



The God of love and peace shall be with you.

—II Corinthians 13:11



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

Love

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Love

from the Responsive Reading

Philippians 1:3–5

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.

Paul's letter to the Philippians is addressed to a church he had founded with Timothy and Silas a decade earlier. Now Paul is in detention, likely in Rome and possibly in chains (see v. 7). Yet his opening expression of joy is repeated throughout the epistle. "Such joy arises," notes a commentary, "not from his circumstances or those of the Philippians, but from a deep-seated trust in the reliability of God."

from Section 2

6 | I John 4:7, 8, 11

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.... Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

To know God goes far beyond just having information about Him to a deep understanding of His nature as Love. Similarly, the writer makes clear that love is more than a strong human emotion. A researcher explains, "Love comes not from the best of the human spirit but from the character of God."

Verse 11 draws the unmistakable conclusion that this love is to be made manifest in affection between fellow believers. The

source adds, "Because love emanates from God's essential nature and because God's children live in response to their intimate relationship with him, love must characterize the Christian community."

7 | Matthew 5:44, 45

I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.

Together with Jesus' injunction to turn the other cheek (see v. 39), the charge to love our enemies is sometimes interpreted as a call for passive nonresistance. Yet the Master's instructions include active responses of kindness—*love, bless, do good, and pray for*—toward those who intend or bring harm.

"Why ... does Jesus demand that a man should have this love, this unconquerable benevolence, this invincible goodwill?" a commentator asks. "The reason is very simple and tremendous—it is that such a love makes a man like God." To love without discrimination is to love as God loves.

from Section 3

10 | II Kings 6:8, 9

The king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

An exploration of Bible citations from the *Christian Science Quarterly*® Bible Lessons

“... a lesson on which the prosperity of Christian Science largely depends.” —Mary Baker Eddy

At this time, hostilities between Syria and Israel had been continuing off and on for years (see, for instance, I Kings 20:1–34). When the prophet Elisha predicts Syrian king Ben-Hadad’s military movements, Ben-Hadad plans an attack on Dothan, where Elisha is living. (Dothan—the site of Joseph’s betrayal by his brothers centuries earlier—was a city about 11 miles, or 18 km, north of the Israelite royal residence in Samaria.) But the Syrian horses and chariots which “compassed the city about” (II Kings 6:14) are no match for the “horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” (v. 17).

Scholars note the themes of sight and blindness in this story. Elisha’s servant, Gehazi, is blind to divine power until the prophet prays that his eyes be opened. And through Elisha’s spiritual sight the Syrian forces are blinded and overcome (see vv. 17, 18).

from Section 4

14 | Romans 12:9, 12, 14, 16, 21

Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.... Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;... Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.... Be of the same mind one toward another.... Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Many writers of ancient times used *parenthesis*—a catalogue of moral and spiritual exhortations—to summarize their teachings. In this part of his letter to Roman Christians, Paul includes a list of behaviors expected of the faithful. His points are strengthened by references to statements from both Christ Jesus and the Hebrew Bi-

ble. For instance, verse 14 echoes Matthew 5:44; verses 17 and 21, Matthew 5:39–42; verse 19, Deuteronomy 32:35; verse 20, Proverbs 25:21, 22.

from Section 6

21 | Revelation 12:10

I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

The book of Revelation is an apocalypse—writing that predicts great upheaval leading to the destruction of evil. The term *apocalypse*, from the Greek word *apokalypsis*, means unveiling or revealing—thus the book title.

Apocalyptic writing in the Hebrew Bible often arose in times of crisis and uncertainty, and used images and symbols to convey its message of hope (see Daniel, chaps. 7–12, for instance). In the New Testament, Jesus prophesies apocalyptic events in Luke 21:9–33 and the destruction of evil in John 12:31.

Accuser (Greek, *katēgorōn*) is a legal term. Researchers point out Satan’s similar role as adversary in Job 1:9–11 and Zechariah 3:1.

Resources quoted in this issue

RR: Gaventa, Beverly Roberts., and David L. Petersen. *The New Interpreter’s Bible One Volume Commentary*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010.

Cit. 6: Mays, James L., Joseph Blenkinsopp, et al., eds. *Harper’s Bible Commentary*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988.

Cit. 7: Barclay, William. *The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol. 1. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew, 1955. Revised and updated by Saint Andrew, 2001. Reprinted as *The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol. 1. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001–04.

What can heal the brokenhearted?

By Bettie Gray House

From the May 11, 1998, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

Recently, while thumbing through a Choctaw language dictionary, I saw a word that struck me as very beautiful—a single word that encompassed deep and tender meaning: *nuktalachi*, “to heal the heart.” It occurred to me that this single word must have played a large part in Choctaw thought when these people were forcibly removed from their homeland in what is now Alabama and Mississippi and sent west (as were the Cherokee and other native peoples) on a “Trail of Tears” through bitter cold, heartache, hunger, disease, and even death.

Is there anyone who has not sometimes felt or said “That breaks my heart” or who has not felt as if he or she were on some personal “Trail of Tears”? There is another trail, a trail that leads to *nuktalachi*—a healing of the heart.

This path involves a new understanding of God as infinite Love—a view of God filled with so much lovingkindness that it embraces the entire universe, including everyone. Understanding this Love, even in a small degree, releases us from fears, tears, sins, and sorrows, and shows us not only how to find our own freedom but also how to see our brothers and sisters as the very creation of that divine Love.

True Christianity demands that we learn to heal as Jesus did, and an essential part of this healing is helping the brokenhearted. Mary Baker Eddy, who herself had spent many years in heartache, sickness, homelessness, and loss, wrote, “If we would open their prison doors for the sick, we must first learn to bind up the broken-hearted” (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 366).

How, then, do we go about mending hearts that are wounded and sorrowing? How do we bind up our own broken heart? We must learn to look at ourselves and others *through the eyes of divine Love*. Divine Love sees each of us, not as a vulnerable mortal, but only as its own completely loved spiritual idea, always at one with Love.

To see this truth will lead us more consistently into Love’s response to sadness. That response *rejects* sadness, cruelty, bitterness, regret, and all such unhappiness as impossible lies about the child of God because Love never made such things.

Accepting God’s vision is not an escape hatch that ignores sorrow, sickness, or sin; rather, it involves a radical change of heart that heals such things by yielding to God’s omniscience. God does not know about a condition called “heartbreak”; He never gave His creation a breakable heart. True compassion acknowledges only the goodness of God and His creation, allowing us—and those we would help—to walk free of heartbreak of any kind, whether apparently caused by abuse, unforgiveness, racial prejudice, the loss of a loved one, injustice, or rejection.

Those who find and agree with Love’s point of view are never again content to accept a distorted image of a heartless God or man, or a brokenhearted man. And what’s more, they find that their own heart becomes more *like* God’s—merciful, forgiving, expansive, loving.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to jsh.christianscience.com/what-can-heal-the-broken-hearted.