

USED

Isaiah 30:15-18

¹⁵ This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says:

“In repentance and rest is your salvation,
in quietness and trust is your strength,
but you would have none of it.

¹⁶ You said, ‘No, we will flee on horses.’

Therefore you will flee!

You said, ‘We will ride off on swift horses.’

Therefore your pursuers will be swift!

¹⁷ A thousand will flee

at the threat of one;

at the threat of five

you will all flee away,

till you are left

like a flagstaff on a mountaintop,

like a banner on a hill.”

¹⁸ Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you;
therefore he will rise up to show you
compassion.

For the LORD is a God of justice.

Blessed are all who wait for him!

Nap Time

The hardest part of nursery (day care) for me
was nap time.

As a child I wanted to do everything.

I wanted to play.

I wanted to hear stories.

I wanted to do something, anything.

Nap time is like doing nothing.

It is time to rest.

When you grow up, there is no more nap time.

But you know what, God wants you to have
nap time.

Not all the time, but at the right time.

We sleep so we can heal, can think, and listen
so we can ready for action.

"Nay Mo Yung"

One of the most common scoldings received in a Chinese family is the phrase "Nay mo yung."

It means, "You are useless."

It is one of the worst things that can be said.
It isn't exclusive to Asian culture but is also very present in our culture.

We get our sense of worth from being useful.
Our livelihood often depends on it.

Productivity, commerce, progress, industry, economics is a matter of use.

The opposite of this is slothfulness, laziness, carelessness, waste.

On the positive side we are responsible, conscientious, hard-working.

On the negative side we become stressed, goaded, compulsive, workaholics.

Spiritual Usefulness

Sometimes, we superimpose this value of usefulness into our relationships.

This is where we begin to get into trouble.

God did not create us to be useful.

He did not make us so he could use us like robots or tools.

But a lot of us act like that is why he made us.

"We have to save souls, we have to be missional, we have to do the right thing, we must love our neighbour, I must go to church, I do need to serve because we were made to be useful."

This is wrong.

God made us because he loves us.

And we do all those things because of his love.

If you are here at worship because you must be, I feel sad for you.

A Caveat About Work

I believe in hard work, in being conscientious. The Bible does tell us that in everything we do we are to work as if working for God.

Slothfulness, laziness, dissipation, dissolution are not healthy nor are they Kingdom qualities.

We work for our employer, supervisor, client, patient or student because we care about them - their trust in us.

We work to help our employees, reports, assistants, and associates because we care about them - their trust in us.

Yes, money is exchanged, but hopefully justly and rightly - not so you can squeeze someone for more, but because it is right and fair.

We choose to be useful for the sake of love.

Horses

Israel is in trouble.

They have enemies & stresses that threaten their lives and their peace.

God invites them to four things:

Repentence (turning to him), Rest, Quietness and Trust.

But instead they are going to trust their horses.

What are horses?

They are the predator drones of their day. The tanks and stealth jets, their special forces who will protect you and exact justice.

They are the pensions, the savings account, the RRSPs, the venture investment, the line of credit that will bail you out.

They are Oprah, Dr. Phil, The Dalai Lama, Deepak Chopra, Dr. Oz, Pope Francis, Francis

Chan, Pastor Ted who will make you feel better.

They are our Family Doctor, the drugs, the acupuncture, the MRI, the surgery, the Cold FX, the Johnny Walker that heals us.

We scramble to fix our situation using whatever and whoever is at our disposal.

We use whatever and whoever to protect us save us, to heal us.

Now, each of these in their right time and place and wisely applied are indeed useful but none are guarantees. None.

Salvation & Strength

What does repentance & rest save us from?

What strength is found in quietness & trust?

What happens when we don't?

We are left stressed at the sound of one.

We are left paranoid, fleeing at the few.

We are left alone, like a banner on a hill.

Anxiety, stress, isolation.

We are programmed for fight or flight.

Not to turn, rest, quiet and trust.

We are not programmed to pray.

But we are invited to pray.

But prayer seems useless in the light of real
trouble.

I agree. It *seems* useless.

But it is not.

God did not create us in order to use us.

We do not pray to God in order to use him.

What are we being saved from?

Always from sin.

And what is sin?

Replacing God with ourselves, our idols, our
distrust.

We were created to pray.

To play. To love. To sing. To dance. To worship.

Sin has taken that away.

Made us forget.

To become the used and the user.

When we accept God's invitation to turn
around, to rest, to quietness, to trust, to wait.

We are saved and we are strong.

More than Useful

We all have gifts and talents.

And yes, they are useful indeed to have!

And yes we live in a fallen world that wants to
use us.

But I am not defined by my usefulness.

I am defined as one who is loved.

And in response to that great love
I love in return.

My turning, my resting, my quiet, my trusting,
my waiting, my praying is that love.

Prayer is not a substitute for action;
it is the action for which there is no substitute.
- Jane Edwards

It is a singular act of love.

Exercise: Rest Time

[Tell people to go to the bathroom now!]

Turn out the lights.

Turn: to the window.

Rest: Find a comfortable enough position.

Quiet: Calm yourself with breathing.

Trust: Give God everything that bothers you.

Wait: Just be with him.

Share your experience with another person.