
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

July 26, 2015

Becoming Anxious for God

“One by one, they all began to make excuses.”

Luke 14:18 (Common English Bible)

An anxious eye on the clock and the unending fight with time accurately describes the character and tempo of life today. We are a people always on the move, operating on a tight and crowded schedule. The pace of life seems swifter than that of a previous generation, the pressure harder and responsibilities to be borne heavier than they should be for any one person. The tragic consequence for millions is that little time is given to cultivate the life of the soul – little time left to know and enjoy God.

Luke’s story offers caution. In this parable, Jesus speaks of a man who prepared a great feast and sent out invitations to his friends to be his guest. One by one they sent their apologies. The first had bought a farm and felt it prudent to go and look it over. The second closed a deal for five oxen and was off to check on them. The third had recently married – perhaps the strongest excuse but an excuse nonetheless. At that the host directed his servant to go out and bring to the feast the poor, the crippled, blind, and lame. Jesus’ point is clear. All three men were engaged in perfectly legitimate activities. Yet, so immersed in them were they that they left room in their lives for nothing else.

Jesus’ life was also filled with many legitimate activities. Some may say that Jesus’ life was burdened with the needs and hurts of others. But do not fail to notice an important distinction between the life lived by Jesus and the life of the men in the parable. Jesus made time for quiet, for prayer, and for God. Precisely because the demands of life exhausted Jesus he would slip away from the crowds and the bustle to be alone with God. If Jesus realized the sustaining need of regular time with God, how much more do we? Jesus’ deepest need to get through each day was spiritual. So is ours.

We are a busy people. Occupied and preoccupied by this and that, and the other thing, those things that matter most are often crowded out. Luke’s Gospel makes a plea for the human heart and soul – a plea for perspective and recognition of the supreme values for which Jesus stood. In an overcrowded life, and the pressure and pace being greater than they should be, Jesus’ own life calls us to practice discrimination – to choose wisely what will fill our lives, never neglecting to reserve time for the spiritual. The spiritual should have priority over everything else. Our duty to God comes before all other demands placed upon us. Should we become anxious about what we face this day, let us first be anxious for God.

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