

7/3/11

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF PENTECOST
July 3, 2011

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY Gracious God, our heavenly Father, Your mercy attends us all our days. On this holiday weekend we pray peace for our country, and the nations of the world. For your church, we pray, be our strength and support amid the wearisome changes of this world, and at life's end grant us Your promised rest and the full joys of Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE EPISTLE LESSON Romans 7:14-25a page

(For I know that nothing good dwells in me because sin dwells in me.)

14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-- this I keep on doing.

20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. 21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

25 Thanks be to God-- through Jesus Christ our Lord!

THE GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 11:25-30 page

(Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.)

25 At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. 26 Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. 27 "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. **28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."**

THE SERMON

"Jesus - Rest for Weary People"

Matthew 11

INTRO - There's an old parable that I bet the ladies know. "A man works from sun to sun, but a woman's work is never done." However, rather than thinking about the difference between men and women, I want you to think about what this says about work. Whether work is from sun to sun or never done, life is full of work and there is a lot to do.

I. A 2008 study by the Center for Disease Control said that 70 % of Americans had not gotten enough sleep or rest. How about you? Do you feel tired or weary?

A. We should not be surprised. In Genesis 3 God says to Adam after his sin, **17 "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."**

1. According to this verse "painful toil" and "the sweat of your brow" are the result of our disobedience and rebellion against God.
2. There will always be work and to some extent people will always get tired.

B. But, there is another kind of weariness. Last January as I sat by my mom's bed with my dad he broke down and said, "I can't take it any more." He was saying he couldn't hold the emotions in anymore. The difficulty of the situation, and the difficulty of life at that moment was overwhelming.

1. We can get weary and burdened from the problems of life.
2. there is a point where we do all we can and it doesn't seem enough and we are just overwhelmed.
3. There is a point when our weakness and failure is overwhelming

II. Today in our lesson Jesus is talking about the mysteries of life and says, **28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."**

A. For weary people God desires rest. In fact, for tired and weary people, Jesus is the one who gives rest.

B. That is different than what most people think.

1. People think rest can be earned. You know, you work and you have a few days off.
2. But, there are times that a person still doesn't find rest or peace in simply stopping work.
3. Life's problems continue. We live in a sinful world and just stopping work does not give rest for the body or what Jesus talks about in verse 29, **rest for your souls.**

C. Jesus says, **28 "Come to me"** Jesus says, **I will give you rest.** We can understand why Jesus gives rest, even if we do not always put this into practice.

1. Our burdens and our painful toil come because of sin, rebellion against the Creator of the world. But, Jesus has overcome sin with His death on the cross and His resurrection. Jesus gives rest.
2. We can feel burdened by our failure and weakness, but, Jesus gives forgiveness for those who have failed God.
3. People can feel burdened when life's problems seem bigger than their resources. But, Jesus who conquered death is stronger than any problem we face.
4. We can feel burdened when we feel all alone in this world. But Jesus is God with us, and he says, **"Come to me"**

III. My dad collected himself, and he kept going. He and my mom talked a couple of times more before she died. He made funeral arrangements with the kids around. He continues to worship, to exercise, to see family and friends. It is not that life is easy, but He knows that Jesus is stronger than the burden of my mom's death, that she is with Him, and my dad knows that God is with him. He keeps going, strengthened and comforted in his grief. On this holiday weekend, God wants us to know that He wants us to have rest.

A. God has created a Sabbath day every week, as a time for tired people to rest from work.

1. But, guess how we rest, we **'come to HIM' in worship.**
2. God doesn't want us to just stop working but to be filled with His refreshing forgiveness and the comfort of His love, and the joy of His presence.
3. Then we are really rested when our souls have rest.

B. Jesus says today in the Lord's Supper, "Take and eat" or in other words, **"Come to me"**

1. For weary souls God lets you know you are loved.
2. For people who are over whelmed, God gives Himself.
3. God sends you away forgiven and strengthened, with rest for your souls.

C. Right in the middle of when life and trouble seem stronger than we are, God says to us, **"Come to me"** We can go to Him in *prayer* knowing that in love He hears us and answers even *'groans too deep for words.'*

CONCLUSION - A famous French philosopher, Albert Camus said, "Happiness is like a butterfly. If you chase it it will flee. But if you wait silently it will come and land on your shoulder." People chase peace and rest with anxious moments and painful toil. But God tells us clearly where rest is found. Even in the midst of life's overwhelming burdens, even in the midst of painful toil that leaves us weary, Jesus says **28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."**