

THE FIRST 15

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

Today is Tuesday, June 18 and we are studying what the Bible says about contentment.

OPENING PRAYER

In the quiet stillness of a dawning day, I seek the Lord who loves me. I calm my restless thoughts, slow my breathing and center myself upon God's holy presence. Come, Holy Spirit, teach me to rest in your loving kindness. Help me discover the secret of contentment and peace in this earthly life. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 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." Matthew 11:25-30

REFLECTION

In today's passage from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus explains that kingdom truths are sometimes kept hidden from the scholarly and well-educated and revealed to little children. Perhaps that is the case with contentment. Wisdom comes when we humble ourselves like a little child. A toddler looks to his parents to provide for his needs - food, water, nourishment, clothing, shelter, comfort, love, affection. A small child humbly trusts in adults to care for him and I can humbly trust God to do the same for me.

Contentment comes from a place of humility. When I humble myself before my Lord and Shepherd, Jesus, I realize that he knows what is best for me. He knows my needs before I ask. He knows when I need to be guided to safety and security. He knows when I need to take time for rest and renewal. Pride says I know what is best for myself. Pride says I need more, I want more, I deserve more, I desire more. More, more, more. Humility says, I have enough. I am content. I am full. I am complete. I can rest.

If I seek contentment and peace in this earthly life I can find it in Jesus. He is the one who will supply what I need. He is the one who will give me rest. He is the one who will show me the way. I am invited to put away my worldly knowledge, stop searching the internet and asking AI for answers to my questions and solutions to my problems. When I take Christ's easy yoke upon my shoulders I find the peace and contentment for which I long.

I search my soul for places of weariness and shadows of sorrow. Am I bearing burdens for myself or others that I don't need to be carrying? Am I weighed down with worries or

responsibilities? Am I yoked to the busyness and pressure of constantly doing? I imagine a biblical yoke - a circular wooden halter placed on an animal's neck that harnesses them to a plow or cart. There are things in this world to which I am yoked. I am pulling around heavy burdens all day long. Jesus invites me to unyoke myself from worldly things and take his humble, gentle, easy yoke upon my shoulders. I trust him to lead me and lighten my load.

Ask: Where do I feel weary and burdened? How might Jesus help me find rest for my soul?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help me come to you with a childlike faith and understand the truths you offer. Reveal the love of God my Father and help me know him and experience him through you. Thank you for the easy yoke you offer. I exchange the heavy burden I have been carrying for the lighter burden you provide. Reveal the places in my life where I am unnecessarily weary and weighed down. I accept your invitation to come to you. Here I am with a humble heart. I am ready to trust you, give my life to you and take on the yoke of your gentle love. Amen.