

Watching with My Shepherd



Annie

Scriptures:

2 Samuel 11

John 18:15-18;25-26

John 5:24

Through the online ministry of a, now, dear friend which began during the pandemic, I have learned a wonderfully simple but immensely valuable and powerful prayer. "Save me O Lord while waking, and guard me while sleeping, that, awake, I may watch with Christ, and, asleep, may rest in peace". Simple words that inspire and encourage me, as well as being as comforting as a warm, fleecy blanket on a cold night. Words to wrap around my soul and heart, words to delve into and find new light and fresh hope.

I see God's word, and these words, as new pastures, lush and green, opening up before me as I follow our Great, Good Shepherd. Gazing on never before seen vistas, lakes, valleys, mountains towering around us in their majesty and glorious greatness. Not words on a page to be read and hidden away in my memory, but a banquet of life giving sustenance to be absorbed and enjoyed, and explored with the One who knows exactly what each of us needs and when we need it.

We recently visited Australia and had to drive from where we arrived to the town we would be staying at, about a 4 to 5 hour drive away, and I was giving huge thanks to God for the app on our phone that talked us through the unknown streets to find the highway that would take us there. Initially, I couldn't work out why "she" wasn't speaking to us, until I realised the phone we were using didn't have our location activated and visible to the map app. How could "she" know where to tell us to go if "she" wasn't aware of where we were? Through this, God taught me such a huge lesson. He is never unaware of where we are, He never loses sight or sound of us, however much the enemy would have us believe differently. And this leads me back to that simple prayer.

I am very good at seeing things through my eyes, using my reasoning, my logic, to try and fix what I consider needs fixing, which often leads me down paths and roads I really don't want to be at. Yet, when I remember that prayer, I find myself, sometimes metaphorically and sometimes in reality, on my knees before God, repenting of my choice to go my way, without seeking Him first and foremost. Once again, I am in the place of asking God to save me from myself. To save me from listening to the wrong promptings because I insist on seeing things through my eyes and not His. To save me so that I will watch WITH Christ, to open the eyes of my heart to see what He sees, and thereby follow where He goes.

The most wonderfully comforting aspect of all this, is that I know I am not alone in my human frailty. Throughout scripture, God has allowed the history of His prophets, His children to be related to us unvarnished, unedited, in all its rawness, not covering up mistakes or fears, but, in mercy and love, showing us that there is only One who is perfect. When we watch with Christ, we are

privileged to be able to see His Righteousness, His Justice, His Mercy and Grace on full display. The contrast between humanity's attempts at any of these qualities and His are beyond awe inspiring, it could not be clearer, without God all will turn to dust and ashes.

Following in the footsteps of Christ, our Great Shepherd, is a journey that leads to the destination that He has already prepared for us, our home with Him for all Eternity. Yet, He says that we, who believe on Him, already have Eternal Life, this is what He sees when He looks at us. So, watching with Christ, opens our eyes to see ourselves as He sees us, wrapped in Light, in His Righteousness forever in our Eternal home. Safe and loved forever.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we have eyes to see and ears to hear You alone as we follow our Shepherd through all of the new and exciting places He will take us on our earthly journey. Save us, o Lord, from the self that would blind us to You and Your abundant Love for us, in Jesus Name we pray, Amen.