

"I Will Give You Rest"
Matthew 11:25-30
Pastor Espinosa

Introduction: It's hard to find a more comforting Scripture than what we have in today's Gospel...

Part I: Verses 25-27 demonstrate God's work and God's grace to us...and it is extremely comforting:

- a. But first there is an inherent warning: we don't want to be "the wise and understanding" = not referring to those who are educated necessarily, but to those who are self-sufficient (educated or not); basically those who live as if "they know it all." As a result God is put into a box and so is His Word, but consider Psalm 14:1. What does the "fool" say in his heart?
- b. This should also be convicting to us. We have this fool inside of us as well. You might object...but in spite of what we say, consider *how* we live.
- c. Now the fool inside of you and me is convinced that we have it all figured out!
- d. As a young teenager I remember being excited for any kind of physical work where I could flex my muscles and be that "tough guy," but one day my dad assigned me to work on getting a tree out of our front yard...I learned something about tools, esp. axes.
- e. But it just wasn't as a teenager that I was the fool who thought he had it all figured out: many of you know that Traci and I have had the wonderful blessing of being parents for almost what might be considered two generations of children...we have three older kids and five younger kids...well after having raised my older kids, I kinda thought I had parenting all figured out! Not the case...I am still very much a work in progress! And way too often I try too hard...worry too much...exert myself in terribly inefficient ways. It's a mistake to think we have it all figured out.
- f. This illustrates what foolish sinners do in respect to life in general...seeking peace, contentment, happiness, rest, and joy not listening to our Heavenly Father, but trying to do the job on our own.
- g. Most recently, I was convicted about my neglect of the gift of prayer as described in Matthew 6 (keep in mind that prayer is also a constant longing for the Lord in faith and our perpetual prayers to the Lord from the heart)...how important it is for Christians to live in this gift and because I've chosen too often to neglect the gift...I've missed out in an invaluable resource too often...to do so is to experience unnecessary labor and weariness!
- h. If we're honest the result of trying to be so self-sufficient is exhausting. Jesus here in Matthew 11 refers to it as "labor" and being "heavy laden."
- i. I saw these in a man I once served. He had been seeking faith in God for a long time and boy, he was frustrated and bitter! Everything changed with one basic insight: it wasn't for him to form faith in himself, but the work of God. We don't form faith; we don't give ourselves faith...faith can ONLY come from God. He must

form our faith; He must create our faith. This man was very intelligent, loved philosophy, but he had been spinning his wheels so to speak for a long time...and as a result was feeling fed up with faith! He was weary and heavy-laden, but by God's grace all of that changed.

- j. But Jesus is clear in our Gospel: *"no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."* (verse 27b)
- k. We can ask the next question: "Well who does Jesus *want* to reveal the Father too so that people can know the saving Gospel?" That's easy to answer: everybody, because He died for everybody!
- l. Still, coming to Christ is the work of God, a work of grace. From our Lutheran Confessions:

"Holy Scriptures ascribe conversion, faith in Christ, regeneration, renewal, and everything that belongs to its real beginning and completion in no way to human powers of the natural free will, be it entirely or one-half or the least and tiniest part, but altogether and alone to the divine operation and the Holy Spirit..." (SD, Art. II)

- m. So who is blessed this way to have Jesus reveal the Father to them? Jesus gives the answer in our Gospel...God reveals the hidden things of God to quote "little children."
- n. There is only one basic thing to get out of this description...the word used here for "little children" means that the child is so little that they can't even speak yet. These little children have nothing to bring...they can't even try to be self-sufficient, because they are helpless! What is really significant though is that they can't speak. God's law accuses us: "sinner!" And the "little child" doesn't talk back...it's true, no argument...we are sinners, we need God...we are overwhelmed by our inability; we are overwhelmed by the flood of our sin. We can relate to King David after all of the terrible sins of rebellion he committed against God in Psalm 51 he says that his sin is always before him. Our sin is before us, we don't deny it; we are helpless little children; we are the weary ones; we are the heavy laden who need to be saved!

Part II: So here comes the great great news at verses 28-30:

- a. Jesus sees your condition and my condition...He saw it back then for the people put under the Law and He sees it today for struggling sinners like you and me and He says still today:

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

- b. The word "rest" is very simple: it means that the labor and heavy-laden condition stops. It means "cessation" or "interruption."**
- c. I was watching American Ninja and it's amazing what these athletes can do, esp. in regard to their incredible grips and how they can carry their body weight on the tips of their fingers. One of the American athletes can evidently do three push-ups on one pinkie finger. But even these athletes as they transition from one obstacle to another, when they get to an in-between platform, you can see the relief; they pause to rest, they shake out and rub their arms...if not for that rest, they would totally fail...they would never be able to finish the course.**
- d. We need rest brothers and sisters in Christ to finish this course of life the right way. We need rest.**
- e. But the rest Jesus is talking about isn't taking a siesta or shaking out your arms after you work out (though the Scriptures remind us that sleep is a certainly a good thing and a gift), but our Savior is talking about an even greater rest.**
- f. We grossly underestimate the burden of sin, the world and the devil upon us. We don't realize how much these things cause terrible unrest in our souls. Never feeling that we are in a good place, the right place; that we are living the way we should live.**
- g. But with Jesus when He gives this rest it is with a powerful, drawing-to-Himself invitation. He says "Come to me" and with these words you are raised up from the death of sin; with these words you are pulled out of the hopelessness of this world; with these words you taken out of the clutches of the devil himself.**
- h. Jesus calls you through the Word and the Blessed Sacrament and He gives you His forgiveness, His body, and His blood; and you are restored through the forgiveness of sins and this impacts everything else: to the extent that the forgiveness of sins leads to the resurrection when your physical body will know the effects of eternal rest and will be fully restored and radiant...that's how powerful the rest from the forgiveness of sins is!**
- i. The rest of forgiveness ceases and interrupts the crushing burden of sin and as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed your transgressions from you!**
- j. Still, some might be confused: "Jesus takes my weariness and my being heavy laden, but then He says that when I come to Him, He's going to give me a yoke...isn't that just trading one burden for another?"**
- k. No, not really. It's important to note that the yoke Jesus puts on you – that unites you to Him – Jesus calls "my yoke" [that is HIS yoke]...you get united to Christ and then you are reminded of what He placed on Himself: He bore all of your sins and covered all of them with His precious blood. His yoke was to defeat death for you; His yoke was to beat the demons that pursue you. His yoke gives life!**
- l. And when you enter into that yoke – and you have dear Christian because you've been baptized into Christ – you then learn who it is that you're connected to: Jesus**

is gentle and lowly in heart...He will never condemn, but will continue to treat you as He always has: with compassion, and mercy, and love, and forgiveness...that's the way He treats His little children...that's the way He treats you. And now you have rest.