

The Bridal Chamber

By Kay Elise Tolman

The great mysteries of the spiritual life in Christ unfold during times of deep intimacy in the secret place of the Beloved. For me, my little apartment in Hillsboro, Oregon became a bridal chamber, a place of rest and seclusion with my King. It began with Tabernacles last fall and culminated with the fire of Pentecost this year. Today, I step out of His chambers transformed, ready to embrace the new path He has set before me. Since it has been many months since my last communication, I thought I would share this intimate journey with you.

As many of you know, my marriage of thirty years concluded early last year with the loss of my daughter, and grandbaby. I entered a dark season one could characterize as the dark night of the soul. For the first six months there was a stripping of the old life, including my home, belongings, and even the apostolic ministry center. By October 2019, I graduated our first learning team at the Academy, suspended the ministry, and entered a time of sabbatical and seclusion.

When the drone of constant busyness and activity stopped, the excruciating pain of my losses overwhelmed me. I tried to numb the pain, to no avail. I gained a significant amount of weight trying. Day after day I shuffled around in my apartment in my pajamas and sat at my dining room table with one jigsaw puzzle after another. I could barely function to do anything else. The holidays came and went, still I was alone and lonely. By the end of January, I counted four months since I had experienced a good night's sleep. Depressed, sleep deprived and grieving, I was in the darkest place I have ever been. At that time, my son called with a message from my daughter concerning his wedding. Her words of rejection absolutely broke my heart, wounding me to the core. All I wanted to do was die and I had a lethal dose of medication in my possession to do it.

What stopped me? I knew it was not God's will that I die that way. I had a choice, my will or His. I reached out to my friend Sally by text. She was at my place in ten minutes and drove me to her home where she ministered to me for many hours. She said, "The Lord told me you were coming for a visit."

I felt raw for weeks after that and wrestled with my relationship with my son, the only remaining family member in my life. The Lord gently asked me to surrender Devin to Him too. I remembered thinking the LORD is certainly thorough. With that surrender I thought I had nothing left. But that is the paradox of the Christian life. Jesus said, "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matthew 16:25 - NKJV)

I thank God for the precious saints that sent me cards and checked in with me frequently, reminding me I was part of a larger family of God. Jesus asked the question in Mathew 12:48,

“Who is my mother and who are my brothers?” He said in verse 50, “For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.” Based upon that word, I realized God had already blessed me with a great big family of precious people that sincerely cared for me and were willing to pray me through.

Grief and sorrow are never easy. I implored God to take away the pain, do something! Anything! If He loved me, why would He let me suffer like this? I knew he was there, but He didn't fix the problem. In my frustration, I cried out to Him. Finally, I quieted myself to listen. He said to me, “I am here, with you in it.”

Yes indeed. He really was there every moment of every day. He never left my side. He gave me a precious opportunity to fellowship with Him... in suffering. Paul said in Philippians 3:10 *“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death...”*

In my quiet times with Jesus, He spoke to me often through His word. *“My beloved reached into me to unlock my heart. The core of my very being trembled at his touch. How my soul melted when he spoke to me! As I surrendered to him, I began to sense his fragrance - the fragrance of his suffering love. It was the sense of myrrh flowing all through me!”* (SOS 5:4-5 - TPT)
Myrrh can be described as “tears of the tree,” a reminder of the cross.

I finally realized my pain was His pain, His pain was my pain. In this deep and intimate place, the Bridegroom-King says to his bride in Song of Songs, *“Open your heart, my darling, deeper still to me. Will you receive me this dark night? There is no one else but you, my friend, my equal. I need you this night to arise and come be with me.”* This verse reminds me of Gethsemane, *“For my heaviness and tears are more than I can bear. I have spent myself for you throughout the dark night.”* (SOS 5:2)

Jesus said to His disciples, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.”* (Matthew 16:24) Calvary is painful. It demands death to the flesh.

Paul gives us this promise, *“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.”* – Romans 6:5

I now understand what Paul meant when he said, *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.* (Galatians 2:20 - NKJV)

With this eternal perspective, death is finally defeated.

The season has changed, the bondage of my barren winter has ended, and the season of hiding is over and gone. It is now a time for singing. (paraphrased from SOS 2:11-12).

My friend Sally once described her relationship with Jesus as one where she sings to Him, and He sings back to her. Her song for His song, His song for her song.

In Song of Songs the bride says *“Then may your awakening breath blow upon my life until I am fully yours. Breath upon me with your Spirit wind. Stir up the sweet spice of your life within me. Spare nothing as you make me your fruitful garden. Hold nothing back until I release your fragrance (myrrh).”* Then she says, *“I endured all travails for him. I’ve been pierced through by love, and I will not be turned aside!”* (SOS 4:14-5:1) Nothing can stop me now!

Passover this year was truly historic as the world hunkered down in our homes while the angel of death passed over. The days of quarantine become precious moments set aside to rest in the intimate place of the bridal chamber of my King. His deep called out to my deep, to yield deeper still. I heard, “Will you fast for me Katie, until Pentecost?” For fifty days He asked me to fast all forms of sugar, alcohol, grain (including corn), and dairy. During the final ten days, I also gave up beef, fruit and lectins. And it was easy!

When Pentecost came, I literally felt like I was on fire!

He gave me these verses from Song of Songs 8:6-7 (TPT)

⁶Fasten me upon your heart as a seal of fire forevermore. This living, consuming flame will seal you as my prisoner of love. My passion is stronger than the chains of death and the grave, all consuming as the very flashes of fire from the burning heart of God. Place this fierce, unrelenting fire over your entire being. ⁷Rivers of pain and persecution will never extinguish this flame. Endless floods will be unable to quench this raging fire that burns within you. Everything will be consumed. It will stop at nothing as you yield everything to this furious fire until it won’t even seem to you like a sacrifice anymore.”

Indeed, when the fire consumes all, it isn’t a sacrifice anymore, it is resurrection life!