

Bridal Love

by Basilea Schlink

Jesus is concerned about our exclusive love, and He yearns for us to surrender everything to Him, so that He can be our true love and we can experience eternal life and joy.

Scripture: Exodus 34:14, Matthew 22:37, Matthew 26:8, Luke 6:38

Topics: "Divine Love", "Surrender to Christ"

Description

Basilea Schlink emphasizes the profound nature of love that Jesus desires from us, likening it to the exclusive love between a bride and her bridegroom. This love must take precedence over all other attachments, as Jesus yearns for our undivided devotion and commitment. He invites us to surrender everything to Him, promising that true joy and eternal life are found in this complete love relationship. Schlink illustrates this through the example of the rich young ruler, who struggled to let go of his earthly possessions for the sake of following Christ. Ultimately, she calls believers to cultivate a deep, intimate relationship with Jesus, prioritizing love above all else.

Transcript

Jesus, who so often says "Whoever loves Me . . ." "Do you love Me?" is concerned about our LOVE!

He is concerned about a special kind of love. It is the love which is shadowed in the relationship between a bride and her bridegroom; that is, it is an exclusive love, a love which places the beloved, the bridegroom, above all other loves, in the first place. As a Bridegroom, Jesus has a claim to "first love". He who has loved us so much wants to possess us completely, with everything we are and have. Jesus gave Himself wholly and completely for us. Now His love is yearning for us to surrender ourselves and everything that we are to Him, so that He can really be our "first love". So long as our love for Him is a divided love, so long as our heart is bound to family, possessions, or the like, He will not count our love to be genuine. Divided love is of so little value to Him that He will not enter into a bond of love with such a soul, for this bond presupposes a full mutual love. Because our love is so precious to Jesus, because He yearns for our love, He waits for our uncompromising commitment.

Whenever there are two alternatives, true love always chooses Jesus. If, for example, Jesus calls someone into the mission-field, then for Jesus' sake he has to depart from his native land, often leaving his family behind or being separated from his wife for a while. The love for these things has to take second place. Jesus can be our true love, our first love, only if this love takes priority over all others only if, whenever we are faced with the choice between Jesus or people and things, we choose Him. Jesus has

the right to make such a claim upon our love, because there is no one like Him. No one is so full of glory, so full of royal beauty and powerful love as Jesus. His love is so overwhelming, so tender so intimate, so fiery and so strong. No human love could ever be compared with it. No one loves so exclusively, so faithfully and with such loving care. No one exists so exclusively for us as Jesus. Jesus knows what He can bestow with His love. He knows how happy He can make a human soul. That is why He has a thousand times more right than an earthly bridegroom to say, "Give Me everything-your whole love-your first love, for which you would leave earthly things behind, just as a bride would put aside all her other desires and would give up home and fatherland."

Jesus stands before us as One who entreats. He wants to take complete possession of us. His love is a jealous love, because it is so great and filled with such a strong ardor for us (Ex. 34:14). It is a grief to Him when we do not return His love with all that we are and have. His love for us is so powerful that it yearns to receive the ultimate of love from us, and for the true bride there is nothing more blissful than to surrender her whole being, her whole love to the One who loves her. Indeed, if her Bridegroom takes her completely into His possession, it is bliss for her. Divine possession-blessed words! God has taken possession of me. He longs for me so utterly that He is not satisfied until I give myself wholly and completely to Him. Only he who loves Jesus in this way can comprehend Jesus in His deepest nature, for only the soul that has given itself to Him completely in love can experience His great and intimate love.

We remember the rich young ruler. Jesus loved him, and the rich young ruler longed for the love-relationship to God. Jesus saw his deep desire to enter into this fellowship of life and love with God. Jesus showed him the way: to attain the precious pearl, eternal life, one has to sell something, one has to give up something-indeed, one must give up everything. This is inevitable, because the divine, eternal life is loving and this loving must be whole-hearted. In order to give my whole love to Him, I have to forsake other things I love. The rich young ruler went away sorrowful, and to this day (as I have known for myself), we believers are often dismal and depressed. We have not been caught up into His great joy, because the heartfelt, blissful relationship of love to Jesus is lacking. So long as we cannot bring ourselves to give Jesus our first love, we shall not know this relationship. It may be that some are afraid of falling into false asceticism or legalism, but it is usually because we are chained to our earthly possessions, to our honor, to our profession, to people we love, and so on. We will not give Jesus our undivided love.

Jesus said to the rich young ruler: "Sell-give up-follow Me-bind yourself to Me and My way! Out of love give Me your life and everything that makes it rich and desirable for you. Give it to Me-not as an ascetic act, no, out of love and I will give you the eternal, divine, overflowing life of love, which is the richest way of all, and which will make you abundantly happy. For only I can grant the highest life." Jesus can say this, because He is "the Life". Whoever follows Him, whoever joins Him, is joined to that Life, to the stream of life and love that flows without end.

Yes, whoever follows Him receives eternal life. That is what I found. For years I had lived on "cheap grace"-not answering His call for uncompromising discipleship as obligatory for my life. But then the time came when His love overwhelmed me. Then, as His disciple I consciously chose His way. In the affairs of life, I tried to choose the lowly place, the way of poverty, the way of the Lamb which is described in the Sermon on the Mount. I tried not to insist upon being right, not to strike back and not to retaliate when I was wronged. During the war and the post-war period, I gave up my last possessions according to Jesus' commandment: "Give and it will be given to you ..." (Luke 6: 38). From then on I knew for myself that whoever follows Jesus is really joined to the "eternal Life", to the spring of love that flows without end. I knew that this spring of love was poured out most into the hearts of the sinful and the poor. Ever since I

had begun to take seriously Jesus' call to discipleship, I have been shown the real, true, divine standards for my life. Over and over again I sinned against them, but my sins drove me straight into the arms of Jesus, impelled me to claim His redeeming blood and reopened the fountain of His love.

In Gethsemane, Jesus waited with such yearning in His heart for His disciples to stand by His side and show Him their love, but He sought and waited in vain. While He was in Bethany before His passion, He had also looked for love. There He found someone, who sympathized with Him and understood how heavy His heart was, because the time had come for Him to begin His road of sorrows. This was Mary. Her love had shown her how deeply grieved was His soul, and she did what she could do for Him. Her entire concern was to comfort and refresh Him. That is why she did not give her money to the poor (and so incurred the disciples' reproach), but rather "wasted" it on Jesus Himself (Matt. 26: 8, 12). She wanted to comfort and refresh Him, because He was so grieved.

I shall never forget the time when it sank into my heart that because Jesus is the same today as He was yesterday, and because His heart is still suffering today, He is waiting for us to make Him happy and to refresh Him, yes, as the scriptures say, to be comforters for Him (Psalm 69:20). Since that time, my first concern has been Jesus Himself and not my ministry for Him, although I have throughout sought to fulfill that ministry. Now I was concerned about if one may express it this way the ministry unto Jesus. Since that time adoration has burned in my heart. I was grieved for Jesus' sake, because He received so little love in words and songs of adoration. Since then adoration has never been lacking in my prayer life. Although I am a pronounced active and social type, from that time on I have been constrained to spend every free minute in my room so that I could talk to Jesus in prayer. I sense that He is waiting. A bridegroom always waits for His bride to come to Him so that He can carry on a dialogue of love with her.

Jesus is yearning to have fellowship with us and to hear words of love drop from our lips. He is waiting for us. He wants us to be close to Him. He wants to speak to us in our hearts, to cultivate love's intimate relationship with us. Only in times of quiet when no one else distracts us, and nothing else draws us away, can Jesus visit us with His love. Let him who wishes to know the presence of Jesus and who desires to enter into bridal love for Jesus keep his times of quiet holy and faithfully for Him.

Jesus is waiting for our love. As important as our sacrifices and our obedience to the commandments are for God (the rich young ruler sacrificed, and kept the commandments), they are not enough. Sacrifices and obedience do not necessarily yield the "eternal, divine life". Love does not necessarily pulsate through them. Jesus is pulsating life and love and He wants to impart His nature to us. Therefore, only our love, which stems from the divine, eternal life which He has granted to us, is the proper response to His love for us. This love leads us to keep His commandments, which are His wishes for us. It will lead us to bring Him many gifts, and to offer Him sacrifices-but in a different spirit.

This love has radiant power. It radiates happiness and great joy. The Bridegroom is the Master of joy, who has been anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows (Psalm 45: 7). His bride participates in this great joy. She belongs to Him, the Sun of love, Who shines forth in light and joy. She is united to Him in marriage. His joyful radiance falls upon her being. It is love which brings more bliss and joy than anything else into the world. The joy of an earthly bride is but a faint shadow of the true, eternal joy of the bride of the Lamb. Bridal love for Jesus is filled with delight. There is no greater, happier, higher, richer love.

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