

The Song of Solomon

Lesson 6: Love Strong as Death; Final Words -- Song of Solomon 8:5-14

We have come a long way together. We started in a garden of springtime longing, walked through the seeking and the finding, lingered in the wedding and the wonder, weathered the cold night when love had to be sought again, and now we arrive at the last hill of this Song. Listen to how the final movement opens: "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" That single picture holds the whole book. A woman comes up out of the wilderness, and she is not alone, and she is not striding ahead in her own strength. She is leaning. The strongest thing in this Song is not a fortress or an army. It is two people who belong to each other, walking home with her weight resting on him.

If you have ever leaned on someone, you know it is not weakness, it is trust. It is the body saying what the heart already decided: I have given myself to you, and I am betting my balance on yours. The whole study has been building to this moment, where love finally speaks its deepest word about itself. Up to now we have heard love describe the beloved, praise the beloved, search for the beloved. Here, at last, love turns and describes itself. And what it says is so large that it has echoed down three thousand years and into wedding vows you have heard with your own ears.

In a few short verses we reach the summit of the whole Song: "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death." This is the verse the whole book has been climbing toward. Everything before it was the slow ascent. Everything after it is the gentle walk back down the other side, the little sister, the vineyard, the last tender invitation. But right here, at the peak, the Spirit of God lets a man and woman say out loud the thing most of us only half believe: that real love does not flicker out, that it cannot be bought, that many waters cannot drown it, that it burns with a flame from God Himself.

So gather your heart for this final lesson. We are not here to be sentimental. We are here to see something true and to let it search us. For the love this Song celebrates between a husband and a wife, glorious as it is, turns out to be a window. Through it we glimpse a greater Bridegroom who set His own people as a seal upon His heart, who went down into the floods of death and was not drowned, and who gave not the substance of His house but the blood of His own body for a bride He would not lose. Come up from the wilderness one more time. Lean hard. Let us look at love that is strong as death.

Group Discussion: When you hear the words "love is strong as death," what real-life picture comes to mind first, and what does that picture tell you about what love actually costs?

Personal Reflection: Where in your own walk right now are you trying to come up out of the wilderness on your own strength, when the Lord is inviting you to lean on Him instead?

Read Song of Solomon 8:5–14

Study Questions

1. In Song of Solomon 8:5 the bride comes up from the wilderness “leaning upon her beloved.” What does this opening picture teach about the nature of covenant love, and how does it set up the great declaration that follows?
2. Think honestly about your own relationships and your walk with God. What does it look like for you to genuinely lean, and what fears keep you standing rigidly on your own two feet instead?
3. In 8:6 the bride asks to be set “as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm.” What did a seal mean in the ancient world, and what does this request reveal about love’s longing for permanence and belonging?
4. Where do you long to be “sealed,” to be securely and unmistakably someone’s, and how have you tried to find that security in things that cannot finally hold you?
5. Verse 6 says “jealousy is cruel as the grave.” The Bible speaks of God Himself as a jealous God. How can jealousy be a holy thing here rather than a sinful one, and what does that teach about the exclusiveness of covenant love?

6. Is there a place in your life where you have called something “love” while withholding exclusive, wholehearted commitment? What would it mean to love with the kind of singleness this verse describes?
7. In 8:8–12 we meet the little sister and the imagery of the wall and the door, and the vineyard let out to keepers. What do these pictures teach about purity, readiness for love, and stewarding what God has entrusted to us?
8. Looking back over your own life, how have you guarded, or failed to guard, the “vineyard” God placed in your keeping, whether your body, your heart, your home, or your influence? What needs tending now?
9. Stand at the summit of the whole Song: “for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned” (8:6–7). What does this passage reveal about the very nature of love, where such love comes from, and how it points us to the love of Christ for His church who went down into death and came up again?
10. Now look back across this entire study, from the first longing of chapter one to the final “make haste, my beloved” of 8:14. Name one specific way the Lord Jesus has been forming you through this Song. What is the one change you will carry out of this study and into the rest of your life?

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Ephesians 5:25–32, where the love of a husband for his wife is revealed as a picture of Christ giving Himself for the church; Romans 8:35–39, where Paul declares that nothing, not even death, can separate us from the love of God in Christ; Hosea 2:19–20, where the LORD betroths His people to Himself forever in righteousness and faithfulness; 1 Corinthians 13:7–8, where love bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things and never fails; Revelation 19:7–9, where the marriage supper of the Lamb is the joy toward which all true love has been pointing all along

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