**Sunday, November 29th, 2020**

**Song of Songs 2:16**

Remember your love notes of young romance?

Think about it.

Flip back through the scrapbook of your heart.

You thought he was the only one.

You knew she was the reason for creation.

And with youthful passion, you expressed your love:

“I will love you forever.”

Song of Solomon describes a relationship between a bride and groom.

It is a beautiful record of the love a man and woman can feel for each other.

It is a poem, actually a series of poems, about love the way it is meant to be.

And it is unlike anything in the Bible.

Don't try to take it literally.

Don't search for hidden codes or submerged messages.

Love letters are to be appreciated, not analyzed.

For that reason, it should be read differently than any other book in the Bible.

Two main problems make it difficult for us to read and understand this book.

One is the poetic imagery.

No modern lover would say: “Your hair is like a flock of goats.”

          Or “Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon.”

          Or “Your neck is like David's tower.”

While some images are appealing: “His intention toward me was love.”

          Or “Love is as strong as death.”

The majority of the book's metaphors sound strange to our ears.

Remember these words were not written for us.

We are opening someone else's shoebox of letters

          and reading the correspondence between two people madly in love.

Another problem is that the story of their love is hard to follow.

One part doesn't seem connected to the next.

Think of it more as a series of snapshots of a couple in love –

          snapshots not necessarily in order.

Put together in one photo album,

          they show the profound feelings of newly married lovers.

Although Song of Solomon is primarily about love on the human level,

          many have read it as a book about God's love.

This was probably not the author's original intent,

          but it is a legitimate and inspiring way to look it.

This short book presents a love so rich, so full, so unashamed, so joyful,

          it is natural to think of God and his love for us.

Love is very important to God.

After all, love was God's idea.

As we begin the season of Advent, we remember God's great love for us,

          and the wonderful gift he gave us at Christmas.

God's love for us is not dependent on how we look, how we think,

          how we act, or how perfect we are.

His love is absolutely nonnegotiable and nonreturnable.

Ours is a faithful and loving God.

No matter what we do, no matter how far we fall,

          no matter how sinful we have become,

          God has a relentless, undying, unfathomable, unquenchable love

          from which we cannot ever be separated.

Throughout the Bible we discover God's amazing, undying love for us.

Over and over, He reminds us: "You will be my people and I will be your God."

God tells us over and over to:

Love one another.

Love our neighbor.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart .

And He means it, it is important to Him for us to love each other.

Perhaps God knew we needed a reminder that love was his idea.

The love God wants us to have for each other is not a casual love.

It is meant to be as passionate

          as the love Solomon and his bride had for each other.

It is not meant to be a casual love once in a while,

          but a love which encourages one another,

          builds one another up,

          really notices our neighbor,

          and makes a difference.

He urges us to love with our whole heart.

But most important He wants us to love Him as He loves us.

Because He is our God,

          and we are his people.

AMEN