

Christ's Love for His Church

Ephesians 5:21-33

"You are beautiful, but you are empty," he went on. "One could not die for you..."

The Little Prince

Ruysbroec speaks of "the bottomless love of God." No matter how deeply we are immersed in God's love, we never reach the bottom, since that does not exist. God's love has no limit, no end.

Peter van Breemen

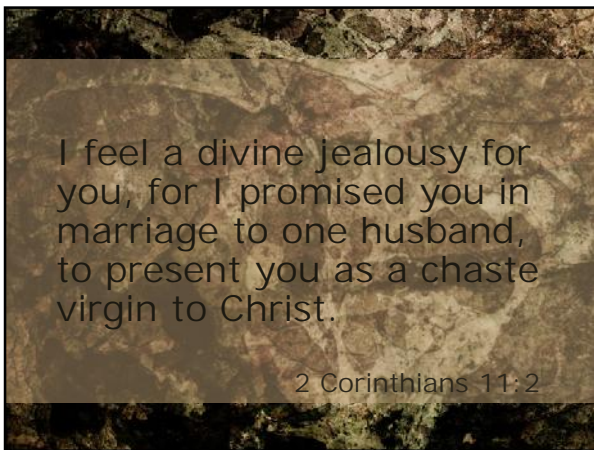
1. The Church: The Bride of Christ

1. Christ as the head of the church (v23): head=source, ie. headwaters of a river
2. Christ as Saviour of the church (v23b)
3. Christ loves his church as a bride (v27)

4. Christ nourishes and cares for the church (v28-29) even as a person cares for his body
5. Christ is one with his church even as a husband and wife are one (v31-33)

Thus says the Lord: I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.

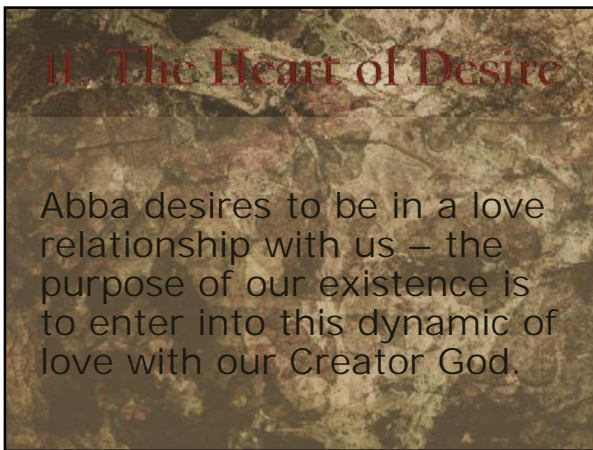
Jeremiah 2:2



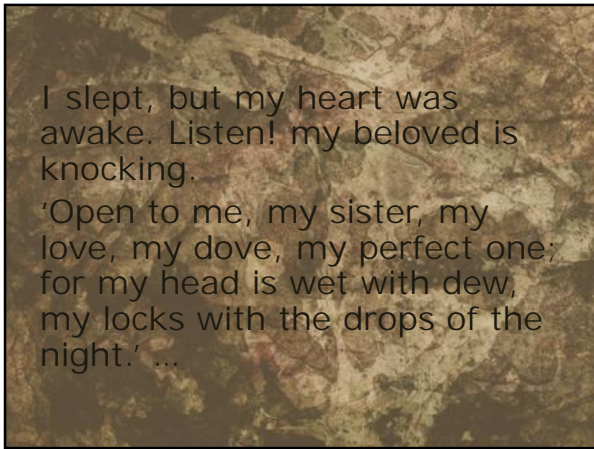
I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:2

II. The Heart of Desire

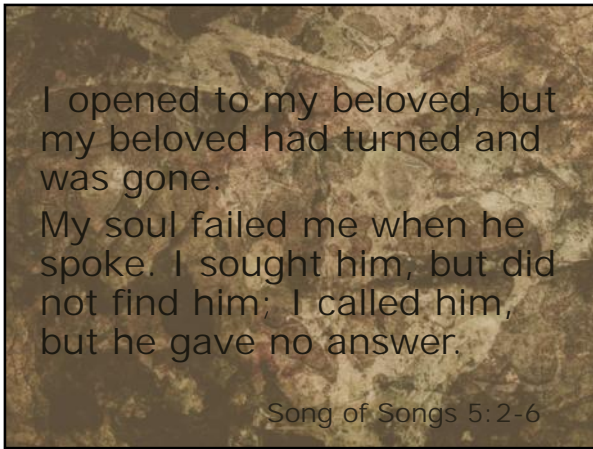


Abba desires to be in a love relationship with us – the purpose of our existence is to enter into this dynamic of love with our Creator God.



I slept, but my heart was awake. Listen! my beloved is knocking.

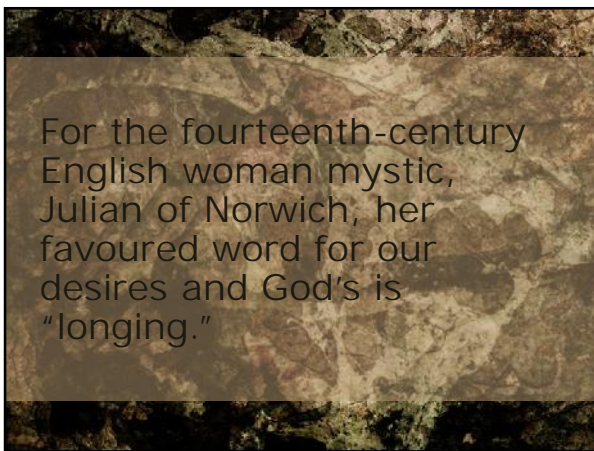
'Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is wet with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.' ...



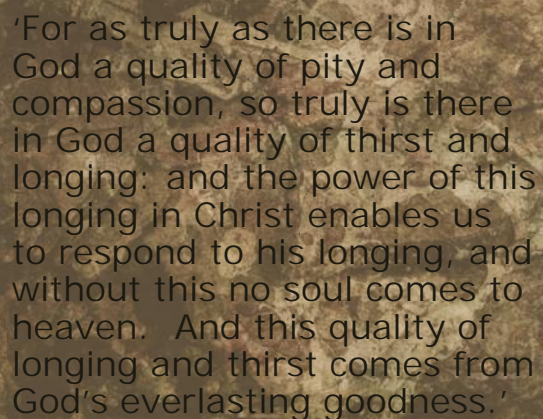
I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and was gone.

My soul failed me when he spoke. I sought him, but did not find him; I called him, but he gave no answer.

Song of Songs 5:2-6



For the fourteenth-century English woman mystic, Julian of Norwich, her favoured word for our desires and God's is "longing."



'For as truly as there is in God a quality of pity and compassion, so truly is there in God a quality of thirst and longing: and the power of this longing in Christ enables us to respond to his longing, and without this no soul comes to heaven. And this quality of longing and thirst comes from God's everlasting goodness.'

In other words, God's fundamental desire is that we are to become united with God and to share in God's own "bliss."

Philip Sheldrake

III. God Descending to His Bride

The challenge we face is that God is invisible and seems to be unavailable - as a result God comes down to us in Christ (John1:14)

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them;

Revelation 21:2-3

And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

Revelation 21:10

The question we face is:

- Do we want a God who comes down to us? or
- Do we prefer to keep God at a distance?

What is the nature of our true desire for God?

IV. Fueling the Fire of Love

1. A daily reading of the scriptures to renovate our minds
2. A daily time of giving thanks; ie. the point of the feeding miracles (Mark 8:1-10) "the abundance of God"
3. A daily time in silence to discern God's voice (Psalm 62:1-5)
4. A daily conversation with Jesus to speak with Jesus as a friend (John 15:14)
5. A daily commitment to compassion and service to others (Matthew 28:31-46)
6. A daily awareness of our spiritual senses – to respond to God's touch in our lives
7. The ultimate characteristic of spiritual fervency is love (1 Corinthians 13:13)
- to live in love with Christ who loves his church even as a husband loves his bride

