

Cybercolumn by Jeanie Miley: Resting in God_12405

January 18, 2005

Posted: 1/18/05

CYBER COLUMN: Resting in God

By Jeanie Miley

When I was a child, I thought that when I got to be one of the Big People, I would have the answers to my questions and I would know how to act in any given situation. I think I must have believed, as well, that when I got to be an adult, I wouldn't be afraid any longer.

I've been one of the Big People for quite some time now, and I've noticed that the only people who appear to have all the answers are those who really don't. And the only people who don't ever experience anxiety and fear are either so shut down that they don't notice the shifts and changes in their emotions or are not able or willing to tell the truth! Or maybe they just don't get it about how dangerous life really is!

Jeanie
Miley

When I was a child, I also bought the lie that if I followed the rules and did what was "right," God would protect me from bad things happening to me. Looking back, I can't recall who it was that "taught" that lie, but I've noticed that I'm not the only one who bought it. Now I know that bad

things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people, however one defines “good” and “bad,” and the only significant issue is how we respond to whatever happens to us.

To live and to engage with life is to experience the anxiety that goes along with the realities of life. Life is dangerous. Life is uncertain, and stuff happens to the people who are faithful and true, just like it happens to “the others.”

I’ve noticed that those who cope with life the best have a rigorous self-honesty and an unflinching realism in the face of whatever life hands them, and I’ve noticed that people who are victorious, even against unbearable odds have lots of emotional support and the spiritual practices that sustain and nurture them through the dark nights of their souls.

We who call ourselves Christian do best when we take seriously Jesus’ invitation to “come to him” for rest. We who dare to say that we are followers of Christ must, in fact, follow him, daily taking on his perfectly-fitting yoke so that we will not stick our necks in the yokes of servitude and addiction, misplaced loyalties and the yokes of other people that chafe our necks and sometimes break them.

This rest that is offered and provided by the living Christ is not escape or sleep, but a radical empowerment by the Creator himself. It is the rest of the branch, connected intimately with the nutrient-supplying vine. It is the waiting on God that prepares us for service and for producing the fruit that is in us. Resting in God is attentive alertness and radical awareness of the movement of the Spirit in our lives. Resting in God is the spiritual practice that undergirds everything else.

As I move into this new year, I am deepening my commitment to “come to him” even more faithfully now than ever before. I am consciously and intentionally making sure that I seek the “rest” of his being in his presence

with conscious intention to consent to his presence and action in my life. I am making sure that I do not neglect coming to him, day after day, so that he can give me the spiritual sustenance and support that I need to face the ambiguity, ambivalence and anxiety of life.

Resting in God is the secret of the abundant life—for children of all ages.

Jeanie Miley is an author and columnist and a retreat and workshop leader. She is married to Martus Miley, pastor of River Oaks Baptist Church in Houston, and they have three adult daughters. Got feedback? Write her at Writer2530@aol.com.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.