Ruth 3:18 (Benjamin McCall Barbour) 138226

Sit Still Until ..., Sit Still . . . Until - (3:18)

“Sit still, until — ”! Until when? “Until thou know how the matter will fall” (Ruth 3:18).

It is one of the most difficult and yet one of the most desirable and profitable lessons in our spiritual lives to learn to “sit still.” This is especially so when we are beset by darkness and doubt, and when we are in ignorance of developments.

Often our course is “hedged up,” our path is in perplexity, and we do not know which way to turn. This is when it is safest, sweetest, and most successful to “sit still.”

It is not natural to “sit still” at such a time of testing. It is a lesson that has to be learned. It is not always easy to overcome the restlessness of our spirit, and the feverishness of our desire to know what lies ahead. To most of us it is truly “a mountain of difficulty.” But mountains melt and move away by miracles of grace.

Doubtless, we wish we could “sit still.” But just how to keep the spirit calm, the mind cool, the hands off, and the tongue quiet about the problems that perplex us, the people who vex us, and the things which lie beyond our control is, indeed, a secret of inestimable worth.

Happily, some have reached the stage of what we might call “sitting.” That is much. But it is infinitely sublimer to “sit still.” Cessation of bodily activity is not always accompanied by a spirit that is calm and quiet. The arms may be folded, the back may recline in the ease of bodily repose, but, if the mind is in anxiety, if the heart is harassed, if the spirit is grieved, if the conscience is condemned, all our efforts to “sit still” are in vain.

Outside stillness may favor inside calm, but the human heart knows well how the “sitting” without “sitting still” is our common experience.

But is it possible to sit still in a world of such ceaseless activity, faced as we so perpetually are by problems that perplex, and by mysteries that amaze? Yes, it is quite possible! This is what Christ can do for those who are His own. “With God, all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26).

The divine recipe for stillness in the midst of doubt, darkness, disturbance, and disaster is: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee” (Isa. 26:3).

It adds immensely to the meaning of this verse if we read it in another translation: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind stops at God,” in other words, the mind that reckons on the Lord in everything, and refuses to go beyond Him. The heart that is satisfied to lean hard on Him and to leave all its affairs to His almighty wisdom, love, and care — the soul that is stayed upon God — such is kept “in perfect peace” and may blessedly “sit still.”

The Lord is an ever-open, never-failing harbor of refuge for the sinking spirit, for the exhausted frame, for the troubled mind, for the fearful and foreboding soul. He is a shelter in the time of storm.

“There!” Oh, soul, are you “there”? For it is only “there” that we find this stillness that soothes and strengthens, that subdues, sweetens, and sustains. Are you so right with your God that you can “stay” upon Him, that you can “stop at God,” unloading every care, and leaving all in His all-loving hands? It is only there that we can “sit still.”

When through the blood-stained way of Calvary we have learned something of that love that sought us, bought us, and brought us to His fold and made us His for evermore, then surely we may trust His power to keep us in safety through all our future course, even though it be to us a hidden and mysterious way.

When the way is barred, and when the future is black, stop at God! Go no further. No, not a single step. Concentrate on Him. Wait on Him. Abide in Him. Be occupied with Him. Praise Him. Rejoice in Him. Extol Him. Commit your cause to Him. Lean hard. Lie back on Him. “Sit still!” The result is sure: “The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7).

The strength and the stability of our “stillness” will be tested. In nothing will this be more evident than in regard to those events and circumstances which lie ahead, the development of which is indefinite and uncertain. Things which are known to us we feel that we can face with comparative composure. It is the unknown, the uncertain, the indefinite that fills us with suspense, apprehension, anxiety, unrest — yes, and sometimes with fear. It is this that so often makes the heart sick, the head heavy, and the whole being faint. It is this that unnerves and unfits us for even the most trivial duties of the common day. And it is in the midst of just such uncertainty, when confronted by darkness and doubt that we are exhorted to “sit still” — just when it may be we feel least disposed to do it, or least capable for the ordeal. It is just then that we should “stop at God” and say:

(F. E. M. Irwin)

“Sit still, until — ”! Until when? “Until thou know how the matter will fall.” This is the test. Isn’t it because we do not know that we find it so difficult to sit still? How different it would be if only we knew. If only we knew how that case which so seriously affects our prospects would turn out! If only we knew what the next step in our future course will be! If only we knew how the days ahead would be provided for! If only we knew why that letter, so longed for, is delayed! If only we knew why coldness has crept into the heart that once loved us so well! If only

we knew why those who were once so kind to us are now so cruel! If we only knew the contents of that message, which makes the hand to shake and the cheek to pale! If only we knew where we could find that wandering boy tonight — the boy of our love and care! If only we knew that our daughter, our pleasure-seeking girl, were safe! Oh, if only we knew the countless things that are hidden from our view, then it would be easy to “sit still.” But we do not know. We cannot know until — ! But, we can “stop at God”!

Though in His wisdom we may be permitted to know nothing, yet we may rest assured that He knows all. Though we cannot see even so much as one step ahead, yet we may know that He sees the end from the beginning. Though we are compelled into the seeming inactivity of “sitting still,” we may be quite sure that He is incessantly at work on our behalf (Isa. 64:4, margin). He is perfecting His plan for our truest and highest good. When we are faced by a future that is black, when we are beset by uncertainty that would drive us to despair, for us to know then that He knows, that He loves, that He cares, and that He is over all relieves us of anxiety, and enables us sweetly to “sit still.” Blessed release! How good to be delivered from all our fighting and our forcing, our fancying and our fearing, our fussing and our fuming, our fretting and our fury, and all the futile efforts of the flesh!

We “sit still” when we “stop at God;” when we “wait upon the Lord” and give place to Him to work out His perfect will for us in His all-perfect way. The result is victory over circumstances, and a deep settled peace in our soul.

Count it the highest privilege to commit your cause and course to God, and leave them there.

“Sitting still is impractical!” some say. “It seems like doing nothing.” But it is not so. It is truly a great and grand work. It is “stopping at God.” It is placing implicit confidence in Him. It is reckoning on His faithfulness. It is resting on His word. It is having faith in God. No, it is not idleness to wait upon God’s working. Sit still! Do not hurry Him. Haste will only hamper Him and hinder you. “Sit still, until He hath finished the thing.”

(J. Danson Smith)

Listen to the reasonableness for thus sitting still: “For the man will not rest until He have finished the thing this day” (Ruth 3:18). It is because He is working that we may sit in stillness and so wait. His divine hand is upon our smallest, even as upon our largest concern. He is controlling and carrying these concerns through to the ends that are for His greatest glory and our grandest good.

“The man will not rest”! What man? “The Man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). Be assured, with such an One conducting our affairs the end must be success!

O soul, “sit still, until — ”! Until you know what He has deemed it wisest to withhold for the present! Until He clears the clouds! Until He melts the mists! Until He removes the mountains! Until He breaks the barriers! Until He dispels the darkness! Until He solves the problems! Until He answers you in peace! Until He restores your riven friendships! Until He brings the wanderers back! Until we see Him “face to face”! Until “we shall be like Him”! Until we know even as we are known! Until — “the day break and the shadows flee away”! Yes, until He comes! Oh, “Blessed Hope”! perhaps today! “Sit still”! “Sit still”!

O soul, “sit still.” Sink down into that sweet beloved will of God, and wait His time for the unraveling of your mysteries and the unfolding of your path. Thus you will know Him better and in knowing Him, will be forever fully satisfied. Yes, even now, the joy of leaning hard on Him and resting in His love may win your heart to the high altitude of confidence in Him that says, yes, that even sings:

“Sit still, until — ”! Until when? “Until He have finished the thing.” There is a “finish” to it. Let Him carry it through to the “finish.” What the “finish” may be here on earth, we may not know. It may be seeming failure, even like unto His own. It may bring to us ignominy, misunderstanding, persecution, seeming disaster and defeat. It may seem to blight our prospects, crush our hopes, yes, even to curtail our life. But the “finish” is not here. What is counted here as loss, in heaven is reckoned gain. There gloom is changed to glory, and for the cross we get the crown. In that day we shall be profoundly thankful to Him for the countless things — disturbing and distracting — that He did not let us know, and for the all-sufficient grace bestowed that enabled us to be satisfied to “sit still” until He had finished the work.

Has not our blessed Master gone before us, to stimulate and to strengthen us to follow in His steps? How sweetly and serenely He moved amid the adverse circumstances of life. From whence came His stillness of demeanor, His deep and holy calm? “He committed Himself (margin “His cause”) to Him who judgeth righteously” (1 Peter 2:23). He left all in His loving Father’s hands. His confidence in Him was constant and complete. Reverently, shall we say, He “stopped at God.”

O soul, let it be so with you. We may not know what lies ahead, but we do know this, that nothing ever escapes His knowledge, nothing can defeat His purpose, nothing can supplant His power, and nothing can diminish His divine and everlasting love. Thus:

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” “Be still and know that I am God” (Psa. 46:1, 10).

“Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let Him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon His God” (Isa. 50:10).

“Their strength is to sit still” (Isa. 30:7).

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