

Quiet

The Scripture:

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake (Psalm 23:1-3).

Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth (Psalm 46:10).

The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing (Zephaniah 3:17).

Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight (1 Peter 3:4).

The thought:

William Wordsworth said, "The world is too much with us." That is certainly the sentiment of today. We rush from activity to activity, from event to event. Exhaustion comes at us in various forms: physical, emotional, and even spiritual. We are looking for "a place of quiet rest."

There is no easy way out of the noisy hum of daily life as people, issues, work, and trouble surge around us. The only answer is to find peace in the midst of the storm. We need to be like Jesus, asleep on a cushion in a boat in the middle of a storm (Mark 4). He was able to sleep because he had confidence in the providence of God. His sense of peace was not determined by the external circumstances but by the relationship he had with the Father above.

I remember a story about an artist who was given a prize for his depiction of "peace." He painted a picture of a bird who built a nest on a ledge behind a raging waterfall. This picture won the prize because it depicted true peace in the midst of the storm. This is a practical peace, not an abstract or idealistic one. It is but a peaceful protection provided by the surrounding cascade of cascade of water.

Scripture has many pictures of peace—“the cleft of the rock,” “green pastures,” “my refuge and my fortress.” In addition, our daily lives are to be characterized by the peace which is an essential part of the fruit of the Spirit along with love and joy.

Scriptural peace is really the quietness which comes from being in the right relationship with God; being held in his everlasting arms.

The song:

*There is a place of quiet rest,
Near to the heart of God.
A place where sin cannot molest,
Near to the heart of God.*

*O Jesus, blest Redeemer,
Sent from the heart of God,
Hold us who wait before Thee
Near to the heart of God.*

*There is a place of comfort sweet,
Near to the heart of God.
A place where we our Savior meet,
Near to the heart of God.*

--Cleland B. McAfee (1901)

The question:

Where do I find times and places to be quiet? How do I show this “quiet” to others?

The experience:

Quiet places can be formative. I like to remember the time I hauled a couple of planks up into a eucalyptus tree and nailed them in place. This “platform” was my tree house and a quiet place to sit up among the bluegum leaves. I could see everyone and everything that passed by and yet I was “invisible.”

In Ontario, I followed the creek near my house back up into the woods until it became a small stream and then finally a spring bubbling out of the hillside. There was only the breeze in the trees, the calls of birds, and the murmur of the little brook. Indeed that was a quiet place. In my mind, I can still retreat to that tranquil place of beauty.

As a young teen, I was privileged to have a small wooden rowboat at my disposal on the church campground where my family lived. I did not really own it but I was the

only one who used it so it sort of became mine. Many summer hours were spent rowing back and forth across the small river. Sometimes I tried to grab turtles sunning on logs but I was never successful. They always seemed to hear me or perhaps they saw me floating by. But, this was a quiet place to think and to contemplate the world around me. One summer day I found my way to the annual baptismal service on the bank of this same river and nailed down my commitment to serve the Lord. That event, at that place on that quiet river, has always been a life-marker—a stake—for me.