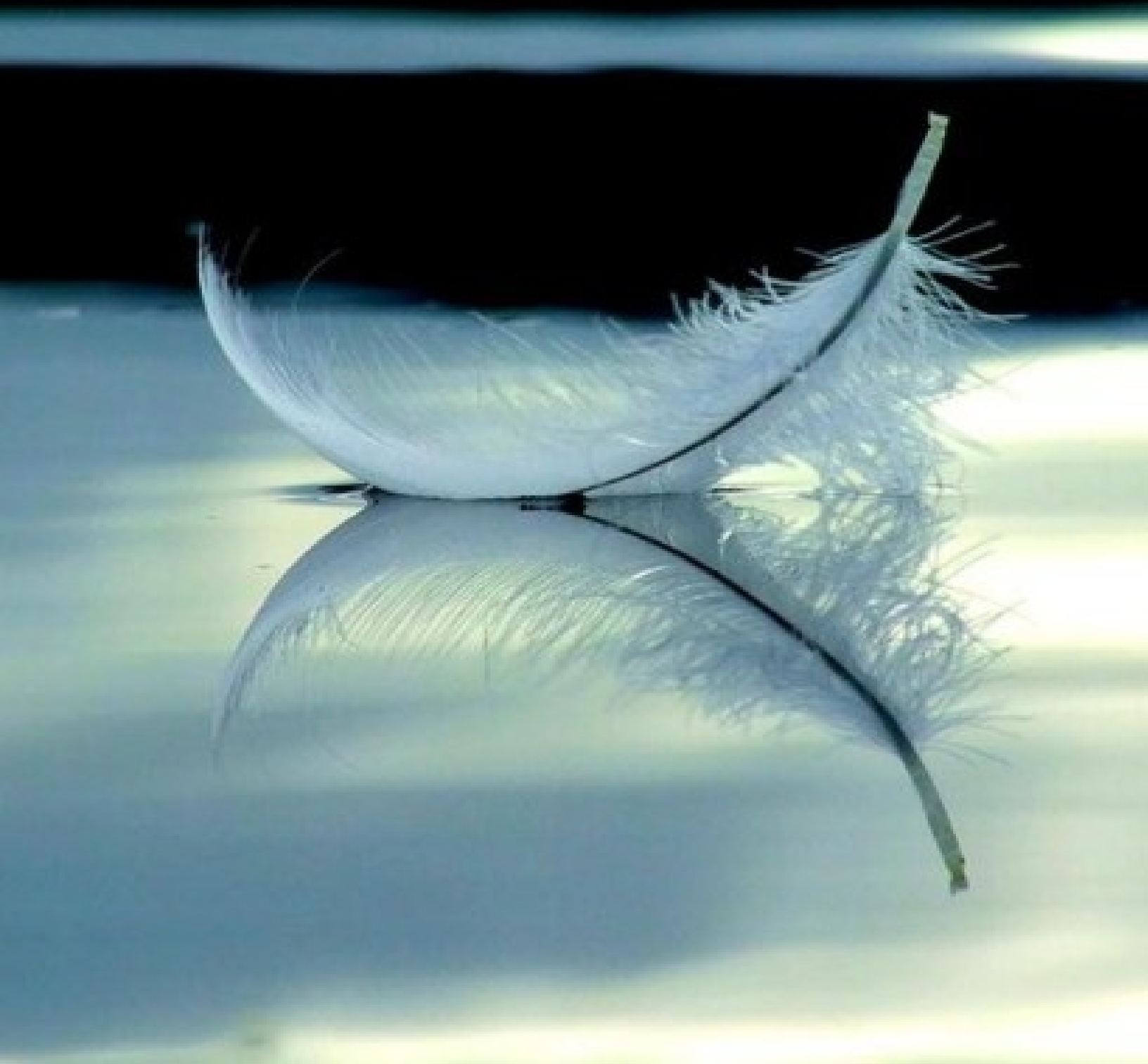
The Rest of Faith

Mike Connell



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Audio Transcripts of Sunday Sermons

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Rest of Faith

The Rest of Faith (1 of 4) "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down."

Psalms is full of David's battle to find that resting place. In fact he had many difficulties, pressures setbacks, obstacles - all kinds of challenges, but he said “I'm never lacking, because God is my provider and my source”.

He came to rest inside, in God. The kingdom of God is about rest, not works.

“He that has entered into rest has ceased from his own works.”

The Rest of Faith (2 of 4) Jesus said: If you're stressed out, come to Me. The answer is a person, your connection with a person, connecting with Him and learning.

Technology doesn't solve problems, because the problems we really face, the core of them, are found in the heart; and in our walk with God.

The reason He can teach you how to do life, is because He has an attitude of meekness, humility; and He gave an example of how to do life.

The Rest of Faith (3 of 4) Stress and pressure are part of our life, and Jesus has given some clear things about how we can deal with it.

When you're stressed out, anxious and uptight you don't live your best; you struggle in your relationships; there's overflow in your health.

God doesn't intend us to live that way. Let's have a look what Jesus said…

The Rest of Faith (4 of 4) "My presence will go with you, and I will give you Rest"

Rest is a peace in our heart, in spite of the turmoil around us. We're live in an age which is in turmoil; people are anxious & fearful - stressed out.

Rest is a gift to us. It's an experience you can come into, when no matter what's going on around you, you can still be at peace in your heart.

This is something God gives to us. It comes out of His presence being with us; and out of learning how to let go issues to Him. We're called to bring peace into wherever we go.

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"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down."

Psalms is full of David's battle to find that resting place. In fact he had many difficulties, pressures setbacks, obstacles - all kinds of challenges, but he said "I'm never lacking, because God is my provider and my source".

He came to rest inside, in God. The kingdom of God is about rest, not works.

"He that has entered into rest has ceased from his own works."



Psalm 23 - I want to speak on the Rest of Faith. I've had such a great time in the rest of faith more recently, and I want to talk to you about it - it will help you.

Psalm 23:1-2 "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down". He makes me lie down - so David is expressing his personal relationship with God. This is a psalm written by a shepherd, and he's defining his walk with God, or his relationship with God, in terms of: I have made the Lord my shepherd. If you read through all of the rest of the psalms, you'll find then he talks about the blessings, which flow by faith, out of that relationship.

He says: the Lord is my shepherd, therefore I shall not want. I'll lack for nothing. I have everything I need, because I've made Him my shepherd.

It doesn't mean he didn't have troubles, or lacks, in his life. In fact he had many. He had many difficulties, many pressures, setbacks, obstacles - all kinds of challenges; but he said: I'm never lacking, because God is my provider and my source.

He came to rest inside, in God; and if you read psalms, it's full of his battle to find that resting place.

Most people read it like: “He makes me lie down in green pastures” - but sheep don't lie down in green pastures.

In the Bible, sheep lay down in the ‘fold’ - in the sheep fold; so it reads more like this: “He makes me lie down. In green pastures He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul”.

It's just, sometimes people don't read it right, but if you look it up in Ezekiel 34:14, it tells very clearly that: “He calls us to lie down in the sheep folds”.

The sheep folds were a place of protection. They were surrounded; the shepherd slept at the doorway. It was a place where the sheep were safe.

If you've ever seen a sheep lying down, they're usually chewing the cud; and they are easily disturbed - they frighten easily, scatter easily.

So when a sheep is lying down and chewing the cud, it is perfectly at rest. That means: no stress, anxiety, pressure, worries, demands; it's at a place of rest.

Notice that it says: “HE makes me lie down”. This is something that comes from God - the ability to rest, and be at peace in your heart in life, no matter what you're facing.

This is the thing: what is it that God wants you to rest from? It's not from doing things. God expects us to be busy for His kingdom; but the rest he's talking about is an internal rest, that can only come about by faith. It's an internal rest, and a peace.

Everywhere we are, and I particularly noticed this in Australia recently, the two most common problems that came up in the altar calls: 1) Anxiety; 2) depression.

That quite surprised me. Over and over and over and over again, when I asked people what are the problems you're facing: anxiety, or worry and stress about life; and the second thing was depression, a feeling of despair, that they could never get on top of the pressure they were facing in life.

In spite of all the iPads, phones, texting, and everything else, there's a state of increasing stress on people. People are not rested.

People in fact are more stressed and pressured than ever before; so when it says: ‘rest’, its rest from internal stress.

It is rest from: anxiety, fear, danger; the worry about what will happen in the future. Rest from guilt about your mistakes; rest from striving to get somewhere in life.

It's a rest from effort, from having to work hard to be a good Christian, work hard to get the victory, work hard to get on top. It's about that.

It's about resting from all of that, and coming to a place where: no longer do you exude stress and anxiety; but you carry an atmosphere of peace and rest in your heart.

That's something all of us can come into - this is the rest of faith; and it's a fruit, and an outcome of your relationship.

It's not something you work at - you don't work hard to get into a place of rest. It comes as a result of doing something else - so we want to help you find that.

The first thing I want to look at, in relationship to this ‘Rest of Faith’ is: when we look at the kingdom of God, the kingdom of God is about Rest; not Works.

Romans 14:17 – “The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, or activities of the law; but it is rather righteousness (or right relationship), and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost”.

Peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Whenever the Kingdom of God is manifesting in your life, there comes peace.

That's one of the first things He said: “rightly-connected to God through faith, and at peace in our heart”.

So one of the key indicators that God's kingdom is there is Peace; and one of the key indicators that it's not there is: confusion, and turmoil, and distress.

So wherever Jesus' kingdom is manifesting in a person's life, they come to peace - in your finances; your family.

It doesn't mean to say there's not some difficulties. Jesus said: “the peace I give you is not like the world gifts. He said: “I give you a peace”.

This Peace (or Rest) that you get, brings you to a place of peace in your heart, where you're not in turmoil or anxiety and stress.

There may be concerns. He said: “My peace I leave you, My peace I give to you, not as the world gives, give I unto you”.

He said: “In the world you'll have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I've overcome the world”.

Jesus said: there's a peace that can manifest in your life, where you are freed up from stress and anxiety and worry - and it comes from Him. It's not like the world gives.

The world gives you peace when it's got everything around you all stabilized - no troubles; but Jesus said: there's a peace I give you, which is in you - in the midst of all the troubles.

So He said: that's the rest.

He said: it's not that there won't be troubles.

If you're a Christian, you'll have troubles. If you're a believer, and you're active in your faith, you'll have troubles. Some troubles come because of things you do; some because of things others do; some because of the devil; and some because it's just… troubles from being a Christian.

You try to be honest, you try to do what's right - and then you have these troubles; so peace is something God gives to us.

Colossians 3:15 – “Let the peace of God RULE in your heart”.

That word rule is to be an umpire. If you ever go down and see the netball or rugby, and the game is in play; if anyone breaks the rules [RRR!] – a whistle, or a red flag etc. Straight away the whistle blows, and the umpire has made a decision that you have broken the rules, you've done something wrong.

The Bible says: whenever you lose your peace, something is wrong - the whistle is blowing!

So today, if you are not at peace inside - the whistle is blowing on you.

Usually what happens is: the referee will blow the whistle; everyone stops what they're doing; and then he points - you! What have I done? Then the rules cited, and maybe get the red card, a sin bin, put off the side there…

Heaps of people get sin-binned you know; and in the church they get sin-binned too. It's a horrible thing really, isn't it, but there it is - it happens.

So every time you lose your peace inside (or lose the rest inside) - the whistle is blowing, something's not right. That's the warning to look at your relationship, your connection, what's going on in your thinking, and in your heart - because something is not right.

Hebrews 3 & 4 has got quite a bit about the Rest of God, and while it's got prophetic and dispensational aspects to it, we're just going to stick with the practical of making this thing work in your life.

Hebrews 4:1 - “Now there's a promise remains, of entering His rest; let us fear, lest any of you seem to come short of it.

So this is a promise to receive, that we can enter His rest (whatever that means). “For indeed the gospel was preached to us, as well as to them; but the word they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. And we who have believed, enter that Rest”.

Hebrews 4:10 – “He who has entered His rest, has himself also ceased from his works, as God did from His.”

To ‘enter’ rest means: to cease struggling and striving. It's to cease your own works, to try to accomplish something before God.

Unfortunately, it's very easy to go down that route. The Old Testament law seems to come like this: if you do this, you'll be blessed; if you do that, you'll be cursed. Tithe and you'll be blessed, don't tithe and you'll be cursed; and so on and so forth.

You have all of these laws: and so we get to have a mentality of the law: that if I just do enough, I'll get what I need.

If I just do enough, my parents will be pleased, and dad will smile and say: well done. If I just do enough, I'll succeed; if I just do enough I'll get a promotion. If I just do enough… and so we become wired: if I just do enough, I'll somehow get what I need.

The trouble is, what we do is never quite enough to get what we really think we want; and so we're left striving and struggling and wrestling. This is true of people everywhere.

Then we come to the church; and so the first thing you hear is: you hear the gospel - and the gospel's very clear:

We are saved by? Grace!

Grace through? Faith!

How do you get saved? Grace through faith, grace through faith. How is the rest of all your Christian life supposed to work? Grace through faith, grace! God's empowerment through believing, not striving.

Yet striving is where people end up, and I find so many people striving and struggling. The striving and struggling is very subtle, and it comes up in books and resources.

How many have read a book: four keys to this? What's implicit in that is: if I just do the four things - I'll get what they say.

10 keys to a great marriage; five keys to breakthrough - then we do them, we don't get the breakthrough, and we can't work out why. So we go for another book, and so on and so forth.

The shops are full of them. The Christian shops abound in books with keys; and yes, there are things we can do - but what you've got to realise is:

The core of the work of God is: believing.

The core of it is: believing what God is like; and what God has said He's done, and will do on our behalf - not trying to make it happen.

For example, a lot of Christians (sensitive area here), they hear this scripture; and I've heard it a number of times - it's always worried me a bit really.

Malachi 4 – “Prove me…” Now I believe you can prove God, and this is a great - and I believe in the whole area of tithing, and beyond tithing and giving; but people get into this thing that: “If I do it I'll be blessed; if I don't then I'll be cursed”.

Now that is the law; but I am blessed. In fact I'm blessed all the time. I'm blessed in Christ. He made me blessed. He positioned me for blessing, when I believed.

I don't work to get blessed. I don't have to work to get to blessing. What I need to do is: believe I'm blessed; and align myself with what a believer should do.

If I believe that God is my source, then I'm free to give to Him - and give well beyond the tithe.

Many Christians are locked in on this tithe thing, and they're locked in on the law.

Fear is what drives the law; rather than realizing: if I'm a man of faith, and believe that God is my source and supply, then I can give, and I can give well beyond that.

I can be a generous person. In fact, actually that's what God wants me to be; not just a tither, legalistically tithing, and wondering why I'm limited. He wants to make me a generous giver. A generous giver!

I counseled one guy, a former pastor. He was sitting in a group (a group of Cook Islanders), and we were talking to them. The guy was very grumpy, and he started off by announcing: “I've just stopped tithing. I've gone to the bank, and I've cancelled my tithe”!

There was a deathly silence in the meeting, and all the religious people... they all kind of went back, because the fire of God is about fall! [Laughter] Pastor's about to give him a hammering, you know? Ooh! Stand back, watch this! He's

going to be charred!

I could feel all the pressure on me. I looked to him, and I said to him: “I can tell you're very sad, to have done that - you must have had a lot of disappointment”.

I said: “You know what? God's not too worried about your tithe. Why don't you go and take yourself and your family out for a meal, and give thanks to the Lord for all His abundant blessing, until your heart comes right?”

I said: what you're doing is, you're trying to manipulate God; “oh, You didn't give me what I want, so therefore I'll do this”. You can't - that's just not how we work with God. We don't work with God that way.

God is generous, and loving; and because I believe that, I can respond out of a generous heart. Anyway, he got himself sorted out very quickly after that, but see: Grace was given to him; not the Law.

We've got to not be under the law. Jesus came to set us free from the laws of do's-and-don’ts; and to bring us into the Rest that Faith brings.

So you notice here it says: “he that's entered into Rest has ceased from his own works”.

Notice two things here. When you come into the rest of God, you: ‘enter’ into the benefit of His works; and you ‘cease’ from your own works. Getting the idea?

Cease from works, means a cease from struggling. So if you're struggling, striving, contending, in distress, pressure, guilt, fear, anxiety, all that kind of thing, you are struggling and striving.

What’s needed is to understand what God has provided for you, and come to trust in that; and rest from whatever's pressuring and driving those emotions inside you.

Second thing about this, is that Repentance from Dead Works is quite foundational. In Hebrews 6 - the foundational doctrine of establishing your life in Christ - the first things you learn is: Repent from Dead Works; and Faith towards God.

It doesn't say there: repentance from Sin; its saying: repenting from working, trying to establish yourself with God. It's repenting from: striving hard to please God.

How can you please God more? He's pleased when you have faith in His Son; and what the Son has done.

He delights in His Son, and if I'm in His Son, He delights in me; and that's irrespective of whether I'm up and down, have problems, or fall over, or fall on my face, or make a mistake, or sin or something like that. It doesn't change God's view of me.

My daughter had an open vision, in a meeting where deliverance was taking place (I was leading the meeting).

She said: I couldn't see you, I saw Jesus; you were in Him. That's what the demons were seeing - they weren't seeing you; they were just seeing Jesus represented.

So that takes away a lot of the stress then, and the striving. We realise then, that I'm called.

Anything that I'm doing, and I'm struggling to get something God has already given me - that is a dead work. If I'm struggling to get accepted, to get forgiven, struggling, struggling, struggling; if I pray harder, work harder, read the Bible more, do this…

Praying is a necessarily discipline in our life; reading the Bible is a necessary discipline in our life; but if you approach it: I have to do this, in order to get something - you're going to get nothing much.

What I need to do is: come into the place of faith and rest that this is: I need to engage with God.

So Repentance from Dead Works - it shifts us. It shifts us from: striving to rest; from self-effort to grace. It's a shift, a big shift, from reasoning to revelation - I need to be listening to God more, instead of trying to figure it all out; from anxiety to peace.

It's a shift, a major shift; and when you're in the shift, your life looks different to everyone else; because they say: how come you're at peace, when there's all this turmoil going on? They can't understand it - how come you're at peace?

Simple: you're at rest.

How can be at rest? Don't you understand how bad it is?

Yes, I do; however, my eyes are fixed on Jesus Christ, who has promised: “My peace I give to you”.

So rest comes, when you overcome the driving internal pressures, and external expectations.

To look good - that's a pressure. To try and impress people, so you look better than you really are. Why not just be authentic? This is who I really am. It'd make life a lot easier.

It's easier to be authentic, than it is to try and keep up an image. Image costs you a lot of money, a huge amount of money. Then when you least expect it, it falls over and fails; and some of you blow it, and someone got a photo, or saw you, and you really blew your stack one day, and all the image is gone.

The facade is so nice and cool, and then it's blown away in one moment of anger! It happens, doesn't it?

So when you enter your Rest, you're resting in what God says; and you're focused.

The focus shifts from: trying harder; to coming to a place of believing, and dealing with the issues that stop me believing. It's where the focus is, that's the difference.

The focus of Works is: you try harder to get to achieve.

The focus of Rest is this: your work is directed to dealing with the internal issues that stop you trusting God; so your focus is on the issues of trust, not trying to make something happen.

That's where the key battle is fought. It's in the heart, on the issue of trust.

The Holy Ghost, when He came onto Jesus, came as a Dove, and He rested on Him. Here's the interesting thing: Doves will not rest where there's no ‘man of peace’. Jesus was at peace; and the dove came and rested.

If you want the Holy Spirit flowing in your life, you have to come to peace in your heart; because anything that disturbs your peace will cause the dove to flutter.

That's the nature of the dove. That's why they use the picture there. It's quite simple: if there's agitation and disturbance, the doves fly, they don't stay.

It's a particular type of dove, and so you'll find: it rests.

The Rest of God doesn't mean you're not doing anything. I've just got to make that clear, before I show you how to enter the rest.

The rest of God doesn't mean: I just lay around on my face and worship. It doesn't mean that: I do nothing, you know, I'm not occupied. In fact the Bible teaches exactly the opposite.

This is about an internal positioning in your heart; where you are free from fears and anxieties; the turmoils of guilt and pressure; trying to please people, trying to look good, all that kind of stuff; and you come to just be at peace in yourself with God - a great thing.

Titus 2:14 it says: “Jesus has redeemed us, to be zealous for good works”.

That's what He's making for Himself, a people zealous for good works. Are you zealous for good works? Are you zealous to do things for God? Are you passionate to do things for God? That's the people Jesus is preparing.

Titus 3:8 – “Be careful to maintain good works”. Be careful that your life is productive in doing things which advance the kingdom - reaching out to people, talking to people, building connection with people, winning them to Christ, showing kindness to them.

Titus 3:14 – “Let our people also learn to maintain good works, and meet urgent

needs (or show compassion), that they don't be unfruitful”. So the Bible's very clear about good works.

Okay, but how? Hebrews 4:11 – “Let us be diligent, to get into this Rest of Faith”.

So our work is to come into a place of faith, where we're free, and it's natural to be generous, natural to overflow; and you actually become productive. You're productive, because you're no longer stressed out. This thing of being stressed-out is a huge issue for people today.

Fortunately Jesus makes an invitation. Matthew 11:28, three things Jesus said…

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Jesus is promising… Rest!

Where's the Rest? “Take My yoke on you, learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls”.

Notice He said: “I give you” the rest; and: “you'll find” the rest.

So it says: it's a gift from God. If it's a gift, you didn't work to do it. If it's something God gives, I've got to receive - and I receive everything by faith.

Not only that, He said: it's something you'll find. In other words, you've got to pursue it. You've got to pursue this - to come to a place of peace in your heart.

A lot of people are not at peace in their heart; there's every kind of thing agitates them. Now listen, there's every reason for you not to be at peace in your heart.

There's issues in marriage, issues with children, there's issues in church, there's issues in relationships, there's issues of injustice, there's issues of offences, there's issues of pressures and stresses and work. Man, the world is just full of it.

This week I encourage you, look around the people you know, and see how many are stressed out, uptight and not at rest - you will be amazed.

Jesus said: “Don't be anxious”; don't be stressed out; don't be uptight. There are some remedies for that in Me. There's a rest you can come to, in the midst of all

the strife; and so He then talks about how you receive the rest.

That's a better way. How do I receive that rest? He gives three parts to receiving Rest - and they're all to do with Relationship and Trust.

1) He extends the invitation to everyone who: labours, that's weary, troubled, turmoiled, heavy laden, loaded up, burdened out of all sorts of things to do. The invitation is one to find rest, from all the have-to's of life.

How's it going to come? He tells us: Come to Me.

I didn't want you to say that! I wanted you to say: here's the principle, here's the rule to follow.

Here is the rule to follow: come to Him. You come to a person. Yes, a relationship - connect.

He said: come to Me. He said: the connection to a person, not a principle. It's not something to do; it's a person to come to. It's a person.

He's the one that's got the peace. If you're in turmoil, rest is found in Him. Peace is a gift from Him, so it comes through the connection.

He is the Prince of Peace, so if we're going to come to rest, the rest will come out of my connection with Him.

How am I going to do that? What does it mean: “come to Me”? I thought I'd already come to Him - I come up the front and prayed the sinner's prayer; and now today I'm in turmoil.

No, it actually means to just change your focus from the problem, and put your focus back on Jesus. It means pushing out of your mind, the things that are troubling you, and re-centre around Him again.

Get your mind set on Him again, and that takes a bit of discipline. The discipline is not: to get Jesus to give you rest; the discipline's to: push the other rubbish out - that's where the work is.

The work is coming to a place where I have confidence and trust that God is

going to meet my every need. The reason that you get anxious is: you're not sure that God is going to meet your need.

So I'm anxious, I'm uptight, I've got to work hard to get this need met. But what if God were to meet it? Where would your anxiety go then?

Let’s say a bill comes up, you've not got enough money in the account; the stress of how I'm going to pay this thing.

The focus is on the problem; but what if I was to shift my focus to Him; and allow my heart to meditate on the truth: I shall not want, because He's looking after me?

That takes the pressure off me figuring the solution to the problem; puts it back with Him, and I can come to peace.

It's a relationship. It's about connecting with Jesus - and that is where the trouble lies. We'd rather have something to do.

The ‘Rest’ is the person, connecting to the person.

The reason we have trouble connecting to Jesus: something got in the way. The moment you try to connect with Him, whatever's in the way of connecting Him will come up into your mind - to be dealt with.

It's always about trust.

Notice He says: “come to me”; and that's what Peter did. While he kept his eyes on Jesus, he was walking on the water. As soon as he got his eyes on the circumstances, all grace and power left him - and he began to sink.

Two last things… He said: “Take My yoke on you”.

That's something we can do. We can choose to come to Him or not; and we can take the yoke. The yoke is the teaching and lifestyle; and it means following His lifestyle.

Jesus was surrounded by turmoil. He was surrounded by people with agendas. He was surrounded by hostility. He was surrounded by people - even betrayers

and traitors next to Him. He was surrounded by pressures and expectations - but He never lost His peace.

He always remained at peace, even when His friends pressured Him, he remained at peace. How did He remain at peace?

He says: “Take My yoke”; which means: to follow His lifestyle.

Use Him as your model – ask: what would Jesus do in this situation? How would Jesus handle this situation? To take the yoke on - how did Jesus handle it?

He just listened to what the Father had to say. So how did Jesus handle all that stress?

1) He just refused to be dominated by it; and

2) He just began to listen: “Father, what do You want Me to do”?

The Lord was speaking to me about some stuff earlier on in the year (and in this time away) - then He required me to do it; and so the first meeting was great. I had 10 meetings at night time, plus 2 training sessions in a day, every day.

These 10 meetings are power evangelism meetings. I got one message, the first night; but that was it! I thought: that's great, I got a message, praise God.

The next night came - no message. I sweated and sweated and sweated. There was no rest for me then!

I don't want to get up in front and speak - I've come all this way, and there's no message! This is horrible Jesus - HELP! So there was a little bit of stress and tension…

Then I just stopped and said: look, I need to get my eyes back on Jesus; so I got my eyes back on Him - and then an idea suddenly came to mind:

I should think of some altar calls, write some altar calls. I wrote an altar call down, then I wrote another one, then I had a whole list of them. I thought oh, perhaps Jesus just wants me to do altar calls tonight - that's a bit different.

I got up there, and the very first altar call I'd written - there was a woman had a testimony on that very issue!

I never even got to do all the other altar calls that night, because it was just the one she gave the testimony on - was the one I'd written down, was the one that everybody came up and got – and there was a massive deliverance. We were busy all night!

There was no time to preach a message. Oh, I fitted in a bit of preaching, did a 5-minute job, and all these people came up and got saved - but God moved. The same thing happened every night.

I had to learn to Rest! I didn't like it, I can tell you; but you've got to learn to rest. It's something you have to learn to do: learn to rest in Him – “take my yoke”. Loss of peace is a signal you've got your eyes off Him.

The final thing is: “Learn from Me”.

Here's a simple thing: ask Him questions. Ask the Lord questions. Learning, from a Hebrew point of view, was asking questions, listening, gaining insight, gaining revelation, gaining wisdom for life. You've got to ask the questions.

If you ask God good questions when you're in difficulty… what would that look like?

If you've got distress, something's gone wrong: “Lord, I've lost my peace. Lord, I just re-centre my life back on You. I push this thing at Your feet, because it's a care that's distracting me.”

You just begin to worship Him, until you come to a place of just ‘at rest’. Then: “Lord, I want to learn from You, how do I handle this thing. What do I do? What do I need to learn in this situation?”

Don't ask WHY! That's not going to work - He won't answer that one. He'll answer the other questions - the ones where you learn. Those ones He'll always answer - then be quiet to hear His replies.

It may come immediately to your heart and spirit. You may have a thought come to your mind, or you may just be reading the word of God, and the insight

comes.

“Come to Me, all that labor, and are heavy-laden. Take My yoke on you. Learn in Me”.

Why can you learn in Me? Because I've got two qualities that are really amazing. One is: I'm meek; and the other is: I'm humble.

Humble means: I accept who I am, according to what God says about me, and I trust God.

I'm meek - it doesn't mean I don't get angry and uptight about everything that goes on. I've got my inner life under management. Meek; humble.

The opposite of meekness is anger? Why am I so angry? What is happening in my heart? What is it I need to learn? Where do I need to let go my rights? What is the injustice I need to let go of? Those are the kinds of questions God will answer, so you can come to peace. Then in the asking the questions, you'll find peace, because He's given you insight.

Now this is a lifestyle. The lifestyle Jesus wants us to have is: to come to peace and rest.

Does that mean you've solved all the problems? No, but what it does mean is: you're not letting the problems get inside you, and wreck your life; so when people look at you, they say: “there's one thing I don't want to be in the world, is like you. You're miserable, sad, angry, depressed - and you're a Christian! I don't think I want this Jesus you're talking about”.

This is the problem. This is why Christ is misrepresented so much, because we haven't learnt to come to the place that the rest of faith brings, and learned to relax and enjoy the journey.

Closing Prayer

Father, we just thank You, You're teaching us, helping us. Lord, You're speaking to our hearts and minds today.

I wonder is anyone here, who's never made the decision to receive Jesus? Today

would be a great day to start, make that decision to connect with God, connect through Jesus Christ.

Jesus said: to all who received Him, and believed on Him, He gave power to become something, a child of God.

It wasn't power to do something; but power to become something. Power - the right and privilege to be a child of God.

How many felt challenged about this whole issue of Rest in your personal life? You've realised there's many turmoils, and you don't stay at rest very long. Perhaps you like to be at rest in a meeting like this, for an hour or two on Sunday, but the rest of the week it's not quite like that. You felt God just speak to you - to just start to develop and cultivate your intimacy, your faith, your trust in Him.

It's a word that God wants us to get a hold of in our hearts. It doesn't mean we're not busy for God; it means that in the busyness - we're at rest. We're at rest from strife, fear, anxiety, trouble.

Father, I just pray that Lord, as we've looked at these keys, that we will come to experience the reality of being at peace, and being at rest in Jesus' mighty name.

Why don't you just pray for someone next to you, that they'll experience the blessings of that. You might even have prophetic word, to encourage them and bless them in their journey. God bless you. Have a great week everyone.

Prelude: Report from Asia Trip (first 18 mins of Audio)

[Pastor Mike] We had amazing testimonies of people getting breakthroughs, of things that had gone back over years in their life: people that had been adopted, people that had been sexually abused, people that had had traumas in their life - amazing encounters with the Lord.

We had people out-to-it on the ground, just under the power of God, for long periods of time; and last night was incredibly touching.

In that particular church, we had an altar call I hadn't done before, but the girl gave a testimony, and she'd been really had a hard time at home, rejected by

family, rejected by her father, and struggled with relationships.

She got into same sex relationships during her teen years, brought a lot of shame around her life, and she stood up and courageously testified how, in the last time we were up there, she'd come to the Lord.

She'd been set free, and had come to just a clean life, now walking with the Lord, and it took a lot of courage to share a testimony like that.

I felt the Lord say He wanted to heal her, and that He wanted to touch others as well; so I got her up after we were introduced, and thanked her for her courage in sharing so personally, and just honoured her for being so courageous.

We just prayed for her, and the Holy Ghost just came on her, she had a massive release in her life - it was extraordinary, and was out to it for quite a long time.

Because she'd been so courageous, I just felt to reach out to anyone else who was involved in same-sex relationships, had these affections, had issues of brokenness, that had resulted in that kind of trouble. I think we were staggered.

You can't believe the difficulty for Asians to come out in the open about this, and yet there was such an atmosphere of love, that they just streamed to the front.

We had people from wall to wall. Then the presence of God came on them - even before we even started to pray for them; and just a spirit of love, and they began to break and weep and weep and weep.

A lot of women, some guys; and some of them had been abused, homosexual abuse or lesbian abuse; some had just entered these relationships; and God just amazingly set people free.

It was just a powerful, powerful time, and I haven't been in a meeting like that before, where it was such an intense love of God, that enabled people to be so open about what they were struggling with in their heart.

So we had just amazing numbers of people set free, and those kinds of meetings were happening every day. Every night we were there doing evangelistic meetings; so we had hundreds come to the Lord, and multiple hundreds come up in altar calls for ministry. It was just amazing.

We had others there that we'd ministered. Everyone we went to, we'd known for a long time, and the fruit is all starting to manifest in their life in quite an amazing way.

One guy there I've worked with, some of the prophetic words I've had over his life, it's just unraveling now; and he's in enormous favor, financially doors opening into China. His churches are growing and expanding, multiple churches since we've prophesied over him, and he's just taken the prophetic word and worked with it. God has particularly enlarged that, and so again we have extremely accurate prophetic words over him.

Then we went up into Singapore, to a range of other churches we've worked with. We worked with one, the very first church I went to, at the beginning, in about 1990 - my first church in Asia I went to. We've come back to revisit them this last year and a half too, because they need a whole number of things.

They need reviving in the things of the spirit, which has been happening; and they also need a total fresh leadership change in direction, which is similar to what we're experiencing here.

So we were able to help them in a whole number of ways, and work with them, and just amazing presence of God just coming. It was just - the thing that surprised me this time, was how easy everything was. There was no effort, no struggle, no difficulty in getting breakthroughs in every meeting; and on the last night, with the worship team, in that particular church - we had like an open heaven, and people came into encounters. They were just lying on the ground, out-to-it on the ground - a whole number of them had experiences with God.

We're seeing more and more and more of that, and in that particular time I had, as I was leading them - normally you can't sort of get involved yourself, when you're trying to lead the meeting.

But this time I felt the Lord say: “just step in”; and so I began to step in too; and then had the most amazing encounter - the moment I just stepped into where we were leading everyone, I just had an encounter.

We had two miscarriages, many years ago; and I met with both of the grown-up children; I just saw them straight away, and knew them; and they began to talk to

me. Then Jesus spoke with me for a little, and He began to just lay out some things He wants me to focus on and do, in the coming season in our life. So it was quite an extraordinary time, so I saw two of the children we'd miscarried at the age they would now be, identifiable...

[Joy] …in their thirties...

[Pastor Mike] ...I could see them quite clearly, all the details about them; and it was interesting just to connect - I've never had an experience like that.

Three of our children have, but I've never had it, so it was quite interesting. We also met a grandchild that we'd lost through miscarriage - and he recognized me as well.

Also I met with Jesus carrying our latest grandchild that was miscarried, and so we had quite - I had an interesting time in the spirit, just as an overflow of what everyone else was getting.

It was the very last meeting, the very last night before we quit and went home, so it was quite a touch of God at that time.

[Joy] It was interesting. Even the very first meeting, even without praying for anybody, people were lying on the floor being delivered, just coughing up spirits, furiously coughing up and nobody had even touched them.

We went to 3 churches in Singapore, had known all of them for about 20 years, but all had different needs. The second guy had come out of a Brethren background; and enjoyed very strong community penetration, awesome church, done great things. But they'd also kind of gone a little back into their Brethren ways, and forgot that they need to lean into the Holy Ghost more, and it suddenly dawned on them that actually yeah, we need to be also fortified and strengthened, into not trusting in our own efforts, but into leaning into God, so that was a great connection.

Then we went to a family camp in Malacca. Again it's church events for a major transition. It was good for us to see it. They hadn't had a camp for three years, because they had a radical change, lost a lot of people, but radically changed, and now there's new life there, new vision, new direction.

The whole place is quite different, and poised for a whole new season. I thought it was amazing. One lady just had strong prophetic word over the church, spent quite a long time just prophesying; and when the pastor stood up the next day, it was like you were in their board meeting. All their big dreams and visions, were all kind of spelled out, and your prophetic word over the church.

It was very helpful for them. They got trained and equipped in how to move in the spirit. They got delivered. They got a bit of everything actually, six sessions over two days, but it was a great re-launching of that church into their next season ahead, and it was great to be part of it.

[Pastor Mike] So thank you for all your prayers, been outstanding. We just honour the Lord for what He's done. It's fantastic, but let's give the Lord a clap, just thank the Lord, thank You Jesus for all You do, we can never out give You.

Praise the Lord, but we live here so here's the place to build. Amen. I love what God's doing in all the nations of the earth, but there's nothing like our nation here. We need to keep believing God and stretching for lives and souls to be changed and touched. Isn't that right? Amen to that.

There are some great things God is doing. I got a connection with the man who took me over to Asia, and I was interested to find out what he'd been doing…

He's in his seventies now, and he said: working up in Ethiopia. We've got a whole move of God taking place in Ethiopia, massive persecution, but there's also a massive work of God.

I said: when you say massive? He said: oh yeah, there are just miracles, like the New Testament. They walk in, and they just line up in queues for hours to come, and they just get New Testament miracles.

I said: so what's your role in there? He said: oh well, we're equipping the house groups, because the church is multiplying through houses there, all over the nation.

I said: define multiply. He said: well I've got about 240,000 groups (laughter) that we're working with.

He said: that's just in that nation. We're also working in other nations, so I

thought: oh man! Just when I thought I was going well, and a 74 year old man revs me up, so I thought it was great.

Praise the Lord - so if you're 74, you've still got something to do in God, isn't that right? If you're 84, you've still got something to do.

Actually there's no such thing as passing a baton on to someone else. All that you really do is, you just change your season; and I believe that if you're walking with God, you've got a baton - well you hang onto that thing, and you pass it over when you die. There it goes… but what you do on the way changes; and so there are seasons in life, all of us are going to have our seasons.

Summary Notes

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1. Introduction
· Psalm 23:1-2 “The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down”
· David expresses his personal relationship with God – Shepherd, personal friend.
· David outlines in Psalm 23 the friend of this relationship – the outcome of faith.
· “He makes me lie down” = picture of sheep resting with legs folded in sheepfold (Ezekiel 34:14)
· What is he resting from?
•Stress •Anxiety •Fear •Pressure •Danger •Striving •Self effort
•This is the rest of faith! – a friend and outcome of relationship.

2. Kingdom Life is about Rest not Works
Romans 14:17 The Kingdom of Heaven is not about eating and drinking (law keeping) but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.
· Peace is an evidence that the inner life is at rest from striving, struggling.
· Peace is a gift that God imparts to us when we learn to trust (John 14:27).
· Anything that disturbs our inner peace is a signal something is wrong.
· Colossians 3:15 “ Let the peace of God rule in your hearts….”
· Rule = NT1018 = to attribute, act as an umpire, rule, prevail.
· Hebrews 4:10 “He who has entered his rest has himself ceased from his works as God did from His.”
(a) Cease from Works = Cease from Struggling
· OT laws – full of works to be done to earn blessing, often forever.
· Reliance on own efforts and strength results in striving and struggling.
· This leads to cycles of defeat, frustration, trying ‘to be good enough’.
· People lean towards self effort, ‘keys to success’ instead of faith.
· Books/resources abound in keys to success – works to do!
(b) Repentance from Dead Works is Foundation in Christ
Hebrews 6:12 Repentance from dead works and faith towards God.
Dead Works Faith
-Striving -Rest
-Self Effort -Grace of God
-Reasoning -Revelation
-Anxiety/Pressure -Peace
-Self Centered -God Dependent (Faith)
· Rest comes when overcome inner pressure by faith in God and His Word.
· Enter rest when you believe in your heart what God says and act upon it.
· Enter rest = focus effort on believing not doing.
· Holy Spirit rests on men of peace who have come to rest of faith.2
(c) The Rest of Faith Produces Fruitful Works
Titus 2:14 “…..zealous for good works”.
Titus 3:8 “…..be careful to maintain good works”.
Titus 3:14 “Let our people also learn to maintain good works to meet urgent needs that they may not be unfruitful”.
Hebrews 4:11 “Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest (of faith)”.
Diligent = NT4704 = to make effort, labour, study, haste
= Key issue is where effort lies:

•From contending to get results.
•To contending to believe Gods Word

3. Jesus Invitation to Rest
Matthew 11:28-30 The Kingdom of Heaven is not about eating and drinking (law keeping) but
(a) The Invitation to All
· “All who labour and are heavy laden".
Labor = NT2872 = to feel fatigue, wearied, work heavy, troubled.
Heavy Laden = NT5412 = to load up an animal, overburden, heavy cargo.
· Invitation is to all in turmoil in their souls to find rest.
Turmoil of duties, have to’s, laws, anxiety, stress, pressure, intentions.
(b) “Come to Me”
· This is the first of three decisions you need to make – rest is the outcome.
· Connection to a person not a principle – rest is in the person of Jesus.
· Peace/rest is a gift from Him – if it is a gift then it is not a work.
· Centre your focus on Jesus not on storms or pressure of life.
Eg Matthew 14:28-31 Peter walking on water.
While he maintained focus on Jesus not the storm he walked on water.
(c) “Take My Yoke on You”
· “Yoke” = teaching and lifestyle of a Rabbi.
· “Take Yoke” = to become a disciple/follower of Jesus and His lifestyle.
· Jesus was surrounded by turmoil, agendas, hostility, malice but walked in inner peace.
· Jesus rested by listening to directions of the Holy Spirit (John 5:19) and refused the pressures, expectations others placed upon Him.
· Loss of peace = signal to evaluate what is happening and yield to obedience.
(d) “Lean on Me”
· This means to receive instruction in the same way, same attitude – meekness and humility, disciples did from Master.
· A process of interaction, questions, enquiries listen to response.
· A process of gaining insight, wisdom through direct interaction.
· Slow down – stop reading – ask Holy Spirit questions – listen and obey.
Results: “Find rest for souls”.

The Rest of Faith (2 of 4)

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Jesus said: If you're stressed out, come to Me. The answer is a person, your connection with a person, connecting with Him and learning.

Technology doesn't solve problems, because the problems we really face, the core of them, are found in the heart; and in our walk with God.

The reason He can teach you how to do life, is because He has an attitude of meekness, humility; and He gave an example of how to do life.



Matthew 11, the Rest that Faith Brings. We started off looking in Matthew 11:28…

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden”.

Doesn't that sound like a lot of people you know? Burdened, troubled, anxious, uptight, stressed out?

Isn't it amazing, that with all the gadgets we've got now - all the computers and texting and emails and Facebook, that life has become more stressful than ever?

The things that people hoped to have achieved with all of that don't seem to happen. You may have 2000 friends on Facebook, but you're still sitting there lonely, because there's no one really to talk to face to face.

Technology doesn't solve problems, because the problems we really face, the core of them, are found in the heart; and in our walk with God.

Jesus said: if you're stressed out, come to Me. He didn't say: this is the solution, step one through three, how to get out of problems. He said: the answer is a person, your connection with a person, and connecting with Him and learning.

“Come to Me” - let your heart and attention come back on Me; then: “Let Me teach you”.

Let Me teach you: how to handle life, how to do life. He explains that the reason He can teach you how to do life, is because: He has an attitude of meekness; an attitude of humility.

He gave an example of how to do life: He faced opposition; accusations, betrayal, offences, people rejecting Him, being misunderstood - and He never lost the plot one time - not once.

Even when He was rejected, and the disciples said: I've got a good idea Lord, let's call fire down on that town! You probably would have, wouldn't you, if they just rejected you? Yeah, fire! Then you'd have found a verse in the Old Testament to justify it I'm sure.

Nevertheless, Jesus said: “you don't know what spirit you're of”. He didn't treat people that way; He always showed love and kindness and graciousness.

Jesus invites us to a lifestyle of learning how to handle life, how to handle the stresses of life; teenagers, youngsters, financial pressures, pressures everywhere.

The key to this is: intimacy with the Holy Spirit.

Its something you've got to do; but notice again: the key is a person. The answer lies in a person; and how you engage with a person in the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22 says: “the fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace”.

That word 'peace' means: rest; or prosperity - to be in a place of settlement in your heart. It means to be joined or connected to God.

He tells us that's a fruit of the spirit. A fruit of the spirit is not something you work to do. It appears on the tree, when the life of the spirit is flowing - so peace in your life is an overflow of your connection with God.

There are some things can stop the Holy Ghost working in your life. In Judges 16:20, it says of Samson - he was in a deep sleep, because he was involved with Delilah in sin, and sexual sin.

It said: he'd gone to sleep on her knee, and was under the influence of a spirit. He'd gone into a place of slumber; and she cut his hair. He got the most

expensive haircut in history.

Then it says: she woke him up and said “the Philistines are here”; and he jumped up, shook himself, expecting to feel the power of God flowing in his life - and he felt nothing.

These are sad words: He didn't realise the Holy Spirit had left him. He wasn't aware the anointing had lifted off him. He wasn't aware the Holy Spirit was no longer available to empower his life anymore.

He had grieved the spirit of God, over a period of time, so much, that now there was no empowerment of the Holy Spirit acting in his life.

God tells us: He would never take His spirit from us. He said: “I'm always with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you”.

The spirit of God remains joined to our spirit; but that does not mean that the tangible power, and presence, and activity of the spirit, is available to you.

It's always available; but we can cause a grieving and withdrawing of the Holy Spirit, and then when that happens, like Samson, you end up losing vision; you end up in chains, in a daily grind.

Most people wouldn't think of ‘losing their eyes’, and they wouldn't think of ‘being in bondage’; but daily grind… that rings a bell doesn't it? The daily grind!

Our life is to be full of joy. Not all the time - there'll be some difficult times.

Jesus promises His kingdom, His righteousness, right relationship with God, then the outcome of that - peace, and then joy in the Holy Ghost! Wonderful joy in the Holy Ghost!

You wouldn't think that many Christians have got much joy in the Holy Ghost. If you've got joy in the Holy Ghost, you laugh a lot more, and you stop frowning as much.

Remember, joy in the Holy Ghost is not something you do; it's actually something that turns up. It's a person!

Joy in the Holy Ghost; through the spirit of: love, joy, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. It's a joy He brings, as He is allowed to work in your life.

The peace is a peace He brings, as He is allowed to work in your life; so these things are fruits on the tree. So what fruits are showing up in your life?

Are you stressed out, pressured, uptight, anxious; wondering how you're going to make the next deadline?

Are you serious; or have you allowed the Holy Spirit to work in you? We need the Holy Ghost! You can't do life without the Holy Ghost.

Jesus didn't say: God so loved the world, He gave a book… He gave a person! Who wrote the book.

So you need the book; but you need the person - the spirit of God working in your life; and so it's possible for us to lose that flow of the Holy Spirit.

John 1:33 – "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, that's the one who baptises in the Holy Spirit".

The Holy Ghost descended on Jesus like a dove- a turtle dove.

A dove is symbolic of Peace. Where did they get that from? It's from the Bible, that the dove is a symbol of peace.

The interesting thing about turtle doves is: they're a bit wary of humans. Now a pigeon - they're not wary, they'll just come - they just want food!

A turtle dove is not territorial. In other words, it's got no ownership, or anything like that; whereas pigeons are very territorial. Turtle doves won't fight and contend; whereas pigeons will fight one another and contend.

Pigeons will mate with anyone; but turtle doves mate one person, for all their life. It's no wonder they said the turtle dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

He came on Jesus, and remained on Jesus. There was no: one day the Holy Ghost's there; another day He's not. There was no lifting of anointing off Jesus.

The Holy Spirit remained on Him, because His life was perfectly aligned with the Holy Spirit. The ‘resting of the spirit’ was because Jesus' life was aligned.

Ephesians 4:28, and He's talking about how to live out the Christian life. It gets really practical…

“Let Him that stole, steal no more. Let him labour, working with his hands, doing that which is good, that he may have something to give to him who has need”.

When does a thief stop being a thief? When he stops stealing? No, when he starts working and giving.

It says: “Don't let any corrupt words proceed out of your mouth; but what is good for edification, that it impart grace to the hearers” - this is all once sentence.

He's talking about your language. That's the way we talk about one another; and to one another.

It says: don't let any corrupt talk come out of your mouth; but rather talk that will build up, and release grace.

Now grace will flow to you. Grace is God's power flowing. It's an enablement; so here's a question for you:

How much, after you're interacted with people, have they become empowered and graced and lifted up?

Then it says: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption”.

So it's very clear that we can grieve; that word grieve means: to cause distress; to cause sorrow; to hurt the Holy Spirit's feelings. Some of you may not have thought of the Holy Spirit as a person, but the Holy Spirit is incredibly sensitive.

One of the things about being sensitive is: it works two ways; so the Holy Spirit is very sensitive to you. He's sensitive to your needs; to everything that's happening in your life. He is sensitive to your feelings - but the other side of the

coin is: He's also sensitive to how you treat Him.

Now a lot of people don't even consider the Holy Spirit, and His work in their life, very much. It's Father, Son, and Spirit of God - the Holy Spirit. He has been given to you, to be a friend and a comforter to you. When you're in distress, He is willing to comfort you, but you've got to turn to Him.

It says: “don't grieve the Holy Spirit”; and the first evidence that grieving of the Holy Spirit has taken place, is: how we talk to, and about, one another.

That's the first evidence. You only have to listen to your mouth - you can tell when you're grieving the Holy Spirit - it doesn't take long.

Some of you may have been in a conversation with someone, and while they were talking, you actually felt quite grieved in your heart, as they spoke. That's the Holy Spirit, bearing witness to your spirit: this is not right. You shouldn’t be here listening to this stuff - we should stop this stuff being spoken about.

Don't grieve the Holy Spirit. He says: let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

He said: there's some things you've got to make sure you deal with, because if you don't deal with them, you'll consistently grieve the Holy Spirit; and then find you lose vision, you can't see where you should be going, and you become into bondage to certain things. The life that you're living is a grind rather than a joy.

For many people, the first evidence that something's not right is: your life has become a grind. If your life is a grind, then there's something missing in your connection with the Holy Spirit. There's something going on in your heart needs to be addressed.

The second way that you would recognise something's not right is: the loss of peace. You may not be aware that the Holy Spirit's drawing back, and being grieved; but the loss of peace (meaning: you're agitated, internally distressed, or not at rest), is the indicator - the Holy Spirit is drawing back, and warning you something's not right.

The most common indication anyone has, that the Holy Spirit is struggling with

your life and your behaviours, and that He is wanting to get your attention is: you feel the loss of peace. Loss of peace is #1.

Colossians 3:15 – “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts”. When we lack peace in our heart (some may never have had peace of course), but peace is God's gift: to be at rest in the midst of life, to be in a place of calmness. When all else is falling away and panicking, you're centred on the Lord, and know that even if you don't have the answers, He does.

Notice here the list of things it says, one after the other: bitterness; wrath (that's rage; raging anger); anger; clamor (loud speaking or yelling), loud quarrelling; evil speaking be put away with malice.

Malice means you hope someone really gets theirs. You're looking for a chance to pay them back. These are all heart issues.

Now here's the pattern - it's normally: a person gets hurt, they get angry. They don't deal with the anger.

The hurt, you can't do much about; life deals stuff up that hurts us. That's life - get used to it.

But when you get hurt, then the normal thing is to feel angry - and I've got to do something with the anger, because if I don't, I'll soon feel a growing, smouldering resentment towards people; and that can go deeper down in the heart, until it forms bitterness.

Once bitterness is rooted in your heart, then there's malice and ill-will; and before you know it, you erupt at the least things. This is what people do!

I had someone do that the other day - they just stood in front of me: face red, going for it. I tried to appeal to them, and talk to them.

What they were talking about, I had nothing to do with, but it didn't make any difference. They had built up this reservoir of anger, and I was the one it was directed to, and I was going to get it.

The person responsible came up, and said: excuse me, it was actually - it's what I did; and they just... It was me they were out to kill!

And I say ‘kill’, because whenever you've got wrath, you'll have the spirit of murder with it; and it ministers to you something that'll steal your life away - it's a horrendous spirit. If you get this spirit of anger, it brings with it a spirit of murder. It takes away life.

Cain was angry at his brother, and he ended up killing him. So you may not physically murder people, but there's lots of ways we can murder people, lots of ways.

Notice there, it starts off with people getting hurt; so here's the question I ask you: why are you so angry?

Ephesians 4:26 says: it’s okay to get angry. It's okay to get angry, because God gets angry. ‘Angry’ is just an emotion. Anger's a signal that something's not right going on inside. We want to know what the message is, so anger is just a signal.

It says: it's okay to be angry, but don't sin, and don't let the sun go down on your anger.

So here's the deal; you can get angry. Now that's quite a release, because actually all of us get angry - you see a person that’s so sweet and nice - they'd never get angry. Don't you worry, they get angry! They've just learned habits of burying the anger – a smoldering, seething, rage inside.

It's just part of what happens, when something happens in our life, and we lose something. So it says: be angry, but don't sin with your anger.

Deal with your anger properly; and thirdly, here's the timeframe to deal with it: one day. Before the sun's gone down, deal with it. Sort it out, and get rid of it.

If you've had something that upset you yesterday, and you're still sitting on it today - you are now sinning.

It doesn't matter whether they were right or wrong; if you've held your anger overnight, you've kept your anger. You've laid there, just lying awake stewing about it, wake up stewing about this thing; and you know what you should have done was, before you went to bed, sorted it out.

“Let not the sun go down on your anger” – so about sundown, you should have

addressed your anger. You should have addressed the issue that caused you to get so angry and upset.

Now I want to just talk briefly on that, and just give you some ways to approach it that will be helpful, because remember: this is what grieves the Holy Spirit.

If you don't deal with anger, it leads to all the other things: quarrelling, bitterness, resentments, judgements, all kinds of stuff comes out of just not dealing with anger properly.

We tend to get angry, when we don't get what we want.

I always want to get to church time. Today I didn't get to church on time; but I laughed, because I saw exactly what God was up to. It was a choice how to handle anger; very simply, just deal with it; before you get to church. Especially if you want to keep the Holy Ghost on you, keep the joy.

I could have gone all the way to church: mutter-mutter, you know - I could have done that; then you arrive and its all (smiles): hello, praise the Lord you know?

It's what a lot of people do. They're furious all the way to church, then: “hello brother”. “Bless you brother”, and “praise the Lord”. That's very religious. It looks good, but no Holy Ghost there, because the moment they get out down the driveway - they're going again!

Anger comes when you: don't get what you want; or what you feel you're entitled to.

When we feel: our rights have been overlooked; or what should come to us, don't come - that's when anger arises. So it's an issue of rights and entitlements.

It's an issue of: something we expected to happen, didn't happen; or something we didn't expect to happen, happened.

So generally, anger means that something, one of your rights, or something of your expectations, was not met; and so the consequence is, you feel someone's robbed you. Someone has robbed you of something that you wanted, and that's why we get angry.

We get angry because we believe something was taken from us. It may well be something was - so you can understand a child, when parents break up - of course they feel angry. They have every right to feel angry. Something's taken away from them, so they feel angry.

You can go through the list of life, all the things that were taken away from you, or you thought were taken away from you, or you felt entitled to and it didn't come, so you get angry.

You think: “you owe me”! That's what happens, when people are angry: you owe me! Well, what do you owe me? You owe me an apology; or you owe me some money - I'm owed.

So you've got to understand that when people feel something that they wanted - a right, a demand, or an entitlement - when that seems to have been taken away, the person gets angry; and inside, they put the person that they're angry at, under a debt: you owe me; I'm owed.

If people don't deal with it, it becomes bitter, and then after a while: everyone owes me! You get with someone who's angry - man oh man, everybody owes them. They're angry, no matter where they go. You cannot reason with them, they're just angry.

In Proverbs, it says: if you hang around with an angry person, it'll do you no good. It says: “don't make friends with an angry person, because you'll learn their ways, and it will snare your soul”.

So anger is a contagious disease of the heart, every bit like bitterness is. Anger is a contagious disease. Why? Because you will hold over people that: you owe me. You'll have demands everywhere, so it starts small and grows, and in the end it becomes a real issue.

When someone's angry, there'll always be an overflow out of their life. They either: internalise it - and then they get depressed and stressed, and maybe get sick, or withdraw or shut down, or have all kinds of issues; or they blow out and let it all go out.

They find some way to vent it, because when a person's angry: I'm owed

something, somebody should pay me back; and that turns into ill will, and bitterness, revenge, and all kinds of stuff. That's why people get stuck on revenge.

Utu (revenge) - I want payback, and if you can't give it to me, well I'm going to punish you in a way, that you will be sorry you ever did this to me. That's what movies are full of, that's what life is full of; so we've got to have a simple way of dealing with it.

How do we deal with it? Jesus said: it's okay to feel angry when things go wrong - just handle it. Handle it, so you don't end up grieving the Holy Spirit.

Is the Holy Spirit upset by you being angry? Not at all! He's not upset by you being angry at all.

What He's upset at is: you're failing to deal with it; and then having a demand: that I'm owed. That demand, literally leads to a pressure put on everyone around you, because of your anger.

So here are some simple things you can do. It's a process, and it involves the Holy Spirit, because without Him, you don't get free of your anger; because many times, the thing that triggered your anger to explode, was not necessarily the thing you were so angry at.

You've heard of people, and they're nice all day at work, and they come home, and then the cat just gets in the way, next thing you know - the cat is getting it. There's a download of anger, and kicking the cat and whatever; and you think: whoa! Poor cat just walked in front of your path, and actually just got in the way as you were coming through the door - and yet the cat gets it all.

What the cat has got is: the overflow, of all the anger the person's built up all through the day - having to cope with stuff, but not really dealing with their anger - so it just flies out, and the cat gets it, or the kids get it, or the wife gets it, or someone gets it.

Why? Because I'm owed; and if I don't address it directly, where it needs to be addressed, it'll find a way out.

It'll be you, because: you remind me of someone who did. That's why people

tend to marry someone who's very like the unresolved issues they've come from in their family… and they love them; and then they get angry at them.

1) You need to identify: who am I angry at. Now that may not be easy - you may need the Holy Spirit to help you; because you think: I'm angry at this person; but actually it's much deeper than that.

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you: who am I angry with? If I don't address where the anger came from, I can't solve it, so I need to address that.

Who's the source? You could ask these kinds of questions: who do I hope I never see again? Tick that name - you're angry there, okay!

Another one you could ask: who do I want to pay back?

Who, when they fail and fall over - I'm glad? That shows you've got buried anger underneath there, need to deal with it. Who is it you secretly hope will fail, and when they do, you're very happy?

You'd be surprised in the Kiwi culture, there's so much rejection that breeds anger - they just love to see someone 'tall poppy' fail and fall.

It's just unresolved stuff. We've to go face it: who are you angry at.

2) What do they owe you? What is it you're angry about? What do they owe you?

You can't be general, it must be specific. There's something you've lost; something you want; something you're entitled to.

What was taken from you, that you really are upset about? What right was violated?

What does this person owe you, or what did they take? They took away my happiness. I was entitled to have a happy family, and they took it all away.

Just think about it: what do they need to do, to put it right?

Here's the problem you'll find: a lot of situations in life, there's nothing the

person could do, that's enough to put it right.

You think: if father commits adultery, betrays his family, breaks up the marriage, and the whole family goes into disaster zone - how could he put that right?

There's almost nothing he can do that could fix it; but there's something you can do, to walk free of it.

What he could do, would be to: acknowledge the pain; acknowledge the hurt; take responsibility; express apology - but that often never happens.

So people are left in the thing: you owe me. Now, they may never ever come to the place of ever wanting to put it right, so what do you do if someone doesn't want to put it right?

You've still got to face dealing with the anger you have in your own heart, otherwise it grieves the Holy Spirit, and wrecks you.

Why would you let your life be controlled by someone else, and what they did or didn't do? That's the question, so we can simply solve that.

We ask the question: who am I angry at; what am I angry about; what is it they've taken from me?

3) Just grieve the loss. Just grieve that there is a real loss. I think emotions are fine. You just need to cry them out, express them out. If people try to forgive before they've grieved, they never forgive from the heart.

Ephesians 4: “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you”.

So that makes it real clear: the path through, is to let the debt go.

So who are you mad at? Why are you mad? What did they take? What's the right that was violated, or entitlement you didn't get? Now grieve over the loss, if you need to grieve over the loss, and get rid of the emotions. T

hen it's important to actually then let it go. Let it go! I forgive, I release! You've got to make a decision: to let it go.

Let it go! It's killing you. You'll grow old and ugly early. Think of all the old people you've met, that look ugly, because the bitterness on their face, because of stuff they've sat on for years. You don't have to talk with them long and… out they go.

You think: what did I just do - I pushed a button, something went off. That's not the beauty of Jesus! You just think: what a bitter old biddy!

It's not right! We need to deal with this sort of stuff, so we need to make a decision: I will release it, and let it go. I've made judgements about all kinds of people; I will renounce them and let them go. I will forgive; and here's why I forgive: because God in Christ forgave me.

I'm a forgiven person, and forgiveness is what I live out. I live in grace. I choose to live in grace. He's called: the spirit of grace; so if your rights have been violated, and you're very, very angry, there is a spirit of grace to empower you - to handle the loss, and to release the people; even as God did for you.

It's not so hard is it - except when you have to do it!

Some people just don't want to let go. I DON'T WANT TO LET GO! I won't let go. You see, something was taken, and you owe me. Well, they may never give it back; so what you've got to do is make the decision: I'm going to let it go.

Here's the last thing, because I've found just letting it go, you find the next day you pick it up again. How many have found the next day you're angry again, because there you are - they did that same thing that so annoys you? Your frown-face puckers up again, and before you know it, the fire's all burning again.

How can we live out a powerful life, if we don't handle this disease of the heart - anger?

So I found one of the last things, a great help is: to hold the person in your heart and prayer, and pray blessing on them. Pray blessing on them.

Jesus told us to: “bless those who curse us, pray for those who despitefully use us”. So maybe this person has despitefully used you, and continues to do so.

If they continue to do so, then you do need to have a confrontational experience;

but not if you've got anger in you.

Don't even think of trying to work anything out, until you've dealt with your own anger; because you'll hide your anger and try: we need to come and have a talk. You come to have a talk, next minute [grrr] and it's all out there, and now it's even worse; so don't even think to try and put anything right with anyone, until you've resolved what's in your own heart first.

Jesus wants us, no matter what anyone else does in life, to be able to walk in joy and peace and rest.

Now maybe others don't get to put things right, they keep still doing goofy sort of stuff - it's appropriate to set boundaries at times, and it's appropriate to confront it at times; but the biggest thing to do, is to learn to let things go to the Lord's hands, and to let your own heart be changed with the experience.

Come into the revelation of what's called grace, and come there by peace.

Closing Prayer

Father, we just thank You for this day. We thank You Lord for the spirit of grace that's on our life.

We thank You Lord, we in no way want to grieve You, and quench the operation of Your presence in our life.

We ask Lord for great grace; that you'd bring a revelation to the hearts of people.

If you don't know Jesus; this would be a great day to give your life to Jesus, a great day to open your heart to God, and to come to know Him as your friend.

Jesus died on the cross to make this possible, but it requires a decision and a choice, to recognise this offer He's made, and receive Him.

Others, as I've shared, you think: boy, He must be listening to my conversations. No, I wasn't, but I was listening to the Holy Ghost last night as I went to sleep, and He started to talk to me about this.

We want to enjoy Him in our lives, and manifest His fruit in our lives. That

means we need to see the things that disturb Him.

Holding on to my rights, entitlements, putting demands on people, it grieves Him, and it leaves me angry.

If I can just let go and say: God my life is in Your hands.

Jesus said: learn in Me, let Me teach you, for I am meek.

That word meek - it's the opposite of being angry. It means: my strength is managed, and I don't rise up when my rights are violated. I've learned how to manage my inner life. It's a great strength, great strength.

If I'm angry, how is it showing up in my life? Where does it come from? Who am I angry at? What was taken? What do I think I was owed, that's taken from me; and am I willing to just find God's grace in this, and release grace to that person?

Grace or judgement, which will I walk?

I pray that God will empower you and help you, minister to you deeply in this area; and bring you to a place where quickly you're able to sort through feelings of anger, bitterness, things that come that disturb us about the behaviours of others, and how we're treated; and that you would walk in great grace and rest in your heart. Amen.

Summary Notes

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1. Introduction
· Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus invitation and promises “I will give you rest” “You shall find rest for your souls”
· So many people today are in turmoil – anxiety, stress, anger, fear, striving
· Jesus invites us into a lifestyle of learning how to handle life – have rest in our soul.

2. Intimacy with the Holy Spirit is the Key to Rest
Galatians 5:22 “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace…..”
· The activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to produce the fruit of peace.
Peace = NT1515 = to join, rest, prosperity, quietness, set at one again.

(a) Example of Samson
Judges 16:20 “He did not know that the Lord had departed from him.”
· Over a period of time Samson continued to grieve the Holy Spirit.
· He felt nothing when the anointing lifted from him but the impact was devastating.
· The consequence of the Holy Spirit being grieved was that he lost his strength to prevail in life.
· The result: loss of vision – bondage to his enemies – daily grinding in slavery.

(b) Example of Jesus
John 1:33 “….. upon Him whom you see the spirit descending and remaining on
Him, the same is He that baptizes in the Spirit.”
· The Holy Spirit remained on Jesus empowering Him each day to live in victory.
· The Holy Spirit is gentle and sensitive:
(1) Sensitive to the needs and emotions of others
(2) Capacity to be hurt and grieved.
· The Holy Spirit came in the form of a dove – symbol of peace.
· Turtle doves are very sensitive animals – symbol of the Holy Spirit: Dove not Pigeon. E.g. Never fight, don’t like noise, can’t be trained, mate for life, not territorial, afraid of people.
· The Holy Spirit felt at home on Jesus – values and lives in agreement.

3. Don’t Grieve the Holy Spirit
Ephesians 4:29-32 “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit by whom you were sealed…..”
· The Holy Spirit is sensitive, has feelings and can be hurt and quenched.
· Grieve = NT3706 = To distress, to make sorry, cause grief and pain.
· Grieving the Spirit occurs when our attitudes and actions hinder Him flowing.
· When He’s not grieved we experience the fruit of His presence within us.

(a) What grieves the Spirit?
Ephesians 4:31 “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice”
· Holy Spirit is grieved and withdraws presence when we are filled with bitterness, hold grudges, refuse to forgive and allow sin and uncleanness in our lives.
· The lack of peace (rest) is an indication that something is wrong (Colossians 3:15).
· Each of the sins mentioned is a response to failing to address the pain and hurts that arise in relationships.
· Hurt = anger = resentment = bitterness = malice = evil speaking.

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(b) Why Are You Angry?
Ephesians 4:26 “ Be angry but sin not, neither let the sun go sown upon your anger.
· It is ok to have feelings of anger but must manage them or it becomes a disease of the heart and grieves the Holy Spirit.
· Angry – we get angry when we don’t get what we want or think we deserve.
- when we feel our rights or entitlements have been taken away.
· Anger – Somebody takes something, somebody owes me!, Payback!!
· When there is anger in the heart it will always find a way of expressing .
Internalise Anger – person suffers depression, sadness, apathy, withdrawn.
Extending Anger – tend to want payback, revenge, explode, tend to talk to others to justify feelings and causes.
· Anger is a contagious heart disease that is destructive – become angry with all.
Proverbs 22:24 “Make no friendship with an angry man and with a furious man you shall not go lest you learn his ways and set a snare to your soul.”

4. Dealing With Your Anger
Ephesians 4:32 “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you.”
· There is the remedy! But how to apply it?
(1) Identify who you are angry with
· Need to address the source of anger.
· Who do we hope we never see again?
· Who do we hope to payback?
· Who do we hope will severely fail?

(2) Determine what they owe you!
· Cannot be general, must be specific.
· What do you want, feel entitled to?
· What did they take?
· Until you know what’s lost you’re unable to relax
- What does this person owe you?
- What did they take?
- What do they need to do to put the matter right?

(3) Grieve the loss.
· You cannot just override feelings.
· How do you feel about the loss?
· Express grief constructively.
· Acknowledge the feelings that you have harbored in your heart.

(4) Cancel the debt, forgive.
Ephesians 4:32 “……., forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you.”
· Jesus endured the pain and forgave, He released us from all debt.
· Make a decision – speak it out, release them from the debt.
· Have you made any bitter judgments?
· Renounce and cancel the judgments.
· Ask the Holy Spirit to forgive you fro holding wrong attitudes and for grieving Him.

(5) Pray for the person to be blessed.
John 2:14 “We know we have passed from death to life when we love.”
Matthew 5:44 “Love your enemies……pray.”
· You are not free until your heart is free.
· Picture the person as you pray and release blessing over them.
· Jesus said “Come to Me and I will give you rest”.

The Rest of Faith (3 of 4)

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Stress and pressure are part of our life, and Jesus has given some clear things about how we can deal with it.

When you're stressed out, anxious and uptight you don't live your best; you struggle in your relationships; there's overflow in your health.

God doesn't intend us to live that way. Let's have a look what Jesus said…



Matthew 11. How many people get stressed out easily?

Bill's the honest one. He's stressed out all the time you know! People come with all these things they want, and stress and pressure are part of our life. Jesus has given some clear things about how we can deal with it.

When you're stressed out, anxious and uptight, you don't live your best; you struggle in your relationships; and there's overflow in your health.

Things are not good when you're living like that. God doesn't intend us to live that way. Let's have a look what Jesus said…

Matthew 11: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest”.

It doesn't mean lie down and do nothing. The kingdom of God's always about work; but He's talking about an internal rest, an internal peace.

Although there are challenges and difficulties, there's peace inside. Many people don't have any peace, they're struggling, tormented, troubled; no peace. The challenge that people have is: how to find that peace.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He said: come to Me, I'll bring a peace into your heart; but there's a way that that happens, and we're exploring the way that that

happens.

That rest is a gift to you, something God gives to you; and when it's operating in your life, you remain at peace. You're actually in the middle of the storm, but calm inside.

He says: it's something that you will find. Therefore, there's a path of discovery to ‘find’, and then ‘receive’, the rest that God gives. It's a lifelong journey, learning how to come to rest - when you and I face pressures and struggles and difficulties daily and regularly.

In Exodus 33:14, God is speaking to Moses, and He said: “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest”. It’s the same words: I'll give you rest; but the rest is connected with the tangible presence of God.

When He said “My presence will go with you”, He was referring to a visible cloud of glory - on the tabernacle at day, and like a flame of fire at night.

You and I have something better than that! We have the Holy Spirit come to live within us - the same spirit that manifested in a cloud of glory, comes to live inside you.

Once He lived in a tangible way, over the congregation; now He comes to live inside us.

My presence will give you rest. My presence will be with you, I will give you rest; and Moses said: if we don't have that, we're not going anywhere. Don't take us anywhere! Don't take us into conflicts and battles, any challenges unless we have your tangible presence.

You should never take for granted God's presence. It's something to be pursued, treasured, and valued. He is to be honoured.

It's easy for us to grieve the spirit that gives us rest. Have you ever thought that you might grieve the Holy Spirit, and limit His work in your life?

One of the tragic things is that, when we grieve the Holy Spirit, and His presence begins to withdraw - He never leaves us, but the expression of His presence can diminish, until you feel: God, where are you?

Here's the tragic thing in the Bible: almost every time the spirit of God draws back, or is grieved - most people don't know it. That's a bit of a scary thought, isn't it? Have you ever though that you could be grieving the spirit of God, who has come to give you rest and empower you - and you didn't even know it?

If you go on like that (didn't even know it), you end up religious; just doing lots of activities, and there's no life flow, no joy, no peace.

The presence of the Holy Spirit brings peace and rest in our heart, and brings joy in our life; so anything that disturbs your peace, anything disturbs your joy, is a cause for alarm bells going off: hello, hello, hello, something's happening! I need to look at what is going on.

The Bible says: “the flesh ‘wars’ against the spirit”. When you are flowing with the Holy Spirit, the fruit is peace, joy within; but when there's something has grieved the Holy Spirit, you're in turmoil, you'll lose the peace, lose the joy - and it's always your flesh fighting against that, in various ways, which you may not recognise.

Let me just give you four examples in the Bible of people who grieved the Holy Spirit, or who lost the presence of God - and didn't know it.

1) Judges 16:20 - “Samson did not know the spirit of God had left him”.

He got very familiar with God's presence around his life; God would come on him, and help him at major times; and he didn't realise the spirit of God had left him. Why, what had happened?

There had been a dulling of his spiritual sensitivity through sexual sin - lust that he allowed to rage in his mind and thoughts. Because of the sexual sin that he was involved in, he gradually became desensitised to the Holy Spirit.

There came a point where the Holy Spirit drew back - grieved; and at that point, if you follow what happened, he goes into terrible bondage, loses vision, loses his whole perspective in life. We see this again repeated in the New Testament.

2) Psalm 95:10. “Israel grieved the Holy Spirit”.

Israel is an example for us. This is a whole congregation of people that grieved

the spirit of God: “For 40 years, I was grieved with that generation”.

Look at that: God is grieved with a whole generation; and He said: “It's a people who go astray in their hearts, and don't know My ways”.

God says what caused Him to be aggrieved: they did not learn about Faith.

They'd had years in slavery, and were embittered by the bondage and problems they had. God drew them through a path - to change them and prepare them.

He wanted them to learn Faith, to learn to trust Him to meet their needs. Instead, they complained, constantly!

Complaining grieves the Holy Spirit; yet people do it like it's nothing - complaining about all sorts of things; not realising that when we complain, we are manifesting: we do not trust God.

We are manifesting our unbelief; and without faith, you can't please God. What it cost them was: they lost inheritance. The things that God wanted to give to them, they couldn't enter, because they grieved Him through their unbelief.

3) Luke 2:41, Mary and Joseph. His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of Passover, and when He was 12 years old, they went up to Jerusalem, according to the custom of the feast. When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem.

Joseph and His mother did not know it; and supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and then when they sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances, they could not find Him. They returned to Jerusalem - seeking Him.

It says: after three days, they found Him.

They walked away for a whole day. This is their child, you know - the saviour of the world! They got so used to Him being there, for 12 years. Every year they've gone up to the feast at the temple, at the same time. Every year they come back, they're in a pattern of familiarity. It's okay, He's in the crowd - He's there somewhere.

Imagine the horror, after one day: their Son, which they've been entrusted with, is gone! Any parent that has lost a child knows the freak-out feelings you get around that.

It's easy to leave kids behind. I know that - we've had enough of that in our own life. Then when the moment of realisation comes to you, you've got this panic!

It took them three days to find Him again! There's the lesson: it's easy to become so familiar with God (and the things of God), that He draws back from you - and you didn't know it.

It can take some time to re-establish yourself in that place of connection again. It took them three days; but the worst part is: they didn't know it.

Imagine: you're selected, above everyone, to bring in the saviour of the world in - then you lost Him! Imagine the prayers on that day...

Father: we lost Him! We don't know where He's gone! That's horrendous isn't it? That's a real lesson to us; and of course: Jesus and the Holy Spirit are one; so it's easy to lose the presence of God. So they lost Him because of familiarity. They just supposed He was there.

4) Luke 19:41. "Jesus drew near to Jerusalem, and as He came near the city, He wept over it, saying: if you had known even this day the things that make for your peace! But now they're hidden from your eyes".

Then it says: "these days will come, when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, level you to the ground, your children within you on the ground; and they'll not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation".

Israel grieved the Holy Spirit, because when God was moving, they were so stuck in tradition, that they held on to the old, and did not welcome the new.

That's historical, that happened - and if you have a look at movements of churches, when God's started to do something different - tradition, and holding on to what they valued from their past - they didn't move with God into the new things.

That can happen to any church, any group of churches. History is full of movements, that started with a move of God; and ended up where God isn't there - but no one really knows it. No one's even speaking about it. There's just routines and tradition left.

These are all warnings for us: that we can, for a variety of reasons, lose the active moving flowing of the Holy Spirit - if we don't guard our relationship with Him.

So the key thing then, is: our relationship with Him.

Rest comes from the presence of God. The Holy Spirit is given to us, to bring that presence. He is the one who's present with us. I need to learn how to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and how to welcome His presence, how to draw in, engage with Him.

Ephesians 5:10 (from Amplified): “Try to learn, in your experience, what is pleasing to the Lord.”

Make an effort to discover what pleases God. If you are in love with someone, you normally want to find out what they like, and what they don't like. When you first start going out with someone, it seems like everything's going okay; but then after a little while: they like some things; they don't like other things.

They go quiet, when they don't like other things.

Have you ever thought that God might go quiet on you, because He doesn't like some things?

Have you ever thought: if God has given you His spirit, to help you in life - to be an over-comer; how important it must be to find out what He likes, and what He doesn't like - and to do the things He likes, and don't do the things He doesn't like (or put it right quickly if you do).

Have you ever thought: being a spiritual person is about discovering this exciting journey with the Holy Spirit - what He likes, what He doesn't like; and learning to relate to Him, and work with Him, and walk with Him?

How are we going to find out what the Holy Spirit likes, and doesn't like?

Trial and error; but a lot of it's through experience, and so you have to begin to work with Him. The Bible helps, it tells us things He likes, and things He doesn't like.

You could decide to do a search: I'm going to find what God likes, and what He doesn't like. The things He likes, I'm going to start to put them into practice in my life, more and more and more.

Things He doesn't like: I'm going to try and be aware of it. I'll ask the Holy Spirit: help me be aware every time I grieve you or hurt you, by my thoughts or attitudes or actions or words. I'll put it right real quick.

What a great thing, if we were to start doing that, and become sensitive to the Holy Spirit; because if we're not led and filled by the Holy Spirit, then you're just struggling in your own effort, and that's where the struggles of life come. That's where we lose the rest.

It doesn't matter what church you're in; personally, we've got to learn: what pleases God, what He likes and what He doesn't like.

Without faith, you cannot please Him. We have to consciously continue to exercise faith.

Ephesians 5:17 – “Don't be vague, thoughtless, or foolish; but understand and grasp what the will of the Lord is”.

Don't be a vague Christian; I don't know what God's up to. I don't know. It says: don't be vague, and don't be thoughtless; don't be foolish. What does it matter, He said, but rather understand what the will of the Lord is.

So it's a process, and we've got to walk through that process, so here's a few things that you could start.

1) Make Him Welcome. He loves to be welcomed.

Talk to the Holy Spirit: I welcome you; Thank You for Your presence; I just love You. Please come into my life today, afresh. Empower me today, afresh.

Make Him welcome, talk to Him. He's within you, and as you talk to Him, make

Him welcome: I just invite You to help me. It's a simple thing to do: make Him welcome.

You know when you're made welcome, and when you're not. When you're welcome, you're very pleased; and when you're not welcome (or ignored), it's quite painful.

There's a book that Benny Hinn wrote: “Good Morning Holy Spirit”. Rise up: good morning Holy Spirit! Another great day of victory!

Rather than: oh no, it's time to get up again. That's what a lot of people do.

Holy Ghost, You're here! It's a great day! It's a great day. We're going to have a great day together, as you talk with me, and we fellowship together. Today is another great day in God! Talk to Him every day. Go: “oh Holy Ghost, come, come around my life”.

I walk down the road, and I go down the path, praying for about hour every morning, just walking there - and I met someone coming back. They said: “Whoa! Presence of God's all over you!” I said: “yeah, I'm praying, I'm carrying on...” I did carry on. I knew this person, they got quite touched.

2) Childlike trust.

You don't have to be smart to be a Christian. You can be wise; but God wants us to trust Him.

Matthew 18:3 - “If you want to enter the things of the kingdom, you have to be converted, and become as a child” (or develop child-like trust).

Hebrew’s 11:6 – “Without trust, without faith, how do you please God?”

So I've got to come to Him: Holy Ghost, I need Your help on this - I don't know what to do. Just come like a little child would come: Dad, help me, I don't know what to do. Show me what to do.

Come to Him in a very simple, childlike trust; confident He's there, confident He'll help - and asking Him for His help. Learn to talk to Him, invite Him in to those parts of your life.

Express gratitude. You know how hard it is to keep being kind to people, when they're just ungrateful?

Ingratitude offends. A lot of people just take everything for granted. It speaks of a heart attitude of demand, or entitlement, or: it's my right, why should I say ‘thank you’?

Mothers that are doing all these meals for teenagers every day, I wonder if the teenagers say: “thank you mum - that was a great meal”; instead of: “eww, what's this?”

Okay, well you'll wear it. There you go. That's what it is - it's a hat! Make your own from today!

Gratitude is a big thing. We enter His presence with gratitude.

Psalm 100:4 “Come into His presence with thanksgiving”

It tells very clearly: God loves it when we're grateful, and we begin to praise Him and thank Him. That's the way to talk to Him: Thank you Holy Ghost for helping me. Thank You Your presence with me.

Talk to Him and show gratitude. Place value on Him. Acknowledge His work in your life. These are really simple things.

3) Practice listening to Him.

Listening is an art to be learned. It doesn't come naturally, because we'd rather talk. We talk and don't listen.

It takes effort to listen. You have to train your heart to listen to the Holy Ghost.

When the Holy Spirit speaks, it's usually a very gentle, still, small voice; flowing pictures, thoughts, impressions. It's very gentle; so you don't hear much from Him when you're in great turmoil.

You've got to quieten down, focus your attention, listening for His voice.

What was the last thing He told you? Did you do it?

He spoke to you, so practice listening to Him. You have to focus, and give focussed attention.

Have a time of worship, and then just be: Holy Ghost, Lord just speak to me, talk with me. What do I do about that?

Begin to listen: Holy Ghost, You've got something to tell me; or read the word of God.

Holy Spirit, You wrote this - I don't understand it. Speak to me, help me, draw my attention to something that can help me today.

It's nothing sophisticated. It's being childlike (in this faith with Him) that seems to be able to draw His presence around. Ask Him questions.

Luke 2:46 - “They found Him after three days in the temple”, the place where the presence of God is, sitting in the midst of teachers - listening and asking questions.

So Jesus listened a lot, and asked a lot of questions. If you look at His ministry, He asked questions all the time; so ask questions.

It takes a bit of skill to ask questions - ask Him the right thing.

If you ask Him: why did it happen? He won't tell you that.

Try: Holy Spirit, what do you want to teach me? What's happened that I need to know? Holy Spirit, draw my attention to the things I need to be focussing on right now. In this conflict, what's my part?

If you talk in just a simple, childlike way, and a submitted way, you'll be amazed how He will talk with you.

Sometimes we need to accept His silence. How many have noticed: God sometimes doesn't talk to you at all?

I hate that so much! It's hard when God doesn't speak to you, and you just wonder, you go through all sorts of things. There's reasons why He does that, but sometimes He is just silent.

How come Mary and Joseph didn't know that Jesus was staying behind? There's only one reason: He didn't tell them! That raises troublesome questions...

Jesus, the near teenager, didn't tell His parents He was going to have a sleepover! That doesn't go down well with any parent, does it?

It's hard to understand; but we just recognise, that sometimes God does not tell us everything.

It can be quite offensive when you don't get answer, when you really desperately need one. I've observed over my walk with the Lord, that I'll have some things where God is talking quite strongly, directly, specifically about.

But the things I really need the help, there's this deathly silence. I can't understand it. It's horrendous, because on one hand, God's moving, and I'll get words for people - all kinds of things for others, but what about one for me?

He's not saying anything; and then you think stuff. You go through turmoil inside; but what it does is: it forces you to search for His presence.

You make a decision, in the midst of that silence, to search for His presence; and then to notice and observe what is coming up in your life, in that silent time.

It says of Hezekiah, that God left for a season, to find out what was in his heart; so silences of God, cause what's in our heart to come up to the surface; and then we're able to engage with God. Suddenly the silence is all over!

I've got many things I need answers to, some of them are actually quite critical - and I cannot get an answer.

I just feel so wasted over that, I hate it. However, you've just got to continue to trust, childlike trust. It's in God's hands. Amen!

Yeah, but I need an answer. Needing an answer can become quite a driver; then we get offended with God, and we grieve the Holy Spirit.

So learn that sometimes He just won't give you an answer. He just wants you to walk in the last thing He gave you to do; or just in the general principles.

What about some things that you should stop doing?

Ephesians 4:30 – “Now don't grieve the Holy Ghost”. This is written to Christians!

If you grieve Him - the word grieve means: ‘to cause Him great sorrow’. He's a spirit of joy; can you imagine the ‘spirit of joy’, very sorrowful? Hurt inside, grieved inside, and drawing back, because you've wounded Him.

You've done things that hurt Me; I'm not going to come near, I'm just staying over here - and you'll just blunder on your merry way, trying to solve all your problems, until one day you wake up: my God, when's the last time I felt the presence of God?

Then tears and brokenness, and: Holy Spirit, where did I leave You? Where did I move; do things, or say things; or have an attitude that caused You to be grieved, and lift off me? You can ask that sort of thing.

So don't grieve the Holy Ghost; and it's got a whole list of things...

Ephesians 4:29 - “Don't let any corrupt communication come out of your mouth, but that which is good for building, that it imparts grace to the hearers”.

Ephesians 4:31 – “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you”.

Ephesians 5:1-2 “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma”.

Ephesians 5:3-5 “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know: that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God”.

As soon as you've grieved the Holy Spirit, you begin to lose the peace and lose the joy.

You've got to go back and ask: what happened Holy Spirit? How have I hurt You?

He may tell you things you don't like to hear - that's the challenging part of working with the Holy Spirit. I like it when He's just doing nice stuff; but then other times it’s not so easy: repent of this.

1) Deal with bitterness.

Bitterness is a root that defiles. The answer to bitterness is: repentance; renouncing judgements; and forgiving.

Bitterness is a long-standing resentment, a deep grudge; anger against someone, which in the end becomes everyone.

Bitterness defiles, so we can't allow bitterness.

Bitterness comes when you're disappointed, hurt, and you let it go down; and the resentment stays there. It just sits there.

You don't feel bitterness; it comes out in your words and language, and every time it does, it grieves the Holy Spirit - sharp, terse words.

2) Deal with anger. Anger is a root that destroys.

Proverbs 29:22 says: it's the source of immense conflict and strife in relationships.

Under anger, several things are mentioned; wrath, which means literally ‘blowing up’. Explosive anger is incredibly destructive - hurts everyone around, releases spirits of murder and violence against them.

Then He talks about an anger which is a slow, smouldering resentment, just this thing inside. Those sorts of things grieve the Holy Spirit.

Clamour: loud angry talk, talking loudly about your grievances, and the things that you've done wrong. Start to listen around, people are doing that everywhere.

It grieves the Holy Spirit! If someone is doing it, don't get involved in it. Quieten

it down, and calm it down; get what the real issues are. Stop people blaming people; get them to face what they need to deal with, what's in their own heart.

3) Guard your tongue.

It says it in different ways: “Don't let corrupt words come out of your mouth”. Further down: “evil speaking”; then it talks about bad jokes, unclean jokes.

Communication that just is negative and destructive, that defile; that runs people down.

To ‘evil speak’ means: to slander someone, to speak against them. You may not even have the truth, the true facts; but you're running them down, and stealing their reputation.

It also refers to: filthiness; unclean conversation; smutty jokes. Everyone may laugh; except the Holy Ghost - He won't laugh - He'll just withdraw.

If we value the Holy Ghost, we need to start to listen what's coming out of our mouth, what we're engaging in; and then take a Holy Ghost sigh.

If there's any benefit of the doubt, give Him the benefit of the doubt, and don't get engaged in those things - shut them down.

If people are telling coarse jokes, and they realise you're a Christian - they'll suddenly shut up and say ‘sorry’. Isn't that interesting: they know that they've done something wrong? How much better if we pick that up in our own heart, and don't get part of it?

Malice just means: ill will. You're holding something against someone, and you want to see them pay.

Greed: I want more and more and more. Greed is idolatry. Greed means: I just need more of something.

That thing of greed is only gotten over by being thankful, and by expressing appreciation, and celebrating with others; instead of being resentful.

4) Sexual uncleanness.

Sexual uncleanness grieves the Holy Spirit. He is the spirit of holiness. He is the spirit of grace. Let's not grieve Him by allowing unclean stuff to rest in our mind and heart; or become part of our conversation and our talk.

It's so easy for it to happen; but imagine if you were to live your life saying: I want to live my life so I'm sensitive to the Holy Spirit at all times; so I'm aware of His presence, and people are aware His presence is with me - what a great way to live!

The ‘plus’ is: peace and joy in the Holy Ghost - wonderful peace, wonderful joy in the Holy Ghost. How great to have the Holy Ghost surround our life.

He is a person. You can learn how to work in the gifts of the spirit; but never build a love relationship, where you are empowered to win in your life. God wants us to win our life, and it only comes by the power of the Holy Ghost working in us.

Closing Prayer

What it is, that God is speaking about to you today?

What did God touch your heart on today?

What needs to shift in your life?

Are there some things that God wants you to do, in terms of: this is the thing you should start, to cultivate your relationship with the Holy Spirit?

Are there some things that you need to put out of your life? What are those things?

Last question: What are you going to do about it?

What steps will you take; so the glorious spirit of God, who's come in to live in you, and abide in you - but still has room to rise and fill you, to empower you - what will you do tomorrow, to allow that to happen?

I've been working for quite some time on my life, to become sensitised to the Holy Spirit; and become aware of the things that desensitise me.

Perhaps there's someone here today doesn't even know Jesus Christ. You're separate from God, but today could be your greatest change, when God gives you His spirit. His own spirit comes and lives joined to your spirit, you become born again and alive.

One of the greatest delights I would have, would be you would experience His spirit in a greater measure, experience Him in a greater measure, to experience Him.

Why don't we just stand together, with raised hands, saying: “Holy Spirit I need You; Holy Spirit, come”.

Let's ask Him, talk to Him - pray in the spirit. Pray. Open your heart to Him right now. This is time for a fresh movement of the spirit of God

One of the great things in moving in ‘Child-like Faith’ is just: letting go control, allowing life to flow with the spirit of God; rather than trying to make people and circumstance yield to us.

Summary Notes

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1. Introduction
• Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus invitation and promises “I will give you rest” “You shall find rest for your souls”
• So many people have no peace – soul is in turmoil, anxiety, fear, worry, stress, striving.
• Rest is a gift that comes by faith. (Hebrews 4:3) By trusting God and His Word.
• Rest is a fruit that comes from ¬ to the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22)
• Exodus 33:14 “My presence will go with you and it will give you rest” God promised Moses rest – came with the presence of God tangibly expressed. Israel were led and directed by the cloud of God’s presence. The presence of God distinguished them from all other people.

2. We can Grieve and Quench the Holy Spirit
• Grieve = NT 3076 = to distress, make sad, fill with sorrow and pain (opposite of joy). We grieve the Holy Spirit by actions and attitudes that hinder Him being Himself in us.
• Quench = NT 4570 = to extinguish a raging fire. We quench the Holy Spirit by actions and attitudes that hinder Him doing what He wants through us.
• We need to develop sensitivity to the Holy Spirit – what He likes and dislikes.
• We can grieve the Holy Spirit and quench His power without realizing it.

Examples of People Grieving the Holy Spirit
(a) Judges 16:20 Samson: He did not know the Lord had departed from him. Samson grieved the Holy Spirit be sexual sin and lust uncontrolled.
(b) Psalms 95:10 Israel grieved the Holy Spirit continually and lost their power to inherit. Israel grieved the Holy Spirit by unbelief, complaining and ignorance of Gods ways. Israel remained bitter instead of changing.
(c) Luke 2:43,46 Mary and Joseph were not aware that Jesus was no longer with them. They supposed that He was still with them – made assumptions.
(d) Luke 19:41-44 Israel grieved the Holy Spirit – they did not recognize the time of visitation. They grieved the Holy Spirit by unbelief and clinging to tradition.
• In each of the above people were not aware of what they did but all experienced loss.

3. Developing Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit
Ephesians 5:10 “And try to learn in your experience what is pleasing to the Lord (ampl)”
• To find out what people like we must: spend quality time with them; listen to them; observe them.
• We learn what pleases the Holy Spirit from experience and from the Word of God.
• Find out what He likes – Do that!
Find out what grieves Him – Don’t do that or put it right quickly.
Ephesians 5:17 “Do not be vague, thoughtless, foolish but understanding and fully grasping what the will of the Lord is”
• Discovering what another person likes and dislikes is a process of trial and error.
• We need to find out what pleases the Lord.

(a) The Holy Spirit Likes: Practice Doing These Things
(i) Welcome His Presence
• Talk to him. Speak words of welcome. Holy Spirit I welcome you!
• Take Him as He wants to come – Joy, Peace, quickened verse, promptly to apologise.

(ii) Childlike Trust Matthew 18:3
• Let go control – control of people, control of your world.
• Don't try to fix up everyone and everything – let God be in control.
• Trust is developed as you let go attempting to control life and reacting to it.
(iii) Express Gratitude Psalm 100:4
• Don't take the Holy Spirit for granted – express thanks and appreciation to Him.
• Gratitude places honour and value upon the Holy Spirit and acknowledges what He does.
(iv) Practice Listening to the Holy Spirits Voice
• Listening is an art to be learned. Holy Spirit speaks as a flow of pictures, thoughts and impressions from within.
• To listen you must focus – give the person your attention.
(v) Ask Questions Luke 2:46
• If you want to learn – develop the skill of asking questions.
• Ask the right questions – Lord what are you teaching me? Not why??
• Luke 2:46 "They found Him in the temple sitting in the midst of the teachers both listening to them and asking questions."
(vi) Accept His Silence Luke 2:48
• Sometimes God does not speak to us or explain what He is doing.
• Jesus did not explain to His parents that He needed to stay behind in Jerusalem.
• God tells us what we need to know, when we need to know it. Don't react.

(b) The Holy Spirit Dislikes: Stop Doing These Things
Ephesians 4:29 – 5:5 " Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God……"
• We can easily grieve the Holy Spirit by how we react because of things God allows to happen.
• Where we react we lose the peace of the Holy Spirits abiding presence Colossians 3:15
• We need to enquire and ask the Holy Spirit to show us how we have grieved Him!
(i) Deal with Bitterness a root that defiles Hebrews 12:15
• Bitterness = long standing resentment, becoming a grudge and ill will towards others.
(ii) Deal with Anger a root that destroys Proverbs 29:22
• Wrath = passion, bad temper, outbursts of anger.
• Anger = smouldering resentment and reaction to people, life.
• Clamour = loud angry talk about personal grievances and injustices.
(iii) Guard Your Tongue a force of life and death Proverbs 18:21
• Corrupt communication = words that pollute and defile.
• Evil speaking = to slander, speak destructively against another person.
• Filthiness = unclean conversation, crude jokes, clever undertones.
(iv) Malice ill will towards others
• Malice takes delight in inflicting injury on another.
• Dwells on wrongs and wants the other person to suffer.
(v) Deal with Grief Ephesians 5:3
• Covetousness = idolatry
(vi) Deal with Sexual Sin Ephesians 5:3
• Fornication and all uncleanness.

The Rest of Faith (4 of 4)

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"My presence will go with you, and I will give you Rest"

Rest is a peace in our heart, in spite of the turmoil around us. We're live in an age which is in turmoil; people are anxious & fearful - stressed out.

Rest is a gift to us. It's an experience you can come into, when no matter what's going on around you, you can still be at peace in your heart.

This is something God gives to us. It comes out of His presence being with us; and out of learning how to let go issues to Him. We're called to bring peace into wherever we go.



One of the things we saw in Exodus 33, when God spoke to Moses. He said:

“My presence will go with you, and I will give you Rest”.

So rest is a peace in our heart, in spite of the turmoil around us.

We're living in an age which is in turmoil, and people are anxious and fearful, stressed out.

The Bible tells us: Rest is a gift to us.

It's an experience you can come into, when no matter what's going on around you, you can still be at peace in your heart - and this is something God gives to us.

It comes out of His presence being with us.

It also comes out of learning how to let go issues to Him, and this is a great thing for us to be able to walk in.

We're called to bring peace into wherever we go; and wherever you go outside in the community, it's in turmoil. It doesn't take much scratching to see the turmoil and pain

I am just so delighted and proud of the groups that have gone out, and ministered to the turmoil, in very practical ways. This is the gospel in action, and I believe God is on it, and if you and we will continue to do that, we will continue to experience increase.

Moses said: “If you don't go with us, don't take us anywhere”.

He said: How will the world know that we are different, except Your presence is on our life, and there's a place of rest in our heart?

How will people know we're different? The reality is: people don't know Christians are different, because Christians seem to struggle with all the same issues.

Luke 2:41, this is Jesus' parents, His family; we can identify with family; and Jesus is doing stuff we didn't expect. How many have had an experience where Jesus did something you didn't expect?

His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was 12 years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.

When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it. But they supposed, they assumed, He was with them in the company; and they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

And when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. Now it was after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening and asking questions.

And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. And when they saw Him, they were amazed”.

They were very distressed actually, they were shocked.

His mother said: “Son, why have You done this to us? Your father and I have sought You anxiously.”

No peace there, is there?

And He said to them: “Why do you seek Me? Did you not know, I must be about My Father's business?”

But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Then He went down with them to Nazareth, and was subject to them, and His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.

Now the Bible tells us very clearly, in the Book of John, that all the things written about Jesus, you couldn't contain them in all the books of the world. So the Holy Spirit has selected some things, so we look here and you get a glimpse. The only glimpse into Jesus life growing up is this passage here; and it's an unusual story.

His parents have gone down to Jerusalem to the feast; they've come away from the feast, and He stayed behind - and of course the parents are totally stressed out.

Jesus did not tell them what He was doing! That is really hard to understand. We can't say that He sinned, that He did something wrong; so we have to conclude there must be more to this passage than we realise...

1) Sometimes God is silent about His plans. How many have experienced a time when God was silent about what He was doing? And He answered things for you, that you really didn't need an answer for; but the thing you really needed an answer for, He didn't talk at all.

That is an experience we have as a Christian. It creates quite some turmoil in our life.

Jesus did not tell them what He was doing. He was actually entering into a new season in His life.

They got in a habit with Him, they would go down to the feast every year; they'd

go through whatever they were going to do - six, seven days there. Then they'd travel home, it an annual thing they did, and they were quite familiar with it.

They didn't pick up that Jesus was now entering a new season in His life. He was approaching, at 12 years old, his Bar Mitzvah.

That meant He was moving from: being deemed a child; to where He's now responsible, as a young adult, to obey the law. The obvious thing is: He's going to connect with where He can learn the law.

They were so familiar with how He had been moving; they did not recognise that there was a change about to take place.

This is very true of the church, and very true of our lives. We get so familiar with God; with routines, the way we do things; that we can miss that God is making changes. He doesn't always tell it straight away.

In a marriage, for example, familiarity with one another can lead to a lot of communication breakdowns; and a lot of stress and difficulties.

I thought you were going to do this; but no one spoke. Well I assumed you were going to do that; but no one said anything. So in marriages and relationships, a lot of stress comes when we assume things.

One of the dilemmas we face in life, in relationships, is that: familiarity leads to assumption, or presumptions.

We can be so familiar with God, and with our walk with God, that we assume that we are walking right, that we are doing the things He wants; and it comes as a shock to us when something happens that up heaves our world. It doesn't seem like God gave us any warning, told us about it, talked about it to us at all.

Notice: they just “supposed He was with them”. They got familiar He was a good boy - they didn't have any trouble with Him. The last thing they ever expected was that He would do something they didn't expect, which was stay behind.

Any parent who's had a child stay behind, you've lost them - you understand the stress the parents would feel at this; but see how Jesus handles it.

So familiarity can lead to presumption. Jesus could have spoken to them, and told them - but He did not. He is now emerging from: being a child; to: knowing exactly who He is, and what He's called to do.

He's starting to emerge into adulthood. His ministry hasn't begun, His assignment hasn't begun, but He's definitely come into knowing who He is.

He knows He's the Son of God. He knows He's called into a work; and so the obvious thing is, as a young child now, is to come under tutors and governors, to be prepared for that.

To Him it was very obvious what He should do; so He stays behind.

It doesn't say He just lingered or tarried. The word literally means this, it means: He ‘endured’.

He stayed under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, to remain there behind; and obviously the Holy Spirit had told Him: don't say anything.

There are some times when God does stuff, and He doesn't tell us. When He doesn't tell you, it's not because He doesn't care about you; it's just He's going to move anyway, and He's not asking for your opinion about it.

You just get upset every time that God didn't ask my opinion, or consult me about what He was about to do.

Many things seem to just happen and it just upsets us. We get very distressed, very upset, out of kilter.

We have to realise that God is always God. He doesn't always tell us about the things that'll happen.

How many, when you chose to follow Jesus, had no idea what that might incur?

Many may very well have not decided to follow Jesus, if you had known all the things that might happen on the way? So God doesn't tell us.

Our journey is a journey of faith - which means you don't always know what's going to happen; or understand what's happening.

You do have to come to a place of Trust, and Rest.

Our dilemma is: we want to know everything; and when we're not informed, ‘nobody told me’, we get upset. God wants you to learn how to handle these issues in life.

I have found God does not consult me about everything, He doesn't tell me about everything; and sometimes happen that surprise me.

You've got to take it, and learn how to handle it, or lean into God.

Sometimes God is silent; and part of the problem is, we get so familiar in our relationship, that we just make assumptions on everything continuing like it is.

I believe that the church in the West, particularly, is needing to make massive changes, massive changes.

The more I have been praying, and looking at this over this last year, the more I am aware that church is just needing reformation, to engage fully in what God wants to do in our nation.

That means changing. That means: you changing, and me.

I'm on a journey of change. I've found it to be disturbing, painful, distressing; a challenging journey that God is with us in.

God wants to help you. It's so wonderful that God is with you, and promises to help you; so why is sometimes God silent? Why is it, that God doesn't always tell you what He wants to do?

I have found it to be a recurring experience, that: God, I can move very strongly, and God's speaking through me to all kinds of people, about all sorts of things.

Then the thing I need to hear, I hear nothing. It's quite a paradox: you can be used of God to touch other people; but the very need you have, doesn't seem to get answered. Why is that?

2 Chronicles 32:31 – “God withdrew from Hezekiah, in order that He might try him, to know all that was in his heart”.

Did God forsake him? No, He didn't. He just drew back His tangible presence, went for a season; that God might see what was in him, what would come up.

Sometimes God will let you face an experience which is painful, challenging, and difficult. You don't feel like God is there; and what He wants to do is to draw up out of your heart what is there - so you can see it, and grow and change.

Sometimes we forget that this 'following Jesus' is a lifelong journey of change. You think: I repented ages ago; I said I was sorry, I've done my thing. Now I'm trying to live a good life.

Actually no - repentance is a foundation, upon which we build our life.

Repentance is about: changing how we think, to align with what God is doing and saying to us.

Sometimes God will let us go through things: 1) to reveal what is in our heart. When you're under stress and pressure, what's inside comes up; and it comes up in a way that's not always nice.

2) God wants to see if you'll put into practice what you've been learning.

We've taught you how to live in the spirit; how to build your spirit man; how to resolve. You've been more taught than any people I know.

But what do you do when you're under pressure? That's how much you've learned. It's only what we put into practice.

We've taught you how to flow with the spirit, how to listen to the spirit, got to be sensitive to Him; but you've actually got to put it into practice.

Most learning takes place in the course of life, not in a meeting like this. In meetings like this, you get flashes of information, flashes of help; but it's in the small groups that learning takes place, where we can interact.

Where we're interacting in our faith with someone, that's when we really grow. God wants us to learn and continue to grow, so He'll let us face a few experiences: 1) to reveal and bring up what's in our heart; 2) so we can see where we need to grow and change; and 3) so we can see if we're really applying what

God has told us to do.

We've taught you how to build a strong spirit man; but if you're not doing that, then when pressure comes - you cave; you live out of your soul and emotions.

There's only so much the teaching can do. At the end, it's actually what we're putting into practice in our life.

That's where small groups are so helpful, because you get with others, and you're sharing and interacting over your faith. You bring out to the open what God is doing.

One of the best questions we can ask one another in a small group is something like this: what is God currently doing in your life right now? What was the last thing God was speaking to you about? How are you getting on putting that into practice, and doing it?

Those kinds of questions, when someone's facing you – that’s when you start to change.

I see people say: God's been speaking to me about this. I say: what's the specific area He's talking to you about? If you can't say what specifically it is - it's just general fuzzy stuff - you won't change; but if I can answer the question: God specifically is dealing with me about this attitude; then the next thing is: well what will you do to change?

What plan have you got in place, in order to grow?

What are you doing to shift from where you are, to where God wants you to be?

If we don't apply God's word into our life, if we don't actually let it shape and change us, we get deceived in our mind.

The Bible says: if we hear the word and don't do it, we're deceived in our mind; but when we hear the word and do it, our life becomes strengthened, and a foundation is built.

Do have anyone asking you these questions: what did God last say to you; or what is God speaking to you about right now? What is your plan to put this into

practice? How are you getting on with that? How can I help you with that?

That's a great way we can help one another, in this journey of growing in God.

So God sometimes is silent, and sometimes frictions and difficulties come up - in order to stimulate seeking Him and growing.

With Mary and Joseph, it surfaces some things in them. It says: “they went a day without realising He was there.” Don't you love that - they went a day? Then it says: “they supposed He was there”.

We can drift in our Christian life, supposing we're flowing with what God wants, and suddenly become aware: it's not all right. That's the time to start to re-centre, and redirect, your life again.

It says: “they sought Him among their friends”. The first place they looked, when they found the loss of the presence of God, when they felt the loss of Jesus, was: they turned to their friends.

They took to their family their acquaintances; their small group; and then finally: they had to return to where they lost the presence of God. They had to return to where they lost the peace.

They went back to Jerusalem, seeking Jesus. Jerusalem means ‘City of Peace’; so they had to go back to the place where they lost their peace.

Their focus was on finding Jesus, and reconnecting with Him again.

If you have felt the presence of God lift off you, you can always sense it in different ways. It's not that He's left you, or abandoned you; but you can feel when the Holy Spirit is no longer flowing around your life:

1) You become anxious, and lose your peace.

Colossians 3:15 – “let the peace of God rule in your heart”.

The moment you lose your peace, is the warning signal of the Holy Spirit: something is wrong in my life.

It may be: the way I'm thinking; reacting; an attitude I have, or a value I have. Stop - something's not right.

Enquire of the Holy Spirit: what is going on.

2) You start to become irritable; you lose your love for people.

Someone who's irritable, they're manifesting an attitude of: lack of peace in their heart; and lack of concern for people.

They're wrapped up in themselves. There's a lack of love; because love is not irritable

Corinthians 13: “Love is patient, bears long”; so when you start to find people and they've lost their peace, and they're becoming irritable, the Holy Spirit's flow has lifted off them, and God is trying to get their attention.

3) Confusion & turmoil; and you start to look for someone to blame.

God is not the author of confusion; He is the author of peace.

The kingdom of heaven is always associated with peace; or rest in our heart. Not eating or drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

When you start losing your peace; become anxious and uptight; start losing your capacity to love people; become irritable; confused; looking for someone to blame - the spirit of God has lifted.

You need to see the warning signs; and go back to Jerusalem, back to Jesus, and find: Where did I lose you? Where did I miss You? What in believing needs to change? What in my response needs to change? What is it You are trying to tell me?

Or very simply: what am I feeling? How did I get to be feeling that way? What is going on in my belief system, and my heart?

This is something you practice - you put into practice.

It's called: taking every thought captive, and bringing it into obedience.

It's just stopping to evaluate what's going on momentarily, and re-centre your heart just as quickly as that, in looking towards the Lord.

In Elijah's day when the axe head was lost (2 Kings 6:1-7), and the man come up and said: “I've lost my axe head” - I've lost my cup, I've lost my anointing, I've lost my flow; He said: where did you lose it? Go back there.

He took him right back to where he lost the axe; and then He cut down a tree (which speaks of the cross), threw it in; and the miracle was: the cutting edge was restored (the iron floated).

Inevitably, when you've lost that flow of God in your life, you've got to go back: when did I lose it? Where did I lose it? What was the issue? Now God, what do I need to do to deal with this?

They returned to Jerusalem. It took them three days to get back to what they'd lost in one day.

One of the things about your life with God is: if you let your life with God go - it takes more time to get it back again, than it does to maintain it.

If you let go your prayer life, your life in the word, your relationship with God - it seems to take longer to get it back again, than it does to lose it.

You can lose it quickly, but you've got to actually get back into a flow again, to regain that life with God.

They returned to Jerusalem, and they were seeking Him; so very simple - when we've lost that peace, lost that flow of the spirit, first: recognise that's what's happened.

1) You need to return. They returned to Jerusalem. The word ‘return’ is the same as the word ‘repent’.

We need to come back: God, where did I lose You? Where did I miss You? What is going on in my heart, that I need to change?

The evidence of: loss of peace, irritability, anxiety means: I'm no longer aligned with heaven. The spirit of God has lifted.

I now need to say: God, where have I missed it? What do I need to repent?

Repentance is just saying: Lord, in my thinking, in my approach, I'm out of order with You. I need to realign. What a great thing to do, to realign.

So the first thing was Repentance - they returned; they recognised something. Usually repentance means: God, I'm so sorry. Lord, forgive me that I allowed my mind and my heart to drift. Lord, forgive me that I allowed this to happen.

Just be quite specific and ask: God, Lord show me what it is that I missed.

2) We need to pursue.

I have found people take God very casually. I do not take Him casually - I pursue Him.

It said: “They sought Him diligently for three days”.

Think about what it would be like to lose a child in a big city; to have to try and find him in a city - that is scary.

The worst thing is: they didn't have a clue where to start looking.

When they finally speak to Jesus, Mary gets quite testy with Him. Notice her language: “why did You treat us like this?”

A lot of people talk to God like that. “How come you're treating me like this, what's going on?”

Notice the irritation in her - she was upset with Him. She was centred on herself, only her.

“Why did You treat us like this?” People get like that with God; you're getting into blaming Jesus; and Jesus made an interesting statement.

He said: “How come you've been worrying and stressing and seeking Me like this? Didn't you realise what I would be doing?”

He's saying: you've been raised in the law, you've been raised in the word of

God. By now, you should have understood, that this is what would be normal for me to be doing - to be in the house of God, at my Bar Mitzvah, beginning my preparation for the call that is on my life.

They're saying: “how could you treat us like that”; and He said: “you're My parents - how did you not realise this is what would be happening to Me right now?”

He turned it right around on them. How did you miss this? You went everywhere looking for Me - why would you think I'd be there, or there, or there, or there?

I'm 12! I'm beginning to go into my new season as a young adult, when I'm going to be responsible to obey the law, so I need to be instructed in law.

The only place I would be would be “about My Father's business” - which is in the house of God.

So at the age of 12, He was connected to: who He was; and what He was called to do.

His concern was: how come you, My parents, didn't realise what was happening? How did you miss this? If you were sensitive to the changing season, you would have known that this is exactly what I'd be doing.

For you and I as believers, even for us as a church, we can get so familiar to Jesus moving in certain ways, that when He changes - we get upset, because He's not doing what we think He should be doing.

We tend to be angry with Him, blame Him, because this is not going how I'd like.

His question comes back, saying: you've walked with me this season, for this much time, and you've learned all these things. How could you not realise, this is what I would be doing at this time?

Why are you so agitated, that I'm doing these things, at this time? It's because you're not aware of the season of God, you've become wrapped up in yourselves.

I believe the church in the West becomes so wrapped up in itself, it's missed that

the whole season has shifted, that God is moving.

Today, as I was listening to the stories (I want to hear more of those stories) of people going out into the community, and just showing love and kindness, connecting to people in their need - that is where the river of God is running.

I have noticed in the last two years, that every time that we've had a need within the body (or something we've focussed on outside the body), where we've come in love, and started to gather around and help people - whether it's someone else in the church, or whether it's been someone else outside - there's like a river of God's spirit moves on that.

I've become convinced (and we have aligned our lives around that) that we need to redirect our attention, to being kind to the community, kind to people; and start to bring the gospel in a way that's palatable.

The church has to get out of its ‘small world’, meetings that seem so important, but are not important.

Micah 6:8 – “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you - to do justly.”

That word ‘justice’ is: coming to places where people are suffering, and doing what we can to put it right - to love mercy.

That word ‘mercy’, is the word ‘loving kindness’ - to extend loving-kindness to people, and to walk humbly in a place of relationship, intimacy and trust in the Lord.

Jesus spoke to the Pharisees and He said: you've tithed of all these little things, you've tithed of every carrot, and you’ve tithed of this and that. But He said: the things that you are missing are the weightier matters: justice, mercy and faith.

So in God's eyes, the weighty matters are: Justice - treating the cause of the hurting and broken, working to minister to it and help them; Mercy - showing loving kindness to people who are broken and in need; and Faith - believing for the power of God to move, and to work.

Mary and Joseph had been entrusted with the Saviour of the world, to raise Him;

but when the season changed for Him, they failed to recognise it.

They got so familiar, and were blessed with what was happening up to that point. They had the perfect child, remember!

Then one day, at the age of 12, He does something that really messes with them. Jesus has a way of doing that.

My recommendation is always: see what Jesus is on, and stay with that.

The church has got a history of: staying with what it likes, what it's used to; rather than: seeing what Jesus is on, and working with that.

I believe that globally now, there is a desperate need for the ministry of Healing, Deliverance; of Kindness, Compassion; of mercies. It needs to flow like a river from the house of God.

Let's not be like Mary and Joseph, missing our moment, missing what God is doing, and being so caught up with what we're doing, that we go a whole day's journey, then realise: God, what has happened? Where are You?

Then have to face three days of pursuing, with anxiety - because we don't even know where to look - we're so out of touch with what God is doing.

God's moving on this area of compassion to the poor.

God is moving. Everything that you do, that involves reaching out that way - you'll find the river of Gods spirit come on it.

God is interested in healing the broken-hearted, restoring people. Whatever we do in that, you'll find the river of God will flow. Everywhere I go, I see this happening.

God is interested in people being discipled - growing and fulfilling their destinies and calls in God; not just sitting in church, coming on Sunday, and thinking that that's what it is to be a Christian.

To be a Christian is to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said: “Follow Me, and I will make you”.

Your life will undergo continual change and transformation; and the outcome will be: you'll be a fisher of men. You will reach out, engage, gather people, and bring them to become followers of Me.

This is the movement of God, in the hour we're in. We need to get on the page with Him.

Now at a personal level - if you find that you've lost your rest, your peace; you're becoming anxious, stressed out, irritable, confused - go back to where you lost it.

Return to the Lord, return to that place of peace - begin to make the adjustments and changes.

On the bigger scale, if you find that there's restlessness around your life, uncertainty around your life, then start to re-centre around the person of Jesus again; see what He's on, and begin to follow Him anew.

Let's just open our hearts to Him right now. The last thing is: interestingly enough, Jesus - even though He spoke that way to them - then submitted to them.

“They did not understand what He was doing - but He went along with them anyway, submitting in His heart to them; and He grew in wisdom, stature, and favour with God and man.”

[Closing Prayer]

Perhaps there's an issue in your heart?

Perhaps you don't know the Lord. You've never had an experience with Him, or learned what it is to walk with Him. You're walking in your own ways, following your own path, influenced by what's around you.

What a great day today to make a decision: that I'll put my life in the hands of Jesus Christ. I'll begin to pursue the One who loved me, and died on a cross for me. I will put my life in Jesus' hands, and partner with Him in changing this world.

Are you at that place, where you recognise your need for Jesus Christ, and you want to just give your life to Him today - trusting in Him, to save you from the power and the presence and the penalty of sin?

Perhaps, as I've talked, you've realised: I'm not in a place of rest; I'm in a place of stress and anxiety. I've moved away from a heart that's rested in Him.

Here's God's word to you today:

In returning, and rest or trust, you will be saved.

In quietness and confidence in God, you will find peace.

God wants you to come back in that place of peace again.

Perhaps God's been silent; and you're going through difficulties, pressures, struggles.

Say: “God, I want You to help me. I need You to help me today”.

Father, I thank You for each one here today. We thank You for Your grace to help them to come to a place of rest and trust in You, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Summary Notes

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1. Introduction
Exodus 33:14 “My presence will go with you and it will give you rest”
· So many people live in constant turmoil, anxiety, fear, striving – no rest in their soul. God promises to give us rest: Rest is a gift of God received by faith – trusting Him. Rest is connected to the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives and our relationships.
Romans 14:17 “The Kingdom of heaven….. is righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Ghost”
· Whatever disturbs our peace or joy should get our attention.
· Activating sensitivity to the Holy Ghost and response to His presence is key to rest.

Key Passage: Luke 2:41-50

2. Why God Sometimes is Silent
Luke 2:41-43 “Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem and Joseph and Mary his mother did not know it”
· Jesus was silent about His plans. He did not tell them what He was doing!
· Jesus was entering a new season in His life – He did not speak or explain it.

(a) Familiarity Can Lead To Presumption
E.g. Marriage: The most common problem is communication.
“You didn’t tell me”; “I assumed”; “Well I thought”
· Luke 2:43-44 “Joseph and His mother did not know it, but supposing Him to be in the company went a days journey…”
· Note: Jesus was silent – they supposed He was still with them.
· It was an annual event to go to Jerusalem; it was a custom or habit.
· Presume – to take for granted, to assume to be true, to assume without proof.

(b) Why God Sometimes Is Silent
2 Chronicles 32:3 “God withdrew from him (Hezekiah) in order to test him to know all that was in his heart”
· Sometimes God is silent about the things most important to us. Why?
(i) To Reveal What Is In Our Heart Deuteronomy 8:2
· God’s silence exposes and brings to our awareness or condition, priorities, values.

(ii) To Humble Us Deuteronomy 8:2
· We have a tendency to go our own way, to operate independently, to live in our comfort zone.
· Habits and routines are good but can lead us to familiarity and presumption.
· We constantly need fresh challenges to keep us dependent upon Jesus.

(iii) To See If We Will Apply What We Have Learned Deuteronomy 8:2
· God is constantly teaching us, changing us – His plan means ongoing change.
· He wants us to learn to walk by revelation and wisdom (applying the Word of God).
· If you collapse under pressure and challenge your personal foundations are not strong.
· In seasons you do not hear from God – do what He last told you and walk in the principles of God – prayer, thanksgiving, praise, fellowship.
· Mary and Joseph went 1 day without Jesus then experienced and acute sense of loss and anxiety.

3. How to Recognise the Presence of the Holy Spirit has Lifted
Luke 2:48 “So when they saw Him they were amazed, and His mother said to Him: “Son why have you done this to us? Look your father and I have sought you anxiously”
(i) Anxiety – Loss of Peace
· The presence of God brings with it a peace and loss of His presence brings anxiety.
· Mary revealed she was anxious but sorrowing from on road: to go down.
· She was tormented in her mind and emotions.
· Philippians 4:6 “Be anxious for nothing – peace of God will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”

(ii) Irritability –Loss of Love
· Mary was irritated at Jesus – why have you done this to us?
· She was angry at Jesus and resentful at how He had treated them.
· 1 Corinthians 13:5 “Love – is not provoked (irritated, stirred, sharpened)”

(iii) Lack Clear Thinking - Confusion
· Mary did not understand what Jesus was doing.
· They were amazed…. Why have you done this to us? They did not understand.
· She accused Jesus of treating her unfairly – she took it personally.
· Stresses in life can cause us to turn inward, focus on self, blame others.
· 2 Timothy 1:7 “For God has not given us a spirit of fear but a spirit of power, and love and a sound mind”
· When the Holy Spirit rests upon us our thinking is clear and we react in clarity.

4. Returning to the Rest of Faith
Luke 2:44-45 “They sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances, so when they did not find Him they returned to Jerusalem seeking Him. Now it was after 3 days they found Him.”
· They were so preoccupied with familiar – they did not realize Jesus was not there.
· They had to go back to where they lost Him (if lost axe head 2Kings 6:6 Where did it fall?)

(i) Repentance (“They Returned”)
· Repentance – Melanoia = change of mind
· Repentance – recognise have made a mistake, failed and admit “it was wrong”.
· People tend to be defensive rather than admit “it was wrong” and change.
· Repentance is foundational to walking with God – admitting wrong thinking and actions.
· 1 John 1:9 If we confess (say the same as God does) will forgive!

(ii) Pursuit of God –(“They Sought Him”)
· Their focus was not on pursuit of peace but on pursuit of Jesus.
· They wanted to reconnect with Jesus Psalm 27:4
· It took 3 days to find Him – they persevered determined to find Him again.
· We can pursue Jesus by re-establishing times of prayer, fasting, worship.

(iii) Openness to Fresh Revelation
· Their familiarity with Jesus caused them to miss the change in their life.
· He now was at an age where He would come under tutors for His destiny.
· They were astonished, they did not understand, they did not ask questions.
· We must move towards what God is doing, not react and move away to familiar.

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