

Daily Meditations on the Love of God
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A Scripture text is given for each day of the year as an opportunity for you to hear the Lord speaking to your heart through that particular text on that particular day. Following the text is a short meditation that you can use to supplement or complement your own experience of the divine word.

March 1

Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in love. (Joel 2:13)

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The prophet refers to God's self-definition to Moses in Exodus 34:6, with its emphasis on the divine *hesed*, or covenant love. It's the Father's superabounding love for us that gives us the courage and desire to "return" to him, that is, in Old Testament terms, to reject our sins and faults, or rather to submit them to his powerful cleansing mercy. Only his love can destroy our rejection of love.

March 2

I came that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 10:10)

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Saint John uses the word "life" or "live" 54 times in his Gospel to describe the gift of Jesus, the purpose of his coming into the world. What we want is the fullness of life, and only Jesus offers it. Let us open our hearts to receive it and to proclaim to the folks of our day that In Jesus they will find the authentic life they are seeking.

March 3

A pure heart create for me, O God; put a steadfast spirit within me.

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The psalmist likes to say things twice (Hebrew parallelism): the two halves of the verse support and reinforce each other. A heart purified from self-seeking is nothing less than a new "creation," which God wishes to grant us if only we ask for it. The heart needs to become the dwelling place of God's Holy Spirit.

"While 'heart' in the Old Testament designates simply the center of human existence, as the place of all feeling, thinking and willing, 'spirit' refers to the effective power that penetrates all feeling, thinking and willing and that comes from God." (Hans-Joachim Kraus)

March 4

For our sake God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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Christ absorbed all human sin into his own body while remaining sinless himself. The death of his body was thus the death of sin. Man now reconciled with God can live in conformity with God's will by the power of the resurrection and the gift of the Spirit. Insofar as he is conformed to this Spirit he can be called righteousness itself. The righteousness of the redeemed is the kingdom of God.

March 5

Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live in the love of the Lord your God, obeying his voice, clinging to him; for in this your life consists. (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

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God has been called the "infinitely helpless God," because he cannot force us to be happy. Our freedom to choose is his image in us. He begs us to choose the only thing that will give us the happiness we seek, namely acceptance of the gift of his love, that love which purifies and fortifies us to love what he loves. Moses saw no conflict between clinging to God and obeying him.

March 6

Happy the man who has placed his trust in the Lord. (Psalm 40:5)

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Adam and Eve did not trust that the Lord loved them and so chose their own route to happiness. Cutting oneself off from the Creator of life was a recipe for death. Our vocation now is to reverse that original choice and recognize that reliance on the Creator's love is the key to human fulfillment.

March 7

If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross every day and follow me. (Luke 9:23)

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No sooner has Jesus announced that he is to be put to death and raised (Luke 9:22) than he transfers the same pattern to his disciples. Following him will mean preferring his will to one's own, bearing the suffering this entails, and rising with him to eternal life. He asks nothing of us that he has not first suffered.

March 8

A humbled, contrite heart, O God, you will not spurn. (Psalm 51:19)

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For "contrite" the Hebrew has "crushed," which few versions are willing to translate. But the stubbornness and hardness of the human heart needs to be demolished by a power greater than the self. John Donne asked God to "batter" his heart so that it could be fashioned anew. What God destroys is only the false self, the self-worship that keeps us from union with him. In this crushing we gain not lose.

March 9

With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption. (Psalm 130:7)

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We meet again God's principal attribute, *hesed*, here translated as "mercy." His mercy is shown in his "redemption," his "buying back" of us through his death on the cross. This redemption is "full," leaving no trace of bondage but abounding with life. Let us take a few moments to let this truth sink in.

March 10

Lord, your love fills the earth. (Psalm 119:64)

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Everything was created out of love so everything manifests divine love. We must never despise creation but see it as the theater of God's work, the place where he will manifest his glory in a humanity clothed with divine life.

March 11

Show me, Lord, your way, so that I may walk in the truth. (Psalm 86:11)

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The way of the Lord is his love, the way he acts. When Saint Paul says, "I will show you a higher way," he is speaking of charity, a way of living conformed and united with God's own way of loving shown in Jesus. Only God can teach us this way.

March 12

You are my God, have mercy on me, Lord, for I cry to you all the day long. (Psalm 86:3)

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The cry for mercy appears over 20 times in the psalter. It is the fundamental cry of the human person in distress. It is the heart of the Jesus prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me," a prayer ancient monks repeated "all the day long." Above all, a prayer that is always answered.

March 13

O Lord, you are good and forgiving, full of love to all who call. (Psalm 86:5)

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Divine love is ceaselessly poured out on the universe and every creature in it, but only those who "call" on him receive its effects. He never forces the acceptance of his love but respects us as free agents.

March 14

O that today you would listen to his voice; harden not your hearts. (Psalm 95:7-8)

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Monks recite this verse at the beginning of every day. God is inviting us into his presence with a reminder of repentance, of the need to ask for a softening of the heart. “My sheep listen to my voice” (John 10:27).

March 15

It is not those who are well who need the physician, but the sick. I have not come to call the virtuous, but sinners to repentance. (Luke 5:31-32)

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Our sickness and our sin are the things we most ardently strive to overcome. In fact they are the entry point of divine healing. We must learn to cry out continuously for the physician’s help in order to receive the healing we cannot achieve for ourselves. If we were sinless we would not need or obtain divine mercy.

On this, see the following video: <https://seekreplay.com/video/23>

March 16

If it is certain that through one man’s fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift. (Romans 5:15)

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Our task is to receive the gift, which may require our asking the Lord to break down our resistance. He can only live in us if we continually invite him in.

March 17

If it is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man’s fall, it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift that he does not deserve, of being made righteous. (Romans 5:17)

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Jesus is the New Adam who communicates life to all who accept him. This life is a share in the righteousness of Jesus himself, whom we invite gradually to take possession of our souls. His gift is the life that is to flower in holiness.

March 18

Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)

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Our souls need nourishment as much as our bodies do. God’s word to us is the offer of divine love that our souls hunger for. It is a banquet of rich foods, “intellectual day” (Crashaw). “Authentic converse with the unconfined / This might alone suffice my avid mind / This might alone my hungry spirit feed” (Evelyn Underhill).

March 19

Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all the rest will be given to you. (Matthew 6:33)

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The kingdom of God is God's reign over human affairs. When men and women accept divine love for themselves and for everyone else, human beings and God will live in fellowship that is eternal bliss, a mutual giving and receiving of love.

March 20

Lord, make me know your ways. Lord, teach me your paths. (Psalm 25:4)

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The "ways" of God are "faithfulness and love" (Psalm 25:10). Saint Paul teaches that the "more perfect way" of living is love (1 Corinthians 12:31 & 13:1). It is something the Lord must "teach" us, not just intellectually but practically, like an art. In fact, he teaches it by his Holy Spirit who dwells in us to motivate our actions. He accomplishes in us his own commands.

March 21

In your love remember me, because of your goodness, O Lord. (Psalm 25:7)

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Goodness and love are the essence of God. The psalmist confidently taps into that essence and gives God permission to wield those attributes in his own life.

March 22

The time has come, and the kingdom of God is near; repent, and believe the Good News. (Mark 1:15)

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Two statements and two imperatives, the latter responding to the former. These first words of Jesus announce that God's plan is being fulfilled in him, his rule is being established over creation. To be part of that new creation we need only renounce our attempt to control our lives and surrender them to his healing action.

March 23

If your lips confess that Jesus is Lord and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

* * *

Nothing here about good works, we don't deserve heaven. Acceptance of the person of Jesus risen from the dead, submission to the loving guidance of his Holy Spirit, these effect a change in us which then shows itself in works of love. "Jesus is Lord" is a short summary of Christian faith.

March 24

All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Romans 10:13)

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Saint Peter says the same on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:21), quoting the prophet Joel. The name of the Lord for Christians is “Jesus.” Constant calling on that name drives out demons and gradually conforms us to the Spirit of Jesus. The name itself means “The Lord saves.”

March 25

The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. (John 6:63)

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To allow the words of Jesus to touch our hearts is to spring to life with a spiritual vigor. They are the words of the Creator who loves us and died to unite us to himself. In particular Jesus refers to the words he has just spoken about the bread of life.

March 26

The law of the Lord is perfect; it revives the soul. (Psalm 19:8)

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The law of the Lord is his plan for salvation, namely that man participate in the nature of God which is love. Surrender to his love for us permits him to live in us, and this life will show itself in gradual learning to love like him.

March 27

This poor man called; the Lord heard him and rescued him from all his distress. (Psalm 34:7)

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God’s specialty is to save. Awareness of our need for salvation is our friend because it impels us to call on the one who only waits for our call to intervene and rescue us.

March 28

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted; those whose spirit is crushed he will save. (Psalm 34:19)

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Jesus made it clear that he did not come for the healthy (Mark 2:17). We need to be aware of a deep wound in us that consists in preferring our way to God’s. It’s this brokenness that we bring to Jesus for healing. It’s to sinners that he was close.

March 29

Your love, O Lord, is eternal; discard not the work of your hands. (Psalm 138:8)

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God has no interest in losing us but instead wishes us to share his nature.

March 30

Seek, and you shall find. (Matthew 7:7)

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This word comes toward the end of the Sermon on the Mount. The only way to fulfill the teachings of that Sermon, such as loving one's enemy and turning the other cheek, is to seek the help of God in prayer. Jesus commands only what he gives us the power to do, but we have to ask for it, and keep asking.

March 31

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I shall be with them. (Matthew 18:20)

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This saying was fulfilled on Easter night when the risen Jesus appeared to the Eleven. When we gather together with fellow disciples he is with us in his Spirit who forms us as his Body. He will never abandon his Church.