

SongOfSolomon 20-02-06b

Let's pick up our study now and we've seen the first two of three refrains that occur in this book charging the daughters of Jerusalem to not do something. And there's been all kinds of arrows shot into the air, landing I know not where, about what this actually means. I appeal to the Hebrew here for my own understanding of it and the context.

In the first case, chapter two, he brought me to the house of wine. His banner over me was love. This is Ahav, A-H-A-V or B, Ahav.

His banner over me is love. So what is a banner? What does that do? It's a public sign signifying something, right? Signs signify. Signify comes from the word sign.

So Solomon has put a banner over her saying Ahav, and the banner is over her, similar to her being in the shade of the apple tree and hoping to enjoy that close proximity, sitting in the shade, eating apples and so on. In the house of wine, the banner over her is Ahav, it is love. So what does she say here in verse six? His left hand is under my head and his right hand embraces me.

So at the moment she says, this is my ideal. This is what I'm after. Solomon with me.

He's got one hand behind my head. He's got the other hand wrapped around me. This is an embrace of love and marital happiness, right? So what does she say to the daughters of Jerusalem? What do they basically constitute? Well, they're a threat.

They're a distraction to Solomon. If there were no daughters in Jerusalem and it was only her, she would easily have him all to herself. But all of these wives, concubines, queens, and so on are in Jerusalem.

They're there in Solomon's harem. So what does she say to them? I charge you by the gazelles or by the does of the field, do not stir up nor awaken Ahav. This is a feminine noun, Ahava, until it pleases.

And that's also a feminine construction. So it is love itself. So what's her concern? If he wants to, don't stir up Solomon's love in your direction.

She's just described his love in her direction. And I think she is challenging the daughters of Jerusalem not to waylay Solomon's affections, not to seduce him away. Don't stir up or awaken his love in their direction when he's not initiating it.

It's one thing if he decides to depart. That's a different thing. But if they're just wooing and seducing and awakening and arousing his love in their direction, if they're dressing provocatively or making themselves unusually available to him or whatever else, they're using their own appeals to try to draw his attention.

One way to read this is, I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem. And this is something of a of a more or less formal request. Don't.

It's like Dolly Parton's song, Jolene. Please don't take my man. She's new on the scene.

Solomon has expressed dedication to her. So daughters of Jerusalem, don't awaken and arouse love. They're not going to be awakening and arousing his love for her.

They would be trying to direct it toward themselves. And she says, don't do that until love itself pleases. The word for please is one we've seen before.

It's Kepets. C-H-E-P-E-T-S. Kepets.

And it means desire. It occurs, and we talked about it in David's last song. When he says, all my desire, you know, there was dew on the grass and all the rest of it.

There was a lot of potential in the kingdom, but it didn't come to fruition. My desire was not fulfilled. But he has hope for the future that one day it will be based on the word of God.

But it's a desire, Kepets. And she says, don't awaken Ahava, love, until it, the love itself, desires. So it's one thing for the guy to be seduced.

It's something else for him to willingly walk away. That's one way to understand it. It is a bit cryptic, but I think as we go through the book, we'll see that context helps us out.

The context here is his left hand is under my head and his right hand embraces me. This is where Solomon is supposed to be. This is where he has pledged to be.

This is where he has promised to be. Don't lure him into breaking his promise. When you get to chapter three, verse five, and the identical charge is expressed.

Look at the preceding context. I had to go look for Solomon. And when I found him, I brought him back and reminded him about, I wouldn't be here if it weren't for my mother conceiving.

You have a, you have a pledge, you have a responsibility, you have an opportunity, you've, you've expressed this deep love and appreciation for me and my uniqueness and all the rest of it. So daughters of Jerusalem, don't deflect and distract Solomon from that pledge, pledge from that covenant, from that promise, that expression. So then in verse six, she says, who is this coming out of the wilderness? Like pillars of smoke, perfume with myrrh and frankincense with all the merchants, fragrant powders.

And this is a sort of a side note, a commentary on the wealth and luxurious abundance of goods from all over North Africa and the ancient near East in trade, the tremendous economic boom that was enjoyed in the days of Solomon. And so these luxurious things are in abundance and

Solomon sort of gets credit for the economy, if you will. And here is Solomon's palanquin, his couch, his carried royal chair, so to speak, 60 valiant men around it.

Every man with a sword on his thigh because of fear in the night. He's powerful and he's evidently also controversial. And there are those who would attack him.

He's got a security guard. Solomon made himself this palanquin. He made its pillars of silver, the support of gold, its seat of purple, its interior paved with love by the daughters of Jerusalem.

Now, the last time we saw gold and silver mentioned, what was it going to be used for? Remember back in chapter one, verse 11, Solomon says, we will make you ornaments of gold with studs of silver. But where do the ornaments of gold and the studs of silver show up? It's on Solomon's royal chair. She never says, I sure do like this necklace you got me in these wonderful earrings.

It's he's got entire pillars on this chair made of silver and the supports are made of gold. And it's it's very lavishly appointed. And it was a project by the daughters of Jerusalem.

So what has the Shulamite asked the daughters of Jerusalem to do? Let Solomon make up his own mind. Let this fragile new love solidify and blossom and come to fruition. Don't stir it up and agitate it and distract it.

This is my understanding of it. So as you look here. And we're now in Section E, the king has come from the wilderness.

And what's in the wilderness? What's he been doing out there? It's like when he was over the mountains and past the hills, coming back to climb the wall and look in the lattice. Where has he been? I don't know. Where is he when she's in her bed at night? She doesn't know.

She has to go out and look for him and go try to remind him that she's supposed to be in his bed because they are supposed to have this covenant of a fruitful marriage. So now he's out in the wilderness and he's he's coming back with this fancy new chair and the daughters of Jerusalem knew all about it. They helped him build the chair and probably all giggled and batted their eyelashes when he got into it and said, oh, how do you like that pillow I stuffed for you in there? So she says in verse eleven of chapter three, go forth, oh, daughters of Zion and see King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day of the gladness of his heart.

See King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him. And you remember this story about how David was old and Adonijah and there was this whole thing about a different king being crowned and his mother had to appeal to the king and get Joab involved and get the deed done so that Solomon would be crowned. Well, this is the crown from that day.

This is before he met the Shulamite and before he accumulated these. The. Wives and

concubines that are already on the scene, right, and it's it's a reminder, the mother harks back to what she was talking about, the mother gave birth to us to a royal son and she crowned him.

This is the Shulamites hope that she can bear Solomon, a son, and that she can put a crown on his head at some point. And it goes back to what we just saw in the preceding section. See King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day of the gladness of his heart.

So you continue now into the second part of this pair of songs, which begins at chapter four, verse one, and you'll notice this progression of initial bliss and then recognition of departure, separation, threat of seduction from other sources. But in chapter four, Solomon seems to swoop in and try to allay all fears. And so you have this very lengthy section here.

Where Solomon says, behold, you are fair, my love, you are fair, you have dove's eyes, your hair is a flock of goats going down from Gilead, your teeth, your lips, your mouth. He describes her physical beauty in great detail. And he says in verse six, until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, I will go my way to the mountains of Myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.

You are all fair, my love, and there is no spot in you. Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Sinair and Hermon, from the lion's dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

You've ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse. You've ravished my heart with one look of your eyes, one link of your necklace. How fair is your love, my sister, my spouse? How much better than wine is your love? And you remember she had said that back in chapter one.

And the scent of your perfumes, that all spices, your lips, my spouse, is the honeycomb, honey and milk are under your tongue. This is just extreme expression of appreciation. Is it flattery? Is he laying it on too thick or is it sincere? It's hard to know.

We've heard these warning notes in the preceding sections. But he says, a garden enclosed as my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard, spikenard saffron, calamus cinnamon, et cetera, a garden enclosed.

And she, of course, has belonged to no man previous to this. We find out in chapter eight with regard to her brothers and their policy. If she's a gate, we'll close it.

If she's a wall, we'll reinforce it. She is chased. She is a one man woman before, during and after.

And he recognizes that here. She can hardly say the same about him. He's already accumulated so many of these women.

And so that extends down through verse 15. And the section continues there with Solomon.

There's a little exchange there in verse 16, and then chapter five, verse one.

I have come to my garden, my sister, my spouse. I've gathered myrrh with spice. I've eaten honeycomb with my honey.

I've drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, oh friends. Drink, yes, drink deeply, oh beloved ones.

And he basically says, yes, I've been in the house of wine. Yes, I've been out with my friends. Yes, I've been everywhere, but I'm here now.

So, you know, allay your fears all as well. And I put three stars by Solomon's speech here because there is a symmetry in his, this is almost going to be given as evidence that he's, you know, methinketh thou protesteth too much. But we come now to the center of the chiasm and really the center of the book.

And you'll recall that the change in setting tells us we're in a new section. We saw the king coming from the wilderness in chapter three, verse six. And then the exchange of, actually not an exchange, but the expression of compliments all the way through from Solomon.

And so now in the center, you have this change from Solomon talking to his friends and saying, eat and drink and, you know, let's all celebrate. But his celebration is with his friends, not with his wife. And so she's starting to become, what do they call it? Arm candy, or she's an accessory in his palatial presence.

So the Shulamite speaks now in chapter five, verse two, and we're now at the heart of the book. And this is what we've been wanting to get to for a couple of weeks. She says, I sleep, but my heart is awake.

The voice of my beloved. He knocks open for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one. My head is covered with dew, my locks with drops of the night.

It's the same thing that he was talking about up above where, you know, come with me. I've been to the mountains of Gilead and Lebanon and the lion's dens and, uh, oh, you know, join me in my adventures and whatnot. And, uh, she says, you're, you're coming back and making this appeal and laying on all of these compliments, but where have you been? My bed's been empty.

I've been out, you know, asking the watchman in the night and having to remind you of our, of our promises and our pledges to each other about parenting children and having offspring and, you know, visiting the house of my mother and so on. She says, you're back now and here's your voice. And you're talking to me, uh, and giving me some more of this lather about being a dove and a perfect one.

And I've been out, you know, I couldn't help it. I've been out with the dew falling on my head and whatnot. And, uh, she says, look, I gave up on you.

I was waiting. I had on my, my negligee and had the candle lit and was all ready to enjoy the fruits of all of these promises. But you didn't show the candle burned down.

So I took off my robe. How can I put it on again? I've washed my feet. How can I defile them? Now, if she was still in the throes of a romantic infatuation, I don't need a robe and I don't care if my feet get dirty.

Let's, uh, here you are. Oh, my love, let's embrace and so on. But this is a psychological place that she is in.

You're coming in too little too late. Uh, I've, I have passed the point of being taken in by your flatteries and your excuses and your claims of where you've been and what you've been doing. My, my heart is no longer in it is the implication here.

So my beloved put his hand by the latch. My heart yearned for him. I rose to open for my beloved and so on.

Um, but my beloved verse six had turned away and was gone when I was ready for him. He wasn't there where we're out of sync. Now he's, uh, he's not where he said he would be.

And then when he does show up, it's not the right time. And when I'm ready, he's gone. Uh, I sought him.

I could not find him. I called him, but he gave me no answer. The watchman who went about the city found me.

They struck me. They wounded me. We saw this last time.

The keepers of the walls took my veil from me. This is a recognition by the security people, by the ones who are supposed to be reverencing and respecting the queen, the marriage and so on. They recognize that Solomon has already pretty much kind of thrown her over and gone back to his old ways.

So if he doesn't respect her, why should they? And there's really no other way to take this. People say, Oh, she's having a bad dream. I don't see any applicational value or pertinence in that assumption.

The watchman who went about the city found me, struck me, wounded me, took my veil away from me. And so she now issues this charge again, chapter five, verse eight, I charge you, Oh, daughters of Jerusalem. If you find my beloved, tell him I am lovesick.

Don't arouse his love and try to, to distract him in, in your direction. Tell him I'm lacking here. I am needy in, in the area where all of these pledges and promises were made.

And because we're now coming out from this center portion, that's, that's the heart of the, of the book is this, the descent from initial infatuated bliss to being slapped around by the help. That's, that's the movement for the Shulamite. Honored, fetid, complimented.

You're one of a kind. I never seen anybody like you. Now Solomon's not even there.

And the servants are disrespecting her to the point of physical abuse, tearing her veil off, treating her like a common servant, tearing off her veil. What does that signify? Think about somebody doing this in a Muslim country that takes their women being covered up seriously. You know, that's, you can, you can die for that kind of thing.

It's, it's thought to be such a disrespect. Well, that's right at the center of the book. And if you look at our symmetry now, we're going to start coming back out.

And this next section in chapter five, verse nine through chapter six, verse 10 is, is symmetrical with complimentary to the chapter three, verse six through chapter five, verse one, the part that immediately preceded that central disappointment and degradation of the Shulamite undeserved. All she wanted to do was find Solomon and find out why he's not keeping his promises. And she's degraded in the process.

So now the daughters of Jerusalem are going to start to back sass because it's clear to them that she has lost Solomon's heart. What is your beloved more than another beloved? Oh, fairest among women. And you get the idea that this is almost a sarcastic rejoinder now.

What is your beloved more than another beloved? Why don't you just get another guy? You know, probably a number of these women, when they lost Solomon's attention, just went and found somebody else to make hay with. And they're saying, you know, one beloved is as good as another. If Solomon's not around, you know, he's just a bee floating from flower to flower.

So what's what's that beloved more than a different beloved? When for her, Solomon was her, the love for which she had waited. So why are you charging us to go find him and try to send him back to you? So the Shulamite responds in verse 10 and talks to the daughters of Jerusalem and her genuine love for him, despite his mistreatment is reflected here. My beloved is white and ruddy chief among 10,000.

His head is like finest gold. His locks are wavy, black as a raven. His eyes are like doves by the rivers of water washed with milk and fitly set.

His cheeks are like a bed of spices, banks of scented herbs. His lips are lilies dripping liquid myrrh and so on. And she goes on here and you get the idea that that her triple star section about Solomon is of a different tone and a different cast than his chapter long extolling of her virtues.

She hasn't been out feeding among the lilies. She hasn't gone over the hills. She hasn't been

going out to the flocks of the other shepherds and wandering to see where they pasture their goats and so on.

She's been loyal. She's been faithful. She's in her chambers.

She's been in her bed at night where she's supposed to be. Solomon has been everywhere except where he's supposed to be. And he belatedly comes in and checks on her and she's not having it.

And so she's alone and she's mocked for her trouble. And she says, you know, these are the things that made me fall in love with Solomon to begin with. His countenance like leaven and excellent as the cedars.

His mouth is sweet. He's altogether lovely. This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

Often overlooked, she found in Solomon not only her lover, the husband of her dreams, but her friend. He doesn't ever say this about her. He is ready to extol all of her physical beauty, but he doesn't say, where are you, O the covenant friend of my heart? But she does because, and this is generally how ladies are built, relationship is central and commitment and trust and fidelity.

So this is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem. You can circle, this is my friend. So you have now, and you can see in the symmetrical outline I tried to create for you here, that the daughters of Jerusalem begin that complimentary F section.

And now they're going to begin the complimentary E section again. Oh, where is your beloved gone, O fairest among women? Where has your beloved turned aside that we may seek him with you? And again, I think this is kind of a snide rejoinder. Well, where do you think he's gone? Why isn't he here? Tell us where to go look for him.

There's only 140 possible beds that he could be in in any given night, you know, 60 of one and 80 of another. So where do you think we ought to look? And there is this sort of pejorative note to their question. And the Shulamite says, I know where he's gone.

Your little fox's ploy here isn't news to me. My beloved has gone to his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens. Remember earlier when she said he's feeding among the lilies? Well, he's feeding in the gardens.

He's feeding in the beds of spices. All of this is plural. I know where he is.

I don't have to know the specific one, but he's out, you know, either exploiting the 140 that he's already got or recruiting new ones. And notice he's gathering lilies. He's not content with the lily of the valley.

He's not content with the rose of Sharon. He's gathering more. And it's lilies plural.

She says, I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. And you could, you could put here in parentheses, but he feeds among the lilies. We're supposed to be to become one flesh, but he's, he's not here.

I am his and he's mine, but he's out feeding among the lilies. So Solomon returns at this point and he's going to lay on some more flatteries. He, and there is a, you know, I won't even begin to talk about the pattern that is, that is widespread in abusive marriages where a guy can do all kinds of heinous things.

Then he receives his wife's forgiveness and acceptance. And then he goes out and does the same thing again, comes back, lays it on thick, talks a great fight and says the words that his wife is desperate to believe. Men will say things, married or unmarried, dating or in the shackles of matrimony, they will say all kinds of things.

And there's an almost instinctive ability to say what someone wants to hear. And there's the willing suspension of disbelief. And despite history, despite counsel, despite experience, they'll take him back.

They'll believe it. They'll turn a blind eye. It's because what is the alternative? I just don't want him to believe that he doesn't really love me, that this wasn't a peccadillo or a temporary slip or he's not really like this.

There's an excuse. There's a reason. And women in particular can be so forgiving and so long suffering and so anxious to find the security and the comfort and the love that their soul deserves and that their heart desires.

And it is often exploited. So this letter is a warning to have eyes open and like a doe or a gazelle, don't be caught unawares by this pattern. And she's describing it in detail.

I'm sure it was painful to do. But here is some of the further eyewash, if you will, in my view that Solomon lays on. Oh, my love, you're as beautiful as tears, as lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners.

If she's all that awesome and all that great, why is he out feeding among the lilies? Why is he over the hill? Why is he gone at night? Why is her bed empty? Oh, you're just the greatest thing. It's all talk and no action. As you say, in Texas, all hat and no cattle.

He's trying to give the appearance of all of this devotion, but it has become a hollow song of praise because it's not followed up with actions. You remember the accusation that the Lord brings against his people? They honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

It's in Isaiah in the Old Testament. It's in Matthew in the New Testament. Isaiah 29, 13 is the original.

And the Lord Jesus quotes it in Matthew chapter 15, verse eight. That's, I think, what you're seeing here, honoring with the lips. But where is he at night? Where is he when the shadows are setting in? Where is he when she's being slapped around by the help in the palace, having her veil ripped off, being disrespected and disregarded, nowhere to be found.

Oh, my love, beautiful as tears, as lovely as Jerusalem, hair like a flock of goats going down from Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of sheep. Come up from the washing, twins, pomegranates.

Verse eight, there are 60 queens and 80 concubines and virgins without number, which is the lilies he's been feeding among and the gardens and beds of spices he's been visiting. My dove, my perfect one is the only one, the only one of her mother. You keep having this recurring appearance of motherhood.

She's the only one of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her. The daughters saw her and called her blessed. The queens and the concubines praised her.

And here's the content of their praise. You can put quotes around verse 10, I think. Who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as an army with banners.

He says it in verse four and he says it again, perhaps quoting these women in verse 10. He says, I praise you, they praise you, everybody thinks you're great. Well, the reply from the Shulamite begins in verse 11.

And once again, you have a pair of sections there, that F prime section and E prime section beginning in chapter five, verse nine and extending through chapter six, verse 10. And what is our section marker? How do we know we're shifting a step in the structure? It's a change of setting, a change of venue. And I've tried to note those.

You can see it on the D prime there, six, 11 and 12 down in the garden, down in the garden. I went down to the garden of nuts to see the verger of the valley to see whether the vine had budded and the pomegranates had bloomed. Now, why has she gone to the garden? She's looking for produce, right? I wanted to see if there's budding, if there's blooming.

But before I was even aware, my soul had made me as the chariots of my noble people, the Amin Adib, if you will. This is not a good thing. What do chariots do? You know, when you see cars in a museum, it's kind of a freaky thing because cars are made to drive down the road.

I was talking about this to a really interesting guy who collects Coleman lanterns. And he said, you know, there's a whole collectors. It's like people who collect anything.

You want a Barbie doll still in the box. I pick on Barbie a lot lately. I don't know why.

But there's people who want this, this pristine example. I was telling him that in the album collecting world, vinyl albums, people want one that's still in the rack, never been opened. And I never buy those.

I never want them unless I'm going to buy it and open it because albums are meant to be played. And he was saying, you know, Coleman lanterns are meant to be fueled up and lit. There's, you know, he takes all of his out.

He's got hooks around a thing out on his carport and he'll take all of his collection of lanterns, light them all and hang them out and watch them burn, which I think is great. You know, it's there to be used. Cars are meant to be driven.

Don't, you know, shine it up and make it look like it just rolled off the factory floor and then never, never drive the thing, play your albums. That's what they're for. If they're great, enjoy them for their, their greatness.

Well, the marriage in the old Testament day was designed by God for fruit, for offspring, for descendants. Children are a blessing of the Lord and the fruit of the womb is his reward. That's somewhere in the Psalms, right? The fruit of the womb is his reward.

And people felt like there was something wrong and they would go to God and say, Lord, have I done something wrong that I, that we're not having children. Sometimes God would delay and there wasn't anything wrong. We've, we've gone through those examples many times.

So she goes down to the garden to see the verger of the valley. When it says garden of nuts, I think this was actually there. It's a phrase in Hebrew.

And I think it was kind of like, uh, uh, Linda Vista and a lot of the other Spanish names that you find in, uh, in California, Escondido and, and, uh, uh, so many of these names, they may mean something in the original language, but it's just the designation of a place. And this was evidently a very verdant garden associated with the palace. She hasn't left the palace since, since Solomon brought her there.

He's gone to the mountains. He's been over the hills. He's come down the road in his plank.

When he's kicked up dust from faraway places, he's come in, in the night with dew in his hair. She hasn't been anywhere. She goes out to the garden, probably this garden of nuts, so-called that's adjacent to the palace.

And what is she looking for to see whether the vine had budded and see if the pomegranates had bloomed. But before she had a chance to even find out her soul was made like the chariots of her noble people. And I'm back to my example of cars and albums and Coleman lanterns.

What are chariots for? Do you just stand them all in a row and admire them like a, you know, autos at a car dealership. Chariots are the swiftest thing on the battlefield. They, they fly.

They're like the heart and the gazelle and the dough. Right. And she says, I was, I was looking for, and this is, I think, metaphorical.

She's hoping that she's pregnant. She's hoping that their honeymoon phase has, has resulted in budding and blooming and that there's going to be offspring. But before that could have any potential chance, her soul is like a chariot.

In other words, I feel like I need to, to get into high gear. Why she's, she's running away. And so, uh, somebody you're in your new King James, it says the beloved and his friends.

I personally think this is the daughters of Jerusalem again. And I have so labeled it. You see six, 10 labeled there under E prime return, return.

Oh, Shulamite return, return that we may look upon you. So the, the wedded bliss portion of the marriage has been so brief and so interrupted with Solomon's absences. She's not pregnant and it's a huge disappointment.

And so these daughters of Jerusalem, these kind of snide other women in the palace, whether they're the virgins, the concubines or the Queens, they say, Oh, return, return Shulamite. We want to look at you. Solomon has praised your looks and we want to look at you.

You're, you're just pretty as a picture. You're pretty as a painting. What a, what a living doll, but you're not going to be the mother to the King's heir and offspring.

And so she replies at, in the second half of that verse. And it's these verse divisions aren't the way I would have done them. So you have 13, a and 13 B. You saw the change in setting.

We were down in the garden. So now we're in the D prime section and the daughters of Jerusalem say, well, return, return. Oh, Shulamite.

And uh, she says, why do you want to look at the Shulamite? In other words, why do you want to look at me? Are you looking for the dance of Mahanaim? Mahanaim is the, the camps. You see it translated here, the two camps. There's even a town called Mahanaim, but you already had the introduction of the chariot.

And now you've got the Mahanaim. These are typically the, the battle camps. You know, Joshua returned to the camp.

He and the army were encamped across the Valley from the Philistines or whoever. And so she replies to this, this mocking tone of the daughters of Jerusalem. Oh, return, return.

What's the matter with you? Why are you, why are you fleeing in disappointment? As it were. And she says, you, you want to, you want to look at me like those in the, in the camp, not the chariot, not the battle, not the army. You, you want to, you want to look at me like I'm the, I'm the people who are ineffective.

They're back in the rear. They're not doing anything, getting anything done. They're sitting back in the camp, guarding the guarding the bread or something.

She says, you, you want to gaze at me to look down on me. I remember there was a defugalty at one point and David had to issue a new policy because only the people in the forefront of the battle thought they should share the spoils. And David said, no, everybody should share alike.

The people in the rear with the gear are just as important as the ones at the point of the spear. Well, this is the idea. Well, that brings us now to the final two sections that begin in chapter seven, final three sections.

Actually, Solomon's going to try to lay it on thick one more time, but here's, I want to introduce now the point of application. There is a nobility on the part of the Shulamite. There is royalty on the part of Solomon, but his treatment of her is not with integrity.

He doesn't honor the pledges that he made to her. He has essentially led her on. He has gotten her to open the garden gate as it were to become his wife.

She thought he was going to fulfill this potential and he has not. And she is describing this experience. Why? Once again, marriage is a species of commitment.

Getting someone to agree to a contract in business, getting someone to agree to a coordinated effort, whether it's volunteer effort, whether it is fulfilling a project or working together on anything. If it's in church, we have a shared commitment to one another. We love one another as a reflection of love for the Lord God in heaven, love the Lord, your God, love your neighbor as yourself.

And part of that love is being careful about making commitments and keeping those commitments when they are made. Marriage is a very prominent, central, foundational example, but it's not the only example. And it boils down to, are we people of our word or not? Are we willing to mislead for personal advantage? Are we willing to shade the truth? Are we willing to leave out details to make things look better than they are? Are we willing to excuse ourselves? Oh, I'm sorry.

I couldn't be here. I was out in the night. My hair's all wet.

Open up the door. But she's waited way past the time. I haven't got my robe on anymore.

I've already washed my feet and gotten into bed. Now you want me to come back and do things on your timetable. There's a lot of self-sacrifice and being in the middle, but where is your

commitment? Why all of these excuses? Why all of these flatteries? Actions speak louder than words when it comes to commitment of any kind.

So many people, you look at the political ruckus that's going on now and is going to continue at a heightened pace until we survive another election. But it goes on all the time. Promises are made.

Points of view are expressed. Commitments are given. Where is the fulfillment of action? It's wonderful to see somebody actually fulfill a pledge and stick to their promise and adhere to their word and let their word be their bond and their guide.

This should mark every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ in every area of life. Take responsibility when you fail. If you make a commitment, keep it like death is on the line.

That's what the Lord Jesus did. He made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf, and he never wavered. I must be about my father's business, and he was from beginning to end.

He fulfilled the law. He was tested beyond anything we will ever know, yet without sin. His faithfulness is an expression of his love for the Father and his love for us.

Faithfulness for us, faithfulness in marriage, faithfulness before marriage. If you're sure you're going to get married, you should be faithful to the person you are going to marry even before you meet them. It's integrity.

It's faithfulness. The wall that is guarded, the gate that is blockaded until love blossoms, love within God's plan and purpose, love within God's design, love that unites a man and a woman till death do us part. But it's an example of commitment and faithfulness in every area, and we should examine ourselves to see if we are faithful, faithful to God, faithful to one another.

I think that's the message that is a significant part of the purpose of the book that we have before us. Well, we will continue and conclude our study of the Song of Solomon next time, but we'll close here tonight in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for its convicting power to rebuke and correct and instruct us in righteousness. We pray that as we reflect on what we've seen and on the example that is put before us that God the Holy Spirit will help us to see clearly how we can improve our own lives, our own perception of where our responsibilities lie, where our opportunities are, where the path of faithfulness and truthfulness really lies. And we pray that as a result our lives will bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ both now and in the ages to come.

We pray these things in his name. Amen.