

Week Beginning 1st February 2015

Grow by Subtraction

Letting go and acceptance contain the key to happiness. Most of our disappointments come from unmet desires and expectations. This reflection whispers, 'Just let go for a minute. Do not torture yourself with these fearful, angry, hopeless thoughts. Take a few big sighs. Trust in God. Don't panic. All will be well because everything passes. So for the moment, just let go.' . . .

We feel an immense freedom, then a real salvation, once we allow ourselves to be blessed with the grace of detachment, of letting go, of stopping being a victim of our own or someone else's expectations and emotions. While the quality of detachment is never easy, it does become easier with practice. It is important, also, for us beginners to remember that we will always experience negative feelings about ourselves and others. Even Jesus experienced doubt, disappointment, fear and anger. Negativity is, and will always be, a definition of the human condition. What matters is what happens when we become aware of these feelings. Do they cripple and stifle us? Or, as soon as possible, by non-judgementally acknowledging them, do we transform and disarm them?

I never fail to experience a profound and stirring of freedom every time this happens to me. Nevertheless, because of the initial distrust, fear and panic it brings, letting go is a kind of dying, but a dying into a Christ-won liberation. Nobody finds it easy to be stripped, to be emptied, least of all God in becoming human as a defenceless baby or Jesus in his broken and spent body on the cross. It is too risky. But that is what love does – it keeps letting go and the reward is immense. . .

There is no need for arduous, penitential, spiritual exercises. Just by letting go, in trust, into the mystery of God's love for us, the unblocking of our divinity happens, and resurrection powers its way through the world of hearts and the heart of the world. The clouds rain, the sun shines, the earth surrounds, the farmer sleeps and, with nobody pushing it, the hidden seed is splendidly, effortlessly and irrevocably transformed into perfect praise. . .

Our soul, in spite of a mysterious resistance, is coded for this kind of spiritual growing.

(Travelling Light pp 41,42)

Follow-up - If you would like to explore mindful meditation, try this simple daily praxis: -

Today's focus is our possessiveness. Once you are settled, make a decision to let go of something today. Begin with an object that's been hanging around the house unused for a while. . . Then, in your mind move on to something you're holding on to in case it might be needed one day . . . Go through the house. In your imagination, first, give many things away. . . . Let go of something every few days. It brings immense power and wealth. . . During the minutes you are devoting to meditation, or at other times of the day, practise 'letting go' with every exhalation in your breathing. Every time you breathe out, visualise parting with one of your possessions or even one of your quite hidden and self-justified prejudices. Even though in a small way, this is still a kind of dying. Jesus died many 'little deaths' before his final letting go. And each death, however insignificant, brings its own abundant resurrection.

(Travelling Light p43)