

Sermon Note: The Time of Singing Has Come

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Introduction

Welcome to the first Sunday of September, where we begin a new series on Uncommon Wisdom. This week, we dive into the poetic beauty of the Song of Solomon. This week's text invites us into a celebration of love and the joy of God's creation. As we consider this passage, we are reminded that there is a time for singing and rejoicing, even in the midst of all that life can bring. Let us embrace this time of renewal and the new possibilities that God brings into our lives.

Illustration Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drnBMAEA3AM>

In this iconic scene from "The Sound of Music," Maria teaches the Von Trapp children to sing. The joy and simplicity of learning music together reflect the theme of celebrating life and finding happiness in the little moments.

Video Discussion Questions

1. How does this scene from "The Sound of Music" capture the essence of joy and celebration?
2. In what ways can we find similar joy in our everyday lives, even during challenging times?
3. How can singing or other forms of expression be a response to the beauty and love described in the Song of Solomon?
4. How does this scene relate to the themes of love, renewal, and celebration found in this week's scripture?

Song of Solomon 2:8-13 (NRSVue)

⁸The voice of my beloved!

Look, he comes,
leaping upon the mountains,
bounding over the hills.

⁹My beloved is like a gazelle
or a young stag.

Look, there he stands
behind our wall,
gazing in at the windows,
looking through the lattice.

¹⁰My beloved speaks and says to me:

"Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away,

¹¹for now the winter is past,

the rain is over and gone.
¹²The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtledove
is heard in our land.
¹³The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.

Scripture Discussion Questions

1. The text from Song of Solomon includes vivid imagery and the invocation of the senses. How do these approaches open up the passage for you?
2. The Song of Solomon is, at its heart, a love poem. Some scholars point to this book as an allegory of God's love for humankind, while others celebrate the goodness of what God has created as expressed in our physical nature. Can both these approaches be valid? Does it matter to you which one is "right?" What place does scripture that refers to physical desire and have in your own understanding of faith?
3. Later New Testament writings, such as James 1:27, seem to divide the physical (things of the world) from the spiritual, so that an element of "true faith" is "keeping oneself unstained by the world." How do you reconcile all of what God has created (physical and spiritual) in your faith and worldview?
4. Verse 12 says, "The time of singing has come," which might be more accurately translated as "the time of pruning." In matters of the heart and in matters of the spirit, there is time for singing and time for pruning. What experiences have you had in "singing" and "pruning?" How has that helped you to grow in your spiritual life?
5. Verses 8-13 suggest that the time for the Beloved is now, but that also implies that things happen in their own time. In your own spiritual journey, what experiences of "now" time or "not yet" time have influenced the path of that journey? How has "no" or "not yet" or "now" influenced your growth?

Additional (Optional) Questions

1. What do you already know about the book Song of Solomon?
2. What was the weirdest description you heard in the scripture? What made it weird for you?
3. What metaphors or similes about God's love for people can you think of from other parts of scripture?
4. We know that Solomon wrote songs. If Solomon wrote this song in your lifetime, what genre of music do you think he would have used? Why?
5. How does what we read from the Song of Solomon compare to the lyrics or titles of modern songs?
6. What is something you read that felt like it might have two meanings?

Weekly Action

This week, take some time to reflect on the beauty around you. Whether through a walk in nature, listening to music, or simply pausing to appreciate a moment of joy, let yourself be open to God's presence in the everyday moments. Consider journaling about how these experiences bring a sense of renewal and joy.

Prayer

Loving God, who has created us in all our physical and spiritual fullness, we give you thanks for showing us that love is possible and that love is good. We lift up to you the frailties that disrupt or corrupt our love for you and for one another and pray that you reform us in grace. We ask this in the name of Christ. Amen.