



*5 Minutes*  
*with*  
**Jesus**

MAKING TODAY  
MATTER

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## Noise Pollution

Stop for a moment and just listen. What do you hear? Maybe the neighbor's lawnmower . . . the barking dog a few houses down . . . a clock ticking . . . the cars on the street.

Now stop for a moment and just listen to the noise *inside*. What is keeping your heart from being quiet and at peace? Most likely, it's many things, because although we long for peace, real life intrudes.

A call from the doctor

A note from the teacher about a child's behavior

A lost job and a pile of bills

Real life does not foster internal peace!

In the last major conversation Jesus had with His closest friends, He spoke about peace—but not as we might have expected Him to. When I read Jesus saying, "I've told you all this so that you may have peace" (John 16:33), my



first question is *All what?* If I didn't look back to John 15 to see what Jesus had been saying, I'd guess that keys to peace would be something along these lines:

"You're going to live to a ripe old age."

"Your children will rise up and call you blessed—even when they hit fifteen."

"You will always have enough money for all you need and most of what you want."

"You will hear the Lord tell you 'Well done' after a lifetime of faithfulness."

Sounds good, right? But not one of these things was included in the strangest "peace speech" I've ever read. Turn to John 15 and you'll see that Jesus told His closest friends that they would be persecuted and no longer welcome in places they used to go. Go to John 16:2 and you'll find these devastating words: "You will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God."

Clearly the peace Jesus spoke about is not what we think of at all. He was saying to His disciples—and to you and me today—"It's going to get rough down here, but don't worry. I am with you. I will never leave you. And *I* am your peace."

No matter what is going on in your life, stop for a moment and

speak His name out loud: “Jesus . . . Jesus . . . Jesus.” Know that He is *with* you and that He is *for* you even when the storm is raging all around.

*Peace is not the absence of trouble;  
it is the presence of Christ.*

### ↪ **Five Minutes in the Word** ↩

*“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind  
and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world  
cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”*

John 14:27

*Those who love your instructions have  
great peace and do not stumble.*

Psalm 119:165

*"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."*

John 16:33

*In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O LORD, will keep me safe.*

Psalm 4:8

*For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end.*

Isaiah 9:6-7



## Being Honest with God

**I** am angry!” she said to me.

It was a strange way to start a conversation, but her emotions seemed to overwhelm her.

I had just finished teaching, and I was signing a book for someone when this woman stepped between us. Asking her to wait just a second, I finished signing the book and handed it back to the now very concerned recipient.

“Let’s walk for a bit,” I suggested to my unhappy new friend. When we were finally alone, I quietly asked her, “What happened to you?”

For half a second I thought she might slap me, but as I watched, the ice in her eyes melted from anger into intense pain. She fell into my arms, and rivers of tears streamed down her face.

“I’ve buried two sons,” she said when she could speak. “Every time I hear you talk about your boy, it’s like a knife in my heart.”



We talked for a long time that night. At one point I asked her if she had let God see her rage, and she seemed horrified by the suggestion.

“I can’t talk to God like that!” she said.

“Don’t you think He already knows?” I asked, holding her tight. “He knows—and He loves you. He knows—and He wants you to trust Him enough to tell Him the whole truth about what you’re feeling.”

Have you ever done that? Have you ever simply gotten alone with God and let Him have it all, the good, the bad, and the downright ugly—*whatever* it is you’re thinking and feeling? Doing so will change your life. Trust me; I speak from experience! But it took me years to open up to God. I’d lived much of my life filled with shame, with the profound sense that no matter what I did, I would never be good enough for God or for anyone else. Clinging to that falsehood, I kept a wall around my heart so that no one could hurt me. The wall kept me safe, but it also kept me lonely. One night when I was alone in a hospital, alone in the dark, I spoke out loud to God everything I felt. It wasn’t pretty . . . but I wasn’t struck by lightning. Instead I actually felt closer to Him than ever before. Truth does that. Truth destroys walls.

Are you willing to take that risk today? Will you fall at the feet of Jesus, tell Him the whole truth about what you’re thinking and feeling, and then let Him love you back to life?

*God knows your whole  
story and He loves you.*

❧ **Five Minutes in the Word** ❧

*The Lord is close to all who call on him,  
yes, to all who call on him in truth.*

Psalm 145:18

*"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

John 8:32

*Send out your light and your truth; let them guide me. Let them  
lead me to your holy mountain, to the place where you live.*

Psalm 43:3

*Unfailing love and truth have met together. Righteousness  
and peace have kissed! Truth springs up from the earth,  
and righteousness smiles down from heaven.*

Psalm 85:10-11

*“The time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way.”*

John 4:23



## Real Rest

When is the last time you felt rested? I don't mean the time you managed to get to bed before midnight. I mean really rested.

We don't live in a culture conducive to rest. Even in the church we can end up being overcommitted because we say yes too often. After all, it's easier to say no to attending a neighborhood party than to signing up for a Bible study. If something sounds spiritual, we too easily think we should line up behind everyone else and take a ticket. But being busy for God and knowing God are two different things. And often they don't fit together well.

One day when Jesus addressed a crowd, He spoke right to their bone-deep weariness: "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). He wasn't speaking about the kind of tiredness you and I feel at the end of a good day's work,



when we just want to sink into a chair and not move until Christmas. No, Jesus was speaking to those who were worn out trying to do the right thing to please God and earn their salvation. Remember, this was before the Crucifixion and the resurrection, so if you were a God-fearing Jew listening to Jesus that day, you still woke up every morning under the burden of 613 laws. We know the Big 10, the commandments God gave Moses on Mount Sinai, but there were 603 more for the Jewish people to follow. Add to that weight the reality that the religious leaders of the day did nothing to ease the people's burden. Jesus spoke directly to that fact:

The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the law of Moses. So practice and obey whatever they tell you, but don't follow their example. For they don't practice what they teach. They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden. (Matthew 23:2-4)

Jesus loves you. That's the whole sentence. There's no *if* tacked on at the end. It stands alone. Jesus loves you and me just as we are right now. Despite the countless shades of light and dark that live inside us, we are loved completely by God. Hard to take in, isn't it?

That kind of love doesn't exist apart from God.

That kind of love is hard to grasp when we're busy running from one activity to another.

That kind of love calls us to rest—really rest—in the presence of the One who made us, who knows us, who loves us.

*Real rest comes with knowing the grace of our salvation in Jesus. We don't have to earn it.*

## ❧ Five Minutes in the Word ❧

*Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."*

Matthew 11:28–30

*I said to myself, "Relax and rest. GOD has showered you with blessings. Soul, you've been rescued from death; Eye, you've been rescued from tears; and you, Foot, were kept from stumbling."*

Psalm 116:7–8 MSG

*The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name.*

Psalm 23:1–3

*I see that the Lord is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.*

*No wonder my heart is glad, and my tongue shouts his praises! My body rests in hope.*

Acts 2:25–26

*Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.*

Psalm 91:1



## Let Go!

I vividly remember one Sunday afternoon when Christian was three. We'd been to church and had lunch, and it was time for him to nap. I tucked him in—and not five minutes later he reappeared. I settled him again. Three minutes later he did an encore. With his fourth appearance, I'd had enough.

"Christian, I want you to lie here and ask God to help you be quiet and still." A few minutes later he popped his head into the den where I was reading a book.

"Didn't you ask God to help you?" I asked him.

"I did," he replied. "But He said that's just not how He made me!"

Perhaps that's how you feel when you read the words *Be still, and know that I am God*. I know I sometimes do. Countless times I've sat down to try to be still and holy. It's never worked very well. Only recently when I was studying this passage did I realize my misunderstanding of the text: the original Hebrew root of *Be still* doesn't mean "be



quiet”; it means “let go.” That’s very different, don’t you think? *Let go and know that I am God!*

Let go of trying to control your spouse!

Let go of your worry about your finances!

Let go of your unforgiveness!

Let go of your past!

Let go of what you can’t control—and rest in the knowledge that God is in control!

We worry so much about things that we can’t impact. What if we decided to make a list of things we are holding onto and release all of them to God? What if we took one moment each day to be still and acknowledge God’s perfect control? Let’s give it a try.

*“Let go and know that I am God.”*

## ✧ Five Minutes in the Word ✧

*Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!*

Psalm 46:10 ESV

*Do you know how God controls the storm and causes the lightning to flash from his clouds? Do you understand how he moves the clouds with wonderful perfection and skill?*

*When you are sweltering in your clothes and the south wind dies down and everything is still, he makes the skies reflect the heat like a bronze mirror. Can you do that?*

Job 37:15–18

*Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.*

1 Chronicles 29:11–12 ESV

*Remember the things I have done in the past. For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me. Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish.*

Isaiah 46:9–10