**Lesson: Be Still My Soul**

 Have you been restless inside where you can’t sit still? Have you felt overwhelmed with current or future events, or maybe hung-up on past ones? Do you wake up at night worrying about stuff that you can’t do anything about until morning? Do your thoughts race through your head like it’s the Indianapolis 500? Yeah, me too. We all get agitated and impatient sometimes. This also was the case for many biblical figures. Take David, a man after God’s own heart (ACT 13:22), who was often unsettled within his heart and soul; the anointed king spent a great part of his life on the run from his enemies. When he was disquieted in his soul, he turned to the only source of solace available, the Lord God. This uneasiness is evident in many of his psalms when he sought the loving arms of His heavenly Father.

* PSA 4:4 ~ Stand in awe, and sin not. Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.
* PSA 42:11; PSA 43:5 ~ Why are you cast down, oh my soul? Why are you unsettled within me? Hope in God, and praise Him. He is my God, the health of my soul.
* PSA 46:1–2,8–10 ~ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth be removed or the mountains be thrown into the midst of the sea. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He has made in the earth. He makes wars to cease, He breaks the bow and the spear in two, and burns the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth.
* PSA 107:27–30 ~ They reel to-and-fro, staggering like a drunkard, and at their wit’s end. Then they cry to the Lord in their trouble and He brings them out of their distress. He calms the storm and makes the waves still. Then they are happy because they are quiet, while He brings them into their desired haven.
* PSA 131:1–3 ~ Lord, my heart is not arrogant nor my eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in grandiose matters or in things too high for me. I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child weaned by his mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth, even forevermore.

Don’t you feel troubled in your heart at times, even to your very soul? Who doesn’t? We have challenges and setbacks and we want them to go away. But they will pass soon enough so why do we worry endlessly? Does worrying do anyone any good? Apparently not according to Jesus (MAT 6:34). But anxiety and stress seem to be a universal state of mind for the whole of humanity. Yet, God is always there to comfort us (2 CO 1:3; HEB 13:5). And no matter what happens, we are guaranteed salvation of our souls, as we look forward to our inheritance of eternal bliss and peace. While our minds are restless, we can find rest in the Lord, and He will calm our nerves and give us peace of mind (MAT 11:28).

* JOB 21:22–26 ~ Will anyone teach God knowledge seeing how He judges at the highest level? One man dies in his full strength, being wholly quiet and at ease; his body is nourished and his bones strong. Another man dies in bitterness of soul, and never eats with enjoyment. They will both lie down in the dust, covered by worms.
* PRO 1:33 ~ Whoever calls to me will live safely, and will be quiet from fear of evil.
* ISA 30:15 ~ The sovereign Lord of host says, “In repentance and rest you will be saved; in quietness and trust you will find strength. But you refused it.”
* ISA 32:17–18 ~ With the work of righteousness comes peace; the effect of righteousness is calmness and assurance forever. My people will live in peaceful habitations, and in quiet resting places.

Remember when Jesus calmed the storm? His disciples were wrought with fear by the raging storm and violent waves, while Jesus slept. They roused Him out of His slumber believing they were about to die. And with an authoritative voice Jesus said, “Peace, be still.” Immediately there was calm (MAR 4:39). The disciples were even more afraid of Jesus, saying amongst themselves, “What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the waves obey Him?” (MAR 4:41). Well, at least they got it right as to whom they should fear, and it certainly was not earthly events or persons (MAT 10:28).

Our focus should be on Jesus, not the raging storm. It is likewise important to look to the inward self not to dwell on external situations or appearances. What is going on outside of you is not as significant as what is going on inside of you. That is, you are responsible for how you think, feel, and react which need not be influenced unduly by others or circumstances. Such is life, but how we respond should be spiritually focused; it is counterproductive to have the emotional or physical reaction dominate one’s thoughts. We have the power of the Holy Spirit living inside of us, so what can the world throw at us that we should be afraid? Does God not promise to give us everything we need (PSA 23).

* 1 TH 4:11–12 ~ Study to be quiet and to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands as we have told you, so that you may gain the respect of others while depending on nobody.
* 1 TI 2:1–2 ~ I encourage you to offer supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all people, including rulers and all who are in authority, so that you can live a quiet and undisturbed life in godliness and honesty.
* 1 PE 3:4 ~ Tap into your inner self, where resides the beautiful heart of a humble and quiet spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God.

The soul is your inner self, which knows what is right, recognizes truth, and will be cleansed of sin by the blood of Christ if you so desire (PSA 103:1–5); God will bless your soul by purifying it, and in that state it will remain forever once you begin trusting in Him. When we are troubled into the depths of our souls, we are letting the world get in the way of the Way of God, obscuring the path to righteousness. Everything in the world will pass (REV 21:1–5), and none of it is too complicated for God to turn into good. Your suffering is in vain; pain, anxiety, and sorrow will be done away with, because the price is already paid.

You must look beyond the hurdles to see the finish line. No matter how long it takes for you to complete the race, you can be comforted in the knowledge that a crown awaits. There is only one first prize: all who choose Christ will receive a Crown of Life. This is a spiritual crown, where the heads of God’s faithful are adorned by the righteousness of Christ; meanwhile, all worldly crowns will be thrown down at His feet (PSA 72:11; REV 4:10–11).

* PSA 146:1–2 ~ Praise the Lord oh my soul. As long as I live, I will praise the Lord for the duration of my being.
* 2 TI 4:7–8 ~ I have fought the good fight, finished my course, and kept the faith. Henceforth, a crown of righteousness awaits, which the Lord the righteous judge will present to me. And not only to me but also to anyone who loves His appearing.

Many renditions can be found for the famous hymn, “Be Still My Soul” which translated into modern English explains how we should believe God in order to receive the rest and peace He guarantees. He is our shield, our strength, and our comforter; His Holy Spirit abides with us always (MAT 18:20). Isn’t it curious how we can know the peace that surpasses all understanding (PHP 4: 6–7) and then quickly be distracted by incidents, people, and society? How nice it would be to see the hoard of angels protecting us, if not the Spirit of God Himself; in which case it would be very hard to become preoccupied with the physical world. But you must look with your spirit to visualize it. But we get sidetracked every day, not remaining mindful that the God of the universe is right here.

* 2 KI 6:17 ~ Elisha prayed, “Lord, open my friend’s eyes.” And the man saw that the mountain was covered with horses and chariots of fire all around them.
* PSA 34:7 ~ The angel of the Lord encamps with those who fear God, and will deliver them.
* HEB 1:14; HEB 13:2 ~ Are there not ministering angels sent forth to assist those who are heirs of salvation? Do not forget to be hospitable to others, for you might be entertaining angels unawares.

I have been working in the field of behavioral health for decades. It is obvious that anxiety and depression are the most prevailing symptoms. These are, of course, states of mind. Unlike personality traits that are quite resistant to change, emotional states are temporal; they come and they go. For some, those feelings may linger, developing into mental problems that necessitate therapy and medication. Of course, a spoonful of God’s love works better than any clinical intervention, which is why I incorporated spirituality into my practice. Not surprisingly, clients got better faster when they agreed to spiritual goals being included in the treatment plan. In short, the more mindful we are of God’s presence in our lives, the lower our stress level: the stress occurs less often and is less severe. This is not rocket science, but it is scriptural. Do not lose heart (PRO 4:23; LUK 18:18), for someday you will see God (JOB 19:26; MAT 5:8).

* PSA 55:22 ~ Cast your burden on the Lord for He will sustain the righteous; He will never let them down.
* PSA 94:19 ~ Among the troubling thoughts within my soul, I find delight in your comfort.
* ISA 41:10 ~ Do not fear for I am with you; do not be dismayed. I am your God and I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you and uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness.
* MAT 6:34 ~ Take no thought of tomorrow for it will take care of itself. Sufficient to every day is the evil therein.
* JOH 14:27~ Jesus said, “Peace I leave you, my peace I give you. I do not give as the world gives so let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid.”
* 2 CO 4:15–18 ~ Everything is for your sake, that the abundant grace of God through our giving of thanks might rebound, reflecting His glory. For such a cause we do not faint or lose heart; while outwardly we are inundated, inwardly we are renewed daily. Our menial troubles are building an eternal fortune in glory. We do not look upon things that are seen but that which is not seen; things you can see are temporal but those you cannot see are eternal.
* 1 PE 5:6–7 ~ Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so He might exalt you in due time. Cast your cares upon Him, for He cares mightily about you.

It all boils down to patience, waiting until the right time; because God’s timing is perfect. We either want it now when are not ready, or we want to put it off when it is already in front of us. If we try to force the issue or if we try to avoid it, it will not go away until it’s the right time; and when it has passed and no longer a threat, we wonder why we worried so much about it in the first place, especially since it seldom is what we expected. So, wait and see what happens and you will probably be pleasantly surprised.

* PSA 37:7–10 ~ Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Do not fret about those who prosper or about people who promote wickedness. Refrain from anger and forsake rage. Do not succumb to evil of any kind. For evildoers will be cut off. But those who wait upon the Lord will inherit the world. In a little while the wicked will no longer exist; you will not find them anywhere.
* PSA 130:5–6 ~ I wait for the Lord, my soul waits; and in His Word I will hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning.
* LAM 3:26 ~ It is good for a person to hope quietly and wait patiently for the salvation of the Lord.
* ISA 40:31 ~ Those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary; they will walk and never faint.
* ROM 8:25 ~ If we hope for what we do not have we must patiently wait for it.
* ROM 12:12 ~ Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

Did you recognize the spiritual gifts mentioned in this lesson which will help you overcome thoughts like despair, depression, disappointment, and dejection? Spiritual treasures are readily available to everybody, provided free via the Holy Spirit. Here are the aforementioned gifts listed alphabetically so as not to imply that any one is less important or necessary: calmness, comfort, faith, godliness (godly fear), honesty, hope, humility, joy, love, mindfulness, patience, peacefulness, praise, prayer, quietness, rejoicing, repentance, restfulness, righteousness, stillness, trust. If you want to feel at ease within your soul tap into your higher powers, all of which you already possess, you merely have to employ them. They will conquer the negativity and replace it with positivity because they come from God and are greater in power than their opposite (for example, peace conquers anxiety, joy conquers depression, and mindfulness conquers uncertainty).

Simply put, think positive. How do we do that? Think on the spiritual fruit itemized above (PHP 4:8). Don’t dwell on things that can bring you down; focus on things which can lift you up, because they are true. Thus, you can place truth high on your list of uplifting things, whereas anything that does not comport with truth results in adversity. And what is truth if not the Holy Spirit Himself (JOH 14:16–17; JOH 16:13)? So walk in it (PSA 86:11), and don’t let the world obscure your vision of the path to heaven (JOH 14:6).

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