

THE POWER OF LOVE

PREACHING THROUGH SONG OF SONGS

To love is to suffer. To avoid suffering one must not love. But then one suffers from not loving. Therefore to love is to suffer, not to love is to suffer. To suffer is to suffer. To be happy is to love. To be happy then is to suffer. But suffering makes one unhappy. Therefore, to be unhappy one must love, or love to suffer, or suffer from too much happiness. I hope you're getting this down.

(Woody Allen)

LOVE CAN GET PRETTY CONFUSING.

Thankfully God provides us with clear, practical wisdom in the Old Testament book, *Song of Songs*.

In preparation for preaching through *Song of Songs*, I came to the conclusion that the integrating idea of the book is that **love is both wonderfully and dangerously powerful**. At its best love can be beautifully exhilarating and intoxicating. When handled carelessly however, love can inflict more pain than you can possibly imagine.

Song of Songs communicates these love truths through the threefold repetition of a cautionary chorus (2:7, 3:5, 8:4) as well as a reflective, final conclusion (8:5-14). These textual markers divide the book into **4 main sections**. For my preaching series I choose to give one talk on each section. See below for title, passage breakup and brief summary of each talk. The actual talks can be listened to at www.dpc.org.au.

talk 1 Crazy little thing called love 1:1-2:7

Love is not to be rushed into because it will shape and transform how you think about someone. God's love shapes his dealings with us.

talk 2 Love and other bruises 2:8-3:5

Love is not to be rushed into because along with great pleasure it can also bring much pain. God's love of us brought great pain to himself.

talk 3 Too much love will kill you 3:6-8:4

Love is not to be rushed into because it is so powerful that it can ruin your life (eg Solomon himself).

talk 4 I want to know what love is 8:5-14

God is love and so we can look forward to a full and flawless experience of love in the new creation



Resources -

Barry Webb, *Five Festal Garments* (Apollos, 2000) provides an excellent overview and literary analysis. Unfortunately it doesn't give a verse by verse exegesis.

Mark Driscoll has preached a series on Song of Songs called *The Peasant Princess* (<http://www.marshillchurch.org/media/sermons>). The series helpfully works systematically through the text, though perhaps sometimes its not quite sensitive enough to the poetic license of the text.

Luke Tattersall has a useful preaching article at the Perspective site (<http://perspective.org.au/preaching/74/-more-talk-about-sex>)