

Heart Learning

Introduction

There is an intimacy and simplicity to knowing the Lord from our place in Christ. From within this relationship we can learn of Christ Who is our life. Even as John the beloved disciple rested on Jesus' bosom, we can also rest in His love as we come to know Jesus. The best "seat" to learn from in the school of Christ is in Jesus Himself, for we have already been raised together with Him and are now seated together in Him (Ephesians 2:6).

A Bosom Relationship With Jesus

"His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me" (Song of Solomon 2:6). This description of the Lord holding His Church in the Song of Solomon sounds far more intimate than a preacher charging people to obey a far away Sovereign. The Shulamite woman in this passage of scripture has much to learn yet, but Solomon is holding her in the bonds of a relationship that will define every stage of her growth.

Where are we seated and from what position do we know the Lord? Have we found the place of His embrace? Do we live there? Do we learn from there? Is it the only place from where we relate to our Beloved? The spiritual environment of acceptance in Christ prepares our hearts to embrace all knowledge only through union.

Learning Christ can only happen from a certain place. John the beloved found that place in the bosom of Jesus. From this picture we can see that learning Christ goes beyond mere instruction into the very essence of relationship, it reaches to the heart.

The Place of Learning

There have been so many pictures of Jesus with John the beloved resting on His bosom that many of us may have taken it for granted. But think about it, in what classroom would you find the disciple lying on the teacher's bosom? It did not seem odd to the other disciples when John would rest on Jesus' bosom, yet this was a student with the Teacher! Even so, it did not seem out of place in their classroom environment, but appropriate to the spirit in which Jesus taught. We can easily miss the intimacy that Jesus was teaching about a relationship and not a doctrine. The questions that this picture should raise to us is: What position do we learn from? In essence, WHERE do we sit when we learn Christ? What is our relationship with Jesus, the Word of God? It is hard to embrace and retain information about union when we are sitting far away from Him Who is our Life! How can His words make their way into our heart if we yet abide as separate from our Lord?

The other disciples may have felt somewhat out of place as they heard Jesus share and yet felt so foreign and removed from His teaching. They were one place and the Lord was somewhere else. John perceived the importance of "nearness" to Christ as well as

receiving the information He shared. In reality the true place of nearness to Christ is “IN Him”, for we have now been raised up and seated together in Christ through His death and resurrection (Ephesians 2:6).

In Bosom

If you look in Paul’s epistles, there are many places where it refers to the position of a believer being “in Christ” in the resurrection. Sometimes our understanding of our place in the Son can seem more doctrinal than relational, more like teaching than a life-union. Just consider understanding our position “in Christ” as the place of being in His bosom, even as John rested on our Lord’s breast. If you go through your Bible and mark the places where “in Christ” is used to define our position, and replace it with “in bosom”, it may help you to realize the intimacy of our place in Christ. I am in no way trying to redefine the scriptural accuracy of the term, “in Christ”, but only pointing out the blessed intimacy that this position speaks of.

From The Bosom Of The Father

Jesus, the Word of God, was sent from His position in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18). His existence was out from a relationship that defined eternity. This relationship of oneness is the way the Son is with the Father. This oneness is represented by His location in the bosom of the Father. The Son’s relationship with the Father is in oneness of being and not agreement of doctrine. Jesus is the beloved Son of His Father. His place in the Father’s bosom shows us the love the Father has for Him. And now we are accepted in the Beloved, and John the beloved gives us a picture of this intimacy and acceptance in the bosom of Christ.

The Word came from the bosom of the Father and is received by those who dwell in the bosom of the Son. Our relationship with the Lord is based on our position “in” Christ. God put us in His Son so that through oneness we could partake of His nature rather than just knowing things about Him. We may, therefore, consider the great necessity of not just what we are learning but where are we learning it from.

Not An Ascended Master, but Our Ascension

Other religions and belief systems have great ascended masters that are the teachers of many students. These masters teach their students from a distance for each student will have to find his or her own path to ascendancy. Christ is not an ascended master but the Great High Priest who did not ascend alone but carried us in His bosom with Him back to the Father (Ephesians 2:5-6). See the difference? We are not told to find our own path to the above life and spirituality. Through His Cross we became married to Jesus and He brings us into all these things through union. If we understood this, then we would not think it odd that the student who was pressing in to know the Lord the most was found resting on His bosom. We would understand that any student who is going to truly know the resurrected Christ MUST learn from the position of in Him, as represented by John on

the bosom of Jesus. This student will learn what only those who are in union with Christ can learn.

The Place Of His Voice

There is not just a voice from heaven touching us on earth, but the place of His voice that we must enter into so that we can hear properly. This place resonates with the fullness and clarity of our settled union in Christ. It is a place of rest in love, even as John would find rest on the bosom of the Lord. When God speaks, He speaks from His heart and what He sees. His words proceed out from the place within Himself that is clear and unhindered by the earth and our carnal understandings. His words reverberate with the sweetness and settledness of the love union that has been established through Christ's death and resurrection. We must come to the place of knowing Him by taking our place of rest in Him, reclining on His bosom and then listening to His voice from the place of His voice.

Rest For Our Souls

“Come unto Me all you that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me for I am meek and lowly and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls” (Matthew. 11:28-29).

As we come unto Jesus we find the Person in Whom all treasures of knowledge are hidden. As we enter into our place of rest in Him, we have found the place where we can partake of all His fullness.

We must recline into His love even as we learn of Him. The Lamb was slain, not just for redemption purposes but that we might also have a place in Him from whence to learn of Him in oneness. Knowing Christ as our dwelling place is like discovering gardens in high places even when our life on earth is yet a barren wasteland and dry wilderness. Does this not speak of the wonder of being accepted IN the Beloved rather than in our own righteousness? There is a place of rest for the weary soul in the bosom of Jesus where those who are in famine and without strength can enter into His fullness. Only when we let go of our self righteous stance and collapse onto His chest will we find rest for our souls. This is the best position to learn in. Blessed are the poor in spirit, the empty and dry, those without their own resources. He will in no wise reject these but rather receive them into the classroom of His heart and teach them of His resources that will be found in them. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst and are empty in themselves, for here...in Christ, is all fullness. He came for the destitute and impoverished. He came for the empty and needy so that He might give them His Life.

Jesus told us that first we must come unto Him and find rest and then learn of Him. We may feel like we need to learn about Jesus so that we can come to Him, but Jesus said that we must come unto Him so that we can properly learn of Him. Our Teacher was slain so that we could learn of Him from the position of love and acceptance in Him. When we

recline in His bosom our souls can rest as we learn of Him Who is our Life. His yoke is easy and His burden is light for He fulfills all things in us.

Jesus is meek and lowly for He is the Lamb of God who came to die that we might live. He poured out His Life that we might become filled with that Life. Yet of His fullness we can only receive grace upon grace (John 1:16).. Because the branches (us) have become united to the Vine (Christ), we can partake freely of all the Vine's root and fatness. Likewise, because the students have become united to the Teacher in death, burial, and resurrection, we can now freely receive all of His fullness by grace. It is not our wisdom or strength that advances us in God's classroom, but our embrace of Christ as our only Life. In the "school of Christ" the fastest learners will be the weakest in themselves. Those who become filled will be those who came empty. We are not adding information to our resources, but in our weakness His strength is being perfected (matured) in us. We are no longer seeking knowledge but a relationship of oneness that brings forth fruit.

Once again, Jesus brings us unto Himself in life union. His methods of teaching are a bit different. He is not just the teacher but the True Vine. We will have nothing if we do not come into union as branches grafted into the True Vine Himself. We must not just 'study' but find the place of His heart and then simply abide! Only as we abide in the Vine can His words remain in us, for they are held through the bonds of union (John 15:1-7).

Earning The Right To Rest

What a position to learn in! Resting on the bosom of Jesus. We can feel that we must sit up straight and get to work earning the right to know God through vigorous study. We can earn no such right. Jesus died and rose again, sitting down at the right hand of the Father with us in Him. He carried us there, in Himself. He earned the right for us to know Him.

We may have segregated the situation of John's place on the bosom of Jesus to John being special and Jesus' favorite. Maybe John was just the teacher's pet? No, I do not think that God is partial. I believe John simply began perceiving that Jesus' purpose went beyond teaching. John began to know the Lord according to relationship rather than religion. John met Jesus where His heart was. He related to the Lord's heart and found rest there, rather than getting information from a master theologian. We can also see this with the example of Martha and Mary. Martha may have done more "homework" than Mary, but Mary found the place of learning and rested there in her desire to know the Lord (Lk. 10:39-40).

Peter or John

"Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?" (John 13:23-25). "Then Peter, tuning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?" (John 21:20).

At the Last Supper you find John resting on Jesus' breast while Peter is frantically wondering if He might be the one that betrays Christ. While John is settled concerning his place in the bosom of the Lord, Peter not only wonders about his own acceptance, but his own sanity! Peter finally has to ask John to find out from Jesus who it is that will deny the Lord. Peter knows that John has a relationship with the Lord that he does not have. It becomes clear that John more intimately knows the Lord's mind than Peter who is running around as separate from the Lord.

The point is not that John is any better than Peter, for we are all accepted in the Beloved. The issue is simply the difference of where we choose to abide in relationship to Jesus. John was relating to Christ by reclining on His bosom, while Peter was yet running around trying to figure out his relationship with the Lord. I would rather be resting on Jesus' bosom with John than panicking with Peter!

Jesus Wants To Gather Us

In the gospel of Matthew Jesus is found grieving over Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37). He was filled with sorrow but it was not over their sin. He was sad because they were rejecting gathering into the place of the intimacy of being in Him. This expresses the heart of God. He has brought us into His place of intimacy that we might relate to His heart and know Him beyond mere knowledge. Because the Lord's doctrine is relational and not technical, it required those who wanted to know Him to be gathered into Him even as a mother hen would gather her chicks under her wings and close to her heart. God's desire is to gather us. His heart reaches beyond teaching for His aim is to reveal in us this relationship of oneness that is ours in Christ.

His cry over Jerusalem was not as a great and distant Master that had come to impart knowledge. His first concern with His people was that they would come and gather into Him, and from that position learn of Him. In John 5:39 Jesus found men who searched the scriptures for eternal life but would not come into relationship with the Person of Life. They would come unto a book and search but would not come unto a Person and partake, so they could never possess eternal Life.

We Are In His Heart

It comes down to the knowledge that we are in His heart, not in a theological way, but in a love way. We are IN HIS HEART and He relates to us in love as those who are in union with Him. All that He would teach us about this would not be properly understood apart from knowing the spirit of these truths through union. Ask Him questions, not as a student, but as a Bride that is already one with Him and wants to know who she is

Because we were crucified with Christ and afterwards raised up in Him as the New Creation, our union exists only through Christ as our new Life and identity. In this place of learning we therefore discover our glorious new identity as bone of His bone and the corporate vessel of His fullness.

There is a place of His love and a place of true learning. This place is not at a desk or in a seminary, it is not found kneeling at the side of our bed in prayer. This place is found in the bosom of Jesus. Only in this place, in Christ, can we hear His voice clearly and have the Person of truth revealed in us through oneness.

Love From God's Bosom

Bosom love comes from the bosom of God. It calls those who were once outcasts, "Beloved". "As he saith in Hosea, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved" (Romans 9:25). Through the death of His Son, God has brought that which was separate into oneness. We are now held in the bonds of oneness in God Himself where our life is hidden with Christ. Consider the depth of this great love, it is the very depth of God's own bosom wherein we are loved and accepted in His Son.

If we are held in God's bosom in such love as this, we also out to love one another with this same bosom love. The scriptures exhort us to love in this specific way for it says, "Beloved, let us love one another" (I John.4:7). Call each other "beloved" as those who are accepted in Christ together as one. Minister to one another tenderly in that spirit and relate to one another out from God's own bosom. Can we hold each other in God's love even as He holds us in His bosom in Christ?

In Conclusion

Throughout this booklet we have been discussing John, the disciple who rested on Jesus' bosom. Later in his life, John ministered to and fathered many churches in the Lord. John had a particular name he would use when he wrote to the churches, for he would call them "beloved". John had a specific request of his beloved churches in Christ, for he would always beseech them to love one another. Where did John get this emphasis? I believe he understood this from his abode in the bosom of God.

Beloved, let us learn from our place in the bosom of our Lord Jesus Christ. May we find a life beyond doctrine that stems and flows out from the very heart of Jesus. And finally, at all times and in all things may we love one another out from this place... the bosom of God in Christ.***