

**Trinity - 15 July 2018**  
**Reading: SS 5:2-8 & 1 Co 6:7-11**  
**'Broken Sex'**

### Introduction

- Fourth sermon in five-part series on SS, 'The Good News About Love.'
- Recap where been so far:
  - First week introduced book and saw what had to teach about *true romance*: promise-keeping love finds origin in God ('flame of Yah') and points to God.
  - Second week, learned about *good sex*: sex good gift of God who loves all that made, and will one day redeem in new creation, including all trust in Jesus.
  - Last week saw that *sex for marriage*: sex fuel God given to power marriages, so great within marriage, but only for marriage.
- But today focussing on darker reality: though sex good, this side of fall also broken. Now, sex can be weapon, way of hurting people not serving. May have experienced self, either as one been hurt or done hurting. *How today going to help?* How hearing SS - love song - going to help, been hurt by sex, or hurt others, or both?
- More than think. For all dreaminess of couple in *Song*, also know about brokenness of sex and willing to share experiences. Not only that, willing to point towards one can put sexually broken people back together again. Let's get into.

### Broken sex

- SS very positive about sex, but also not naïve. Knows that sin turned sex into cause of pain as well as joy. Three times, hints at ways may be case. Sex can be arena for *contempt, control, and violence*. Will look at each in turn.
- *Contempt*
  - **1:5-6a** *'Dark am I, yet lovely, daughters of Jerusalem, dark like the tents of Kedar, like the tent curtains of Solomon. Do not stare at me because I am dark, because I am darkened by the sun.'*
  - Woman lovely, but dark. In particular, darkened by sun, probably because has to work outside for living and hence not woman of high status. This has attracted attention of other women, 'daughters of Jerusalem': 'stare' at her, and not in good way, as asks not to do it. In short, *this is woman being judged on how looks*. Can just hear women's assessment of: 'Pretty but trashy.' How contemporary criticism sounds. How many women face constant judgment of bodies and what supposedly say about, often most scathingly from other women!? In brief scene, SS hints, this side of fall, beauty not just something will attract praise and desire, but can also bring jealousy, judgmentalism + contempt. That part of brokenness of sex.
- *Control*
  - **1:6b** *'My mother's sons were angry with me and made me take care of the vineyards; my own vineyard I had to neglect.'*
  - This bit of trickier one. Building on idea of woman working outdoors, image of brothers ('mother's sons') working so hard on vineyards that can't even look after own vineyard. What that mean? What own 'vineyard'? In context, probably her own body. **8:10-12** *'I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers. Thus I have become in his eyes like one bringing contentment. Solomon had a vineyard in Baal Hamon; he let out his vineyard to tenants. Each was to bring for its fruit a thousand shekels of silver. But my own vineyard is mine to*

*give; the thousand shekels are for you, Solomon, and two hundred are for those who tend its fruit.* Woman already been compared to 'locked garden' (5:2), so when describes self as 'wall, and breasts like towers', makes think again of walled garden/vineyard, of which body boundary. Then compares self to Solomon. Bit of context here helpful: Solomon bit of ladies' man. 1 Ki 11 says had 700 wives + 300 mistresses! So, when woman already started talking about bodies as gardens starts saying Solomon rented vineyard out to multiple tenants, get drift of what saying! But by contrast: **8:12** *'My own vineyard is mine to give; the thousand shekels are for you Solomon, and two hundred are for those who tend its fruit.'* I.e. 'Solomon, can do what like with own body, but as for me, I decide who give to, and won't be. Can keep rent.' In other words, woman has control of own body and who gives to in sex.

- Yet, in 1:6, not in control of own body. Brothers so in control of life, working so hard in vineyards, can't even look after own vineyard, i.e. body, and who might give to. *Control of woman's body - and, in particular, control of by men - another sign to woman of brokenness of sex.*
- **App - What got to do with, and in particular men? Probably not taking sisters as slaves in vineyards! But can all fall foul of male temptation to treat women as *objects*, things to be *controlled*. One of obvious ways can do this porn.**
- **Porn always about control of women.** Ill - Oscar Wilde, *'Everything in the world is about sex except sex. Sex is about power.'* V. **cynical view, but when comes to porn not be truer. Porn about men controlling women to use for sexual gratification. As result, porn terrible for women.**
  - **Terrible for women in it.** In recent survey of 300 top porn titles, found that **49% of scenes involved verbal aggression against a woman + 88% physical aggression.** Porn actresses more likely to get STI, be addicted to drugs, suffer domestic violence or get divorce, not just than regular actresses but male porn stars.
  - **Terrible for women in relationships with boys and men watch.** In recent study, found that men watch porn increasingly expect partners to engage in fringe sexual activities as though normal, because porn conditioning to think normal. This really hurtful to women who generally don't want to do things but feel should because what now expected. Porn terrible for women near it.
- **So, can plead with you: if man and using porn, please stop using. Hurts women in. Hurts women near you. Turns people made in image of God into objects to be used + controlled. Hurts you, as gets addictive hooks into more and more. But can be free. Come + talk. 'Captured by Better Vision.'** But whatever do, don't just keep going as are, as will only lead to more hurt and brokenness, on all sides.
- **Violence**
  - **5:7.** Woman beaten, bruised and stripped by city guards. Fact stripped her implies some level of sexual assault going on. Should note: assault happens in dream sequence, not real life, so this probably represents more woman's sexual anxiety than actual assault suffered. But implication same: threat of sexual violence real fear for woman, even in idealised, SS world; how much more for rest of us, especially woman, in real world!
  - **App -**

- **Sexual abuse epidemic in country.**
  - One in five women in Australia been sexual assaulted (as compared to one in twenty for men) and one in six been stalked. In 2016, police recorded, on average, 52 sexual assaults each day against women and 11 against men.
  - If young, indigenous, separated woman, or woman with disability chances of being sexually assaulted only go up.
  - Tragically person most likely to assault person someone close to, i.e. partner or family member.
  - Huge impact. Sexual/domestic violence leading cause of homelessness among women + children. Big impact on health. Even impact on economy: 2015-2016, financial cost of sexual and domestic violence against women and children in Australia estimated at \$22 billion.
- **What to do?**
  - **If woman, get help!**
    - Such shame surrounding sexual abuse, especially if happening at home, women often don't tell. But not fault! Only one person responsible for sexual abuse, perpetrator. If someone abusing, not your fault, theirs.
    - So tell someone. Remember: sexual abuse not just rape but any unwanted sexual contact, including coercive sex. Wickedly, some used Bible to defend this kind of abuse, e.g. passage looked at briefly last Sunday, 1 Co 7:3-4 *'The husband should fulfil his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife.'* **Some read that - especially bit about wife not having authority over own body but yielding to her husband - as license for sex-on-demand. But not. Complete perversion of passage. 7:3 doesn't say 'claim marital rights from spouse' but 'fulfil marital duties to spouse.'** 7:4 doesn't tell spouses to *take* authority over other's body, but to *yield* authority over own. Verses about what to do with own body, not what can tell others to do with theirs. As such, should never be used for coercion. So, if woman in situation, get help. Church. Insert.
  - **If man, stop it!**
    - Lots of excuses:
      - Denying: 'Wasn't being abusive.'
      - Minimising: 'Wasn't that bad, being blown out of proportion'
      - Blaming: 'If gave sex wanted, wouldn't have to take.'

- **No: sinful. Doing exactly what Ge 3 says men will do as result of fall - dominate by force. So stop.**
- **But also, get help. Often huge shame for sexual abusers. So, get help. Bring shame into open. Satan wants to keep secret so can grow and fester and destroy you and those around. So, talk to someone. Church. Insert.**

### Redeeming sex

- Because good news is, even though sex in our world not perfect - is broken in some respects - not how story ends. Rather, ends with God sending Jesus to deal with all our brokenness on cross, including sexual brokenness.
- On cross, Jesus took punishment for *all* sins of world - not just M-rated ones but X-rated ones - so could be forgiven. On cross, God did not censor judgement: no filter on wrath that only punished for *most of* sins but left most depraved ones to still be paid for by us. No, Jesus paid price for *all* sins, no matter how degrading.
- But cost. Cross utterly debased Jesus. Php 2:8 says cross 'humbled' Jesus. Heb 12:2 says cross 'shame'. Heb 13:13 says 'disgraced.' On cross, Christ utterly humiliated: stripped naked, flogged, nailed, and left to hang in public until died. And had wrath of Father poured out on, so didn't have to face.
- **App -**
  - **Good news if someone been hurt by sex (judged, objectified, abused).**
    - **Means God *identifies* with: *knows* shame sin brings because felt shame self, on cross.**
    - **Means God will *vindicate*; sins suffered will be punished. One of great fears of victims of sexual sin: *offenders will get away with*. But won't: no one does, with cross. All sin will be paid for: either in own body, if don't repent, or in Jesus' body, if do.**
    - **Means can move toward *forgiveness*, because know not getting off scot-free. Rather, God has seen sin, condemned, and offered forgiveness if will accept. Means can do same.**
  - **Good news if someone hurt others with sex.**
    - **1 Co 6:9-11 list of sinners won't inherit kingdom of God. Of nine sins listed, three of sexual. But then listen to what says 1 Co 6:11 'And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.' Note how puts: 'what some of were.' Were adulterers or sexually immoral but this no longer what defines. What defines fact been forgiven by Jesus.**
    - **That means no sin done can't be put in past by God. Feel burden of guilt and shame? Can have release. Ask for forgiveness + for power to stop judging, objectifying + abusing other people, and will give. That promise of gospel.**
- Let's pray.