

## Inner Rest

Recently, I had to pull myself up. I was restless with my psyche in overdrive. That is not a way in which I like to be. But life, at times, makes it happen. A chapter of a book I had read about Divine Union came to mind. I don't aspire to that in a mystical sense. The characteristics of such a union though are helpful in bringing life into perspective. Its reading spoke to me and settled me down. The opening sentence hit a sweet spot. In rather old-fashioned English it said: 'Just in proportion as we approach to quietness of spirit, we approach in similitude to God.' Or, as I might have written: the quieter my spirit, the more I live in the likeness of God. It made me think of looking into a mirror. By divine kindness, the image I saw of myself, did resemble God a little. But it needed sharpening up badly.

I settled deeper into my chair in reflection and began to dwell on the significance of what I had read. Having learned a few home truths over the years about spiritually coming to rest, a calm began to come over me. Partly, by the graciousness of God, and partly because in my mind I was bringing matters that had got me wound up into perspective. Gaining a Christian perspective is central to the ability of achieving inner rest. Insufficient perspective, or a faulty one – little rest.

Jesus is remembered for being a healer of the body and he did miracles in the process. But more importantly, he is a healer of the soul. Come to me all you that carry a heavy burden and I will give you rest, he said. A rest of the spirit. Sometimes, when being with Jesus, that rest may settle upon us like a miracle. Usually, it is a matter of taking a deep breath, calming down, and handing over. Handing over is a key in attaining inner rest for it takes the power away from that what is bothering us. I give it all to Jesus and without complaint about what may have happened to me – the reason for my unrest. He then brings his peace. It is a first principle in coming to rest.

Modern life is full of pressures, entitlements and desires. Usually, we don't have to worry where our slice of bread will come from on any given day and that is a blessing. But there is much else to navigate in making a living. So much, that many people are continually tired. Being tired at times is unavoidable. Often though, we have only ourselves to blame. I may make that extra effort to fit into my schedule those things I feel I deserve. Doing without those things, even if that would be wise, is a challenge. So, I'm loading up the pressure. Or, I may ignore attending to what would be good for me, like sufficient exercise. It reduces my resilience. The list of what can take away my peace and restricts real wellbeing is long. I will never get fully on top of it. Keeping a close eye on the problem is the key.

More deep-seated and long-lasting in its effect is the emotional baggage I carry. It will linger on but over time can be turned into being a memory more than an emotional infection. Again, it is a matter of handing over. I must try to hand over the question of why a certain experience ever happened to me. God knows all and I may live within that providence. In God there are solutions. I am not for a moment suggesting that letting an injustice simply be is easy. The road to wellbeing is difficult. Many do not travel well. In protecting wellbeing, it is often wise to let matters be. Even when that grates on me.

A handing over is not complete unless it leaves retribution to an event in the hands of God. Jesus summed it up by suggesting that we wish our enemies no harm. On the cross, he asked his Father to forgive his executors. Why did he do so? Was Jesus even while in super agony still an extra kind man? He may have been that, but Jesus knew that a far more important dynamic was at stake. It concerned the health of his soul. Jesus would allow no bitterness to enter his being.

By now, you may feel that finding true rest is becoming overly difficult, even with the assistance of God. I beg to differ. Life can be like a castle wall on a theatre stage. It looks impregnable, solid and strong. Take a hammer to that wall and you will smash right through it. The wall is an illusion. My perception of what is achievable with God's help, may present me with a wall to be scaled that isn't really there. Scripture tells that Jesus is our peace who has broken down every wall. If there is no wall between God and me, and the possibilities that brings, why should I erect one?

Inner peace is a struggle. Fortunately, inner turmoil for a Christian need not be permanent. Much depends on my perspectives. If I get those right then, when catching up with Jesus, it enables me to find his peace. An inner rest that is like a breath of fresh air. Apostle Paul knew it well. He wrote something like: Don't worry, but discuss everything with God wherever you are. Thank God that your worries are already known and in good hands. And God will give you peace in mysterious ways that will keep your heart and mind at rest in Jesus Christ. (Phil. 4:6-7)

I have to make sure not to leave important matters in life in the too-hard basket. My agitated soul must not be ignored. I should make time to deal with it – many a time. And I need not despair. Jesus will strengthen me and shower his calm upon my frustrations. Be still and know that he is God.

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If you have found this interesting please consider my books in which much more is explained about God and the reality of an authentic Christian perspective on life – the benefits that offers.

Thank you,

Michael