

Friday, April 3, 2020

Turn off the outside “noise” for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God’s Word.  
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9 (TNIV)

<sup>6</sup> Do not be **anxious** about *anything*,  
but in **every** situation,  
by **prayer** and **petition**,  
with **thanksgiving**,  
present your requests to God.

<sup>7</sup> And **the peace of God**,  
which transcends all understanding,  
**will guard your hearts and your minds**  
• **IN CHRIST JESUS.** •

— PART 6 —

*I found that when a passage of Scripture has been very familiar to me for a long time — such as this passage! — if I will simply **slow down** . . . take my time . . . and read thoughtfully and reflectively, it can become alive to me in new and fresh ways.*

**Here is little more on those three simple words. *In. Christ. Jesus.***

*“in Christ Jesus”* — Let’s hear a little more on this phrase from Pastor Darrell Johnson, picking up from where he left off yesterday. I’m going to adapt what he has addressed to those who preach so they apply to all of us who follow Jesus. I think what Darrell has to say speaks powerfully to our current situation — because we have been forced by circumstances (and government mandate!) into “social distancing.” **In this mandatory period of isolation, the spiritual disciplines he recommends of silence, solitude and Sabbath could deeply benefit each of us!**

I want to shout it from the mountaintops or, in our urban world, shout it from the high rises: “Jesus includes us in the eternal life of the Trinity!” But before I **shout** the news, I am to **live** the news. **The life of the [disciple] is lived in union and communion with Jesus, his Father and his Spirit.**

***This is what the spiritual disciplines are finally all about: ways of abiding, ways of staying plugged in to the vine.*** Especially important for [disciples] are the disciplines of silence, solitude and Sabbath.

## **SILENCE**

**Since we live by speaking, we need to periodically stop speaking to make sure we are not just talking in an attempt to shape and protect our worlds. “We are so accustomed to relying up on words to manage and control others. If we are silent who will take control? God will take control: but we will never let him take control until we trust him. *Silence is intimately related to trust* [RICHARD FOSTER, *Celebration of Discipline*].**

## SOLITUDE

Since we live continually interacting with people, we need periodically to stop interacting to make sure we are not just going through the motions. “In solitude, we confront our own soul with its obscure forces and conflicts that escape our attention when we are interacting with others” [DALLAS WILLARD, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*]. ***In the solitude we meet the risen Jesus again, and he heals us to “return to society as free persons”*** [DALLAS WILLARD again].

## SABBATH

And, along with every disciple, we need to periodically stop (one day of every seven) and shift the focus from our work to the work of the living God, from what our hands accomplish to what God’s hands accomplish. It is not so much that we keep the Sabbath, but that the Sabbath keeps us. ***The point of the Sabbath is seeking and delighting in the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, shifting the focus from what we are doing to what God is doing, so that when we act, we realize that we act with and in the triune God.*** It is not that the [disciple] keeps the Sabbath but that the Sabbath keeps the [disciple]. It is not that the [disciple] keeps silence but that silence keeps the [disciple]. It is not that the [disciple] keeps solitude but that solitude keep the [disciple].

**We are to do *whatever it takes to live in the...Jesus [the Anointed].***

DARRELL W. JOHNSON, *The Glory of Preaching: Participating in God’s Transformation of the World* (InterVarsity Press, 2010).

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Abba Father, we so easily live each day “in our own heads.”

Or “in a fog.”

Or “in a blur.”

Or “in the flow of nonstop COVID-19 information that discourages and threatens.”

**But your Word clearly tells us  
that we are “in *CHRIST*”!**

**So during this “season of shutdown” when we have lost sense of time,  
where the hours seem to drift by with very little accomplished,  
help us to intentionally carve out time...**

***to be still...***

***to step away from our busy-ness and “steal away with Jesus”...***

***and to stop regularly (one day in seven)  
to rest...to be replenished...to be renewed.***

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May God’s serenity and peace be poured out on you today,

Pastor Doug

P.S. We would love to hear from you! How are you doing right now? And we would love to pray for you! Email us at [info@bethanyonline.net](mailto:info@bethanyonline.net)

P.P.S. Keep checking this page — we will try to post fresh encouragement **every day** during this crisis!

P.P.P.S. And watch our **LIVE-STREAM Worship Service** this coming Sunday at 10:30 a.m. for more encouragement.