

4/ Communion in Friendship

A. Prayer of Quiet & of Union

Chapter 5

Meditations on the Song of Songs
by Teresa of Avila

Continues to deal with the prayer of union and tells of the riches the soul acquires in it through the mediation of His Holy Spirit. Tells of the soul's determination to suffer **trials** for the Beloved.

I sat down under the shadow of Him whom I desired and His fruit is sweet to my taste. (Sg. 2:3)

Let us now question the **bride**. Let us learn from this **blessed soul** that has approached the **divine mouth** and been sustained by these **heavenly breasts**.

We shall learn what we must **do**, how we must **act**, what we must **say** if the Lord is to bring us to the experience of this wonderful **favor** (union).

2. What she tells us is: *I sat down under the shadow of Him whom I desired; His fruit is sweet to my taste. The King brought me into the wine cellar and set charity in order in me...*

She says she sat under His **shadow**. She compares Him to the **apple tree**, and says its fruit is sweet to her taste.

O souls that **practice prayer**, taste all these words! How many ways there are to think about God. How different the foods we can make from Him! He is **manna**, the taste we get from Him conforms to what we prefer. Oh, what heavenly shade this is! And who could say what the Lord reveals from it!

The angel said to our Lady: *the power of the Most high will overshadow you.*

How fortified will a soul be, placed by the Lord in this grandeur! Rightly can it sit and be assured.

3. Almost always, God gives these **sublime gifts** to those who have **labored** much in His service; **desired** His love; and, **striven** to be ... **agreeable** to Him in all things.

There may be exception when a soul is given a **special call**. St. Paul was at once brought to the summit of contemplation. God appeared and spoke to Him. The saint was immediately **exalted**.

But when souls are **worn out** from many years of **meditation**, of having sought the bridegroom and are most weary of worldly things, **they sit under the shadow of Truth**.

They do not seek their comfort or calm anywhere **except** where they understand they can truly have it. They place themselves under the **Lord's protection**; they desire no other. How well they are acting by trusting His Majesty; sitting under His shadow. Fortunate the soul that merits to sit under His shadow...

4. While the soul is in this **delight**, it feels totally **engulfed** and **protected** in this **shadow** and **cloud of Divinity**. From it comes **inspirations** and a delightful **dew** that removes the **weariness** that **worldly things** have caused it.

There the soul feels a **repose** that even makes breathing wearisome. The **faculties** are so **quiet**. The **will** would not want them to admit any thoughts ... There is no need to move the hand ... for anything, for the Lord gives from the apple tree (to which she compares her Beloved) the **fruit already cut, cooked and even chewed**. So she says *His fruit is sweet to her taste.*

In this **prayer**, all the soul does is **taste** with **no work** on the part of the faculties; present in this **shadow of the Divinity** — well does she say “**shadow**,” since we cannot see It clearly here below but only **under this cloud**—is that **brilliant Sun**. This **Sun** sends, by means of **love**, the knowledge that His Majesty is indescribably close...

5. It seems to me that the Holy Spirit must be a **mediator** between the **soul** and **God**... He enkindles the soul in a **supreme fire**, ... How low do the **branches** of this **divine apple tree** reach, for the soul at times to take hold of them by reflecting upon the ... **mercies** shown it? and, that it might **enjoy the fruit** that Jesus Christ drew from His Passion, watering this tree with His precious blood, so admirable a love.

The soul previously enjoyed sustenance from His **divine breasts**. As a **beginner** in receiving these favors, the soul was nourished by the Bridegroom.

Now that it is growing, ... He nourishes the soul with **apples**. He wants it to understand how it must serve and suffer.

The Lord ... understands that the soul is totally His, with no other interests ... He never ceases to commune with it in so many ways and manners, as One who is Wisdom itself.

6. In the first kind of peace, **quiet**, it seemed no more could be given, yet **union** is much more sublime ... What more could we desire than this favor...? ...

How miserable we would remain if Your giving were in conformity with our asking! Now let us consider what else the bride said.

Amen

