

## **Matthew 11:25–30**

<sup>25</sup>At that time, Jesus continued, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from clever and learned people and have revealed them to little children. <sup>26</sup>Yes, Father, because this was pleasing to you. <sup>27</sup>Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wants to reveal him. <sup>28</sup>“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Sermon for Pentecost 7, July 19, 2020 St. Paul’s Green Garden

Text: Matthew 11:25-30

Theme: “Jesus Gives Us True Rest”

In the name of Jesus, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

What does the Dr. tell you when you are sick? Take your medicine if any, drink lots of fluids and get plenty of REST. Anyone recovering from the debilitating effects of any difficult illness needs to get plenty of rest and that seems to be true for anyone recovering from Covid-19. And the whole concept of rest is kind of interesting, because it is really pioneered by the one who we wouldn’t think really needs any rest.

When Moses records the creation account he tells us that on the seventh day God rested from all the work he had done. Now from scripture we understand that God is perfect, holy and has limitless power so he really does not need rest. But when God rested it means he stopped working. His work was completed. And yet, God did not rest simply for himself. We are told God blessed the seventh day and set it apart as holy. He did not do that for himself. He did it for us. In a perfect world, God pioneered the concept of REST.

When he gave his O.T. people his commands regarding worship, he wanted them to rest on the seventh day. That may have been happening among believers even before the laws given at Mt. Sinai. But he made it official, he made resting on the seventh day standard for his people as an opportunity to worship him. And we should understand, the ‘rest’ God wanted his people to experience had very little to do with resting from, plowing, planting, harvesting and taking care of their animals. God wanted his people to rest from their work and take time to focus on his gifts of forgiveness of sins and eternal life through the work of the promised Savior.

And in the course of time, according to God’s plan, the Savior came into the world. And right here in Matthew 11 we have this Savior promising to give us rest.

## Page 2

Here is the rest that comes from Jesus, the rest that God wanted his people from ancient times to look forward to, the rest that Jesus gives to every child of God because he promised it to us already through the Old Testament Sabbath Day. So when Jesus invites us, **“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest,”** he promising to us, and giving to us the very rest that he came to bring. Not merely rest from covid-19, not merely rest from the trials and difficulties of life in this world, but rest that we can only truly understand when we know that we need forgiveness for our sins. Because when he gives us this kind of rest, it takes away every burden. Here our Savior gives us true rest. 1. Rest both hidden and revealed. 2. Rest given to the weary. 3. Rest that enables us to carry the burden.

Jesus wants you and me and all his children to know about the rest he gives. His ministry was all about bringing rest to sinners like you and me. The Savior did many miracles in towns, villages and cities, especially miracles of healing. Just before he spoke these words he had spoken against the cities of Bethsaida, Korazin and Capernaum because most of the people in those cities had seen him work miracles that proved he is the Son of God and the promised Savior. Yet they did not believe him. Many of those people may have imagined they were too intelligent to believe that an ordinary carpenter from a little town in Galilee could be the Son of God.

That did not discourage Jesus from continuing his ministry. Instead he gave thanks to his Father: **“Jesus continued, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from clever and learned people and have revealed them to little children. <sup>26</sup>Yes, Father, because this was pleasing to you.”** Jesus had come to bring rest to the souls of every person. But to some who were clever and intelligent and believed they were too good, too smart, too learned to let Jesus give them his kind of rest, the truth about Jesus remained hidden to them. How sad this is, that people whom Jesus openly invited to believe in him did not want to receive forgiveness for their sins and rest for their souls.

The apostle Paul quoted Isaiah, **“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will bring to nothing.”** Those who refuse the rest Jesus gives are really saying that they know better than God what they need. Jesus’ enemies whether at the time he lived all the way to the present time, refused to receive the rest he brings. What joy, peace and comfort they would experience if they would simply trust what Jesus gives. But since they do not, his perfect rest remains hidden to them. But God is merciful.

Our Savior’s rest does not remain hidden to everyone for Jesus said, **“Father...you...have revealed [these things] to little children.”** Jesus is not

### page 3

excluding adults. Rather, he was saying, those who think all they need is their own intelligence to survive are wrong. Those who know they need Jesus, who are willing to confess their sins and look to Jesus for forgiveness are the little children, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness from Jesus because they know they have none of their own. These are the little children, who with a humble, child-like faith believe that they can only know the Father by coming to him through Jesus. These are the little ones who trust that Jesus is taking care of them through all the circumstances of the covid pandemic because he loves them. And if we ever get the idea that we don't need Jesus, all we need to do is look in the mirror of God's commandments. There we will see our sins and once again, see our need for a Savior who has chosen to reveal his love and mercy to us, chiefly in the shedding of his blood for our sins.

What relief that is. That is what rest does for us. It brings relief. I don't know anyone personally who has contracted covid-19. But from some reports I have heard, those who have bad symptoms suffer quite a bit until they recover. During recovery they often experience fatigue and weariness. In a spiritual sense we suffer weariness when we feel like our sins are piling up. Perhaps you have been sick with a physical illness like the flu and you feel the aching in your muscles, the congestion in sinuses and the fever. We have all known that misery at some time or other. Those symptoms usually go away in a few days to a week. But how about the weariness of sin? The only way that will go away is when we turn to Jesus, confess our sins and receive his forgiveness. That is truly rest—rest that lasts.

And it lasts because it is given by the one who earned it for us. There are many who search for rest and relaxation through a vacation, a hobby or a long term project. All those things are good, but they don't address the symptoms of the weariness we experience because of sin. We need rest for our souls because sin destroys us. King David wrote about his weariness when, for a time, he failed to confess his sins of adultery and murder: “**When I kept silent, my bones wasted away as I groaned all day long.**” Imagine the burden, the weariness, the sadness of failing to confess sins that burdened his conscience. But then we don't really have to imagine it do we, because at some point or another in our lives, we have each experienced such weariness haven't we?

They only relief we have is in Jesus and his Father. “**No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wants to reveal him.**” Jesus wants us to know that he gives us true rest because of the will of his Father. We know the Son and his work of redemption, AND we know the Father and his love for us through the work of the

## page 4

Holy Spirit who creates faith in our hearts. We need to know the Son, but we also need to know the Father and his love for us so that we know Jesus came to be our Savior through the authority of his Father. He was perfectly willing to come to earth to give his life as a ransom for the sins of every person who has ever lived. And what a blessing it is, what relief from the weariness of sin when Jesus reveals his Father to us, for then we can see for ourselves how much he loves us that he was willing to sacrifice his only son to give us a new and holy life with him.

Perhaps you remember a time in your life when your sins had you snowed under. You thought you had everything under control and then came God's Word of the Law to remind you of your sins and your need for a Savior. And the only way to be rid of your burden was to listen to the voice of the Lord Jesus. He is the only one who can give you what you really need—assurance that your debt of sin is paid for in full and rest for your weary soul. We need this rest each day because we will live with sin and in a sinful world until our Lord takes us out of this life. Jesus wants to teach us how to carry the burden, not of sin, but of living in the joy of obeying God's will.

What Jesus says in these last two verses seems to be a paradox, that is, how can you accept a yoke that is easy and a burden that is light. But Jesus does not stop there. He says, "**Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart.**" A key word here is that we learn from Jesus. The word *learn* that Jesus uses here comes from the same word we translate "disciple". A disciple is one who learns from his teacher and takes what he has learned and makes it his own. So Jesus, in urging us to take his yoke and learn from him means that we learn to carry whatever burden Jesus asks us to carry in his name. And one of those things is to obey his will as God expresses it in the ten commandments.

And we CAN obey because we know what the gentle, humble Jesus did for us. He took off his heavenly crown, set aside his royal robes and put on human flesh to live with us in our world. He obeyed his Father's will. So when we obey God's will, we are showing others who our Savior is so that they, too will learn from him. He is the one who obeyed his Father to come down to earth and save us. Our obedience shows the humility and gentleness of Jesus. Now its true of us that our sinful nature rebels against the burden of obeying Jesus. But when we feed our new self on God's word, when we strengthen him by receiving the sacrament, he strengthens us to keep learning from him and we have no need to consider obedience to his commands to, be a burden. The apostle John wrote, "**This is love for God: that we keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome**".

## Page 5

Yet we recognize that our obedience is so imperfect. When we see our imperfect obedience we also see how much we need Jesus' perfect obedience given to us through his death and resurrection. So, whether God has enabled me to speak clearly and plainly to those who ask about the hope that we have in Christ; or if I have defended my Savior against attacks from those who speak evil of him, I show my love for him who rescued me from eternal punishment in hell. Every disciple of Jesus takes delight in showing others what the Savior has done for him or her. So the yoke is easy and the burden is light when we depend on the gospel which points us to our Savior and his perfect obedience in our place.

Yes, Jesus makes the yoke easy and the burden light when he gives us the power, help, strength and consolation even as we face the temptation to sin in so many ways while we face this strange disease. But remember that Jesus has already cured you of the worst disease of all, the disease of sin. In doing that he has given us true rest for our souls. Receive this gift from Jesus not as something you and I have earned, but rather as a gift of his undeserved love for us. All the 'rest' we have, all the blessings we enjoy come from our Lord Jesus who took our burden so that we can praise him for his everlasting love. Amen.