

# Paradise lost and found: Song of Songs 5:2 – 8:4

## 1. The challenge of self-centred loving 5:2 - 10

- I slept but my heart was awake. This could be a dream or it may refer to her state of being. Love is still present but body and heart are at odds with each other.
- The lover comes home? Calls out, head damp with dew. A clear longing to be together but...
- The beloved is not rushing to put herself out! I have taken off my robe, my feet are washed
- The lover's persistence impacts her heart and with that she responds with action but it's too late
- The promising start to their relationship is hard to keep going.
- The friends invited to help!

## 2. The lover's attractions are remembered (First love) 5:10 – 6:1

- From head to foot she remembers what attracted him
  - i. Physical manly attraction – but alongside the physical beauty is the beauty of his values and character
  - ii. Valued – head purest gold,
  - iii. He is altogether lovely! This is my lover, this is my friend
- The friends once again offer their support, point her to what she probably already knows

## 3. The turning point – Paradise found 6:2 – 3

- His garden cf 4:16, 5:1
- I am my lovers and my lover is mine. A reversal of 2:16 - I am not my own! I don't live for myself but for another. 1 Cor 6:19 – 20, 1 Cor 7:4
- She gladly repents of self centred love and longs for him to browse among the lilies! She removes the barriers of 5:3

## 4. The lover's response 6: 4 – 8:4

- The lover is overwhelmed! He does not look to take advantage of her
- She really wants HIM! She allows him to see her cf 2:14 when she hid away in the cleft of rocks.
- He explores her beauty in a new and deeper way. My perfect one is unique!

- The friends in verse 10 see the re-ignited love and passion, the beloved is compared to the beauty of the dawn, the moon and the sun, majestic as the stars process.
- 11 – 12 the lover recognises something new is developing in the relationship. This love is something bigger than just the two of them. Set among the royal chariots of my people. Their love impacts the community
- The friends are caught up in the moment and seeing the lovers leave because this love is something to be observed! But the intimacy of their love is not something for public display v 14.

5. The couple see each other in a new way 7:1 – 8:3

- His gaze of his beloved goes from her feet upwards
- Verses 7 - 8 a declaration of the fruitfulness that they will enjoy together
- Verse 10 the beloved declares why she gives herself to her lover. I belong to my lover, and his desire is for me. (1 Cor 11:24 'This my body which is for you')
- The love making that is enjoyed leads to intimate conversation 8:1 – 2 she wants to be able to enjoy this level of togetherness in public, if you were only to me like a brother.
- Verse 3 a repeat of the intimacy enjoyed before they were married, 2:6 His left arm is under my head and his right arm embraces me

6. The final refrain that calls for us to reflect 8:4

2:6	3:5	8:4
Daughter's of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.	Daughter's of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.	Daughter's of Jerusalem, I charge you: do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.

## Digging Deeper

Read Song of Songs 5: 2 – 9

1. The honeymoon is over – what is it that makes it hard to keep love alive and fresh?
2. ‘My heart sank at his departure’ verse 6. Why do our hearts react to emotional and physical separation? Is there something here that has spiritual significance for us?
3. It takes two! In what ways have both the lover and the beloved contributed to this separation?
4. The watchmen and the friends act. One harshly and the other gently. Is there anything we can learn in this?

Read Song of Songs 5: 10 – 6:1

1. Remembering what attracted us to each other is a key part to their paradise being regained. How can we support and encourage this?
2. Revelation 2: 1 – 7 picks up the theme of first love. How do we use the Song of Songs as both a celebration of human love and a pointer to the love Jesus has for us?
3. The friends in 6:1 offer to help the beloved find her lover. Why do we find it challenging to intervene in a couple’s marriage if it is going through difficulties?

Read Song of Songs 6: 2 – 3

1. I don’t live for myself but for another! How does marriage help us learn what love is?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19 – 20 and 1 Corinthians 7:4 – I am not my own – Is this how we think and act?

Read Song of Songs 6: 4 – 8:4

1. The difficulties of 5: 2 – 8 have led to a deeper relationship. How do we use the bad times to grow our love rather than break it?

2. The couple see each other in a new way. Vulnerability and failure is not used as future ammunition. 'Love keeps no record of wrong' how do we put this into practice?
3. 8:3 repeats the embrace we first heard sung in 2:6 – How do we find space and time for the depth of relation pictured here?
4. How as a community of God's people could we help encourage and build the marriages that exist among us?
5. 8:4 is subtly different as the final refrain is repeated. Any ideas if this has any significance?