

I will give you rest Midweek Reflection # 31, Jan 14, 2008

“My presence will go with you and I will give you rest.” Exodus 33:14

God’s promise to Moses as he is called to step out in faith into the unknown is only one of many promises in scripture which are becoming more and more special to me during this illness. It is the promise of God’s presence and rest, two very precious commodities, offered again and again to those who trust in God.

Emilie Griffin, in her little book Doors Into Prayer, provides insight into experiencing these promises as realities, an approach which I am seriously appropriating in my life right now.

“God wants to draw us in. He wants us to know his affection. Authentic prayer begins when we turn ourselves over to the grace of God. It is not a prayer of making requests, of trying to get things done or figured out. This kind of ‘resting in God’ is not a matter of doing but of undoing. Resting in the love of the Spirit, we are sustained by the power of the living God.” Doors Into Prayer, An Invitation, Emilie Griffin, Paraclete Press.

This is not a rest of inactivity, but rather the peaceful rest of moving within the current of God’s purposes. I believe it is what Jesus promises to his disciples in Matthew 11:28 when he says: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” This rest is deep and enduring, not troubled by the surface conditions, the chaos of circumstances. This rest quiets the believer in the deepest part of the heart where God’s real presence is experienced by the attentive and listening soul.

I love the way Eugene Peterson translates Christ’s promise in Matthew 11:

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me ~ watch how I do it. **Learn the unforced rhythms of grace.** I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.” (Matthew 11: 28-30, The Message, by Eugene Peterson, NavPress.

I want to be walking with Jesus in the “unforced rhythms of grace” no matter what kind of anxiety I am walking through. I want my soul to “rest in God’s perfect love” even in the very midst of turmoil and conflict. I believe this is the meaning of the Light of the world shining in our darkness and the Love of God reigning victorious in a broken and

incomplete world. Let us continue to pray for each other, that we will know and trust this presence and rest which God has so graciously promised!

Under God's Mercy,

Howie