

5 S. after Pentecost  
Matthew 11:25-30

7/5/20  
9A

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.

And to Adam [God] said,  
 “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife  
 and have eaten of the tree  
 of which I commanded you,  
 ‘You shall not eat of it,’  
 cursed is the ground because of you;  
 in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;  
 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;  
 and you shall eat the plants of the field.  
 By the sweat of your face  
 you shall eat bread,  
 till you return to the ground,  
 for out of it you were taken;  
 for you are dust,  
 and to dust you shall return” (Ge 3:17-19).

Life in a fallen world is a hard life. No one knows that more than you,  
 Dear Child of God.

Paul reminds us in our Epistle this morning, how hard it is to live by the light of God’s Word, as we wrestle with the lusts and desires of our sinful flesh. The 1<sup>st</sup> Table of the Law teaches us that we are to “Love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Mt 22:37). That’s a lot of work. It’s hard. You don’t always like the way God works. You think you should be God, so you can do things your way. You have your work, your activities, and you pay homage to them. You have your 401k, that’s what you trust in.

And this Sabbath Day thing. You know you're supposed to come to God's House, but that means you have to get out of bed, and it's hot out. And you have to get the kids up and dressed and out the door. Then, there's that Bible reading and devotion you're supposed to do every day, and it's just a hassle at the end of a long day at work and kids' schedules.

And then, we have the 2<sup>nd</sup> Table of the Law, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22:39). And let's just be honest – your neighbor is a jerk. We are to respect and obey those in authority over us – and let's be honest about that, they seem to be more hypocritical clowns than statesmen and leaders. And you have thoughts -- thoughts about your neighbor's boat, house, income, and wife – thoughts about stuff you have no right to. With thoughts like that, you are not content; quite the opposite, you are angry at your neighbor and angry at God.

We are weak; we are worn because we cannot make ourselves righteous before God by our thoughts and words and deeds. Paul says it so well in our Epistle, "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate...For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing" (Ro 7:15, 19).

"Easy and "light" are not the words we would use to describe the yoke we bear. There is the burden of trying fulfill the Law – doing the good we know we should do and not being able to do it. And being weighed down with guilt and shame for doing the evil we know we should not do. And then, there are the crosses we bear in this valley of the shadow of death. Covid-19 and all manner of disease and infirmity which ruin and destroy our earthly bodies. The marriage that has become a curse, rather than the blessing God wants it to be; all because of the sinful flesh. Then, there's

working 9-to-5. And, free advice, I know how hot it is, but keep your snow shovel handy, because it won't be long until you have need of it. Trust me on this.

To you who are heavy laden, Jesus says this, "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" (vv. 27-30).

Rejoice and be glad, for Jesus humbled Himself to be born of a virgin to take all the burdens you bear upon Himself and carried them all to the cross of Calvary, where He suffered and died for you, for your sin, so that you have the forgiveness of all your sins. Isaiah the Prophet teaches us this, "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Is 53:4). Only Jesus can give us rest because only the Son of God has removed the curse of sin and death from us.

And the 3<sup>rd</sup> day He rose again from the dead to give you His easy and light yoke in your Baptism. There, in the washing of regeneration and the washing of rebirth, He re-creates you so that you are able to love God and love your neighbor as yourself. And He continues to do His work in you, giving you rest.

Oh, how beautifully the hymnwriter said it, "We know not, oh, we know not what joys awaits us there; The radiancy of glory, the bliss beyond compare!" (*LSB* 672:1). In Christ, the rest of heaven is our rest. The Scriptures comfort and cheer us, "There remains a Sabbath REST for the people of God" (He 4:9). "And I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Blessed indeed,' says the Spirit, 'that they may REST from the labors, for their

deeds follow them” (Rev 14:13)! We should rest from all our earthly burdens in heaven, and God will wipe all the tears from our eyes.

But even today, even as we feebly struggle, Jesus is with us always to give us rest this day.

I emphasize “this day,” My Dear Friends in Christ, because it often seems to our human eyes and ears, that God is weak, helpless; that He doesn’t care; Satan with his lies will even try to convince you that there is no God. But, God is at work -- in Christ. Baptized and living in Christ, you are a disciple. You’ve heard me say this before that we generally think of “disciple,” as “student,” and that’s ok. But, the better way to think of “disciple” is “hearer,” for faith comes from hearing the voice of Christ (cf. Ro 10:17). To be Jesus’s disciple is to learn from Him. In all the trials and tribulations of earthly life, we continue to learn again and again that Jesus is gentle and humble. Jesus gently receives and forgives all who come to Him in need.

Like that woman Jesus met and encountered in the synagogue one Sabbath. Luke tells us she had suffered a crippling deformity for 18 years, so that she could not even straighten herself to stand tall. Or, the woman caught in adultery that is brought to Jesus. Or, the leper who knelt before the Savior and pleaded, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean” (Mt 8:2).

To that poor woman with that crippling deformity, the Great Physician says, “‘Woman, you are freed from your disability.’ And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight” (Lk 13:12-13). You know what He said to the scribes and Pharisees when they brought the woman caught in adultery to Him? “‘Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her,’ and they went away one by one” (Jn 8:7). But, that’s not how the story ends, is it? No, Jesus said to her, “Neither do I

condemn you” (Jn 8:11). To the leper who knelt before Him, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.’ And immediately his leprosy was cleansed” (Mt 8:3).

I share this with you, Dear Children of the Heavenly Father, because Jesus does not just promise rest, He gives rest! He gives rest to you, Dear Child of God, as he speaks His Words of joy and peace into your ears; as He feeds His life-giving Body and Blood at His table to give you strength to bear your cross and walk by faith in the darkness that overwhelms you.

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Amen.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.