



Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

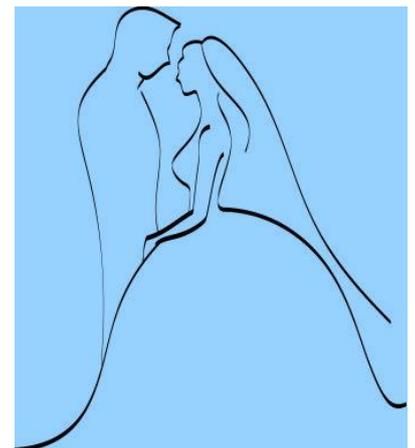
Song of Solomon 8:6-7a 'Love's Enduring Greatness'

⁶ Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,
passion fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame.
⁷ Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.

All of us find words, descriptions, poetry and prose important to a greater or lesser degree. Speaking or listening to one another and reading whether by mouth, letter, TV, radio or social media is how we communicate.

If you read the Song of Songs, also known as the 'Song of Solomon', it is immediately striking that no mention of God is made. It is a series of poems celebrating the mutual love of a Lover – possibly King Solomon – and a Beloved, as the Jerusalem Bible puts it 'now meeting, now parting, now seeking and now finding each other'. This is an example of the power of words and poetry, both with this description and with the Song itself.

The origin of the song is not entirely clear, but it is often interpreted as an allegory of the marriage between Christ and the Church. There is no pattern, but themes of human love are followed, as they were in the Book of Genesis, with the story of David, in Proverbs and in other Wisdom books. Indeed, some believe that the poems are a series of songs sung during a week-long wedding feast, still common in Syria today, with the bride and groom being crowned king and queen. I have quoted above part of the Epilogue of the Song, but it is very easy to read and I recommend it.



Jesus used the means of talking, listening and quoting the scriptures. I am reminded of two sayings of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel. The 'Parable of the Hidden Treasure', and the 'Parable of the Fine Pearl', describing God's kingdom: "The kingdom of heaven is like this. A man is looking for fine pearls, and when he finds one that is unusually fine, he goes and sells everything he has and buys that pearl" (Matthew 13:45). Total commitment is necessary to love Christ and follow him, as did the widow in the gospels who dropped all she had to live on into the temple treasury. I find this very difficult to emulate in my journey with Christ.

These are examples of the marriage of Christ and his church, and the Song of Songs is perfect poem upon which to meditate, as we proceed at Emmanuel, now and in the future.

Prayer:

Lord, we ask that you will guide us in our discipleship,
that your example will lead us, your word will inspire us,
and your love, through your death on the cross, will be demonstrated in our lives.
Help us show you then rose from the cross, to give new life to all. Amen