

**Hungering for God:
Hungering for Romantic Love
Genesis 2:18-24; Song of Songs 1:1-2:3; Hosea 1:1-3; 2:14-20
Sermon Outline**

Introduction: Most of us hunger for at least some of the things that romantic love promises to deliver. What does the bible teach on the subject? How do we manage it?

I) The Bible and romantic love

A) The Bible celebrates it

- *Gen 2.23: Now at last...*
- *Song of Songs 1.2: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*

B) The Bible links romantic love with commitment

- *Gen 2.24: Therefore a man shall leave...and cleave*
- *Song of Songs 8.6: Love is strong as death*

C) The Bible often describes God as a suitor

- *Hosea 2.14: ...I will allure her...and speak tenderly to her*

II)

III) What do we learn from all this?

A) Our experience of romantic love can reveal God's love

- Cheating on him causes him pain
- He actually likes us

B) God's 'romantic' love shows us how to conduct ours

- Don't cheat
- Don't make it too important: (God is jealous)

Conclusion: Love will win

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) A common 'story' in our imaginations, literature, music and film is the 'soul mate' story—the story that there is, or should be, someone out there who is just right for you. Discuss the various iterations of that story that we find. What do you think of the story?
- 2) Read Song of Songs chapter 1. Itemize the ways that it celebrates romantic love.
- 3) Our culture tends to argue that commitment (think marriage) gets in the way of romantic love. How does the Bible respond to that argument? Notice the link between Genesis 2:23 and Genesis 2:24. Notice as well the sort of love that the bride in *Song of Songs* is looking for in 8:6-7:

*Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm,
For love is strong as death, jealousy as fierce as the grave.
It flashes like fire, the very flame of the Lord.
Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.
If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would be utterly despised.*

- 4) By likening his love for us to a man's love for a woman, God invites us to believe that our unfaithfulness causes him pain. Read Hosea 1 and imagine how the prophet felt in his relationship to Gomer. What makes it hard for you to believe that you can actually cause God pain?
- 5) Lovers not only love each other (everybody has to do that); they actually like each other. Do you think God likes you? Why? Why not?
- 6) Reflect on the following: "For our romantic love to be like God's, we must never cheat. The meaning of this is plain if we are married. If we are unmarried, but in a relationship, it means that we will not cheat on our present friend's future spouse or on our own: we will have an obligation, in other words, neither to give to our present friend, nor to take from our present friend, the sort of emotional or sexual commitment that may in the end belong to someone else."
- 7) To say that God is jealous is not to say that he is a "green-eyed monster." It means rather that nothing in our lives, not even romantic love, may be more central to us than he is. How can you tell when you have made romantic love a God substitute? Spend some time praying about your love life.