



Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts

We are drawn to Christ because the best of this earth leaves us unsatisfied. Once we have apprehended Him by faith, we return to worship Jesus as Lord because, now knowing Him, we understand why.

Praise and thanksgiving are more often than not blended into our worship of God the Son, for thoughts of Him inexorably expand into everything He has done for us. We realize, of course, that God the Father does things for us as well, but it is Jesus who came in the flesh; it is Jesus who suffered and died on the cross to ensure our salvation; it is Jesus who rose from the dead to confirm our own resurrection.

It was Jesus who came looking, sounding, smelling, behaving like us, then who died for us.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

John 11:25-26

So our worship of Christ is expansive, multifaceted, a mélange of every possible means at our disposal to honor and glorify Him.

*Jesus, Thou Joy of loving hearts,
Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
We turn unfilled to Thee again.*

*Thy truth unchanged hath ever stood;
Thou savest those that on Thee call;
To them that seek Thee Thou art good,
To them that find Thee, all in all.*

Faith unlocks the fullness of Christ. To those just beginning to search Him out, Jesus seems "good." But that is small regard when compared to the truth about

Him; to those who are pre-faith, that just means He is better than they.

Small regard indeed.

But to those who have truly ended their search by faith, the fact that Jesus is good is little more than the door just opening. Inside is found light and life, and their “all in all.”

...far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1:21-23

*We taste Thee, O Thou living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still;
We drink of Thee, the Fountainhead,
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill.*

Worship of Christ Jesus, as well as living with Him day in and day out, is like sitting down to an extravagant feast—a holy, divine, sacred feast, but sumptuous nonetheless.

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.”

John 6:53-58

This is unnerving, even repugnant imagery—no less so to His Jewish audi-

ence. But Christ says that we will not be sustained, we will not survive with anything less than what He has to offer: Himself. Life in Christ is total. He must be our sustenance. He must be our life.

*Our restless spirits yearn for Thee,
Where'er our changeful lot is cast;
Glad, when Thy gracious smile we see,
Blest, when our faith can hold Thee fast.*

Jesus wants us to live with Him as He lives with the Father: close, intimate, as one. Our relationship with Him is a marriage, and where intimacy and oneness are absent, there is no marriage. But where these exist, where the bond between husband (Christ) and wife (believers) is fused and cherished, we yearn for Him, gladdened by His “gracious smile” no less than man and woman yearn for each other.

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

2 Corinthians 11:2

*O Jesus, ever with us stay,
Make all our moments calm and bright;
Chase the dark night of sin away,
Shed o'er the world Thy holy light.*

Bernard of Clairvaux

Worship and praise of Christ Jesus is the believer’s spiritual marriage bed. The physical intimacy between man and woman is essential to the sustaining health of a marriage. Just so, intimate adoration of his Savior is the necessary, regular energizing of the holy relationship between believer and Lord.

True worship
seeks union with
its beloved, and
an active effort
to close the gap
between the heart
and the God it
adores is worship
at its best.

A. W. Tozer

