

Get Some Rest

✠ **Alone with Jesus (vv.30-32)**

Powered by Christ's compassion (vv.32-34)

In the name of Jesus, the Shepherd of our bodies and souls, dearly redeemed family of God:

It's part of our human condition: After you learn something, you feel as if you always knew it. Often we can't remember where or when we learned. Wouldn't we love our teachers more if we could?

One college professor learned in summer school at the U to remove distractions. He taught us by example one Fall when a stereo was blasting across campus. Our whole class followed him into the dorm room of an embarrassed freshman and kindly asked him to turn it down. Think he ever did that again?

This week in Skype-class with my ministerial student we had a baby crying. His, not mine. As a first time father far from family in China, he was trying so hard. He finally said, "My wife does this so much better!" So I took him through my "Daddy Checklist." *Diaper ✓. Fed ✓. Burped ✓.* When all else fails, as my mother taught me, baby might just be thirsty for water. Before too long, baby Ruth was sleeping on daddy Luke's shoulder. So sweet! She could **Get Some Rest** and all together we could be...

✠ **Alone with Jesus (vv.30-32)**

If you've never had the desire to be **Alone with Jesus**, you just don't know Him well enough yet. No one has ever been so kind and compassionate as God's own Son. People heard about His teaching and His miracles and came from everywhere. A popular President might draw crowds from several states with campaign promises and soaring rhetoric. But Jesus did not just talk. He actually did miracles that no human being had ever done before. For example, four men were so determined to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus, they dug through a roof of a crowded house. Not disappointed – Jesus healed their friend. But Jesus also forgave his sins, then read the minds of His enemies too. ***"This amazed everyone and they praised God, 'We have never seen anything like this!'"*** (2:12) So the crowds kept pouring in from all over Galilee, south from Judea and Jerusalem, even farther from Idumea and those mountains across the Jordan, and up northwest from Tyre and Sidon. (3:8) Everyone wanted Jesus!

Most churches and pastors dream, "If only we could grow!" With such large crowds Jesus' disciples didn't have to dream. But they did have to wonder why Jesus kept leaving the crowds behind. He would say strange things to people He helped such as, ***"Don't tell this to anyone."*** (1:44) Not even His closest disciples could understand how adoring crowds could keep Jesus from being the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53), the salvation-Christ of God. They did not realize that the Messiah's greatest miracle for them would be in their hearts and souls, **Rest** from doubt and fear: ***"Don't be afraid; just believe."*** (5:36)

You can imagine the excitement of the Twelve apostles when Jesus gave them special powers and sent them on their first missionary journey. Too cool! ***"They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them."*** (6:12f) Coming back to report to Jesus would be like telling about your big championship game. Or a fishing trip where the fish kept jumping into the boat and the mosquitoes bit each other just for fun. Jesus rocks!

But then He did it again. Maybe they were too excited to eat anyway. But as the crowds kept coming, Jesus told His disciples, ***"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."*** News had come of the execution by beheading of Jesus' cousin and forerunner, John the Baptist. Who could blame Jesus if He needed some time alone as He too experienced our sadness in this vale of tears?

I'll never forget the teacher who first applied this to us future pastors. It was Harmony of the Gospels class with our Dean of Men, our cigar-smoking, beer-drinking, Sheepshead-playing Dean of Men. He knew how to lay down the rules. But He was also trying to impress on us hard core conservative Lutherans that we live under God's grace, in freedom, not under the Law. So the day we came to this passage, the Dean looked around the room and said, "You future pastors will one day be tempted to work yourself into an early grave. To neglect your families and your health as if you were doing it for God. But pay attention to our Lord and Savior here. Jesus commanded His busy disciples, *'Come away by yourselves and rest for a while.'* There's a time to go on vacation and enjoy it!"

By faith you can do all sorts of good things for God with your time, talent and treasure. But nothing so rejoices His heart as when you lay your head down and **Get Some Rest** like a baby on her daddy's shoulder. Then you are not loving God only for what He does, but for the good that He is. Resting **Alone with Jesus** shows you are trusting God's all-forgiving grace, completely satisfied and content with your heavenly Father's tender, loving care – in the kind of miraculous soul-**Rest** that is...

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More than any other people on earth, this is really hard for us Americans. Some wise man once said: *We Americans worship our work, work at our play, and play at our worship.* No drive up North is too far, no boat too expensive, no mortgage too much – while we're spending it on ourselves. On my vacation the drive to church looks longer too. And the financial challenges of spreading the Gospel have the same effect on my sinful nature. I actually wrote to one Synod official and asked him to print the response coupon at the end of his letter. I want to read the Good News of God's grace first. Then my heart will be ready to respond in faith-born love, instead of the selfish way it always wants to go at first.

Knowing this and admitting the truth about my own sinful nature makes me all the more amazed watching Jesus. I've know fatigue from long hours; so have you. Even kids know what it's like to be drained physically, mentally and spiritually to where your brain just won't work. You feel as if you hit a wall. You're just so tired! How do you deal with the knock on the door? The needy phone call? The family challenges that usually jump up to bite you when everyone is tired and hungry? Too many times I've failed miserably. Too many times I've been impatient and unkind with those I love the most. More times than I can count I've come back to God with the tearful sigh, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Mark, the Gospel writer, inspired by God the Holy Spirit, wants us to know our eagerly Jesus is waiting for our knees to reach the floor, how kindly He's watching when our eyes run o'er with tears. Tired as He was, alone at last in a solitary place with His disciples, ready for some "R&R," Jesus saw the people had run ahead along the shore. *"When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things."*

Don't ever think Jesus is too tired or busy for you. He wants you to **Get Some Rest** with Him. His **Rest** is not like Minnesota's mad dash north to work on the cabin only to stumble back to work on Monday. Jesus invites: *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* (Matthew 11:28-30 NIV84) Enjoy your blessings, but remember to "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," sharing **Christ's compassion**.

Through His prophet Isaiah: *"Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."* (40:30f) God wants us closer to Him than a mother with her baby. Again Isaiah: *"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands...."* (49:15f NIV84) We all need to know Jesus better to **Get Some Rest – Alone with Jesus**. Remember *"those from whom you learned it"* (2 Timothy 3:14f) in the holy Scriptures. Our thirsty souls with the water of life are **Powered by Christ's compassion**. Amen.

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