

(2.1) The Inner Life

*The Kingdom of God is among you*¹ was Jesus' response to the Pharisees who questioned him. *Return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning*² says the Lord, detach yourself from worldly values and *take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves*.³ Forsake the outward things and concentrate on the inward ones and you shall find the kingdom of God is not a matter of food and drink, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit⁴, something not found by the wicked.

*Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*⁵ Therefore prepare a place worthy for Christ to enter and you will experience his glory and beauty from within. The Lord makes many visits to the person of inward purity and His intimacy is beyond telling. Prepare yourself, your heart, so that He will come and dwell within you and you will need no other nor anything more; it is Jesus who says, *whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him*.⁶

Our fullness is with the Lord and *the rich in the present age are not to be proud and not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth but rather on God, who richly provides us with all things*.⁷ Worldly wealth dissipates but our Lord is eternal and *is good to those who trust in him, to the one that seeks him*.⁸

Don't depend to any great extent on mortals even though they are often helpful and friendly; let us not be grieved when they counter or oppose us but let us put *wholehearted trust in the Lord*⁹ and he will guide us toward what is best for us. Many persons are like the wind, often changing directions; one day they are with us, another day they may oppose us, so do not let that sadden you.

Here we have no lasting city, but we seek the one that is to come.¹⁰ *On earth we are strangers and aliens*¹¹ and inward peace only comes when we are spiritually united with Christ. *Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ*.¹² All things in this world, including ourselves, are ephemeral so do not become attached to them lest they entangle you and you pass away

¹ Luke 17:21

² Joel 2:12

³ Matthew 11:29

⁴ Romans 14:17

⁵ 1Cor 3:14

⁶ John 14:23

⁷ 1Timothy 6:17

⁸ Lamentations 3:25

⁹ Proverbs 3:5

¹⁰ Hebrews 13:14

¹¹ Hebrews 11:13

¹² Philippians 3:20

with them. Let the Most High be the sole object of your meditations and focus your prayers onto Christ humbly and faithfully, *for He will shelter us with his right hand, and protect us with His arm.*¹³ If you find this difficult then repose in Christ's passion and abide within His sacred wounds. If you meditate upon His wounds, precious marks of His suffering for us, remarkable strength will penetrate your spirit, especially during troubling times; and if others deride you their words of disparagement will be easily dissipated.

Christ was even derided by spiritual leaders and those that followed them so be patient when you face adversity and don't expect all persons to be your friends. Endure hardship when it comes, align your suffering with Christ and your patience will be a crowning achievement because *if you persevere you shall reign with him.*¹⁴

If you could resonate perfectly with the Heart of Jesus and experience his love then inconveniences would be easily set aside by rising above yourself and embracing minor reproaches with humility. The follower of Jesus is a lover of truth, a person of deep spirituality, one who easily turns to the Father, one who can rest peacefully in Him, one who rejects worldly values.



The persons with inner light can center themselves and are not easily bothered by worldly concerns. Responsibilities are taken in stride and scheduled wisely and the perverse actions of others are not dwelled upon and simply let go.

If your spiritual life is ordered and you are free from wrong doing *know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.*¹⁵ If you are often troubled then you have not sufficiently detached yourself from the things of this world. The heart of a person is easily entangled and misled by the love of earthly things. Let go of superficial consolations and direct your mind and energies to things above and joy will surely come into your heart.

This article is based on Book 2, Chapter 1 of Thomas of Kempis' writing, "Imitation of Christ." It is not a translation, and there are many of those, but a personal (layperson's) reflection on his writing; if any of it helps give credit to Thomas of Kempis; if any of it fails the responsibility is mine. (rfm)

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¹³ Wisdom 5:16b

¹⁴ 2Timothy 2:12

¹⁵ Romans 8:28