

# K-032 Bridal Love

by Art Katz

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*Art Katz emphasizes the paramount importance of love in fulfilling God's commandments and living a life reflective of His kingdom.*

**Duration:** 51:58

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 30:1-5, Mark 12:28-31, Luke 10:25

**Topics:** "Bridal Love"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of love in the Christian life. He highlights that living is deeply connected to loving, and that our love should not exceed our living. The speaker also addresses the decline in fervent love and devotion among believers, noting a nonchalant attitude towards corporate worship. He references the story of the lawyer in Luke 10 who asks Jesus about inheriting eternal life, and Jesus responds by emphasizing the commandment to love God and neighbor. The speaker concludes by mentioning a passage in Deuteronomy that speaks about God calling His people back to Himself in the last days.

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## Transcript

Love never fails, isn't that right? So I can't fail. And it's the subject love that's in my heart this morning. Surprised, for me, that's not usually my forte.

But it's on the heart of God, and it's on my heart. I just looked up in the concordance as I was sitting there to see how many times it is that that episode took place or how many times it's recorded. When Jesus was asked, what is the heart of the law? I just feel like reading you each of the times in the gospel that that is recorded.

First, in Matthew 22, and it says in the thirty-fifth verse about a lawyer who asked him a question, tempting him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. I don't know what it is about God's people, a certain kind of naivety in which they think that the law is not fulfilled but absolved or dissolved as if we have no further obligation to consider it. Now, don't tighten up and think that God has sent you a Jew to bring you under legal bondage, but I think it wouldn't hurt to recognize that God has not dissolved the

law, that the law is holy, as Paul says, and that the whole intention of God is to see it fulfilled in the earth through his people.

I think of the remark that Basilia Schlink made, who I shall be quoting shortly more fully, a remark something like this, that the great cancer of Christianity is lovelessness. Are you conscious of that? We're adept in many things and competent in many things and accomplished in many things, but our one profound conspicuous lack is love. That was the subject of part of my remark yesterday in the conference, how Christianity is a call to the impossible.

It's not sentimental love that God is talking about, though God knows we fall short in that as well, but it's a love that exceeds even what human understanding would describe as love. Love one another with a pure heart, fervently, unto unfeigned love of the brethren. And I'm almost willing to suggest that we have been laboring in a kind of a deception, if we think that the full gospel bear hug or backslap somehow fulfills this requirement of God.

Thou shalt love. You know, if you just cut that commandment right there. Thou shalt love with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, all thy might.

In the Gospel of Mark, in the 12th chapter, in 28th verse, one of the scribes came, having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is, hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, well, master, thou hast said the truth, for there is one God, and there is none other but he. And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

I think if we would just bring that up to date, we would say it's more than all communities. It's more than all ministries. It's more than all.

This is the first, the great, of all commandments. It's more. Maybe we need to be reminded because we get lost in all of the demands of community and sometimes get preoccupied with that which is before our noses and tend to forget what it's all about.

That community and ministry and discipleship, the scriptures themselves, all that God gives is to bring us to this great end, which is love. It's the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. It's the first and the greatest.

Ironic if we should lose that while we're knocking about trying to perfect or to obtain community or any such good thing. It's more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he had answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God and no man after that dares ask him any question.

I'm just becoming conscious in the course of this eight week, nine week trip how the kingdom of God is not possible without love. It's love which is at its heart. It's love which brings it to be.

Love is the means by which the kingdom of God is established. They didn't sit down on the day of Pentecost and set up a whole directive of how one should now live having received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. What should be the order of their lives and how should they share? The powerful baptism of love which they received had its own logic and its own spontaneous overflow and outworking.

It happened instantly and spontaneously that they became a new community of love. They had to share. They had to be sacrificial to each other.

They had to seek out one another daily for fellowship. Love demanded it. I wonder how many of the things that we do are an alternative required for the absence of love.

And therefore we have to set up our do's and don'ts and the various other ways that we might somehow harmoniously or agreeably cooperate together. Love is at the heart of the kingdom. Thou art not far from the kingdom, Jesus said.

Maybe God's people need to ask themselves this morning how far they are from the kingdom because you're no closer to the kingdom. You can know all the rules. You can know all of the particulars.

All of the things that distinguish the kingdom of God from lesser kingdoms. But you're no closer to the kingdom than you are to love. In the Gospel of Luke, in the 10th chapter and the 25th verse, it says, And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.

And he, Jesus, said unto him, Thou hast answered right. This do, and thou shalt live. How do you like them apples? This do, and thou shalt live.

Don't you wonder why it is that God is so repetitious? Isn't one account of a single episode sufficient? Why does he have to repeat the same simple episode three times in as many Gospels? Because, dear children, it's a great jewel. It's a jewel with facets. And you need to hold it up to the great light of the Spirit of God and turn it every which way to begin to enjoy and to understand and to receive some of the benefit that is hidden in that precious jewel.

I suppose if there were 30 Gospels, there would have been as many renderings because it is an inexhaustible episode. Thou art not far from the kingdom. This do, and thou shalt live.

I want to say that after 15 years as a believer, I'm coming to the increasing awareness that living is somehow profoundly connected with loving and that our living shall not exceed our loving and that as love is at the heart of the kingdom, it's at the heart of very life. As I said in one of the meetings, there's no way that we're going to love one another fervently on the basis of our own natural temperament. I don't care how Italian you are or Latin or Spanish or whatever nationality it is that's supposed to make one a hot lover.

The kind of fervent love that God is speaking of is a heavenly quality that comes only from above. I think so often that our own shabby, human, temperamental kind gets in the way. And so long as we're determined to operate on that basis and phony it up, we simply cannot receive the holy and perfect thing of God.

This do, and thou shalt live. I think the problem with many of us is that we don't take the commandments seriously. I'm so happy for the exhortation that Mark gave because there is a slipshod, slovenly quality that is coming in to our corporate life.

Meetings are becoming matter of fact. There is a kind of a nonchalant air that seems to characterize God's people. A humdrum kind of bringing yourself to a service on a Sunday with little or no preparation in the spirit.

Hoping against hope or maybe not hoping at all that there's going to be anything distinctive or novel. Kind of obligation that needs to be fulfilled. The same attitude perhaps describes how we feel about the law.

Well, it's there in the book. It's nice, we can nod our head. Yes, it's the first of laws.

But God says, this do, and thou shalt live. Not enough of us are broken by the word. Not enough of us take God's word sufficiently to be brought into crisis by it.

We somehow think that we're fulfilling the requirement of the law when all we're doing is giving the equivalent of a back slap or a bear hug. Lovelessness is the cancer of modern Christianity. She's right.

And maybe she understands it so well because in her own experience, God convicted her. She writes, my sins stood naked and exposed in the light of God's word. I had not taken the command of Jesus seriously.

For he had called for a love that sets him above everything, that loves him with all our might, that devotes to him everything that we are and have. Thou shalt love. No ifs, ands, or buts.

It's not an option. This do, and thou shalt live. And how shalt thou love with all thy heart, all thy soul, all thy mind, and all thy strength.

I wonder if we did it with all, if we would have anything left to occupy our seductive eyeballs. I wonder if we would have anything left to titillate our covetous hearts. I wonder if there would be anything left in our minds to be titillated by merchandise, catalogs, and other kinds of visions of things and possessions that are not legal, and do not lend themselves to the kingdom walk, if we loved him with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength.

I want to say, guys, there's very little in the world that requires all. And I would say that one of the factors that contributed to the failure of my life as a modern man in the world that brought me to a pitch of desperation that made me a candidate for God in my 35th year was the fact that there was nothing ever in 35 years that demanded all from me. I was a university graduate.

I had been in the service. I was a teacher. I had been in many kinds of occupations.

I had traveled widely. I had been married. I'd had many relationships.

Nothing ever required all. It's amazing how little it takes to get by in the world. In fact, the most repeated utterance I recall from my teaching years is the nod of students that came up to my desk at the beginning of every school year to ask, Mr. Katz, what's the minimal amount that we need to do in order to get by? Well, did Jesus say to that man, Thou art not far from the kingdom? How far are you? There are two kingdoms in collision, and the one that is earthy and has its headquarters below is the one whose axiom is, what does it take to get by? What's the minimal amount that you need to get by? What does it take to organize your face for a Sunday morning to get by? What's the minimal amount of a little bear hug and

back slap that'll take to get by? What does it take just to kind of flash a little toothy smile or say an appropriate word and make that to count as a substitute for love? How far are you from the kingdom? This do and thou shalt live.

How much are you living? Love is the answer. Love is the answer. Even the world sings it, though they don't understand it.

And I think that we might be just as guilty. She said, only such a love is obedient to the first commandment. Such a love.

Only such a love. I'll tell you what kind of love this is. It's called bridal love.

And the book of Revelation gives just a little stroke of the artistic brush of God in showing us a bride at the very consummation and end of the age that is prepared for a bridegroom, adorned for a bridegroom, coming down out of heaven, having the glory of God. It's hard for us to understand such language because we've lost the whole sense of holy matrimony. You know that? Even marriage among believers has become rather a nondescript matter of fact, matter of convenience.

I just wonder if anybody anymore is keeping a hope chest. Probably some of you younger ones here have never before heard the phrase until I just now expressed it. I'll use even an older word that you're not likely to know at all.

It's called a trousseau. You see, I'm just old enough a crock to remember very faintly, because it was probably the last of its being expressed before World War II. You know how World War II has changed everything.

It's devastated the modern world. It'll never come together again. All the king's men will never put Humpty Dumpty back together again.

Whatever residue there was of Christian content in Western culture is gone. And we know that the world is hell-bent now to drink the cup of abomination, to be married with a whore, and the whole spirit of fornication is in the world. Easy come, easy go.

Cheap relationships on the make. Married, get unmarried. And isn't that the way Jesus said the age would end, that they would marry and be given in marriage? Easy come, easy go.

Who's collecting a trousseau now? Show me the young girl who lives in anticipation of one marriage that shall be the consummation of her entire life, who has no thought that there would ever again be a second bridegroom, only one for whom her whole life is being fitted. She has no other purpose for her being than this one great consummating event, and she lives in the anticipation of it. She lives in the anticipation of it.

I don't think we're really living, except that we live in the anticipation for which God is fitting us at the end of the age to be a bride for a bridegroom, having the glory of God. I'll tell you, it's going to be a bride who is drooling, salivating, waiting and anticipating the day that she can be eternally joined with that bridegroom. It'll be a bride worthy of him, it says, having the glory of God, being clear as crystal.

Such a love is bridal love. It's passionate, it's fervent, it's absolute, it's unqualified, it's sacrificial, it pants, it waits, it's full of expectancy. You know what I'll tell you guys? You have a love like that for the bridegroom, and that expectation of that heavenly event, and you know what? It'll change your marriage on earth here,

now.

Your marriage will begin to live. How many of our marriages are humdrum? And how many of us are compensating for humdrum marriages by evangelical activity? A law of compensation, filling the void by somehow doing something for God when we're defeating the whole purpose for our being. He would have us to be lovers.

This is the first of all the commandments. Thou shalt love with all. She said, Heartsick, I began to long for the renewal of this first love, and not only to long for it, but to pray and to beseech God for it.

I must abide in this love, otherwise all my service for Jesus would come under judgment. Imagine doing anything for God that is not done for Him with the motive of love. I don't know what to compare it, except some kind of act of, what's the word, fornication is when you're doing it with someone with whom you're not legally married.

But even with someone with whom you're married, some kind of dry, listless exercise that's wanting some lubrication, or otherwise it chafes, and renders no satisfaction, but is a grisly performance in order to fulfill an obligation. That's a picture of service rendered unto God without love. That's the way He sees it.

That's the way He experiences it. That's the way it actually is as God sees it. And the way God sees it is the way that it truly is.

For truth is nothing more nor less than this, everything as God sees it. How much of our service for God, our song service, our preaching, our teaching, our witnessing, our evangelical activity, our community life, is something that chafes Him, that is dry and listless and rubs, but gives no satisfaction, joyless because it's loveless. She says, Now I saw clearly, life depends upon love.

It's an interesting portion of Scripture in the book of Deuteronomy that pertains to the Jewish people, but I think it might also well pertain and have some validity for the Israel of God in general. It speaks about the last days when God shall call His people again to Himself, when they shall return unto the Lord and shall obey His voice, when He shall call them back from their captivity and will return and gather Him, this is the 30th chapter, from all the nations where the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. The Lord thy God, it says in the 5th verse, will bring thee again into the land which thy fathers possessed and thou shalt possess it.

And He will do thee good and multiply thee above thy fathers. Maybe that's a picture of us also. We've been brought back to the land.

We've been brought out of captivity. We're legally and rightfully, technically, in the right place. But there's yet something wanting, which is expressed in the 6th verse when He says, And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul that thou mayest live.

Hmm. What is this? Something is required from God to give us the capacity to love the Lord thy God with all. It's a cutting of the foreskin, of the fleshly part of the heart.

First, they're coming back to the land and then a circumcision of God by which something is lopped off that has become overgrown and calloused and become like a thick membrane over the heart that renders it feelingless and insensitive. I'll tell you where you come for that circumcision. It's the cross of Christ Jesus.

Hallelujah for the cross. Always available. There's room at the cross for you.

And I think it requires more than a once-and-for-all coming. It may require, indeed, a frequent coming, if not a daily coming, because there's something about our fleshly hearts that tends to become overgrown and calloused. Maybe it happens with a word.

Maybe it happens with a look, with a gesture. Maybe an act of indifference. Maybe a failure to love.

Maybe a deferring to laziness or thoughtlessness or mindlessness. Whatever it is, I think that in every loveless act, something like a tissue and membrane forms over the heart. And then the next one, yet another, yet another, yet another.

And something builds and builds and builds until we've got some thick membranous substance that has overgrown our heart that keeps us from loving with all. When's the last time you came for a fresh circumcision of your heart? You remember that whore who came to that Pharisee's house where Jesus was eating? And the man thought he was a great hotshot and quite a progressive religionist. Heads and shoulders above his contemporaries because he was willing to have Jesus come into his house and feed him.

But that woman, from the moment he arrived, did not cease to weep and wash Jesus' feet with her tears and wipe them with her hair and to anoint his feet with an expensive fragrance. All the while, the Pharisee murmured, if this man were a prophet, he would know who that woman is. And Jesus turned to him and said, I came to your house, but you gave me no water for my feet, nor a kiss for my cheek, nor oil for my head.

These are the most elementary things that pertain to elementary hospitality. You don't even have to be a believer for this. But you didn't even provide these fundamental things.

But this woman has not ceased from the moment that I've arrived to wash my feet with her tears and to wipe them with her hair and to anoint my feet with this ointment. And he said, therefore I tell you that he who has been forgiven much loves much. It says in another place of an episode like that where a woman broke an expensive alabaster box and poured the fragrance out upon the body of the Lord that the whole house was filled with the fragrance.

You know that it's interesting that in every case where this took place, either the Pharisees or the disciples themselves murmured and had indignation at the waste. But you want to know something about bridal love? It's always extravagant. It's always wasteful.

It always goes beyond that which is minimally required and necessary. It'll always fill the house with fragrance. I suppose our houses of God are filled with fragrance in proportion as they are filled with light, in proportion as they are filled with love.

And I think just that the long and the short of it is that our houses might resound with good choruses and right teachings and discipleship and all of the other things that are true and good, but they are bereft and void of the fragrance of Christ. And I think that the answer is this. We've not been forgiven much.

Well, you say, Art, if I was a whore, if I was a flagrant sinner, I would have as much reason then as that prostitute to be grateful for the forgiveness which was extended to me at the cost of his suffering and death, and I would love much. Well, too bad, I guess, that we're so righteous, because what is a whore is

one who has scattered her love about prolifically and indiscriminately. It's one who cannot keep her eyes for one, but requires many.

It's one whose eye is always open for a new kind of an affair or a titillation, because she cannot find full satisfaction and delight in that single one, always open for something seductive, some new possibility, some temptation, always easy to be intrigued or to be seduced or to seduce. The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul that thou mayest live. What a pitiful life a prostitute must have.

It's not living at all. I remember earlier in my life, in that journey that resulted in my conversion, coming to Amsterdam, I sometimes tell this episode. I'll never forget it.

You know that many of these western cities in Europe have prescribed areas in these cities set aside by the city fathers for prostitution and pornography. It's all legalized, and it's all governmental, operated, supervised, and so on. And as I walked through that section in Amsterdam, that day I was shocked.

Talk about merchandise in the windows. Big windows with women sitting in the windows with a red light on, with their legs crossed, showing their wares, hoping to attract off the sidewalk someone who will purchase. You can't believe how bizarre it is.

I saw the same thing in Barcelona on a Friday or a Saturday night, where hordes of men clutching their pesos go through the streets in a kind of a fever heat, looking for some kind of thing that will requite them. And you see these gargoyles standing on the corner, so bent out of shape, literally, so deranged, so misused, so abused, losing whatever natural beauty or attractiveness they ever had, having to cover the defect horribly with mascara and makeup. Pitiful, abused women.

The antithesis, the opposite of God, all that God ever intended. Not knowing love, and therefore required horribly to work out such merchandise as this, to the point where they lose the image of God in them. Well, in Amsterdam I saw a woman standing by a lamppost.

It must have been about a block away. And I'll tell you, from that distance she looked very attractive, quite shapely. But as I came closer and closer to this woman under the lamppost, what at first appeared attractive, as I saw her increasingly under the light, became a horror.

Because she was not living, she was dying. Every act of intimacy so-called further compromised and reduced and brought her into a kind of death that was written even on her face and in her body. As though the darkness might conceal it, the light could not.

To love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. You know what happened to Bessalee Ishling? She repented of her lovelessness. She read in Revelation the great cry of God about that church that did everything right.

They were serving God admirably, but it had lost its first love. That's true of some of us, and of others of us, we have never had it. How many of you had, from the very beginning of your conversion, the birth of a profound burning love for God that eclipsed everything and made you to be his fool? I have to say I never had that.

I think I'm first growing into it now. Maybe the reason is I was never saved as a sinner. I was saved as a man who loved truth and was brought face to face with it and could not turn away.

It's since that calling on the name of the Lord that I'm beginning to recognize what sin means and what he had to pay for it that has brought me to the cross to apprehend his sufferings and to see them, to contemplate his wounds, to contemplate the agony that he suffered there, and each time I behold him there on that cross, which is the picture of love poured out, that's the ultimate statement of love that suffers, and nothing else but love will enable you to share that suffering. It's there that my heart is circumcised each time. I come to the place of circumcision when I contemplate Jesus on the cross.

She says she learned to weep over her sins. I fell at the feet of both men and God, and God granted me a personal love to the Lord. Then she writes, No more could suffering and the cross come upon me as an oppressive power, for now I have learned to go the way of the cross.

His love to me and mine to him transformed the cross. How many are there this morning who recoil from the word suffering? Do I gotta? Well, I guess if I gotta, I gotta. How many of us get a little itchy every time there's a teaching on the cross or on the issue of suffering or tribulation or persecution? How many of us can't even bear to contemplate that we should ever be tortured or suffer for Christ's sake? Did you ever read the autobiography of Madame Guion, G-U-Y-O-N, a French saint who lived in the early 18th century? Remarkable book.

Remarkable. I think if I had to make one statement for that woman, it would have to be this. She was a passionate lover of God.

And isn't it interesting? I don't know of another one who suffered as excruciating a life as she. She was born to every advantage. What they say about the silver spoon in the mouth? She had maids and servants, and God in that situation was able to bring her again and again and again to share in her sufferings.

She ran to embrace the sufferings of the Lord. She didn't just, when it came, receive it with a kind of resignation, well, I guess if I got to. She went out of her way to pursue his sufferings and to share them because she loved him.

It transformed for her the cross from some kind of horrible thing that I guess we have to accept to something to which she rushed to embrace. It takes the sting out, love will. Maybe that's what enabled him also to embrace it.

It transformed the cross. Perfect love casteth out all fear. May I even just say perfect love casteth out? Oh, I know that you have quite an emphasis on deliverance, but I want to tell you this flat out on the authority of God.

There's a greater thing than all of those wearisome sessions that keep you up through the hours of the night. That is the painful necessity because of our lovelessness. You know that? So much of what we have to do to rid saints of ugly things and to get us to some kind of working order is an alternative to love.

Perfect love casteth out not only all fear, but everything that has its origin in hell, in the world, in the flesh. Perfect love casteth out. Maybe the searching for memories and the healing of the inner man and all of this other jazz that we're required so wearily to pursue is a statement of the fact of our lovelessness.

Perfect love casteth out. Jesus said, thou art not far from the kingdom. Love is the key to the kingdom.

She writes, the bridal love to Jesus must be the alpha and omega of our life. She says, in the measure that my love to Jesus grew, people and the things of this world became unimportant. They no longer held me in bondage.

Here's the answer to the seductiveness of the world. It's love for Him, bridal love. It's not wincing.

It's not pursing your lips. It's not gritting your teeth. It's not averting your eyes when you walk down a shopping mall.

It's being filled with perfect love for Him. It'll inoculate you against the world. What has the world got that can compare to the luster and the glory of the Lord for whom we are being fitted to be a bridegroom for Him for eternity? She recites the scripture in Colossians where it says, Seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father.

You know, I'd like to stop. Seek the things that are above where Christ is. If you're not seeking the things that are above because Christ is there, you're not going to find the things that are above.

He's the key to heaven as He's the key to the kingdom, not because He fits in with certain theological truths, but because He's the object for which we're being fitted to love. Seek the things that are above where Christ is. You're seeking the things that are above only because that's where He is, and we'll have no more of heaven and no more heavenly mindedness than we have a love for Him that will bring us to the place which He occupies.

Can you see that heaven is God's alternative to earth? It'll save us from earthly things. Love casteth out. Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, with all thy soul, all thy mind, all thy strength.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God and live. Love is the answer, guys, really. So, let's just take a look in conclusion.

In Revelation, I just love these words so, that describe these consummating events. In the 21st chapter of Revelation, in which John saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea, and I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Such a bride needs to be prepared.

I want to ask you if your daily life is preparing you as a bride. I think if you'll be prepared as a bride, you'll need not have to wonder whether you're adequately prepared as a disciple. Being a bride will cover all the bases.

Are you being prepared as a bride, adorned for the bridegroom, coming down out of heaven? Our communities are nothing more than the apparatus of God to fit us for this. Day by day, walking in the light as he is in the light. You know how it began for Bessalia Schlenk? She was a tremendously successful woman, very gifted teacher, doing a lot of service for God, but the Lord smote her and convicted her by the Holy Spirit out of his word when she recognized she had lost her first love, or perhaps had never had it.

She needed a flesh circumcision of the heart, and she came to the one place only where it can be given, at the cross of Christ Jesus. There the fleshly thing was cut, that she might love and that she might live with all. Thou shalt.

There's room at the cross for you. I don't know the song. There's room at the cross for you.

Though millions have come, there is still room for one. There is room at the cross for you. Don't think it's a one-time only.

It's an eternal standard of God. And if you can't come and embrace that bridegroom in that condition, don't think that you're going to be a candidate also to meet him in precious bridal adornment, and he in his beauty. If you have no stomach for him in his wounds, and in his suffering, if you don't love him enough to meet him there, don't think that you're going to be also a candidate to meet him in his glory.

Hallelujah for the cross. For all those who recognize that their heart has become overgrown, membranous, thick, clotted, insensitive. Getting by.

There's a place of cutting always fresh at the cross that your heart might be circumcised, that you might love with all and live. I'll tell you what, it'll change your marriage. You have this bridal anticipation for him, it'll change your earthly marriage now.

I'll tell you what, you love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength, and you'll have to love his creation too. You'll have to love his other children also. I'll tell you what, you'll get so passionate and so carried away, you'll be able even to love those who oppose you, and even to love his enemies, and your own.

Love is the answer. Not our shabby little human, sentimental, schmaltzy kind, but that burning, fervent kind that comes down from above, and that emanates out of a heart that is cut and circumcised at the cross of Christ Jesus. Anything less than that is not living.

Let's bow our heads and pray for a fresh visit to Calvary. Only the repentant can come there in truth. Those who are no longer satisfied with getting by, with sham, with make-believe, with posturing, getting by in their own natural amiability and nice guy-ism, who recognize that only his love, pouring through our cut heart, is the kind that is fervent and that makes life living.

So precious gods, do for us what you did for Basilia Schlenk. That will transform all of our work for you, all of our service to you, as some kind of dry, abrasive, rubbing kind of a thing that chafes and gives no eternal satisfaction. It's only obligation, and it's the spirit with which we come to your Sunday service.

It's the spirit which we carry on day by day. And Lord, we repent, because we did not understand how far we were from the kingdom. That there's a commandment that must be fulfilled, thou shalt, no ifs, no ands, no buts.

It's a requirement, and we thank you for a cross, precious God, that shall make it possible. And I just ask you to receive at this cross, where there's always room for one, as many as shall come to you in truth and repentance this morning. Lord, we are desirous of the day when the house of God shall again be filled with the fragrance of outpoured love, of extravagant love, of wasteful love that goes beyond mere utility, mere necessity, mere requirement, and fills the house.

May our marriages be perfumed with that fragrance. May our families bear it. May the communities of God be this more than anything else, the community of His burning love.

Thank you for the cross. Thank you that you did not shrink from it because love compelled you. Though it was public, though it was shameful, though it was humiliating, you came and saved us from lovelessness.

And now I just ask you in the name of Jesus and as a minister of this gospel for any of you who are really earnest and serious and love Him enough also to suffer the humiliation and the shame of a public coming. If you are really repentant, if you are sick in your heart for your lovelessness, if you want that which comes from heaven, that there can be a thou shalt with all. Will you come to this cross in truth publicly? How shall you do it? How about getting down from your seat and kneeling there? Right at your seat.

Thank you. This is a real God and a real gospel, a real cross, a real word, a real spirit, a God who speaks and a God who hears, a God who has been chafed and rubbed raw by our acts unto Him that have been without the lubricant of love, who has seen our loathing eye, seen our foolish hearts, has seen how easily beguiled we are by the temptations that are about us because we have not loved with all. Will you confess it before Him? Ask for a fresh circumcision of a heart that has grown thick that He shall give you a first love, a bridal love, a burning love for the bridegroom, that you can not only fulfill the first commandment but the one which was like unto it also, that you might love thy neighbor as thyself.

And in this is all of the law and the prophets comprehended. May God have a people who fulfill the law and the prophets to the glory of His name and the fragrance of His presence in the earth for Jesus' sake. Hallelujah.

Let Him render your heart. Break it before Him.

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