

“The Little Foxes that Spoil the Vine”

Song of Solomon 2:15

Introduction:

1. The Song of Solomon is a very unusual book.
 - a. It is difficult. Most of us have to read it from beginning to end (repeatedly) before we begin to grasp its message. Consequently, it is one of the most ignored books of the Bible.
 - b. It is total poetry – from beginning to end. The only book that is.
 - c. It involves conversation from beginning to end – often jumping from one speaker to another, with little or no explanation for the shifting scenes and actors.
 - d. It is never quoted in the New Testament.
2. There are conflicting views as to the meaning of the book, and the approaches people take in their study of it.
 - a. The typical approach – making the story a mystical portrayal of the love between Christ, the Bridegroom, and the church, His bride.
 - b. The allegorical approach – making the “*beloved*” of The Song refer to the Lord, and His bride refer to the nation of Israel.
 - c. The Literal or Historical approach – acknowledging that this is a beautiful expression of pure human love – a poetic record of Solomon’s actual romance with a Shulamite (6:13) woman.
 - (1) For the record, there is nothing in the Song itself that suggests that either Israel (then), or the church (now) is being considered.
 - (2) The literal approach in this case makes good sense because marriage is of God (Gen. 2:23-24), sex in marriage is of God (Gen. 1:27-28), and it is holy and pure in its God-appointed place
3. The main characters in this book.
 - a. Solomon, 1:1,5; 7,9, etc.
 - b. The Shulamite woman, 6:13.
 - c. The Shulamite’s brothers, 8:8.
 - d. The daughters of Jerusalem, 2:7.
4. The Song is arranged like scenes in a one-act drama with three main speakers – Solomon, the Shulamite woman, the daughters of Jerusalem.
5. In our text, 2:15, there is some difficulty in determining which of the persons alluded to spoke these words; however, the immediate context would imply that they were spoken by the bride, the Shulamite woman; such language would be in keeping with her experience as a keeper of the vineyard, and to the importance of watching out for those little foxes which would spoil the vine.
 - a. Foxes, or little jackals, were very numerous in Palestine.
 - b. It was important to clear the vineyards of predators which would spoil the vine; applied figuratively, it was important to remove the “*little foxes*” that could spoil her relationship with Solomon who called her “*my spouse*,” 4:9,10,11,12; 5:1. Contextually, “*little foxes*” is an expression used figuratively, and this is the way we are using the term in this lesson.

Discussion:

- I. **It is amazing how many of the animals of the “lower creation” have been used to teach men needed lessons.**
 - A. Note some of these animals.
 1. The ox and the donkey, Isa. 1:3.
 - a. It was no compliment for the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem to be unfavorably compared to these animals.
 2. The horse and the mule, Psalm 32:9.
 3. Ants, conies, locusts, spiders, Prov. 30:24-28; 6:6-8.
 - B. In Song of Solomon, 2:15, he referred to “*little foxes that spoil the vines.*”
 1. They must be removed, or else the vines will be destroyed.
 2. By way of application, he is saying “rid us of the little sins that destroy our chances of bearing fruit.”
 - a. We have no problem in taking issue with “big sins,” such as murder, fornication, drunkenness, stealing, robbery, etc.
 - b. But it is the “little sins,” as they are perceived to be, that often poses a greater threat to our marriages, and our relationship in the local church.
- II. **Little Foxes which can destroy marriages.**

- A. Nagging, and constant complaining.
 1. Such is a violation of the golden rule, Matt. 7:12.
 2. Such reflects a lack of appreciation for the good things of life, I Thess. 5:17-18.
- B. Laziness.
 1. There's no such thing as a "lazy Christian;" such is a contradiction of terms. A true Christian keeps busy! 2 Thess. 3:10.
 2. A good husband tries to be a good provider, I Tim. 5:8; a good wife "*eateth not the bread of idleness,*" Prov. 31:27.
- C. "White lies."
 1. A lie is a lie! The Bible does not color code lies. Eph. 4:25; Rev. 21:8.
 2. Yet there are times when some husbands and wives are not perfectly honest with each other; they exaggerate and stretch the truth; ultimately their mate begins to distrust them, and the marriage is in trouble!
- D. Temper!
 1. Reflected in shouting, temper tantrums, uncontrolled tongues. Eph. 4:26; Prov. 16:32; I Cor. 13:4-5.
- E. Selfishness.
 1. Reflected in the tendency to buy what they cannot afford. Col. 3:5; Rom. 13:8.
 2. Many marriages remain intact until "debt do them part."

III. Little Foxes Which can Destroy Local churches.

- A. Envy and Jealousy (these "foxes" tend to run in pairs).
 1. Gal. 5:19-21; I Sam. 18:9; Prov. 6:34; James 3:16
- B. Pride.
 1. Prov. 6:17; 16:18; 29:23; James 4:6; I Peter 5:5.
 2. One who is proud of heart resents being corrected, even when he knows he is wrong.
- C. Grudge Holding.
 1. God wants us to be a forgiving people! Eph. 4:32, Matt. 6:12; Luke 23:34.
 2. Illus. Two boys who grew up in Irvine, KY.
- D. Favoritism.
 1. I Tim. 5:21; James 3:17.
 2. The disposition to see no evil in our friends, and no good in those who have wronged, or differed with us.
- E. Diotrepheism.
 1. 3 John 9. The love of pre-eminence, the determination to take control.
 2. Which is often evidenced when one does not get his own way in the church
 3. We should have the attitude of Jesus! John 4:34; 6:38; Matt. 26:39.

Conclusion:

1. Illus. The new preacher in town, who caught the bus, and was given a quarter too much in change.
2. Illus. How many of us have been bitten by a lion? How many of us have been bitten by a mosquito?
3. Generally, what does us in (in both the home and the church) is not the big things; it's the little things; it's the "*little foxes that spoil the vine.*" We must be careful in both our attitude and our conduct, "*for our vines have tender grapes.*"

--Bobby Witherington, May 17, 2015