

Love

God gave everything for us at Calvary. He poured out His life, which is the best definition of love I know. We have all (I hope) known someone who sacrificed for us. But he or she did not give everything. God did. He died for us.

He died for us in order to gain us: He died to draw near to us, to be with us, to calm us with His Presence, to speak words we can hear, to nourish us with His body and blood. He 'who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see' (1T 6:16) humbled Himself in His Son and came closer to us than a mother or a lover ever could.

Love means God comes near to us in Jesus. We who are little and rebellious and unable to love Him back now have access to God through this Jesus. We are not alone anymore. Because of Him, we need not be destabilized by other lovers. All He asks is that we give everything to Him.

That seems like a lot. But it's the only way we can live happy lives. To know Him but to serve other gods is torture, hell before hell. Discovering the secret of surrender opens to us the music of the spheres, the peace that surpasses understanding, unbounded joy. We die to worldly distractions in order to rest in holy love, to enjoy the fruit of His suffering--the Creator's desire for intimate union with His human creation.

I want to rest in the arms of the One who fought for me. I want to know that sweetness in full. To do so, Oswald Chambers quotes St. Paul: 'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me' (Gal. 2:20); "These words mean the breaking of my independence with my own hand and surrendering to the supremacy of the Lord Jesus...it means breaking the husk of my individual independence of God, and the emancipating of my personality with Himself, not for my own ideas, but for absolute loyalty to Jesus."

Lent then is an opportunity to let go of specific distractions so we can know Him more. It is simple: we give Him more space to love us; in gratitude, we love Him back. That rhythm sets in motion the ordering of our other loves, the people He calls us to love.

Immersed in His Spirit of love, we may hurt when we discover that we have loved others poorly, be it in needing another too much out of disordered desire or withholding love because one threatened us or did not give us what we wanted.

Our pain is good. Weep and rejoice in His mercy that renews our efforts to love others better. The Lord is faithful. He will not leave us alone in our human loves. He loves us and them too much! He converts us continuously with His self-giving until we love as He does. By the time we see Him face-to-face, we may well love others better than we do now.