

St Porphyrios of Kavskokalyvia

Selections from *Wounded by Love*

He who loves little, gives little. He who loves more, gives more. And he who loves beyond measure, what has he to give? He gives himself!

Christ himself is joy. He is a joy that transforms you into a different person. . . . Fast as much as you can, make as many prostrations as you can, attend as many vigils as you like, but be joyful. Have Christ's joy. It is the joy that lasts forever, that brings eternal happiness. It is the joy of our Lord that gives assured serenity, serene delight and full happiness. All-joyful joy that surpasses every joy. Christ desires and delights in scattering joy, in enriching his faithful with joy. . . . The point is not to observe all the outward forms. The essence of the matter is for us to be with Christ; for our soul to wake up and love Christ and become holy.

Christ is life, the source of life, the source of joy, the source of the true light, everything. Whoever loves Christ and other people truly lives life. Life without Christ is death; it is hell, it is not life. That is what hell is—the absence of love. Life is Christ. Love is the life of Christ. Either you will be in life or in death. It is up to you to decide.

The Christian feels for everyone, he wants all to be saved, all to taste the Kingdom of God. That is Christianity: through love for our brother to arrive at love for God. To the extent that we desire it, to the extent that we wish it, to the extent that we are worthy, divine grace comes through our brother.

Christ is revealed in that unity between His love and ourselves: the Church. On my own I am not the Church, but together with you. All together we are the Church. . . . The important thing is for us to enter into the Church—to unite ourselves with our fellow men, with the joys and sorrows of each and everyone, to feel that they are our own, to pray for everyone, to have care for their salvation, to forget about ourselves, to do everything for them just as Christ did for us. In the Church we become one with each unfortunate, suffering and sinful soul.

When we see that the people around us have no love for God we are distressed. But with our distress we achieve nothing at all. Nor do we achieve anything by trying to persuade them to change their ways. That's not right either. There is a secret, however, and if we understand it, we will be able to help. The secret is our prayer and our devotion to God so that His grace may act. We, with our love, with our fervent desire for the love of God, will attract grace so that it washes over those around us and awakens them to divine love. Or rather God will send His love and will rouse them all.

Above everything is love. The thing that must concern you, my children, is love for the other person, for his soul. Whatever we do, whether it is prayer or offering advice or pointing out some error, let us do it with love. Without love prayer is of no benefit, advice is hurtful, and pointing out errors is harmful and destructive to the other person who senses whether we love him or not and reacts accordingly. Love, love, love! Love for our brother prepares us to love Christ more.