

## REFLECTIONS WITH SAINT AUGUSTINE

“You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in You.”

“He who created us without our help will not save us without our consent.”

“I have read in Plato and Cicero sayings that are wise and very beautiful; but I have never read in either of them: ‘Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden.’”

“O mortals, how long will you be heavy-hearted? Life has come down to you, and are you reluctant to ascend and live? But what room is there for you to ascend, you with your high-flown ways and lofty talk? Come down, that you may ascend, ascend even to God...”

“Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.”

“Miracles are not contrary to nature, but only contrary to what we know about nature.”

“Seek not to understand that you may believe, but believe that you may understand.”

“Someone who knows enough to become the owner of a tree, and gives thanks to you for the benefits it brings him, is in a better state, even if ignorant of its height in feet and the extent of its spread, than another who measures and counts all its branches but neither owns it nor knows its creator nor loves him.”

“If you believe what you like in the gospels, and reject what you don’t like, it is not the gospel you believe, but yourself.”

“The desire is thy prayers; and if thy desire is without ceasing, thy prayer will also be without ceasing. The continuance of your longing is the continuance of your prayer.”

“Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you.”

"A Christian should be an Alleluia from head to foot."

“The Bible was composed in such a way that as beginners mature, its meaning grows with them.”

“Patience is the companion of wisdom.”

"Anger is a weed; hate is the tree."

"Anyone who does not love Him Who made man has not learned to love man aright."

"A man may lose the good things of this life against his will; but if he loses the eternal blessings, he does so with his own consent."

"Beauty is indeed a good gift of God; but that the good may not think it a great good, God dispenses it even to the wicked."

"Better to have fewer wants than greater riches to supply increasing wants."

"The soul is torn apart in a painful condition as long as it prefers the eternal because of its Truth but does not discard the temporal because of familiarity."

"Christ is not valued at all unless He is valued above all."

"God loves each of us as if there were only one of us."

"Your best servant is the person who does not attend so much to hearing what he himself wants as to willing what he has heard from you."

"God had one son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering."

"Men go forth to marvel at the heights of mountains and the huge waves of the sea, the broad flow of the rivers, the vastness of the ocean, the orbits of the stars, and yet they neglect to marvel at themselves."

"You never go away from us, yet we have difficulty in returning to You. Come, Lord, stir us up and call us back. Kindle and seize us. Be our fire and our sweetness. Let us love. Let us run."

"No one knows what he himself is made of, except his own spirit within him, yet there is still some part of him which remains hidden even from his own spirit; but You, Lord, know everything about a human being because You have made him... Let me, then, confess what I know about myself, and confess too what I do not know, because what I know of myself I know only because You shed light on me, and what I do not know I shall remain ignorant about until my darkness becomes like bright noon before Your face."

"You have been professing yourself reluctant to throw off your load of illusion because truth was uncertain. Well, it is certain now, yet the burden still weighs you down, while other people are given wings on freer shoulders, people who have not worn themselves out with research, nor spent a decade and more reflecting on these questions."

"Belatedly I loved You, O Beauty so ancient and so new, belatedly I loved You. For see, You were within and I was without, and I sought You out there. Unlovely, I rushed heedlessly among the lovely things You have made. You were with me, but I was not

with You. These things kept me far from You; even though they were not at all unless they were in You. You did call and cry aloud, and did force open my deafness. You did gleam and shine, and did chase away my blindness. You did breathe fragrant odors and I drew in my breath; and now I pant for You. I tasted, and now I hunger and thirst. You did touch me, and I burned for Your peace.”

“Give me Yourself, O my God, give Yourself back to me. Lo, I love You, but if my love is too mean, let me love more passionately. I cannot gauge my love, nor know how far it fails, how much more love I need for my life to set its course straight into Your arms, never swerving until hidden in the covert of Your face. This alone I know, that without You all to me is misery, woe outside myself and woe within, and all wealth but penury, if it is not my God.”

“For great are You, Lord, and You look kindly on what is humble, but the lofty-minded You regard from afar. Only to those whose hearts are crushed do You draw close. You will not let Yourself be found by the proud, nor even by those who in their inquisitive skill count stars or grains of sand, or measure the expanses of heaven, or trace the paths of the planets.”

“I look forward, not to what lies ahead of me in this life and will surely pass away, but to my eternal goal. I am intent upon this one purpose, not distracted by other aims, and with this goal in view I press on, eager for the prize, God's heavenly summons. Then I shall listen to the sound of Your praises and gaze at Your beauty ever present, never future, never past. But now my years are but sighs. You, O Lord, are my only solace. You, my Father, are eternal. But I am divided between time gone by and time to come, and its course is a mystery to me. My thoughts, the intimate life of my soul, are torn this way and that in the havoc of change. And so it will be until I am purified and melted by the fire of Your love and fused into one with You.”

“For You [God] are infinite and never change. In You 'today' never comes to an end: and yet our 'today' does come to an end in You, because time, as well as everything else, exists in You. If it did not, it would have no means of passing. And since Your years never come to an end, for You they are simply 'today'...But You Yourself are eternally the same. In Your 'today' You will make all that is to exist tomorrow and thereafter, and in Your 'today' You have made all that existed yesterday and for ever before.”

“O Lord my God, tell me what You are to me. Say to my soul, I am your salvation. Say it so that I can hear it. My heart is listening, Lord; open the ears of my heart and say to my soul, I am your salvation. Let me run toward this voice and seize hold of You. Do not hide Your face from me: let me die so that I may see it, for not to see it would be death to me indeed.”

“Such great and wonderful things would never have been done for us by God, if the life of the soul were to end with the death of the body. Why then do I delay? Why do I not abandon my hopes of this world and devote myself entirely to the search for God and for the happy life?”

“For what am I to myself without You, but a guide to my own downfall?”

“Do they desire to join me in thanksgiving when they hear how, by Your gift, I have come close to You, and do they pray for me when they hear how I am held back by my own weight? ...A brotherly mind will love in me what you teach to be lovable, and will regret in me what you teach to be regrettable. This is a mark of a Christian brother's mind, not an outsider's--not that of 'the sons of aliens whose mouth speaks vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of iniquity' (Ps. 143:7 f.). A brotherly person rejoices on my account when he approves me, but when he disapproves, he is loving me. To such people I will reveal myself. They will take heart from my good traits, and sigh with sadness at my bad ones. My good points are instilled by You and are Your gifts. My bad points are my faults and Your judgements on them. Let them take heart from the one and regret the other. Let both praise and tears ascend in Your sight from brotherly hearts, Your censers. ...But You Lord...Make perfect my imperfections”

“To what place can I invite You, then, since I am in You? Or where could You come from, in order to come into me? To what place outside heaven and earth could I travel, so that my God could come to me there, the God who said, I fill heaven and Earth?”

“What matters it to me if someone does not understand this? Let him too rejoice and say, ‘What is this?’ Let him rejoice even at this, and let him love to find You while not finding it out, rather than, while finding it out, not to find you.”

“I was in misery, and misery is the state of every soul overcome by friendship with mortal things and lacerated when they are lost. Then the soul becomes aware of the misery which is its actual condition even before it loses them.”

“To abstain from sin when one can no longer sin is to be forsaken by sin, not to forsake it.”

“I inquired what wickedness is, and I didn't find a substance, but a perversity of will twisted away from the highest substance – You oh God – towards inferior things, rejecting its own inner life and swelling with external matter.”

“Conquer yourself and the world lies at your feet.”

“The punishment of every disordered mind is its own disorder.”

“A temptation arises: it is the wind. It disturbs you: it is the surging of the seas. This is the time to awaken Christ and let Him remind you of these words, ‘Who can this be? Even the wind and the waves obey Him.’ ”

“Love is the beauty of the soul.”

“Charity is no substitute for justice withheld.”

“Charity is the root of all good works.”

“What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.”

“The mind commands the body and is instantly obeyed. The mind commands itself and meets resistance.”

"Always add, always walk, always proceed; neither stand still, nor go back, nor deviate; he that standeth still proceedeth not; he goeth back that continueth not; he deviateth that revolteth; he goeth better that creepeth in his way than he that moveth out of his way."

“Do not believe yourself healthy. Immortality is health; this life is a long sickness.”

“It was pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes men as angels.”

“Do you wish to rise? Begin by descending. You plan a tower that will pierce the clouds? Think first about the foundations of humility. The higher your structure is to be, the deeper must be its foundation.”

“Humility is the foundation of all the other virtues hence, in the soul in which this virtue does not exist there cannot be any other virtue except in mere appearance. There is something in humility which strangely exalts the heart.”

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