

Conclusions

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[0:00] Please, if you have a Bible and can turn to the bit that was read, you'd find that helpful. We're in Song of Solomon, chapter 8. And we're going to do the very last bit, which is from verse 5 onwards.

And while you're finding the place, let me just say the same introduction that I've said before. Is there not a deep, deep truth that this book touches on? That human beings were made for more than this life.

More than things, but for an eternal person-to-person love with the Almighty One. That's what we were made for.

And until our hearts find that, our hearts are empty, our hearts are restless, as Augustine said, until they find their rest in you.

And let me just say the introductions for those who are new here today. It looks like a love song for human beings. We had it read to us.

[1:03] Is it a love song for human beings? Can it really be that? It begins, let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. And you might say, I thought the Bible was against sex.

And apparently the answer is no. And then you might say, isn't this rather an embarrassing or perhaps even a naughty subject to be looking at on a Sunday morning? And we had last time the reference, rest are like clusters of fruit.

And you think, is this a bit embarrassing? And actually, the Bible's put this here. God's put this in his word because this is something we're to understand as being beautiful.

God has put a beauty into our world. And this book of the Bible just tackles that straight head on and says, yes, this beauty is from God. It's to be understood.

It's to be embraced in the way that God wants it to be embraced. But God has put this beauty of romantic love, marriage, into our world. How is it to be interpreted?

[2:05] Well, the way I've been doing it is to say that there's a plan here. It's about a farm girl and her bloke. But she refers to him as King Solomon. Or she sort of alludes to him as King Solomon in the same way that a couple today might say.

Try and get it the right way around. He's my prince, Prince Harry. And she's my princess. She's my Meghan Markle. It's about human romance.

But human romance has always been designed to be a direct expression of the divine love for his people. And I've asked week by week, is it any use?

And week by week I've answered, it is hugely useful. Because it teaches us about the things that our world is confused about.

Our world is confused about love and sex and gender. And the Bible says this is the way it is and it's a beautiful thing. The song unashamedly celebrates the unmatched beauty and glory of a covenanted love.

[3:10] That's to say a love which is surrounded by promises and commitments. And it's heterosexual sexual love. And in so doing it points us beyond this visible fallen limited world to deep eternal realities.

So that's the introduction. Let me just look back over where we've come. If you've been here through the whole series you'll perhaps remember. We started off with love and longing.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. We went through their courtship. And in the courtship there was always this sense of timing. That there were some things that were not yet right.

Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires. And we went through some issues of distance and loss. He was turned away and then she was worried about their relationship.

But it was okay. Then there was something about their marriage and the consummation. Where he says I have come into my garden. The garden was locked and hidden but it's open to him.

[4:16] Then they found some problems. They got out of step with each other but they got back together again. And then the last time we looked at the confirmation and affirmation of their relationship.

And in particular the emphasis on bodies. And I tried to make the case that the body and the self are indivisible.

And that God's future for his people is the hope of the resurrection through Jesus Christ. When we will have new bodies if we belong to him.

And today we're going to conclude. So that's where we came from. And this is where we're going to. So my plan is. I've tried to make it a little bit memorable. There's something about leaning on one.

There's something about larger than two. And there's something about lasting forever. So those are three L's. So if you fancy trying to remember over lunch what on earth he said this morning.

[5:13] There are three L's there. Leaning on one larger than two and lasting forever. And then there are three P's. The protection of love. Before the protection of love afterwards.

And a poem unfinished. That's as snappy as I could make it. There are three P's at the end. Love being protected before marriage. Love being protected after marriage. And the unfinished nature of the poem.

Okay that's what we're going to do. I'll try and get on with it then. So if you look. Chapter 8 verse 5. The friends said. Who is this? Coming up from the desert.

Leaning on her lover. So who is this? Coming up from the desert. So there she is. Coming up from the desert. And the same sort of question has been asked in 3 verse 6.

Who is this? Coming up from the desert like a column of smoke. And 6 verse 10. Who is this? It appears like the dawn. Fair as the moon.

[6:12] Bright as the sun. Majestic as the stars in procession. And it's here in 8 verse 5. Who is this? Coming up from the desert. Leaning on her lover. The same question has been asked.

And I think it's worth just tracking. The woman. The woman. The woman. This woman. The woman as she comes up from the desert. She started off being an object of disdain.

Chapter 1 verse 6. She was unconfident. And she says. Don't stare at me. I'm a farm girl. I'm dark. I've been darkened by the sun.

She was an object of disdain. She was an object of anger. That's still 1 verse 6. My mother's sons were angry with me. They made me take care of the vineyards. So she was pushed around a bit. It seems. She was disdained. And people got angry with her. She has been through experiences of being misunderstood. And abused.

[7:08] She in her dream. We presume this is in her dream. Chapter 5 verse 7. The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. And they didn't help me. They beat me. They bruised me.

They took away my cloak. And she says. At least in dream. I've felt awful. I've been misunderstood and abused.

But she's moved through that. In chapter 6 verse 9. It says. The maiden saw her. And called her blessed. The queens and concubines praised her.

And she's moved from being this sort of little. I don't know. Shy. Misunderstood girl. To being a woman. A married woman.

That the queens. And the concubines. And the concubines. Praise her. She's gained dignity. And in fact. In 6 verse 10. The dignity that she's achieved.

[8:04] Is huge. 6 verse 10. Who is this. That appears. Like the dawn. Fair as the moon. Bright as the sun. Majestic as the stars. In procession.

That's a huge. Thing to say about her. She's become glorious. This. If you look at it on the human point of view. The.

Becoming. A bride. Is a glorious thing. And here. She's likened to the. The cosmos. Fair as the moon. Bright as the sun.

Majestic as the stars. In procession. And something I learned this week. Which I. I hope is. Accurate. End of chapter 6.

Verse 13. The friends say. Come back. Come back. Oh Shulamite. And the lover says. Why would you gaze on the Shulamite. As in the days of Mahanaim. Well I thought Shulamite.

[8:59] Was simply like. Saying. Where she lived. Like you know. Live in Ditchling. Or. Live in Eastbourne. But. I've discovered. And I hope this is correct. That Shulamite.

Is the feminine form of Solomon. So Solomon. Is the great glorious king. And. They're saying. You are Mrs. Solomon. You are.

The great glorious queen. You know. Solomon S. If you like. So. There's a. A trajectory. That she's gone through. She. The bride. Has become glorious.

In her new relationship. If you think back. To the last wedding. That you attended. Would it not be true. That the bride. Was glorious. Yes. She.

She walked down the aisle. You thought. Wow. And her husband to be. Probably thought. Wow. And had to be picked up. Off the floor. Several times. That's.

[9:57] The way this text. Is going. Is saying. There's something here. We have it here on earth. And we see something of it. The glory of the bride. And of course. If we.

Stand back. And think what is this pointing to. The people of God. There's. Something. Breathtakingly. Glorious. About.

The church of God. Because. She is the bride. Not because. She is. What she is herself. She is. You know. By herself.

If she'd been left on her own. She would have been. Whatever it says. She's. Obnoxious. Forlorn. All on her own. But now. She's been brought into this relationship.

With this great king. She becomes. Glorious. Without spot or blemish. A radiant. Church. A wonderful thing. We had read to us.

[10:51] From the book of Revelation. About the bride. The bride. And the. And the city. Get. Conflated. To each other. I saw the holy city. The new Jerusalem.

Coming down. Out of heaven. From God. Prepared. As a bride. Beautifully. Dressed. For her husband. Breathtakingly. Glorious.

If you're a Christian. If you're one of the people of God. Just notice that. That in Christ. You are becoming. You will be.

Breathtakingly. Glorious. It's a knockout thought. Isn't it? Breathtakingly. Breathtakingly. Glorious. Who is this? Fair as the moon.

Bright as the sun. Majestic as the stars in procession. And the answer to that will be. The people of God. In Jesus Christ. Who is this?

[11:48] Coming up from the desert. Now. She was leaning on somebody. Wasn't she? Leaning on her lover. I just stop on the leaning part. She's leaning on her husband.

Now. It doesn't tell you whether they're young or old. It doesn't tell you whether they've been bouncing around playing tennis. And she's coming back leaning on her lover. Or whether they've just been to the geriatric clinic.

And they're both on their zimmers. And one's leaning on the other. It doesn't tell you that. But it's love. Isn't it? Whatever age that is.

She leans on her lover. And that's love. And it invites husbands. To make sure that they're leanable husbands. That they're there to be lent on.

That they're there to lend strength. And able to be the sort of leader of a relationship. Who can support in a relationship. She's leaning on her husband.

[12:47] Husbands should be leanable. And I think it also teaches us. That love. Doesn't have to be. Hot. Passion. It can be. True. Deep. Proper love.

And here it is expressed. There. She's leaning on him. As they come. From. Sainsbury's. Or. The desert. Or. Wherever it is. And I'm just reminded.

That that same thought. Is expressed. In relationship to Jesus. It says. I'm just quoting here. From John's gospel. In the old version. It says. There was.

Leaning on Jesus bosom. One of his disciples. Whom Jesus loved. We presume this is John. He says. That's. When we. When we were around the table. Jesus let me lean on him.

Because we were friends. We were close friends. And I could lean on him. As we sat around the table. He was leaning on Jesus bosom. The disciple.

[13:44] Leant on Jesus. I'm going to say. That's a right thing to do. Whether you're male or female. Whatever age you are. To be a disciple of Jesus. Is a right thing.

To lean on him. And I hope none of the blokes here. Are so macho. And strong. And independent. That they're above. Leaning on Jesus.

It's the way to be. To lean on him. When I first came to the church. As a. As a young man. It was a lady. All the ladies in the church wore.

Sort of. Strange. Woolly hats. Felt hats. And they all had. Felt coats. Don't know why they did that. They did. And they were from a.

A generation. I don't know. They would. They were. Ladies in their 60s. And 70s. And they. Wasn't good to the young people. The students.

[14:40] And I remember. I think it was Mrs. Lake. Mrs. Lake. Or Mrs. Laker. No. Ray doesn't remember. Well. Anyway. I might have got her name wrong. But I remember her saying to me.

She said. Young man. Lean on the Lord. Young man. And the more you lean. The better he likes it. Which was a very. Sort of. Down to earth way of putting it.

But I have not forgotten that advice. Lean on the Lord. It's the right way to live the Christian life.

Leaning on the Lord. Who is this coming up from the desert?

Leaning on her lover. So point one. Leaning on one. Number two. Larger than two. Let's go on. So the beloved says. Under the apple tree I roused you.

There. Your mother. Now. It says conceived. And that might give you the wrong idea. Because the word actually means to. To writhe in labor. Mother. So really. There your mother gave you birth.

[15:39] What should we say. And there she who was in labor. Had a child. Something like that. It's two parallels on giving birth. The scene of their togetherness.

That's the scene of their togetherness. Under the apple tree. There. Your mother. Your mother. Gave birth to you. So she's saying to him. Under the apple tree.

Let's put an apple tree. Now what's the apple tree? So I'll be a little bit speculative. Some of the commentators take this view as well. I wonder whether she means the apple tree is like the family tree.

Where your mother was in labor. She's saying. Our togetherness.

Is linked to the previous generation. And maybe the generation before that. And maybe the generation before that. In other words. Our togetherness.

[16:38] Is not just the two of us. Independently. Who cares about anybody else. But we're part of. A tree. Part of a linkage. That goes through generations.

She's saying. That our relationship. Is in the context. Of family. And if we have children. Then there will be children. And grandchildren. And we'll all be connected together.

It's in the flow of the generations. Where your mother. Gave birth to you. So. Put a baby inside. It's mummy there. So in other words.

The Song of Solomon. Has this. Rather. I think. Lovely. It's not. An obtrusive. Emphasis. But it's there all the time.

Romance. Is not. Like an elopement. Where. A couple say. Forget my mum and dad. Forget what they think about this. We're off on our own.

[17:37] We're going to do our own thing. And goodbye to them. That's the classic elopement. Isn't it. So. Tom and Lady Sybil. Nearly eloped. In Downton Abbey.

But. They were. Rescued from that. And. Those of you who watch Downton Abbey. Will know. That they were wanted to break. With the family. But they were persuaded. Not to. And it was actually a good thing.

That they stayed. In contact. With the family. So this. Relationship. That the. The girl. And the man. Have.

Is not. Promiscuous. It's not. Random. It's fully. Placed. In the context. Of the generations. And connections. Of family. So.

I'll come back to that. In a moment. Let's just see the next thing. That she says. She says. Place me like a seal. Over your heart. And like a seal. On your arm.

[18:30] So. A seal. On your heart. I think. Is a secret thing. Isn't it. What you put on your heart. So. I don't know. What a seal looks like. So. I put a. Blob. There's a seal.

On your heart. And then she says. So. This is a private thing. Hidden thing. Put me like a seal. On your arm. Now. I think that. Must be displayed. Because if you wear something.

On your arm. Everybody can see it. Can't they? So. She says. Those two aspects. And. Here's a thought. That. I listened to.

When I was thinking about this. This week. Sexual. Intimacy. Is very much. Private. Inside the bedroom.

The door is. Closed. And if there are kids running around. It's probably locked. Sexual intimacy. Is very much. Private. But marriage.

[19:30] Makes. Makes it very much. Public. Public. Being together in the bedroom.

Is private. But the. But what marriage does. Is to make it. Public knowledge. Who. Is having sex. With who. That's right.

Isn't it? That's what a marriage does. You say. You bring your friends. Relatives. Even tell the government. This is how we intend. To live. And you've got those.

Two aspects. You've got the very. Private. Telling everybody about that. But the fact. That we are together. Is a public. Statement. And this is how.

God. Has ordered. Society to be. And if you think about it. It's a very. Wise. Balanced.

[20:26] Wholesome. Thing. Because. Society is built. Around couples. And families. Isn't it? And. The intimacy. And the beauty.

Of that. Is actually. Within this. The privacy. Of that. Is within this. Framework. Of a very. Public record. If I'm putting it crudely. Those two are having sex. With each other. Those two are having sex.

With each other. Those two are having sex. With each other. Those two are having sex. With each other. It's written down. In a book. Which the government. Keeps. And that. Is the way. Society. Is to be.

Ordered. To be stable. To be responsible. To be accountable. To be wholesome. For the good of everybody. And I just.

Ponder. How far. From this. Our society. Has got. How very far. From this. And. Without. Sort of.

[21:19] Trying to be. In any sense. Political. About it. How much. Pain. And. Suffering. And.

Upset. Would. Be spared. If people. Lived the way. God wanted. That's right. Isn't it? How much. Pain. And suffering.

Heartbreak. Disturbance. To children. Would be spared. If people. Were able to live. The way. God wanted. So. That's my second point.

That this relationship. Is larger than two. It isn't just two people. Doing their own thing. It's. Set in a. A web. Or family. Society. And so on.

Right. Third thing. Lasting forever. Love is. Well there's some love is. Here. Aren't there? Love is. Verse six.

[22:15] As strong as death. Death. It's jealousy. As unyielding. As the grave. Word is hard. Hard as the grave. It burns like a blazing fire.

Like a mighty flame. The translation. On the. I'm going to go with the translation. In the margin. Which. Or the footnote. Which says.

The flame. Of. Yah. Which is a contraction. For the name of the Lord. So. It's a flame. Of the Lord. Waters.

Cannot. Quench love. Rivers. Cannot. Wash it away. Let me just do that translation. Again. A little bit more clunkily. Strong. As death. Is love. Hard.

As the grave. Is jealousy. It's flashes. A flash. Is a fire. The flame. Of the Lord. Many.

[23:11] Waters. Cannot. Quench. Love. Floods. Not drown it. Hmm. These very strong statements. About this thing.

Called love. I keep on. Little. Songs keep on. Copping into my head. As I say that. It's a crazy little thing. Called love. And. What's the Johnny Cash one.

About. Burn. Burn. Burn. Ring of fire. You see how. Our human. Experience.

Just taps in. On the same level. As. As. As. As. This bit of the Bible. Doesn't it? If you think. If you think. Of another one. Just sing it out. While I. While I carry on. Let's just think about.

The flame. The flame. Of the Lord. And I. Just follow the idea. Of. One of the times. The Lord.

[24:04] Appeared. Appeared in flame. Was. The burning bush. Wasn't it? When Moses. Approached. And there was a bush. That was. On fire. But it wasn't. Burned up. It just kept burning.

Didn't. Wasn't consumed. And Moses. Approached. And the Lord. Made his presence. In that. And he said. Hold on. Moses. Take your sandals.

Off your feet. You're on holy ground. Because. The Lord. Is a consuming. Fire. And I. Think about water. And floods. Perhaps.

The readers. Would have thought. Of the. Red Sea. When the waters. Were parted. To let. The Israelites. Through. And then. When the Egyptians.

Came to follow them. And grab them. The water. Came back. And flooded them. As a mighty act. Of God's power. And if you might like. To link it that way. You say.

[24:59] This is. Love. Has something. Of this. Quality. Of. Burning. Power.

Of. Unquenchability. A. A trueness of love. I know there are different. Sort of. Sort of. Flippant love. And. Passing love. But. Something. About love.

In its. Deepest. Truest. Purest. Form. Which. Many rivers. Cannot quench. Can't. You. Can't be drowned.

Something. Really. Powerful. About. This. What do we call it? It's not just an emotion. Is it? But. This thing. That all human beings. Know.

Something. Of. Don't we? We all know. Something. Of love. Love. Love. the Bible points us to the originator of love, the source of love, the God of whom the New Testament said God is love.

[26:06] That's part of, it's not the whole of, it's part of his essence, his essential character, that he is love. And you get statements like this, the steadfast love of the Lord lasts forever.

His mercies never come to an end. Something unending, unquenchable about the love of the Lord. This is his steadfast love, his chesed in Hebrew, love.

Something strong, unbreakable. The steadfast love of the Lord lasts forever. Nothing, says the Apostle Paul, can separate us.

Let me read it to get it right. Let's get it right. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

As it is written, for your sake we face death all day long. We are considered a sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[27:44] to the church in Corinth the Apostle Paul writes and says get your priorities right there are three things that remain faith, hope, love and the greatest of these is love.

Leaning on one I can't remember what was the next one something more than two and last forever okay we've gone to the letter P protection of love before I'm going to come back to verse 7 in a minute the friends we have a young sister whose breasts are not yet grown what should we do for our sister for the day she is spoken for if she is a wall we will build towers or battlements of silver if

she is a door we will enclose her with panels of cedar and then the the grown woman the wife says I am a wall my breasts are I'm going to say as as towers thus I have become in his eyes like one bringing contentment so the little unmarried sister first of all the importance of timing we want when she is married for that to mean something and we don't want to get it mixed up with how she lives before so the importance of the context don't stir up love until the right time and until the day she's spoken for what should we do well we're going to protect her friends are saying it's the friends her social group they're going to protect her from sex outside the right time and place and they give you a little illustration of it this is the opposite of today's culture isn't it let's see what have we got here if she's a wall we will build silver towers and we'll get on the towers and we will shoo away anybody else who comes near that's what the friends are doing yes wall protected with silver towers click anything happened or if she's a door we will protect her with panels of cedar so we'll put panels of cedar to protect her and here is society here are the friends here are the peer group helping this woman to be to not act as if she's married until she's married so that puts a what's the word a duty on the friends which most of us really isn't it friends and family to help this young woman to not behave as if she's married until she is married and I say how our crazy world does the exact opposite doesn't it nowadays our crazy world tries to tell people who save themselves to marriage that they're foolish that they're missing out makes fun of such people how wrong how cruel how very very unhelpful well

Christian societies Christian peer groups have a an ability to help help one another in this and of course it also shows us that the value that God puts on an exclusive love when we're married it means something because this is special a value for one special person in an articulated commitment so articulated I mean they say in words what their commitment is that's what you do when you get married and that commitment is made in public and this is helped by friends and not hindered and again I think this is why at a wedding you invite your friends so that they can be part of supporting the marriage and in one place let me just say it now I'll probably end up saying it again people fail in this and come to the

Lord he is so full of forgiveness wouldn't want anybody to go away thinking you know I've made mistakes in this I've failed in this and that's me done finished absolutely not the Lord is merciful the Lord understands and I'm reminded of how he spoke to the woman at the well you remember the woman had five husbands five men and the man she had at the moment wasn't her man wasn't her husband and how tenderly the Lord Jesus dealt with her when he said go and fetch your husband and she said well I haven't got a husband and he said you're absolutely right you've had five husbands the man you're with now is not your husband he didn't sort of rub a nose in it he didn't make her feel any more embarrassed than she need to be he just knew and understood and he forgave her and I just want to make that point before I go on protection before marriage protection of love after marriage so this is the woman speaking in verse 10

I am a wall and I want to change the like to as my breasts are as towers thus I have become in his eyes like one bringing contentment so I think the statement is not a statement of geometry but strategy that's the security of our marriage inside the walls is contentment shalom peace well-being inside this marriage relationship and part of the military protection is me says the woman I am a wall my breasts are as towers and I think what she's saying is this I myself provide defence for this relationship my womanly attractiveness is part of that defence against invaders and I am the provider then not only of security but contentment within this relationship and here is the woman the provider of comfort and the provider of peace into our relationship there's a particular role for the woman to be as you might say a peacemaker rather than a peace breaker providing with her womanly attractiveness and her femininity to provide a defence in that relationship protection after marriage she goes on to say

[34:49] Solomon had a vineyard in Baal Hamon my understanding is that Baal means lord and Hamon means of a crowd I don't know whether it was actually a place or whether she's making a little bit of a comment here Solomon he was Baal can mean husband actually as well husband of a crowd how many wives and things did he have let's just see he had a vineyard let's do the vineyard first he had multiple wives do you know how many he had 700 700 700 and 300 I don't know which way round it was 700 wives and 300 concubines or the other way round do you know I'm sure he must have had difficulty remembering all their names don't you think a thousand sexual partners and she comments about this she's not approving of this

you'll get the point in a moment

Solomon had a vineyard in a lord of a crowd he let out his vineyard to tenants and each was to bring for its fruit a thousand shekels of silver so this is a big business isn't it it's all to do with money but she says Solomon King Solomon I mean my bloke is a little bit like King Solomon but not entirely like King Solomon and in this regard we're very different in this particular respect because in our relationship there is just one king and one wife it's just one to one vineyards not multiple tenants just one my own vineyard is mine to give the thousand shekels are for you O Solomon you can keep them and the two hundred for those who tend its fruit and they can keep their money but for me it's just me and you yeah it's an exclusive relationship one to one and she says to her husband

I offer myself to you and only to you and I know that you have me and you don't have anyone else and that's how it is and I'm absolutely happy with that situation King Solomon can keep his thousand whatever they are 700 of those and 300 of those he can keep that silly king silly man fancy living that sort of way do you think that gives him any real satisfaction is there any real beauty in that absolutely not folly I'm far better off she says as a farm girl with one husband who's faithful to me than being married to a king and I'm just 0.01% of his attraction and I'm not for sale she says I'm not for sale have you ever thought about that that a marriage is something you can't buy that's right isn't it if you're a multi millionaire let's suppose you were what's his name

Jeff Bezos is it or who's the chap who does Tesla Elon Musk you've got a load of money got a ton of money do you think on all the shelves of all the supermarkets in the world or the Harrods you can go and buy a wife I suppose in a way you could but will she love you will she be a wife a real wife you can't buy can you in the kingdom of God not everybody has a wife or a husband the apostle Paul didn't have a wife he says actually in the way the kingdom operates at this particular time the real advantage is in being single so if you're a single person please don't think that you're on the wrong end of things but if you are married you have something that money cannot buy isn't that right money cannot buy this relationship this love you can't buy it and you can't put a price on it end of verse seven says if one were to give all the wealth of his house for love it would be utterly scorned and I think what he's saying is you can't buy love the song is money can't buy me love isn't it nobody there's not a flicker of recognition when I said that that's a

Beatles song can't buy me love okay and I just stopped to say how blessed to love and how blessed to be loved money can't buy that protection after so we get to the end of this song the lover says you who dwell in the gardens with friends and attendants let me hear your voice and he's going to say do you not agree with me on this and I presume the friends are going to say amen or yes or way to go or something like that depending on their culture so he says will you not agree and I am going to ask you do you not agree with this do you not think that what we've looked at is brilliant and wonderful and beautiful a rather special book this it gives us a sort of insight into beauty and a wonder that comes direct from heaven into our world in a most surprising way now what does she say to him verse 14 now in our translation it says come away my lover and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the spice laden mountains or spice mountains well I looked at the translation and although the translation says come in fact the word every time it means go so she's saying off you go that's what I think she's saying so let's try this on for size the poem ends up saying we're together we have a security in our relationship now off you go you can go and do the shopping or you can go and go to work or you can go on your business trip or whatever it is you toddle off and do that because I know that you'll come back

[41:51] I'm not saying you've got to stay here forever and ever we can have a life off you pop but I know you'll come back if the stag goes off you go our relationship continues implies if you go away it won't be long before you come back and it's that's where it ends it's sort of saying here we are life continues but I know there's going to be a sort of a return I know that we haven't reached the end yet and I will close with this quote from one of the commentaries that I read which I think sums it up really well this longing is intended to remind us all of a love greater than any human love a love for which marriage provides the best picture that the world affords this jealous love of

God for his people has triumphed over death and sheol that's the grave through the cross and now invites his bride into his eternal embrace to embark on a journey together that stretches beyond our

own deaths beyond the grave and onwards and upwards forever we've come to an end we're going to sing a song together we're going to sing 803 a song Thank you.

803 is a song which celebrates love. It doesn't have a huge amount of content in it.

I think there's some of the things that we've sung and said already provide the content. But this just talks about love. It's purity, the way the love of God weeps for the shame I know and pays the debt I owe.

This love stills my restlessness, fills my emptiness, shows me holiness. This love springs from eternity and streams through history and is a fountain of life to me.

[44:52] And we honour the Saviour Jesus Christ as the one through whom this love comes. When we sing it, it goes very quickly.

Once we've sung it, you think, so I suggest I'm going to look at you. If you're still singing, we might sing it all over again and do it twice just to get our money's worth from it. We'll play the whole thing just to give us the tune.

Thank you. Thank you.