

The peace of God be multiplied to you all through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our text comes from Psalm 4 and you can especially note the theme of this psalm in the closing verse, verse 8.

**Psalm 4 (NKJV)**

To the Chief Musician. With Stringed Instruments. A Psalm of David.

**1** Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

**2** How long, O you sons of men, Will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness And seek falsehood? Selah

**3** But know that the Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly; The Lord will hear when I call to Him.

**4** Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah

**5** Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the Lord.

**6** There are many who say, "Who will show us any good?" Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.

**7** You have put gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased.

**8** I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

This is the word of the LORD.

## **Get a Good Night's Sleep for Your Soul**

In Jesus name, who is our eternal rest, dear fellow redeemed,

To begin, I would like to see a show of hands. Raise your hand if you did not sleep well last night... There are all kinds of reasons why we struggle to get a good night's sleep. It could be something you ate. It could be a child or baby that kept you up. According to the National Sleep Foundation, nearly 7 out of 10 Americans say they experience frequent sleep problems. I think all of us at one time or another can relate to this sort of sleep trouble. What is the reason for the restlessness and, even more importantly, how can we fix it?

At times, our restlessness is more than a physical disorder. As sinners, it can go way beyond lying awake at night. This is something that no earthly medication can cure. As the burden of sin affects your life at one time or another, in one way or another, you can easily find yourself not getting the rest you need for your soul. This is something for which I think we could all raise our hands.

We look to God's Word today for the medication we really need as the Holy Spirit, through the psalmist David, leads us to rest. (**v.8**) Get a good night's sleep for your soul. Rest in confidence. Rest in peace.

## 1. Rest in Confidence

The National Sleep Foundation notes that 1/3 of Americans are losing sleep over the economy. In one way or another this is a result of our lack of confidence. This comes perhaps from lack of confidence in our government, in the stock market, perhaps in your employment. But what about our confidence in God? God promises to provide all that we need for our body and life as He guides us to our eternal rest in heaven. Still we worry. Still we take the burden on ourselves to carry our concerns. We rely on our own will and wisdom to seek our own solutions.

God is trying to tell you something. Whether it is the economy, your family, or your future, God provides what you need to rest in confidence.

After all, what is truly the root cause for lost sleep for your soul? Restlessness rests in our attempts to carry the demands of God, the demands of holiness. How could we catch a wink if this were left on our shoulders? Sure a person could push this off. A person can find temporary security in earthly distractions or in illusions that he has done good enough. Yet even this leads to an endless pursuit. Then when the time comes to face the final sleep of death, can we be confident we will find rest? What confidence do we have to shut our eyes if we knew the demanding God to be waiting who says, "the soul who sins shall die." (Ez. 18:20). This is the restlessness of a life without Christ. This is the tossing and turning of trying to find confidence in your own works and life.

(**v.3**) Think about what it means to be set apart by God. This word is almost equivalent to the word "saint." That is to say, when God by the blood of Christ made us saints, He has set us apart from the world, He has made us holy before His presence.

Our Lord Jesus says, **Matthew 11:28 (NKJV) — 28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.** Oh, sweet rest... Jesus. Confidence to sleep secure is found in Jesus. God has revealed to you that you don't have to carry your burdens. In fact you can't possibly carry them. Only Jesus could. Jesus has carried the load of your guilt. He has met God's demands for holiness. He has faithfully followed every one of God's commands in your place. And so David says, v.5, "**put you trust in the LORD.**"

The rest God gives you is rest for your soul. It is rest by faith in Jesus. As Paul writes in Romans 4, **Romans 4:4–5 (NKJV) — 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,**

Faith then is not something for us to achieve, it is something for God to give, along with grace, forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life. By qualification you are justified –

declared righteous. After all the passage says, God justifies the ungodly. That is, if you are sinful, then you are justified. This is how God has set you apart. He has taken what was ungodly and counted it as godly through faith in Jesus Christ.

The result is a good night's sleep for your soul. You can have confidence that all your sins are taken away. You can have confidence that eternal rest is yours. You can have confidence that God is with you in every situation. In every sleepless night, He is reaching out with the rest you need for your soul.

The psalmist David obviously was facing some serious persecution as he reveals in v.2 . What should have been his glory and honor, namely, faithfully serving Christ, his enemies would turn into his shame. The world loves worthlessness and lies. We said earlier, 1 out of 3 Americans are loosing sleep over the economy. (**v.6a**) Financial stewardship is important, but may it never drive us to restlessness. May our concerns never lie in wanting more than we need. That is the world's shame: wanting more. But as the Spirit writes in Psalm 127 **Psalm 127:1–2 (NKJV) — 1 Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it ... 2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; ...** all these earthly goals are pointless if it takes away from the spiritual rest you need. Yet as we read on in that psalm ... **For so [God] gives His beloved sleep.**

God lays you to rest from your labors. **Psalm 121:4–5 (NKJV) — 4 Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade at your right hand.** God will keep watch. You rest while He works. He will see to it that His people are set apart from danger. For the real danger lies not in the economy collapsing or you being stuck by sickness or disability, the real danger lies in trying to go it alone. The real danger is to face sin and death without confidence in our Lord Jesus. Jesus is your rest.

Just look to the empty tomb. Confidence is given to you as you journey there in faith. When all else seems to shake loose, stand upon this empty cave, it will not move. God has proven His everlasting love for you by rescuing you from death. It was hard for those disciples to let go of their fears. As we read earlier from Luke . . . **He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”** When they turn your glory into shame, when your flesh entices you after your its will, when you wonder, as in v.6, **“Who will show us any good?”** Behold His hands and His feet. **v.8.** – Rest in confidence.

What was the first words that the risen Lord said to His disciples? “Peace...” This confidence in our Lord leads us to rest in peace.

## **2. Rest in Peace**

My Mom somehow engrained on my brain that a good night's sleep was 8 hours. She was always reminding me of the importance of sleep for healthy function. “Start fresh in

the morning” she would say. When you sleep, your body reenergizes. Your breathing slows, your muscles relax, tissues are repaired, hormones are balanced, your blood flow improves. Your body finds peace.

I recall one individual I know who in college was juggling two jobs, raising a family and going to school full time. He would be glad to get a few hours sleep some nights. Later on in his life then he suffered from insomnia. He would find his mind racing over different concerns and now that he had time to sleep, he couldn’t find peace. It seems his body had just gotten so used to bad sleep patterns that could no longer easily find rest.

How many sleepless nights has your soul suffered? How many days do we find ourselves crabby, or impatient? If children, for instance, don’t get the rest they need, parents know well what the consequences will be. How much more will lack of peace with God lead to stress and impatience on our part? This is not just a trouble sleeping at night, but it leads to trouble with our faith. It leads to trouble with the relationships in our life. It leads to bad sleep patterns down the road where we just can’t seem to find any spiritual rest.

(v.4). Paul quotes this passage in Ephesians 4:26 and adds **Ephesians 4:26 (NKJV) — 26 “do not let the sun go down on your wrath.”**

Forbes.com lists among 14 reasons you are not sleeping, Marital Strife. What ultimately is the cause of this restlessness within a marriage. It is usually just what Paul says not to let happen: couples let the sun go down on their anger. This build up night after night of unresolved marital issues is what destroys the peace that should be their. Without a love for Christ that looks to resolve these issues before the sun goes down, peace is easily lost.

In any strife – marital, work, parents – **“Be angry and do not sin.”** It is in our flesh to get angry when we feel we are not getting what we should. What the Spirit is telling us is although your flesh gets angry, don’t act out on this anger. Don’t let it erupt. Don’t sweep it under the rug either. Before the sun goes down, take a moment to meditate. Be still and see the length of our Savior’s sacrifice that He was even in His last moments forgiving the enemies who were putting Him to death. This perfect love of Jesus has forgiven you of all your anger, all your strife. He has reconciled you to Himself. Now reconcile yourself to others.

Maybe it has not been too long since you’ve struggled through a night of tossing and turning. Maybe you went to bed restless and burdened by what was on your mind. Maybe sickness or pain has caused you to lose sleep. Maybe you couldn’t stop thinking about a loved one that is going through a difficult time. All these things are a result of discord in your life. All these things are evidence to the ongoing war being waged in this world where the curse of sin fights against the blessings of God’s eternal purpose.

**(v.6) Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.** This is where peace is found – the face of God. Peace for your soul is found when God's presence being lifted upon us. It happens at every Divine Service as we gather together. In the hearing of God's of salvation He lifts up His presence upon us. In the blessing also at the end of every Sunday service, we say, "The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you ..." what? "... peace." That passage we call the Benediction, comes from Numbers 6:27 where Aaron the priest was instructed to invoke the name of Jehovah where ever they gathered as God promised to bless them with His presence. This is the rest that restores and reenergizes us.

God's word is where your burdens are lifted. As David declares, v.7, **"You have put gladness in my heart."** Here is where He speaks to you words of peace. Whether it is weight of your sin or weight this fallen world upon you, God's word replaces your heavy burdens with the yoke of peace. God's Word assures with the words of Jeremiah, **Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV) — 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.**

On many grave stones you will read the letters R.I.P. That stands for "rest in peace." The day is coming where your rest will be complete. The restless struggle we experience in body will soon be over. Jesus has gone to prepare a place for you. The resurrection promises you a new and perfect body that never lacks energy. The resurrection promises you a soul that will never experience loss or sadness. This is eternal rejuvenation. **Revelation 14:13 (NKJV) — 13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."** When you close your eyes for the last time, whether it be tonight or tomorrow or in 90 years, you can rest assured, you will open those eyes to your eternal resting place prepared for you and your Savior waiting.

**(v.8)**

Come unto Me, ye weary, And I will give you rest.  
O blessed voice of Jesus, Which comes to hearts oppress!  
It tells of benediction, Of pardon, grace, and peace,  
Of joy that hath no ending, Of love which cannot cease.

Get a good night's sleep for your soul. Amen.