**The Imitation of Christ by Thomas A. Kempis**

**BOOK THREE:** INTERNAL CONSOLATION

### **Chapter 23:** Four Things Which Bring Great Peace

**Quote:**

"The Voice of Christ

 MY CHILD, I will teach you now the way of peace and true liberty.

Seek, child, to do the will of others rather than your own.

Always choose to have less rather than more.

Look always for the last place and seek to be beneath all others.

Always wish and pray that the will of God be fully carried out in you.

Behold, such will enter into the realm of peace and rest.

The Disciple

O Lord, this brief discourse of Yours contains much perfection. It is short in words but full of meaning and abounding in fruit. Certainly if I could only keep it faithfully, I should not be so easily disturbed.

For as often as I find myself troubled and dejected, I find that I have departed from this teaching. But You Who can do all things, and Who always love what is for my soul's welfare, give me increase of grace that I may keep Your words and accomplish my salvation.

A Prayer Against Bad Thoughts

O Lord my God, be not far from me. O my God, hasten to help me, for varied thoughts and great fears have risen up within me, afflicting my soul. How shall I escape them unharmed? How shall I dispel them? "I will go before you," says the Lord, "and will humble the great ones of earth. I will open the doors of the prison, and will reveal to you hidden secrets."

Do as You say, Lord, and let all evil thoughts fly from Your face. This is my hope and my only comfort--to fly to You in all tribulation, to confide in You, and to call on You from the depths of my heart and to await patiently for Your consolation.

A Prayer for Enlightening the Mind

Enlighten me, good Jesus, with the brightness of internal light, and take away all darkness from the habitation of my heart. Restrain my wandering thoughts and suppress the temptations which attack me so violently. Fight strongly for me, and vanquish these evil beasts--the alluring desires of the flesh--so that peace may come through Your power and the fullness of Your praise resound in the holy courts, which is a pure conscience. Command the winds and the tempests; say to the sea: "Be still," and to the north wind, "Do not blow," and there will be a great calm.

Send forth Your light and Your truth to shine on the earth, for I am as earth, empty and formless until You illumine me. Pour out Your grace from above. Shower my heart with heavenly dew. Open the springs of devotion to water the earth, that it may produce the best of good fruits. Lift up my heart pressed down by the weight of sins, and direct all my desires to heavenly things, that having tasted the sweetness of supernal happiness, I may find no pleasure in thinking of earthly things.

Snatch me up and deliver me from all the passing comfort of creatures, for no created thing can fully quiet and satisfy my desires. Join me to Yourself in an inseparable bond of love; because You alone can satisfy him who loves You, and without You all things are worthless."

**Definition:**

Enlightenment: The spiritual awakening and the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

**Scripture:**

Psalms 43:3

Send me your light and your faithful care,
    let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy mountain,
    to the place where you dwell.

Micah 7:8-9

Do not gloat over me, my enemy!
    Though I have fallen, I will rise.
Though I sit in darkness,
    the Lord will be my light.
 Because I have sinned against him,
    I will bear the Lord’s wrath,
until he pleads my case
    and upholds my cause.
He will bring me out into the light;
    I will see his righteousness.

John 8:12

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Ephesians 1:18

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

**Concept:**

As Christians we are to advocate for a humble and selfless approach to life, advocating for seeking to fulfill the needs of others, prioritizing simplicity over abundance, embracing humility by taking a position of lowliness, and praying for God's will to be fulfilled. Those who embody these qualities will enter a state of peace and rest.

**Discussion:**

How does the Christian concept of humility and selflessness influence the way believers interact with others and prioritize their own needs?

In what ways do Christian teachings encourage believers to seek simplicity over abundance, and how is this reflected in the practice of faith and daily living?

What role does prayer and the pursuit of God's will play in the attainment of peace and rest for individuals who strive to embody humility, selflessness, and a focus on fulfilling the needs of others?