

The Little Foxes that Spoil the Vine

Song of Songs|Song of Songs 2|2:15|25-2|2:15|25

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Scripture: Song of Solomon 2:15 "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vine, for our vines have tender grapes."

TITLE: WATCH OUT FOR THE LITTLE FOXES

I am thrilled and honored to bring this Sermon this morning. We have come a long way the past few months. The devil threw all he had at us last year. He came in like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He made as much noise as he possibly could. Yet, we have stood with the Help and Grace of God. There is a message that we need to hear and understand this morning as we march boldly into the battfield. We need to be careful and understand that the devil will begin to change his tactics and come against the Church. He has only departed for a season. I believe God would have us in position to understand what is still before us.

The fascinating love story in Solomon's song contains many intriguing pictures. One is of a beautiful vineyard in early spring. The vines, however, are threatened by little foxes that come in to eat the tender grapes before they are ripe. Thus comes the plea to capture ("take") the foxes and prevent them from spoiling the vineyard. An obvious spiritual application is to the subtle danger of so-called "little sins" that undermine a believer's love and service for his Lord. If it goes unchecked it gives the adversary just enough room to come in and destroy the vines.

Solomon calls to our attention that it is the little foxes that spoil the vine. This appears to be a warning to you and me. It is the little things in life that get us down -- minute - microscopic that commence to destruct our homes - destroy our relationships -- stagnate our local churches. Perhaps we spend necessary time praying and are prepared when Satan enters as a roaring Lion, we are equipped with our spiritual armour, we expect that - However, when Satan arrives as a Little Fox - little situation - we find we are not adequately prepared. I know that sounds like a Contradiction, but I encourage you to stay with me this morning.

These little foxes have a tremendous advantage. Not expected to have much Consequence - unglued - not expected to knock a marriage out of commission - not expected to end relationships - not expected to spiritually kill a church - We display the attitude that it is just a little/trivial thing. United Kingdom, British have a sport where they run around the countryside on horseback chasing and attempting to catch a Fox. They will ride all day long until they capture or give up.

The fox is a rather peculiar animal. It derives its name from its tendency to dig underground to settle in holes or burrows or to feast on grapevines. It is silent and solitary. It has an incredible sense of sight, smell, and hearing. It exhibits tremendous cleverness in going

after its prey. At times, it will actually play dead in order to attack a bird which is within its striking range. When hunted, it is very cunning, devious, and capable of misleading its pursuers with utmost skill. Resultantly, it has always been considered as an emblem of slyness - cunning - craftiness - mischief.

- Fox is Fast
- Fox is Slick
- Fox is Sneaky
- Sounds like I am describing some people in the.....
- Fox is Little
- Fox is Adorable
- Fox is Cute
- Because of its cuteness we don't take it seriously
- Decoy so we don't see how dangerous it really is
- Cunning more dangerous

We tend to underestimate the smaller things in life. The atom bomb was a small object yet brought the nation of Japan to surrender in just a few minutes. A flea is very small but enough of them can kill the largest dog. The termite is a very small insect, but it can destroy a three story house if ignored. Solomon warns of the "Little foxes". In this passage of Scripture we see the principle of little things. If we ignore the little things they will someday grow up and become "big things", and then they will present us a great problem.

- Children when little talk back - Cute
- Children when little use Bad Language - Cute
- Children when little Dance, Shake, Gyrate - Cute
- But one day they grow up and it's no longer Cute.....

The children of God generally do not fall into great and well known sins, but there are sins that we commit often, according to the Word of God. These sins are like little foxes which spoil the vine and our lives -- and we become fruitless. So the question arises, what are these sins?

Let's spend some time this morning identifying some of the Little Foxes that, if we are not careful, can creep into the Church. First Little Fox I want to identify is - DISCOURTESY. No longer teach children to be courteous - don't call anyone Sir or Ma'am any longer. Allow children and their friends to call parents by first name. Don't want to be called Mr. or Mrs. - removed that wall of respect. Want to be buddy or friend. What your child needs is not another friend - need a parent. I heard a Grandmother tell her son and wife when they gave birth to their first child, Grandmother said she did not want to be called a Grandmother and wants the child to call her honey - we willingly remove the boundaries of Respect.. Children now rude say whatever they want to adults - and don't you attempt to correct someone else's child. Children have the freedom to express. Parents introduce other adults to their children on first name basis. If I were discourteous, when I was coming up -- slapped until I heard the joy bells ringing.

Oftentimes we are even DISCOURTEOUS to one another in the Church. There is never a reason for us to be discourteous to one another in the church, no matter how upset we

might be with one another. When you are discourteous to me, it does not make me look bad, it makes you look bad and it has the potential to drive a wedge within the relationship, if both individuals are spiritually immature. The Bible challenges us ROMANS 15:1 "WE THAT ARE STRONG OUGHT TO BEAR THE INFIRMITIES OF THE WEAK, AND NOT PLEASE OURSELVES" When one person is discourteous, my prayer is that you recognize that you are strong in the Lord and don't allow the devil to hinder relationships within the church.

Husband and Wife no longer courteous. One mistake and foul language - LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS CHRIST LOVES THE CHURCH. Simply take one another for granite.

- Courting one another
- Open Door
- Buy Flowers
- No Longer have Courtship
- Raining outside husband run out to the car jump in start the car then hit the unlock button to let wife in vehicle
- First Five Letters in Courtship = COURT
- Head on Collision with the Courtroom

Another Little Fox I want to Shine Light on - PREOCCUPIED = We are just too busy, everything today is instant. We are always in a rush. Just throw a meal in the Microwave, nuke. Too busy to say Honey, I love you -- if we are too busy to say Honey I Love You, to whom we see everyday, too busy to fall down on bended knees saying Lord, I love you. Wife too busy, Husband, too busy -- Son -- Daughter too busy. Pay more attention to the family. Spend time together to find out what is going on. Don't pay enough attention, children can't go to college - can't read, parents never knew it. Drugs in our neighborhoods, babies having babies, somehow we were just too busy! Take time to raise our children in the way they should go.

Too PREOCCUPIED TO ATTEND CHURCH. We want to do Morning Worship and go home. Don't want to attend afternoon Worship, we are too busy.

- Ministries used to have Annual Days
- Now all ministries combine into one annual day a year
- Church Anniversary now every couple years
- Sure give a Pastor an Anniversary every year though
- Was a time we enjoyed being in the Church all day long

Let me identify another Little Fox - TELEVISION = Babysitter of our children. Television can cause our children to become desensitized. Television can glamorize violence and death. Children get mad tell them to read a book - first virtual reality:

- Too much TV - not enough Prayer Time
- Too much TV - not enough Study Time
- Too much TV - not enough Church Time
- Too much TV - not enough Deny Yourself Time
- Too much TV - not enough Revival Time
- Too much TV - not enough witnessing Time

Not suggesting that we get rid of the TV, just some of the programs that we watch. Jerry Springer will not edify our soul, neither will soap operas:

- Generic Hospital
- As Our Stomach Turns
- Days of Our Lies
- Some of us won't miss some soap operas and talk shows
- Local Evangelist on TV we quickly turn the station talking about their heart is not right
- What's so right about the heart of Jerry Springer or other Talk Show Hosts, and Soap Operas
- Heard young adult say the don't need to come to church every Sunday – watch Church on TV
- Bible says HEBREWS 10:25 - FORSAKE NOT THE ASSEMBLING OF THE SAINTS

++++Another Little Fox - NAGGING = Indoor Olympic Sport for Women -- husbands and daddy's they nag too! Stop nagging and take it to the source – take it to the Lord in Prayer. We can nag our Children to the point of provoking them. Continuously throw a past issue in their face, knowing it will stir them to anger, then we jump on them for having an attitude that we caused. EPHESIANS 6:4 "FATHERS PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN TO WRATH: BUT BRING THEM UP IN THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD." Husbands and wives need to stop nagging one another. If we are saved by God's Grace, just trust in His Word. This is why the songwriter said:

--WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS ALL OUR SINS AND GRIEFS TO BEAR, WHAT A PRIVILEGE TO CARRY EVERYTHING TO GOD IN PRAYER - O WHAT PEACE WE OFTEN FORFEIT, O WHAT NEEDLESS PAIN WE BEAR ALL BECAUSE WE DO NOT CARRY EVERYTHING TO GOD IN PRAYER.

Final Little Fox for examination -- MONEY = So busy making money that we forgot how to treat people and how to relate to one another in the Church. Living in era everything goes for a dollar. Falling into the snare of the devil. Money in itself is not wrong. Scripture that we ordinarily quote and only quote half of it. I TIMOTHY 6:10 "FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL: WHICH WHILE SOME COVETED AFTER, THEY HAVE ERRED FROM THE FAITH, AND PIERCED THEMSELVES THROUGH WITH MANY SORROWS."

- Are we in ministry for service or are we in it for the money?
- Is money the driving force behind our decisions in the Church?
- Do we walk by money or Do we walk by Faith?
- Must ensure our decisions are based upon our Faith not upon Checks and Balances

Destruction of Little Foxes = First we must know tactics of Satan to destroy him put under foot. JAMES 4:7 "SUBMIT YOURSELVES THEREFORE TO GOD, RESIST THE DEVIL, AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU." Don't need to worry about the society of prevention of cruelty of animals - People.

- Get People Oriented

- Pet a Dog and Ignore a Neighbor
- Take in a Stray Cat and Close Door on Hungry Neighbors

Most of the time we are Beat Up by the Devil because we will Resist the Devil and wonder why he will not flee. Wonder why he still beats us up. Look at the first part of the verse again. "SUBMIT YOURSELVES THEREFORE TO GOD..." We don't want to do the submitting part, we just want to hang out in the resisting part of the verse.

-Jesus was people oriented, concerned with the needs of those around Him.

-Watch out for the little things

-Little things will tear you down

-Little things will destroy your home

-Little things will destroy your Marriage

-Little things will Separate you from God

-Little things will Hinder your Prayer Life

-Little things will Stunt your Spiritual Growth

-Little things turn you all the way around

-Little things will Cause you Stress

-Little things will Hurt the Spiritual Growth of the Church

-Little things will Keep a Revolving Door in the Church

-Little things will Drive the Divorce Rate Up

-Watch Out For the Little Foxes - Let's pay attention as God moves us Forward