

“Come with Me and Get Some Rest”

- I. Physical rest for weary disciples
- II. Spiritual rest for troubled souls

*Mark 6:30-34*

<sup>30</sup>The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup>Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

<sup>32</sup>So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. <sup>33</sup>But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. <sup>34</sup>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.

Tell me, isn't summer a great time of the year? The kids are out of school. The weather is inviting. There are a ton of events to get involved in. So, have you taken advantage of it? Have you taken some vacation time yet? Your pastors sure have. Pastor Gawel spent last week visiting relatives in Michigan. Pastor Priewe is headed to Florida this week. Pastor Zank has been relaxing at his camper in Waushara County. And Sarah and I took in a pair of family reunions complete with some very competitive bean bag toss, pickleball and yes, plenty of fishing.

Tell me, is that okay? Is it okay for a person to just kind of leave his work behind for days, maybe even weeks at a time, to indulge in a little R & R, that is, rest and relaxation? Does the Bible say that's a good thing, a bad thing, a “it doesn't matter” thing? Well, our text for today answers those questions for us. It gives us a glimpse into how Jesus handled the subject of “vacations.” We see that Jesus wanted his disciples to get some rest—but not just rest for their bodies. Jesus wanted to give them rest for their souls. The same thing is still true for you and me today. Today we turn to this brief account from Mark chapter 6 to hear Jesus say to his disciples both then and now:

“Come with Me and Get Some Rest”

We'll see that Jesus, the ever-compassionate Shepherd of the sheep, offers:

- I. Physical rest for weary disciples
- II. Spiritual rest for troubled souls

Our text for today takes place between Jesus sending out his 12 disciples and his miracle of feeding the 5000. Mark records the sending of the apostles with these words, <sup>7</sup>Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits. <sup>12</sup>They went out and preached that people should repent. <sup>13</sup>They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

And then when these men returned, Mark tells us, *the apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.* Can you imagine what that kind of “apostolic ministry review” must have sounded like? You know, talking about all the miracles, the healing, the people coming to faith. It reminds me seminary students coming back from their vicar year, talking about how they got to preach their first sermon to the congregation, and visited people in the hospital, and shared the gospel with people who didn't know who Jesus was.

Well, you take that excitement, that desire to report on everything the disciples had

experienced, and you couple it with the crowds of people already gathered around Jesus, and you end up with a major scheduling conflict. The work schedule for Jesus and his disciples was absolutely booked. Mark tells us that they didn't even have time to eat. So Jesus proposes the solution to their problem. Mark writes, *Then, because so many people were coming and going that they (namely, Jesus and his disciples) didn't even have a chance to eat, Jesus said to them, come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.*

Hmm. Is Jesus opposed to believers taking some time off to kind of get away from it all, to enjoy some mental and physical rest? Apparently not. In fact, didn't God make that clear from the very beginning of time? Genesis chapter 2 records God's actions. *By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. (Genesis 2:2-3)*

And of course, God used that model to set the pattern for our work week at this very day. In fact, in the Old Testament, God commanded that his people set aside the 7<sup>th</sup> day to physically rest their bodies. That word "Sabbath", the seventh day, literally means "rest." On that day, the Old Testament believers were to do no physical labor. Now, does that mean that it would be wrong for a Christian to accept a job where he or she is required to work on Sunday? Should I feel just a little guilty about working up a sweat mowing the lawn on a Sunday afternoon? No. What does the Bible say? St Paul writes to the Colossians, *Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a new moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ (Colossians 2:16-17).* In other words, the Old Testament regulation about not working on the Sabbath day has been fulfilled by Christ, who now offers us an even more important kind of rest (which we will talk about in a minute).

But understand, even though God no longer commands us to set aside a specific day to rest our bodies, that doesn't mean he's against physical rest and relaxation. In fact, here with his disciples he encouraged it. He still does the same thing for you and me today. God wants us to find a healthy balance between really working these body parts and providing some healthy rest for them. The trouble is, as sinful human beings, we often fall off that balance beam in either one of two directions. Either we become workaholics and let our job become our god, seeing our self-worth, our purpose in life in terms of what we do, even if it negatively impacts our health, our family and our spiritual life. Or we fall off in the other direction and let leisure become our god. We get lazy and let rest and relaxation negatively impact our job, our family, our spiritual life. In either case, we're not putting rest in its proper place. God intends that rest be a good thing. God wants rest to be what follows hard work and what in turn prepares us for more productive work to follow. Wasn't that the case with these disciples? After a grueling mission trip and the subsequent press of the crowds, Jesus realized his disciples needed some downtime with him. But that was in part to prepare them for their next task, namely, the mental stress of dealing with 5,000 people with nothing to eat and the subsequent physical task of distributing the fish and loaves and later collecting all the leftovers.

You see, in the end, God intends that work and rest go together. They complement each other. That's why Jesus, the ever-compassionate shepherd, says to his disciples, both then and now, "Come with me and get some rest." First. (I.) Physical rest for weary disciples. And yet, let's recognize that Jesus offers something much more important than physical rest. He also offers (II.) Spiritual rest for troubled souls.

Tell me, did you notice that when Jesus' disciples came back from their missionary

journey, a little worn down, stressed out by all the activity around Jesus, Jesus didn't say, "Why don't you guys go on vacation? Hit the beaches on the Sea of Galilee." No, he says, "*Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.*" In other words, Jesus wasn't saying, "Go your separate ways and do whatever you want to do." Rather, he was saying, "Come with me. I'm the one who can give you what you need. I can give you rest for your souls."

Now someone might ask, "What is rest for our souls?" Well, think of those 12 disciples. When they returned from their missionary journey, they were not just physically and mentally tired; they were spiritually troubled. Why do I say that? Well, because Mark tells us that in between the time that Jesus sent out the apostles and the time they returned, the disciples received some really bad news, in fact some shocking news. Their good friend, and to a certain extent, their mentor, one of their spiritual leaders, John the Baptist, had been put to death. Literally, John had had his head taken off by order of King Herod. Can you imagine how that news must have hit those disciples? I mean they were hurting. That means that these disciples were hurting. They were mourning the loss of their loved one, and at the same time, wondering if the same thing was going to happen to them. I mean, they were preaching the same message that John was. Could it be that that's why Jesus wanted his disciples to come away with him by themselves? So that he could share some words of comfort and hope with these hurting believers?

Kind of reminds me of what the members of the Asia One Team did after we lost our good friend and mentor, Pastor Steve Witte. We all got together, granted, via a zoom call, because we had people on two different continents, and we just spent time in the Word. I had the privilege of leading a devotion on the words of Psalm 16, where the Psalmist prays, "Keep me safe, O God." And we took comfort in the fact that God had kept Pastor Witte and his family safe. God had saved them from something much worse than a house fire. He'd rescued them from the fires of hell. And now by God's grace, those believers could say with King David of old, *Lord, you have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. (Psalm 16:11)* You see, that's the confidence that we could have about those believers because of the promises God had made in his Word. It's God's word that ultimately brought peace to our troubled hearts.

So, let me ask you, what is it that is weighing on your heart these days? What is troubling your soul? Are you worried about the health of a loved one? Not sure how long you're going to have that person in your life? Are you feeling pangs of guilt about something you did or said? Are you wondering how God really feels about you? Are there secret sins that keep you awake at night? Are you feeling the weight of the constant battle against your old man inside of you? Regarding all these spiritual burdens, what is Jesus say? He says, "*Come to me and get some rest.*" Or as Jesus put it in Matthew 11 verse 28, "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*" In fact, Jesus comes right out and says that in him, "*You will find rest for your souls.*"

And how does Jesus give us rest for our souls? The answer: he takes all those things that weigh on our hearts, the doubts, the fears, the worries, and most importantly, the sins and the guilt that weigh us down and he says, "Let me carry those for you. In fact, I've already carried them all the way to the cross. You're good with God. I've got your future in my hands. I'll never leave you or forsake you. In fact, I'm going to use even the hard things in life for your eternal good." Now, whether Jesus is telling you that right here in his word, or he's transmitting it to you through his holy supper, the result is the same: Peace with God. Yes, rest for your souls. That's what your good shepherd, your compassionate Savior, has done for you.

So, what's the takeaway from this Biblical account? It's simply this. Jesus knew what his disciples were going through. He knew their highs and their lows. He knew that life can get hectic at times, So he invited his disciples to come with him and get some rest. Yes, rest for their bodies, but more importantly, rest for their souls, the true spiritual rest provided to them through time spent with him and his word.

Isn't the same thing still true for you and me today? When you need a break, take some time off. Go on vacation. But don't let your vacation become your god. Instead, take your God with you. Carve out some time to read your Bible. If you're away from this house of worship, then worship with us online. Or better yet, if you're traveling out of town, go to [WELS.net](http://WELS.net) and find the nearest WELS congregation to worship with. Last month the whole Raasch clan showed up at St Paul's in Adams-Friendship, where Pastor Sellnow used to serve. After we enjoyed a week of some rest for our bodies, it was a wonderful thing to be able to enjoy some rest for our souls, recharging our spiritual batteries with God's Word and sacrament.

My friends, the bottom line is this. No matter who you are, no matter what you been through or what you're going through right now, your Lord Jesus, whose heart is filled with love and compassion for you, offers you the perfect invitation. And it's simply this. "Come with me and get some rest." God grant it, for Jesus' sake. Amen.