

Spiritual Relaxation
Isaiah 30: 15-18
5/30/10

How do you find peace and quiet in a busy, hectic, and demanding life?

Interviews

Ten years ago I was spending some time with my good friend, Brad, in Montreat, NC. I thought I could find some peace and quiet at his home in the mountains but my mind traffic would not slow down. He had the solution – a solo. He took me out in the woods and left me. There I sat amidst the trees, dirt floor, and running stream for two days. No phone, watch, radio, or connection to the world – all alone! It took me several hours to settle down and rest with my thoughts. I reflected deeply on my life in the quietness of the woods.

Isaiah tells the people of God that rest and quietness are the keys to salvation. The Assyrians were threatening to attack the people. The prophet Isaiah told the people to trust in God. The Lord would take care of them. God's word to them was:

In repentance and rest is your salvation
In quietness and trust is your strength.

Repentance is a word that describes returning to God for help and direction. It involves humility and trust. It usually involves turning away from sin and turning to God for forgiveness. It often means reorienting one's life and letting go of things one once depended upon – things like money, position, and authority or people's advice and resources.

An example of repentance is changing your mind which involves admitting you were wrong. When I was playing soccer in high school, I collided with the goalie and hurt a muscle in the back. The doctor gave me some simple exercises. I thought I knew better and did not do the exercises. I continue to have back problems through half of the season. It never healed. I finally decided to take the doctor's advice and do the exercises. Guess what...my muscles healed and I ended up having the best soccer season of my life.

I changed my mind and followed the doctor's orders. Repentance is changing our mind about who is trustworthy and trusting the Lord Jesus Christ.

The rest and quietness means stopping activity to save ourselves. Sometimes our minds are going so fast we don't listen to what people are saying to us. God's guidance is blurred because of our noisy minds and busy lives. We think we are more qualified to handle our situations. When we are relying on other people or ourselves, we will never experience the rest that God offers.

That was the problem described in our passage this morning. The Assyrians were threatening to attack God's people. Instead of trusting God's word through the prophet, they decided to rely on Egypt to help. Egypt had fast horses and strong armies. God tells them their attackers will be faster and stronger than any hired mercenary.

Human help will lead to loneliness and destruction. God's advice for his people stops trying to save yourselves and return to me. Cease your busy, chaotic activity and trust me to care for you. The quietness God offers is the absence of panic and restlessness.

Jesus ... invites us to his rest (Matthew 11:28)