

1 Kings 19:14-21
Elisha follows freely

→ Psalm 62 ←
Free to rest in God alone

Luke 9:51-62
Negative examples of total
Commitment

I'd like to start out with doing something we haven't done in our service yet. Up to this point we have been active in our worship singing, praying, speaking. What I would like you to do for a minute is just sit quietly, silently. If you wish you can even close your eyes. I'll set my stopwatch for a minute. OK...

Did you find that uncomfortable or hard to sit quietly? Did it seem like a long time – a whole lot longer than a minute?

Perhaps it's a good thing we aren't Quakers. Of course their theology is a little different. We believe the Holy Spirit comes through God's Word and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, but Quakers believe the Spirit comes through meditation. So they build a time of silence into their worship – sometimes up to 30 minutes before their leader stands up to speak.

Perhaps there is another reason it was difficult for you to sit in silence? Did your mind race with a thousand thoughts? Maybe you thought about all the things you did this past week / or about all the things you are going to check off your to-do list later today / or all the things you have to deal with and struggle with in the week ahead. Sitting quietly, silently, resting peacefully is not so easy to do.

It should be – it's summer time – a time for teens to sleep in to noon but still they aren't rested. Kids get a time to rest during a break from school – but you still hear words I can't stand: "I'm bored." We go on vacations during the summertime but even then we try to pack so much into our vacations that we're more tired when we get home than before we left. And our culture doesn't make it any easier – we have to go all the time – work all the time – get the kids here and there all the time...

Let's admit it: we are not so good at resting quietly.

And let's admit it: we are not so good at resting quietly physically AND spiritually.

Perhaps you spent the minute of silence worrying or stressing or filled with anxiety. Maybe you felt guilt gnawing away for something you did this past week. We spend so much energy running from the guilty and our sins it is impossible to get rest on our own – now and in eternity. Jesus himself said the consequence of sin is the place where the worm will not die or the fire quenched. He's describing hell and he's describing an eternity of restlessness.

So what's the answer? You'll find it in Psalm 62.

1. Sitting in silence

King David is the author of this Psalm and it's not hard to figure out the background for his song. People are speaking behind his back, plotting against him, not defending him. It sure sounds like the time his own son Absalom led a rebellion against him. It may not have been like the Egyptian coup this past week, but imagine, his own son plotting against him. His appointed officials speaking behind his back. The common citizens thinking that someone could do better than David. You would think David would be anxious, worried and filled with all kinds of stress. You would think the last thing he would be able to do is rest – but what does he say: My soul finds rest in God alone.

By the way, when you are looking for the key theme in a Psalm, look for words that repeat. In verse one and in verse five, David says, "Find rest, my soul, in God alone. My salvation comes from him." Another way

of translating those verses is to say, My soul waits QUIETLY or SILENTLY for God. The key to perfect rest is sitting in silence, quietly trusting in God as our only hope and salvation.

It's not "I need to do this and to do that." It's not, "first let me take care of this and then that." It's not "I want this and I want that." My salvation, my hope, my perfect rest comes from God alone.

Jesus invited you to have that perfect rest when he said, "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 gently and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls."

Do you get his invitation? To be yoked to him, to be connected to him like two oxen pulling a plow, allows him to carry the weight, to bear the burden and give us perfect rest. And he did, he carried it under the crushing weight of the cross from Jerusalem to a hill called Calvary. That cross weighed so much that a man had to be pulled from the crowd to help him carry it. But there on the cross your Savior wore all your sin and worry and guilt and restlessness, paying for it all with his precious blood so you and I might be free – free to rest in God's love, in his forgiveness and the sure and certain promise of a perfect rest in heaven!

2. Not shaken in struggles

Do you see the other words that are repeated throughout this Psalm? The words, "rock," "refuge," "fortress," "strength," are scattered throughout the Psalm. And it's those words that allow David to say not just once but twice, "I will not be shaken."

He can say that because he knows God's promises are sure and certain. He can say that because he knows God's power and protection are his. He can say that because he knows God's love cannot be shaken. He can say that even though he feels like a tottering wall about to fall. "I will not be shaken."

And make sure you catch what NOT to cling to. Verse nine speaks of highborn men and lowborn men – his court officials and the people of his land. David couldn't depend on them and he acknowledges he can't depend on his own strength. He's the king. He has power and influence, but the strength of people, our lives and accomplishments and our abilities to escape problems on our own: but a breath that are nothing when placed on the balance scale.

And don't think winning the lottery or becoming rich will give you peace and rest either. Here's verse 10: "Do not resort to extortion or depend on stolen goods. Though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them." We'd like to think that money and wealth and all kinds of things will make life easier, but if anything, they make life more stressful and more worrisome.

My soul finds rest in God alone!

And before I close, let me point out the last verse: "One thing God has said to me, two things have I heard (that would be like saying: I figured this out and you have to listen), that you, O God, are strong, and that you, O Lord are loving." What an awesome combination, huh? God's power used in love for you. Sit in silence. Know you will not be shaken. Pour out your hearts to God. For your soul finds rest in God alone.

So when might you use this Psalm:

- This past week I attended a funeral with my son. It was the funeral for a woman who was 53 years old. She left behind a 15 year old son, a classmate of my own sons. And while the message of Jesus was powerful and comforting, I thought to myself how difficult it could be for my son or anyone's son to lose a mother at 15 years old. What can you say? How about, "My soul finds rest in God alone."
- I visited one of our members this past week in the hospital. He had a different roommate each night he was there. They were loud, the TV was blaring, nurses were coming in and out, while your fellow member just needed to rest. Where could he find it? "In God alone."
- Or when there is quiet in your house – too much quiet because you are alone – remember to find rest in God alone.
- Or when there is quiet in your house – too much quiet because people aren't speaking to each other and relationships are strained – remember to find rest in God alone.

- Or how about when you fall into the trap of the disciples in our Gospel lesson this morning? “Sure I’ll follow you Lord but first let me do this.” “Sure God I know what you say, but I got this myself.” When you fall into the temptation, “First let me,” let this Psalm touch your heart and soul so that you sing – no, “My soul finds rest – silence – peace – quiet – in God alone,” – and for more than just a minute.

AMEN.

VVV – Phillip Sievert