

LOVE

Is More Powerful Than Punishment

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The compassionate, loving gaze of Jesus Christ who appeared in a dream, the light that was glowing in Jesus' eyes, penetrated to the depths of his soul and caused a conversion and awakening in Starr Daily who had hitherto been impudent and unmoved by all external, physical torture or punishment. The figure of Jesus Christ who had appeared before Daily's very eyes disappeared like an illusion, but that image began gradually to appear in the form of a word. That word was *love*. That word also eventually disappeared. Daily then felt that he had lived a part of his life with a strange, clear, indescribable feeling. The joy he had felt when he received love in the past now came welling up from within him as the joy of giving, and he found himself crying tears of gratitude and blessings. "I love all people"—this thought, this feeling came welling up from deep within his soul. Jesus' love poured into him and became his love. He hated only the evil conditions that people imposed on each other and on themselves. Feelings of love for all people, the world, and for God came welling up from within. The next thing he realized was his being released from the dungeon where he had been held.

Daily Following His Religious Transformation

After experiencing this spiritually blissful vision of the radiant Jesus, Daily sincerely wanted to share his spiritual joy of bliss with other inmates and began to do so. One of Daily's fellow prisoners,

however, eventually began cursing him for his non-rebellious attitude toward jailers. Thinking that Daily was shifting to the prison side, he began calling him a coward. Daily's fury peaked and it was all he could do to keep himself in check and from getting violent with the man. To do this, it required true courage that he had never before had to use. The inmate said, "If you're really brave, you'll come to the next prison assembly, stand at the podium and tell your fellow inmates about the beauty of your reborn soul. Everyone will no doubt cry tears of deep gratitude and happiness from your old-style religious testimony."

Finally the manager of the prison assembly hall (also one of Daily's fellow inmates) stood up and gave introductory comments. For Daily, it seemed as though he was taking forever to talk about a lot of unnecessary things. The manager finally finished his remarks, and when he looked towards Daily, Daily was trembling dreadfully. Later, he would not be able to recall how he stood up and walked to the podium; he wasn't conscious of it at all. When he got to the designated seat, a sudden assault, not of applause, but of boos, jeers, and heckling attacked him, at times like a tidal wave, and at other times like a surging wave. He waited until the jeering settled down, but he was very confused and ready to collapse. As he was thinking this, the audience suddenly quieted down. His mouth was dry and his tongue was like a piece of cement and



wouldn't move. He tried to say something. Daily barely managed to open his dry and hardened lips, but wasn't able to voice a word. The cursing voices and frighteningly violent jeers came again. He couldn't hear what they were saying but it was clear that the comments were mean-spirited. He tried again to talk, but he couldn't. As a disgraced hero, Daily stepped down from the podium, feeling like a coward who had punished himself. Thunderous taunting, ridiculing voices that could destroy a person could be heard. To recover from this dishonor, he knew that he would have to stand at the podium time after time until he redeemed himself.

However, God's preparations miraculously saved him from that suffering. After an hour, the prison guard came to Daily's cell and gave him a piece of paper.

"You have to move, so get your things ready," he said.

"Where to?" Daily asked.

"Another cell."

"I never asked to be moved."

"I have no idea what it's all about. I just got the orders."

"Whose orders?" Daily asked in an almost protesting way.

"I don't know whose orders," he said. "They're just orders."

In this way, from this move to another cell, Daily was able to get out of this difficult situation. In his new living quarters, he met a "lifer" from whom he was to receive help and guidance. No matter how difficult the situation, when a person carries out what he is

supposed to do at the time and graduates that situation, he is sent on to the next. That is because life is a process where through experiencing various things, one's soul is elevated to the next level.

Sunday as a Day to Practice Love

Starr Daily decided to dedicate Sundays to learn about God's love, and also to practice love as Jesus did. "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love" (Eph. 5:1, NIV).

If he came upon a spiritual low ebb (Daily taught that there is a spiritual low and high that comes in a periodic cycle to people) on any particular Sunday and was not feeling loving, he tried to do something that wasn't a part of his duties as a nurse in the prison hospital, something that would be charitable. He tried as best he could not to look at the patients' flaws and looked at them from a condition of love. This was the practice of imitating God's love.

From a perspective of studying God's love, Daily made it a point to study the chapters and verses in the Bible on that day. He was particularly fond of the verses of love that he found in 1, John. He liked to read the passage, "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16, NIV). When Daily read this, he would envision that God, who is love, permeating everywhere, so he was living and breathing in the vast sea of God's love.

He would close his eyes and pray, "God's love is under, over, all around me, as well as within me. All my cells are immersed and



soaked within His love.” While praying in this way, he would close his eyes and try to feel this from the very depths of his consciousness. There were times when he practiced this meditation that he was able to relive the feeling of deep love that he experienced that time in the dungeon when Jesus appeared and gazed at him with eyes shining brightly with love. And he was able to understand the truth of Paul’s words, “so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” (Eph. 3:17, NIV). With God’s love embraced deeply in his heart, Daily made the rounds and looked after his patients. When he did, he was able to say the appropriate things to them at the appropriate time and give appropriate kindness at the appropriate place. It was particularly important for him to practice this meditation when he went into the operating room with the surgeon or right before he had to undertake something especially difficult.

In Order to Love Someone Whom You Cannot Love

One day after the conclusion of Daily’s religious meeting, a young girl asked to see him. She was the switchboard operator at a stock exchange. A year had gone by since she started working there, but each and every day was filled with pain and fear. A girl she worked with had an intense hatred towards her, something that stemmed from jealousy, and would do various things to harass her and make her afraid. The young girl said she was on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

Daily advised the girl to prepare herself spiritually each day before going to work. He told her to visualize having loving feelings and thoughts towards everyone with whom she came in contact at her workplace, especially the girl that had been causing her such grief.

The young girl’s problem was fear. It was fear that came from her co-worker’s sarcasm and threats. Daily tried to get her to remember the words in 1 John, 4:18 (NIV): “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” Daily said, “Fill your mind with thoughts of love.”

“You must protect yourself against the reaction that comes from that girl’s jealousy. Triumph over her jealousy with kindness. Melt her heart with love. If you do, you can understand how the girl is a ‘means of God’ that is guiding you to elevate you even higher and become even better.”

However, this was a very difficult problem because it takes tremendous effort to change feelings of fear to those of love. Daily wrote the young girl letters encouraging her to live in this way. Several weeks later, she was able to grasp the rhythm of love and was able to continue to feel this love. The heart of the person who had formerly been her enemy softened, and she even became a very close friend. In this way, they were both elevated to an even higher level.

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