

Daily Update Dec 9th

Hello Everyone,

I hope you are well. As we get closer to Christmas, in spite of the extra planning we will have to do, Christmas does play an important part in our sense of belonging, by celebrating and inevitably, taking a break and resting together. We cannot go long without food, rest or sleep. It is important to our very being and we do not function well if we do not rest. In fact the longest anyone has very gone without sleep is just over eleven days, but they started hallucinating after four days!

Our need for a deeper rest is central to Jesus' message to us. If John 3:16 summarises the Bible, then Matt 11:27-30 summarises the message of Matthew's gospel, rooted in Moses's relationship with God, Ex 33:12-13 in which he prays, "You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favour with me.' If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favour with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

The Psalmist, David, exhorts us to remember this.

*He made known his ways to Moses,  
his deeds to the people of Israel:  
The Lord is compassionate and gracious,  
slow to anger, abounding in love.  
He will not always accuse,  
nor will he harbour his anger forever;  
he does not treat us as our sins deserve  
or repay us according to our iniquities.  
For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
so great is his love for those who fear him;  
as far as the east is from the west,  
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

Ps 103:8-13

When Jesus states that no-one knows Son except the Father, he is showing how far people were from knowing God. The burdens of life, sin and the pharisaic law all weighed people down so they could not find God. They lived with unrealistic expectations and a false view of God, not based on love, but on law and duty.

So Jesus, by God's grace, makes known to others what the Father has made known to him - that all things, all truth, meaning, life, purpose, understanding, forgiveness, salvation - those things longed for by prophets of the past, are revealed in Jesus Christ. His teaching, example and self giving, even on the cross, reveal the love the Father has for his people.

It is possible then, that through the Son we can know the Father's love drawing us back to him, in order that we know him as our heavenly Father. This is through understanding and obeying Jesus's words, example and accepting his promise of life through taking up his

yoke. Although no yoke is truly easy, Jesus explains that compared to the burden of the pharisaic law, a life of unforgiven sin, life with him brings rest to our very souls. The word Jesus used, ἀνάπαυσις, [anapausis] also means refreshment, not just for now, but for the future. An ongoing refreshment and encouragement. When we rest in God's acceptance and love, we find refreshment for life. This is what Moses prayed, that he could know God's ways, in all circumstances. For us, that means that in our relationship of love with God, we can also find refreshment for our souls in all sorts of situations. Every day.

So I wonder what rest with God could bring you today. What might some of our burdens, our sin, anxieties, our false expectations of God, or ourselves look like if we spent time in God's presence, and took up Jesus' way?