

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

The Lord May Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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Rest

Introduction

What a comfort it is to know that God is not an idealist alone, but also a realist! It is easy to speak about the ideal quietness unflustered blessing of rest in the life of a believer, however, in the normal functions of life there are times of stress and “rest” and “peace” is far removed from our hearts and minds. There are many saints across the world who know what it is to stand by a loved one who is in a comatose state or dying, and they know there will be no recovery. For them the questions swirl, “What am I going to do, how will I manage?” Others are going through bereavement, the loss of a job, the sickness of a child, a missing loved one, and “still waters” (Psa. 23:2) are far removed from our lives. To them, God seeks to encourage by being a realist, in that He, the God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1:3) can come close by the Comforter (Jn. 14:16), the Holy Spirit, and the succouring of our High Priest (Heb. 2:18) bringing peace and rest to our hearts.

- a) The disciples knew the stress of situations the Lord let them be brought into. When in the boat in the storm and it was about to sink (Mk. 4:38), that was a stressful situation. When He asked the disciples about buying bread for the multitude (Jn. 6:5), that was a stressful situation. Then when the Lord told the disciples He was going away, that caused them stress and “rest” was no more (Jn. 14:1; 27).
- b) The ordinary people, and it was irrelevant if they were disciples or not, He met them in their stressed situations. The widow of Nain who was following her only son’s body for his burial (Lk. 7:11-13), that was a stressful time for her?
- c) What was the answer to the stressful situations of life?
 - i) To the disciples in the boat the Lord came walking on the troubled sea, and fearing it was a spirit, they cried out (Mk. 6:48-50). Then, to me, there is an advancement with the two on the Emmaus Road, for not only did He draw near but also it is recorded: “went with them” (Lk. 24:15). The reality of the conscious knowledge that the Lord was there and in complete control, tempered the stress and gave rest.
 - ii) Another truth that can temper stress is His words: “I am with you always” (Matt. 28:20); “let not your heart be troubled” (Jn. 14:1); and the words of the inspired apostle: “Be careful for nothing” (Phil. 4:6).
 - iii) Another truth is that the Lord is in control of the happenings of life and nothing has taken Him by surprise. He knows nothing of stress, but dwells in serenity and quietness. He knows nothing of rushing and the pressure to get things done, or is agitated about waiting for things to come to fruition. When we live in the reality of His sovereignty and complete control then we also can have peace and rest.

When we consider “rest”, that is freedom from agitation, frustration, and panic. Many try to find “rest” through yoga, meditation, getting away to a remote place away from everything, listening to calming music, aromatherapy, staying away from social media outlets, etc. These can help to a certain extent but this not the true meaning of “rest”. True rest is living in the consciousness of God’s abiding person and power.

Meditations on Some Aspects of “Rest”

- 1) The first time the truth of “rest” is mentioned is when we are informed that God rested (Gen. 2:2-3). This was not the rest from exhaustion from work, but the rest of all being in perfection and in conformity to His will. How lovely to know we have a God who is never weary (Isa. 40:28), and yet our Lord who is God knew what it was (Jn. 4:6). At a point of time after God finished His work sin came into the world and God began the great process of seeking to bring man back into fellowship with Himself. With that in mind, the Lord said: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (Jn. 5:17), and again, “the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me” (Jn. 10:25). In this age the whole trinity is functioning in multi spheres at once to ultimately bring about conditions where sin will never again be found, and when God is “all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28), that is, all is in complete perfection before God, then there will be the eternal rest, no more turmoil, changing, spiritual warfare; all is peace forevermore.
- 2) Isaiah is perhaps the most prophetic/Christological book in the Old Testament, and one of those prophetic statements concerning the Lord is: “The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him” (Isa. 11:2-5).
 - a) His baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him (Lk. 3:22), and “abode upon Him” (Jn. 1:32).
 - b) The works of the Lord and the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:22).
- 3) One of the most beautiful thoughts of rest is when the Lord bowed His Head on the cross. The word means, “to rest”, and it is the word used when the Lord said: “The Son of man hath not where to lay His head (Matt. 8:20; Lk. 9:58).
- 4) Because of the righteously finished work of Christ He can offer salvation to the whosoever will. His words resound through the centuries: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matt. 11:28, 29).
 - a) The struggle of the Law, a burden they could not keep (Matt. 23:4).
- 5) How easily we humans get things confused, and with that in mind, the Lord did not want his ancient people to think that Canaan was the end of all things. It was a shadow of a future rest. The writer of Hebrews, in considering the children of Israel and Canaan, indicates that even in the Old Testament Canaan was not the final rest. Had it been the final rest, David hundreds of years later would not have written: “Today if ye will hear His voice” (Psa. 95:7-8), inviting them to enter His rest. This is the truth the writer to the Hebrews speaks of when he writes: “For if Jesus (Joshua) had given them rest, then would He not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.” (Heb. 4:8-10)
 - a) The rest of salvation, ceasing from our works, depending in quiet assurance that we have a High Priest who is there for us to succor and present Himself before God in all His perfections.
- 6) There is one thing we soon learn in the Christian life, it is not a bed of roses! There are struggles and trials which the unsaved never have, and added to this there is the enemy who seeks to depress us constantly. One of the afflictions is to have constant turmoil from the unsaved and the agitation of the flesh to get even. To us God says: “Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him” (Psa. 37:7). That is, do not respond to this in the natural way by taking things into your own hands. Just wait without inward or outward agitation, nor murmuring on the Lord, rest on Him.
- 7) Recently I attended the funeral of my mother and within a 10 week period five of my relatives and friends died. Thankfully all were saved. If the Lord does not soon come, each of us will enter the valley of death. How blessed it is to be assured that we have the assurance not only for resurrection, but also being in the fulness of joy in His presence and appreciating in a deeper way the wonders of the person of the Lord. The psalmist put it so wonderfully: “Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope . . . in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psa. 16:9-11).
- 8) The last time the truth of rest from labour is when it says concerning the saints: “They may rest from their labours” (Rev. 14:13).
 - a) Dad loved the hymn; “When All My Trials and Labours Are O’re”, and thank God there is coming a day when the weariness from the labours, but not of the labours, will be over. The Lord was wearied in the work of God but not of it. Some have struggled in the mission field for many years, others at home in the local church, some have toiled in care for others, and others worked in obscurity from early morning to late at night. While we will not be sitting around in heaven doing nothing, there will be total freedom to work, for the powers of sin and Satan will be forever gone, and in the purity of love we shall serve Him.

As we rest in the finished work of the Lord, and now as we face death, live and rest in hope, we look beyond the veil and anticipate the blessedness when we sing the truths of Charles Gabriels’ hymn:

When all my labors and trials are o'er,
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,
Will through the ages be glory for me.

Refrain:

*O that will be glory for me,
Glory for me, glory for me,
When by His grace I shall look on His face,
That will be glory, be glory for me.*

When, by the gift of His infinite grace,
I am accorded in Heaven a place,
Just to be there and to look on His face,
Will through the ages be glory for me.

Friends will be there I have loved long ago;
Joy like a river around me will flow;
Yet just a smile from my Savior, I know,
Will through the ages be glory for me.

. . . . Rowan Jennings

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