

Life in the Word
Week 2
“Reading with a Quiet Heart”

Luke 10:38-42 – “Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, ⁴²but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken from her.”

Psalm 131:1-2 – “O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. ² But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me.”

Mark 1:12-13 – “The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan...”

Mark 1:35 – “And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed...”

Henri Nouwen (Out of the Solitude) - “In the center of breathless activities, we hear a restful breathing. Surrounded by hours of moving, we find a moment of quiet stillness. In the heart of much involvement, there are words of withdrawal. In the midst of action, there is contemplation. And after much togetherness, there is solitude. The more I read this nearly silent sentence locked in between the loud words of action, the more I have the sense that the secret of Jesus’ ministry is hidden in that lonely place where he went to pray, early in the morning, long before dawn. In the lonely place, Jesus finds the courage to follow God’s will and not his own; to speak God’s words and not his own; to do God’s work and not his own... It is in the lonely place, where Jesus enters into intimacy with the Father, that his ministry is born.”

Luke 5:16 – “But [Jesus] would withdraw to desolate places and pray.”

Matthew 14:23 – “And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone...”

Matthew 6:6 - “But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Psalm 37:7 - Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him...”

Psalm 46:10 - “Be still, and know that I am God.”

Psalm 4:4 - “...ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent.”

Dallas Willard - “Silence and solitude are the two most radical disciplines of the Christian life.”

Blaise Pascal - “All men’s miseries derive from not being able to sit in a quiet room alone.”

Practical Recommendations:

1. If you want to connect with Jesus in the Word, you will first just need to carve out time.
2. If you want to connect with Jesus in the Word, do what you can to quiet your heart.
 - a. Solitude
 - i. Find your “secret place” and “shut the door”
 - ii. Alone – just you and God
 - b. Stillness
 - i. Don’t just instantly start reading - busy, busy, busy, doing, doing, doing
 - ii. Sit for a few minutes, let your body come to rest, your heartbeat slow down, the waters in your soul begin to settle
 - iii. Anxious thoughts? Give them to God, roll your burdens on Him
 - iv. Remind yourself you’re in God’s presence, just *be* with Jesus
 - v. “Be still, and know that He is God”
 - c. Silence
 - i. Don’t talk, put away the phone, turn off the music, shut out the noise
 - ii. Be silent, embrace the silence, and just breathe – calm down!
 - iii. “Ponder in your own hearts, on your beds, and be silent!”
3. Then pray, ask God to help you to be fully present to Jesus in the word, fully present to what the Holy Spirit might want to do in you through the Word
4. And then open your Bible and begin to read.

Martin Luther (Christmas sermon, 1522) - “It is an eternal word and must be understood and contemplated with a quiet mind. No one else can understand except a mind that contemplates in silence.”

Eugene Peterson (*The Contemplative Pastor*) – “In Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*, there is a turbulent scene in which a whaleboat scuds across a frothing ocean in pursuit of the great, white whale, Moby Dick. The sailors are laboring fiercely, every muscle taut, all attention and energy concentrated on the task. The cosmic conflict between good and evil joined; chaotic sea and demonic sea monster versus the morally outraged man, Captain Ahab. In this boat, however, there is one man who does nothing. He doesn’t hold an oar; he doesn’t perspire; he doesn’t shout. He is languid in the crash and the cursing. This man is the harpooner, quiet and poised, waiting. **And then this sentence: “To insure the greatest efficiency in the dart, the harpooners of this world must start to their feet out of idleness, and not out of toil.”** Melville’s sentence is a text to set alongside the psalmist’s “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10), and alongside Isaiah’s “In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength” (Isaiah 30:15)... Somehow it always seems more compelling to assume the work of the oarsman, laboring mightily in a moral cause, throwing our energy into a fray we know has immortal consequence. And it always seems more dramatic to take on the outrage of a Captain Ahab, obsessed with a vision of vengeance and retaliation, brooding over the ancient injury done by the Enemy. There is, though, other important work to do. Someone must throw the dart. Some must be harpooners.”