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Perfect Peace

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“Fear not! For behold, I bring you good news of great joy that shall be for all people. Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.” Luke 2:10

Perfect Peace

Friday afternoons usually feel like a one hundred yard dash to Sabbath. Quick, leave the office, swing by Walmart Grocery Pick Up for groceries, clean the entire house, finish laundry, iron for church, prepare a few meals, then run back to campus for university vespers. We often refer to it as “Preparation Day” - accomplishing the work of two days in order for us to finally rest on Sabbath. But in all of this hectic dashing around, I’m becoming more aware of the fact that my Sabbath rest usually feels more like a Sabbath-hit-the-wall by the time I finally crawl to the finish line. Where’s the rest in all this hecticness?

My husband and I put up our Christmas tree, decorations and lights two weeks ago as we ushered in the 2018 holidays. Now we’re in full deployment preparation - making lists and checking them twice, addressing the Christmas cards, making cookies and other baked goods, and attending all the Christmas parties. “Silent Night” comes on my iTunes playlist shuffle while I’m out running errands and I silently scoff, “Silent night? Ha! It wasn’t a silent night! Mary was giving birth! A screaming new born was being brought into the world.” Though I haven’t had the privilege of bringing life into the world myself, I know from other’s this is not a quiet event. Where’s the silence, the peace, the rest in all this holiday hecticness?

We’ve come to the end of our first semester and perhaps you’re wondering: *If Jesus is real, why doesn’t He give my weary soul rest in the midst of all of these things I have to do? Why doesn’t He give me peace? Why doesn’t He slow things down or make things easier at least?* Trust me, I’m right there with you asking these questions. But lately I’ve felt the Holy Spirit turn the question back on me: “Why have you traded preparation for perfection?” So what if the house isn’t perfectly clean or the Christmas cookies perfectly frosted? There is no peace in the midst of preparation if we are striving for perfection.

Both Sabbath (a weekly sacred holiday) and Christmas (a yearly holiday) should be reminders to us of the ultimate gift of Jesus Christ - born as a baby to live on this earth, to die for our sins, to rise again so that we could be free. “And if the Son has set [us] free then [we] are free indeed!” John 8:36. Freedom offers us peace. It is the gift that silences the tape recorder in all our minds telling us we must work harder, we are not enough, we have to prove ourselves, we must be perfect. Jesus alone is perfect: “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in [Christ], and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross,” Colossians 1:19-20.

Today, in the midst of all this preparation I claim Isaiah 26:3 as my prayer: “You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all who’s thoughts are fixed on you!” Jesus, may I trust in you to be the perfect, spotless lamb of God slain for me. May I trust that

you are working as a craftsman to chisel away my imperfections and to give me a character more like yours. And may you remain steadfast at the center of my life.

May the perfect gift of Jesus Christ bring peace and great joy to your heart and soul today as you make the Main Thing, the main thing this Christmas season.

Blessings to you and prayers as you finish this semester!

-Anna Bennett