

CONCLUSION

The battle between preference and resistance: the patient waiting of God who begs for our love

by Julián Carrón*

Thus entered into history the battle between the love of God, which never stops seeking us, and our reluctance. It is a battle between preference and resistance, between God's preference and human resistance, a battle between self and the mysterious measure that revealed itself in the history of a people. "The most suitable criterion for the human person's action is God [...]. Instead, from the very beginning, we try to change our very nature as a creature made 'in the image and likeness' of God, and tend to impose our own measure on life, which in more or less shrewd and complex forms is nothing other than the reactivity of the moment, whether it appears as a mood, an instinct, or as an opinion [...]. The general lie on the level of the conscience is also a temptation in that small people that God had chosen, but it presents itself in a more dramatic way, as a battle between *oneself* and the mysterious measure. It is as if the human person had to walk totally entrusted to something that does not respond to any human measure, and found joy after abandoning itself; [what peace when we finally abandon ourselves!] but normally [this is not the case:] it is toil, resistance, rebellion."¹

In the face of this relentless obstinacy of the human person, God is "forced" to show His innermost depths of pity and mercy. Exactly like you parents, like a mother in front of her son's stubbornness, either you slam him against the wall, or you have to draw forth all your deeply felt love as a mother. Even though the people of Israel persist in their resistance, God cannot abandon them. [...]

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© 2016 Fraternità di Comunione e Liberazione for the texts by J. Carrón "I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have had pity on your nothingness."

» It might seem like a total failure. But “God never fails,” says Benedict XVI. “Or more precisely: initially God always fails, He lets human freedom exist and this freedom constantly says ‘no;’ but God’s imagination, the creative power of His love, is greater than the human ‘no.’ With every human ‘no’ a new dimension of His love is bestowed and He finds a new and greater way to bring about His ‘yes’ to man, history, and creation.”²

In this moment, as well, God does not break His Covenant. He starts anew: “God is never defeated,” affirmed then-Cardinal Ratzinger, “and His promises do not fall together with human defeats; rather, they become greater, just as love grows in the measure in which the beloved has need of it.”³ This is a crucial point, one that overturns our logic. We project our defeats and our parameters of success and failure onto God. “But I am God, not man,” He repeats to us. He is “Other,” not an extension of ourselves. God is different. He is not us. God is God. He always starts anew and never ceases to take the initiative with us, because He is not bound to what we would call “successes.” God does not measure the efficacy of His initiative with this yardstick, because the source of His movement is entirely different: it comes from His innermost being, not our defeats. No matter how often we say no, no matter how inadequate our response always is, He never stops seeking us. As Pope Francis says, He is “the One who never wearies of visiting the marketplace, even at the eleventh hour, to propose His offer of love.”⁴

“Note, then, the point: God was moved by our nothingness. Not only that. God was moved by our betrayal, by our crude, forgetful, and treacherous poverty, by our pettiness. God was moved by our pettiness, which is even more than being moved by our nothingness. ‘I have had pity on your nothingness, I have had pity on your hatred of me. I was moved because you hate me,’ like a father and mother who cry with emotion because of their child’s hatred. They don’t cry because they’re struck, they cry because they are moved, which means a cry that is totally determined by the desire for the child’s good, the child’s destiny: that the child may change, for his destiny, for the child to be saved. It’s compassion, pity, passion. He had pity on me, the one who was so forgetful and petty. If our life is normal, with what we’ve had, it is difficult to be able to find particular sins during the day, but *the* sin is the sin of pettiness of distraction and forgetfulness. The sin is the pettiness of not translating what we do into something new, not making it shine like the new dawn. Instead, we leave it opaque, we leave it as it is, without striking anyone, yet without giving it over to the splendor of Being.”⁵

This then is the source of our certainty: “He had pity on me and on my nothingness and He chose me. He chose me because He had pity on me. He chose me because He was moved by my pettiness! What marks the devotion with which the Mystery—the supreme Mystery and the Mystery of this man who is Christ, God made man—what marks the Mystery’s devotion to us, the devotion with which the Mystery creates the world and forgives man’s pettiness, and forgives him while embracing him, embracing him who is petty, disgusting, is an emotion, is like an emotion; it is being moved, it has being moved within it. It is precisely this that exalts the maternity of God.”⁶ [...]

You tell me if there is anything more urgent than this gaze upon us. Through it God wants to evoke our *yes*. For this reason Simone Weil said, “God waits patiently until at last I »

» am willing to consent to love Him. God waits like a beggar who stands motionless and silent before someone will perhaps give him a piece of bread. Time is that waiting. Time is God's waiting as a beggar for our love."⁷ We can respond to this with the song we sang at the beginning, "I know, I know, who you are to me. Come what may, I will wait for you."⁸

¹ Luigi Giussani, *Alla ricerca del volto umano [In Search of the Human Face]*, Bur, Milano, 2007, p. 33.

² Benedict XVI, *Homily at the Holy Mass with the Members of the Bishops' Conference of Switzerland*, November 7, 2006.

³ Joseph Ratzinger, *Guardare Cristo. Esercizi di Fede, Speranza e Carità [Looking at Christ. Meditations on Faith, Hope and Love]*, Jaca Book, Milan, 1989, p. 44.

⁴ Francis, *Address at the Meeting with the Bishops of the United States*, Washington D.C., September 23, 2015.

⁵ Luigi Giussani, *Is It Possible To Live This Way? An Unusual Approach to the Christian Experience*, Vol. 3: *Charity*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and Kingston, 2009, p. 16.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

⁷ Simone Weil, *First and Last Notebooks, Supernatural Knowledge*, transl. Richard Rees, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR, 2015, p. 141.

⁸ *Haja o que houver*, words and music by P.A. Magalhães: "Haja o que houver eu estou aqui, / haja o que houver espero por ti; / volta no vento, ó meu amor, / volta depressa, por favor. // Há quanto tempo já esqueci / porque fiquei longe de ti; / cada momento é pior, / volta no vento por favor. // Eu sei quem és para mim / haja o que houver espero por ti. // Há quanto tempo já esqueci... // Eu sei quem és para mim..." ("I am here, / come what may. / I will wait for you. / Return on the wind, / Oh my love, / return quickly / if you please. / How long has it been? / I have forgotten / why I remained far from you. / Each moment is more painful. / Return on the wind / if you please. // I know, I know / who you are to me. / Come what may, / I will wait for you.")