

We are in the season of vacations.... People look fwd to their vacations for many reasons... a chance to get away ... see new things.... experience new adventures....

For most, they are hoping that a new environment... and a relaxing pace.... with help them actually REST up from the strain and turmoil of daily life....

Isn't that the goal of your vacation? A little slice of JOYFUL REST.....?

What you may not know is that God has a plan for that to happen for you on a regular basis .... rather than just once / year....

Just as parents delight to go into the room of their small child and watch them sleeping....

Your Father in heaven wants you to be able to have **Joyful Rest**

We are coming from Psalm 4 (A Psalm of David) – one that Israelites probably sang or recited in the evening....

Most believe it was written....when David was a **fugitive** in his own land....

God had already anointed him King of Israel..... but Saul (and his choice officers) were chasing him about the country.... seeking to kill him out of **jealousy**.....

Our plight is somewhat similar as those who have been anointed children of the King.... through the gospel.....

Our enemy plagues us day and night.... with condemnation... guilt... worry and fear.... likewise out of **jealousy**.....

That is ONE reason you sometimes have trouble sleeping.....

In the midst of all those enemies..... your Father wants you to **rest** ....peacefully satisfied in the fullness of joy in Jesus Christ..... just like David did... by faith in Who God is.....and in what He has said about you ...His dear child.

#### **Psalm 4:1-8**

1 " Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!  
You have given me relief when I was in distress.  
Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

2 O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies?

- 3 But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.
- 4 Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent.
- 5 Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD.
- 6 There are many who say, "Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!"
- 7 You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.
- 8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety."

David's **circumstances** were **not** restful..... he was in great danger.....

He was not comfortable,.... he was likely either in a cave..... or under a rock somewhere...in the wilderness....

Yet... he declared that the LORD was his safety ...so he could peacefully lie down and sleep....

If **you** are able to get a good night's sleep on a regular basis.... it is probable that you take that rest for granted.....

But Scripture tells us that the need for both physical and spiritual **rest** is something God has designed into the very fabric of humanity.... and that sleep (in particular) is a **gift** from Him to His beloved children...

Because we all **WANT** that gift..... let's look in detail at how David describes and proclaims it as being HIS...

### Joyful Rest

#### 1. Comes Through Confident Prayer

"Now I lay me down to sleep.... I pray the Lord my soul to keep... and if I die... before I wake...I pray the Lord my soul to take....

Is **THAT** confident prayer? I suppose it could be.... but most often it is used like **charm**.... a ritual that (if you say it) is supposed to give you peace...

But Joyful Rest never comes through rituals.... or charms... it comes through **confident trust** in the reality that the God who controls every atom of reality is listening to you talk to Him..... because of who you are in relationship to His Son.

Listen to that confidence as David prays:

1a **Answer** me when I call, O **God of my righteousness!**

David's heart is **not quiet** at this point.... it is **desperate!** Have you ever been in a dire situation.... and you need to get a hold of someone on the phone..... and the phone just rings and rings....

Without even thinking you cry out..... Answer the phone! (as if they can hear you)...

David is calling on God (like that here) to answer His plea..... based on Who God has made him to be...

## **Joyful Rest**

### **1. Comes through Confident Prayer**

How can I be confident when I pray...?

#### **A. Declare Your New Identity**

This is probably no surprise to you..... but God .....has **Caller ID**....

When you pray....your **Identity** accompanies that prayer.....

If you are still in your sin..... unrepentant..... and unwilling to obey the great call of the gospel.... to **lay down** your sin and come take up your cross and follow Jesus....

Then you are **not** on God's **Friend list**..... and He will not answer your prayer....

That is... until you **repent**.

But if... by the grace of God.... you are a **New** Creation in Christ Jesus.....

If by grace you have been saved through faith.... the old has passed away...and all things in your soul have been made new through the gospel....

Then you are no longer standing on the outside of Heaven's Gate in your filthy rags.... pushing the call button..... hoping someone will answer.....

The LORD is **now your righteousness**.....

He has clothed you with the royal wardrobe of His spotless Son.....

The obedience that Jesus learned through suffering.....that resulted in a PERFECT human life.....

Has now been **credited** to you as RIGHTEOUSNESS.... as you believe in the God who freely gives you that gift....

Just like Abraham..... just like David.....

- So you can CONFIDENTLY cry out..... I am calling on you.... God of my righteousness.... ANSWER me!

The God who **vindicates** me before my **accusers**..... who has separated my sin as far as the east is from the west.....

Hear me when I call!

Be confident the God who gave you His Son.... will also (in Christ Jesus) FREELY give you all things....

You are on His Friend List..... He put you there... as a gift of grace.....

When you pray.....the name.... **Child of God**..... shows up on the Caller ID... in heaven.... and Jesus answers the phone and takes your requests before the Father.....

**ALL** of them..... even the ones that are so painful... they come out as groans...

It glorifies God for you to **be confident** in that **new identity**.....

And it will help you to be confident by DECLARING that God is your righteousness... as you pray....

Conversely.... it does **NOT** glorify or honor God.... when one of His children.... whom He has clothed in His royal garments.... is still standing on the **outside** of the palace.... wallowing in his own shortcomings.....and doubting whether God will answer his call.....

James says let not that man think he will receive anything when he prays.... because he is doubleminded..... (he says he believes God.... but he operates as if he does not)..

David was confident God would answer... because of Who God had made David to be...through faith in His Word...

Ever much MORE so than David.... you can be confident...God hears your prayer...

ALL of you who are in Christ... have had God answer at least ONE significant prayer in your life..... (right)?

because He saved you when you called .....

1b You have given me relief when I was in distress.  
**Be gracious** to me and hear my prayer!

But for most of you... that was only the beginning of countless times where you have been between a rock and a hard place....where you felt backed into a corner....with no where to Go...

And God LIBERATED you ...to freely enjoy the **broad place** of the **goodness** of the children of God....

That is the exact language David is using here.... he is remembering times in the past when he was in distress... and God delivered him.....

Based on God's faithfulness both to David and to his forefathers..... David has confidence to ask God to have **PITY** on him... and HEAR his prayer!

That is the ESSENCE of believing prayer..... based on God's faithfulness to His people.... and to His Name..... you can come **BOLDLY** to the throne of Grace...

Not because of what you've done..... but because you KNOW He is a God who shows **MERCY** ..... He gives **GRACE** to the humble....

He will hear your prayer (even now...)

In **v. 2**, David begins to speak to his enemies as if they are present with him....(because in a spiritual sense) the condemnation of their voices was ringing in his ears....

He speaks to them with authority... **BECAUSE** he has a **clear conscience**...and he knows he is standing on the truth...

but he finishes his rebuke of them.... by declaring his new identity....just like you should....

#### **Psalm 4:3**

"But know that the LORD has **set apart** the godly for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him."

The wording here is rich... because it is the same language used when God **set apart** Israel in the midst of Egypt.... when the plagues passed through the land destroying everything.... but Not ONE of Israel's livestock were affected.....

because God chose to make a **DISTINCTION**....b/t what was HIS and what was not...

Same language used when the angel of death passed over Egypt killing every first born... but not even a dog barked at the sons of Israel... b/c God had **set them apart** for himself...

Why? B/c they were better..... **Nope**... B/c God had chosen to set His steadfast love upon them and make them His own...

In the same way God has demonstrated His choice to set you apart by bringing you the gospel... and giving you grace to hear... and to believe....

He has set you apart for Himself..... so He hears when His beloved ones call.

But it gets even better!

When he says that God has set apart **the godly** for himself.... don't be fooled into thinking he means those who earn their way to such a position....

The Hebrew word (godly) is literally the adjective form of the OT word for **grace** (steadfast love)...

ESV study Bible says..

“ This term, variously rendered “godly,” “saint,” “faithful one,” and “holy one” in the Psalms, refers to those who have genuinely **laid hold of God's steadfast love**; here it is singular, to stress that each faithful member of the people may have this **confidence**.”

What does that type of grace ...that unending love...motivate you to do?

Your flesh will try to twist it so that you become complacent..... wheew... don't have to worry about sin anymore.... lets go party!

But if you truly LAY HOLD of just who God has made you to be....(godly)... it will make you want to ENTER in to His presence in prayer... with confidence...

So that in His presence.... through Jesus Christ.... you will find **REST** for your weary soul.

2<sup>nd</sup> means of Praying Confidently....

## **B. Refuse Satan any Opportunity**

What David is experiencing is **unjust**..... He does not deserve it..... He has not done anything wrong....

So...as he lays down to try and sleep..... He begins to feel the **strong irritation** of injustice.... as he begins to think about how wrong people are doing him....

- Are you familiar with that??

“This is **NOT fair**” is the first seed planted in his mind.....

**ANGER** is knocking at the door..... it is right around the corner.....**LURKING**..... ready to fuel his emotions like wind does to a forest fire....

David can **FEEL** it....first his heart begins to quake....pulsate.... He is **trembling** inside...(most literal translation of this word – “anger”)

Just like GOD first told Cain..... this **anger** is crouching at the door like **Lion**... but you must rule over it.....

It is our arch ENEMY called SIN..... it is in league with the one who comes to steal, kill and DESTROY...

And it wants to take advantage of your vulnerability..... as you open up your soul to God...

Paul rightly said.... Don't give the devil an **opportunity**.....

GOD....in His mercy... gives David a Word to conquer this rising volcano of anger... and what David hears whispered in his ear.... He proclaims out loud to us...

#### **Psalm 4:4**

"Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. "

When you are boiling water....you don't need a thermometer to tell you when what is in the pan is approaching 212 degrees..... **LONG before** the water is furiously bubbling over onto the stove....the steam makes little bubbles around the edge....

then a few at a time begin to surface in the middle.....

Your **heart** is the same way..... it does not go from calm to a **raging boil** in an instant....

If you have a short fuse it is because you are allowing anger to simmer just below the boiling mark all the time.... it only takes a little added heat to put you over the top...

God says.... when those bubbles of anger **first** start to show...you have not yet sinned.... you are **IRRITATED**.... but recognize that if you do not take action to

conquer it.... you will erupt into a **BOIL** .... and your heart will rage against everyone and everything .... INCLUDING the Lord.

How can I be angry and not sin?

- Knowing that sin... is not an option.... **eliminate** that response from your list....

Instead... **BE STILL** before the Lord....

**stop** formulating all the vengeful plans....

Be Silent and **PONDER the reality** that whoever is sinning against you (as the chosen of God) is actually picking a fight with God...

#### **Isaiah 54:15-17**

"If anyone stirs up strife, it is not from me; whoever stirs up strife with you shall fall because of you. Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy; **no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed**, and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their vindication from me, declares the LORD."

As you are tempted to get angry and plot your own revenge against your circumstances.....

Remember **Who** you are.... and the One who said that whoever touches you..... pokes their finger in the apple of my eye.....

I always wanted an older brother..... someone to take up for me when the big kids were picking on me....

What is your response to the REALITY.... that God Himself is offended whenever you are wronged?

- What is **your** response to that truth?

Does it make a **practical** difference in the way you think about whatever is assailing you **right now**?

Your response should be an overwhelming desire to **enter into WORSHIP** of a God who would bring you into the **safety** of His loving presence.....

#### **Psalm 4:5**

"Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD."

Because Jesus **has** been sacrificed for our sin..... the sacrifice **WE** bring before the Lord is one of continual praise and thanksgiving for what **He** has accomplished....

- Are you tracking with what God is saying here?

As you lay down to rest.....

- 1) Begin to **CALL** upon the Lord.... make it your habit to begin praying even before your head hits the pillow..... don't wait for some worry to take center stage..
- 2) **EXPECT** God to answer you because of Who HE has made you to be in Christ Jesus... (you are righteous in His sight)
- 3) As you begin to consider whatever circumstance you are in...learn to...**RECOGNIZE anger**..... before it starts to boil.....turn away from it
- 4) **ENTRUST** your soul into the **CARE** of Almighty God....
- 5) Offer up the **sacrifice of praise**.... (out loud!) The fruit of lips that give THANKS to your redeemer.... your rescuer.... to the ONE in whom you can find REST for your soul....

## Joyful Rest

### 2. Is Independent of your Circumstances

Everyone wants a **GOOD** life.... In fact there is more energy spent in America on chasing after the GOOD life... than anything else....

So you aren't necessarily a Christian just because you want God to bless your circumstances.... even David's enemies called upon Jehovah to do that....

#### Psalm 4:6

"There are many who say, "**Who will show us some good?** Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!"

Can you recognize that cry? That is the cry of every human heart..... Who will **do me good?** THAT is where **I will go** to get my needs met....

That is the cry of the CONSUMER within you..... whoever has the best deal... I'm going.....

Whoever can help me succeed..... **however** I can get my goals accomplished....

Oh... **God** can do that? Bring him on..... shine your face upon my circumstances O LORD! "Did I say it right???"

Jesus said you are not going to **find peace in your circumstances**....

If you are waiting around for your marriage to be **rosy**..... or the environment at work to like a taste of heaven.....

you are looking in the wrong place....

Here is the LORD's promise to us who follow him during this life....

**John 16:33**

"I have said these things to you, that in **me** you may have peace. **In the world you will have tribulation**. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

**Stop** seeking to find rest in your circumstances..... that will not happen until Jesus returns.....

You are at **war**..... with your own flesh ... and with a world who hates Christ....

**JESUS** is your Peace.... seek to find rest in the attributes of His person.....

Seek the LORD **Himself**... instead of what He can do for you.....

David did **that**.... and there in the midst of the worst circumstance he could imagine.... where he is not even sure he is going to **live** to see tomorrow....

He says:

**Psalm 4:7**

"You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound."

**Prosperity** is only a temporary gift of God..... (give thanks for it).... but don't expect that temporal joy to have power to carry you through ANY trial... or to give you peace in the midst of a storm....

**Jesus** is our JOY! He desires that you have **fullness** of JOY... in fellowship with Him and His Father through the Holy Spirit!

**ENTER into His joy**.....ask Him to fill you with His very PERSON..... that your joy may be FULL.

That is better than ANY **buzz**..... that any rush of success..... than any pride of life....

Best of all..... with your heart consumed with His joy..... you can **REST in His arms**:

**Psalm 4:8**

"In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in **safety**."

When you lie down on your bed.... your muscles no longer have the responsibility of holding you up.... your mind doesn't have to consider any activity your hands might be involved in..... your body is in an INACTIVE state....

But there is a lot of difference between **lying down**.... and actually sleeping.....

**INSECURITY** is what robs you of sleep.....

You don't know what the future holds..... and you can not rest because you feel like there is something you should be **doing about it**.....

If you are not in control.... who knows what will happen?

Hear this.....

GOD is an impenetrable fortress.....a strong tower....which no enemy of yours can permeate...or even touch....

And He offers you that **REFUGE**..... to enter into REST....

Where you can dwell **SECURELY**.....

GOD Himself is your PEACE..... He is your DEFENDER.....

He is your PROVIDER..... That is why we call Him Father.

David did not have a cushy pillow....he was on hard ground.... hiding in some rocky cleft or in a cave.... it gets cold in the desert at night....and there was no **digital thermostat** nearby....

Yet, he declared CONFIDENTLY .... that he could BOTH lie down **AND** sleep.....

Because the LORD Himself was His peace.... the LORD Himself was filling his heart with JOY from His presence....

The MEANS of you finding REST for both your body and soul.... is to seek to be satisfied and filled with the fullness of **Jesus ALONE**....

It is your Father's will for you to have **JOYFUL** REST.....

- Will you ask Him for it? (bow your heads)

Some of you... even now... need to learn to cease STRIVING... and KNOW that I am God.....

Believe..... trust..... **REST.**