

Flying Higher – Soul Care – A Brilliant Darkness

Dear friend, last year I felt often in the place described in this writing below; a season when my heart and soul felt on fire. I thought having experienced a previous season like this I'd never go through that again, but this lasted right up till Jan this year. On reflection I realize it was God's answer to my naive prayer to love Him more, love others more and understand more of His love for me!! Reading this today, reminded me of the length God will go, to care for our soul. Our pain is his loving training to help us fly higher as He brings us to a place where we will say - "for me to live is Christ - to die is gain....."

A Brilliant Darkness:

"Consuming fire came from (the Lord's) mouthHe parted the heavens and came down....He made darkness His covering....Out of the brightness of His presence (dark) clouds advanced. "Psalm 18;8-9;11-12.

The soul that begins to pursue this higher way of God does not understand what is happening when the flame of God comes to purge him. So at first, in our fallen fleshly state, His cleansing touch does not feel sweet. but painful. If we understand His actions aright though, and if we are willing to be patient under His hand, we soon find that His cleansing work in us is truly an act of friendship, performed by the hand of our soul's one true Friend.

In order for the flame of God's love to penetrate into the soul's substance, so that we may become one with Love....the Spirit's fire sets upon the purpose of wounding the soul. Only this way - painful as it feels at first - can he destroy and consume the imperfections and evil habits that sink their terrible choking roots into us. Wounding, opening, cleansing, preparing us for the presence of God - this is also the true work of the Holy Spirit.

I will say it plainly: the fire of Love that will afterward unite with the soul and bring it glory is the same fire which begins to assail it in order to cleanse and purify. In order to picture this, think of the way that fire penetrates a log. As the flame begins it burns away the outer imperfections, stripping the log of scars to penetrate and roughness. As it heat mounts, the fire penetrates into the log itself, until wood and flame are one. Just so, the fire transforms wood into fire.

At first as I said, the soul feels that God is subjecting it to so many terrible and trying circumstances. It suffers greatly, wondering if it is merely abandoned by God to great afflictions. From the depth of its being, the soul may overflow with emotion and weeping - for now the flame of God feels only oppressive.

During this time, as the Spirit prepares the soul for His coming in fullness, the fire of God is not bright but dark.....True, there are times when the heat of His loving advance feels sweet, but there are also times of inner torment and affliction. This is not at all pleasant, but rather makes the soul believe it is wandering in an abandoned and arid wasteland. The light shed upon the soul does not feel like the brightness of glory, but like parching sun that is exposing the inner self.

The times of cleansing are full of bitterness and misery. As Jeremiah says, it was like "fire in my bones." (Lamentations 1:13). The soul feels confused, in the dark, not knowing what God is about - or if He is still there at all.....It wants to complain miserably like Job saying "Lord, why have you changed? Why have you become cruel to me? (Job 30:21).

My description of this falls short of the reality, I can assure you.....I want to strengthen you for such times with this knowledge: The dark fire of God is His remedy and medicine, which He does so, only to bring the soul back to health, ... to drive from it every kind of evil. It is no wonder that, at times, the heart feels as though it has been laid on white-hot coals.....

(From You Set My Spirit Free; Rekindling the Inner Fire; Living Flame of Love by John of the Cross)



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