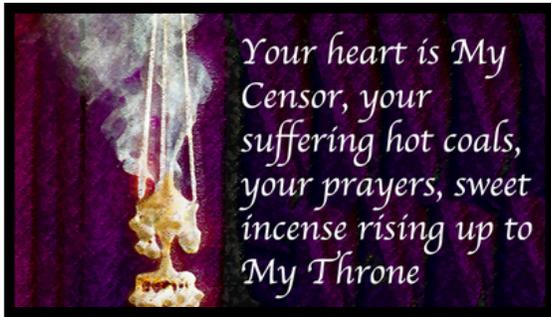


The Fragrance That Draws Me to Your Heart



February 9, 2019

Thank you, Lord, for revealing the secret of intimacy with You.

My precious family, you have not heard from me for a while, because I have been pressing into the Lord. Dwelling prayer, hour after hour, day after day. Trying to get my footing back. He has revealed to me the reason I have felt so

flat-lined and bland in prayer. During the time when I began my abstinence, I became very crabby and impatient, with everything and everyone. In other words, I was unhappy! Grumbling, and complaining.

I wish I could convey to you how very serious impatience and grumbling are. They carry far more weight than you can even imagine. They are signs of taking the Lord for granted; ungratefulness, presumption.

Those who refuse to give thanks for all the Lord has given them are in a dangerous spiritual state. This means not only mindfulness, but more importantly, a heart filled with true gratitude for His gifts. The gift of life, a roof over our heads, food to eat, relatively good health. The joy that pets bring us, good helpers working for us, a car that runs, running water--and so much more than I could enumerate. Consider those who live in war-torn countries--all they had was destroyed and they were stripped down to nothing. Here in this country, we are relatively safe from such things, and we have God to thank for that.

Oh, dear ones, an attitude of gratitude is so very central to our walk with the Lord! And I've heard this a MILLION times from other ministers. But it really was brought home to me when I had some very, very dry prayer time.

When things get hard, when we have to abstain, when someone gets seriously ill, when things go wrong tipping all the dominoes--this is when we discover whether or not we are truly grateful to God. When He asks a little more of us and things pile up going wrong, and we can't reach for the Tiramisu--but just deal with it and pray our way out... this is when we are most likely to grow impatient and start grumbling.

"Lord, why did you let the washing machine go on the fritz?? Look at all this laundry! Didn't we just have to replace a computer and hard drive?! And now my help is sick at home, and we had this project to finish." Yadda, yadda, yadda.

Pretty soon, I found myself angry at these inconveniences. Rather than shouldering my cross and thanking Him, I was complaining. On top of that, my energy was at an all-time low, and I felt like I was dragging cement bags around. And this example is not even the tip of the iceberg at how ungrateful and impatient I have been. Not even!

It starts with dragging energy and moves into every little inconvenience--because with each little problem, more time and energy that I don't have is needed. I especially get upset when I have to look for something because someone put it in a different place. It could be on the shelf right in front of me, but

because I keep it on the shelf BELOW...what's in front of me. I wouldn't see it!

It's totally wasted time and energy. when you get frustrated, you lose energy. And the demons count on that. That's one of the ways they rob us of our energy. And that's energy that I didn't have to start with. And I'm still wasting time looking for something!

When, in reality, these sacrifices are being scooped up by the Lord and turned into graces for the souls being saved by our faithful prayers. Or maybe not so faithful prayers... At least, if we offer our sufferings to the Lord for souls - that counts for something.

When I began this last fast the Lord was calling us to, I believe the Lord was trying to tell me, "You're not going to do this your way--this time." I believe that, because first off, He gave me the travailing prayer I asked for--but it only lasted maybe fifteen minutes. Then He wanted to change the subject to something more joyful. I really didn't understand what He was doing. I thought to myself, "This is odd. I should be in travail, but I'm not. Instead, I'm enjoying this."

Well, the next day when I tried a repeat act, no travailing prayer was given me, no matter how hard I pressed in. However, our washing machine broke down; the laundry piled up. I tried to abstain from certain foods, but my energy level bottomed out, my mind was fuzzy, and I felt absolutely no inspiration for anything... but self-pity.

And that's where it all came to a head. "Why are you allowing this Lord? And how can I get messages out?? I can't even pray without major distractions hitting me and sending me flying? And my dear ones in Trinidad have a crisis again, and just looking at my inbox makes me discouraged--good grief!!! I don't have time to answer tall those letters!"

And my below-the-belt sucker punch to the Lord was: "There's not even time for music! I'll never write another song at this rate!!! How am I supposed to finish my mission with all these problems? I'm exhausted just walking from point A to point B, let alone doing anything productive!"

Well, that's the problem. I wasn't counting on the fact that these inconveniences and sufferings are HIGHLY productive. But not the kind of productive that you can say, "Wow! I sure got that right, didn't I?" Not that kind of productive. No... more the kind of productive that you find out in Heaven, later.

Well, maybe you are asking yourself by now, "Well, what should she have said? That's a lot of stuff piled high, anyone would be despairing!"

The answer is that He told us this would be a two-week period of sacrifice--and He hinted to me that it would be the sacrifices HE chose. Not the standard fasting and prayer. I also was feeling lukewarm and very distant from Him. And you know how painful that is. I couldn't tell if it was a punishment or an offering--and usually in those cases, it is both.

Dear ones, some things are much more trying and revealing of virtue, or the lack of it, than fasting and prayer. Like--can I handle all of this without once becoming angry? We know that all anger is directed at God, because in the end, He has total dominion over everything that is allowed to happen. Nothing happens without His consent.

St. Theresa of Avila was riding her horse to an important meeting, and the beast threw her into the midst of a mud puddle. She looked up towards Heaven and said, "Why did You let this happen to me?" He answered, "*I do these things for all of My friends!*" To that she quipped, "No wonder you have so few!"

Thinking about this illustration, which would be a more costly sacrifice? A week of fasting and prayer, or having to appear before important people in muddy clothing? Certainly, that was a major trial for her.

Dear ones, we can't put our sweet Jesus in a box--He artfully escapes every single one we create for Him. He is well aware of what will cost us more in the way of an offering, and He loves to see a soul respond in meekness to the contradictions He allows.

This attitude of heart reveals a tender love for God, a sacrificial love, where nothing is too great. A love that is patient in all things and makes the best of the worst circumstances. This is a soul so filled with love and faith that nothing is in contradiction and everything makes perfect sense. Basically, "Lord, you allowed this, because it was good for my soul and You needed an offering from me. I will work through this patiently with Your help. Please show me if I need to repent of something that offended You? Thank You for this opportunity to offer something for sinners."

Is that too unrealistic, dear ones?

Well, Lord, what have You to say?

Jesus began, "*Nothing displeases My Father more than ingratitude. Taking your lives for granted, taking your gifts for granted by not investing them wisely, taking your health, sustenance and relatives for granted--as well as all I have provided you with. And it is a fact: the richer you get, the more you take for granted. That is another reason why poverty is so very dear to Me.*

"When I tell you it is a rough time ahead, I'm letting you in on a secret, so that you will be prepared to generously offer to Me every inconvenience, every pain, every lack. Those who live this way are approaching sainthood. It is not prosperity that makes a soul great, but how he handles adversity. This is the great danger for a society that becomes prosperous and decadent. Even as history confirms, this society is nearing its end.

"The poor you will have with you always, and I chose a poor existence to manifest to you. This elevates poverty and distinguishes the lowly and humble. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.' I did not say this lightly. And you will note that every Beatitude runs contrary to popular opinion and culture. This was a deliberate play on words to draw your attention to the most valued state of a soul.

"The choice is yours to make. I chose a feeding trough for My bed, and never rested in the beautiful one Joseph had crafted for Me. I chose to live on the run and bear the persecution criminals endure for their misdeeds. From the manger to the Cross, I made Myself the lowliest among men, to teach you the safest route to holiness.

"But My children, if you want to find favor with God, you must learn to rejoice in all adversity. Rather than running from it, run to kiss it, and embrace it--recognizing it as a precious cross I have tailor-made for you. When you embrace this cross with kisses, you are declaring your love for Me and for My

children. And nothing brings Me more joy than to see you completely formed in My image, with a heart full of love and compassion, and a healthy disregard for those things the world runs after.

"My precious Clare, when you continued to complain and complain and complain, growing anxious with those around you, allowing yourself to indulge in self-pity and impatience--you were paddling your canoe, so to speak, away from Me and into the darkness. For you, things just got darker and darker, more confused and tangled--until you had totally lost your perspective. You were in a dangerous place, Darling. This is the precipice of serious presumption, the kind that leads a soul to hell.

"Those who choose to blame God, and others, for all their misfortunes are creating a massive bondage in their hearts. When you receive a bitter seed, which Satan scatters abroad, hoping you will receive... When you do, it goes down into the chambers of your heart and slowly puts out paralyzing tentacles that wrap the heart and entangles it, cutting off the circulation of your life's blood to the rest of the body. The longer you persist in this behavior, the further down and more paralyzed you become, until your emotions are without hope and life.

"Every little inconvenience you react to with resentment, anger, and bitterness carries with it seeds that take root in your heart. These choke off life in the spirit, and hamper your union with Me, until you cannot see Me or hear Me clearly anymore.

"Dear ones, to the degree you react in resentment to trials and contradictions, to that degree you distance yourself from Me.

"Whereas a docile, meek, soul receives these things with love, trusting in the judgments of My Father unequivocally, and receiving them from His Holy Hand as a precious gift. This is what I am praying for you, Heartdwellers. That you receive these things with great love and gratitude, giving thanks continually for your state in life and all it entails. For your obstacles, for your short-comings, for your failures as well as for your victories.

"And if you are feeling distant from Me, begin with gratitude. Make sure you have not developed an attitude of grumbling, 'cause this will lead you down the path of darkness, further and further away from Me.

"Begin by looking at your attitude about your circumstances--what you have and what you do not have. Thank Me profusely for each and every thing I have given you to fulfill your mission in life. Thank Me for your children--even the ones with problems. Be ever so grateful they are still alive and there is still hope for them.

"Thank Me for the plans I have for you, which you know nothing of at this point in your life. Thank Me for suffering on that Cross for you and your family. Thank Me for allowing you to be born and to grow to maturity. Thank Me for the amazing days you live in, and the promise of the Rapture.

"Make it a point all through the day to recognize something wonderful in front of you, and soon your whole attitude towards life will go from discouragement and fatigue to hope and a fresh start. Truly, My mercies are new every morning! But if you keep your head tucked under the covers and never get out of bed, you won't see the sunshine sparkling through the window, the flowers blooming, fresh ideas and opportunities arising.

"So, I beg of you, My children. Awake in the morning and thank Me for every convenience you have. Thank Me, also, if there is an inconvenience. Offer it to Me with Joy and resolution to never complain again. And you will have Me in abundance. The sweetness of My presence will be drawn to you by the fragrance of gratitude, and I will touch your heart and make you to know that I love and approve you and am with you today to do mighty things. And persevere against all opposition."

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