

FINDING REST FOR OUR SOUL

Today is laundry day at my house and between loads, I'm sitting on my back porch enjoying the breezy and sunny weather, as well as God's bountiful nature around me. Actually, I get this awesome view of palm trees, azaleas, crape myrtles, and a vast prairie that extends way beyond the property line. This prairie – as I like to call it - was a gorgeous lake years ago. However, mainly because of its sandy bottom and the lack of rain over the years, parts of it are totally dry. So now, all I see from my house is this expansive area of grassland where buzzards, crows, and sand cranes come regularly searching for food.

As I take a deep breath, I impulsively look up at the immensity of the sky where clouds in different shapes and sizes are blown away to the east by strong winds. I am instantly brought back to my childhood, and the summer days when my friends and I would lay down on our back, watching the big fluffy clouds that looked like huge cotton balls. Our goal was to be the first one to find in them the most shapes – either a face or an animal of some kind - before they vanished into thin air. Ah, these were the carefree days! The times I didn't worry about anything because I knew that my father would take care of everything for me... And now, as I keep looking up, a bird with its large wings fully spread out glides effortlessly above me. Then others join in, and they all move through the air in a dance of their own. Watching them reminds me of a Psalm where the author wrote: "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and find rest." And I ask myself... would I want to have wings and fly away to find rest like the Psalmist wished for?

I ponder over this question, but then realize that I wouldn't. I'm very content keeping my two feet firmly planted on the ground, in spite of the fact that I would probably have a great view from up there! However, I'm sure that for some people, their answer would be an emphatic "YES!" And what would be their reason for it? Most of them would simply get a kick out of it! But others would probably find some kind of freedom, peace or joy that they don't have, but are desperately yearning for. For these people, perhaps life has never been kind to them...

It is true that the worries, anxieties, fears, struggles and trials we experience in life can be overwhelming at times, and finding rest and peace in the middle of this mayhem can be challenging. But Jesus gives us an answer to overcome them when He said: "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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." He also said: "Greater love has no one than this; that he lay down his life for his friends." And that's exactly what He did for us.

As I watch the birds of the air, and enjoy the beautiful scenery around me, I think of Jesus and believe that if He would be walking on this earth today, He would say the very same words He said to the crowds some two thousand years ago, as He taught them about God; oftentimes using nature as a way to explain spiritual truths...

"Look at the birds of the air, for they do not sow or reap or store away in barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' "Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father in heaven knows you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

As it happened to me today, God may choose these moments when we simply make time to be still - body and mind - to remind us of His constant presence in our lives. Oh, I understand we may not have

the luxury to do this on a regular basis when our daily schedule is always packed with different things to do, and the many responsibilities we have to assume. But when we do, we'll realize that these truths are really the only pathway to finding *lasting* rest for our souls. Oh, we may experience a certain kind of rest through other means, but it is only temporary, isn't it?

As a young mother, I felt this constant restlessness in my heart, and what frustrated me the most was that I couldn't pinpoint its source. I had two healthy babies at the time, a wonderful husband, and no justifiable reason to feel this way. Spiritually speaking, I honestly considered myself in good standing with God since I always did my best to observe His Ten Commandments, to follow the Golden Rule, and to attend church every Sunday which, in itself, didn't soothe at all my yearning heart. So, I slowly abandoned all religious practices I was raised on as a child, and flirted with eastern forms of mental disciplines including Transcendental Meditation and Yoga. But again, they offered only a temporarily relief, and I abandoned them altogether. However, I never stopped searching for this critical piece of the puzzle that was missing in my life...

Then one day, through unexpected series of events, God revealed Himself to me. I completely understood that neither religion, my good works, nor my own justification in front of a holy God had anything to do with His unconditional love for me. He had already proved His love for me in sending His only Son, Jesus, on this earth to die on a cross for me, a sinner, so I'd be reconciled with Him. In fact, He did it for anyone who believes in Him. So, it was with a deep conviction, and a contrite heart that I finally left my burdens at God's feet, and entrusted Him with my life. That was the very beginning of a love story between Him and me... From thereon, my life was transformed in so many ways, but one thing I can say is that I never felt this restlessness again. Praise God!

My search for that missing piece of the puzzle was finally over. God gave me a new purpose in life. My priorities and goals changed, and raising my family became the most admirable, and fulfilling mission I've ever had. I had put God first in my life. In doing so, He promised me peace amidst turmoil; wisdom to guide me through the complexities of life; courage in the face of adversity; hope when everything seems to fall apart, and to provide for all my needs. But most importantly, that He would always be with me in this life, and beyond. By His grace, God touched my heart, and I am so grateful that He did.

Jesus said, "Ask, and you will receive... Search, and you will find... Knock, and the door will be opened to you..." So, if you're seeking for this lasting rest, first ask yourself this simple question: "How desperately do I want it?" If you search for it as you would for a precious treasure, then ask God to lead you on the right path to find it. I sincerely believe that He will answer you. I am living proof of that!

<https://MyWalksWithGod.com>