

My Beloved

Often we do not quite know what to do with some parts of the Bible. The wisdom literature containing Proverbs and Song of Songs are two of those books that can cause embarrassed giggles and nervousness around whether this language of passionate love is really appropriate for reflecting on in church. Song of Songs is a beautiful poetic celebration of all that is good about human sexuality and stands in its own right and is an expression of human experience we rarely see in our media or the latest soap opera. But traditionally this poem has also been interpreted by the church as a poem about the relationship between Christ and us as disciples. Here I have deliberately used the image of Christ as lover and touched on the embarrassment and pain that is part of the risk of loving another intimately.

The voice of my beloved!
The voice of my beloved calls
The voice of my beloved calls to us
Arise, my love,
come, gather at my table
gather at my table of remembrance
gather at my table of celebration
gather at my table of community.

And embarrassed,
we mumble our excuses.

The eyes of my beloved!
The eyes of my beloved seek
The eyes of my beloved seek us out
Arise, my love,
come, meet with my friends
meet those who have gone before you
meet those who in the here and now
meet those who are yet to be.

And ashamed,
we turn our eyes away.

The hands of my beloved!
The hands of my beloved caress
The hands of my beloved caress our skin
Arise, my love,
come, touch
touch my hands scared by nails
touch one another's scars
touch the scars of the world.

And fearful,
we withdraw into ourselves.

The voice of my beloved cries out in anguish
The eyes of my beloved stream tears of abandonment
The hands of my beloved sear with pain

Look in the mirror,
look in the mirror of the cross
I know your embarrassment
I know your shame
I know your fear.

And hesitatingly,
we look at ourselves.

The voice of my beloved breaks the dawn
The eyes of my beloved squint in the sunlight
The hands of my beloved reach to embrace us
Look in the mirror,
look in the mirror of the empty tomb
Hear the beauty in your voice
See the beauty in your face
Touch the beauty of your skin.

And expectantly,
we look into the face of Christ.

And so our beloved calls to each of us
as we take our seats at the table
and meet each other's eyes
This is my body,
This is my blood
Taste the bread that is broken
Taste the wine that is poured out
Taste communion with one another.

[share bread and wine]

The voice of our beloved!
The voice of our beloved sends
The voice of our beloved sends us out
for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone
our labours put forth their fruits
our dreams begin to blossom
and heaven is glimpsed in our land.

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