



THE SONG OF SONGS | A THEOLOGY OF LOVE (20)

February 8, 2026

Song of Songs 8:6-7

PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst
To cultivate mutually encouraging relationships
To participate in God's mission to the world

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Discussion Question

- What is something (a hobby, a food, a TV show, etc.) that you really love right now?

WORSHIP 10 MIN

PLEASE OPEN IN PRAYER

RESPONSIVE PRAYER — Isaiah 54

Fear not, for you will not be ashamed;

Be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced;

For your Maker is your husband,

The LORD of hosts is his name;

And the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer,

The God of the whole earth he is called.

For the mountains may depart

And the hills be removed,

But my steadfast love shall not depart from you,

And my covenant of peace shall not be removed.

SCRIPTURE READING

Song of Songs 8:6-7

*⁶Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm,
for love is strong as death,
jealousy is fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
the very flame of the Lord.*

*⁷Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.
If a man offered for love
all the wealth of his house,
he would be utterly despised.*

The concluding passage in our Song of Songs series offers the most concentrated and reflective statement on love in the entire book, as the intimate dialogue between the lovers gives way to a more universal meditation in which the author himself appears to step forward and contemplate the nature of love in its most abstract guise. Here, love is no longer mere action and is now contemplated. Here, for the first time in the Song, we see the rise of threatening themes that have not previously appeared: death, the grave, jealousy, overwhelming waters. There is now an element of hostility as dangerous forces threaten the very existence of love. If 5:1 from our passage last week represented a climax in the lovers' physical relationship, then these verses represent a climax in praise of love's invincibility — the fact that love cannot be overcome by any of its foes. This theology of love unfolds through three movements: its promise, its passion, and its power.

The passage opens with the promise of love, as the Beloved longs to be set as a seal upon the Lover's heart and arm (verse 6, lines 1-2). In the ancient world, a seal marked identity, ownership, and authentication. To be sealed upon the heart and arm represents both an inward/private and outward/public claim. Love, then, should not be reduced to present feelings, but should be seen as bound up with a promise of future faithfulness. Like the vows a married couple takes when they exchange rings in a wedding ceremony, promising to always be there and be for the other person, the seal of love signals the promise of permanence. The seal points beyond affection to commitment: I belong to you, and you to me. The Beloved does not only wish for physical closeness but for permanence, for the love to be signed and sealed — a bond that endures even in absence. The language here echoes covenantal themes elsewhere in Scripture, particularly the stamping and sealing of God's law upon the heart (Deuteronomy 6:6; Jeremiah 31:33). While a seal could be a keepsake or memento, the Beloved herself becomes the seal, indelibly stamped upon the lover's very being, signaling a union that is secure, exclusive, and irrevocable.

The passion of love is then described in some of the strongest language in Scripture in the conclusion lines of verse 6. Lines 3-4 form synonymous parallelism, a regular feature of Hebrew poetry in which the second line restates or intensifies the first: Love is compared with jealousy (or "intense devotion"), while its strength is paired with fierceness. The final comparison of death with the grave clarifies the magnitude of the imagery. As the reader likely understands, death and the grave are unyielding, insatiable forces claiming those under their power and drawing them into their grip (cf. Proverbs 30:16; Isaiah 5:14). The strength of love is likened to the strength of death. Love holds its "victims" under its sway in exactly the same way death does. Once smitten, there is no escape. Then suddenly, the imagery shifts from the cold finality of death and the grave to the heat of divine fire, reminding us of the origin of love in God rather than chaos. This should be read as an affirmation of human love (which includes embodied desire) as a good gift from the Creator reflecting his own love. At the same time, we should be guarded against collapsing God into passion itself. "God is love" (1 John 4:8) can so easily be misconstrued as "love is God," where anything goes, and we lose contact with our moral bearings. Love must be ordered, tended, and disciplined, like a flame that gives warmth and light only when rightly contained.

Finally, the passage proclaims the power of love (verse 7). In the Old Testament, overwhelming waters often symbolize chaos and forces beyond human control (Psalm 93; Isaiah 43:2), and yet love endures even these. It cannot be extinguished by suffering,

circumstance, or substitution. It cannot be bought, bargained for, or replaced. This portrayal helps us to understand the New Testament's insistence on love's indestructibility and its ultimate fulfillment in Christ's love for his people — a love that passes through judgment, suffering, and even death itself without being overcome (Romans 8; Ephesians 5). No waters quenched Jesus' love, nor floods drowned it; he waded through seas of blood to secure his bride, fulfilling the covenant purposes of God from before the foundation of the world. In this way, this passage teaches us that love, at its truest and highest, is best understood through the lens of covenantal fidelity, tested by fire and sustained by God himself. Human love endures only insofar as it participates in this greater love, which neither death nor chaos can finally defeat. Set within the economy of redemption, love becomes not something beyond feeling or performance, but something we receive, steward, and reflect until the day it is brought to perfect fulfillment in Christ.

1. Looking at the Bible

- Share with the group some key phrases or ideas that stood out to you from the passage.

2. Looking at Jesus

At Central we believe that all of Scripture points to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the theological center of the Bible. Every passage not only points to Jesus, but the grand narrative of the Bible also finds its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus.

- If love is something that cannot be purchased (verse 7), how might that frame our understanding of the gift of Christ's love?
- If Christ's love was never earned, how should we think about the possibility of losing it? (Read John 10:27-29 and Romans 8:31-39 to guide your discussion)

3. Looking at our Hearts

- Love in this passage is portrayed as both passionate and covenantal. Often our love can lean one way or the other. Does your Christian life bend toward cold duty (covenant) without affection (passion), or toward sentiment (passion) without commitment (covenant)?
- What might a biblically balanced love look like?

4. Looking at our World

- How does this image of committed love, regardless of circumstance, differ from the feelings-based image of love the world and media so often try to sell us on?
- In a world where feelings often fade, what comfort can we draw from knowing that Christ's passionate love for us is eternal?
- How does the gospel fulfill the deepest desires of people today?

PRAYER
15 MIN

Pray for each other: Share any prayer requests you have.

In Ephesians 3, Paul prayed for the Church to know the vastness of God's love for them. Take some time to pray that the members of your group would come to know the breadth, height, depth, and length of God's passionate love for them.