

The Prayer of Quiet



In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength (Isaiah 30:15). This text from Isaiah is about a time when the Israelites were being pursued by enemies but were refusing God's help. The text tells us that God was full of compassion and ready to help, but they would have none of it.

This is not that different from how we sometimes live our lives. We face problems, even overwhelming challenges, yet we act like we are strong enough and smart enough to handle it on our own. We act as if we don't need God. And we act as if God were not compassionate, as if God were not available, as if God were not willing to help us.

When we finally turn from our self-reliance, rest from our striving and practice prayers of quietness and trust, we find the help and strength we need.

The prayer of quiet is a prayer that makes room for God's presence. When we are quiet, we have come to the end of talking, finished being in charge, finished insisting on our own way. We are ready to make room for God's voice, for God's guidance, for God's way.

The prayer of quiet involves listening and waiting. This often does not feel like prayer. Because we tend to think of prayer as doing something, rather than as waiting quietly before God....

When we move away from all the noise and move into a place of quiet, a space is opened in our hearts. There is room in the quietness for God's Spirit to move, to heal, to guide, and to speak. We discover that we are not alone. We discover that we can trust in the goodness and presence of God.

This is counter-intuitive for many of us. We tend to trust that all our activity will help us and strengthen us. And we tend to believe that God expects us to be in constant motion. During life's difficulties and crises being quiet is often the last thing we think to do. But God calls to us, "Turn to me, rest in my care, quiet yourself and trust me, this will be your salvation, this will be your strength."

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