

3/ The Kiss: Symbol of Peace & Friendship

B. Peace from Friendship w/ Lord

b. The Peace of union and its Signs

Chapter 3

Meditations on the Song of Songs

by Teresa of Avila

Treats of the true peace God grants the soul and of His union with it. Give some examples of the heroic charity of some servants of God

Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth
(Sg. 1:2)

O holy bride, let us turn to what you ask for: that **holy peace** which makes the soul, completely **secure** and **tranquil**, venture out to **war** against all **worldly kinds of peace**... It is a **union** with the **will of God**; there is **no division** between Him and the soul, but **one same will** ... It is a **union proved by deeds**.

When the bride knows she is serving the Bridegroom, there is so much **love** and **desire to please Him** that she doesn't listen to the intellect or the fears it proposes.

2. It will seem to you, daughters, that this way of acting is not advisable ... Keep in mind that the Lord has heard your petition ... that **He kisses you with the kiss of His mouth**. If you know this through the **effects** of His having done so ... forget yourselves so as to please this most sweet Bridegroom. His Majesty gives **many signs of Himself** to those who enjoy this favor. **One sign** is contempt for all earthly things. **Another**, not desiring one's own good... **A third**, not rejoicing except with those who love their Lord. Life becomes **wearisome** to these

persons; their esteem is for the riches they merit ...

3. Once the soul has arrived here, it has nothing to fear except that God may **not** make use of it by giving it **trials** and the **chance to serve** Him even at a cost to itself. Love and faith are at work. The soul does not want to benefit by what the intellect teaches it, for this **union** between the bride and Bridegroom has taught it other things the intellect cannot attain to; the **soul tramples the intellect underfoot**...

4. Nothing seems impossible to the one who loves! Happy the soul that has obtained this **peace** from God, for it is master over all the trials and dangers of the world...

Daughters, you have already read about a saint who, when a widow came to him in desolation, went to the land of the Moors to exchange himself for her son. He did this ... because he must have truly arrived at this **blessed state** in which God must have given him this **peace** and so he could **please** His Majesty and somehow **imitate** him. When he returned from captivity, this saint was **spiritually enriched**.

5. ... The saint was a bishop and would have had to abandon his flock, and perhaps he was afraid.

Those souls who are faint-hearted and weak in spirit ... may have reached this state, but their weak nature is fearful. We need to be on guard because this natural weakness will make us **lose a great crown**. When fearful, turn to **faith and humility** and continue to **fight with faith**; God can do all.

6. By means of **determination**, the Lord desires to make it **master** of its own **free will** ... His Majesty enjoys having His **works** shine forth in **weak people**, in them

there is more room for **His power** to work and fulfill the desire He has to grant us **favours**.

The **virtues** God has given you will help you **act with determination** in spite of your own resistance. These virtues will prevent this weakness from increasing... This isn't the time to think about your sins; leave them aside ...

7. ... When you have to suffer something for our Lord or for your neighbor, do not be afraid of your sins. You could perform one of these works with so much **charity** that all your sins would be pardoned ...

Be certain that the Lord will never fail His lovers, when they take a **risk** for Him alone. What they should watch out for are other **selfish intentions**, I am speaking to those who aim to please the Lord with the greatest perfection.

8. I know a man who was moved by the Lord with such great **charity** that it cost him many **tears** not to be able to go in exchange for a **captive** ... After many requests he obtained permission ... When he was about to realize his good desire... the Lord brought him to **Himself** (union)...

For those of us who have not reached such love of God, it may seem crazy. But how much crazier to come to the end of the dream of this life with so much common sense! ... Please God that we will merit heaven ... and be among those advanced so far in the love of God.

9. God's help is necessary for things like this. So, daughters, always ask with the bride for this **peace** that is so delightful... With it, the soul will reign over all the little fears of the world. And **peacefully** and **quietly** it will conquer the world.

Isn't it clear that the soul God joins to Himself in a **friendship** like this will be left truly rich in His **blessings**? ...

These things cannot be ours ... We can **ask** and **desire** that He grant us this favor —and even the asking is done with His help ... But what power do we have? Sin keeps us miserable that all virtues are appraised according to our lowly nature.

What **remedy**, daughters? **To ask for what the bride asks for** ... If our Lord grants this favor of **inseparable union with Him**, what **effects** will be born from it as **offspring**, if the soul be not at fault!

10. If the Lord should grant you the favor of a **mission** for Him and you disregard that you have been a sinner, **faith** must master our misery and you must not be frightened. ... be encouraged ...

If His Majesty says the **flesh is weak**, how is it we desire to be so strong that we don't feel the trials that can come to us? In these trials the flesh will be as though subject to the spirit. When the **soul's will is joined to the will of God, the flesh does not complain**.

11. Our good Jesus showed us the weakness of His humanity prior to the trials. In His suffering, not only did He not complain but did nothing to make it appear He was suffering with weakness ... While on the cross, He did not complain, nor while in the garden.

He might have complained to His Mother when she was at the foot of the cross; it always consoles us more to complain to those who we know feel our trials and love us more.

12. So, let's not complain of fears or become discouraged at seeing our **weak nature**. Let us strive to grow in **humility** and clearly

understand that if God does not favor us, we are nothing. We must confide in His mercy and until we attain it we remain weak. The Lord showed us His weakness to **console us**. It is fitting to carry out our desires with deeds.

Let us observe that when the soul begins to mortify itself, everything is painful. If it begins to give up comforts it grieves; if it must give up honor, it feels torment; and if it must suffer an offensive word, the hurt is intolerable.

In sum, there are **never lacking sorrows** for the **soul** until death. But, **as it succeeds in its determination to die to the world, it will be freed of sufferings and will no longer complain for the peace the bride asks for will have been attained.**

13. If we were to approach the most Blessed Sacrament with great faith and love, once would be enough to leave us **rich**. How much richer from approaching many times? The trouble is we do so out of routine, and it shows. O miserable world, you have so covered the eyes of those who live here that they do not see the **treasures** by which they could win everlasting riches.

14. How is it possible O Lord, that one can enjoy you in this mortal life with so **special a friendship**?

The Holy Spirit tells us this, yet we do not want to understand that these are the delights you share with souls in this Song of Songs! ...

I don't know how the words can be endured if you do not help the one who hears them to bear them--- because of our weakness.

15. Hence, my Lord, I do not ask You for anything else in life but that **You kiss me with the kiss of your mouth**, and that You

do so in such a way that although I may want to withdraw from this **friendship and union**, my **will** may always be subject to your will and not depart from it; that there be nothing to impede me from being able to say: **“My God and my Glory, indeed Your breasts are better and more delightful than wine.”** **AMEN**

