

Living in the Light September 17, 2017

I have a daughter for whom getting out of bed is the slowest, most reluctant, agonizing process on the planet. She moans. She groans. She shushes us. And then she pulls the sheets back over her and tucks in until we start the painful process all over again! Do you know anyone like that? And there are others who wake up, immediately sit up, get their feet on the floor and they are off! Ready to greet the day! I know that some people wake up every morning wondering what is going to go wrong today! I have another friend who takes a few minutes once they wake up to consider what is already scheduled for their day and to consider that there might be things that come along which they had not planned for. There is all kinds of waking up going on all around us.

Psalm 118 says, "This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!" Show of hands everyone who claims that truth for themselves every morning as they spring from their bed!!

German pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, “For Christians, the beginning of the day should not be burdened and haunted by the various kinds of concerns that they face during the day. The Lord stands above the new day, for God has made it. All restlessness, all impurity, all worry and anxiety flee before him. Therefore, in the early morning hours of the day, may our many thoughts and our many idle words be silent and may the first word and the first thought belong to the one to whom our whole life belongs.”

It seems to me that if we are going to experience the reality of God in our everyday life, that it must be a good thing to start our day with thoughts of God!

I want you to be still for a moment....quiet your mind. Acknowledge that Jesus is present. Invite him to guide you. Gently recall this morning when you first woke up. Watch that scene, as if on a TV screen. What do you see? What is your reaction to that?

Matthew 28 reminds us that God is always with us. As we sleep, as we wake, and as we go about our day. Think for a moment about yesterday. What did you do? Where did you go? How did your day get filled? God is always with us. Think of a moment from yesterday where you can now see how God was with you. Did you have a moment of peace? Was someone kind or compassionate with you? Did you see anyone helping anyone? Did you see God anywhere? If there is any truth to the verse, 'I am with you always', then I suggest at least once in a while, we should catch a glimpse of the presence of God!

Colossians calls us to clothe ourselves in compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience and love. Support one another. Forgive one another. Let the peace of Christ rule your heart. Let the word of God dwell in you richly. Fill your heart with gratitude.

By the time you have finished brushing our teeth, having breakfast and putting on our clothes for the day, are you also putting on compassion and kindness? Are you dressing yourself with

patience? Are you loving one another? Supporting one another?

Forgiving one another? Recall at least one instance of expressing any of these qualities yesterday.

In some churches people are often invited to turn to those around them exchanging the peace of Christ. Often they simply shake hands and say hello. Some say to the other "Peace of Christ". Imagine for a moment this invitation from Colossians- "Let the peace of Christ rule your heart." Ask yourself this....."What would the peace of Christ feel like in my heart, in my everyday moments, in my life?" In those moments when you are able to do just this, what is the tone of your voice like? What do your words sound like? Is there compassion there....or forgiveness.....generosity....humility? If the peace of Christ rules your heart, are am slowing down? Do you have time to help a stranger? Do you have time to listen to someone else's story? Do you have time to think good thoughts?.

Perhaps it doesn't matter how you start your day.....fresh out of bed and onto the floor...or slow and grumpy....needing just to be quiet for a bit. But it does matter how we prepare for the day.

Teeth brushed or not, acknowledge that God is with you. Psalm 118 invites us to acknowledge that This is the Day....Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”.

As you prepare your breakfast, are you also appreciating that you have the gift of another day? That God made this day. That God made you. That somehow, in mystery, God is with you. Is there any reason not to rejoice!

Recognizing that just as deliberately as we put on our pants and shirt and shoes for the day, we have the opportunity to also put on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, love, forgiveness. It is these articles of faith that help us to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, that our hearts might be filled with gratitude.

The passage from Matthew, encouraging us to remember everyday, throughout the day, God is always with us, also calls us to go and make disciples.

Two people are waking down a street. Both of them are Christians. Their faith is important to both of them. One of them kicks an empty pop can off the sidewalk and onto the street. The other one goes and picks it up and carries it to a trash can. One of them is saying critical, unpleasant things about someone they both know. The other is offering grace. One of them ignores the homeless beggar, the other looks at them, smiles, and says hello. One of them hurries across the busy intersection. The other stops to help an elderly lady, burden down with grocery bags.

I don't know how either of these two people woke up, but I do know which one was rejoicing in the day. I know which one had clothed themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, love. I know in which one the peace of Christ ruled. And I know which

one people were drawn to. I know in which one others saw a light. I know which one was responsible for drawing others to Christ. Making disciples is like magnetism. We see this light in others. We see this love and compassion and generosity in others, and we are drawn to it, and we are drawn to the one who is the light of the world, the one who's name is Love.

How differently do you think that your day might go if you began it with Jesus? How different do you think your day might go if you invited the peace of Christ to rule in your heart?

We can restrict Jesus to a Sunday morning adventure, or we can be with him all day every day. The choice is ours!

God bless you on the journey!

Amen