

THE CHRISTIAN'S REFRESHING

WEEK 10

November 8 – November 14

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

“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.”

Matthew 11:29

BOOK READING

Roberts, pp. 73-78

Quotation for Meditation

“When we feel that death is our only comfort, that the light of the sun is only darkness and the prospect of tomorrow is a nightmare, then it is a pointer to the need for a time of respite” (p. 76).

M'CHEYNE BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Nov 8	2 Ki 21	Heb 3	Hos 14	Ps 139
Nov 9	2 Ki 22	Heb 4	Joel 1	Ps 140, 141
Nov 10	2 Ki 23	Heb 5	Joel 2	Ps 142
Nov 11	2 Ki 24	Heb 6	Joel 3	Ps 143
Nov 12	2 Ki 25	Heb 7	Amos 1	Ps 144
Nov 13	1 Chr 1, 2	Heb 8	Amos 2	Ps 145
Nov 14	1 Chr 3, 4	Heb 9	Amos 3	Ps 146, 147

PERSONAL REFLECTION

MY TIGHT PLACES – A TIME TO WAIT UPON GOD

RIES BARLOW

My dad was a champion wrestler back in high school. Although he was on the short side and a little stocky, he was built like a tank. Some of my earliest memories of him were times when he would play with me and my siblings. I recall my dad telling me that while my brother and sister always squirmed – trying to break his hold on their arm – I never did. I simply sat still and waited for him to release his grip. Unknowingly, this was my first introduction to a *tight place*. But something happened along the way as I grew into a man. Instead of waiting upon the Lord to deliver me from the tight place He had brought me into, I was already reaching for my backup plan. While it is good to have contingency plans in place, I shudder to think of the blessings I have missed for not being still and knowing that He [the Lord] is God.

I think of *tight places* as the Lord's speed bumps to slow one down. It is ironic to note that while the first twenty years of living seemed like a very long time in the making, the last twenty have flown by. My wife and I have just celebrated eleven years of marriage and our oldest is turning ten in December. Where has the time gone? How often have I confessed to how great it would be if things would just slow down a little – enter COVID19. Now, I'm not going to add my name to the increasing list of those who are being blamed for this pandemic. How arrogant and ignorant of man to attribute this to a political party or to some wealthy businessmen. That kind of thinking is just one more example that man does not have any answers to life. No, COVID19 is of Him and through Him. It is more than God being in control. He is leading the charge. To confess otherwise, is it not to rob God of glory [Amos 3:6]?

The pandemic has shut down all my outside ministry – it has been just work, school and family. Furthermore, it has forced me to deal with the most important earthly relationships – that of my wife and children. As mentioned previously, eleven years ago I entered into a covenant with God and my bride. The tight place of COVID19 has allowed me to take a little assessment. How am I doing with the vows I had made? What about my parenting? Is it modeled after my loving heavenly Father or after a Marine drill sergeant? I found out that in the hustle and bustle of

life – being employed full time while also working on a seminary degree along with other outside ministries – vital things have slipped through the cracks. While I may pat myself on the back for reaching the end of the day with no broken bones and only minor bruises, is it really a success if the most important things are forsaken? What kind of discipleship is taking place with my wife when it is 9:30PM or 10PM and I'm falling asleep? Osmosis is a wonderful scientific concept but it does not work well in communicating information between a husband and wife. I also was shocked to find out how little time there is between dinner and bedtime. How was I investing that time with my children? Questions like these and more have confronted me during this pandemic.

My response has been sobering and amazement. To think that God loves me so much that He points out these areas in my life that need attention. I liken this to the Apostle Paul's confession in 2 Corinthians 12 where he testified that God gave him a thorn in his flesh to keep him from sinning against God. What a blessed testimony of God's lovingkindness. This is the same lovingkindness He demonstrates to His children throughout the history of the world. The question one needs to ask himself is "Am I recognizing my tight place as a demonstration of God's loyal love?" A tight place is an opportunity for you to stop, be silent and see the salvation of the LORD – the very words Moses commanded the children of Israel in their tight place [Exodus 14:13-14]. You see, God had not only led them to the Red Sea, but He also stirred up Pharaoh and his army to pursue them. Would you agree that this was a tight place? They were trapped with no place to go. Do you feel that way today? Well brother, you are not without hope. The same God who delivered Israel from their tight place is still at work today. The question you have to ask yourself is are you depending upon Him? Have you sought His face? If so, then stand still and see the salvation of the LORD.