

See Him That Is All My Life, and All My Bliss, and All My Joy Suffer?

by Julian of Norwich

Julian of Norwich reflects on Christ's physical and spiritual pain, realizing that seeing Him suffer is the greatest pain she could imagine.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5, John 19:28, Romans 5:8, Philippians 3:10, 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "The Cross", "Divine Love"

Description

Julian of Norwich reflects on the intense physical and spiritual suffering of Christ on the cross, describing in vivid detail the agony He endured for humanity's salvation. She delves into the excruciating pain caused by the crucifixion, emphasizing the profound love and compassion Christ displayed through His suffering. Julian grapples with the overwhelming sorrow of witnessing Christ's pain, realizing the depth of her love for Him and the incomparable agony of seeing her beloved Lord in such distress.

Transcript

AND in this dying was brought to my mind the words of Christ: I thirst. For I saw in Christ a double thirst: one bodily; another spiritual, the which I shall speak of in the Thirty-first Chapter. 37 For this word was shewed for the bodily thirst: the which I understood was caused by failing of moisture. For the blessed flesh and bones was left all alone without blood and moisture. The blessed body dried alone long time with wringing of the nails and weight of the body. For I understood that for tenderness of the sweet hands and of the sweet feet, by the greatness, hardness, and grievousness of the nails the wounds waxed wide and the body sagged, for weight by long time hanging.

And [therewith was] piercing and pressing of the head, and binding of the Crown all baked with dry blood, with the sweet hair clinging, and the dry flesh, to the thorns, and the thorns to the flesh drying; and in the beginning while the flesh was fresh and bleeding, the continual sitting of the thorns made the wounds wide. And furthermore I saw that the sweet skin and the tender flesh, with the hair and the blood, was all raised and loosed about from the bone, with the thorns wherethrough it were rent in many pieces, as a cloth that were sagging, as if it would hastily have fallen off, for heaviness and looseness, while it had natural moisture.

And that was great sorrow and dread to me: for methought I would not for my life have seen it fall. How it was done I saw not; but understood it was with the sharp thorns and the violent and grievous setting on of

the Garland of Thorns, unsparingly and without pity. This continued awhile, and soon it began to change, and I beheld and marvelled how it might be. And then I saw it was because it began to dry, and stint a part of the weight, and set about the Garland. And thus it encircled all about, as it were garland upon garland.

The Garland of the Thorns was dyed with the blood, 38 and that other garland [of Blood] and the head, all was one colour, as clotted blood when it is dry. The skin of the flesh that shewed (of the face and of the body), was small-ripled⁶⁸ with a tanned colour, like a dry board when it is aged; and the face more brown than the body. I saw four manner of dryings: the first was bloodlessness; the second was pain following after; the third, hanging up in the air, as men hang a cloth to dry; the fourth, that the bodily Kind asked liquid and there was no manner of comfort ministered to Him in all His woe and distress.

Ah! hard and grievous was his pain, but much more hard and grievous it was when the moisture failed and began to dry thus, shrivelling. These were the pains that shewed in the blessed head: the first wrought to the drying, while it had moisture; and that other, slow, with shrinking drying, [and] with blowing of the wind from without, that dried and pained Him with cold more than mine heart can think. And other pains--for which pains I saw that all is too little that I can say: for it may not be told.

The which Shewing of Christ's pains filled me full of pain. For I wist well He suffered but once, but [this was as if] He would shew it me and fill me with mind as I had afore desired. And in all this time of Christ's pains I felt no pain but for Christ's pains. Then thought-me: I knew but little what pain it was that I asked; and, as a wretch, repented me, thinking: If I had wist what it had been, loth me had been to have prayed it. For methought it passed bodily death, my pains.

I thought: Is any pain like this? And I was answered 39 in my reason: Hell is another pain: for there is despair. But of all pains that lead to salvation this is the most pain, to see thy Lord suffer. How might any pain be more to me than to see Him that is all my life, all my bliss, and all my joy, suffer? Here felt I soothfastly⁶⁹ that I loved Christ so much above myself that there was no pain that might be suffered like to that sorrow that I had to [see] Him in pain.

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