

Keeping A Joyful Heart



A glad heart lights up the face,
but an anguished heart breaks the spirit.

Proverbs 15:13

Opening Reflection

RESTING IN HIM

COME TO ME JUST AS YOU ARE. Let Me enfold you in My compassionate embrace. I know the depth and breadth of your weariness. I see you from the inside out, as well as from the outside in. Nothing about you escapes My attention-or My tender concern. I offer you rest, My child, but in order to receive it you must stop for a time and simply wait with Me. When you are physically tired, your mind easily succumbs to anxious thoughts. Then, although your body needs rest, the anxiety drives you harder than ever. This is hurtful and counterproductive.

Discipline yourself to stop whatever you are doing, and take time to fix your thoughts on Me. I provide rest not only for your mind and body but also for your soul. However, your body and soul cannot rest until your mind settles down. Take quiet, slow breaths while you focus your attention on Me. It can be helpful to say a simple prayer such as: "Jesus, fill me with Your Peace." Since My Peace surpasses all understanding, your mind will eventually relax in My Presence. You can unburden yourself by making your requests known to Me. This transfers your burdens to My strong shoulders. Remember to bring Me your requests with thanksgiving, for I delight in responding to thankful prayers. Moreover, your grateful attitude will bless you immeasurably-opening wide your heart to receive more and more of Me.

(continued)

Opening Reflection

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." —MATTHEW 11:28-29

Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.
—HEBREWS 3:1

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. —PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 NKJV

from *Jesus Lives* by Sarah Young pp. 266-267

Spiritual Warfare

Ephesians 6:10-17

Finally, draw your strength from the Lord and from his mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil.

For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens.

Therefore, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground.

So stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace.

In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all [the] flaming arrows of the evil one.

And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Principle #1

We are in spiritual warfare. There is a battle going on for the salvation of people's souls. Take it seriously and be rooted in prayer.

- Self-care
- Transformation of mind and heart.
- The role of politics and building a better world.
Salvation is hinged on Jesus' saving work.

Principle #2

Know your own weaknesses and pray for humility.

- The enemy studies us and is trying to get us to fall into despair. He will do everything in his power to prevent us from seeing the marvelous things God is doing. Sometimes through harboring grudges and bitterness, we chose to focus on his destructive work and not God's marvelous work of grace.
- The enemy knows he can use lack of forgiveness and resentment as a tool and weapon against us. Deal with things as they happen and take everything seriously.

Principal #3

Expect Persecution “Rejoice for your reward in heaven will be great!” (Mt. 5:12).

- Recognize that we will be persecuted. Again, pray to imitate the example of Jesus “Father forgive them, they know not what they do.” We must live with the illusion that evil is getting the upper hand, but remember how much God loves trump cards. We must hold on and keep our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ who inspires and perfects us in the faith.

Principle # 4

Prepare yourself to be disappointed as people leave their faith and are lured away. God will provide but we must prepare ourselves for a time of serious testing and persecution.

- Prepare yourself to be disappointed as people leave their faith and are lured away. God will provide but we must prepare ourselves for a time of serious testing and persecution.
- The Cross is our refuge. Try and embrace the Cross and realize there is meaning and value in the suffering we are enduring.
- Encourage yourselves daily while it is still “today,” so that none of you may grow hardened by the deceit of sin. (Hebrews 3:13)
- Affirm all brothers and sisters in the Lord.

The Power of the Cross

The Cross of Christ throws salvific light, in a most penetrating way, on man's life and in particular on his suffering. For through faith the Cross reaches man together with the Resurrection: the mystery of the Passion is contained in the Paschal Mystery. The witnesses of Christ's Passion are at the same time witnesses of his Resurrection. Paul writes: "That I may know him (Christ) and the power of his Resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead" (64). Truly, the Apostle first experienced the "power of the Resurrection" of Christ, on the road to Damascus, and only later, in this paschal light, reached that "sharing in his sufferings" of which he speaks, for example, in the Letter to the Galatians. The path of Paul is clearly paschal: sharing in the Cross of Christ comes about through the experience of the Risen One, therefore through a special sharing in the Resurrection. Thus, even in the Apostle's expressions on the subject of suffering there so often appears the motif of glory, which finds its beginning in Christ's Cross.

The Power of the Cross

The witnesses of the Cross and Resurrection were convinced that "through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God" (65). And Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says this: "We ourselves boast of you... for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which you are enduring. This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be made worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which you are suffering" (66). Thus to share in the sufferings of Christ is, at the same time, to suffer for the Kingdom of God. In the eyes of the just God, before his judgment, those who share in the suffering of Christ become worthy of this Kingdom. Through their sufferings, in a certain sense they repay the infinite price of the Passion and death of Christ, which became the price of our Redemption: at this price the Kingdom of God has been consolidated anew in human history, becoming the definitive prospect of man's earthly existence. Christ has led us into this Kingdom through his suffering. And also through suffering those surrounded by the mystery of Christ's Redemption become mature enough to enter this Kingdom.

(St. John Paul II On The Meaning of Christian Suffering #21)

Principle #5

Proclaim God's marvelous deeds. Share your testimony with others. Silence is not golden when it comes to faith. You can encourage others by sharing how God has helped you deal with suffering in your life and how God has helped you let go of past hurts.

Time To Talk!

- Comments, Questions
- Resources <http://www.thegraceofpentecost.com>
- <http://youtu.be/GNQxMSMh5GI>