

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

The Orbit Of Love Around The Sun Of Love

By Ken Woodley

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love ... I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete ... This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

—The Gospel of John—

If love isn’t all I need, it sure comes close.

Food?

Without love, I’d starve.

Water?

Without love, I’d die of thirst.

Shelter?

Without love, I’d be vulnerable to every tempest.

But, yes, let’s be practical. I do need food, and water. Shelter, as well. A glass of wine never comes amiss, either, and where would I be without music and books. And did I mention tea?

But without love none of them would taste so very good and the music would fail to transport me and the words between the covers would take me nowhere.

The four-letter ‘love’ word dominates the Gospel of John as Jesus seeks to counter the obscenity of hate, indifference, intolerance, self-absorption and apathy being displayed toward the needs of others.

The kind of love that Jesus is talking about is a love that we can swallow, a love that we can breathe, a love that comes through every pore of our skin, saturates our soul and leaves us joyfully splashing in the wonder of it all.

The love that Jesus is talking about is a love that we can call home. Literally.

That’s why Jesus tells us to, “*Abide* in my love.”

The kind of love that Jesus is talking about is a love that keeps all of its windows and doors wide open.

Nobody is locked out. God, in fact, has removed all locks and thrown away the keys. Locks and keys that too often we human beings use to exclude others from any sense that they are truly loved and equally welcomed by God to call this love their home.

It's the kind of love that convinced Jesus to lay down his life for us to ensure that the message and meaning of this mind-boggling love would be passed down through the ages to us all. As he said:

“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.”

Thankfully, we can follow this teaching without being crucified.

But we do lay down our lives when we put aside our own desires and give ourselves to the needs of someone else.

It may even be someone for whom our life by their side may just be the missing ingredient in their life's journey. The answer to a prayer. Balm for a wound.

And when we allow the orbit of our lives to intersect we may be surprised to discover that the love of God has been guiding both of us toward each other for that very purpose.

For the purpose of love.

Only by laying down our own life can we be picked up and carried, as well, by the love of someone else.

We may even be startled to discover that they somehow are the missing ingredient in our own life, the answer to a prayer, balm for a wound.

Our two orbits have become one and around the same sun.

In such shining, radiant love is God made vividly manifest. Feeding us. Quenching our deepest thirst. Sheltering us like no roof ever could. In that audacious love is our joy made complete in ways we could never expect, ways we could never envision.

The love of God carrying us both.

The love of God bearing us all.

And that really is all we truly need.

