

Getting Away From the Noise

Scripture Reading — Psalm 119:97-104; Mark 1:35

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. — Mark 1:35

Jesus loved people. But Mark notes that Jesus also needed to get away to spend time with God. So, early in the morning he found a quiet place to pray. Mark's account is instructional: get away and go be with God. I've learned the importance of that practice firsthand.

For several years I served as a navy chaplain in Scotland. We lived a half-day's journey from the Church of Scotland's retreat at Iona, on the site of St. Columba's mission. We visited regularly. Before breakfast one morning I found a small chapel, perfect for getting away. The only sounds I could hear were seagulls calling and waves lapping. God's presence was unmistakable in the quiet solitude.

I'd responded to Jesus' invitation: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). He invites us not just to escape but also to discover his Word, as Psalm 119 exclaims: "Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long." I discovered the importance of meditating in quiet.

So leave life's noise and find a quiet place. At first you'll hear interior noise: extraneous thoughts and reminders of obligations. Keep listening. God speaks in the silence. Getting away regularly to listen for God was Jesus' discipline. And if he needed to do that, don't we?

Prayer

Father, we're immersed in an ocean of noise. Teach us to answer Jesus' invitation and find a quiet place where we can hear you so that we can walk more closely with you each day. Amen.

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