

An invitation to Rest
Matthew 11:26
July 5, 2020

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” Jesus said that and it is most inviting. For we know how much we actually do need rest. Our minds need rest. Our bodies need rest. I’ve known a few people in my lifetime who are so engaged with whatever it is they are doing in life that they don’t take time for rest. You’ve probably known a few like this too. They go and go and go and go. Then comes the crash. They get sick and are forced to do nothing for a couple of days. And they they resolved to be more disciplined in taking time to rest.

We need rest. Rest for our bodies; rest for our minds; and rest for our souls. Rest for our souls. That’s what Jesus is really talking about, when he says “**I will give you rest.**” For he says, “**I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**” Rest for you souls.

You know when your body needs rest, it sort of gets all achy and stuff. You know when your mind needs rest, you have trouble doing simple math or making sense of what you are hearing. But how do you know when your soul needs rest? There are some indicators that do point to that.

Unexplainable **ANGER** is one such indicator. Anger at everything. A lot of people are experiencing that right now with all of the nonsensical craziness we are confronted with each and every day. Anger is the reaction of someone who thought they had control over stuff but now must realize that there are many things that are beyond control. It’s hard for us to discover that we are to really in control after all those years of convincing ourselves that we are.

Another indicator that your soul needs some rest is a constant need to **SELF-JUSTIFY**. In all situations, you always want come out smelling like a rose. You’re known for never admitting

when you're wrong. You many think you're smelling like a rose, but others discern a distinctively different odor.... and they are telling you about.

Still another indicator that you need rest for you soul is the feeling of being crushed as you carry the **WEIGHT** of your own life. You imagined that you you were making a go of it; you imagined you could do it. You patted yourself on the back for doing, but now, now you are pressed hard. All that responsibility, all those worries....pressing down on you.

And to people who live like this, Jesus the Savior, stands with arms wide saying “**Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**” His words recall a soft bed with nice pillows at the end of long day. You know the feeling of climbing into that bed, getting the pillow just right, pulling the covers up. Jesus is offering something akin to this for your soul. You were never meant to stay up this late; never meant to be so far away from your creator and Lord.

Each of those indicators I mentioned, betray that you have in some ways distanced yourself from the Lord. **ANGER** arises in a person who thinks he can be is own Lord and is realizing that he's not the Lord. The need to **SELF-JUSTIFY** reveals a person trying to cover his own sins rather than seeking the atonement God offers. Being **CRUSHED** under the weight of your own life flows from the belief that you actually sustain your life apart from God, revealing you don't really think God provides.

To this Jesus says “**cut it out!**” I'm loosely quoting him there, he actually said “**Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.**” This rest is not something you can create for yourself. It's not something you earned or deserved. The rest that Jesus would give you comes simply and purely by his grace. he would give it it to you because he loves you. **I will GIVE you rest** says Jesus. He didn't say “**Do something really really super fantastically Holy. Read the entire bible in one week, including all of Leviticus and as payment for your**

championship next level Christianity, I will give you rest.” Nope He simply said, **“I will give rest.”**

How? Because it is he who did what it took to bring us back to God. Listen to how the prophet’s and apostles speak about him **“The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all”** **“Behold the lamb of God who carries away the sins of the world.”** **“He was offered once to bear the sins of man.”** **He himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree.”** This is Jesus. He has come to carry our burdens, especially that burden that makes all other burdens so burdensome: our sinfulness. Sin is what makes us think we can live without God’s presence in our lives. Sin is what leads us to banish him and think he has no role and that we are all in all.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me” he says **“For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”** In the context of today’s gospel Jesus was talking to people who had been instructed by the pharisees to believe that they were in charge. That they could take charge of their own souls by following a bunch of highly detailed rules. This was a horrible burden and a miserable way to live. Jesus offers to exchange this heavy yoke of the pharisees, for the light yoke of the Gospel that says its not about what we do that earns God’s favor, but rather what God has done for us in his Son.

Did he say his yoke and burden are light? It’s so light that it does not press down, but rather lifts. knowing, as the gospel teaches, that God loves you through his Son, you can rest. You can rest in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection. You can rest in the knowledge that no matter what happens, you will pass through it and come out better in the end. The weight of the world is not on your shoulders it was never meant to be. Admit that. Let God be God. Jesus said, **“Come to me you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.”** (Matt. 11:28)
The invitation stands open every single day AMEN