

## Learning Together 5<sup>th</sup> After Pentecost Covid-19 – Rebecca and Romance

Did you know the Bible has stories and poems about romantic love in it? Usually, when we talk about love in the Bible, we talk about how much God loves us and how we are commanded to love one another by being kind and fair in our lives together. This kind of love is very important. But we don't often talk about the kind of love that we see in the movies or in fairytales, with kissing and weddings and all that sort of romantic stuff. Those stories are important, too. Falling in love is part of being human, and being human is what God created us to be.

One great romantic tale from the Bible is the story of Rebecca and Isaac. Isaac was Sarah and Abraham's son, who they had when they were very old. Isaac was still a young man when his mother died, and he was very sad. Abraham decided to send out his servant to find a wife for Isaac to cheer them all up, because in those days, your family was responsible for finding a person for you to marry, not you. It seems strange to us here in Canada now, but that was the way things were back then.

The servant took some camels to ride and travelled to a place where some friends and family of Abraham lived, where he knew there would be some friendly people. He was very worried about finding the right woman to be Isaac's wife, so he prayed to God and asked for a sign. The sign he asked for was that when he went to the well, he would ask any young women he found there to give him a drink of water. The right woman would be the one who not only gave him a drink of water, but also offered, without being asked, to get water for his camels, too. I wonder if he thought someone who cared about animals would have a kind heart and would be a good match for Isaac?

The first woman to come to the well when he got there was Rebecca. And what do you suppose happened? You guessed it! He asked for a drink of water and not only did she give him one but she made sure all his camels got a drink, too. The servant thanked God for the sign, gave Rebecca a gift of jewelry and told her and her family who he was and why he had come. The family asked Rebecca if she wanted to go with him to be Isaac's wife, and she said yes. When they arrived back at the place Isaac lived, it was love at first sight! He gave her his mother Sarah's tent to be her own, and Rebecca brought joy back into Isaac's life as his wife.

There are other stories of romantic love in the Bible, too – Abraham and Sarah, and Jacob and Rachel are two other famous ones. But did you know there was also romantic poetry? The Song of Solomon, often called the Song of Songs, is a whole collection of romantic poems. See if you can imagine the things this one talks about as I read it:

My beloved speaks and says to me:  
"Arise, my love, my fair one,  
and come away;

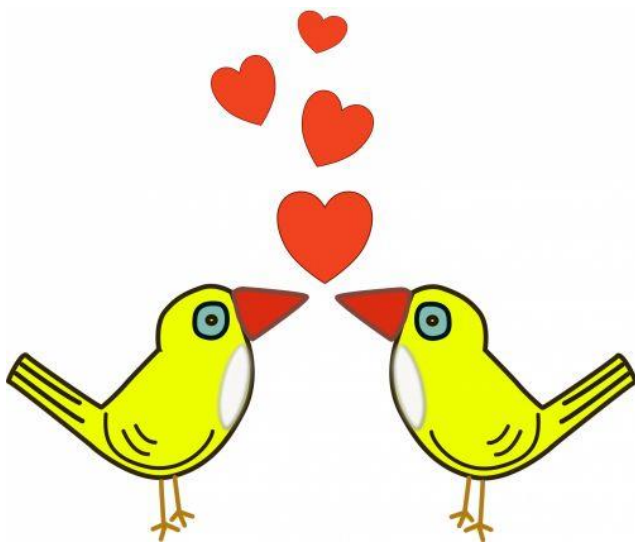
for now the winter is past,  
the rain is over and gone.  
The flowers appear on the earth;  
the time of singing has come,  
and the voice of the turtledove  
is heard in our land.  
The fig tree puts forth its figs,  
and the vines are in blossom;  
they give forth fragrance.  
Arise, my love, my fair one,  
and come away.

The Song of Solomon reminds us that God values all kinds of human love, including romantic love.

My challenge to you this week is to find out about a love story in your circle of friends and family. Find two people you know who are married or have been in a long-term relationship and ask them the story of how they met. How did they make the decision to commit to each other and what is the story of that commitment? Did they have a wedding? Are there other important things that they have shared together? What is the story of their romantic love for each other?

Say this echo prayer with me:

Loving God...thank you for love...romantic love...love of friends and family...and the love you have for us...and we have for you....Help us to remember...our stories of love...especially the love...shown in Jesus....We pray in his name...Amen



*graphic from Needpix.com*