman seeking man.

Huh? Woman seeking man. And then finally in chapter 3, verse 5, we have a woman charging women. As it relates to lovemaking.

Huh? What about man seeking woman? Look at there. Chapter 2, verse 8. The voice of my beloved.

Behold, he comes. Leaping over the mountains. Bounding over the hills. The voice that we hear initially is that of the woman, the maid, the bride, that we first encounter in chapter 1.

In 59% of this particular book, the voice that we hear is that of the woman. Versus 39% of the time for the man, the bridegroom.

[ 7 : 07 ] And her choice word or title for him, my beloved. Don't you just love that? That could be just one expression within the context of marriage or within a relationship.

24 times it's used in the book. Five times in our verses alone. That's my beloved. She recognizes the voice of her beloved in verse 8.

Huh? But notice what I would see as both the physical and the visual pursuit of love in verses 8 and 9.

So he's coming, leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills. You know, Marvin Gaye said it well, didn't he? Ain't no mountain high enough.

Here he comes. My beloved is like a gazelle. Okay? He's coming. He's pursuing our young stag. Behold, there he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows.

[ 8 : 10 ] Huh? Her beloved is making his way to the one that he loves. Here's a man ready for a rendezvous. And the mountains and the hills are no barrier to him getting to his beloved.

Huh? His beloved is, her beloved is strong. And like a gazelle or a young stag or a gazelle, even a young stag. They're parallel.

What's meant by this? This animal, he's swift, fine specimen of masculinity here. Huh? He's speedy. He's been lifting weights.

This guy's buff. Okay? If you will. He's a fine specimen of a man. He's chiseled. If you will. He's a gazelle. He's been running on some mountains.

This guy's okay. Okay? In the next part of the verse, he has arrived at his destination. And having arrived, he wants to look on. I mean, he's looking through the lattice there.

[ 9 : 11 ] He wants to look on the one. So there is physical and visual pursuit. Looking through the lattice.

Huh? Made his way there. And it's likely, this brother, he's liking what he's seeing as he's looking on his beloved.

He steps back maybe a little. Turns his head a little. Watches the contours of her body. He's liking what he sees.

Huh? What we see here, we see it in the book as a whole, is the kind of love that poets and writers write about.

They've penned about these kinds of things from of old. The kind of love programmed by God into the fabric of humanity from the beginning. It's this kind of love that's responsible for populating the earth, if you will.

[ 10 : 16 ] Song of Solomon represents a creative handling of one of the most precious kinds of gifts that God has given to humankind. Romantic love.

What we have here, this is the biblical alternative to Barry White, Brian McKnight, Teddy Prendergast, and Marvin Gaye.

This is the biblical alternative to what we have here. But not only is there the physical and the visual, but did you notice the verbal pursuit in verses 10 through 15?

As a matter of fact, you see also there's somewhat of a chiastic kind of structure in verses 10 through 14.

You see how it begins? My beloved speaks and says to me, arise, my beloved, my love, my beautiful one, and come away. You see that again in verse 13 as it ends, arise, my love, and my beautiful one, and come away.

[ 11 : 21 ] Notice the words that he uses to pursue it. She is, my love and my beautiful one. I don't know, man, if you have words that uniquely are used as it relates to your beloved.

I have several for my wife. She would be blushing if she were sitting here tonight, and there are words that I can tell you tonight. She's my burby, and she's suburbs.

I mean, just sort of crazy, but there are words that communicate affection. And guess what? I don't call anybody else. You know, it wouldn't mean anything to them.

She is, she's the daughter, my daughters have dubbed her, she's the Hersey Kiss with silver on top. You know, she's chocolate, but she's got the silver hair, you know. So various kinds of ways to express preciousness and express love.

He talks about her lovely face, and he wants to hear her sweet voice. Kind, effective words. But did you notice that the time is right also?

[ 12 : 36 ] It's springtime, verse 11. Winter's passed. Rain is gone. Flowers are budding. Birds are singing. The voice of the turtle dove is in the land.

Shift of season. The haze of winter is gone. Love, if you will, is in the air. Huh? Look at verse 15.

The word sparkling includes what we see in verse 15. Catch the foxes for us. The little foxes that spoil the vineyards for our vineyards in Blossom. Huh? There's a recognition that there are some things that can hinder the process of love and love making.

They spoil the progress of love. Things like, that could be described as little foxes that sort of destroy, get in the vineyard. Interference. Things that threaten.

Destructive little forces, as Doug O'Donnell might call them in his commentary on the subject. Song of Solomon. Huh? Things that undermine the beauty and the blessedness of romantic love.

[ 13 : 42 ] And the whole idea is to deal with those kind of things. And we can identify what some of those things might be. But notice verses 16 and 17. If we have physical pursuit in verses 8 and 9 and verbal pursuit in verses 10 through 15, here we have reciprocal pursuit.

My beloved is mine and I am his. He grazes among the lilies. So he is no longer on the outside. He is on the inside.

And what we see here, huh? His pursuit is to get to her and his words of romantic pursuit are over. Huh? O'Donnell says he goes from gazing to grazing, if you will.

He's been invited into the bedroom to enjoy a nighttime of love making. Huh? That is what's in view. Described as grazing among the lilies as a gazelle on a mountain.

Now, it doesn't take much imagination to see what's going on here, huh? Her body, if you will, is the place of grazing.

[ 14 : 55 ] A little of this, a touch here, a touch there. That is what comes into view.

He partakes of her fruit and she loves his love making. This is what we have in this book. And we've already said it together, didn't we, earlier?

This is the word of the Lord. Praise God, huh? My beloved is mine and I am his. Here's the idea. Friends, there is an exclusivity here.

And such exclusivity allows one to give one another, themselves to one another, in abandon, if you will. Why not? Safe set?

This is it, friends, huh? This is where this kind of intimacy belongs, huh? In the context of covenantal commitment. In the context of covenantal commitment. The gazelle.

[ 15 : 56 ] The beloved. Here he is. He's on top of the mountain. That's the woman. There are ideas as to which body parts are being referred to.

Here in this day. Here in this day. Need I say more. Here brothers. If you will. Can I speak to you guys?

Man seeking woman. Here's a manual of romance for you. It's what unmarried man can look forward to. The physical pursuit and the visual pursuit and the verbal pursuit.

Huh? And we should never cease to pursue our wives or spouses. Turn your eyes to her. Direct your attention to her.

And it could be that your pursuit will be rewarded. That's what we see in verses 16 and 17. Man seeking woman.

[ 16 : 58 ] Verses 8 through 17. But notice also. The woman continues to speak. Look at chapter 3. She's relaying either a dream or a nighttime experience.

Woman seeking man. Verses 1 through 4. Yeah? What we. This may be. This is a short mystery. The case of the missing lover.

Huh? She's seeking. I sought him whom I so loves. I sought him. But guess what? Verse 1. I found him not. So I will arise.

And go about the city and the streets and the squares. I will seek him whom my soul loves. I sought him. But found him not. Huh? Several things are clear.

Her baby is gone. Huh? She awakens in the night. She reaches over to the bed to where he normally is. And he's not there.

[ 18 : 00 ] She gets up. She goes downstairs thinking he may have gone to sleep looking at the sports channel. But he's not there. He's not in the house. Her search takes him to the streets.

And there she is. She's down and she runs into the security guard down there at 61st and Woodlawn. The UFC security guard. The security guard. She can't find him.

Where is he? Huh? The one who her soul loves. Notice that she. That's the way she refers to her beloved in four times in each of these verses.

One, two, three, four. What does she mean? She loves him with the whole of her life. That's what's in view. She's totally in love with him. And she's disturbed by his absence.

He is not there. Therefore, she seeks him. And then her search is rewarded. Her search. Look at there in verse four. Scarcely I passed them when I found him who my soul loves.

[ 19 : 02 ] I held him. Would not let him go until I brought him into my mama's house. My mother's house. To the chamber of the one who conceived me. How strange. Language.

That is. Huh? She brings him. She found the one who herself. She cleaved to him. Whisked him to her mother's house. The reference is probably to a place of safety and security.

And certainly could be to a place of intimacy. You remember Isaac takes Rebecca to the tent of his who? Mother.

Okay? Huh? Another alternative is that the reference to a place where her mother conceived her. That is the womb.

So here's a woman in search for her love for her husband. And her desire. Is for him. Man seeking woman.

[ 20 : 01 ] Woman seeking man. Huh? Man finds woman and is satisfied. Woman finds man. And her desires are satisfied.

Huh? Aren't you glad? I mean, here's the Bible. And you wonder how historically how some of these things have been mentioned or been missed.

Because within the context of marriage and relationships, it's okay for a woman to pursue. Oftentimes we think that that is the man's role.

And I believe that he should certainly take the lead in that. But here you have a woman who is uninhibited in expressing her desire, her desire for lovemaking within the context of marriage to her man.

When we come to this book, we come here, friends, with certain foundational assumptions. The context is marriage. Here is what you would call intramarital pursuit versus extramarital pursuit.

[ 21 : 10 ] There's another foundational kind of thing. This is heterosexual marriage, if you will, here. Consistent with what we see here and elsewhere within the Bible.

Other places in Scripture. These are foundational kinds of things that are expressed even in this particular book that we're looking at.

If you look at verse 5, there you have a woman charging women. You see, if there are Jew, you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, that you stir up, not stir up or awaken love until it pleases.

Here's what we're looking at. While there's full expression of romantic sexual desire in marriage. Here, a charge is given to these young women, these daughters of Jerusalem.

He's speaking to unmarried maidens, the primary audience in the book. And so while their desires are ripening and their bodies are ready, here's an admonishment.

[ 22 : 22 ] Even in an oath-like fashion, he's adjuring them to wait until the time is right. To awaken lovemaking.

Don't do it prematurely. Oh, isn't that a great exhortation? It's not simply for women. It's for women and men. Huh? I'm not saying that you can't be in love before marriage.

But it says here there should be restraint of romantic love before marriage. Huh? That which is celebrated within the context of marriage needs to be restrained before marriage.

Huh? It's repeated here three times in the book. You'll hear that refrain, that exhortation. Very consistent with the warnings of what we see in chapters like Proverbs 5, 6, and 7.

Huh? Scripture in the Old and New Testaments is clear as to the context of romantic love. Heterosexual marriage. Huh? So you say, well, Pastor, how can lovemaking be restrained?

[ 23 : 26 ] Huh? Several things that you need to be on guard about. What your eyes see. Huh? Who they're talking about. TV, movies.

No pornography. Huh? Be guarded in what you read. I remember as a 15, I came to Christ as a 15-year-old. And I still remember the title of a book.

I mean, it's amazing what you, the flashback of one of those paperbacks that I, I don't, I think it may have been going around among the guys.

Teenager. I mean, I've forgotten a lot of things, Joe, in my life. But there are some things that we don't need imprinted within the contours of our souls.

There's some things that you should not see because you may try to hit delete and it will not go away. Guard your mind.

[ 24 : 31 ] Guard your heart. Proverbs reminds us, with all diligence, for out of the heart come the issues of life. Huh? Guard your bodies. Don't touch or allow yourself to be touched, if you will, inappropriately.

Don't violate people. Huh? Dress modestly, not provocatively. Huh? Don't awaken love prematurely.

Huh? Married men, go for it. Married women, enjoy it. Unmarried men and women, wait for it.

Believe me, it's worth the wait. Finally. Man seeking women, women seeking man. But, friends, the greatest love story that there ever is, is God seeking men and women.

Huh? That began in Eden after the fall. Huh? Adam! For are you. For are you. And that's the story, friends, of redemption.

[ 25 : 37 ] Holy God pursuing sinful man. And if you're a Christian here today, it's not so much that you found God. The very fact that God found you.

Huh? Search for you, found you by grace. You're saved through faith and that not of yourself. It's a gift of God. It's a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

God in his love lavished his love upon us, caused us to turn our hearts to the one who has pursued us. Huh? And those who were once lost and now found, guess what we do?

We reciprocate. Whom have I in heaven but you? There's no one I desire on earth beside you. My flesh, my heart, they long for you.

We now pursue the one who pursued us with passionate love. Huh? That includes loving God with all of our heart, our mind, and our soul. Huh? Huh? There's nothing in our lives untouched by the love of God.

[ 26 : 44 ] So we sing to him. Ever sing to God? Oh, Lord, you're beautiful. Your face is all I see. When your eyes are on this child, your grace abounds to me.

Oh, you're a wonderful, merciful Savior. Like we sang about this morning. So there, even the passionate love is what we're talking about.

Passionate romantic pursuit is the privilege of those who are joined together in covenant. And our aim, even as Christians, is to passionately pursue the one to whom we are united in covenantal love.

That's God and our spouses. So what are we saying on this evening? Celebrate and cultivate romantic love in marriage.

And it's right to limit romantic love before marriage. This is the word of the Lord. And it's right to do it.