

(Pdf Book) My All for Him / 5 Chapters

by Basilea Schlink

First love is an exclusive love for Jesus that gives Him first place in our lives and is the key to perseverance and true discipleship.

Scripture: Psalm 23:3, Matthew 9:15, Matthew 13:45-46, Luke 6:38, Luke 10:42, John 7:37, Ephesians 5:32, Philippians 4:8, 1 John 4:19, Revelation 2:4

Topics: "Ebooks", "Discipleship", "First Love"

Description

Basilea Schlink emphasizes the necessity of 'first love' for Jesus, which is crucial for enduring the trials of our time. This love, akin to 'bridal love,' is a powerful force that enables believers to face suffering and persecution with courage and joy. Schlink illustrates that true discipleship stems from this intimate love for Christ, which should be undivided and prioritized above all else. She encourages believers to cultivate this love through personal devotion and worship, as it is the key to genuine happiness and fulfillment in their faith. Ultimately, she reminds us that Jesus, as our Bridegroom, desires a deep, loving relationship with each of us, inviting us to surrender our hearts fully to Him.

Transcript

The following five chapters are an excerpt from the book: "My All for Him".

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"Only one thing is needed." Luke 10:42 NIV

I

Of Prime Importance

Supremely important today, as possibly never before, is "first love" for Jesus. Only when we have this love will we be able to bear the hard times that lie ahead, hard times such as the world has not yet known. More Christians have been martyred in the last one hundred years than in the previous centuries put together. We live in an age of great apostasy and widespread deception. Whose faith is strong enough to stand up under intense trial? Who can endure?--Only those who have this "first love" (Revelation 2:4 NKJV), the hallmark of the early Christians.

Reports tell of the passionate love for Jesus with which they faced martyrdom; it was, in fact, their first love for Him that compelled them to embrace suffering for His sake. As we will see, first love is a force to be reckoned with. Its power is greater than the power of suffering, which can have a debilitating and depressing effect on us, making us cowardly and despairing, rendering us ineffective. We need first love in order to persevere. Only one power is stronger than the power of suffering: the divine life contained in love.

God is Love. Whenever He pours out His divine life into human hearts, people begin to love Him intimately and fervently. And nothing in this world--not even the greatest sufferings or horrors, not even martyrdom itself--can quench this divine life, which is immortal, beyond the power of death. First love--a most precious gift! First love--the one thing that is needed. First love--for which we should pray more than anything else. From Scripture we may infer another name for first love--and that is "bridal love."

We read, for example, of Jesus alluding to Himself as the Bridegroom (Matthew 9:15). Then, too, Scripture refers to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and to the Bride of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9). Since the chosen ones of the Lord are collectively called the Bride, it follows that individually each possesses bridal love. From what the Bible says, it is evident that the love between a bridegroom and a bride in a human relationship is but a shadow of the love between the heavenly Bridegroom and His bride.

All human love pales in comparison with this first love, this strong, exclusive love for Jesus. Yet there is a similarity. Bridal love for Jesus is undivided like the love of a bride, who has given her heart to her bridegroom and has eyes only for him. In the same way we are to love our heavenly Bridegroom with an undivided heart. Above all, first love, or bridal love, is of prime importance today in view of Jesus' Second Coming. When Jesus returns, it will be both as King and as Bridegroom.

As Bridegroom He will be coming only for those aflame with bridal love for Him, those whose very love has led them to prepare for their Bridegroom and for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Bridal love, which we so much need, is not an impossible goal. Jesus, who first loved us, has planted the seed of this love within our hearts. "We love, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). A gift from Him, it is a reflection of His own love and His innermost being. So strong, so pure, so fervent is this love that its potential is unlimited.

This love can achieve far more than all natural abilities and strengths, for it is the greatest force in heaven and on earth, possessing the greatest authority because it comes from the heart of Jesus. It was Jesus' love that constrained Him to suffer for the redemption of the world. Bridal love, that reflection of His own love, now gives us the grace to suffer and to sacrifice. Bridal love can impart such strength to us, because it makes us one with the Lord of heaven and earth, the Almighty.

One day, in eternity, we will discover--if we have not already done so--nothing is to be so desired in our life of faith as first love, bridal love for Jesus. It was for this love that we were created and redeemed. This love alone can make us genuinely happy, bringing lasting joy. It is the key to true discipleship. Jesus is waiting for us to love Him with first love, bridal love--for He Himself is the Bridegroom. "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it." Matthew 13:45-46

2 First Love--The Great Discovery

For a long time I could not find the key, the answer to my questions: What is true discipleship? What does Jesus want? On the one hand, He calls us to an uncompromising discipleship: to give up everything, to lose our lives. He calls us to leave father and mother. On the other hand, we are to honour father and

mother. The Bible also says that the whole creation is the work of God's hands. Since human intelligence and skills are part of that whole creation, should not those aspects of human civilization and culture that are "true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable" (Philippians 4:8 TEV) be held in high esteem?

But if we give up everything and live a life of uncompromising discipleship, we become ascetic escapists, rejecting everything God has given. Surely that cannot be right. So what is the answer? Many voices reached my ears. Leaders from a variety of Christian traditions tried to convince me that theirs was the only way. One view was that, as the body of Christ, we should dissociate ourselves from our contemporaries, virtually leaving the perishing to perish. In addition, we were not to concern ourselves with events of national significance.

Discouraged from exploring the worlds of art, music, and literature, we were not even to enjoy nature. We were to live in one realm only--the Word of God and the fellowship of believers. For a while I went along with this, but the reality proved disappointing. Those who subscribed to this view tended to be joyless and lacking in thanksgiving for the heavenly Father's good gifts. Gratitude for the revelation of His awesome greatness in nature was somehow missing. Furthermore, I often found such people narrow-minded and rigid, lacking love for others.

At the same time they were very self-righteous, convinced that they had a monopoly of the truth. Then I heard a very different view, and this, too, I explored. Here were people who were more open, loving, natural, and relaxed. I discovered more of the love and warmth of Jesus in their lives and personalities than I had found in the others. These people did not insist that they alone were the Body of Christ. Actually, they did not speak very much at all about their conversion and seemed to be quite at home in the world.

Yet this very point made me uneasy. Often they had so conformed to the world that they appeared to have lost sight of Scripture's warnings: "Do not love the world" (1 John 2:15); "Do not be conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2); "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14). They seemed to have forgotten that the Bible calls us as Christians to follow Jesus and go the way of the cross, dying to self and doing without. Still I wondered, What did God want? What was His way?

At all costs I wanted to walk in the way of the Lord. After following first the one path for several years and then the other, I still did not feel that I had found His way. But eventually He did answer my plea to lead me "in paths of righteousness for his name's sake" (Psalm 23:3) that one day I might reach the goal of heavenly glory. First, though, He had to show me the truth about myself before He could show me the right way. He had to bring me to the point of spiritual bankruptcy so that I would weep over my sin and see myself for the sinner I was.

It was at a time when I had difficulty in getting on with someone who made life extremely hard for me. Resentful and bitter, I could see no way out. We seemed to be hopelessly at odds. I knew this was not right. Yet I was helpless in the situation, unable to resolve it, not knowing how to overcome. Then the Lord showed me that I was to blame. Had I been loving and merciful towards this woman, she would have been won over. The Lord convicted me of my sin, giving me tears of repentance.

And this experience drove me into the arms of Jesus, because Jesus and the penitent sinner belong together. Jesus began to reveal Himself to me in His love. It was no longer a matter of any particular teaching--Jesus Himself was the answer. My intellectual questions began to fade into the background. All I wanted was to love Him who had forgiven my sins, redeemed me and loved me so dearly. He was now the

great love of my life. To me He had become the "fairest of the sons of men" (Psalm 45:2).

The jewel of my heart, the joy of all joys, He was dearer to me than anyone or anything else. With Paul Gerhardt, I could raise my voice in song: If God is the greatest, the dearest and noblest, Faithful and worthy, unchanging and true, Best of all treasures, delight of my heart. He is indeed the dearest of all--He of whom the psalmist writes, "You give them drink from your river of delights" (Psalm 36:8 NIV). Having drunk from this river, I came to love Him more and more. My love for Him helped me find the answer to my questions.

I had found the key--love for Jesus, first love, bridal love. Love became my teacher. I saw that following Jesus had nothing to do with asceticism; I saw that it did not mean renouncing and forsaking the things of this world just for the sake of it. Suddenly I was struck by the significance of the phrase used by Jesus when calling someone to uncompromising discipleship: "for My sake"-- "for My name's sake." In other words, we are called to tread this path of uncompromising discipleship out of love for Him.

Walking in His steps, we draw very near to the One we love. And this is what true bridal love is all about: being as close as possible to the beloved. Having shown me that uncompromising discipleship is a free-will decision springing from love, He further revealed that love is the key to Christian freedom. Being the very essence of love, would Jesus not have relaxed at times with His disciples, enjoying God's good gifts? And did He not draw their attention to the beauty of nature--"Consider the lilies of the field... even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Matthew 6:28-29)?

So I, too, was able to enjoy nature--not apart from Him, but with Him, being joined to Him in love. Now the gifts of the Creator were no longer remote from me, nor were they to be avoided lest they divert me from true discipleship. Rather, they were tokens of the Father's love. I could enjoy them in the right spirit because they inspired me with thanksgiving and an even greater love for God. I could take pleasure in the beauty of art and music, for instance, seeing the glory of God reflected in them.

I was no longer in danger of getting into bondage or being sidetracked from my commitment to Jesus. I could make use of the things of the world insofar as they deepened my love and commitment to Jesus, inspired me with thanksgiving to the Father, or increased the effectiveness of my ministry. Now everything took on a different appearance. Previously, when I had been trying to lead an ascetic life, I scarcely dared to travel, but now I felt free to do so. Now the motivation was different.

In later years, in order to give the Creator glory, I made "praise trips" to scenic spots where praise plaques with a Scripture or song verse would be set up as a pointer to God, inspiring others to offer Him love, praise, and thanksgiving. Similarly, I was blessed when I saw pictures of the marvels of creation or pictures of the beautiful locations in various countries where God had met with me in a special way. Previously, too, I scarcely dared to admire religious art. But now, when I saw pictures of Jesus, I was filled with greater love and thanksgiving.

And all this, in turn, had an impact on my ministry, enabling me to glorify Him more. No longer did I feel cut off from my fellow countrymen, aware only of belonging to the Body of Christ. Now that I shared in the concerns of God's fatherly heart, I loved my people and all other peoples, because each originates in the Creator's heart, reflecting something of His love and glory. Now I felt pain when my nation turned from God and rejected His commandments, knowing how this grieved the Father's heart.

According to Scripture, although Israel had a special place in God's heart, He was concerned at the prospect of having to destroy pagan Nineveh (Jonah 4:11). And in the light of impending judgment, I came to feel deep concern for my people. All my questions had been answered. More than that, now I was free. In the past I had feared being trapped either in a life that was too narrow and legalistic or in a life that too readily conformed to the world, neither of which seemed to be true discipleship.

Now I had entered the freedom of a child of God, because love bound me to Him completely. Now I belonged unreservedly to the One who is the centre of the universe and from whom comes all that is good and noble on earth. In the fellowship of His love I could share in everything that is His--the earth and the whole universe. Though broadened, my love always remained firmly anchored in Him, the focal point of the universe. Just as I had been unhappy and torn with inner conflict before I found this answer, so I was happy and at peace afterward.

Joy had come into my life, because I had found the One who loves me and whom I was privileged to love above all else, with all my strength and being. And for many years now I have gone through life with Jesus as the Bridegroom of my soul. I could never find enough ways to tell Jesus how much I love Him and to praise Him in song as the loveliest and purest of all, majestic and noble, the joy of my heart, the One who brings true fulfilment to my life. ¶ "This is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the church." Ephesians 5:32 3 TThe Precious Secret of Bridal Love for Jesus

There is a love that outshines all other loves--a love of unimaginable beauty, strength, and fervency, celebrated by the writer of the Song of Songs. It is the love of Jesus for a bridal soul and the love of that soul for Him. How inexpressibly wonderful that such love exists and that Jesus loves us so dearly! We can understand Him coming to us as Savior, because sinful humanity needs a Savior; understandably, we will want to thank Him for saving us. We know, too, that Jesus came to us as the One with power to heal our infirmities of body and soul.

We can also understand Him revealing Himself to us as King of Kings, the Lord of the hosts of heaven, a matchless sovereign clothed with majesty and divine power, at whose command demons flee and wind and waves are stilled. Down through the ages, succeeding generations have expressed their gratitude, adoration, and praise to Jesus, their Savior, Healer, Lord, and King. ¶ What we will never understand is that Jesus wants to come to us sinners not only as King, Lord, Saviour, and Healer, but also as Bridegroom.

Incredibly, the Lord wants to enter into a love-covenant with sinners like ourselves, just as He did with His chosen people Israel, when He declared, "I will betroth you to me for ever" (Hosea 2:19)--"Your Maker is your husband" (Isaiah 54:5). Jesus pledges Himself to the Bride of the Lamb. In forming a covenant of love with her, He forms a covenant of love with each individual soul, male and female, who is a part of that whole company, His bride, the Bride of the Lamb. From Jesus' words "Whoever loves Me ..." and "Do you love Me?" we sense how much He yearns for us to love Him.

But it is a special kind of love He seeks. It is the love that is reflected in the relationship between an earthly bride and her bridegroom. An exclusive love. A love that tolerates no rivals. A love that gives the beloved, the bridegroom, first place. As the heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus lays claim to such first love. Because He loves us so dearly, He longs to have the whole of us. Jesus gave Himself unreservedly for us. Now He yearns for us to give ourselves completely to Him, with all that we are and have, so that He can truly be our first love.

To offer Jesus anything less than this first love is of little value to Him. So long as our love for Him is a divided love, so long as family, possessions, and the like mean more to us than He does, then so long will He consider our love not to be genuine. Indeed, Jesus will not enter into a covenant of love with one whose love is divided, for a covenant of this nature requires a full, mutual love. How Jesus yearns for our love. But because our love is so precious to Him, He waits for our wholehearted commitment to undivided love. True love for Jesus will always choose Him when faced with an alternative.

If, for example, Jesus calls someone to the mission field, then for Jesus' sake he leaves his native land. This could involve separation from loved ones, including children, and possibly even--albeit temporarily--his wife. Love for one's country and family has to take second place. Jesus can only be our true love, our first love, if our love for Him takes priority and, when having to choose between Jesus or people and things, we choose Him. Jesus has every right to make such a claim upon our love, because He has no equal.

No one is so glorious, so majestic and yet so winsome as Jesus. His love is so compelling, so tender and intimate, so fervent and strong that no human love could ever compare with it. No one loves us so faithfully, loves us as if we were the only one. No one is so caring. No one is available so exclusively for us as is Jesus. Jesus knows what He can give with His love. He knows how deeply happy He can make a person. That is why He has the right, a thousand times more than any bridegroom on earth, to say, "Give Me everything--your whole love.

Make Me your first love, for which you would leave all else behind, just as an earthly bride would give up her home and native land, indeed all her desires." Can we hear Jesus pleading with us, asking for our love? He wants to have the whole of us, no area of our life being withheld from Him. He will tolerate no rival love. Loving us fervently, He is grieved when we do not return His love wholeheartedly, loving Him with all that we are and have. His love for us is so powerful that He yearns to receive our deepest love.

Yet for a true bride of Jesus, nothing could be a greater source of joy than devoting herself completely to Him, giving her love, her all, to the One who loves her so ardently. She regards it as sheer grace to be His very own. God's very own--blessed words! God has claimed me for Himself. And He loves me so deeply that He is not satisfied until I commit myself completely and unreservedly to Him. Only the one who loves Jesus in this way can understand Him in His essential being and taste His deep and intimate love.

Do you remember the story of the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22)? Jesus loved him, and deep down inside this rich young man longed to love God. Jesus saw his desire for eternal life and, ultimately, for a life of loving union with God. God is both life and love. Whoever receives eternal--or divine--life, also receives God's love. Everyone, including those trapped in sin and materialism, longs deep down inside for happiness and a truly fulfilling life, but these can only be found in loving God.

Jesus showed the rich young man the way. Attaining riches in heaven, eternal life, requires giving up something else, in fact, everything. This is inevitable, for eternal, divine life means wholehearted loving. Giving my whole love to Jesus means letting go of all else that I love. The rich young man went away sad. And to this day--as I know for myself--Christians are often somewhat rigid and joyless. We have missed out on joy, all because we lack that vital, ardent love-relationship with Jesus, which is supreme happiness.

So long as we do not give Jesus our first love, we will not have this relationship. Perhaps we are afraid of falling into false asceticism or legalism, but usually the real reason is that we are in bondage to material

possessions, or to our prestige, career, loved ones, and so on. We have not given Jesus our undivided love. When I gave Jesus everything--not just in prayer but in practice, surrendering to Him all I held dear, loved ones as well as intellectual and cultural pursuits--I entered a love-relationship with Him.

He revealed His love to me as Bridegroom and let me taste the fullness of life. Jesus' message to the rich young ruler could be summed up like this: "Sell, give up what you have, follow Me, commit yourself to Me and My way. Out of love, give Me your life and everything that makes it rich and worthwhile for you. Give it to Me--not from any ascetic or other motive, but as an act of love. And I will give you the eternal, divine, overflowing life of love with its far greater riches; this life will make you happy beyond all imagining."

Jesus can ask this of us, because He is "the Life." Those who commit themselves to Him are joined to the very source of life and love. Whoever follows Jesus in this way receives divine life. Such has been my experience. For years I had lived on "cheap grace," unresponsive to His call to uncompromising discipleship as binding for my life. Then came the time when His love overwhelmed me. And then as His disciple I consciously chose to walk in His ways. In day-to-day life I tried to live out the Sermon on the Mount, choosing lowliness and poverty, turning the other cheek, not insisting on my rights, keeping silent when wronged, and in time of hardship, as during the war and post-war period, sharing even the last of my possessions, in keeping with Jesus' word, "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 One who is eternal life, to the spring of love that flows unendingly.

I discovered that this spring of love is poured out most into the hearts of those who know they are sinners. Not until I had begun to take Jesus' call to discipleship seriously, was I faced with the true, divine standards for my life. Time and again I sinned against them, but my repeated failures actually drove me into the arms of Jesus, impelled me to claim His redeeming blood and reopened the fountain of His love. Just how much Jesus cares about us loving Him is evident from His visit to the home of Simon, the Pharisee (Luke 7).

He prized the visible tokens of love from the sinful woman who kissed His feet and anointed them with ointment, perhaps her most valuable possession. This was love directed personally to Jesus. This was ministering to the Lord Himself rather than to others. Our service to others in the name of the Lord has its place and should flow out of our love for Jesus. But Jesus values even more our personal devotion, treasuring a love centered on Him, a love lavishing gifts on Him and for which no sacrifice is too great, a love that has eyes only for Him.

The true bride says to Christ: "I do not want what You have to give. It is You I want. You are not more dear to me when I am doing well, nor less dear when I am doing poorly." --Martin Luther (1483-1546) In Gethsemane Jesus waited with a yearning heart for His disciples to watch with Him in His hour of need, just to be with Him, showing that they cared. But He sought and waited in vain for this evidence of their love. In Bethany, just before His Passion began, He had also looked for love.

And there He did find someone who entered into His pain, appreciating how heavy His heart was because of His imminent suffering and death. It was Mary. Love revealed to Mary of Bethany that His soul was in anguish, and she did what she could for Him. Her concern was Jesus Himself. That was why she did not give her money to the poor, a fact for which she was rebuked by the disciples. Instead she lavished her jar of costly ointment on Jesus (John 12:1-8). Sensing His deep pain, she longed to comfort and refresh Him.

I will never forget the time when the realization gripped me: Since Jesus is the same today as long ago, His heart grieves still today. And so He is waiting for us to bring Him joy, to refresh Him, and indeed--as Scripture says--to be comforters to Him (Psalm 69:20). Ever since then my primary concern has been Jesus Himself rather than my service for Him. I continued to carry out what He had called me to do, but now there was a shift of emphasis. Now I was concerned with ministering unto Jesus.

A fire was kindled in my heart as I saw the importance of worship. It grieved me for His sake that He received so little love in words and songs of adoration. Since then worship has never been absent from my prayer life. Although I am a pronounced active and social type, from that time on I felt a compelling desire to spend every free minute in my room to commune with Jesus in prayer. I sensed that He was waiting. Does not a bridegroom always wait for those private moments with his bride when they can open their hearts to each other?

Jesus yearns for fellowship with us and to hear words of love from our lips. He wants to draw near to us. He wants to speak to us in our hearts and nurture a loving relationship with us. Only in times of quiet, away from the hustle and bustle of daily life, with nothing and no one to distract us, can Jesus give us His love more fully and more intimately. If we long to know the presence of Jesus and to enter into bridal love for Jesus, let us be faithful in our quiet times, keeping them holy for Him.

Jesus is waiting for our love. Our sacrifices are important to God, so, too, our obedience to His commandments. Jesus commended the rich young ruler for keeping the commandments. Yet this obedience on its own could not bring him eternal, divine life. Only love could. However, making sacrifices and keeping the commandments are not necessarily inspired by love. Jesus knows this, and being Himself the very essence of vibrant life and love, He wants to share these treasures with us.

To Him, our love, stemming from the divine life He has given us, is the only acceptable response to His love for us. Then love, in turn, will prompt us to keep His commandments, for love respects the wishes of the beloved, and His commandments are His personal requests to us. Love will compel us to make Him many gifts and sacrifices, though in a completely different spirit now, because the motivation is different. There is something wonderful about this love for Jesus. All bridal souls carry this love for Jesus as the most blessed secret and treasure in their hearts.

Even if they do not speak of it, everyone having anything to do with them senses something of this precious secret. There is a joy and a radiance about them, the radiance of love, for they love Him who is the fairest of the sons of men. They love Him who shines like the sun in all the heavens, the entire universe. They love Him who reigns in majesty and glory. They love Him who loves them with a tenderness no human heart could possibly give. They love Him who has revealed Himself to them as their Bridegroom.

Love is a dynamic force. It radiates happiness and great joy. The heavenly Bridegroom is the Lord of joy, anointed with the oil of gladness (Psalm 45:7). His bride shares in this joy. She belongs to Him who shines like the sun in His love, joy, and light. Because she is joined to Him, her personality reflects something of His joy and radiance. Nothing in the world can bring such immeasurable happiness as love. An earthly bride's delight in her bridegroom is but a pale shadow of the true, eternal joy felt by the Bride of the Lamb for her heavenly Bridegroom.

There is no greater, happier, higher, richer love than bridal love for Jesus. Before the world had even begun You loved me, Father, in Your Son, The holy Sole-Begotten. To Christ betrothed, to be His bride

And ever with Him to abide, I sing for joy and gladness. Trials, troubles cannot grieve me, Nor dismay me, For in heaven Everlasting life awaits me. --Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608) \f "The only bliss which we possess on earth is loving God and knowing that He loves us." Curé d'Ars 178s-1859 4 Love--The Highest Calling

LLove--most blissful of words! God is Love; He radiates love; and love is what makes heaven "heaven." Love is the word that rings through heaven as a joyful sound. The redeemed in heaven love one another, because they all love Jesus, the heavenly Bride- groom and King, who is one with God the Father and with the Holy Spirit. We, too, may love Him and, in loving Him, share in the nature of the triune God, which can be summed up in one word: love. Through love the world was created.

Through suffering love it was redeemed. Through love it will be transformed into a new earth, along with a new heaven. Love shines out of every flower God made. Love prompted God to make creation so beautiful for our enjoyment. Love fills the Father's heart and moves Him to give His good gifts so generously--all that His children need in this life. Love inspired Him to create heaven as a place of never-ending bliss and happiness, where those who love Him will dwell in the mansions of the Most High. \f Love constrained Jesus to suffer and to die in order to open the gates of heaven for us.

Love prompted Him to go before us to the Father and prepare a place for us that we might always be near Him, who is Love eternal. In His love He wants to lead us on to the supreme happiness for which we were created: loving union with God. Love, bridal love! Who can comprehend its secret? It is too deep, too high, too wide for us ever fully to fathom. For bridal love speaks of the heart of Jesus, the heavenly Bridegroom, beat- ing with compassion for His bride, a sinful human being.

With tender love He surrounds her, caring for her supportively, con- scious of her slightest concern, ever at her side to help and pro- tect. He gives her a new dignity, enhancing her beauty. Who can compare with the heavenly Bridegroom, who is Love eternal? He did not keep this love to Himself; rather, He created and called us to love Him, who alone can give us the joy of true love and deepest fulfilment. What a privilege! We may drink from His river of delights. We may love Him, who will never dis- appoint or fail us.

We may love Him, the Royal Lord, to whom we sinners are joined as His bride. We may love Him, the Ruler of the universe, with whom we will someday rule all worlds. We may love Him who is the fairest of all because He bears the marks of His wounds as the sign of supreme love. We may love Him as the Man of Sorrows, who poured out His love in immeasurable suffering for our redemption. No price was too high. In Gethsemane His soul nearly died as He suffered intense anguish, His sweat as blood, His appearance changed beyond recognition for sheer terror and agony.

When scourged, His whole body was covered with wounds. Words cannot describe \f the depth of His pain when mocked and despised. Arrows of hate pierced His heart. Was He not the Son of God, whom all the an- gels served and through whom we were created? Now He was no better than a worm, fit only to be trampled upon--and all this even though He had only lived to bring love, help, healing and the message of the kingdom of heaven. Such love defies comprehen- sion. We may love Him who bore His cross quietly and patiently.

He carried all our burdens, taking them to the cross, to which He was nailed in indescribable agony. Tortured to death, He gave His life on that cross so that His blood, flowing down upon this dark, sinful, satanic earth, would redeem those who claim in faith the power of His blood. We may love Him who as victorious Lord rose from the grave, demonstrating the triumph of love over death and hell, and who now shares His resurrection life with those who love Him. The One we are privileged to love is the sum total of

all love, the One most worthy of love in heaven and on earth.

Unbelievably, He loves us. We were created and saved that we might love Him. Blessed are those who hear Him ask, "Do you love Me?" and who respond, "Lord, You know everything. You know that I love You." \f "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink." John 7:37 NKJV 5 TThe Royal Offer

There is One who walks through the streets, knocking at the doors. He has something to offer. What is it? It is His love. Every- one He meets He stops to ask, "Will you take what I have to offer--My love? You are looking for something to make you happy, aren't you? You would give good money for it, devote time and energy to searching for it. But now I am offering you My love. In it you will find everything you are looking for and everything that could make you happy. Take My word for it and accept My offer." "What must I do to receive it?" you ask. He replies, "Make room so that My love can flow in. My gift of love has no equal. But there is this one condition: that you make room for it. I cannot make this gift to a heart that is already filled. I am looking for an empty heart. Empty your heart of everything filling it, and you will find the most valuable gift, the most wonderful gift in all the world: a love-relationship between you and Me--the deepest, closest, purest, holiest, and strongest possible. Surrender all else,

and you will find it!"

\f

Those who accept in faith this royal offer of love, opening their hearts to Jesus and dedicating themselves to Him as His bride, will come to know Him as their one and only love. What Jesus offers surpasses anything that this world can offer.

Jesus as Love everlasting Descended from on high To show to sinful beings The way of love divine.

Jesus as Love everlasting Enkindled many souls

To dedicate their everything For love of Him alone.

Jesus with love still is seeking For hearts aglow with love, Their lives and longings yielding To Him who's from above.

Once more the Saviour is knocking At every heart and door.

Oh, can't you hear Him pleading, "Accept Me as your Lord?"

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/23/SID23239.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/basilea-schlink/pdf-book-my-all-for-him-5-chapters/>

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