

REST

It is an exciting time of year. People are bubbling in spirit with excitement. But, it is also a hectic time of the year. There are festivities like parties, activities, and merry gatherings. This is preceded by much shopping, preparing food, and wrapping presents. There is the stress and exhaustion of obeying the customs and traditions, styles of dress, expectations of home cleanliness and beauty of decor, not to mention what gift to get everyone (including the extra gifts for the random uncle or cousin who might show up unannounced).

While all that is loads of fun, truth be told, it all makes me want to lay down and take a long winter's nap. If I had an animal I most closely related with during this season, it would appropriately be a hibernating bear.

In all seriousness, rest is essential. Whether this season is driven by upbeat celebration or weary obligation, it is busy and exhausting. And the fast-paced nature of the next month or so reminds us that we need rest.

Remember the Sabbath? Mankind tends to run himself ragged and lose focus on what is most important. Rest isn't a friendly suggestion; it is an overt statement of what we should do. It is something we were created to do. When we trust the Lord as our shepherd, he commands us to rest.

Psalm 23:2a

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

Moreover, rest is something that can only happen in his presence.

Exodus 33:14

And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:29

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

When was the last time you rested? When did you last allow the Lord to guide you down onto the green pastures? When was the last time you found rest for your soul?

Let me ask it differently:

When was the last time you put your phone down for an hour?

When was the last time you cleared the schedule?

When was the last time you sat in stillness and prayer for more than 5 minutes?

When was the last time you were quietly alone with the Word of God with no distractions?

Rest is important. Remember to make time for it. Run to the shelter of the Lord (Psalm 32:7) and find your rest there.

Wishing you the Hap, Hap, Happiest of Christmases

Shalom,

Ryan

Psalm 4:8

In peace I will both lie down and sleep;

for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.