



HOW DO WE LOVE AS GOD LOVES?

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My dear people, let us love one another since love comes from God and everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Anyone who fails to love can never have known God because God is love. God's love for us was revealed when God sent into the world his only Son so that we could have life through him. This is the love I mean. Not our love for God but God's love for us when he sent his Son to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away. My dear people, since God has loved us so much, we too should love one another. No one has ever seen God but as long as we love one another God will live in us and his love will be complete in us.

(1 Jn 4:7-12)

St John in the above passage discusses why it is so important that our relationships with one another be loving. He says in verse 7: 'He who loves is born of God and knows God' – the person who is born of God is one who loves. This, John tells us, is because 'God is love'. So to meditate as a Christian is to enter into that state of harmonious resonance with the divine energy of God. 'This divine energy of God is infinite love', as John Main says. So this is the wonder of Christian meditation – it gives us that grace to be in harmonious resonance with the divine energy of God, which is love.

But while transcendence is necessary to be in harmony with God's love, transcendence also requires us to be incarnate. We have just celebrated the Feast of Christmas, God becoming flesh, God's love becoming enfleshed. And Jesus could love the way he did because he continuously maintained his deep relationship with the Father while he was also at the same time conscious of being with his fellow men and women in the dynamic of love. So love is not just something that God does, it is what God *is* at the deepest level. That is who God is, God is and always has been love. That's something all of us have

to be conscious of. God is a trinity of loving relationships, and therefore there is nothing deeper than love. Love has existed eternally and the world was created out of this eternal love.

And because God is the author of love, all real love involves his very being. So when we share this love it is a sign that we are born of him. We are created for relationship as he is relationship. We are created to know ourselves in loving relationships with God and with each other. No wonder Jesus sums up the whole of God's will as loving God and loving our fellow men and women, as we see in Mark 12:28-32.

Now one of the experts in the law came and heard them debating. When he saw that Jesus answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the most important of all?' Jesus answered, 'The most important is: "Listen, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is: "Love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.'

That's all there is – life in Christ, life in intimate union with God. And that is what meditation does for us. It brings us into harmonious relationship with the divine energy of God that is love so that we can love him and we can love our fellow men and women. In Jesus we see what true love is.

People often ask how they can know they are progressing in meditation, that their meditation is bearing fruit? We can know our meditation is bearing fruit only when we love. But what does that mean? I think one way we can make that assessment is whether in the way we live we are breaking down barriers, we are overcoming obstacles to come to the beloved. The beloved is God, and the beloved is our fellow men and women. This love endures rejection and misunderstanding to bring about reconciliation, healing, peace, and life. And I think there we have a guide whether our meditation is bearing fruit in our life, whether we are in harmony with the divine energy that is God. What is that energy all about? It's about breaking down barriers, overcoming obstacles, and in the face of rejection and misunderstanding bringing about reconciliation, healing, peace, life.

In Christ we see God's great commitment to love us to perfection. So love is something you and I can grow in. His whole life, Jesus shares with us God's love so that we can live in God's love and we can love as God loves us. True love comes to perfection and perfects all that it loves. True love will not settle for anything less than the perfection of the beloved, and we see that in Jesus. He accepts us where we are. Why? Only to take us to where he is. And where is he? He is perfect love. As St John says in verse 4:12, as we love one another God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. We participate in his work by choosing to love each other. And I think this is what transcending ourselves does. Transcending ourselves roots us in God who became incarnate. So in meditation we come into harmony with God's love and that harmony enables us to be more loving and Christlike in our relationships with each other. We can love each other only when we first receive God's

love for us and those around us. He then transforms us gradually enabling us love as he does. That's why meditation is important.

John Main says you have to be regular in your practice – daily morning, evening. You begin your day and you conclude your day with it so that your whole day is a meditation – abiding in the divine energy and living out that energy. In that energy, we act out of faith in him, we are loving. And in this process, he gradually perfects his love in us. We will indeed know a day when we will live in love, moment by moment. And this is what John Main says:

And discovering that God is love, brings us to the conclusion that unleashes great power – that there is only one thing that matters ultimately, and that is that we grow in love. Everything else is consequential. And once this insight that God is love becomes strong enough, our lives become altered. (The Heart of Creation)

So, how do you know your practice of meditation is bearing fruit? Our lives are altered. We see the way God sees and love as he loves. We see the importance of compassion, of understanding. We become more loving. As we transcend ourselves to be in God's presence, he transforms us to become love incarnate. Remember, God is the centre, God is love, and Jesus is the revelation of this love. So to love as God loves is and must be the fruit of Christian meditation.

Thank you, dear friends. God bless you. ~

Talk at WCCM Singapore Monthly Online Meditation, January 2021