

“Exploring the Song of Songs: An InterPlay Sermon” with Kate Amoss

August 30, 2015



Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Song of Songs has a different spirit from any other biblical passage. Neither historical nor instructive, it is, instead, a glorious celebration of human love and desire. While scholars do not agree on the authorship of the Song of Songs, they mostly agree that it echoes the ancient love poems of the sacred marriage between Inanna, the Sumerian mother-goddess, and Dumuzi, the Sumerian harvest god. The text contains elements of some of the very earliest written records of civilization. It gives some clues to our human awareness in a time before language had come to shape our consciousness so strongly.

I explored this text using an InterPlay form called a DT3. This is an abbreviation for dancing, talking, dancing, talking, dancing, talking. I let the words emerge from my movements. I found myself drawn to talk about my father's recent passing and the renewal that the city of New Orleans has experienced since Katrina. I also spoke of our summer theme of certainty. Is certainty always missing the point? I wonder if trying to find certainty in fixed words is how we miss the point. There can be no certainty in our conceptual understanding of the words: God, Truth, Heaven, Perfection, and

Hope. However, in the final stanzas of our text today we are reminded that spring always follows winter: "the flowers appear on the earth and the time of singing has come." Perhaps we can find some certainty in the natural rhythms of the earth. Our trust is not grounded in a fixed idea but in the great cycle of life and death.

I closed the sermon with a poem that was read at my father's service. Billy read it while I did a hand dance:

Aren't petals the most exquisite things? By Hollie Holden

And yet

If you try to hold onto

A handful of blossom,

Each one will turn to a withered memory

In your hand.

Whatever it is in you that wants to die,

Let life have its way.

Lie down in those petals and let them drink you in.

But do not hold onto them;

Do not deny them their right to

Return to the earth

And take part in

The great cycle of

Things

That

Cannot

Last.