

Call to Obedience #277
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org

BRIDAL LOVE

By Reimar Schultze

"She has done a beautiful thing to me...
She did what she could." Mark 14:6–8 NIV

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

This passage is one of the most remarkable Scriptures in the Bible because it elevates the modern saint's intimacy with Jesus far beyond anything Adam and Eve ever had in the Garden. To sum it up, Adam and Eve had it better on the outside—we have it better on the inside.

Adam and Eve had a perfect "outside" environment. They had no weeds to pull, no ground to till; they never had to worry about storms, earthquakes, floods, disease and death. They had what retirees are looking for today: no work, no sickness, no problems, always perfect weather—all their needs met.

But Adam and Eve did not have much on the inside. They did not have the presence of the triune God in their hearts. They had God with them but not God within them.

Now, show me your heart. What would you rather have: a perfect environment on the outside or a perfect God in the inside?

And, of course, you know the rest of the story: Adam and Eve, through disobedience, were driven out of their perfect environment, and man, so to speak, has been holding the bag ever since that time until Pentecost.

But then in the Gospel of John, Jesus makes a marvelous prediction, a wonderful prophecy, a glorious promise: the day will come, once the Holy Spirit is poured out, that God will have a new paradise that would far "out-paradise" the old one in Genesis. Father, Son and Holy Spirit would come to dwell in the heart of man if, only if they would obey Jesus.

Adam lost paradise through disobedience—the Christian can get it back through obedience. And the paradise of God's presence has by far a greater glory than the most beautiful landscape without weeds.

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To receive and keep the residence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in our hearts, we must keep the weeds out of our hearts and have such love that we will obey God in everything and do whatever is pleasing to him. And such love is nothing other than Bridal Love, making man a walking tabernacle in a crooked and perverse world.

So then, there are different kinds of love, or perhaps, different levels of love or different degrees of love. Have it your way on this matter. But agree with me on this: there is a difference between Redeeming Love, or the love of sinners, by which "God so loved the world, that he gave..." (John 3:16), Shepherd's Love by which Jesus loves his sheep back into the sheepfold once it has been lost, and then the love that Jesus has for his obedient children that draws his very presence into their hearts—Bridal Love.

This Bridal Love is best portrayed in the Song of Solomon which begins with these words, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine" (1:2).

With this fervent, hot, passionate love of the bride toward the bridegroom, she could then say, "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love" (2:4).

Oh, oh, oh! Read the rest of the Song of Solomon and, with a little blushing, read about an intimacy that has no place anywhere else but in a Bridal Love relationship. So, you see that John 14:23 is the New Testament connection to the Song of Solomon. It is Jesus singing the Song of Solomon—the most beautiful love song of the whole Bible.

Jesus could just have said, "And if you want to know what this intimacy of love I speak of is all about, go read the Song of Solomon because that is exactly why I have placed it into the Bible." In other words, if you do not have red-hot, passionate love in your marriage, and if you did not have that stirring in your heart during courtship, then read what it's all about in the Song of Solomon. Such ought to be the romance between you and your Savior.

Stop here for a moment, and take a deep breath. Isn't this something?

Don't tell me that all loves are the same. I have a love for my wife that I have for nobody else. I have a love for sinners that is different than my love to my wife. I have a love for the back-sliders, but, again, it is different than the love for my wife and for sinners. My wife is the only human person I want to be with almost all the time. I'd rather have her with me under the automobile, changing a muffler, than anybody else. I'd rather have her with me on my vacation than anybody else. She is the only one I want to share my home with all the time. She is the only one that I embrace and kiss. This, my friend, is Bridal Love.

"Jesus answered, If a person [really] loves Me, he will keep My word [obey My teaching]; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home (abode, special dwelling place) with him" (John 14:23 AMPLIFIED). Is it possible to have the holy Trinity live within us if our love does not bring forth the fruit of obedience?

If our love to Jesus is like that of the woman who anointed Jesus for his burial, he will also say to us, "She has done a beautiful thing to me...She did what she could" (Mark 14:6–8 NIV).

Has it ever occurred to you that just as Jesus can anoint you, so you can anoint him and make his heart merry. Indeed, as we can grieve God's heart (Gen. 6:6; Eph. 4:30), so we can bring joy, comfort, and consolation to him. Recall how Jesus said in Psalm 69:20, "I looked for...comforters, but I found none."

The way you become an anointer of Jesus, a comforter of Jesus, is to choose each moment of the day to do that which is pleasing in his sight. And don't look for the big things. It is faithfulness in the little things on a continuous basis that rejoices the heart of your Lover and causes him to embrace you in the Spirit.

Along these lines, Basilea Schlink says in her book My All for Him:

"I bring joy and comfort to my Bridegroom Jesus when I can say in suffering, 'I want to bear this suffering out of love and gratitude to You.'

"When plagued with fear, I declare, 'I trust You. You have conquered my fear.'

"When following a difficult leading, I say, 'I know that You will make the bitter sweet.

"When I declare on paths of chastening, 'Thank You, Jesus. You are my heavenly Bridegroom. In Your love, You want to bless me through chastening and prepare me for the heavenly glory.'

(Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1999, pp. 106–107)

Again, when we respond in such ways, we anoint the Lord Jesus and make his heart merry. Oh, my friend, will you become an anointer of Jesus?

So, Bridal Love is what it is all about, is it not? Consider Jesus' message to the seven churches as recorded in Revelation. The main point of Jesus' first message is love, and so is the main point of Jesus' last message to the churches. To the first church—at Ephesus—Jesus basically says: you have done a lot of good church work. I commend you for it, but "...I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. 2:4–5).

Do you get the picture? Is it not so that generally the time a couple loves each other the most fervently is when they first fall in love? Friends, we are supposed to keep that love up—that first love. This is the love all true converts have toward Jesus on the day of their conversion. Jesus said to the Ephesian church: you have lost that love, and if you don't repent, if you don't get it back, I will withdraw my life, my presence from you.

If we no longer do everything to please Jesus, if we stop anointing him, we have lost our first love, and we have lost the inner presence of the triune God. Look again at John 14:23.

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But Pastor Schultze, you say, I still feel the Lord's presence even though I know I'm not right in every way with God. Yes, you do feel his presence. But you are now in Shepherd's Love and not in Bridal Love. You feel Shepherd's Love. Jesus calls you to come to complete obedience to get back into Bridal Love, to get back to the kissing and embracing.

So, in Jesus' seventh message to the churches, we see him standing on the outside of the human heart. That is a heart that is not entirely surrendered to God. Yes, he is there at the door. He is there, and you sense his presence. But he is on the wrong side of the door (Rev. 3:20). And so he is with all Christians that are not entirely obedient. He is there, but on the outside of the door.

He is knocking at your door to come in. He desires to have fellowship with you. And once he is back in—in Bridal Love—the only way you can keep him there is by overcoming the Self-life that tries to draw you away from his love. But if you continue to overcome the desires of the flesh—the Self—the day will come when you shall sit with Jesus in his throne, even as Jesus will sit in His Father's throne (Rev. 3:21).

Jesus cannot stand to have his bridal souls to sit in one corner of heaven while he sits in another. This is not Bridal Love. As bridal saints, he wants you with him—next to him—in his throne forever and ever and ever.

Oh, Bridal Love! Bridal Love makes every burden lighter. Bridal Love makes all your disappointments diminish. Bridal Love will never make you feel lonely. Bridal Love will give you the courage of a lion and the meekness of a lamb. Bridal Love will always be satisfying. Don't spend another day without it since you know now how to get it!

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