

Love Doesn't Come From Other People.

What's poppin', people? It's Dante.

Currently going for a beautiful walk here, and today's thought is about **love**.

What is love?

Baby, don't hurt me... don't hurt me... no more.

Yeah, I think love is an interesting topic.

Especially in this modern world where we're constantly seeking love from external things.

Whether it's through relationships.

Through our artistic practice.

Through a movie we watch.

Through a game we play.

Through pleasure.

Love is something that we seek from everything.

But I believe that **love truly comes from within.**

It comes from having a relationship with yourself through knowing yourself.

And as a Christian, I consider love to come from Christ.

From God.

I think about love as a relationship with the divine.

Love Begins Under the Sun

The most concrete way I can describe this feeling is by describing what it feels like to stand beneath the light.

To stand under the sun and let it kiss your skin.

Doesn't this feel good?

I always find it strange when people don't enjoy being outside.

If you spend your life hiding indoors, surrounded by air conditioning and artificial light...

Living on standby...

I don't know.

It feels difficult to find love there.

How can you find love if you never experience the sun?

Maybe the first step toward finding love is simply going outside.

Surround yourself with nature.

You could argue that's still external.

But it's also the most natural thing that exists.

The sun above is the reason we're all here.

Without it, none of this exists.

So maybe the first step toward love is simply finding yourself beneath the light.

Nature Is Always Pointing Back to God

I think about our connection to nature.

Our connection to the sun.

Our connection to the water.

Without light...

Without water...

Nothing lives.

The flowers disappear.

The trees wither.

Everything dies.

But instead we have beautiful plants.

Beautiful flowers.

Endless life.

All because of light.

All because of water.

Nature almost feels magical.

Look closely at a leaf.

Study its veins.

Notice how they carry life throughout the plant.

Then look at the veins in your own body.

Look at the branches of a tree.

They echo the same patterns.

The more you study creation, the more you begin to recognize that everything is connected.

When you begin seeing those connections...

That's when love begins.

Because you recognize that we are part of something much larger than ourselves.

Learning From the Birds

When I watch birds...

I feel love.

There's something about the way they move through life.

Flying from canopy to canopy.

Eating when they're hungry.

Teaching their young to fly.

The bird isn't constantly asking why.

The bird simply lives.

The bird experiences the present moment.

Humans complicate everything.

We judge.

We compare.

We decide what's good and bad.

Our ability to reason gives us incredible gifts.

But it also gives us the ability to hurt one another.

Words can heal.

Words can also wound.

Actions can express love.

Actions can also create suffering.

Maybe all of that complexity moves us further away from love.

Love Requires Something Greater Than Yourself

One thing I've realized is that authentic love between two people requires both individuals to be connected to something greater than themselves.

For me, that's God.

I experienced this during my time as a Peace Corps volunteer in Zambia.

The communities there thrive.

Families are large.

Generations stay together.

Everyone has a purpose.

The mothers carry babies on their backs while balancing firewood on their heads.

The men build homes and churches.

The boys make bricks from mud and sand.

The girls prepare food and care for the home.

Everyone contributes.

Everyone sacrifices.

Their lives are centered around serving something larger than themselves.

That's what allows the community to flourish.

Love Is Sacrifice

To love someone is to sacrifice yourself for their good.

Not because you're empty.

But because you're already overflowing.

That's what I discovered.

You can't authentically give love if you're constantly trying to receive it.

Love has to overflow from within.

Only then can it flow outward.

When I lived in Zambia, I saw communities with very little material wealth.

No bureaucracy.

Very little government.

Just God.

Family.

Land.

Tribe.

And somehow...

The people often seemed happier than many people living in modern cities.

At the center of every village was a church.

At the center of the church was the altar.

The reminder of Christ's sacrifice.

And I think that's significant.

Because the greatest act of love ever demonstrated was sacrifice.

Christ and the Ultimate Example

The ultimate sacrifice is Jesus on the cross.

Despite hatred.

Despite betrayal.

Despite suffering.

He forgave.

I don't think we're called to become martyrs.

But I do think we're called to imitate that spirit.

To absorb hatred without becoming hateful.

To answer anger with kindness.

To forgive.

To extend your hand anyway.

That's what love looks like.

Becoming the Well

Every village depends on water.

Without water...

Nothing survives.

The well becomes the center of life.

But wells don't appear overnight.

Someone has to dig.

Deeper.

And deeper.

Through struggle.

Through effort.

Until eventually they reach the source.

I think God is like that source.

The digging represents suffering.

Discipline.

Sacrifice.

When you finally reach that source...

The water never stops flowing.

And suddenly you become the well.

Other people come to drink.

Not because you're trying to impress them.

But because you're connected to something infinite.

Grow Like a Tree

I think about trees the same way.

Their roots push deep into the earth.

Searching for water.

Their branches stretch upward toward the light.

Competing.

Growing.

Reaching.

The tree experiences both struggle and nourishment.

Because of that foundation...

It can stand for hundreds—sometimes thousands—of years.

Birds find shelter in its branches.

Animals build homes around it.

Life grows because the tree remained rooted.

There's something about nature that constantly reflects God's signature.

The Mystery of Life

You don't necessarily have to be Christian to appreciate this.

Or Muslim.

Or Jewish.

Or belong to any particular faith.

If you're simply open to the mystery of life...

I think you're already moving in the right direction.

Personally...

Replacing religion entirely with science has never felt satisfying to me.

Science explains many things.

But it doesn't replace wonder.

I'd rather stand beneath a tree...

Look at another human being...

Look at the birds...

Look at creation...

And see something divine.

Rather than reducing everything to accidental stardust.

Maybe I don't know.

And I'm okay with that.

I'd rather embrace the mystery.

Love Is Unconditional

What I do know is this.

Through the interconnectedness of all living things...

I find God.

And through God...

I find love.

When you're connected to that source...

Love stops becoming something you demand from others.

It becomes something you freely give.

Without attachment.

Without conditions.

Without expectation.

To friends.

To strangers.

Even to your enemies.

For me, that comes through Christ.

Through His forgiveness.

Through trying to live in that same spirit every day.

And when you begin living that way...

I believe you discover the purest form of love.

That's my thought of the day.