

AUGUSTINE: RESTING IN GOD

**Some of Augustine's
teaching on prayer**

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Great are you, O Lord, and exceedingly worthy of praise;
your power is immense,
and your wisdom beyond reckoning.
And so we humans,
who are part of your creation,
long to praise you —
we who carry our mortality about with us,
carry the evidence of our sin
and with it the proof that you thwart the proud.
Yet these humans,
due part of your creation as they are,
still long to praise you.
You arouse us so that praising you may bring us joy,
because you have made us
and drawn us to yourself,
and our hearts is unquiet
until it rests in you

(Confessions 1.1)

Late have I loved you,
O beauty ancient, ever new!
Late have I loved you!
For behold, you were within; and I without
And without I sought you,
and deformed I ran after these forms of beauty you have made.
You were with me and I was not with you.
Those things held me back from you,
Things whose only being was to be in you.
You called; you cried; and you broke through my deafness.
You flashed, you shone, and you chased away my blindness.
You became fragrant; and I inhaled and sighed for you.
I tasted and now hunger for you.
You touched me and I burned for your peace.

(Confessions 10:27)

The word calls you to return.
In Him is the place of peace
That cannot be disturbed

Return to yourself from the things that are without
And then give yourself back to Him who made you.
God is delight
and we rest in delight in Him,
called home from the noise that is around us
to the joys that are silent
Why do we rush about to the top of heaven
and the bottom of earth
looking for Him
who is here at home with us,
if only we would be with Him?

Return to yourself from what is outside you,
and then give yourself back to him who made you;
for he is the sum of all our happiness and our perfect good. To worship him is to love him,
to long to see him,
and to hope and to believe that you will see him.
This is to long for happiness — to reach him is happiness itself... Dear friends,
this love does not come to us of our own free choice, but by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us;
for how could we have cleaved to God

if he had not spoken in our hearts.

Unknown to me You caressed my head,
You closed my eyes
that they should not see my emptiness.
I lost for a while the heavy burden of self
and my madness was lulled to sleep.
And when I awoke in You
I saw You completely differently

Enter into yourself,
leave behind all noise and confusion.
God speaks to us in the great silence of the heart

Look within yourself
and see whether there be some sweet hidden place within where you can be free from noise and argument,
where you need not be carrying on your disputes
and planning to have your own stubborn way.
Hear the word in quietness
That you may understand it.

The Christian may sometimes envy
those who have renounced the cares of the world
for the supposed calm of the desert;
but then those who live in the world
may at any time find within themselves the true desert, where no one enters,
where no one is with you,
but where there is only you and God.

For Christians who fear they are drowning in the world's business the worst thing they can do is panic.
There can be no question of escape from the situation; they is many miles from land and there is no help
near. The one thing they can do is to withdraw,
as it were, into themselves,
to find the Christ within who is as powerful
to still the tempest in their own lives
as He was to subdue the waves on the Lake of Galilee.

Where so ever you are,
where so ever you may be praying,
He who hears you is within you,
hidden within,
or He who hears you
is not merely by your side,
and you have no need
to go wandering about,
no need to be reaching out to God
as though you would touch him with your hands.

At the wall where Our Lord sat down to rest,
great mysteries took place.

Our Lord forbids loquacity.
You are not to address God with a great flow of words
Your true teacher will always be
the teacher within.
It is He who enables you to understand
in the depths of your being the truth of what is said to you
Let Christ speak to you interiorly,
in that place where no human teacher may enter.

Let your desire be before God
and "the Father, who sees in secret will reward you".
It is your heart's desire that is your prayer;
and if your desire continues without interruption,
your prayer continues as well.
For it was not without meaning

that the Apostle Paul said,
"Pray without ceasing".
Are we "to pray without ceasing" in the sense of kneeling,
prostrating ourselves
or lifting our hands?
For if he speaks of prayer in this sense,
I believe we cannot do it "without ceasing".
Yet there is another inward prayer without ceasing,
that is the desire of the heart.
Whatever you are doing,
if you are longing for that eternal Sabbath rest with God,
you are not ceasing to pray.
If you want to pray without ceasing,
never cease to long for God..
The freezing of love
Is the silence of the heart:
the flame of love is the cry of the heart.
If love continues, you are still lifting up your voice;
you are always longing for something
and if you are longing for something yet to come,
you are calling to mind
the eternal Sabbath rest that God has promised.

Homilies on the Psalms 38.13

You are praising God when you do your day's work.
You are praising him when you eat and drink.
You are praising him when you rest on your bed.
You are praising him when you are asleep.
So when are you not praising him?

Commentary on Psalm 146

Do not wish to ask anything of God
except God.
Love him, desire him alone.

Leave all your desires.
He who made heaven and earth
is more beautiful than all;
he will be to you everything you love.

Seek for him alone,
and despise everything else,
make your way to him.
Forget other things, remember him;
leave other things behind, stretch out to him.
Let him be your hope,
who is guiding you to your destination.

This is to love God gratis:
to hope for God from God,
to wish to be filled with God
to be satiated by him.

Let the Lord God be your hope —
seek nothing else from him,
but let him be your hope.
There are people who hope from him riches
or perishable or transitory honours,
in short they hope to get from God
things which are not God himself.

The sound of Your secret melody
I could not catch,
No matter how hard I tried.
my heart was deafened
by the din of my mind.

Love of truth seeks the quiet of contemplation,
while the urgency of love accepts the activity of the apostolate.

De Civ 19:19

We ought not to renounce completely the joys that truth brings,
lest deprived of that sweetness
we be weighed down by the urgency of love.

De Civ 19.19

Let us seek him out in order to find him,
and when we find him,
let us continue searching for him.
We must search for him,
because he is hidden from us.
And when we have found him,
we go on searching because he is without bounds...
He fills those who seek him,
insofar as their capacity permits;
and he increases the capacity in those who find him,
so that they might again seek to be filled.

In ep Jo 63.1

We search for God in order to find him with greater joy,
And we find him in order to keep on searching with greater love.

De Trinitate 15.2

Our voices praise you, O Lord,
our spirit praises you.
Since our being is a gift of your love,
our whole life becomes a continual liturgy of praise.

Whisper words of truth in my heart
for you alone speak truth
I will leave outside those who do not believe,
letting them stir up the dust in their own eyes,
while I withdraw to my secret cell
and sing to you hymns of love.
I shall not turn aside until you gather
all that I am
into that holy place of peace
rescuing me from the world
where I am broken and deformed
and giving me new form and new strength.
You alone are always present,
even to those who have set themselves apart from you.
Let them turn back and look for you.
they will find you have not deserted them
as they have deserted you.
Let them turn back
and they will find you in their hearts.

Rest in him and peace shall be yours

Empty that which is to be filled.
Consider that God wants to fill you up with honey.
But if you are already full of vinegar,
where will you put the honey?
What was in the vessel must be emptied out,
the vessel itself must be washed out
and made clean and scoured,
hard work though it may be,
so that it may be made for something else,
whatever it may be.

To turn work into prayer
we need to spend countless hours
In prayer not working.

Return to yourself from the things that are without
And then give yourself back to Him who made you.

Enter then into your heart,
And if you have faith,
You will find Christ there.
There He speaks to you.
I the preacher,
Must raise my voice,
but He instructs you
more effectively in the silence.
I speak in sounding words;
He speaks within.

Father,
I am seeking:
I am hesitant and uncertain,
But will you, O God,
Watch over each step of mine and guide me.

Confessions 11.17

It is hard to find Christ in crowded places.
We need solitude.
If your heart is attentive,
God allows himself to be seen.
In the crowd you find noise,
in the silence you find God.

Do not be afraid
To throw yourself on the Lord!
He will not draw back
And let you fall!
Put your worries aside
And throw yourself on him:
He will welcome you,
And heal you.

Confessions 8.11

O God,
Creator of the universe,
Grant that I may learn to pray;
Grant that I may become worthy of being heard by you;
Grant that I may in the end be set free by you.

Soliloquies 1.2

He bade me shut the door
of our secret chamber
and pray in secret,
that is in the soundless
secret places of our hearts.
For we pray to Him
In the silence in our hearts

Enter into your heart
and you will be content.

The house of my soul is too small for you to enter:
make it more spacious by your coming.

It lies in ruins: rebuild it.
Some things are to be found there which will offend your gaze; I confess this to be so and know it well.
But who will clean my house?
To whom but yourself can I cry,
Cleanse me of my hidden sins, O Lord,
and for those incurred through others
pardon your servant

Confessions 1.6

Let me know you,
o you who know me;
then I shall I know even as I am known.
You are the strength of my soul;
make your way in and shape it to yourself,
that it may be your to have and to hold,
free from stain or wrinkle.

Confessions 10.1

Give yourself to me,
O my God, for I love you.
And if that is not enough,
let me love you more ardently.

Confessions 13.8

Give me, O Lord, a heart that thinks on you;
a soul that delights in you,
a mind that contemplates you,
an intellect that understands you,
and a reason that always remains faithful to you,
and loves you wisely,
O most wise love.
O Life through whom all things live,
you give me life and you are my life,
life through whom I live and without whom I die:
life through whom I am brought back to life
and without whom I am lost,
life in whom I rejoice,
and without whom I am in torment;
sweet, lovely, life-giving life
who can never be forgotten.

Lord my God, my only hope,
hear me in your goodness:
grant that I may not stop seeking you when I am weary,
but seek your presence ever more fervently

Heal and open my eyes
that I may recognise your will.
Put to flight my foolishness
that I may know you.

O Lord God,
give us your Christ,
let us know your Christ,
let us see your Christ.

Turn and have pity, O Lord my God,
you who are the light of the blind
and the strength of the weak,
the light of those who see
and the strength of those who are strong,
turn my soul and listen
when it calls from the depths.
Let us be of one mind and one heart on the way to God.

Rule I

We need not fly to the height of heavens,
nor go down to the depths of the earth,
to find him who is with us,
if only we love him and want to be with him.

No one need say "But what am I to love?"
Love your brother and sister,
and you will be loving love itself,
you will know the love by which you live
better than the brother and the sister whom you love.
God can be better known than the brother or the sister:
better because more present, more inward and more sure.
Take to your heart the love that is God,
through love embrace him.
He is that very love that draws together all God's servants, angels and humankind, uniting them with each other in obedience to himself.

The one who is filled with love is filled with God himself.
It is with the same love that God and our neighbour are loved,
for God is love.

The end of all our action is contemplation
as it will be the everlasting perfection of everyone,
for God said to his servant Moses, "I am he who is",
and it is God that we shall contemplate in eternal life.

Contemplation is the reward of that faith which purifies our hearts
(and it is the pure heart who will see God).
Beloved friends, realise that the joy of all joys will be the delight in the Trinity
in whose image we have been created.

Sing and keep on walking.