

Who Are We Leaning On?

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[0 : 00] Now with the Lord's help let us turn and consider words we have in the Song of Solomon in chapter 8 and at verse 5.

The Song of Solomon is one song of 1005 that the scripture tells us that he wrote. He wrote 1005 songs and he wrote 3000 proverbs. We find this in 1 Kings chapter 4 verse 32. And he uses an allegory in this particular song describing the love that exists between the Lord and his people.

As if a lover and the one she loves or he loves are together speaking, engaging, being with each other.

[1 : 31] And the Lord uses that very intimate picture of human love, married love, to illustrate the love that exists between Christ and his people.

There are a number of pointers to the intensity of this love. And I'm just highlighting two or three things here before I subdivide the text under three headings.

The first thing I would like to highlight is in chapter 1 verse 2 when the bride says, Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth for your love is better than wine.

She's obviously totally in love with her beloved. And of course in chapter 2 at verse 14 we have the same kind of thing.

The fig tree ripens its figs. The vines are in blossom. They give forth fragrance. Arise my love, my beautiful one. And come away.

[2 : 48] They're in each other's company. Enjoying each other's love relationship. And in chapter 4 at verse 1 we find the bridegroom speaking.

And he says, Behold, you are beautiful, my love. Behold, you are beautiful. Your eyes are doves behind your veil.

And your hair is like a flock of goats leaping down the slopes of Gilead. And so on. So she and he respond in loving terms.

Showing that they are totally in love with each other. In chapter 8 here we find this particular question.

Who is that coming up from the wilderness? Leaning upon our beloved. This is the third of a very, very series of very pointed questions.

[3 : 57] Asking this kind of thing. First of all in chapter 3 and at verse 6. We have the same kind of question. What is that?

Or who is that? Coming up from the wilderness. Let columns of smoke. Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense. With all the fragrant powders of a merchant.

He sees her at a distance. And he's aware of the fragrance of her life. Also in chapter 6 at verse 10. The same kind of question. Who is this? Who looks down like the dawn? Beautiful as the moon.

Bright as the sun.

Awesome as an army with banners. He's talking about her beauty. Comparing her. With the blight of dawn.

[4 : 57] And the sun. And the moon. And the power of an army with banners. And the moon. And the moon. And now in chapter 8 at verse 5.

Who is that? Coming up from the wilderness. Leaning on her beloved. So we see her in these three different pauses as it were. And this is the third one that I'd like to highlight particularly.

Coming up from the wilderness. Leaning on her beloved. Three points. This is the church of Christ. In allegory. The present situation she has. She's in the wilderness.

Secondly. Her activity. She is coming up. From the wilderness.

[6 : 03] And thirdly. There she's leaning. Upon her beloved. This is the way she's coming up from the wilderness.

Leaning. Upon him. That's the kind of posture she's got. A leaning posture. Leaning upon her beloved.

If we think particularly that this highlights. Ultimately the picture. Of the church of Christ. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Present location.

Is. In the wilderness. Is. Do you remember the way. John Bunyan. Uses.

The wilderness. Of this world. In his opening statement. In the pilgrim's progress. When I was walking through the wilderness. Of this world. Is talking about.

[7 : 08] This world. As it is. now the world has many good things to be said about it but for the Christian the world is like a wilderness experience just like the children of Israel they were delivered mightily out of the tyranny and the bondage of Egypt by God's mighty power but he didn't take them comfortably by jet to the promised land and there gave them to sit to enjoy their inheritance no, he took them into a wilderness situation and he reminds them in the book of Deuteronomy why he did that Deuteronomy chapter 8 and he says at verse 15 he led you through the great and terrifying wilderness with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water who brought you water out of the flinty rock who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know that he might humble you and test you to do you good in the end earlier on in that chapter took you into the wilderness to humble you and to prove you to show what was in your heart whether you would keep the commandments of God or not the moment a person is born again becomes the bride of Christ it's the beginning of a learning experience beginning of a wilderness journey just like the people of Israel long ago they walked through the wilderness on the way to the land of Canaan

I mean when you think of a literal wilderness a place of perplexing ways which way to go which is the better or the best way to go tracks here and tracks there we have to have our focus upon the Lord as the good shepherd who leads and guides and holds his people by the hand to show them the way forward we need to be fed spiritually in this wilderness world the world doesn't supply the feeding that our soul needs as Christians the world doesn't feed your Christian appetite it only feeds your carnal appetite we have to come every day as Israel had there to come to the manna the heavenly provision that the Lord makes daily available to the people of God we have to come to the word of God every single day to read it to meditate over it to pray over it to ask for light on it to ask for light upon our own circumstances this is the way that our soul gets fed and sometimes we're gasping for a drink to refresh our dry and dusty souls as we journey through this wilderness the Lord has broken a rock in the wilderness as it says the air the rock illustrates

Christ and the rock gushed forth water water gushed forth from the rock after the Lord had miraculously broken it and so it is still when Jesus Christ died upon the cross he continues to be the source of water irrigation for the soul having a drop of water from him so refreshes my soul and strengthens my spirit to go on another step or maybe you're finding the steps are more difficult as time is going on maybe you're finding the way is very steep am I able to take another step am I able to go on any further maybe you're finding the wind against you so strong that you can hardly stand on your feet the wind of temptation comes your way the wind of opposition from the world comes your way the wind that blows from the depths of hell seeking to draw you aside from the things of Christ comes your way with such power nearly throwing you off your feet the lust of the flesh the lust of the eye the pride of life these areas the devil focuses on to try and draw you away this is part of the wilderness journey and what's more about a wilderness it can be a very lonely place when Philip the deacon was asked to leave Samaria in the New Testament scriptures and to go down to Gaza which is a desert place and there he was going to meet the Ethiopian to preach to him a desert place no one there but all of a sudden the Ethiopian appears on the horizon we sometimes as Christians feel the loneliness of travel because it's a wilderness experience

I mean the loneliness that nobody can understand exactly the situation I'm going through or you're going through you can't relate to what other people are going through and they can't relate to you and what do you do in a situation like that you come and you tell the Lord about it and he's the one who is able to give you a word in season strengthening you to go on another way another step that's the way the Christian life is it's a wilderness experience but secondly we see that the church here shows a particular direction of travel she is it says here coming up from the wilderness it's as if she has turned her back on the best things that the wilderness of this world can offer that's exactly

what

[15 : 30] Israel did when they were in the land of Egypt physically they turned their back upon all of these things there were things that they from time to time lusted after but they had actually left the land of Egypt and left these things behind when you think of the things that used to please you before you were converted what do they do for you now the places you used to go the company you used to keep the frivolity of the life that you once enjoyed you have turned your back upon it it deafens you now you don't want to hear it that's the way it is with the church of Christ here she has turned her back upon the best things this world can offer and what is she doing she is coming up from the wilderness she has been freed from the bondage of sin by the blood of

Christ she has been effectually called by the power of God by his spirit she has been given a new direction of travel and now she is coming forward upwards onwards and upwards because she's coming up from the wilderness you know the Bible speaks about a heavenly calling the Lord has called her from heaven to come to him!

and there's a sense in which at the moment of our conversion our heart responds in such a way that we have a heavenly desire heavenly appetite and desire for things heavenly and she is coming up from the wilderness she has this desire to go to be with Jesus where he is we know we cannot be with him bodily until after we leave this world but we are with him in spirit in our worship services in our fellowships with the Lord's people oh there are many things that still would want to spoil our fellowship confession of faith talks about this that we still as

Christians have a remnant of corruption within us and the devil knows that and he'll try and work upon it to try and weaken our commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ he will try and make us more worldly in our outlook try and make us more worldly in our thinking but the grace of God enables us to keep looking up and coming up coming up from the wilderness oh there are many things in the wilderness that seems to to clog your clog your foot path things that attach to you as it were slowing you down but the Lord who has called you effectually is able to give you grace for every situation of life she is coming up from the wilderness but thirdly what is this posture she's got she is coming up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved what does this mean well

I think first of all it means that she really is not able to make it on her own if you are going to lean on somebody that says well you're tired or you're unable to make it on your own and that's exactly I believe what this portrays to us regarding the Christian they really cannot make it on their own they have to lean on Jesus leaning upon his everlasting arms leaning upon him in every situation of life surely you lean on him for acceptance with God you lean on him that he might give you of his righteousness you have none of your own he is the one who is our righteousness and you lean upon him trust in him that's what the word really means that she is leaning trustingly upon the [21 : 20] Lord Jesus Christ her bridegroom you lean or trust in his blood for pardoning all of your sins surely you lean on him as your shepherd who holds you by your hand who leads you into and through and eventually out of this wilderness because he has loved you with an everlasting love and with loving kindness he continues to draw you and he will not let his grip go of you and you lean on him because he is your best friend and your mediator you remember that

Jesus is a prophet and a priest and a king and you lean on him as your mediator like that who exercises these offices you lean on him as your prophet to teach you God's will for your salvation you lean on him as your priest because he is the one who has died for you and who makes continual intercession for you at the right hand of God in glory you lean on his intercession and you lean on him as your king because you want to come under his rule and his defense he rules and defends you and he conquers all you and his own enemies what a friend we have in

Jesus all our sins and griefs to bear what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer when you come up against situations you don't know exactly what to do should I do this do that go there not go there to whom do you take these dilemmas well I want to take them every time to my heavenly counselor the Lord Jesus he gives the best counsel the wisest counsel bring him to Jesus bring these problems to him what about if you have a particular sin that doesn't seem to yield its grip over you you come to the heavenly physician you lean on him you tell him all about yourself and he is able to put his hand on the problem as he so often demonstrated during his days in this world showing that he had power to forgive sin and cleanse from all unrighteousness he was able to open the eyes of the blind the ears of the deaf give those who are not able to speak power of utterance that they may declare him she is coming up from the wilderness leaning have you started to lean when you lean it's as if you leave things in the hand of the person on whom you lean

I mean you say I'm not able to do this not fit for this but Jesus is a mighty saviour he's able to do in us and for us exceedingly abundantly above what we're able to ask or even think and that's the way the church is portrayed here coming up from the wilderness of this world learning all about herself how imperfect she is how short she comes of what the Lord asks of her I mean none of us can go a day without sinning to whom do we come at the end of the day but to this one who is able to cleanse our sin and forgive us freely the song of

Solomon this is the best of all the songs he wrote because it says at the beginning it's the song of songs and it's the best one because it's about the best of all subjects the marriage of Christ and his believing people it's because it's the best husband of all it speaks of Christ himself he is the one who promises never to leave us and never to forsake us what an amazing promise that is to the poor people of God who feel so inadequate and so unworthy as they journey through this world tempted on all hands and all sides nevertheless if God begins the good work in us he will perform that work until the day he comes to receive us to himself the souls of believers at their death are made perfect in holiness to immediately pass into glory and their bodies being still united to [27 : 51] Christ rest in their graves until the resurrection and then at the resurrection believers are raised in glory openly acknowledged and acquitted at the day of judgment shall be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God for all eternity from the great seat of judgment Jesus will call his people come you blessed of my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world come you have come to me in a day of grace anyway you have leaned upon me all through the wilderness journey through thick and thin through dark days and sunny days through victories and through many defeats you have leaned upon me look to me come enjoy the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world one question am

I are you leaning upon Jesus as the church here is leaning coming up from the wilderness the wilderness behind her the glory in front of her walking by faith seeking to do his will every day may God grant us so to do let us pray