

Song of Solomon 3:1-5

Song of Solomon 3:1,2 Upon my bed at night I sought him who my soul loves; I sought him but found him not; I called him, but he gave no answer. "I will arise now and go about the city, in the streets and in the squares; I will seek him whom my soul loves." I sought him but found him not.

The story told here by the woman does not make sense when read literally. She describes her aloneness upon her bed and the act of seeking and calling to the "one whom my soul loves" but he does not respond. So, she rises and seeks him on the streets of the city but she still cannot find him. She asks the guards, "Have you seen the him whom my soul loves?" and receives no response. Then, there he is and she holds him and won't let him go until she has brought him to her mother's house and to the room where she was conceived. She admonishes the daughters of Jerusalem once again to "not stir up or awaken love until it is ready."

Garrett points out that the phrase, "at night" would be better translated, "night after night." This supports the conclusion that the story is either imagined or a dream. A woman searching for her lover and bringing him home when found to her

mother's house when found is so far outside the norm of behavior in ancient Israel that it is not credible. But in a dream or in our imaginings we are not limited by appropriateness. Dreams reflect our anxieties, they are emotional responses to conflicts and tensions that are very real to us. We would no doubt agree that we would never do something that "we did" in a dream. Dreams are not real in this sense but this does not mean that they should be ignored. Your dreams may reveal what you have not been willing to admit in your conscious mind.

Our young woman's imagination reveals the priority of the relationship when you are in love. You might have a very good life, one that you have been content with for many years, and then you fall in love and there is some trouble between you and your lover. Now, everything that is so good in your life, everything that has brought you contentment and peace, means nothing. You cannot have contentment and there will be no peace in your heart until things are right between you and your lover. In the abject misery of this kind of suffering, nothing seems unreasonable if it can achieve the resolution of the issue, if it can bring you and your lover back together again.

Davis points out that the language of the woman as she describes her lover is very unusual, "him whom my soul loves." Imagine asking a policeman, "Have you seen him whom my soul loves?" She sees the "soul" love as a deliberate means of turning the conversation to the One whom our soul is intended to love along with all our heart and mind and strength.

If there is one common experience that unifies us in this modern world it might be discontentment. Our consumer culture depends on it. We are pitched relentlessly that the answer to our sleeplessness is just a better mattress or pillow, to our pain is just a better pill or cream, to our self esteem is just more money, a fancier car or a bigger house or addressing the deficiencies of being overweight, having too many wrinkles, not enough hair, or crooked teeth. But, if you are able to achieve "the perfect life" will you find contentment?

Could we be looking in the wrong place for the answer to our problem? Augustine would have adapted well to our consumer culture. He tried it all but failed miserably. He "had everything" and it didn't matter until he found his lover, "Thou has made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in Thee."