

The best story – Song of Songs 8:5-14

1. The journey out of the desert 8: 5 – 7

- The friends recognise the couple
- The Desert, a repeat of 3:6
- The desert a place where little can grow. Where life is hard difficult to sustain.
- The beloved reflects on the relationship. I roused you! Your heart. Until now the phrase has been 'my heart',
- A declaration of the value of love (1 Cor 13) Love is as strong as death
- The loving relationship the lovers have entered and enjoyed is priceless. Verse 7

2. Life in the desert 8: 8 – 9

- This may well be the brothers of 1:6 speaking not the friends
- Younger sister, and her breasts are not yet grown. Immature love?
- The brothers a picture of the world that stands opposed to God's blueprint?

3. Love's true value 8: 10 – 14

- The beloved takes the brothers pictures and paints a very different picture:
- Reference to Solomon's vineyards and money perhaps a link with those who would profit from sex. Countered by the beloved's declaration, she has something infinitely more valuable.
- But my own vineyard is mine to give. My life, sexuality, heart belongs to me – its mine to give. I choose to give it to my Lover who is the loveliest of all 5:16

4. The final voices

- The desert is no longer. The beloved lives in a garden. Cultivated and peaceful. With friends in attendance. Verse 13 – perhaps a reference to the absence of the brothers who did not have her best interest at heart.
- The final voice – the beloved's! Come away my lover, and be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the spice-laden mountains!

Why settle for a lesser story?

DIGGING DEEPER

Read Song of Songs 8: 5 – 14 and 1 Corinthians 13: 1 – 13

1. References to desert and gardens have come several times in the Song. In what ways are they good descriptions of what relationships are like?
2. Aside from the Beloved and the Lover, the friends have also had a contribution in the song. Has the community involvement in the song been helpful for you, if so in what ways?
3. If you are single what could you do to build into the marriages around you? If you are married what steps could you take to help make Christian marriage be both honest and attractive?
4. Is love as strong as death in today's world?
5. Verses 8 – 9 are difficult to interpret and understand. On Sunday we looked at the possibility that this refers to sexual relationships without the corresponding emotional development celebrated in the Song. What other ways could we read these verses?
6. How many references are there to money in verses 10 – 12. We know the sex industry is worth billions today and sex sells. How can we tell the better story that the Beloved sings about and still connect with a culture that has very different values?
7. Verse 13 seems to be an invitation those who live within God's blueprint for relationships to be vocal about it. To find our voice. Is this a good thing to do and if so how do we do it?
8. The final voice is the beloved, inviting her lover to come and be the gazelle and young stag. For him to fulfil his potential. She sings not about herself but about him. Looking at the 1Corinthians passage in what ways does the relationship we have studied mirror Paul's spirit led description of love?