

“I Will Give You Rest”

✠ Rest revealed (vv.25-27)

✠ Rest received (vv.28-30)

Thanks to the Father¹ who gave us His Son and sends us His Spirit, ‘til our work on earth is done:

Aren’t you tired of it? Tired of talking about it, hearing about it, living it if you go anywhere, cooped up because of it otherwise. Then to hear the battle over schools opening in the Fall? Meanwhile, our Lutheran schools are working especially hard to make sure they do open safely. But then, what is “safety”? Isn’t everyone going to die eventually?

Could it be that the God of love noticed the world in general and America in particular was crazy busy living in pleasure as if there were no eternity? You think God does not hear how our society denies His existence, but then blames God when bad things happen? If intellectual giants are right that we just evolved from slime in “survival of the fittest,” why shouldn’t the powerful take advantage of the weak? Cities burn, lives are broken, and some think more money will fix it? Is it possible that we human beings are sick with something far worse than the Coronavirus? And here you are just trying to reach your neighbors and loved ones to share God’s peace from last Sunday’s sermon. Aren’t you tired sometimes?

Apparently, the Apostle Paul felt physical and spiritual fatigue. He wrote: **“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”** (Galatians 6:9 NIV84) This was a **proper time** for Jesus to call out an invitation which we’re hearing today. If you ever get to stay in the resort city of Tiberias on the shore of Galilee, you can see lights of modern towns close to the ruins of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. **“Woe to you!”** Jesus told those cities for not accepting this offer when they had a chance. I pray no one here will fall into eternal ruin by stubborn refusal to **“Come”** when Jesus calls. He has something awesome for you: **“I Will Give You Rest.”**

✠ Rest revealed (vv.25-27)

As far as Jesus is concerned, there are totally and completely only two groups of people in the world. If you check out these two groups in other places where Jesus talks about them, you soon find out this has nothing to do with race, gender, politics, or social status. Can you identify these two groups from the opening verses? According to Luke (10:21), Jesus was bursting with joy when He said this: **“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. Yes, Father, because this was pleasing to you.”** (EHV²)

So there are the **“clever and learned people”** and there are the **“little children.”** Most of us would prefer to be in the first group, right? Can’t you remember saying, “I wish I was older?” Some maybe yesterday, some of us a long time ago. But wait a minute! It’s from the **“clever and learned”** that Jesus joyfully hides **“these things.”** It’s to **“little children”** that these treasures are **revealed**. This must not be about age because Jesus told his grownup disciples, **“Unless you are turned and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”** (Matthew 18:3) All our adult running and striving is taking us away from God into sin. God wants to turn us around to run away from guilt and sin back to God. Jesus calls this being **“born again”** or **“born from above”** and connects it with baptism (John 3:3ff; Titus 3:5-7). Jesus commands this blessing for all people with no age limit ever given by God (Matthew 28:18-20). Could there be **Rest** for us if God turned us around and made us again today like **“little children”**?

¹ *Christian Worship Supplement* 747 – “There Is a Redeemer,” Melody Green, 1982, Birdwing Music.

² Unless noted otherwise, Scriptures: *Holy Bible: Evangelical Heritage Version*. (2019). NPH (1-800-662-6022).

God forbid, but what if you were in a sixty-car pile-up? How could you find your own help? Isn't it amazing how God provides first responders, men and women running in when everyone else is running out? Don't you wish we had more of them? They don't ask where you were born or where you live. They're too busy getting you stabilized and safe. Some of our members traveling in distant states dialed 911. Total strangers, paramedics, EMTs, arrived in minutes. Saving lives, healing hurts – could these “angels” among us be matched by invisible angels from God? Even more, God gives angel-messengers as pastors for this priceless gift of **Rest revealed** to you. Freely we receive, freely we give.

Now imagine EMTs trying to help you, but you won't lie still. You keep thrashing about, trying to fix your own wounds, trying to drink any liquid, criticizing their care. What can they do? Give you something to help you **Rest**, or leave you on the side of the road? There's only one option God wants.

Jesus says: ***“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.”*** (EHV³) Any religion without Jesus Christ as God's eternal Son our only Savior can only make people feel good for time, then be lost in torment eternally. Totally from ***“clever and learned”*** God turns you around to be ***“little children,”*** to gladly welcome this gift into your heart. God makes this...

✠ Rest received (vv.28-30)

How desperately we need this rest! God is calling you away from arguments at home. Away from the strife of tongues in media and politics. Away from petty grudges that want to keep you stirred up and bitter inside. God says all this strife comes from sin, selfishness to be exact. We're not even looking at our culture. We're all infected with sin. We don't fear and love God as we should. Sin has a 100% death rate. God warns, ***“The soul that sins will die.”*** (Ezekiel 18:3) ***“The wages of sin is death.”*** (Romans 6:3) But God refused to let this virus of sin ruin your life here or rob you of bliss eternally. That's why Jesus came to save us from sin. People talk about second chances, purging places, reincarnations. But you have God's Word that this one life is our time of grace. God is calling out to you today: ***“Look, now is the favorable time! See, now is the day of salvation!”*** (2 Corinthians 6:2 EHV)

God wanted everyone to know why we need this gift of **Rest** so desperately. So He commanded His chosen people of Israel to stop working on the 7th Day and enjoy Sabbath **Rest** by assembling to hear God's Word. It's not in thunder or earthquake or a fire, but in a gentle whisper. Look at the hands held out to you now. The scars are still there from nails that pierced Him on the cross. His was the only holy, precious blood that could wash away our guilt. And it did – completely, totally, unconditionally – for you, for me, for all. The One who died there in your place and mine said, ***“It is finished.”*** (John 19:30)

Today He wants to cleanse you deep inside. So in that loving voice He whispers across the ages: ***“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, because 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.”*** Jesus is our Sabbath **Rest** from guilt and fear and the power of sin.

Wonderfully the Son of God invites you to ***“Come,”*** just ***“Come.”*** He came down from heaven to tell you this. He found you today with His Word of grace. As He said to Moses in today's First Lesson: ***“I know you by name.”*** (Exodus 33:12) He planned this for you from eternity. (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-7) He knows how ***“weary and burdened”*** you are. He knows you have nothing to pay. So He says, ***“I will give you rest.”*** How ***“gentle and humble in heart”*** that He gives you ***“rest for your soul.”*** His ***“yoke”*** is so ***“easy”*** and ***“burden”*** so ***“light,”*** it's the hope and joy of new life in Christ. God's love and forgiveness make His commandments a joy to guard and treasure in gratitude. You live in God by faith, in your neighbor by love. The more you follow Christ in God's Word and sacrament, the more precious this **Rest** becomes. ***“Come to me and I Will Give You Rest.”*** Amen.

³ Unless noted otherwise, Scriptures: *Holy Bible: Evangelical Heritage Version*. (2019). Northwestern Publishing House. For *The Preacher's Apprentice (TPA)* sermon study or copies: m.cordes@comast.net . New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church You can also call: 651-484-1169. Hear the sermon at www.newlifeshoreview.com . 180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126