



## CONCORD SUNDAY SCHOOL

### LESSON 27

SUNDAY,  
JULY 5, 2020

### **Song of Solomon 2:8-13**

8 The voice of my beloved! Look, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. 9 My 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. 10 My beloved speaks and says to me: “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; 11 for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. 12 The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. 13 The 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.

### **Background**

Song of Solomon is an often skipped-over text. It is full of romantic and passionate metaphors and intimate language. Like the book of Esther, there are virtually *no* references to God. This is the only time that this particular book shows up in the lectionary. So in most churches, people rarely hear this passage. Scholars disagree about what this text is actually about. Is it about intimate relationships between humans? Is it a metaphor for relationships between God and humankind? Most scholars (like Rev. Dr. Renita Weems) do argue one thing-- in order for the metaphor to work, readers have to have at least some basic understanding of the comparison. It remains in the Bible because it is written for an audience that can relate to the content.

**Today's lesson will focus on holding on to things that feel good.**

**Read the scripture out loud together.**

**Discuss with someone in your home. What makes you smile?**

**What's happening during this passage?**

This passage is written in the voice of a woman. She looks to her beloved who is coming over “mountains” like a gazelle. Yet he stands at the gate and into the window, much like some of our images of Romeo and Juliet. There is a sense of desire and longing throughout the passage. The “beloved” says to the speaker, “Let’s go away from here. The weather is perfect, it’s springtime, everything in creation is begging for us to enjoy and savor it.”

**Why does pleasure matter?**

We are in a world that makes it nearly impossible to enjoy things. It’s hard to go for a run in the park when you’re afraid of violence. It’s difficult to eat the things that taste good when you’re concerned about your salt intake. This passage reminds us of the beautiful things in life. In other texts, like Ecclesiastes, the biblical wisdom is to “eat, drink and be merry.” How often do we get advice to enjoy and savor the world around us?

**How are your 5 senses engaged in this passage?**

Sight? Touch? Smell? Taste? Hearing?

**Why do you think we don't hear this passage often?**

This passage directly contradicts some of the warnings of Church architects in early Church history. There were often calls to resist “the flesh” that made passages like these less common. Biblical scholar Wil Gafney writes:

*The Greek philosophical tradition that will become so important to the Church Fathers as many of them reject and restrict sensuality, sexual love and bodiliness is unknown here. This text does not share the later dualism separating flesh and spirit inspired by Greek philosophy in which the body and its desires are regarded as being lower or lesser than spiritual things. Body and soul are one here, united in love.*

Particularly now, the intimacy of seeing a loved one (romantic or platonic) is a true treat. When our faces are hidden and we cannot hold one another, touch

matters. Psychologists and doctors refer to this loss of touch as “touch starvation.” It is a real thing. In fact, the impacts of cuddling and hugging are so compelling that premature babies benefit from “hug therapy.” Tenderness makes a real difference.

**What questions do you still have of this scripture? How will you commit to journeying with this text this week?**

### **Connection to Today’s World**

A mother chronicled her strategy for dealing with her child’s meltdowns. Instead of sending him to time out or putting him on punishment, she created a “calming corner” to help him manage his emotions in a healthier way. In the calming corner, he can meditate, do breathing exercises, or engage some toys that en-



gage his five senses. There were squishy toys for touch, a plasma ball for sight, plants and oils for smell, gum for taste, and crackling toys for sound. After the child engages with the necessary tools, he can talk with his mother about his feelings and choices. It makes for a much calmer debrief, rather than forcing him to speak when he’s still emotionally tender.

Our Freedom School interns engaged a similar process during in-person program years. Calming corners give children space to reflect on what they’re feeling before they talk. Giving ourselves a chance to dip into our senses for a moment is healthy for all ages. Give it a try!

Check out the original video here:

<https://twitter.com/skyleenash/status/1278541495306457088>

**Journal:** Think about the five senses. What sense brings you the most joy. Touch, taste, smell, hearing, sight? What is your favorite thing to sense ?

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**Closing:** Sing/watch “Lord, I’m Available To You,”

For a video, click here:[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8\\_ruoVPpqQY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_ruoVPpqQY)

*You gave me my hands to reach out to man  
To show him Your love and Your perfect plan  
You gave me my ears, I can hear Your voice so clear  
I can hear the cries of sinners  
But can I wipe away their tears?*

*You gave me my voice to speak Your Word  
To sing all Your praises to those who never heard  
But with my eyes I see a need for more availability  
I've seen the hearts that have been broken  
So many people to be free*

*Lord, I'm available to You  
My will I give to You  
I'll do what You say do  
Use me Lord to show someone the way and enable me to say  
My storage is empty and I am available to You*

### **Prayer:**

Dear God,

You gave us our senses to engage the world. You gave us senses to help us see new mercies morning by morning, to hear the song of the birds, to taste the tartness in the communion wine, to touch to feel each other's hands and smell which lets us know that dinner is soon ready. You gave us the gift of our bodies so that we could experience this world.

God, help us to see beauty in our bodies. Help us to see majesty in the things the world may consider flaws. Encourage us to move from a place of joy and to always speak over our bodies with care and tenderness.

Comfort those who are dealing with struggles of illness and pain in their flesh. Especially during this shutdown, help us to regain our sense of intimacy with friends and loved ones.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen

### **Works Cited**

[http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1402](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1402)