

Song of Solomon 5:9-6:3

Song of Solomon 5:8,9 I beg you, sisters in Jerusalem - if you find my lover, please tell him that I want him, that I'm heartsick with love for him.

What's so great about your lover, fair lady? What's so special about him that you beg for our help? (The Message)

In the previous poem, the couple became separated when she did not respond to his knock on the door, then when she did respond, he was gone and she searched the city streets for him but could not find him and then was beaten by the guards. The poem ends with her appeal to her sisters in Jerusalem to "if you find my lover," then "tell him... that I'm heartsick with love for him." Our passage today picks up this story as the sisters in Jerusalem ask, "What's so great about your lover, fair lady? What's so special about him that you beg for our help?"

This scenario should be all too familiar to us. If a couple is in the middle of a spiff and either party complains or seeks sympathy from friends or family, what would be the likely response? Can't you hear the family members say to the young woman, "I don't get what you see in the fellow anyway. He's

just a waste of your time. You should just let him go and be rid of all the misery he brings into your life. And the young woman would answer, "But I love him and he's not like what you are saying. He's really a good man and I'm ok and then, before you know it, they've made up and it's like their crisis never happened. This appears to be exactly what the couple here in the Song experience. The young woman in the Song is not seeking counsel, advice, or even help in finding her man. She seeks support for her relationship and empathy for her suffering. Nothing can change her mind about her young man. She is in love. Her description of his attributes is idealistic. Truly, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Now we turn to our spiritual application. In the Song, the skepticism of her friends is the occasion for her re-examination of her feelings for her man. Even though she is distraught and frustrated by their separation and by her inability to reach him, in her heart, nothing has changed. When she attempts to describe the kind of man he is then she is soon waxing eloquently about him.

There are also interruptions that occur in our walk with the Lord. We do not always understand what God is doing especially

when life experience is disappointing. We might cry out to God expecting an immediate explanation and instead these urgent prayers are answered with silence. Where is God? and, Why has He forgotten me? is a too common mantra. Classically, this experience has been called the "dark night of the soul." Is the answer to walk away and to forget this God who is no longer reliable and who is guilty of setting us up for such a great disappointment?

But the lover of God, after a while, will begin to remember what He is really like. The ancient Rabbi Akiba saw in our passage an all too familiar story. "All the nations of the world came to Israel to ask the question posed by the daughters of Jerusalem. "What is so special about your beloved, your God, that you are ready even to suffer and to die for Him? Thus the nations try to seduce Israel way from their God, 'You are attractive and strong, come intermingle with us.' Israel can hardly believe they are so obtuse: Do you know Him? We will tell you just a little bit of His praise. 'My dear lover glows with health, red-blooded, radiant! He's one in a million. There's no one quite like Him. My golden one pure and untarnished...' It was Akiba who regarded the Song as the Holy of Holies of the Scriptures.