

REST IN THE LORD

There is a rest which is deeper than merely a rest from works to attain salvation. Such rest from works to attain acceptance is the rest as spoken about in Hebrews 4, which is the rest from trying to stay true to the Law of Moses (613 commandments).

The greater and deeper and more complete rest is a rest from one's own constant endeavour to forge a way ahead instead of trusting in the Lord who is the Way. It is a rest from constant inner strife. It is a rest from fear – a fear that is spawned by indecision, doubt and anxiety. It is a rest from turmoil that rages at times in the soul. It is rest that exists beyond external circumstances, beyond the actions of man, beyond the threat of enemy and beyond the veil of religion or tradition.

We have to understand, the Lord wants us to come to a point of such rest. Such rest is the rest as spoken by Jesus in Matthew 6 where we are commanded not to worry, and it is the rest of Philippians 4 where we are urged not to fear or be anxious about anything. It says in verse 6 and 7: "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." It is that beautiful rest when Jesus says in Matthew that we must come to Him to find our rest (Matthew 11:28).

Too long says the Lord has His children been constantly moving in negative motion and emotion, reaping the whirlwind of the souls' complex storms. We have for too long lack faith or we have wandered down the valley of doubt. Too long we have sought to make a plan, to find a plan, to pave a way, to 'open' doors, to seek the next opportunity and to chase after the 'glory' It is time to rest from such endeavour driven by our own need and want, and to rather rest in the Lord.

For such rest was found by Moses when he penned Psalm 1. Such perfect rest from the influence of foe was promised to the Israelites in the Promised Land if only they obeyed the Lord. Such rest is surely summed up in Psalm 23.

Throughout churches, we are constantly busy with a program, with an agenda, with a ministry, with a plan, with a goal, with a dream, all the while remaining frantic and on the move. Indeed, if all such toil and strife and effort are in line with the will of the Lord, then it shall be applauded and lauded, but then again in the power of the Spirit it will not be toil or effort and either shall it produce strife.

Need the Lord remind us it is not by the power of our might or power, but by the power of the Spirit? Understand this – when the Spirit of the Lord rests upon man, and indeed infills man, it speaks of a state of complete calm and submission where man submits to the will and work of the Lord. Indeed, it is by the work of the Spirit that we

cease from our own work, from our own plans and decisions, to rely completely and utterly on the way of the Lord. It is by the power of the Spirit that we are empowered to do the Lord's will and work. Never by our own strength□

There is a call from the Lord for His people to "rest". Not physical rest, not spiritual rest, but a rest from doing it our way. For when we seek a way and a plan and a purpose according to our way we shall find the way of the flesh manifested.

It says in Psalm 37: Rest in the Lord and wait patiently (King James). Hebrew word for rest as in the above context of the King James is "daman". This means to be dumb, be astonished, cease, forbear, hold peace, quiet, self rest, be silent, keep (put to) silence, be (stand) still, tarry, wait.

It says in "Exodus 14:14: The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." Hebrew word for peace in this context is "Charash". This means to be silent, to let alone, cease, conceal, be deaf, leave off speaking, hold peace, be quiet, rest, practise, keep silent, be silent, speak not a word, hold tongue.

"Psalm 46: Be still and know I'm God." Hebrew word for still is Raphah. This means to slacken, abate, cease, consume, draw, fail, be faint, be feeble, forsake, idle, leave, let alone, be slack, stay, be still.

In context, the above Scriptures were penned in a time of war, unrest, strife and a lack of peace. There was great unease, violence and disorder. God told His people to be still, to rest and to be at peace during such turbulent days. They were called to trust Him, lean upon Him, obey Him and keep their eyes upon Him to the point where they "rested" from stress, anxiety and worry□ God was telling His people to be 'weak' {not in a negative sense} to a point of calmness in the sense that they needed to realise they could not secure their own rest but only God can secure victory.

The Israelites thus needed to come to a point where they needed to stop trusting and relying upon their own strength, intellect, wisdom, wealth or personal stature to secure peace and victory. Throughout Scriptures in the Old Testament, the Israelites needed to realise the battle belongs to God, and in that reality and truth they needed to abide and rest. Only then was peace secure. This ten applies to us today as well.

We live a time of war, drought, famine, plague, chaos, anarchy and lawlessness. World economies and commodities fluctuate daily. If we are going to rely on this world, we will never find peace, rest or victory. Like the nation of Israel, we need to come to a point where we lay down the Self, our own strength, our own wisdom, and our own lofty ideals and realise our victory, peace and strength should and only rests with God. We need to trust Him, rely only upon Him, for indeed, the battle belongs to God and certainly no political leader or army.

We as believers are surrounded by physical and spiritual forces that seek to destroy us. But we must not fear, for like Jehoshaphat we must turn to the ONE who can lead us through the valley of the shadow of death to green pastures - our Lord Jesus. This is the same God who sent an angel to slay the entire Assyrian army in one night. This is the same God who reigns and rules forever. Gates of hell cannot prevail against the might of our Lord. Neither can any nation, leader or threat conquer Him.

It is time to rest and to wait upon the Lord for He shall show us the way. Yet, where is the waiting upon the Lord? For it is written "be still and know I am the Lord" (Psalm 46:10). Yet the Lord speaks that so great is the noise from all our effort and endeavour there is no silence to hear the Lord. There is no yearning to be silent and to listen. Samuel as a boy listened when the Lord spoke to him for the first time, yet sadly many are failing to hear the Lord speak for so great is the whirlwind of inner desire and emotion.

When Elijah saw fire rain down on Mount Carmel to destroy the false prophets, he fled out of despair and fear. The Lord met him on the mountain and it was in the stillness of a small voice that God spoke. Elijah had fled because he did not wait upon the Lord. Saul did not wait upon the Lord before the battle commenced, and so the Kingdom was torn from his hands.

There is thus a point of rest where we no longer lean on our own understanding, wisdom, strength, counsel or knowledge in anything that we do, but we rather lean upon the Lord for our complete guidance and hope (Proverbs 3). It is time to rest by acknowledging the Lord in all our ways, to trust Him, to walk in faith, and to behold His beauty through the simplicity of worship.

After the Lord died and ascended to heaven, the disciples were urged to wait in the city of Jerusalem for the power from above. What would have happened if they continued to minister without waiting? What would have happened if they sought to fulfil the Great Commission without obeying? They could do nothing unless the outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place - 50 days after the Lord rose from the grave.

Yet says the Lord, many cannot wait. Many cannot rest in the Lord's wisdom and counsel (Psalm 1). For 50 days the disciples had to wait. Seven weeks. It is long time when one is eager to work for the Lord. But they had to wait. There remains thus a tendency to run ahead of God without His instruction, or even to lag behind out of disobedience or rebellion. We need to wait, no matter the time or the period that elapses.

Those who stayed behind with Aaron while Moses climbed Mount Sinai could not wait. Moses was not returning quickly enough so they build a golden calf. They followed

their own way because of fear. They made the wrong decision. If we therefore fail to wait upon the Lord for clear instruction and for clear orders, we end up following golden calves.

Indeed, it is all about the will of the Lord. Do we not pray it is not our will but the will of the Lord? Why then do we fail to heed His will by following our own way and wisdom? It is about obedience and faithfulness to His will, for then Isaiah 40 shall truly come to pass where we shall run and walk without growing weary or fainting. Yet in the flesh we shall surely stumble, remain foolish, weak, and mere children in spirit.

We shall find our rest when we know the Lord. For when we know the Lord, we shall know His voice, and in His voice He shall guide and direct us according to our mandate and purpose. We all have a clear calling and a purpose. There is a clear intention by the Lord how to fulfil it. If we move beyond this, we move into the flesh, into rebellion and into disobedience. We then move out of God's rest and into a place of double-mindedness, confusion and disorientation. For it says in Proverbs 3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. And also Psalm 119:133 Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. It is time to rest by placing our trust in God, by allowing Him to lead us in all our ways.

So the Lord calls us to a place of rest. Then "Shalom" shall truly become a manifestation of our lives - a state of rest, peace, wholeness and healing. For in the Lord is true rest, but then we have to remain in Him. And in Him rests our understanding, wisdom, protection and provision. In Him rests our hope, love and faith. In Him lies our vision. In Him there is no fear, only a clear way head. In Him there is victory.

So rest in Him. Be still and know He is God.

Yet this is a time we need to turn to God, seek Him, pray, be obedient and lay down the Self so that Christ may live in us.

In these days of unrest, God thus reminds us we must come to a point of stillness, standing at rest, and coming to a state where we are slack (meaning resting in our labour and effort). We must cease in our own work and cease in own strength. We must be consumed by God, we must be still, we must wait, we must keep our tongue and we must come to rest in His might. God wants us to come to a point in such times when we humbly realise then our efforts and attempts when fought in our own wisdom and might will come to naught, rather we must let God be the Lord of the battle, of all our circumstances, situations, fears and insecurities.

The battle belongs to God! In Him is our strength and might!

Psalm 144: Praise be to the Lord my Rock,
who trains my hands for war,
my fingers for battle.

2 He is my loving God and my fortress,
my stronghold and my deliverer,
my shield, in whom I take refuge,
who subdues peoples[a] under me.