



DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

February 1, 2024



Photo: Our Daily Bread

DROP BY DROP

We love because he first loved us.

1 John 4:19

READ 1 John 4:9-19

“In everything / we look for pleasant ways of serving God,” writes sixteenth-century believer Teresa of Avila. She poignantly reflects on the many ways we seek to stay in control through easier, more “pleasant” methods than total surrender to God. We tend to slowly, tentatively, and even reluctantly grow to trust Him with all of ourselves. And so, Teresa confesses, “even as we measure out our lives to you / a bit at a time, / we must be content / to receive your gifts drop by drop, / until we have surrendered our lives wholly to you.”

As human beings, trust doesn't come naturally to many of us. So if experiencing God's grace and love were dependent on our ability to trust and receive it, we'd be in trouble! But, as we read in 1 John 4, God's love for us comes first (v. 19). He loved us long before we could love Him, so much that He was willing to sacrifice His Son for us. “This is love,” John writes in wonder and gratitude (v. 10).

Gradually, gently, little by little, God heals our hearts to receive His love. Drop by drop, His grace helps us surrender our fears (v. 18). Drop by drop, His grace reaches our hearts until we find ourselves experiencing showers of His abundant beauty and love.

By Monica La Rose

PRAY & REFLECT

Faithful God, thank You for loving me first, even when my heart was too wounded and hurting to trust You. Thank You for the many ways You reach me wherever I am. Amen

In what ways have you experienced God's grace "drop by drop" in your life? How has God's love helped you overcome fear in exchange for hope and trust?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

In 1 John 4, we're taught that God's love is the only way possible for us to love others. Love has its source in God (v. 7) because God Himself is love (v. 8). We can be sure we're living connected to Him if His love flows through us to others (v. 12). Love that comes from God will also be the kind of extravagant, giving love that He demonstrated in giving His Son (v. 19; 3:16-18). It won't stop at mere emotion but will flow out "with actions and in truth" (1 John 3:18). – **By Monica La Rose**

Used with permission