

**Wisdom**  
***Song of Solomon 2:8-13***

<sup>8</sup> The voice of my beloved!

Look, he comes,  
leaping upon the mountains,  
bounding over the hills.

<sup>9</sup> My beloved is like a gazelle  
or a young stag.

Look, there he stands  
behind our wall,  
gazing in at the windows,  
looking through the lattice.

<sup>10</sup> My beloved speaks and says to me:  
'Arise, my love, my fair one,  
and come away;

<sup>11</sup> for now the winter is past,  
the rain is over and gone.

<sup>12</sup> The flowers appear on the earth;  
the time of singing has come,  
and the voice of the turtle-dove  
is heard in our land.

<sup>13</sup> The fig tree puts forth its figs,  
and the vines are in blossom;  
they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one,  
and come away.

**Epistle**  
***James 1:17-27***

<sup>17</sup> Every generous act of giving,  
with every perfect gift,  
is from above,  
coming down from the Father of lights,  
with whom there is no variation  
or shadow due to change.

<sup>18</sup> In fulfilment  
of his own purpose  
he gave us birth  
by the word of truth,  
so that we would become  
a kind of first fruits  
of his creatures.

<sup>19</sup> You must understand this,  
my beloved:  
let everyone be  
quick to listen,  
slow to speak,  
slow to anger;

<sup>20</sup> for your anger  
does not produce  
God's righteousness.

<sup>21</sup> Therefore rid yourselves  
of all sordidness  
and rank growth of wickedness,  
and welcome with meekness  
the implanted word  
that has the power to save your souls.

22 But be doers of the word,  
and not merely hearers  
who deceive themselves.

<sup>23</sup>For if any are hearers of the word  
and not doers,  
they are like those  
who look at themselves  
in a mirror;

<sup>24</sup>for they look at themselves  
and, on going away,  
immediately forget  
what they were like.

<sup>25</sup>But those who look  
into the perfect law,  
the law of liberty,  
and persevere,  
being not hearers who forget  
but doers who act—  
they will be blessed  
in their doing.

26 If any think they are religious,  
and do not bridle their tongues  
but deceive their hearts,  
their religion is worthless.

<sup>27</sup>Religion that is pure and undefiled  
before God, the Father,  
is this:  
to care for orphans and widows  
in their distress,  
and to keep oneself unstained  
by the world.

**Gospel**  
**Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23**

Now when the Pharisees  
and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem  
gathered around him,  
<sup>2</sup>they noticed that some of his disciples  
were eating with defiled hands,  
that is, without washing them.

<sup>3</sup>(For the Pharisees, and all the Judeans,  
do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands,  
thus observing the tradition of the elders;

<sup>4</sup>and they do not eat anything from the market  
unless they wash it;

and there are also many other traditions that they observe,  
the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.)

<sup>5</sup>So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him,  
'Why do your disciples not live  
according to the tradition of the elders,  
but eat with defiled hands?'

<sup>6</sup>He said to them,  
'Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites,  
as it is written,

"This people honours me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me;

<sup>7</sup>in vain do they worship me,  
teaching human precepts as doctrines."

<sup>8</sup>You abandon the commandment of God  
and hold to human tradition.'

<sup>9</sup>Then he said to them,  
'You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God  
in order to keep your tradition!'

<sup>10</sup>For Moses said,

*"Honour your father and your mother";  
and, "Whoever speaks evil of father or mother  
must surely die."*

<sup>11</sup>*But you say that if anyone tells father or mother,  
"Whatever support you might have had from me is Corban"  
(that is, an offering to God)—*

<sup>12</sup>*then you no longer permit doing anything  
for a father or mother,*

<sup>13</sup>*thus making void the word of God  
through your tradition that you have handed on.  
And you do many things like this.'*

14 Then he called the crowd again and said to them,  
'Listen to me, all of you, and understand:

<sup>15</sup>there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile,  
but the things that come out are what defile.'

### ***[16 Let anyone with ears, listen]***

<sup>17</sup>*When he had left the crowd and entered the house,  
his disciples asked him about the parable.*

<sup>18</sup>*He said to them,*

*'Then do you also fail to understand?*

*Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside  
cannot defile, <sup>19</sup>since it enters,  
not the heart but the stomach,  
and goes out into the sewer?'*

*(Thus he declared all foods clean.)*

<sup>20</sup>*And he said,*

*'It is what comes out of a person that defiles.*

<sup>21</sup>For it is from within, from the human heart,  
that evil intentions come:  
fornication, theft, murder, <sup>22</sup>adultery, avarice, wickedness,  
deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly.

<sup>23</sup>All these evil things come from within,  
and they defile a person.'

## **Reading Wisdom this Week**

The RCL turns from Former Prophets to Wisdom  
Selections from Megillot festival scrolls in Ketuvim/Writings  
This one is traditionally read at Passover

Is this erotic literature, or metaphoric Kabbalistic code?  
Is it a celebration of carnal, physical, embodied love,  
Or an instruction on spiritual devotion disembodied?

This bit presents as a woman recalling a visit from her beloved  
She 'the rose of Sharon', the 'lily of the valley' –  
Do read at least the whole chapter, eh?

I've long avoided this one –

Here's a link from Lent 2023, my last swat at it:

<http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2023/03/ruth-esther-song-of-songs-sex-sells.html?q=%22song+of+songs%22>

## **Reading the Epistle this Week**

The RCL turns from Ephesians to James  
If Song was too metaphysical for some in the canon  
James was too blunt and practical, 'works righteousness'

The last thing I posted on James was Lent 2023:

<http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2023/05/james-walking-walk.html>

This link to a 2019 post suffered 'bit-rot' on the audio:  
<http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2019/02/tuesday-wk-7-james-1.html?q=%22Corresponding+Christians%22>

## **Reading the Gospel this Week**

The RCL turns back to Mark in Year B, leaving John 6  
Opposition from Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem  
Focused on keeping kosher, while Jesus' disciples aren't

My red flag, as usual, is anti-Jewish tropes in our reading  
Caricaturing observant behaviour, in favor of licence

Mark 7 links:

"Jesus the Unemployed" starting a series in 2006:

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2006/09/jesus-unemployed-jas1-mark7.html?q=Jesus+the+unemployed>

By 2018, had I learned anything for a new context?

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2018/08/walk-talk.html?q=Jesus+the+unemployed>

Anyhow, thank Thom and thank God,

I am opening Zoom links for study

on Tuesday 11am

and Thursday 7pm

but I'm taking this Sunday off from preaching!