

What Did You Forget To Remember?

Bill Loveless

I sometimes struggle when I write letters because my thinking goes like this, “Lord, these folks know all that I know. They are probably living it more consistently than I am. Is there anything fresh and new that they haven’t heard?” As I was thinking those thoughts, the Lord brought to mind a phrase that Ian Thomas used, “The Bible is filled with people who forgot to remember.” So if you are one of those folks who forgets to remember, the following may be for you (and me)!

Jesus says in Matthew 11:28, “Come to Me all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” When I study this promise, the more I realize the eternal implications of the word “rest”. What does it mean to be weary and heavy-laden? We know, at least in part, that we can become weary and “unrestful” any time when we move from dependence to independence. Succumbing to our flesh, the power of sin, and Satan will always create weariness in our soul. However, I believe that we can have other forms of unrest that are not necessarily sin.

The number one issue of unrest that I see in myself and in most (all?) believers is this: We try to figure out what God is doing. I often hear questions like these: “When will I find relief from this situation? Will he or she ever change? I know Your promises, but how long will it take to break free of this stronghold? Will I ever break free? Lord, what are You doing in this situation?” I don’t know about you, but I can put some of these questions in my “soulical squirrel cage” and can spend hours, days, and weeks going round and round with such questions. The unrest is created when I can’t find an answer or when nothing seems to change. In some cases these unanswered questions can lead to fleshly behavior such as frustration, anxiety, insecurity, etc. If they don’t create fleshly behavior, they can at the very least create unrest in the soul.

I call this problem the “I Need To Know” or the “I Must Figure This Out” syndrome. This disorder has taken me from “I want to know” to “I NEED to know” to “I DEMAND to know!” Most of my struggle revolves around trying to figure out the ministry. I have struggled with trying to understand what God wants to accomplish and what His objectives are. It is a healthy struggle until I get to the place of “I need” or “I demand” to know. At that point I became weary and heavy-laden. During these times, great turmoil replaced His rest in me. However, the Lord, in His grace, finally broke through to me several months ago with these thoughts: “You will never figure it out, Bill. It is so vastly eternal you will never be able to wrap your Aggie brain around it. By the way, you are on what the military calls a “need to know” basis, and you don’t need to know unless I reveal it to you. What you need to do is to let me be God, enter into My rest, and know confidently that I know exactly what I am doing.”

Something very strange happened. I actually began to be okay with those thoughts. I slowly began to settle into the fact that unless God reveals it to me, I don’t necessarily need to know and understand what He is doing. It is much like when I was a four year old, and I was told we were going on a vacation. I had no idea what a vacation was, but when it came time to go, I got in the car and went. Why? It was because I trusted and obeyed my parents. They said that a vacation was a good thing, so I believed them.

The middle of Hebrews 11:6 says “...for those who come to God must believe that **He is**, ...” I love Paul’s words in this verse. Our part is to believe that He IS! He is what? He is in control, He knows exactly what He is doing, He is doing it (or not doing it) for our good, and He is

teaching us faith/dependence by not revealing to us what we so much want to understand. So what is it that we really need to understand? God is God. He makes the rules. He works in us and through us. He reveals to us what we need to know if and when it serves His purposes. Do I always like this? Not really, but what are my options? I can either enter into my soulful squirrel cage of weariness, or I can enter into the rest that comes from not knowing or understanding but knowing the One who does know exactly what He is doing.

Therefore, my encouragement to you (when the key to the ignition of your brain is turned on, and you start down that road of trying to figure out God) is to turn the key to the OFF position. Take a deep breath and rest in Him. In that rest you will have deeper revelation of this God within you Who loves you enough to not give you the answer so you will enjoy greater dependence upon Him. With that said, my advice to you is jump in the car and enjoy the vacation!

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Christ Is Life Ministries
cilm@christislifeministries.com
www.christislifeministries.com