

Peace in the Tumult — Three Resources of the Soul

Ministry · November 15, 2020

Tumult — Then and Now

Acts 19 describes a riot in Ephesus so large and disorderly that the writer notes most in the crowd did not know why they had come together. They had seized two of Paul's companions and filled the city with confusion. This was not exceptional in the ancient world; two thousand years of history since then have shown it was not exceptional in any age. In Matthew 27, the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowds to demand Barabbas and destroy Jesus. Pilate saw that a tumult was arising — implacable, unreasoning, demanding. The Lord stood beside him at peace.

He stood at peace not because His circumstances were comfortable — He was about to be crucified — but because He knew all things were in the Father's hands. Earlier He had slept in the boat while the waves threatened to swamp it and the disciples were terrified. They had to go down and shake Him awake. That is peace: not the absence of tumult around, but the absence of it within, because the soul rests in the Father's governance of all things.

And there is another kind of tumult that modern life has added: an attention span shortened to fifteen seconds by the constant stimulation of devices, each notification pulling the mind away before any thought has time to settle. The soul that is always in motion cannot meditate. But it is meditation that produces the peace the Lord described — His own peace, left with us when He ascended.

Silence in Heaven — The Solemnity of God's Righteous Judgment

Revelation 8:1 gives one of the most striking verses in Scripture: when the seventh seal was opened, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. Heaven's myriad host fell silent as God's wrath was about to be poured out upon the earth. Do we ever stop and think about that — not for fifteen seconds but for something approaching that half hour — about the judgments God is going to bring?

At the great white throne there will be no tumult either. Billions will stand there, and not one will speak in their defence. In the Lord's parable, the man without a wedding garment was asked how he got in, and he was speechless. The feature of that final scene will be silence — the silence of those who have no answer before the righteousness of God, before they are cast into eternal darkness. We work beside people every day who will be in that silent multitude. The solemnity of that is something to sit and think about, unhurried.

Salvation is of Jehovah; thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah. — Psalm 3:8

And on the other side, Psalm 3:8: salvation is of Jehovah, thy blessing is upon thy people — pause, and consider. We will not be in that silent throng. The Lord Jesus was made sin, was forsaken by God in those three hours of darkness, so that we would never be. He went through the garden of Gethsemane, through the cross, through death, so that I would not stand there without a word to say. The peace that flows from meditating on these two things — the solemnity of righteous judgment on the wicked, and the grace of God in what the Lord Jesus passed through for us — is not a peace the world can give or take away.

Three Resources — A Threefold Cord Not Easily Broken

John 14:27 gives us the Lord's own peace — not the peace He made for us with God (He had no need of that for Himself), but the peace He had in all His circumstances, the peace of complete submission to and communion with His

Father. He left it with us. And there are three things He has provided that are the practical means by which that peace becomes ours.

First: your Father knoweth. Matthew 6:8 — your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him. This is not limited to physical or material needs. It includes the needs of our souls in the midst of turmoil. The Lord Jesus walked through His whole ministry knowing that the Father knew. He knew what was coming in Gethsemane, at the cross, on the third day. That knowledge — that the Father knows — was part of His peace. It is ours too.

Second: the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. Romans 8:26–27 — we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. In the middle of my anxiety and groaning, the Spirit is making groanings for me which cannot be expressed in words. That is worth stopping and thinking about. What kind of intercession is the Spirit making for me right now, in this moment, on behalf of my need? He is in me, and He is groaning for me. All things work together for good to them that love God — and behind that promise is this unceasing intercession.

Third: He ever liveth to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:24–25 — because He continueth ever, He hath an unchangeable priesthood, and He is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession. Our great high priest, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens — He never ceases. There is no moment of inattention, no failure in His priesthood, no point at which He lays that office down. He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

A threefold cord is not quickly broken. The Father knows. The Spirit intercedes with groanings that cannot be uttered. The Son ever lives to make intercession. Meditate upon these things — give yourself wholly to them, as Paul said to Timothy. If we did, we would know more of that peace that passes all understanding, the peace the Lord left with us when He went to the Father.

