

Fourth Mansions

Ch. 1 6-7

Selected Reading for Reflection

6-My own experience of this delight and sweetness in meditation was that when I began to weep over the Passion I could not stop until I had a severe headache; the same thing occurred when I grieved over my sins: this was a great grace from our Lord. I do not intend to inquire now which of these states of prayer is better, but I wish I knew how to explain the difference between the two. In that of which I speak, the tears and good desires are often partly caused by the natural mood of the moment, but although this may be the case, yet, as I said, these feelings terminate in God. It is very desirable if the soul is humble enough to understand that it is not more holy on account of these sentiments, which cannot always with certainty be ascribed to love, and even then they are still a gift from God. These feelings of fervor are most common with souls in the first three mansions, who are nearly always using their understanding and reason when meditating. This is good for them, since they have not been given grace for more; they should, however, try occasionally to elicit some acts such as praising God, rejoicing in His goodness and that He is what He is: let them desire that He may be honored and glorified. They must do this as best they can, for it greatly inflames the will. Let them be very careful, when God gives these sentiments, not to set them aside in order to finish their accustomed meditation.

7- But, having spoken fully on this subject elsewhere, I will say no more now. I only wish to warn you that to make rapid progress and to reach the mansions we wish to enter, it is not so essential to *think* much as to *love* much: therefore, you must practice whatever most helps you to this. Perhaps we do not know what love is, nor does this greatly surprise me. Love does not consist in great sweetness of devotion, but in a fervent determination to strive to please God in all things, in avoiding, as far as possible, all that would offend Him, and in praying for the increase of the glory and honor of His Son and for the growth of the Catholic Church. These are the signs of love; do not imagine that it consists in never thinking of anything but God, and that if your thoughts wander a little all is lost.

Reflection Questions:

- 1-How do you welcome the 'gift of God' in your life of prayer? (John 4, the Samaritan woman)
- 2-'It is not about thinking much, but loving much.' What does that mean for you?

