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A Call to Remember Love

By The Rev. Susan D. Parsons

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 (also called Song of Songs) 2:10-13.

In the midst of a global pandemic, in a nation laboring to find common ground, with millions of people financially, physically, and emotionally drained, a sensual scripture reading about love may seem a tad out of step, even so close to St. Valentine's Day. "Read the room," gentle readers might be thinking. But maybe this is just what we need at this moment – a reminder of what we still carry within us, what love can be like.

This idea came to me while staring at the 10-foot, metal ladder which is, at the moment, in my living room leaning against a wall. I would put it away if it had a place, but there's no real good place to store it. So, it floats about the house, most often landing in the extra bedroom. Getting rid of it would mean surrendering the high ledges and niches in the house to spider webs and dust, something I just can't do.

And most importantly, the ladder reminds me of love; unabashed, delightful love because scribbled all over it – in bright blue marker – are tiny hearts and words of love written to me by my grandkids one day when I wasn't paying attention. The ladder is a love poem to me. It's a delight, a comfort, and a treasure. It's a call to remember love.

That call to remember love is a good thing. Throughout the Bible, God calls us to love – to love others, love creation, love ourselves, and love God as much as God loves us.

The poetry in the Song of Songs is a passionate call to love. Who the lover and the beloved are remain a debate among scholars. Their uncertainty leaves us free to hear these lush poems in whatever life-giving way we wish. Perhaps they are allegories of the love between God and humanity; maybe they speak of the love between two people who are falling in love; or maybe they are like the ladder in my living room – the reminder to love all people and all creation, with abandon and passion.

Ahh, but there is a catch. We know love is not always easy. Some people are immensely difficult to love. Love is more than a warm, delightful feeling – it is also hard work. When we hear God wants us to "love our enemies" or the stranger, we have to remember we're not being asked to have a "feeling" about them, we're expected to work at finding God in them.

The reward for our effort may not always be apparent, but it does make the love between ourselves and those beloved people in our lives sweeter and more joyous. And it allows us to hear more clearly how God is calling *us* with words of love.

This is a moment when we need to think of what love can be. Love brings its joy and delights that are so much more than the challenges. God is calling to *us* with words of love.

This [song](#) may help us reflect on that call to remember love.