

Ascension

Book 17

Max Seltmann

Recommended chronological reading list:

(with regard to Jesus' life in flesh and Spirit, up to the time of the book of Revelation. All books are written by **Max Seltmann**, unless otherwise indicated. The book marked with **bold**, is the book currently opened.)

1. Childhood years of Jesus (Jakob Lorber)
2. Book 1 – John the Baptist
3. Book 2 – John the Apostle in his youth with Jesus (Love overcomes Part 1)
4. Book 3 – Jesus' Life
5. Book 4 – Jesus' Life
6. Book 5 – Jesus' Life
7. Book 6 – Jesus' Life
8. Book 7 – Jesus' Life
9. Book 8 – Jesus' Life
10. Book 9 – Jesus prepares for His ministry Part 1
11. Book 10 – Jesus prepares for His ministry Part 2
12. Great Gospel of John, Volumes 1 – 10 (Jakob Lorber)
13. Great Gospel of John, Volume 11 (Leopoldt Engel)
14. Book 11 - Good Friday
15. Book 12 - Judas Iscariot in the beyond
16. Book 13 - On the road to Emmaus
17. Book 14 - The Risen One!
18. Book 15 - The New Life in man
19. Book 16 – At Bethany – story of Theophilus
- 20. Book 17 - Ascension**
21. Book 18 - Pentecost!
22. Book 19 - Among the first Christians
23. Book 20 - Divine guidance of the first Christians
24. Book 21 - The chamberlain from the Orient
25. Book 22 - The God-spark and Saul's conversion
26. Book 23 - Awakening the Divine life
27. Book 24 - Experiences with Jacob, Part 1
28. Book 25 - Experiences with Jacob, Part 2
29. Book 26 - Experiences with Jacob, Part 3
30. Book 27 - Experiences with Jacob, Part 4
31. Book 28 - Naeme
32. Book 29 - John the Apostle as a guide (Love overcomes Part 2)
33. Book 30 - John the Apostle as a guide (Love overcomes Part 3)

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1. A morning in Bethany

"The morning hour has gold in its mouth!" - according to this word, one acted also in Bethany. No sooner had the sun, the mother of the day, who takes care of everything, poured out her full light on Bethany, than many hands were already busy in the large establishment. The guests however had the instruction to come only at the ringing to the early meal to the large living room, since Lazarus first made his rounds at all stables, camps and sheds - not in order to control, no, but in order to prepare himself for his duties for the coming day. Theophilus had woken long ago; kneeling, he lay before his bed and prayed intently: "Oh God and Lord! You eternally merciful Love! With this day a new life begins for me, a life of love in Your service! You see my heart and know how empty it is of goods that You have placed in me since my first breath. I have nothing to thank You with for the grace I have received through Your chosen ones here, but, though I am poor, I am full of good will to make myself worthy of Your grace! Therefore, strengthen my will and give me strength to accomplish!"

He was distracted from his prayer by the ringing of the morning meal; rising, he said, "Oh God, more than is possible for me, You will not ask!" Then he went to the living room, where John and Ursus were already in lively conversation.

John met Theophilus cordially and said: "My brother, rejoice! Eternal Love has thought of you and has already hired you to work with us! Therefore rejoice, as we all rejoice!"

"I thank you, dear brother" - replied Theophilus earnestly - "your words give me strength and life; I feel your love! But the more I recognize your loving care for me, the poorer and more unworthy I feel myself."

John looked at him compassionately, but immediately admonished him: "Oh do not be influenced by thoughts that do not spring from love! No-one here will ask more than what you are able to give."

Then Ursus said to Theophilus: "My dear friend and brother in the Lord! Surely it is the most beautiful and glorious encouragement when pure love comes to meet you and prompts you to rejoice and rejoice again! If I did not know that in the right joy, the spirit of all life is stimulated most of all, I would keep silent and greet you only with a handshake! But already the joy of knowing you as a brother who in his spiritual night has grasped the merciful and saving hand of Jesus, triggers a feeling of happiness in me! I know now, you are accepted by Jesus, as I also was accepted by Him!"

The other guests also came and greeted each other joyfully. But when the mother Mary entered the room with Ruth, everyone's eyes lit up. Mary said: "I greet you all with all my heart! My heart feels so happy, for wherever my eye looks, I see love at work! Wherever my ear listens, I hear the sound from the eternal home, which binds us all more intimately and firmly, which makes us familiar with the emotions of the soul that are born of love!"

When Ruth had to weep over all this joy, she took the young girl to her breast and spoke full of compassion: "There is much to make up for you, for your life had few sunny days."

Finally, Lazarus came with Demetrius; after short, heartfelt words of greeting were exchanged, the breakfast that had been served - which consisted of milk, bread and honey - was eaten in silence. About the words of blessing of Lazarus: "Lord Jesus, Who are present in the Spirit of your love, bless us and this our meal and let thereby in us mature

strength and firm will!" - all, and especially Ursus and Theophilus, thought for a long time. Ursus was delighted with all this shining inner life in Bethany, but Theophilus became inwardly hesitant as to whether such joy in life could one day also manifest itself in him?

"Now let us give thanks" - said Lazarus - "for what the heart is full of, the mouth will overflow!" (Matt 12:34). John stood up and said: "My brothers and sisters! Eternal Love blessed us again and gave us what was necessary for the strengthening of our body. But we do not want to give thanks for this alone, but: We thank You, You faithful and caring Father, that we again stand in Your service and may make use of all the gifts of Your Father's love so abundantly given to us! Give us the right light, so that we may fulfill all the tasks awaiting us with Your love! May Your holy peace in us be all our strength and power! Amen!"

"Amen!" - said all; then Lazarus stood up and said: "My beloved ones! Love has manifested itself for the joy of us all! Now let us also declare that we want to please this Love, this glorious and eternal One, through our actions! And so I think: You, Ursus, can ride to Jerusalem with some of your people to bring Ruth to her eagerly waiting mother; for it is not acceptable to let her wait any longer in anxiety. Theophilus, you and John stay together today, so that the ground of your mind may still be cleansed of many roots and fibers of your accustomed concepts. But we - Demetrius and I - will look at the land from the Mount of Olives and get to know each other even better."

Ursus gratefully extended his hand to Lazarus and spoke joyfully: "If I still had doubts about the presence of Jesus here, then this your order, brother Lazarus, should have taken away every doubt from me! Behold, in my heart the desire was already forming to assist Theophilus' sister in the return journey; but a quiet voice said thereupon: 'Believe that I am here and will arrange what is right!' Now I have a special joy in going to Jerusalem, because now it is certain to me: Eternal Love needs helpers, needs faithfully devoted servants and I may also be something to this Love!"

"Quite right, my Ursus" - Lazarus replied - "It is well, if one already receives an order from the hand of Eternal Love and carries it out properly! But it is still better, as you did unconsciously, if I search in myself for an activity which will be of use to the neighbor! Behold, the relationship of all of us to God is, taken earthly, like father and son. The love of our great Father is the same for all His children. But the love of the children for their father is different. In all of them lives the thought: We are indebted to our father! But real childlike love consciously searches for ever new ways and means to prove gratitude to this Father in free acts of love!"

Reflecting, Ursus replied - "Yes, a great light of truth has been kindled in me by your words! And so I will strive more consciously to offer my thanks and my childlike love to the Father in free acts of charity!" Then, turning to Demetrius, he said: "Now, dear lord and brother, let me make my arrangements for this journey to Jerusalem, which I am sure will meet with your approval." And quickly he left the room.

"Brother Theophilus, now it is your turn to prove what love is capable of!" - said Lazarus kindly. "Therefore try to make your dear sister's parting from here quite easy, for her heart belongs to you! Reward her for the sacrifice she made to you yesterday with your love!"

And then, turning to the others: Let us also say goodbye to our dear little sister, who must be taken back to the parental home for the time being. So greet your little mother from Bethany and say to her: it is waiting for you!" With a hearty handshake and a deep look into her tear-filled eyes, Lazarus parted from the girl; the others also took leave and Theophilus and Ruth remained alone.

"Ruben! Why must I go away from here? Why can't I stay any longer?" -

Ruth asked sadly. "I will never be able to feel happy at home again! It is as if here is our home and there in Jerusalem is the home of strangers."

"My Ruth" - replied the brother gently - "how often have we parted and felt nothing at it! But now that we have seen the joy of those who have recognized in love the true value of all living together, we look at our life, which we have lived until now, differently! Certainly, here the opposite of that prevails as with us! But when the Spirit of love will fill us so powerfully, then our parental home will also become a place of such peace. I stay here to learn, to be tested and to be made ready for the work of Jesus! You too may come back often and perhaps you will be able to convince father of what he has failed to do so far! For I recognize more and more that my life and yours was not a life and have the burning desire to make our life more light! But see, for this I need your support! As long as I know that you are depressed and lack the peace that makes the Bethanians such joyful people, I suffer with you and my struggle is made more difficult. But when I have come to the point where I have conquered my mind, then, dear Ruth, my life is above all for your peace!"

Ursus came into the room and said: "Brother in the Lord! Everything is ready to take your sister back to your parent's home. Have you any instructions in case I meet your father?"

"Yes, my dear Ursus" - answered Theophilus earnestly - "tell him that the merciful love of God has opened my eyes and made me a hopeful man again! Never will I go back to the temple! Rather the simplest day laborer, than to be a blind tool of the temple, is my certain will! Lazarus offered me not only his hand, but also his love; and so I may hope, with God's help, to become also a joyful, good and useful man! - And tell him further that this conversion is not too late for him either!"

"I will gladly comply with your wish, dear Theophilus" - said Ursus - "and will do my part also! For there are many things I cannot forget about the Templars - and I will rejoice, if I may work among them in the Spirit of Jesus!"

In the courtyard stood five horsemen and a wagon for Ruth; a servant held the spirited horse intended for Ursus with difficulty, and some of the inhabitants had come to take their leave. "Ruben" - Ruth asked softly - "why are the people so good here? This is what I keep asking myself and will never forget!"

As they parted, Mother Mary took little Ruth by the hand and said: "Go ahead and board the vehicle! May the love of Jesus guide you into the arms of your mother! We will not forget you and long for the hour when your parents will be led to Bethany by hands of pure child-love. Think often of all the things I was allowed to say to you yesterday, and do not forget the most beautiful: That Jesus, the most loving and best Friend, also loves you very much! Know that this makes you strong and invincible! The blessing of the Lord be yours!" The others also took their leave, and at a sign from Ursus, the vehicle rolled out of the courtyard.

Theophilus watched the procession for a long time and seriously; then John spoke encouragingly: "Brother, do not dream, but always be awake with your eyes and mind! Has it become clear to you that if you want to give your life a different content, you must also cast off the old one? With the departure of your sister, the last stone of your old views has been set rolling! Do not stop it, but look to what is coming and to the Lord! Then you will easily overcome everything that still hinders you! Remember also that the striving for perfection cannot fall to any man without a fight! Jesus also had to struggle for it, often bitterly and hard! But now that He has overcome all His humanity, He is the Lord, and we

recognize Him as the victor! Therefore, in every battle with the worldly, we remember His words: 'Do not be afraid! For the new life, which flows to you from Me after the battle, no longer holds dangers, but is power and gives clearest consciousness!' You too, dear Theophilus, will experience this: His life in you! Therefore come, today I lead you as a future inhabitant of the house of Lazarus through the whole property. It is necessary, so that you know where you are at home; the dangers by the Templars are often finely laid out, but here they dare no more!"

2. Return to the parents' house

Ruth gazed in wonder at the rarely beautiful horse and the sturdy Roman who rode silently beside their vehicle; but when two men in Greek garb met them and looked deep into the chariot, Ursus asked: "Are you familiar with these two men? After all, their curiosity is very striking to me - I think they are Templars in disguise."

"They are not known to me" - Ruth replied; "after all, we were kept so strict by our father that we hardly got to know anyone."

"Hopefully everything will be different now, dear sister," Ursus comforted her, "for there is a Master for your father, too, and he is Jesus, the Friend of us all!"

The ride continued quickly. When they reached Stephen's Gate, Ruth asked to be allowed to get off here, since she would rather walk to her parents' home. Ursus sent the wagon back to Bethany and, riding at a walk, followed Ruth, who was hurrying ahead. He was moved by several questions: Is the father still hostile to Jesus? How might the sick mother be? Will I be able to say something good to them?

Ruth stopped in front of a big house and said to Ursus: "Here is my home! Please, come with me to my father, as I feel he needs us!" Ruth gripped the knocker, and after a short time, she was greeted with loud joy by the maid. Ursus, meanwhile, handed his horse over to his servants and gave instructions to find quarters, but then to notify him immediately.

The maid had rushed into the room full of joy: "Ruth has come! Ruth has arrived!" The mother wanted to get up from her bed, but was much too weak to do so; then Ruth, followed by Ursus, entered and wanted to greet her mother and father joyfully; but when she saw the two priests Hosea and Joab, she was so frightened that she could not utter a word.

Then Ursus said to her: "Go ahead and greet your parents, and do not be afraid, for Jesus has appointed me to protect you!" But he greeted those present only by nodding his head. Now Ruth hurried to her mother and embraced her.

Hosea, however, looked at Ursus with contempt and said: "What does that mean: Jesus has appointed me for protection? If you are perhaps still ignorant, I tell you: you are in a Jewish house, which does not want to know anything about Jesus!"

"Are you the master of the house and the father of Ruth?" - asked Ursus in amazement - "If so, I want to accomplish my mission! If not, surely you have no business speaking to me."

Before Hosea could answer, Enos came up to Ursus and said: "I am Ruth's father! - And who are you?"

"My name is Ursus!" - the latter replied - "I am the son of the Roman merchant Demetrius, now the guest of the great philanthropist Lazarus of Bethany. At the express wish of our friend Lazarus, I have brought your daughter back with several soldiers, well protected and without harm, and I hope to be able to discuss something important with you and your wife."

"There is nothing to discuss" - Hosea interrupted the young Roman - "for we are priests and lords of this house."

To which Ursus replied sharply: "By what right you make yourself lord of this house, I do not care! But by what right you would forbid me to speak to Ruth's father, I would like to know! For I am accustomed to see clearly."

"By the right which Jehovah has given us!" - replied Hosea challengingly - "since we are His servants and priests."

But Ursus coolly replied: "With Jehovah and His servants, I have nothing to do, consequently not with you! But since I am a guest in this house, I do not want to be the cause of discord! Therefore I will go, and come again later."

Then Ruth cried out pleadingly: "Oh Ursus, stay for my sake and for the sake of my parents! These priests may claim to be friends, but they are our enemies."

"Be silent!" - shouted Hosea excitedly - "until you are asked, and take care of your mother, whom you left yesterday without any important reason, you unfaithful one."

Painfully touched, Ruth was about to retort something, but Ursus took her aside and spoke comfortingly: "Don't worry about these men! Trust in Jesus and in me."

Turning to Hosea, however, he said strongly: "Is this the way of a servant of God, as a guest in the house of a priest and colleague, to exercise the householder's right so brutally? I always believed that priests were also educators! But here I get to know a priest without any education."

Becoming more and more agitated, Hosea shouted loudly: "What do you care about my kind, since you are only a stranger with us and even want to refer to the Nazarene whom we hate!"

"Stop! Not another word in that tone!" - said Ursus sternly. "For Jesus is my best friend and enjoys my utmost respect! If you should speak of Him in such an insulting manner again, I shall consider myself offended, and shall call you to account with the right to which I am entitled! I hope that no doubt will be put into my words, for I am a Roman!"

Here Joab stepped forward and spoke graciously: "Lord, I ask forgiveness for my brother Hosea, he is agitated and does not consider what he speaks."

Ursus answered him briefly: "Excitement is no excuse! A man must know where his limits are, and therefore full responsibility falls upon him. The right I have as a Roman, thanks to my appointment, does not exclude the duties connected with the office!"

Old Enos turned pale when the Roman, in his vigorous manner, thus silenced the old priest; but then taking heart, he held out his hand to Ursus and said: "I feel as if I ought to thank you for the trouble you have had with my daughter Ruth; but I also know that a Roman attaches little importance to words of thanks."

"It is not necessary to say a word about it" - answered Ursus gravely - "it was my pleasure to return your daughter to her parent's home; at the same time I will now dispense with my mission, which is to tell you that your son Theophilus will remain in Bethany, and that he can never return to the temple! He would rather live contentedly and freely as a lowly day laborer than be a will-less templar and hypocrite. A single day in Bethany was enough to

show him the wrongness of his past life; and now he wants to gain a new attitude toward life, which has as its goal inner peace and a happy existence."

Enos asked in amazement: "You speak of Ruben, my son, and call him Theophilus? Tell him that my father's blessing is with him!"

Because yesterday I also realized that our life so far, although spent mostly in the temple, could not bring the real satisfaction to any of us! I tried to make this clear to my friends shortly before, but I spoke to deaf ears and hard hearts. See, we have become old people and have not been able to follow the course of the new time, which has become a completely different one through Jesus, the Nazarene! He is now dead, and perhaps what He wanted will soon be a thing of the past; but a sting still remains, for what has been sinned against, cannot be made good!"

"Not at all!" - Ursus answered briskly - "that is only your wrong idea, which is burned into your soul! Nothing is lost and every sting can be removed, because Jesus is not dead, but lives and works more alive than ever! I myself have come to know Him as the Risen One and have been allowed to look into His heart filled with great love for all people! If this were not so, for what reason would I have this interest in Him? I have never seen Jesus before, but only heard about Him! And when I came to Caesarea with the greatest hope to get to know Jesus now, I learned about His tragic death! I was disappointed, inwardly torn, even saddened to the point of death - then He Himself came to us and made me free and happy! He healed many sick people who stayed in the healing bath of old Mark! But you Templars want to make all this out to be a fraud! But these facts speak more powerfully than your sermons."

Hosea stood up and said excitedly: "Brother Joab, let us go! We can no longer listen to this outrage, where the temple and its servants are made out to be impostors! But to you, Enos, we say: If you too become a traitor, all the wrath of Jehovah will fall upon you!"

"Not at all!" - Ursus answered him calmly and firmly - "The glorious, great love of God will be revealed to him only when he finds the courage to turn his back on you! Go to Bethany and ask the happy ones! Go to Caesarea and let them tell you what rejoicing, what happiness arose there when the blessed love of Jesus, living and real among them, turned all sorrow into joy! Name me only one similar deed of love of the temple, and I will be silent! But as long as you cannot do this, I declare it to all the world and wherever it may be: Jesus lives! Jesus was victor, even over death!"

"Sir" - said Joab, giving in - "we cannot command you, as a Roman, to be silent! But the history of Israel shows a thousand instances where men were active in the work of God and proved their loyalty to Jehovah by miracles! Our Holy Scriptures are full of evidence of such messengers of God, and so I think it would be wrong to disrespect the temple as the holy house of Jehovah!"

"You do not succeed in this justification" - Ursus said boldly - "for all the people you are thinking of, the temple has persecuted all the time! And they gave you the promise of a coming Messiah! How is it that you do not want to recognize this Messiah, who also sought you, who also wanted to bring you love? How blind and obstinate you are! Look, there lies the housewife and mother sick; you, as priests and physicians, are powerless and cannot relieve the pain! But Jesus, the Living One, my Savior, speaks in me: 'Bring help by My support!' And so I will give you proof of His almighty, everywhere helping love!"

With a few steps, Ursus was at the bed; and as he gently laid his hand on the mother's head, Ruth sank to her knees. After a brief, deeply interior prayer, Ursus spoke in a strong

voice: "Arise, then, from your bed! For Jesus has taken your pains and weaknesses from you! But believe! Believe in Him and do not doubt! He also wants to be your Savior, your Redeemer!"

Hosea was already about to scornfully retort something, then Miriam stood up, all weakness was gone, upright she stood before the priest Hosea and said: "Already you wanted to mock, thank God that you have not done it. But now leave us alone, for your power has ended here! But you, Enos, father of our two children, master yourself and know the pure Divine truth and Divine love!"

Enos was most astonished at his wife and at her words, therefore he spoke doubtfully: "But Miriam, calm down! Who knows if your weakness will not return later and cause us new worries!"

"Oh no, Enos" - Miriam spoke with joy - "in me everything is like new! A stream of fire pervaded my whole body, and now I feel a wonderful courage within me to witness for Jesus! And all this I owe to this young Roman! There is no longer any doubt possible: Jesus has healed me as He has helped thousands! Oh, how glad I am that I too can now testify aloud: Jesus, the great Savior, has also helped me!"

Hosea turned pale under the steely gaze of the Roman, but still said: "Enos! How will the high priest curse us, that in our goodness we let your son go free! Oh we fools, this is now the thanks! Instead of that, we would have held you by this, we now have to watch how you erect a throne for the Nazarene in your house - in our presence! This very day, the temple court will receive knowledge of your conduct, and you will have to bear the consequences!"

"Be without worry" - Enos answered gravely and firmly - "here, too, a way out will be found! But it is well that I am informed in advance, and so you may presently witness how I place myself under the protection of this young Roman, who, without knowing it, has done my house such great favors. But to you, Ursus, I come with the request: do not deny me your advice and help!"

Touched, Ursus reached out his hand to the old Enos and said: "No man has ever asked me for anything in vain, so also my advice and my help are promised to you, even at the risk of my life! But I set you one condition: Do not close yourself any longer to the Savior's teaching! For only in mutual trust, in the Spirit of my Savior Jesus, can I keep my promise given to you."

Enos looked at the young Roman for a long time, inwardly wavering about this condition; then he spoke slowly: "I will try! But I beg you, have patience with me, for I am still like an old, gnarled tree that is difficult to bend."

"That is enough for me!" - said Ursus - "I have no doubt that you too will yet experience the glorious grace of recognizing Jesus as the Savior and Redeemer of your lost soul! But in order to discuss your future path, it is necessary that you let these priests go or cause them to remain well-disposed toward you."

"We go!" - said Hosea haughtily to Enos - "but beware lest you fall into the hands of the temple! For there is no mercy for traitors!"

Then Ursus answered sternly: "That will not happen as long as this house is under Roman protection! But for you it would certainly be an advantage, if you wanted to check once truly and seriously your dark attitude towards the One crucified by you, but now risen from

the dead! It is possible to hide the truth about Jesus for a little while, but never ever in the long run! How do you, as defenders of God's truth, want to stand before yourselves with all the evidence of the new life of the Risen One? Is it not yet enough of all the wickedness and lies? Is it not enough that all the people have been driven into great doubt? Only a short time still, then the mission of the Nazarene will be completed and you will experience how the truth about Jesus, like a rising sun, illuminates and reveals all the lies about Him!"

"Lord" - Hosea replied thoughtfully - "you as a stranger, supported by the power of the emperor, can demand well as a judge: Believe this and do that! But if you were a Jew like us, I would say to you: Have you forgotten that we are bound for life and death to the temple? Already since the earliest time of my life, I have been a boarder of the temple and until now I have wanted nothing else than what the temple demanded! It is not possible to prove to me that I was disobedient only once to those who are my superiors in the temple! Now this Nazarene comes and brings a whole new teaching, desecrates the Sabbath and claims to be older than Abraham! And this we, as keepers of the house of Jehovah, are to approve? Oh Lord, your faith in honor, but our faith is also to be honored and respected!"

"Well" - replied Ursus, more gently - "if your words came from the heart and were born of sincerity, then it would be possible to negotiate further on this ground. But what you have said is only born of your intellect and is meant to cover your hatred! Therefore let me say to you: Your faith, yes, it is also a sanctuary for me and not one of us will shake your teachings of God. But your attitude, your way of acting towards those who, like me, believe in God's glorious message of a new life of love, is to be deeply despised! For this way of yours does not seek understanding, but wants to corrupt! If we would pay back with the same coin, truly I tell you, the temple would not stand anymore! Do not tell me: since time immemorial the temple has been the house of our God!

Every stranger will have to confirm that your temple and all its facilities are only a gold-mine for your interests. You Templars know only the name of Jehovah; everything else is the work of man! Instead of being grateful to God that He came to you in the Messiah Jesus and revealed Himself as the One who still loves His people and wanted to show you His life's most glorious and holy goods, you have crucified your God in the man Jesus! Now see how you can deal with your conscience! But tell the temple court calmly how we Romans and Gentiles think of you! For the man whom I am to respect and believe, must be honest! You are not!"

At that moment the maid came and led in a soldier of Ursus; he saluted, but kept silent, as Ursus gave him a sign. The time seemed to have come for the two priests to leave; proudly erect, they departed without greeting.

Now the mother came to Ursus and thanked him for the healing; but Ursus said: "Only to the Lord will we give thanks together, and will joyfully confess that it is He alone who can help us!" Ruth wanted to say something, but her deep joy at her father's repentance made her silent; and at the same time she wept with happiness at her mother's healing. Enos, however, was also silent, for he felt very depressed after all.

The soldier now reported to his superior, and the mother had refreshments brought for all. Enos, however, did not want to take anything and apologized: "All this is too depressing for me! Now, at the end of my life, I must realize: all my earnest striving was in vain! Must I not despise myself for having represented all my life something that now brings me such great sorrow? There are certainly ways to become free from the temple, but the temple

council sees my resignation as a betrayal of God's cause and has the right to punish me as it has treated my son so agonizingly!"

"Dear, old Enos" - said Ursus, pacifyingly - "do not worry about this, but about getting right in your heart with Him who alone can help - with Jesus, the Living and True One. You must be able to put your whole life and existence into His hands, then everything else will come into order as if by itself! What seems so dull and dark to you today, will be cleared up! For I tell you: If Jesus, the great friend of mankind, had not stretched out his hand to you, your wife would still be lying in pain on this bed! Your son's way of life would not yet be paved, and your daughter would not yet have realized which life is better, here with you or in Bethany! Therefore, strengthen yourself and draw a line under your life up to now! A new and glorious life lies ahead of you, but only with Jesus!"

"You dear young friend" - Enos said, touched - "your love for Jesus makes you find warm words for me; but unfortunately I cannot follow you so quickly, since it still looks desolate and barren in me. Consider: a short time ago his ardent opponent, who was guilty of actions that I cannot forgive myself! What good is the delightful message if it cannot penetrate me? What is the use of the prospect of a new life, if the old one still exists unchanged?"

"First of all, learn to understand Jesus and His great doctrine of love" - Ursus replied, consoling him - "then you will learn what is possible for His Savior's love! And if your debt burden had increased immeasurably, His grace and mercy is still greater! But now it is above all necessary to consider what you want to do and undertake? For the temple will certainly take it's measures soon! If I may give you a suggestion, it is only this: to come with me to Bethany! For there is the home of all those who have to fear the power of the temple."

"To come with you to Bethany - I cannot make up my mind" - objected Enos - "indeed I have often gone out and come in there, but alas, not as a friend, but as a hater and an adversary."

"Dear Enos" - Ursus again pacified him - "what is past, you must also let it be past! A new, a different Enos is coming to Bethany to seek help and protection and a new field of work! As I have experienced Bethany in one day, I am sure to say, in the spirit of Lazarus: "Come with me!" We leave two soldiers for the protection of your house, who your maid will have to take care of, until you have put your things in order with the temple from Bethany. What you have of precious and valuable things here in the house, you can take quietly; and everything else you arrange with Lazarus."

Here Ruth hurried to the father and asked fervently: "Do not say no, dear father! What is offered to you and to us there comes as if from heaven, which I experienced there yesterday and this morning alive! Never have I been so happy as in Bethany! Nowhere have I met such good people as there! And never have I heard of such heavenly harmonies as among the inhabitants of Bethany! At least give it a try! After all, you can always go back if it doesn't suit you."

"Child" - answered the father earnestly - "I have grown old in Jerusalem, and it is difficult for me to part with what I have grown fond of in all these years. It would be presumption, too, to want to accept love and friendship from those whom I have only sought to corrupt."

"Father, dear Father!" - Ruth begged - "you had better separate yourself from that which has made your heart so hard and loveless. And think that the love of Jesus has also forgiven you with the saying at his death: 'Father, forgive them! For they know not what

they do!' Father, take the offered hand, which wants to help you, and think also of Ruben, how he has already won through bitter suffering to the right and true peace! Father, I will love you with all the ardor of my soul! I will ask the Savior to help you until I know that now you are happy too! Think of Mother, who thinks the same as I do and who has already experienced Jesus' helping Savior's love! In Bethany they plead in heartfelt prayer to the All-Benevolent One also for you, and their last word to me was: 'Bring your parents to us as soon as possible, we are waiting for you!'

Enos was silent. Inwardly, he fought a mighty battle, but at last he said firmly: "Well, so be it! I can no longer resist your pleas!"

Then Miriam knelt down and prayed aloud: "Oh kind God and Father in heaven! How late I come to know Your goodness and mercy! How wonderful are all Your ways and guidance! We were blind and now we see! We were deaf and now we may hear! You have turned the great suffering, and thankfully I cry out to You: Out of the error You have led us and show us the gates of Your heavenly city! Let us arise and go to You in thanksgiving and fulfillment of duty! We are now Yours! Make of us what Your love has intended and accept the thanks which I can only speak now, but will live in the future! Give strength and blessing to our undertaking, for without blessing, there is no success! Amen." "Amen!" - said Ruth and Ursus; but Enos wept.

Ursus now ordered the soldier to bring the comrades and a large chariot here, and immediately the preparations for departure began, with Ursus helpfully assisting old Enos. After an hour, the soldiers stopped in front of the house with the horses and the chariot - when a messenger from the temple council came and brought the order that Enos should come to the temple immediately! Enos wavered, he was used to obey, but Ursus acted as a Roman! He had parchment and a pen given to him and wrote to the temple council: "The priest Enos appointed by you has placed himself under my - i.e. Roman - protection! Since it is to be feared that the high temple council will not show my protégé the right understanding for his actions, I have taken over the obligation to watch over his life and property and bring him to a place where he will be protected from all reproaches of the temple! An authorized representative of Enos will set all things in order with the high temple council!" This letter was received by the messenger of the temple in reply.

Then everyone helped to load the things into the wagon; but there was no more room for the three people. A second wagon had to be provided, and when finally everything was arranged, Ursus still ordered that two soldiers should stay behind as guardians of the house with the maid. At last the happy Ruth departed with her parents and Roman escort, and without any incident, they reached their place of refuge: 'Bethany', the place of love!

3. In the new home

Ursus had sent a horseman ahead, who announced to Lazarus the arrival of the family and this unexpected message meant for Lazarus again a visible victory of Eternal Love over a hardened Templar heart! When the sun was already sinking, the wagons drove into the big court, where the inhabitants were very astonished that a Jewish priest in Roman company came to Bethany. But Lazarus himself reached out his hand to the old Enos, supported him when he dismounted and spoke full of kindness: "Your coming, dear Enos, is a special joy to me! And that you never have to regret your decision, for this Jesus, the Lord, give me out of His power; for I want to become a true brother to you! So welcome to all of us in the name of Jesus!"

Enos could not answer anything. Tears of joy stood in his eyes; so he shook the hands of Lazarus silently in overflowing gratitude. In the meantime, the women were also warmly welcomed and the things they had brought with them, were packed into the room.

The mother Mary led Miriam and Ruth into the living room and spoke as they entered: "Blessed be your entry into Bethany! You shall want for nothing here, it shall become your home! Consider yourselves not as strangers, but as belonging to the house; for we rejoice with the Lord Jesus, Who in His love and mercy, has already created dwellings where all may take refuge in the coming times of severe tribulation. Therefore rejoice! Only then can you be truly grateful to the great Giver of all that is good and beautiful!"

Moved to tears, Miriam said: "Oh, you dear, good people in Bethany! The change in our circumstances is so sudden that I cannot quite believe it yet. We women were always condemned to silence, while the men acted according to their insight and ancient law. But when my son had a change of heart, there was no more peace in our quiet house; and if the Roman Ursus had not taken our fate into his own hands today, we would have been completely ruined! But where is my son? As yet I have seen him nowhere - my heart yearns for him."

"Have patience, sister, I too have not seen him since this morning" - replied the mother Mary; "he is with the disciple John, getting acquainted with our Bethany."

Meanwhile, Lazarus said: "Brother Enos, your coming to us makes you my brother! Let no thought of the past cloud our future relationship! That you are inwardly not yet quite in order, I feel; but be assured that I understand you completely. With good will and the right zeal, you will succeed in removing all the barriers that you have built up between us in your self-love, defiance and wrong self-confidence. Behold, all of us in Bethany are building on the foundation of selfless love that Jesus, the Risen One, has laid in us! Choose this foundation for yourself, too - and you too will be permeated by the stream of His grace!"

"Lazarus! You good, dear man, call me brother?" - asked Enos, deeply moved - "I found it difficult to follow the young Roman so readily; but as I could no longer resist the entreaties and urgings of my daughter, and, on the other hand, did not wish to incur still greater guilt, I consented to seek refuge with you. I have brought almost my entire fortune with me; it is yours! Manage it for your benefit, and I will strive to become a brother to you as well! But I beg you, have patience with me - it is all so new! But where is my son, I have not seen him yet."

Lazarus spoke kindly: "Brother, do not worry! He is in the best of care. Brother John is his companion, and at supper we shall all be together again."

Ursus, however, felt useless here, so he sought to meet his master Demetrius or John and Theophilus, for his heart urged him to share this joy with them. From afar came John and Theophilus, and he hastened to meet them; but Theophilus also longed to hear his report, and immediately asked: "Brother Ursus, how was the reception? And how the success?"

"Come and see for yourselves!" spoke Ursus joyfully - "what we could not expect has happened! Your parents and Ruth, dear Theophilus, are already in the house with Lazarus!"

"A miracle has happened!" - exclaimed the quite surprised Theophilus - "My father, who hated Bethany and was already excited when Lazarus was mentioned? But it might not be possible even for him to resist; for God in His love, overcomes every adversary!"

To this, Ursus spoke thoughtfully: "Brother Theophilus! I wish it were as you just said! But behold, there were still two priests present in your house, whom love could not help! Only out of fear of us Romans did they finally leave the house! But later you will learn all the details!"

Contemplating, the three looked back to Jerusalem and saw a crowd of men coming to Bethany. "They are our brothers" - said John - "today you will get to know them all; only one is no longer with us" - he added quietly.

The departing sun illuminated the firmament with golden-red brilliance and kissed this earth once more, as if in farewell; then Ursus exclaimed with deep feeling: "Oh earth, how beautiful you are, you are our home, and yet you cannot give us true peace! Such a sunset always fills me with longing and brings to life memories of things past and once experienced, of which I lack all certainty. But soon it is night, and then these images from a blissful childhood, disappear again."

"Shall we go out to meet the brothers?" asked John. "The sign for the night meal has not yet been given, and we are not absolutely necessary in the house!"

So the three went to meet the brothers. All of them would have come, but the deep seriousness in their faces made Ursus wonder; therefore he asked John: "Have these brothers experienced disappointments, since I do not notice a cheerful mood, or are they not allowed to be joyful and happy? I want to hug the whole earth for happiness, and these look as if everything has been taken from them!"

"You are mistaken, brother Ursus!" - said John - "their joy lives within them! And their muteness is to us the eloquent testimony that they are occupied with their inmost life, which we are all to practice continually! Moreover, through their awakened spirit, they immediately recognize your inner being, and I believe you will remember with pleasure the hours we spend with them today! But listen, the sign calls to the common meal!"

Then Theophilus asked: "Brother John, the brothers don't even ask who we are? Ursus and I are strangers to them!"

"No, brother, not strangers!" - answered John; "for we know that all people are our friends and brothers! They are, after all, all loved by our glorious Master, and we are to do the same in all things. The Master saw all things with the eyes of love, and if you do the same, ask no more: 'Are you a brother to me or not?' See, one of His last words was: 'A

new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another as I have loved you! Only in this sense can you also seek to solve your tasks!"

4. Was Jesus' visible departure necessary?

Thus the men reached the house and entered the large, brightly lit room. A silent handshake was exchanged with Lazarus, then they silently took their seats. Theophilus could greet also his father only with a meaningful handshake and mother and sister with joyful lighting up in the eyes, but with fervent gratitude towards God in the heart!

Lazarus blessed the present ones and then the food and said: "In the name of Jesus - all of you are cordially welcome! It is His holy will that we feel completely united with Him in these evening hours! So let us give Him thanks with joyful hearts and confess: Lord! How wisely You have guided and directed everything! You have brought us new brothers and sisters and never cease to prepare new delights for our hearts with Your love. Therefore, all our thanks and love to You! May Your holy peace be our portion! Amen!"

"Amen!" - said the others also, and then they refreshed themselves with bread and honey, cold meat and sweet fruit, and drank spicy wine with it. Miriam sat with Mary the mother, Ruth with Mary Magdalene. Lazarus sat between Demetrius and Enos, rejoicing that the timidity had already somewhat departed from the old priest; in answer to his question as to who the men were who had arrived, Lazarus explained: "They are the disciples who followed the Lord at every turn and are called to carry on the Lord's work and teaching to all the farthest places wherever humans live."

"I have a lot to make up to them, too! Because I fastened many a curse to their heels" - Enos confessed sincerely. But Lazarus answered him: "Do not worry about it! Your curse was shattered by the love and patience of the Master, but it rebounded on yourselves! Therefore it is not on them, but on you and yours that you have to make amends, since every wish, every blessing, but also every hateful thought or curse always rebounds and still exerts its power and validity! Therefore rejoice that now your love may take effect! For only then you will become aware of what God has prepared for those who are active in His cause!"

Demetrius was also interested in the new brothers, but their seriousness struck him too, and so he asked Lazarus: "How is it that these brothers, who came last, display such seriousness? Surely he who comes to Bethany must rejoice and lose all that is burdensome!"

Lazarus instructed him: "Their joy is deeply internal! See brother! In the three years of teaching, as His disciples, the new spiritual life developed within them through the constant care and love of the Master! But from now on they shall live and work by the power of God, Who revealed Himself to us all as the Risen One! Hence their inexpressible inner joy at being chosen by Him! But also their holy earnestness to prepare themselves for this high mission! We will still hear many a profound word from them!"

When the meal was finished and the tables cleared, then Peter asked Lazarus to speak to everyone, which was granted him with joy; he stood up and began: "The grace of God and the peace of our Lord Jesus be with you! Dear brothers! It was the Lord's will that we should come to Bethany together, in order to be led even deeper into the work of His great holy love - for the redemption of mankind from error and darkness - in the spirit of intimate union with Him in you, brother Lazarus! We all know that these last weeks were a great, tremendous test for us - (concerning the beginning of persecutions of Christians), but also that we were allowed to experience the wisdom and grace of His guidance more and more gloriously, whereby something solid, never imagined before, came over us!"

Behold, the Lord visited us in Jerusalem many times, even ate with us and showed us more and more clearly the secrets of all the dark and unknown in our inner life, but also the powerful consciousness of heavenly life in an awakened human soul! And so we know now: It is not enough, brethren, that we love one another, but that His love comes alive in us! For, as His love for all created things is stirring more and more vividly in us, we are already treading the path of inner development, on which He as man, as our Jesus, preceded us all, so that we follow Him on this path up to the high goals of our inner perfection and God-likeness!

Now the Lord has commanded us to stay together in silence until we would be filled with the power from above! For without His power, we could not continue His work of awakening inner life, which He as the Master of Life has begun in us, but which we are now to complete independently in ourselves, in order to be able to transmit this blissful peace of His teaching to all fellow men as those chosen by Him!

He is still looking for our love, which has awakened to life, for all those who once fell out of the Divine order, and is deeply concerned about this work of His in us. For soon, very soon, the hour will come when He will cease to be the Son, in order to be able to approach His becoming children even more as our Eternal Father!

But when this hour comes, when we, as His sons, as His heirs called by Him, must take over His begun work of redemption from spiritual night and darkness before all the world, yes, even before the eyes of the angelic and spiritual world - then, brothers, there is only one concern for us, how to proclaim His love clearly and fearlessly to all people, so that the world may recognize its Redeemer! And the one task, to transmit His teachings purely and unadulteratedly to their hearts in such a way, that all want to enter the way of His following joyfully, in order to become also Divine children! We know: He alone is the power and the glory and from Him we receive this power to overcome everything lower in us and around us!

Yes, He has promised us to give it to everyone who asks, according to the degree of his selfless love! Because only through His love and His power do we find the connection with the Divine in us and may only thereby become helpers to bring back to the earth and its inhabitants the once lost peace with God and the shining glories of God's kingdom. What a great, holy life-task! But, brothers, the Master is still the very nearest to us! But when He will take leave of us to return to His eternal home, then we shall recognize in the farthest and deepest fallen, our neighbor, whom we shall love, whom we must help so that he, too, may learn to find the way to peace with God within himself!

If up to now, all our thoughts and feelings have been turned to our Lord and Master, then in the future our thoughts and all our love will be directed to those who have been lost or are still living in error. The miraculous power of His victorious Spirit, which we experienced through His death and resurrection, will also become our own as the innermost driving force for these holy tasks on the lost souls, as soon as His living love finds a permanent dwelling place in our hearts. With Him we will only become what His grace has called us to be! But without Him, without His support, we are nothing! So we ask You, Lord and Master, from a united heart: Bless us and make us ripe for work in Your vineyard! Amen!"

"Amen!" said also the others, and silence fell in the great room.

Enos had sunk down; with such words he felt no more ground under his feet. His gaze slid to the disciples in search of help, his thoughts rushed back to the temple and then to Golgotha, and his guilt stood huge before him, taking away all hope and prospect! He

thought of his son; but when he looked into his son's shining eyes, his strength was completely gone; his breath went twice as fast and he sunk down.

John went to him, put his right hand on his gray head and said gently: "My dear brother! The grace of the Lord and His saving love have also been granted to you! You are still standing with your consciousness on your old ground, which you have made your own; but this is disappearing from you, since you must recognize that your life, all your work and creativity, has brought you no happy content, no inner peace! But it is not yet too late! The Divine Master's merciful love is eternal and applies to all, to all beings, including you! What seems impossible to you today, can be a shining truth tomorrow! Bow not only your head, but also your mind and let your deepest feelings be touched by the ray of His great Savior's love; then you, too, will take with joy the hand that the Risen One wants to extend to you and will experience the miracle of His saving power! But examine seriously and do not be hasty! And we all want to stand by you, helping and praying!"

Enos wanted to give thanks for these words full of understanding love, but his mouth remained silent; in his heart, a struggle was surging that he had never known before; but if he had looked at his daughter as she inwardly prayed for Jesus' help, he would certainly have found the word that would save him.

Ursus had followed attentively the speeches of the disciples and now asked: "Dear brothers! Already yesterday you, John, and today you, brother Peter, spoke the word that Jesus, the Risen One, wants to depart from us forever to return to His original home and that you should then continue His inheritance with His spiritual power! This I do not understand! Or I do not understand it as you may think, for look: the grace to look into the Lord's most loving eyes was granted to me only once; but His light-filled, convincing words created in me a whole new, undreamed-of life and thus a living power that wants to move mountains! This is not only a belief, but a clearest consciousness of power, which lives in me! How is it, then, that you, dear brethren, still expect a visible departure of the Master, in order to attain to the life of His power, which was given to me by His coming? When I look back in spirit to Caesarea to Mark, to the fishermen there on the seashore or to Lazarus, our dear lodge-father here, then I see how the inheritance of Jesus is in good and best hands! But you, His faithful disciples, chosen by Himself, are still waiting for the hour when you will receive His inheritance?"

"My dear Ursus" - said John - "your speech is clear as a spring and true as the light of the sun. But you forgot to make a difference between you and us disciples! See, we were twelve! We twelve, however, represent not only the twelve tribes of Israel, but all mankind, which at all times sustains the earth. Jesus' teachings, all His deeds and signs thus became the property of all mankind through us! Everything was preserved in us until the last, and what one did not keep, the other carried in himself! But live into our conception and our love for Him! His complete humanity, His attitude towards all the human errors, His compassion for all the sufferers, were so suitable to consider Him as a mediator, as the Son of God!

When Jesus once asked us: 'Who am I?' Peter immediately answered: 'You are the Christ! Son of the living God!' We were constant witnesses of His omnipotent power as well as His innermost glory! But for this very reason, many things in us were shaken when we saw Him suffer and struggle so grievously! And so it happened that the full greatness of His redeeming love for mankind could not be revealed to us in His death; and it became difficult for us to recognize our beloved Master in His full Divinity, as our Father since eternity!

With you, my Ursus, it is completely different! You owe your experience to Him not as Jesus the man, but as the Victor over all death! And as you have recognized Him as the Lord in His indestructible spiritual glory, so you will not be able to experience Him differently in eternity! And now recognize the great difference between you and us: Our past experience with Jesus as a human could never become present experience with Him for you! But now we have to learn to experience this familiar contact with Him as God more and more vividly and as present in our inner world - and then to convey out of ourselves, as our personally acquired spiritual property, also to others this way of familiar contact with Jesus as our Redeemer, in their inner world! In our hearts lived the man Jesus, but in you and in all later generations, will live the God Jesus! And that is why for us there must still come a visible conclusion of His earthly mission, so that in our concepts and ideas, everything human about Jesus can be completely removed and His spiritual-Divine essence as the life-giving Power of the will can completely break through in us and in all His followers. You, too, will witness this process of grace of His visible departure from this earth and will then, like us, see in clarity what is still so unclear to you and to many! That is why we strive that He alone, as the Lord, may become our love! And in His love, we want to serve all our fellow men! Not only today, but for all eternity!"

After these words, a deep silence fell.

5. Jesus' teaching about His inheritance

Now Lazarus asked all to entertain themselves after the pleasure of their love unconstrained, since lighter food was necessary for the new brothers. "The evening is so beautiful, let us go to the balcony; but the women and these who are busy early in the morning, may go to rest."

Enos asked Lazarus to be allowed to retire to seek the place of rest with his son, saying in conclusion: "My soul is troubled as if by a great tempest; I feel as if I must die, since I realize more and more that my life has been utterly wrong. My guilt rises up grotesquely before me, because I have sinned not only against the pure Messenger of God, but also against my people! I see your great love and feel your forgiveness, but my heavy disgrace is not erased by it."

"Brother Enos" - Lazarus spoke full of compassion at this agony of soul - "you can not go to rest like this, the night would not bring you any sleep! Therefore stay still awake with us! Let us unite ourselves more intimately in Jesus' love, that salvation may come to you too!"

And so it happened; without much talking, the brothers gathered on the balcony, where a wonderfully silent night awaited them; no moon, but star after star sparkled in glorious clarity, and over the whole of nature spread the blessing peace of God! Lazarus asked the brothers to remain in quiet devotion, until the new brother Theophilus had spoken with his father: "because both need also our blessing wishes and forces for it."

Theophilus said: "Father, my guilt is the same as yours - and yet my heart is full of hope! For with the laying aside of my old name, my will also changed! I will and will serve only Jesus!"

"How can you do that?" - asked Enos softly - "Surely one cannot give allegiance to a dead, even agonizingly crucified man? And in His resurrection I cannot quite believe!"

"You will believe in that too, dear father" - answered Theophilus resolutely - "for God wills that we too shall not perish, but receive salvation for our souls and then effect it! Only hold on to Lazarus! He is the one called and blessed by the Lord in Bethany! Behold, he was dead and is called back to life through Jesus, the great Savior of all people! And as Jesus saved Lazarus from bodily death, so He will also be able to save our soul from all the torment of spiritual death! This is now my firm faith!"

"I wish it with all my heart" - said Enos, sighing - "for with this guilt I would not go into the pit!"

Lazarus, who now sat down next to Enos, said with kindness: "Dear Enos! We are no longer strangers to each other, because your whole soul-life was already revealed to me. May now also my inside be open to you, so that you see with your own eyes the love that lives in it for you! Think no more of your past in this hour, but consider your future life and know that through the Master's grace, power and love, we may now be shapers of our future ourselves! What was wrong and false, we will now correct! What we did in wrong love, according to wrong concepts, we will try to make up for unitedly! But what we have destroyed in a criminal way, we must atone for, because the Lord and Creator put the admonisher into the heart of every man! But to atone for such things - i.e. to make up for and erase everything that makes us debtors, we need the grace of the Lord! Because without Him, we are all only weak and foolish children! Without Him, there are no powers

in our words and deeds! Without Him our heart, our emotional life is as if dead! Therefore, only look for Him, even to you this is still possible! 'In every human breast I am to be found!' He calls to you! But before that, bring thoughts of love to Him, and the request to forgive you, will not be in vain!"

Enos was silent to this, but the words of Lazarus had done him good, and for the first time, he found no doubt about it. More and more insistently, however, he heard like an echo the words inside: "I am to be found for everyone! Whoever seeks, will find Me! I am salvation, redemption and forgiveness!"

"Who is speaking these words?" - Enos finally thought - "those gathered here do not speak a word! But I see their eyes shining with joy; what has happened? Here is one who lays his hand on my head and says: 'I am salvation, redemption, and forgiveness!'"

"Who are you?" - continued Enos - "your hand is so gentle, so soothing, your nearness so gratifying!"

"I am salvation, redemption and forgiveness! Believe it, then My peace is yours also!" - he heard it being said again; then he rose, turned, and saw Jesus standing before him!

"You are alive?" - he cried out - "It is You, Jesus?" - and, sinking to his knees, he begged: "Oh grant me Your mercy and forgiveness!"

Crying, it trickled through his body - Theophilus, too, fell down, knelt beside his father, and begged: "Lord, if You art still able, let mercy go before justice! Our guilt is so great, our offense so grave, that it would be presumptuous to ask You to forgive us. But I will not ask for myself, but for my father: be merciful to him and let Your sun of love rise in his heart, so that in this light of Yours, he may recognize You as the only Savior and Redeemer from all our night and darkness!"

"But what will you do?" - asked the Lord, looking lovingly at him - "if I accept your father, but not you? - If I forgive him, but not you?"

Theophilus answered: "Then I will labor and wrestle and fight until I may say: Lord, look at my work, it is permeated with the Spirit of Your love! Accept it as atonement for the great wrong I have done You! That I may work for You, is reward enough for me!"

And again the Lord asked: "But if your strength is not sufficient, if you grow weary and faint before the time, if the great enemy of life lays snares and traps for you and your hopes come to naught, what then? Is it not better that I also forgive you and say to you: Only with an untroubled heart and mind you can accomplish your life's work and fulfill your high tasks!"

"Lord, now that I hear it from Your mouth, I believe it!" - spoke Theophilus, joyfully moved. "But now my whole striving shall be directed to serve You only!"

"But if I come to you no more, and you almost perish with longing" - the Lord asked him further - "or grow weary and faint in the struggle with and in the world - tell Me, will you also 'then uphold this promise?' I did not ask you to bind yourself to Me!"

Then Theophilus answered joyfully: "Oh Lord! Night was in me! Night was around me! Your light and grace were like a gift to me, and made me sober and awake. But now I know Your love, now I know that You have forgiven us, Lord, there is no doubt! To You I belong forever and ever."

Then the Lord said: "Take My blessing, My son, and take with you the knowledge that I will never ever leave a child, if he truly loves Me and wants to consecrate his strength to Me! "And you, Enos!" the Lord asked the old priest, who was completely slumped: "is it not better, if you also make My love and My blessing your own, than to stand far away any longer? There is only one happiness in this world and only one striving which can give the soul the most valuable eternal content, and that is: to recognize Me and then to follow Me! If you can do this in inner freedom, then you have everything and can enrich yourself from the cornucopia of My love and grace as much as you can love your poorer brothers."

"Jesus! You live - and do not judge me?" - said Enos at last. "What an incomprehensible being **are You!** Only evil have I spoken about You, have persecuted Your work and Your teachings - partook in Your death and had a part in the sorrow of Your loved ones! Oh Lord! Why did You let all this happen and why did You not punish us immediately?"

But the Lord answered him kindly: "Because forgiving is better than judging! Because My death will be the eternal proof of My all-forgiving love, and because My resurrection is the crowning of My mission! Behold, all - all must pass by Me! No-one, no matter how clever, can ever manage to pass through the gate into the inner life without meeting Me! But I have not come to you to judge, but to raise up and redeem! No-one could prevent Me from acting on you as You have acted on me, and no-one could say: Lord, You have done wrong! But I have come to make you blessed and to take the lost home to their eternal Father's house! Behold, your son asked for you, therefore he now already rests in spirit at My chest, and bliss trickles through his inner being!"

Up the stairs came Mary with Miriam and Ruth, then came both sisters of Lazarus and Mary Magdalene. Astonished and then elated, they hurried to the Lord! Ruth also knelt down, clasped the Lord's feet and said: "At last! At last I may see You, at last my desire is fulfilled! Oh Jesus! You good Savior, that I may embrace You but once!" - she exclaimed with fervour. "Lead me away from You, for I am not worthy to clutch Your feet, but happiness has come to me! My eyes have seen You, and my arms have embraced You."

Bowing down lovingly, the Lord said: "Oh child! Whoever comes to Me in such love, I give him all that I carry in Me! And who already considers it a happiness to look at Me and to touch Me, say, how will it be for him then, when I take residence with him completely in the Spirit of My love? Therefore I do not reject you, but ask you: Stay with Me, even if I will no longer be among you, and keep Me with your love in your heart as you now hold My feet!"

Now Miriam also sank on her knees; then the Lord spoke further: "You come late, daughter! But in your heart you were already close to Me, therefore now receive My blessing of love!" "But now, beloved ones, gather yourselves for inner rest, that your hearts may be receptive to the Word from My love and to the Spirit from My heavens!"

After a pause, the Lord then continued: "You, My brothers, remain quietly united in the Spirit of My love and mercy - until the call becomes louder and lively in you! Do not think and speak so much of My death, but of the Holy Spirit who gave Me the power of overcoming to make of the place of horror and terror(Golgotha), a piece of heaven! All that I suffered and endured, was not for My sake, but for your sake - and for the sake of all mankind!

Because only through this I completed the task given to Myself, to exemplify to you the irresistible, all-evil-transforming love-power, which can only come to the breakthrough in the hours of most bitter suffering! You were allowed to experience how all suffering meant for Me, pulled Me upward instead of destroying Me, and how all life in Me only became more alive instead of dying! This holy overcoming Spirit is now My inheritance to you,

which I want to send to you as the Comforter when I am no longer visibly with you. Then see to it that this Holy Spirit becomes the property of all mankind! I want to go home into My primordial Essence, but through this My Spirit, I want to pave the way for you into your own inner being! You too, pave these ways for your brothers into their inner being, so that they may have dwellings ready for Me, and that when I come, I may enter there with joy to set up My kingdom.

"Be like a tree, which takes the strength for growth from the soil, but whose branches spread out toward the light and tower above everything earthly! And fill also your brothers with this My Spirit, which raises you above all lower things! Only then will My life be revealed to you more clearly, which has the power to overcome everything imperfect! All of you, My brothers, who know Me, are now My stewards! Into your hands, into your love I now place My work of redemption, which has been started since eternity! I do not know to whom I would rather entrust this great, holy work than to you, although countless angels and servants are at My disposal. Therefore let My Spirit mature in you in innermost humility and in loving service! It will enlighten for you My all-life-liberating truth, as soon as your task to continue My work, has become the holy goal of your life!"

Again the Lord was silent - He pensively looked at His disciples and then continued to speak: "Turn your inner desire, so that I remain with you forever! And so I say to you today: All of you stay with Me! Then you can give to the earth and its inhabitants that which serves all for their salvation from night and error! In two weeks, when the sun has reached its highest level, invite all brothers here, so that I may visibly bless you once more! But you, do not tire of being always ready to serve and to bless! My peace and My power be yours! Amen!"

Without disturbing the devotion, the Lord became invisible - but in all remained the holiest love for Him!

After a long silence, Lazarus said softly: "Let us go to rest! For it is almost too much of the good and glorious, what we were allowed to receive from Him. Also tomorrow is still a day where we can continue this holy devotion in our hearts!"

6. About silence

The next morning, when the signal for the early meal sounded, all the brothers gathered in the large dining room as usual; but Enos felt very depressed and unfree, so that Ursus asked: "Brother, are you sorry you came to Bethany? I cannot imagine that a man to whom the Most High lovingly drew near can still be under soul-pressure which, after all, is only caused by wrong and perverse thinking."

"My dear young friend - for so I must call you - it is as you say!" - replied Enos - "first my guilt weighed me down, but now I am weighed down by the love which I have been permitted to experience and enjoy here! Like a sinner led to judgment, I feel and inwardly ask God that He may be gracious and merciful to me! It would already have been a blessing if a punishment sermon had shaken me up! But now Love itself comes - and heaps on my guilt-ridden conscience new love, new benefits! I want to get out of my ego, I want to be someone different! But I am so uncertain, I have no strength to go on this new way to Jesus, the One crucified by us! That is why the night did not bring me the longed-for rest."

"That is self-torment" - Ursus briskly replied - "because you do not yet know Jesus, the Glorious One, well enough! Look at the brothers! They all bear the sign of His peace as a blessed rest in their hearts! But in their eyes shines a brightness that is not of this earth! And why? Because the Divine Love has become their own. You are assured of forgiveness, peace, and redemption from the Lord, and yet you still want to hold within yourself what makes you unfree?"

"My dear Ursus" - replied Enos gently - "the rapid change of our circumstances and the realization that I have left behind me a completely lost life, have made me so miserable. But leave me alone for only a short time, so that I can deal with myself in silence! Only in the silence of my heart will I recover and new hope can enter me."

Then Ursus answered with shining eyes: "Yes, brother Enos! Only in the silence of the heart can Jesus be your Helper and Savior! Only to Him it is possible to make your inner being healthy and free! Leave your whole mind to Him in deepest silence; let your whole thinking be directed only to Him and gently the desire to thank Him and to love Him, will be awakened in you, too! As long as we are still occupied with ourselves, precious time is lost! But if we occupy ourselves in the deepest silence of the heart only with Him, then we become aware of the value of our life and we will want to use the time still allotted to us on this earth, more profitably!"

Before Enos could reply, Miriam, Ruth and Mary, the mother of Jesus, entered the room. Quickly Ruth, with the reflection of pure happiness shining on her face, rushed up to her father and asked him: "Father, dear father! Do you not feel happiness in your chest? What joy, what delight to know at last: I am safe and may rest at the chest of Eternal love! Now I see my way clearly before me and the task seems so beautiful to me, because I have learned and experienced: I am loved! Loved by the good and glorious Jesus, who put His life on the line out of love for all erring people! But God not only gave Him His life anew, but also a whole new life to all the people who love Him!"

"Child" - said Enos - "rejoice in your happiness! I cannot yet, for guilt and love constrict my senses and thoughts, and between me and Jesus stands the cross of Golgotha!"

"Father, do you doubt the Risen Lord? Have His words addressed to you not penetrated your heart and swept out the old garbage?" - asked Ruth, startled. "I am convinced that if you had faith, the miracle would happen: you would be filled with gratitude for the gift of His love brought to you! Father, I already see the miracle in me: the cross of Golgotha is nothing judging, but that which redeems us! In the cross lies our salvation! Behold, it is surrounded by light! Yes, it gives light, much light to all who turn their eyes to it! It reveals to us the love of Jesus that reconciles us with God over all our weaknesses and sins! I feel as if this light wants to announce to the whole night: Here in the cross, we experience the separation from all worldly things! Here we receive a new life and peace and forgiveness!"

Everyone, including the disciples, looked in amazement at Ruth, who spoke such words as if transfigured; to this, the mother Mary said: "Yes, child! Your Spirit revealed to you this truth, which will not be recognized by many - many! Believe firmly and fervently in this revelation of His Cross, and your life will still be sunny! But never forget that it was the great Redeemer-love of Jesus that gave you such insight!"

Before Ruth or Enos could reply anything, Lazarus asked those present to take the meal; he blessed their hearts and the food, and silently the early meal was finished. Afterwards, Peter asked the master of the house for the blessing, since they wanted to return to Jerusalem, saying: "Our way and our work is in Jerusalem! This is the Lord's will, let it be done now and always!"

Lazarus blessed the brothers, saying: "Do the will of the Lord, you are His hope! His love is your portion! Thus equipped, you will never lack strength and endurance to overcome all that is hard and difficult! Before us all shine the cross! From now on the symbol and sign of innermost peace through silence before God! Go forth in peace! Amen!"

Silently the disciples said goodbye; a serious look, a silent handshake was enough to say everything that moved their hearts. But this farewell made a strange impression on Theophilus and Ursus, and Ursus asked somewhat hastily: "What strange language is this? Is it really in the master's plan to be so wordless? As a stranger, one must be disappointed by this silence."

"My brother" - Lazarus answered seriously - "this silence is the innermost language of the heart, through which one feels everything alive with the other. We communicate by the look, the handshake and by our fully awakened inner life and need between us the outer language no more! Know that already in Jesus' constant presence we had to practice this inner heart language, in that we were allowed to ask Him at any time, without an outer word, and always received a clear inner answer from Him. These disciples are now facing the glorious hour of grace, when everything they have experienced, seen and heard with Jesus, will first come to life in them and thereby become a fire-power that can no longer be held back! Like bursts of fire from a stream of light flowing through them, they will then be living witnesses of Jesus! For their awakened love wants to give back everything first received from Him!"

Ursus was silent and suddenly felt very small; for he had not yet known of such language. "Brother Lazarus" - he said slowly - "I suspect great things! I myself, out of gratitude, could become a firebrand, which would not burn anything, but only kindle everywhere this fire of holy revelation about Jesus' work of love. As I recognize these disciples more and more in their inner being and understand their seriousness and their silence better and better, brother, I myself feel so small, so cheeky, that I would like to disappear completely in the background!"

"Oh my Ursus!" - replied Lazarus, moved - "with this you give my heart great joy! For in order to understand the Lord's guidance and to be able to be completely absorbed in His Spirit, it is necessary for my ego to come to rest, to silent devotion! Know: at every moment when my own 'I' is still the acting one, the true life of God recedes, and the effect will not be fully satisfying! Behold, you already carry His life, His love in you, but still too much of your own ego-life! Stimulated by the glorious graces and revelations through the brothers, yes, by His personal appearance, you are lifted and carried to a height, which, however, is in reality not yet your own standpoint, but only a given one! You will therefore have to struggle seriously within yourself to possess these high insights as your own! Therefore, I am glad that you want to place yourself there, as if of your own accord, where you are only a servant and disciple. As long as you live here in Bethany among like-minded people, the high, glorious and graceful aspects of this life of love will not seem so difficult to you, since you live as if in a land of the sun and are almost always only the receiver. Only when you are put outside, where darkness and coldness, where deceit and unconscionability rule the world, then this gracious life here shall become a driving force for you, which wants to lift and enlighten all, as much as it is at all possible! Only then will your inner life grow into the holy love-life of the Master, because then you can be the giver, the steward of the high goods, which you will win as your own in the struggle with the worldly. And only then you will be able to recognize and experience the inner glory which God has prepared for all those who want to serve Him in His Spirit and out of this Spirit, love all the human brothers!"

"Thank you, brother!" - said Ursus, breathing a sigh of relief - "In your few words lie such profound truths, that it will take quite some time before they become my property! I also see now: in order to be able to represent these eternal truths before others, everything must first have become truth in myself! May the Lord help me in His grace; I certainly have the will to do so."

"Then let us not talk any further about it!" - replied Lazarus, "for it is only in acting and doing that we realize our will. But I still ask you for an important service; it will be necessary to put the matter with Enos and the temple in order this very day, and you would be the right man for it; the temple will try to act quickly in it's own way! Therefore arrange it so that you can ride to Jerusalem in two hours, then Enos will be ready with his letter to the high council. Speak to Pilate first, he is our friend; but for your safety, take some more soldiers with you, and no harm can come to you!"

It was evening; in the house of Lazarus, the inhabitants were united again to the common meal; but Ursus was not yet back; restlessness grew in Enos and Theophilus, while Miriam and Ruth were full of confidence. Then a messenger came from Ursus to tell them that he had been summoned to Pilate and was still staying in Jerusalem; but the matter with Enos had been settled to full satisfaction, the Lord had visibly helped! At these words, Enos was as if redeemed! Once again he asked the messenger, but he could give no further information.

Lazarus thanked and spoke to Enos: "Brother! This was love from Ursus! By this short report, he has relieved you and also us of great worry! I knew it already, because the Lord spoke in my heart to me: 'Brother, the love has again carried away the victory! For Ursus was able to act entirely in My Spirit and to prepare the ground in such a way that even some in the temple have wavered in their stubbornness!'"

"How is this possible?" - asked the astonished Enos - "the priests together with their servants are, as I know, outspoken enemies of Jesus! There again a miracle has happened!"

"Brother Enos" - answered Lazarus - "what you still call miracles, are for me visible effects of the love-powers of God! Believe and love still more, then you experience the truth of these my words! But tomorrow we will experience everything in more detail!"

7. Ursus in the temple and on Golgotha

The next day at noon, the longed-for ones finally returned; the joy could not be described when Ursus handed Enos the letter of the high priest, in which Enos and Theophilus were released from their office and their oath! Both now felt happy and free!

At the midday meal, Enos asked Ursus to tell his experiences in Jerusalem before all present. Ursus, however, first looked questioningly at Lazarus; when he answered in the affirmative, Ursus began: "When I received the order yesterday morning to arrange for the freedom and release from their oath at the temple for our brothers Enos and Theophilus, I was nevertheless somewhat depressed, since your words, brother Lazarus, of the own I-life and the often not satisfying effect of our words, still had a great effect on me.

So I rode with my escort to Jerusalem, but was still not clear how to meet the high priest. We inquired at the commander's office, there I reported to the captain of the city guard and was pleased to meet an old acquaintance, told him my request and my mission to the temple and asked for help if it was needed. Then we were led to the house of Pontius Pilate, where, as a Roman, I received an extremely warm welcome. When I now described my request and presented the credentials and powers of attorney, I already had a valuable helper in our brother Pilate and experienced the glory of brotherly love, for Pilate wanted to take my cause into his own hands! After a small snack, we drove together to the commander's office, where Pilate gave some orders, and then we went to the temple. I do not want to describe the impressions I had when I entered the temple; - they willingly led us to the chamber of the high priest, to whom the coming of the governor had already been reported by the city guard.

But now a striking transformation took place in me: my ego, my thoughts withdrew as if by themselves, before my eyes stood the great suffering of our brother Enos, and I experienced his guilt and his longing to become free from this unworthy pressure! Then, once again the scene of the day before yesterday passed before my eyes, where Jesus Himself spoke to Enos: 'I am salvation and forgiveness!' At this, I became wonderfully calm and inwardly strengthened, because I felt Jesus' presence!

I submitted the two letters as well as the powers of attorney to the high priest Caiaphas, but he would not hear of them! 'For this I must summon the high council' - Caiaphas spoke sternly - 'for both are priests and now oath-breakers!' The appropriate orders were given; meanwhile, Caiaphas invited his friend Pilate and me into an adjoining room. Pilate, however, urged that we be done with it, since I, as his guest, was already expected by his wife. I clearly saw through the thoughts of the high priest and knew that the greatest restraint was required before his cunning!

After a short time, a messenger reported that the high council was ready to enter into negotiations. With the heartfelt plea: 'Lord Jesus, now I need You!' - I went among the assembled. Brother Pilate was offered a chair, but I had to present my case standing. Brothers, I thank the Lord that I am not a Templar! How devious, how dishonest these men were in their attitude! It brought a blush of shame to my face. The request was rejected and the two priests were to be put on trial! 'Is this your answer to these petitions?' - I asked the high priest; he answered in the affirmative! Then I could no longer restrain myself; I stepped forward a few steps and said boldly: 'I will not take this answer to Bethany! There is no offense on their part! Only their conscience no longer allows them to remain among you and in your community! Therefore they want to dissolve this relationship properly. But you want to put both of them in a state of accusation? Well, do it

anyway, but remember that they are under Roman protection! And what you would do to them, I would do to you! By virtue of my appointment as imperial representative, I would charge you: First, of the deliberate murder of an innocent man, and then as a propagator of false, lying representations about the resurrection of the One crucified by you! For Jesus is my friend! His honor is mine! No-one can prevent me from standing up for the establishment of the honor of my exalted friend Jesus! If you persist in your intention and crown your unkindness with the work of diabolical hatred, I call upon all Jerusalem to convince itself tomorrow of the truthfulness and reality of the Risen One! You know very well that Jesus has already appeared to many! Nevertheless, you remain the same? You are better informed than many a follower of His teaching, but your hatred and lust for power do not allow you to acknowledge the truth about Him!

Then the high priest answered coolly: 'We did not fear the Nazarene, consequently we do not fear you! And by what right do you want to put us on trial? I want to see the court that will sit in judgment on us!'

Then I said quite calmly: 'With the right which my love for Jesus lets me find! But before the forum, which demanded Jesus' sacrificial death, before the same forum I let you be put and exactly in the state, in which you have put Jesus before the people! This is my answer! A Roman demands what is right and justice, but he will not ask! Pilate, the governor, approves of my decision, since you yourselves give us Romans the means to do it.'

'The high priest laughed loudly, but at that moment, a servant reported: 'Sir, Roman soldiers have gathered in the outer court and around the temple courts; what shall we do?'

Then the high priest became quite agitated and said to Pilate: 'What does this mean? This is an interference with our right!'

But Pilate, smiling, replied: 'My friend, calm down! ~ It is the right of self-preservation and is done to protect legitimate Roman interests! Either you make the small sacrifice and give freedom to both asking priests and guarantee to all followers of the Savior Jesus of Nazareth to be able to assemble without harm to their freedom, or we will do the same to you what you have done to Jesus and demonstrably to many others! There is nothing else! For I too have convinced myself of the truthfulness of the Risen One!'

A somber silence fell on the assembly; then Joab the priest, a friend of our Enos, came to me and said: 'Lord! Your sharpness I have already come to know! But I cannot help but ask you: why did this Jesus not say a word in his exoneration at that time? His silence was for us recognition of his guilt! You call us his murderers? We were only henchmen and executors of our law!'

Then I said to the priest: 'I see through you, your objection only wants to weaken our will! But let it be said to you and to you here: Just in order to spare you and to leave you the possibility to still come to the acknowledgment of the anointed God. He let all this happen to Himself! But I have no commandment to spare you, because your unscrupulous acting offers me a handhold! So, come to your senses! Let it be done to you as we have declared!'

Then the high priest came to Pilate once more and was about to object, but Pilate became agitated and said aloud: 'No, not another word! Either you do voluntarily what we ask, or you will feel the power of Caesar! Long enough I carried the guilt of having contributed to the death of Jesus as a burden in my heart! It is my greatest desire to make amends and to help the deprived to His honor! I wish I could dry all the tears and soothe all the pain

that your wicked deed caused to the truly innocent! I have resolved and promised to the Risen One to watch over you and prevent you from continuing your work of vengeance against the followers of Jesus! It is up to you now; either we become friends, or remain enemies! Give us the written answer in one hour! We will stay in the forecourt with the commando, we will not come back!

We all looked at each other once more, firmly and seriously, then we left the chamber calmly and went to the captain, who was already waiting for us. We received his report that everything had been done in our favor, and while we were still talking, a temple servant already brought the letters confirming Enos and Theophilus' freedom, and another letter asking them to preserve the honor and prestige of the temple and not to disturb the peace of the sacred halls! ‘

‘Enough has been accomplished!’ - said Pilate with satisfaction - ‘the other will be accomplished later!’ Then he gave the order to let the soldiers move back to their quarters.

But we stayed together for the rest of the evening in invigorating conversations about Jesus and about our temporal and eternal salvation. Finally, I expressed my wish to go to Golgotha the next morning, and Pilate immediately offered to accompany me.

Early in the morning we went with little company to the holy place; but how astonished I was: There were three crosses erected, two smaller ones and a larger one in the middle. I asked: ‘Who has done this?’ I was answered: ‘I have erected them for the terror of the Templars! I also gave the prohibition to ever have another execution here, because the last word of the Savior: ‘It is finished’ should not be desecrated! Thus I honor Jesus, by setting up the emblem of His love and His surrender as a respectful symbol visible from afar!’

Deeply shaken I stood before the big cross! Even if it was not the same one on which the Lord and Savior Jesus died, what had happened here unfolded before my inner eyes! Then I exclaimed, driven from within: ‘Oh Lord and Savior Jesus! You yourself let me experience your love and revealed your true and holy teachings to me! But what I feel here at the place of Your suffering and death, is Your true Jesus-Glory, which still wants to take care of the deepest and lowest things and guarantees that no-one, no matter who it may be, will ever ask for forgiveness from You in the future! Oh Lord Jesus, let this Your Spirit become my property, so that I serve only You and Your love completely in Your sense! Amen!’

Deeply shaken, but also highly happy, we turned away from the place of pain; and yet I must say: I felt as if I were leaving heaven!”

8. At the feast from the heavens

Demetrius had discussed with Lazarus and Ursus that they and their company would still be guests in Bethany until the day appointed by Jesus, which filled Lazarus with joy; and so these days were spent in mutual love-service, as was necessary to bring about in Enos and Theophilus a new birth in the Spirit of the Risen One. Ursus and Theophilus as well as Demetrius and Enos were inseparable; Ursus served Theophilus to make him as alive and full of fire as he himself was, while Theophilus gave Ursus many an enlightenment from the history of the people of Israel. In the same way, Demetrius succeeded in taking away the last remnant of Jewish Templarism from the old priest Enos and in turning him into a praying and desiring child of God. His saying: "Enos, I am no longer dealing with sin and guilt, but with the living God of love, who is mercy and forgiveness!" - removed the last barrier, and now all doubt in Enos was finally overcome! Thoughts of his past only fortified the desire: "Only for Him will I still live, in humility and gratitude!"

One evening, Lazarus said after the common meal: "Tomorrow, a lot of work awaits us all, because dear brothers come to us to spend the feast day determined by the Master with us! Therefore we look for proper rest for this night, so that we can meet all requirements!"

The next morning, with great joy, everything was prepared to receive the guests, and by noon, the first visitors arrived. The work in the gardens was stopped, and all the residents and workers appeared in their festive robes; after all, it was once again necessary to prove to all the visitors and all those who belonged to Bethany, that Bethany was the place of love!

The temple had also sent out its scouts today, and they were not astonished when more and more people came to Bethany. Kisjonah also came, and the welcome was warm. "The Lord wills that I be your guest today and tomorrow" - he said to Lazarus - "and my heart also drove me mightily to come here."

"I, too, am glad to have you here" - Lazarus replied - "the Master has invited all the brothers here. He certainly will want to conclude His mission to personally deliver His work to the disciples!"

Pilate had also come with his wife, but she remained with the women. The great hall was festively decorated and a rich meal was prepared. All in honor of Jesus and to thank Him for His love and all His benefits! The guests had dispersed on the grounds and gardens and were engaged in inspiring conversation, but the disciples from Jerusalem were still missing. Lazarus was with Pilate, Kisjonah and Demetrius, discussing again the reasons why the Lord wanted to unite all His faithful here!

Kisjonah spoke: "The Lord never departed from me and mine! I feel as if He is always around us, guiding us all with His eyes; not the slightest pain that His death had caused, burdens us any more!"

Pilate replied: "Happy are you to be praised, since your love belongs to Him who is certainly only love! But I am not so well, since the death of Jesus still stands as something in my life, reminding me of a great guilt! No matter how great His love may be, no matter how forgiving, it does not undo this deed!"

Then Lazarus spoke: "Brother, a short time ago a young sister spoke to her father, to whom this crucifixion was also a heavy burden of the heart: "I see the cross surrounded by

heavenly light! It is nothing judging, but it testifies to us the reconciling love of the Savior to clear the way to God for erring humanity! It is the miracle of Golgotha!" So you too will still experience the great and mighty thing in it, for the cross of Golgotha is the exhortation to be still, to voluntarily submit ourselves to the will of God! It is the beckoning call to the eternal home as the place of heavenly peace!"

The sisters Mary and Martha came and informed their brother that the disciples had arrived in the meantime and that he should give the sign for the common meal, everything was ready. When all were seated, the feast began with a song of praise and thanksgiving, and all hearts were happy.

After the meal, Ursus stood up, as if on inner impulse, and spoke in his sonorous voice: "All of us who are gathered here, experience anew the blessedness that lies in true neighborly love! Through this, our hearts are opened to Him who loves us all so dearly! He not only gave us His love, but He also gave His life for us, so that we would be delivered from the coldness of unkindness and the error of the world. Therefore we can believe: we are His property, we are His happiness gained through pain and death! Oh my brothers! Those who, like me, have already gone through war and devastation, sickness and plagues in the world, recognize the great value of the love that Jesus brought to all people! Therefore I confess aloud: There is no greater happiness than to know: Jesus, the Lord and Savior, has also received me into His love and has thus opened the gate for me to feel all His glory!"

And animated by the Spirit, Ursus stood up again and spoke: "Just as this door will now open by itself for the Lord, so that He can enter into our midst, so also door and gate are opened for us at any time, to enter into the house, where He wants to expect us! This is in the sanctuary of the temple which we ourselves are to build for Him in our inner world!"

All were moved by the fervent words of Ursus, - their eyes were directed to the door, which now opened softly - and solemnly the Lord walked in! He came up to the tables, and with outstretched arms He blessed those present: "Peace! Holy peace be with you all! This peace permeates your whole being, so that you feel lifted up as if by strong arms over all worldly things and feel nestled at My chest, so that My Spirit and My inner life may be fully revealed to you! But I thank you, brother Lazarus, that you have made this day a special feast day completely in My sense! Today, I want to be among you once again as in past days and then I want to conclude My mission among you! No-one should feel oppressed by My presence, because I am still the same who stayed among you as a man!"

When the Lord was silent, they all rose up and wanted to take His holy hands in thanks. But He spoke lovingly: "Little children! Your joy is thanks enough for Me! Look, I sit down among you and remain with you until tomorrow! Therefore feel joyful and free as before!" And He sat down between Ursus and Theophilus.

From the kitchen, some women came to Lazarus with the news: "The Lord let us say that He does not need our services today, His servants will do the rest of the work!"

Then Lazarus said, deeply moved, to the Lord: "Oh Lord and Father! You have already blessed us so richly with Your love, and yet You want to be the great Host again today? All is well of You and from You; but today I would please You as my loving heart desires."

Then the Lord said: "My dear brother Lazarus! I knew well about this longing and love of yours, but Mine is greater and stronger!"

Therefore, just have patience, your love will still be called upon often enough, while I then can only give to you according to your desire! A new time is dawning for you, a time of work and creation for My work! A time where you must not get tired anymore, where the consciousness is to fill you: The love for Me gives you the inner strength and the faith in Me makes your stand unshakable! You have experienced the glory that comes from the Father! Now I want this to become visible before your eyes once again, so that also these new brothers in truth can experience the undreamed-of glories of God's kingdom! So that they recognize their high tasks and know for which perfection of the human soul they should struggle and fight!"

White-robed servants came in, silently cleared all the tables and brought up a new meal consisting of roast lamb and freshly baked bread. Golden yellow wine bubbled in crystal goblets and pears, grapes and figs lay in larger bowls of pink glass. Old Enos and Demetrius were astonished how all this was going on so silently and with an unimaginable speed, when hardly an hour had passed since everyone had seated themselves.

Then the Lord stood up, blessed this meal with His hands and said: "Little children! Eat and drink! My heart is full of joy that I can once again visibly serve you with these gifts from heaven! Eat and drink of it joyfully and receive My blessing! May it remain your portion forever!"

And now turning to Ursus, the Lord said: "You, My Ursus, now know Me, My life created in you a new life! In this awakened inner life, many things became apparent to you, but the most glorious of all can become yours only when you, as if removed from My help, have to work and create in the hard struggle with the worldly as if out of yourself! Even if not everything can be steered into smooth paths, your awakened spirit must give you all support, all firmness! For I can and may work only insofar as My 'I' will receive space in you according to your free child-love and as your little 'I' can already withdraw! But to you, My Theophilus, I say: Do not look backward, but only at Me! You have experienced My caring love, but you are not yet completely free from the old ideas about Me, in order to be able to truly serve My teaching! Therefore, this night you shall experience how I have provided for all who once desired to carry Me in their hearts!"

Then the Lord addressed everyone and said: "My great love belongs to all of you, always! But only he who will embrace Me in his whole love, he is with Me, and to him I can come, dwell with him and reveal Myself through him! Behold, I am your Father, but you are My beloved children, dear to Me! I will leave all heavens, all its glories shall fade before My eyes, if one of My children here on earth longs for Me with a loving and longing heart! Faster than lightning I shall satisfy his desire, and rejoice and bask in the awakening and growing love of such little children."

With a holy gaze He looked into the eyes of His beloved ones gathered around Him; then He spoke further: "Oh My brothers! Once again My place is among you - from tomorrow, only in you! Today I want to rejoice with you and strengthen you, so that never ever again sadness arises in your hearts about the fact that I now want to visibly leave you! And that you recognize that with My outer parting, only our inner connection will take place for eternity! I now go back into My original home, into My original Being! But I still leave you in this outer world, so that you continue my started work! I can no longer say to anyone: Follow Me there, where I am going now! I must leave the further development of your inner life, your happiness and your bliss now to yourselves! But now be happy! Once again we enjoy together what My love holds in readiness for you all, then we go to the Mount of Olives, so that I may finish My mission!"

This supper made all hearts wonderfully joyful, and no-one thought of the Lord's coming departure! Jesus, however, remained calm and serious. Many a word was exchanged back and forth, and so became midnight. Then the Lord invited all to follow Him, and they left the house and walked slowly to the Mount of Olives, which is also part of the property of Lazarus on this side.

9. Jesus' Ascension

As full of life they had all been in the house, so full of rest they were now. The Lord had asked His disciples for Himself and went ahead of the procession; and in an open place, where blankets and carpets were already spread out in great quantity as if by angels, they camped. The night was beautiful! Star after star competed in twinkling and shining and silently all enjoyed this splendor of the visible sky. Thereby Ursus and Theophilus were put into a spiritual sleep and their souls were led by the angel Raphael to their former home, where they were allowed to experience consciously the wonders of the great Father-love of God. Still the Lord was silent, but His disciples became full of life and once again revealed to those gathered, the great love- and redemption-plan of God with the human souls lost in darkness! And so the night passed; the stars faded and the dawn announced the new day! Ursus and Theophilus were restored to their natural state and believed to have slept and dreamed very vividly; yet they found no occasion to relate their strange experiences!

When the sun rose above the horizon, the Lord went to each one, blessing and praying, laying His hands on his head for a moment and calling him by his name, making another request to one, giving a promise to the other! When He came to Ursus, He also laid His hand on the crown of Theophilus' head and said to both: "Children! My will made you today the owners of great mysteries! Since you are still facing great tasks, you had to learn that you belong together for time and eternity! You, My Ursus, have seen how My sacrifice is valued in a world that was yours before you became human here! And you, Ruben-Theophilus, can feel one with Me without shyness, because you have now seen what love is able to do!"

Turning to Enos, the Lord said, laying His hand on his head: "But to you, My son, I say: Doubt no more this experience with Me! But if you feel that I no longer fill you with My Spirit, let My cross be the mediator between us! For everyone who wants to feel one with Me, must also love My cross!"

Thus all received their share of love! The young people, however, were gathered closely around Him and received special words, which the others could not understand.

Then the Lord turned to all again and said: "Children! And you, My brothers, from all worlds are witnesses in this place, and all your ancestors and forefathers bless this hour in which their secret desire comes true! For hear: This hour is and was already foreseen in the great plan of My becoming human! From now on you are all aware: In all your doing and omitting, you must become independent, because I leave you only My living Word! If you now see Me disappear with your eyes, then let this last wish of Mine of your becoming independent, come true! I do not want to hinder your free inner development and the unfolding of your love for activity thereafter with My visible presence. And so I trustingly place My work still to be completed as an inheritance into your hands! Keep it as your highest sanctuary and guard it with all your love, so that the enemy of all life will not destroy what is now your work! Well, I am returning home! For the homeland of all homelands is waiting!

But nevertheless I remain, invisible, with you and with all who love Me and want to serve Me on this your earth! Therefore seek, and you shall find Me! But no being will ever find Me, if I was not found by him on this earth! And therefore My abiding on this earth shall be until all that is lost, is brought home!"

The Lord looked quietly into the morning sun, as if into far times, then He spoke further: "I leave you now alone! - But this be your comfort and your strength: I have overcome the world and will send this My overcoming Spirit to you! Equipped with this Spirit, then go out into all the world and carry My Word and My teaching everywhere where the Spirit will drive you! And plant My love-life in My place deep into the hearts of all people! And what you have experienced with Me as witnesses, shall now be experienced by all those who will follow you! I see the question in your hearts, when I will come again to establish here My kingdom with all who expect Me with longing? To this I say: It is not your duty to know the time and the hour! This remains reserved for the Father! But you will soon experience the power and strength of My Spirit in you, which will drive you to proclaim My Word to all nations!" And spreading His blessing hands wide, Jesus, already completely transfigured, cried: "So receive My blessing! My love and My peace are yours forever!"

Before everyone's eyes, a light cloud descended, in which the Lord and Master was enveloped, and thus ascending to heaven, He disappeared from their sight!(Luke 24, v. 50-51.)

All looked after the beloved Master with adoration. But there were two heavenly witnesses standing by them, who brought them the promise: "Just as we saw Him, veiled, disappear upward, just so veiled will He one day return! So that the love and mercy of the Son of God may be fully revealed by the love and faithfulness of the child.

10. Conclusion

On this day, all remained still in the house of Lazarus; from all eyes, a holy joy and thankfulness shone, and in their hearts it sang and sounded: "We are chosen to cooperate in the holy work of the Lord and to proclaim His Word to all, to whom His love leads us!"

Especially the otherwise so serious disciples radiated a joy, that Ursus whispered to Lazarus: "Why do you think that in the hearts of those who loved the Lord so much, there is now visibly such an inner joy (Luke 24:52), when they know: Now it is no longer possible to see Him with our eyes, to hear His dear voice with our ears! For He has returned to His original home and left us all only His Word full of life and the promise of His coming again. The Lord must have said something very special to them!"

At this question Lazarus, felt an urge in his chest to make another request of the young people who were preparing to return to Jerusalem; and so he said: "Dear brothers, there is certainly a quiet longing in some of you to learn something of those high words which the Lord spoke to you, His disciples, at the end, but of which we others were unable to hear anything.

"You do well" - Peter said - "to ask this question so that no-one will think that the Lord could have spoken louder, so that everyone could hear. Behold, we were all witnesses today to an event that none of us expected before! Everyone received special words of blessing from Him, but His last words were only for us as His closest circle of disciples. However, we have no commandment to withhold these words from you, and so all of you listen to what the Master spoke to our hearts: "Brothers! I stand today before the conclusion of My mission! I do not want to repeat to you once again all the things you should do or refrain from doing, but only to explain very briefly why I now want to part so visibly from you and from all who are gathered here! Brothers, you know, nothing human, nothing spiritual could stop My victorious walk! Incessantly I strove for the inner high goal, which the Godhead in Me set before Me! And you know that it is accomplished! When I now visibly depart from this place of My work and creation as Son of Man, I want to leave this testimony of Mine to the earth and all it's inhabitants: I go as the transfigured One, as the Overcomer and Victor over death back into My primordial Essence, in order to send from there My Divine assistance to all who stand in the serious fight for the eternal spiritual goods, without which no success and accomplishment is possible for you!

But, My brothers, how could I continue My holy work in you and through you, if there still exist in you human concepts or ideas about Me, which could ever put your inner being into unrest or even doubt? You know that I gave back to the earth through My free sacrifices, what I owed it as a human. I am now Spirit by this My success and accomplishment! I have put this earth into a state that whoever wants to acquire the will and the power out of My eternally clear victorious Spirit for the similar overcoming of all worldly things in himself, that he then, like Me, can make himself independent of all earthly things! Yes, even more: Just as all earthly things had to serve Me and became subject to Me, so also to these overcomers, everything shall subordinate itself in service, what this earth still possesses as it's property!

My brothers! What I hereby give you in this hour is more than what heaven can give, is more than any man can ever comprehend! Only to you and to all those who will be completely child and yet in themselves completely perfected, it shall be revealed what a gift I leave to you at My departure and through you to the earth, yes, even to all worlds in infinite space! But still remain together in deepest silence until you feel that this word of

Mine addressed to you in the last hour, testifies to its own life in you, and that your living love for Me has then also transformed the last spark from the Son of Man to the Son of God! Then - then the hour is there, where, like a flash of lightning, My Word lights up the night through you, and where all darkness becomes the far shining message: I live as the eternal Truth! But no longer a life out of Me, but a life in you and out of you! But what this life of Mine in you will mean, all the world shall soon know! And when all powers of darkness rebel and unite all their forces to silence you, a holy breeze, a holy fire shall glow through you, so that you, like a sun, can let out a fullness of light of eternal truths, which must convince all adversaries with ease that it is I who live, work and create in you!

Look at Jerusalem, the place of My suffering and My great victory! For all future the foundation stone is now laid here, that every man can also become a victor over his death and a resurrected one to a new life! For I have not ordained you to die for Me, but to a heavenly life! You shall live for Me! Live out of My rich abundance of grace, so that My holy-great work of life finds its continuation in you! Remain still in all silence connected with My Spirit, until the promised help - the Holy Spirit - is granted to you as the fire-power for all good and noble! Thus I still bless you especially! And My great love for all mankind become more and more conscious to you, so that you become a blessing for all! Amen!

Thus spoke the Master to our innermost life." Peter concluded, moved - and a solemn silence fell upon everyone at the great revelations of Divine Love in these farewell words.

Then Peter added: "In my heart I feel more and more the happiness and joy of being chosen by Him to become also a savior for our fellow men, as He Himself was our Savior! But listen, brothers, to what I now recognize and feel in Myself" - he began again after a while, and his eyes shone with a rare brilliance: "I see: the Master could not tell us anything more about all the glories of an awakened inner life, since He had to take into account our unbelief - and our narrow and short-sighted concepts of the Divine!

But now I look into the eternal glory of our Divine Father, which puts me in such a heavenly state that I may find in myself all that His mouth had yet to conceal from us!" And still more glowing from within, Peter turned his face toward heaven, exclaiming, "Oh glorious Jesus! At last You too are delivered and redeemed in me from the pressure which the law exerted upon You. Only now may You live and work in us through the love of Your children, redeemed from all the outside world, who have made their hearts a Jerusalem and their love a temple in which You can dwell, and an altar where You will enjoy the love-offerings of Your children!"

Then he slowly turned to the brothers again and called out: "Hear it, all of you: He did not ascend to heaven, but heaven descended to us and took up again in its original center, the most holy and sanctified being of love! In all heavens the longing will grow to experience the eternal, holy God also as Father! But only from this earth, the fulfillment of such longing will be able to happen! For You, Jesus, our God and our Father, cannot completely return to Your original home, since love still binds You to all the lost ones, to whom this home is still closed! Therefore Your request to us: "Let Me live in you and continue My work in My eternal Spirit of love!"

Peter was silent, deeply turned inward, but his face shone in the radiance of wonderfully transfigured peace! Everyone looked at him with deep devotion - no-one had ever heard or seen Peter like this before! Ursus, at these revelations from the innermost life of Peter's heart, was inflamed by the spirit of vigor, went to Peter and said: "Yes, brother, now I understand your joy! Your words penetrated deep into my heart and awakened something I would never have dared to say, namely: This Ascension of Jesus has indeed taken away

from us the prospect of ever coming into personal contact with the Lord; but for this, the Lord and Master reveals to us that He now knows no other longing than to dwell in the heavens which His children will build for Him here in earthly life, that is: in their own human bosom! Or, to change words: This His Ascension means for me the implantation of His Spirit-personality into my heart!"

After a pause, Ursus spoke further: "Also I feel it in me as in the clearest light: Man should not lose himself in longing for the Master and depend on all kinds of desires, which cannot be of use for his spiritual perfection. He wants to be sought by us - and then to be found - in his own inner world! Oh You glorious God and Father! Strengthen my love! Broaden my still earthly concepts, so that I learn to understand the mighty and the holy of Your love for us little human children! Let me become completely love, so that You may also feel in me something of the delights, as You have prepared for me delights of Your love!" and with a deep breath, he added: "Amen!"

Then brother John stood up and said to all: "Rarely has a man understood the Lord as you have, brother Ursus; and only a few have been granted the grace to be allowed to look so deeply into these new heavens, which His immeasurable love has long since held in readiness for all of us in our hearts! But it is even greater than this gift of grace when you learn to put your inner life outwardly out of the Spirit of His Redeemer's love and can surround all people with it in the true brotherly spirit! It is greater because such devoted and serving love wants to replace for all people something of what today we saw disappear to heaven!

The Master, who never wants to withdraw His trust and help from us, will safely guide and direct us in such tasks. His words are now our existence, our life! Let His words be our anchor and the reason of our life! Then His Word will unite with our life! And His Words will testify of their life in us! And only in this unification, we experience the glory of our Father and may take in His fullness of light, as much as our love can already understand! Then also our words will live - have an igniting effect - and give support and trust to others! He Himself is then the center of my heaven and has become the Lord in my inner world!"

After a break, John spoke further: "Behold, soon we must separate! Each one of us will return happily to his entrusted sphere of activity. But we will remain united for all times, since the Master, with His departure from us, now gives us all the most glorious means of grace, so that we may live in Him! As long as His love is only a model for us, we will chase after the blessed inner life! But if His love has awakened to life in us, then He lives in us and we live from Him! Oh Mankind! Understand this miracle!

Amen!"

