

**Articles and Sermons :: The Mystery of Marriage by Art Katz****The Mystery of Marriage by Art Katz - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/1/23 2:38****The Mystery of Marriage***by Art Katz*

INTRODUCTION

For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband (Eph. 5:31-33).

The mysteries of God are dear to Him, and are concealed until it pleases Him to reveal them. He does not allow them to be understood on the basis of intellectual ability or to satisfy human curiosity. We cannot deduce them by the operation of our minds. They have got to be revealed, and God looks and waits for an attitude of heart and spirit in which there is a reverence and appreciation for mystery. When the revelation comes, we are brought into a high responsibility in God. The promulgation of mystery is not merely for our edification and knowledge. God desires His mysteries to be fulfilled. That is why they are given. God is jealous over His mysteries, and He will not allow them to be mishandled, trifled with, or rudely examined by those who do not have a right disposition for them.

With that in mind, the mystery of two disparate beings becoming one new entity is a sublime mystery. It is a mystery of which we, as believers, seem to be largely ignorant, but it is one that God would have fulfilled in His Body. God has established and intended that the union of man and woman should reflect the union that He enjoys with His Church, which is an eternal and unchangeable union, and our marriages should be a reflection of that.

If our Christianity is lackluster and mediocre, it is likely more of a reflection of our marriages than we know. The corollary is not an accident because the mystery of the Church is the mystery of marriage and the mystery of marriage is the mystery of the Church. It is the same mystery. It is a mystical union between man and woman and between the Body and its Head. If we are content with a marriage that is somehow free from problems, and we are enjoying a kind of easy accommodation of one another, a natural compatibility by which we do not experience much strain, we may well have missed the deeper issue, that has to do with ultimate purposes in God! There is a strange paradox here. God desires and calls us to be at peace with one another as far as it is possible. But let us not become satisfied with a marriage that has success and happiness as its chief goal. To what degree are our marriages reflecting and showing forth the mystery and glory of God? A marriage that has for its purpose the glory of God, and that seeks to come into that quality of relationship and union, can never be based on the whims of temperament and compatibility. It has got to be a work of God's grace for those who seek it, desire it, and who understand that God has called us to such a mystery as this.

The world needs to see something in our marriages that reflects the unity of the Godhead. They are not impressed by our shadowy and unresolved issues and discord. There is a glory that has got to be revealed, but it will not come at the expense of truth.

There is a bride being prepared for the Bridegroom bearing the glory of God. She is not prepared in heaven, but in earth, right here where we are, in the ordinary places that we occupy, in the daily grind that makes up our life. These are the raw materials and ingredients, if they are properly understood, received and responded to, by which God is preparing a bride for the Bridegroom. She will be a bride suitable for the Bridegroom in the same way that Eve was intended to be a suitable helpmeet for Adam.

(continued)

Full Article Here:

<http://artkatzministries.org/the-mystery-of-marriage/>

Re: The Mystery of Marriage by Art Katz - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/1/23 17:53

CHAPTER 1 - IN THE BEGINNING

In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Adam in the day when they were created (Genesis 5:1b-2).

In God's original intention, He had one name, Adam, for both the husband and the wife. He has never veered from that intention, namely, that the two should become one flesh. The name of the man was to suffice for the woman as well. It is one identity, one union, and one coming together in such a profound kind of connection that there was to be no such thing as a dual existence.

In many societies, couples do not even bother to get married. The woman retains her own name and shares housekeeping facilities with another man. This has the affect of subverting and undoing God's profound intention in creating us male and female. The unisex movement, with its feminizing of men and masculinizing of women, is a blurring of the distinctiveness between man and woman. The loud, contentious, striving wife who is found, not accidentally, with the emasculated, feeble echo of a husband, is a perfect picture of the success that Satan is obtaining in this generation. Why is Satan so intent on destroying male and female, and in blurring the distinctions between them? We know he is vengeful and opposed to everything that is made in God's image, but he also recognizes better than us that the ultimate issue for which God created all things is the preparing of a phenomenon by which the Church will have its eternal identification as the bride of Christ. And until a bride is prepared and adorned for the Bridegroom, having come down from God, there is no consummation of the age, but rather a delay. How shall the Body of Christ become a bride in its final and eternal configuration if the whole meaning of what a bride is, and what a woman truly is, is lost to us in our own generation? We need to contend for this or it will be lost.

God could have made Eve out of the dust of the earth as He had made Adam, but He made Eve out of the side of Adam. He took her out of man and that is what the word "woman" means. He took the woman out of the man while Adam was sleeping. It says that "there was not found a helper suitable for him" (Gen. 2:20b). Of all the things that God created, He could not find in the animal kingdom a helpmeet appropriate and suitable for the man. How many women would experience indignation at that very simple, preliminary statement, namely, that the whole purpose of God in creating woman was to make something suitable for the man? That does not mean, in any way, that the woman is somehow demeaned, or limited, or that she does not have an identity unto herself or for herself, but that the whole purpose of her being is for the man. For most women, that will likely sound too narrow and restrictive to have such a confining definition. However, it was God's intention from the first, and remains His intention still.

The ultimate intention of God, two becoming one flesh, is a glorious thing beyond anything that we have characteristically seen in most of our church life. The reason this is so difficult to conceive of is that we are separate entities; we are seeing each other as opposite and separate; we are male and female; we are different in so many respects, so how can the two be one flesh? It is certainly not going to be automatic, convenient or easy. In fact, it is altogether impossible with man, but possible with God. He has structured and established something and called us to something that cannot be attained independent of His grace and His life.

So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. And the man said,

"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh (Genesis 2:21-24).

That is not a metaphor or a fanciful play on words, but the very mystery of the Godhead Himself in three persons who are yet One. It is the same cry of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, "that they may be one, just as We are one" (John 17:22b). It is the most profound kind of union by which the persons are distinct, and yet, are submitted and yielded one to another, for the glory of the other.

Jesus said that both the words that He spoke and the things that He did were not His but the Father's. He was so yielded to the Father as the Spirit was yielded to Him, that the Three might be one. This is not the kind of unity that is promulgated today in the ecumenical movements of denominations meeting together, which is just as much a lie and every bit as much a false accommodation as are the conditions of most of our marriages. When God is talking about two becoming

ng one flesh, He is not talking about a shallow compatibility and accommodation by which we "get by"; He means exactly the same phenomenon of the Godhead actually being expressed through the Church in order that the world might know that the Father has sent the Son. He rests everything on the revelation that shall come to the world when we shall be one as He is one. If we are not one in our marriages, then what shall we be in the Body? It is the same mystery.

And He (Jesus) answered and said, "Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'? Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate" (Matt. 19:4-6).

I want to say that man is vigorously putting asunder what God has joined. One of the first ways we do it is by disputing whether God Himself has joined us. We see our marriage as some circumstantial accident, or a convenience; we see it as youthful error, or that we are suddenly incompatible and have every reason to break it off and try again. Divorce and remarriage are increasingly such a commonplace, even in the Church, that it is becoming a normative and accepted thing. Many have not divorced in fact, but have divorced in a hidden way. We are married, but we are not married. We are sharing mutual quarters, but we are not relating or related. We are ships passing in the night and phantom figures that have a glib little word for each other, but no more. We are already divorced because our minds, hearts and spirits are elsewhere, and we are looking for other sources of gratification and fulfillment that should be found in the husband, and the husband should find in the wife, but we turn our backs on the very thing that God Himself has provided for His glory, which would also be for our true fulfillment and joy.

Re: The Mystery of Marriage by Art Katz - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/1/24 13:23

CHAPTER 2 - UNION WITH GOD

What, then, is existential union with God? How is it demonstrated in a marriage union? What would you rather be: someone who receives help from the Lord so that *you* can do *for* the Lord; or someone who has come to such a place of union *with* the Lord that He can do His will through you to the point that you cannot tell where you end and God begins? It is a place where your speaking is *His* speaking, your thought is *His* thought, your will is *His* will. You have no independent existence outside of Him.

Which would you rather have: an independent Christian existence speaking *your* thoughts and *your* desires, which may seem nice, and Bible-based, or a dependent Christian life where the Lord Himself is the source of your life and your speaking? This is a radical crossover, from one reality to another, and how many of us would prefer not to cross over? Yes, we would like the help that God would give *us*, so that we could do *for* God, but we do not want to cross over to that side where we live by the Spirit of God.

How many wives would be willing to cross over to the side where she and her husband have become one flesh to the degree that she no longer desires her own independent life and ministry, to where she is equally gratified to hear her husband and speak, as if she herself spoke, because she has died to self to that extent? Where is the wife who can come to such a place of submission, of willingness to defer to her husband, as the Lord calls the Church to defer to Him, because the two are one new man? Where the husband's glory is her glory, and she forfeits her own desire for independent spiritual life and ministry, which many Christian wives today are pursuing? We see husbands and wives with independent, parallel ministries, which give them individual fulfillment, but misses the glory of God. Can she be just as gratified to see God express through her husband things that God has given her in revelation and insight? Is her delight in the scriptures of the kind that it is all the same to her whether that word comes out of her mouth or her husband's?

In fact, would she be even more delighted to see her otherwise passive and maybe even spiritually indifferent husband come forth and blossom, than to see him stay in the back seat that he has taken? Would she decrease that her husband might increase? That might well be the reason why we see so many pseudo-spiritual women whose husbands are diminished, and who languish before television sets watching football games, wholly indifferent to the faith. The wives have taken over, so to speak, and the men do not feel that there is a place for them. Something has been misappropriated when the wife has taken a certain exaltation and delight in the performance of a ministry that would have more rightly honored the Lord were it expressed through her husband, the head of her body.

The most profound ministry of women to the Church is the demonstration of the essence of femininity in truth, because that is the eternal designation of the whole Church as the Bride of Christ. We are the *militant* company of Christ now on earth, but our eternal designation is as a bride. Therefore, we need to see that bridal quality depicted before us by women who are believers. It is interesting that women who are aggressive in their own ministries become invariably hard and

d masculine. There is a note and a ring in their voices that is brassy and metallic. The greater ministry would be to demonstrate to the entire Body what a wife is as a submitted bride in the spirit of humility, a bride adorned for the Bridegroom. The whole Church needs to see the model of it, and to emulate it.

That does *not* mean that the wife will be a blank, a robot and a puppet, with no distinction or originality in herself. And, that is *not* to say wives cannot contribute in meetings with insight, prophecies, and other expressions inspired by the Spirit of God. Paul wanted that women should not *exercise authority* in the churches, because we, as believers, do not exercise authority over the Lord.

Two become one when they have come to one mind, one heart, one understanding and one speaking. When Paul says for us to speak the same thing, it is not an invitation to become automatons that come in lifeless submission to speak the same thing. We are to be a people who are richly individualistic and formidable in ourselves, and alive to the possibility of having our own opinions and views. But, by the maturing processes of God through suffering and trial, we come into such agreement with God that when He requires it, we can speak a creative and life-giving word. Do we desire this quality of integration, unity of life, and agreement? "Great grace was upon them all" means the end of our secret reservations, subtle rebellions, self-will, and egotism.

Re: The Mystery of Marriage by Art Katz - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/1/25 12:05

The Role of Women in the Church

Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says. And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church. If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized (1 Corinthians. 14:34-38).

How is it that these words of Paul have somehow been disavowed? Modern theologians have determined that in the above case, Paul was speaking only culturally, and voicing a kind of Jewish prejudice against women, and not speaking by the Spirit, universally, throughout all generations. That kind of thinking leaves us with the unenviable task of scrutinizing, not just this statement, but every scripture in order to distinguish whether God intends it for the Church in all generations, or only to that particular generation and culture.

I believe Paul was speaking for all generations, and the Word of God is eternal and unchanging in speaking to the condition of mankind everywhere and at all times. In that very context, Paul says that Eve was deceived first, staking his arguments on the grounds that a woman is more susceptible to deception; that God never intended, by the very structure of what a woman is, that she should be employed in things which would be expressed through authority.

When Paul states that a woman who prays and prophesies should have her head covered, he is indicating that there is a role for women in prayer and prophecy, but these are very different from teaching, which is an expression of another kind of authority. There are discerning women, and those who bring a word of prophecy, and I appreciate them very greatly, but it must be a man that God uses in an oracular way, and that the revelations of God, the purposes of God and the statements of God for the Church in the hour must be brought forth by a man in the authority that God gives men in that calling.

There is a precious place for women to be supportive to the Body, so we need to be careful in that regard. There are clear functions for women, and to shut them out, as if Paul's statement above is the full statement in regard to their function in our fellowships, robs the Body, and we lose a vital source of input. We need to distinguish between teaching as a systematic presentation of the word, and the prophetic function for women in bringing things that the Lord quickens and makes alive for them.

We have the situation today where women feel themselves shunned to the side, only allowed to teach Sunday school to the children. Every member should have a sense of their vital significance and importance in the Body. Everyone should be fully prepared when they come together for the meetings, each joint supplying what the other parts need. We prepare ourselves because it is a holy coming together of the Body, and in expectation of the Lord's use of us.

Re: The Mystery of Marriage by Art Katz - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/1/27 2:07

Authentic Union

We cannot come into a true union with each other outside of a vital and authentic union with God. Without that authentic union, we condemn ourselves to functioning out of a sense of obligation, lifelessly obeying the biblical commands. Unless we have been inducted into the mystery of the indwelling Christ, we will find ourselves living and moving from the mere level of mental assent, which falls hopelessly short of the glory of God, and in fact leaves us outside the Kingdom itself. God has given us His Son that we might live *through* Him, but most of us stubbornly insist upon living through ourselves, with an outward veneer of respect for the truths of the gospel and the teachings of Christ.

How many of us have come to that place of such utter self-disgust, such loathing, such final revelation of the degradation of our souls that we see all our most sincere religious intentions as mere dung? How many of us would allow God to bring us to such a crisis of humiliation, and of failing God wretchedly, until we realize that there is no way that we can live this Christian life out of our own resolutions? Our whole religious lifestyle, for which no one would fault us, needs to be brought down, that the breaking through into another dimension of glory and reality may be found. We need to be brought to the place where we realize that Christianity is impossible, and that God has not called us to a patsy religion, but to a radical Kingdom. It is the entry into another quality of life and relationship that is utterly different from that which is in the world. The only way to enter that life and to live from it is to join Him first at the Cross, which is the place of burial, and to be raised into newness of life. We have not understood baptism as the apostolic generation understood it. When they went into those waters, they were leaving the world. It was a ruthless, utter, and radical separation from this present world.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2009/1/27 11:14

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Thank you for posting these. Just this last week I was having a discussion with a guy who teaches the youth at our church and how he understands these scriptures to mean "women keeping silent in church" as somehow culturally relevant and unique to the Jewish temple authority.

It's amazing how we'll rationalize and conjecture anything under the sun to get 2 plus 2 to equal 4 according to our own ideas. In our minds we knit nice little sweaters that are heavily influenced by modern culture and then try to get them to fit over the perfect contour of God's Word.

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/1/27 17:07

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In one of my notebooks I have written:

"What does one do,
when one plus one,
no longer equals two."

It is only when we determine that what appears to be is not necessarily so - it is only then that we begin to realize that there is a whole realm of truth that we have absolutely no knowledge of. That the things that we cling so tightly to are but foolishness in the eyes of God. It is only when we are willing to let go of the things of the world that the beauty of what He has prepared begins to shine forth. Then, in the beauty of the light of His wisdom, the things of the world slowly diminish into nothingness.

Re: The Mystery of Marriage by Art Katz - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/1/28 11:02

Chapter 3 - Intimate Union

The Hebrew word for "know," when it is used in the sense of knowing God, is the same word that is used to describe the sexual union between man and woman; Adam knew Eve. It does not mean that they had a casual kind of relationship where they learned facts about each other; rather, they came into one another in such a way as to receive from that intimate inter-relationship a knowledge of each other that went beyond words and into an experiential knowledge.

God intends marriage and the sacred relationship of sexual union as a most beautiful fulfilling experience and expression of intimacy. Like everything else that God has purposed, Satan seeks to corrupt, destroy and to ravage it, and to make of it a merely lustful and obsessive thing. Sex is not merely for procreation; it is central, and at the heart of this completely glorious mystery. It is no wonder that it is taking such a battering in this generation. One might ask to what degree the increasing sexual disturbances and freaky aberrations in society express the revulsion of men and women to the mystery of God because there is so much perversion and distortion: child molestation, homosexuality, lesbianism, all representing the unwillingness or inability to submit to, or find consummation in, the Divine order and intention of God for male and female. It is a rebellion against God Himself, tangibly expressed. Men and woman who are unable join with one another are going off on other tangents to find expression of sexual need and energy, outside of the way that God intended.

There is something about the nature of sexual union that requires more than mechanical or biological accommodation. It is a supremely spiritual act, but how many of our wives are accommodating their husbands out of a sense of obligation, or other kinds of motives, but who are secretly chafing and pursing their lips? More often than not, they are being suffocated and extinguished in their own integrity and spirituality. They are not able to meet with their husbands in the union, harmony and love that God intends, for which this mystery is to be enacted, but it requires uttermost love. If love is tinted by resentment, anger, bitterness, disappointment and the things that must, of necessity, arise in the complex thing that is called marriage and relationship, and are not attended to, then we have a kind of chafing, grinding, physical accommodation by which we may find a moment's release, but we will have missed the glory of the union by which we become one flesh.

Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For He says, "The two will become one flesh" (1 Corinthians 6:16).

When marriage and sex are violated, when we treat them cheaply, when we allow another in where they ought not to be, there is a shock and a stunning trauma of such a kind that even when you think you have forgotten it, the pain and the wounds yet register deep. God intends that the relationship we have with Him is akin to the relationship that He intends for us to have with each other. The quality, depth, character and honesty of the relationship that we have with each other is no greater, no more honest, no deeper than the relationship that we have with Him.

Jesus was never married, but He knew relationships. Marriage is the name given to one set of relationships. It is the deepest relationship, and as every one of us knows who has entered into it, more is required of us in this than any other relationship in our lives. Every relationship has exactly the same basic constituent elements, whether it is the relationship between a husband and wife, pastor and his flock, between races or between parents and children. Therefore, we need to know what the basic ingredients of relationships are, that we might understand what it means to know God.

True marriage requires a holding ourselves in reserve for the one God has ordained. It is a sacred union in which you allow everything that you are to be interpenetrated by another, and you allow it because you trust the other, because you come lovingly, because you come with expectation, and because you know that you are not going to be violated, exploited, or abused. You confidently open yourself in trust and abandonment to the interpenetration of the other whom you know is your lover. Gritting the teeth, or coming into sexual union with a distaste, are a caricature for the joy that God intended for those who come in love, one to another. For how many of us is this a reflection of the way we come to God? We feel obligated to give him an hour or two on Sundays, but there is no loving abandonment out of which comes true knowing.

By necessity, intimate union requires that you come nakedly. There is no other way. You have got to come without concealment, you have got to come trembling, and you have got to come hearing the call of deep unto deep. If we come with so much as a covering, then what kind of a relationship and what kind of intimate union is that going to be? We must come not just once, but continually. It should never become a drudge. We are coming for a renewing and a re-enactment of a loving union. It should never be the same, never mechanical, never dull, but always unique. There is no limit to the k

knowledge of God. There is no limit to the penetration of the depths of His infinity. Every time you come to Him in that loving abandonment, you touch and sense new depths in that relationship with Him and in yourself. There is never a falling back to where you were; you are raised from height to height in that loving relationship with Him who bids us come. It is something alive and creative and new every time. It begins in hopeful expectancy, and it goes on in deepened confidence to new expectancies again and again.

God has so ordained the intimacy for mankind to be face-to-face. We are required to behold the face of our lover. Jacob said: "I have seen God face to face, yet I live." To look into the face is the symbol and expression of the uniqueness of that personality with whom you are coming into intimate union. Have we seen God face to face? Have we turned our faces up to Him? If we do, we will never again return to any previous aloofness or detachment. It is a losing of oneself in the other, a coming together in a mystical merging that is deep, intense, personal and total.

This can be seen on the face of one who is a lover. It is a rare thing, but every once in a while you find that pair who are real lovers, so caught up in each other, so fulfilling each others hearts and lives, that their faces beam with light; there is simply no room in their hearts for anyone else.

This is very different from the married "bachelors" and "spinsters" in the workplace and elsewhere, who are married and wear a ring and have some kind of technical certificate, but they are "single" in their spirits. Their eyes are continually roving and scanning the room, hearts filled with lust, because their hearts are empty and unfulfilled, and seeking for gratification outside their own marriage relationship. There is a God who wants us to know Him in a deep, intimate union that will so fill our hearts and souls that there will be no room in our hearts for any of the blandishments of a world that is seeking to put its hooks into us.

Our faces will tell the story of whether we are lovers of the living God. What are the enduring results of a relationship such as this? When we come back time and time again for that renewing and for that re-enactment, we begin to take on the coloration, the aspect, the character, the personality and even the appearance of the loved one.

God has called us to real relationship and real intimacy. It is the same profound experience to which He calls us, to know Him in intimate union. God is not calling us to a religion, but to a union with Him who is holy, righteous, just and loving. Every time we come to Him in abandonment, naked, stripped bare, delighting to see His face and opening ourselves to the penetration of His love, we are never again the same. He bids us come time and time again, and to rest in the arms of Him who is coming for His bride, without spot and without blemish.

There is only one place to be married to the bridegroom, and few are willing to come. Why do we not want to come to such a knowing as this, and such an intimate union as this? Perhaps it is because the cross of Christ Jesus is the necessary circumstance of being united with Christ, and it is the cross that offends our taste. The dung hill of Calvary, a rude, blood-spattered cross, a battered and despised Bridegroom with a visage marred more than any man, will hardly attract many away from the seductive world to a union with Him in His crucifixion, His death, His burial and His resurrection life. There is little wonder that we see so little evidence of His life in believers, for there are so few who are willing to die with Him. However, when we come to that cross, then every plastic, rigid, encrusted thing of our heart and life snaps and breaks, and out comes that flow of love and life that God wants to pour forth into the world to bring healing and salvation. The world needs to see in our faces the signs of our Lover, because we have joined Him in that one place alone where we are to meet and to merge with Him, namely, in His cross and in His suffering, in His shame and reproach, in His pain and in His death.

The hour is late and the stakes are too high to mistake our natural sociability, our natural gregariousness and our accidents of personality to be somehow the expression of Christ in us. We need the love of Him who is love, and who will transmit that love into us and through us if we are willing to come and be wedded to the Son of the Living God.

Paul knew this union better than most: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20).

He was a man so caught up in the Bridegroom that he had no life unto himself. He had no impulses unto himself; he had no concern unto himself; he doted, meditated and contemplated upon the Lord, and had a heart sensitive to wait, to hear and to receive the leading of the Spirit of Him to whom he was wedded on the cross. Therefore, it was the Son's life that was poured forth to establish the churches. It was that life that came through his personality.

More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him (Philippians 3:8-9a).

Paul wanted nothing more than to be found in Him—in union with Him.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me (Revelation 3:20).

This is not just the sharing of a meal, but a continual presence and merging of lives in the interpenetration of one with the other.

That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death (Philippians 3:10).

It was Paul's cry, and it needs to be ours.