

Sermon Text: Song of Songs 4:10–5:1

Theme: God's Design for Love, Sexuality, and Redemption

Big Idea

God created sexuality as a **good and holy gift**, meant to be **protected through chastity before marriage and joyfully enjoyed within marriage**, ultimately pointing us to the deeper love of **Christ for His bride, the church**.

Detailed Sermon Summary

This sermon continues the Lent series tracing God's redemptive story through **gardens in Scripture**. In this message the focus moves to a **poetic garden in the Song of Songs**, where the imagery of love and intimacy points both to **God's design for human sexuality** and ultimately to **Christ's love for His people**.

The preacher begins by acknowledging that **Song of Songs is rarely taught in churches**, largely because it deals openly with sexuality. Yet Scripture addresses this topic directly because sexuality is **God's gift**, and in a culture filled with confusion and distortion, the church must return to God's Word for clarity.

The passage describes a **love poem between a bride and groom**, widely understood as depicting their **wedding night**. The man describes the beauty of his beloved through poetic imagery, comparing her to precious fragrances, spices, and fertile gardens. The dominant metaphor introduced here is the **garden**.

The garden imagery communicates two key realities about God's design for sexuality:

1. Chastity Before Marriage

The bride is described as **"a garden locked up... a sealed fountain."**

This imagery emphasizes that sexuality is meant to be **protected and reserved**. Like a garden enclosed and cared for, it is something **precious and sacred**, not meant for casual or premature use.

The sermon reflects on past church movements like **True Love Waits**, which emphasized sexual purity before marriage. While these efforts sought to uphold biblical teaching, they sometimes unintentionally communicated shame—suggesting that someone who failed sexually was permanently "damaged."

The gospel reminds us that **purity is not something we earn but something Christ gives**. Our standing before God does not depend on our past but on **Christ's forgiveness and redemption**.

2. Joyful Consummation Within Marriage

The poem then shifts from **chastity to consummation**. The bride invites the groom into the garden, and he enters it with delight.

This imagery portrays sexual intimacy within marriage as:

- Joyful
- Celebrated
- Blessed by God

In fact, some scholars believe that the final voice in the passage—“Eat, friends, and drink; drink your fill, O lovers”—is **God’s own voice affirming the goodness of marital love**.

The sermon notes that many Christians have heard the message “**don’t do it before marriage**” but received little teaching about the goodness of intimacy **within marriage**. As a result, some couples enter marriage carrying shame, confusion, or unrealistic expectations.

Scripture, however, presents sexuality within marriage as **a gift to be celebrated**, not something dirty or shameful.

3. Sexual Love Points to a Greater Love

Ultimately, the Song of Songs points beyond human love.

The garden imagery echoes **the Garden of Eden**, where Adam and Eve were naked and felt no shame. Sexuality reflects God’s original design for human flourishing.

But the New Testament reveals an even deeper meaning. In **Ephesians 5**, Paul teaches that marriage—and the one-flesh union within it—points to **Christ’s love for the church**.

Human marriage is therefore a **living picture of the gospel**:

- Christ is the bridegroom
- The church is His bride
- His love is sacrificial and redeeming

Jesus gave Himself for His bride not through pleasure but through **the suffering of the cross**, cleansing and redeeming His people.

The sermon concludes by pointing to **the Lord’s Table**, where believers remember the sacrificial love of Christ and anticipate the **Marriage Supper of the Lamb**, when Christ will finally be united with His redeemed people.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Passage

1. Why do you think Song of Songs is often neglected in churches?
2. What does the “garden” imagery teach us about God’s design for sexuality?
3. What do the descriptions of the bride and groom reveal about the nature of romantic love?

Wrestling with the Message

4. How has our culture distorted God’s design for sexuality?
5. In what ways has the church sometimes communicated unhealthy messages about sexuality?
6. Why is it important to hold together both **chastity before marriage** and **joyful intimacy within marriage**?

Gospel Reflection

7. How does the message of the gospel reshape the way we think about sexual mistakes or past failures?
 8. How does marriage point us toward Christ’s relationship with the church?
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Living It Out

1. Renew Your View of God’s Design

Spend time reflecting on how God describes sexuality in Scripture—not as shameful but as **a holy gift with boundaries and purpose**.

2. Replace Shame with Grace

If past experiences have produced guilt or shame, remember that **Christ redeems and restores**. The gospel brings forgiveness and new identity.

3. Strengthen Marriages

For married men, consider one intentional way this week to nurture your relationship with your wife—through communication, affection, prayer, or service.

4. Guard Your Heart

Take practical steps to protect your purity and integrity in areas like media consumption, online habits, or relationships.

5. Reflect on Christ’s Love

Meditate on the truth that Christ loved His bride—the church—enough to sacrifice Himself for her.

Service Challenge — Encouraging and Honoring Marriage

Because marriage reflects Christ's love for the church, intentionally serve someone this week by **strengthening or encouraging a marriage**.

Consider one of these actions:

- Offer practical help (childcare, a meal, or encouragement) to a married couple you know.
- Write a note or send a message affirming the faithfulness of someone's marriage.
- Encourage a younger couple or newly married couple with wisdom or prayer.
- Pray intentionally for marriages within your church.

Serving others in this way helps build a culture where **God's design for love and faithfulness is honored and supported**.

Prayer

Lord,

Thank You for the good gifts You have given us, including love and marriage.

Help us to honor Your design for sexuality with wisdom and humility.

Heal the places in our lives where sin or shame have distorted Your gifts.

Teach us to see in marriage a reflection of Christ's deep love for His church.

And strengthen us to live in purity, faithfulness, and grace.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.