

Matthew 11:25-30

I don't know about you, but I'm **tired** today. In fact, I've **been** tired for a long time now. I can offer you **lots** of different **excuses** for it, but most of it is my own fault. No doubt many of you would probably have some **solutions** to offer me - things like - get more **exercise** - eat better **foods** - and stop **working** 12 to 14 hours a day, 7 days a week. When I was a kid, my Dad always used to tell me, "If you're **tired**, go to **bed**." But you and I **both** know that it isn't always that easy. No matter who we are or what we do, there are **commitments** to keep, and **deadlines** to meet. All too often, there just aren't enough hours in a day to get it all done, and we find ourselves physically and mentally **exhausted**. But in our text for today, Jesus offers us some good news. He says that there is **Rest For The Weary**. Today in our text from the Gospel according to St. Matthew, we will consider **who** it is that Jesus means when He talks about those who are **weary**, and we will **also** consider exactly **what** He means by **rest**.

Jesus **begins** our text today by offering **praise** to God. He said, *"I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the **wise and learned**, and revealed them to little **children**. Yes, Father, for this was Your good pleasure."* I think it is important to recognize the **context** in which these words were spoken. In the section preceding our text, Jesus had been talking about the cities of Korazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum - cities located in the province of Galilee. They were places where Jesus Himself had spent a lot of time. He had **walked** in their midst. He had **talked** to them, **preached** to them, and had even performed **miracles** in their midst. But even with all these **advantages**, the people of these cities **still** did not repent of their sins. So Jesus **denounced** them. He explained that the judgment which would be brought against them would be **worse** than that which would fall upon the people of Tyre, Sidon, and even Sodom!

Now that doesn't really sound like a reason for offering **praise**. However, what we need to realize is that Jesus was not praising God because some of the people **rejected** Him. Rather, He was praising God because some of the people **followed** Him. Jesus describes **these** people as **little children**, and He contrasts them with those who are **wise and learned**. Many scientists, scholars, and others who possess **great** knowledge about the things of this **world**, know little or nothing when it comes to a knowledge of the **Gospel**. While they have delved deeply into the mysteries of nature, and medicine, and government - many have

remained **ignorant** about the mysteries of the kingdom of **heaven**. Isn't it interesting then, that God has taken little **children** - literally **babies** - and has revealed His mysteries to **them**!

And that brings us to the first **question** which I would like you to consider today. Just who **are** those who are **weary**? If you have watched little **children** running around, then you know that they hardly **ever** seem to get tired. Time and again, I've wished that I could **bottle** some of their energy, and use it myself - as I mentioned before, I'm **tired** again **today**. But I'm not the **only** one. We're **all** tired, aren't we? Ask your friends, your family, or your associates at work. People get **tired** and **weary** from all sorts of things. Some are tired of **working**, while others are tired of **not** working. And of course who **isn't** tired of all the **floods** and **earthquakes** - of all the **terrorism** and **warfare** - of all the **poverty** and **hunger** in the world? **Physical** and **mental** exhaustion strike us **all** at one point or another, and they can cause **insomnia**, **depression**, and **ulcers**, as well as **high blood pressure** and **heart attacks**. However, the **primary** focus in our text for today, is on a far more **severe** problem - that of **spiritual** exhaustion.

The Apostle Paul gives us a prime example of **spiritual** weariness. In today's epistle, Paul told the **Romans** about the ongoing struggle which he experienced. He knew well enough what God had said in His Word. Paul **understood** the **commandments** just fine, in fact, he even had a great **desire** to **follow** those commandments. However, actually following through and **keeping** those commandments was another matter all together. The good things which he **wanted** to do, he **didn't** do - and the evil things which he **didn't** want to do, **that's** what he **did**. Even for the Apostle Paul, the strength of his Old Adam, and the weakness of his faith, made for a **tired** and **weary** human being.

That **inner** struggle is not **unique** to the Apostle Paul either. It is found in **every** Christian. Don't you get **tired** of **fighting** against sin? Don't you get **tired** of constantly **battling** against the lack of morals and the absence of decent values in the world? Don't you get **tired** of feeling like you're the only one out there who still wants to follow God's will? I do. Spiritual struggles are **extremely** draining. After all, we need to remember that we are not only struggling against our Old Adam and the world, we are also struggling against **Satan** and all the **other** forces of evil. That same **wretched** feeling which came over the Apostle Paul, also comes over **us**. We feel **miserable**, and **confused**, and **frustrated**. We may even begin to question our **faith**. We feel like crying out as Paul did, "*Who will rescue*

me from this body of death?"

The **problem** is that our spiritual **batteries** have worn down. There used to be a time when parents wouldn't even consider buying battery operated toys. And the **reason** was, that you could practically go **broke** just buying **batteries**! The child would play with the toy a few hours, and then suddenly, it didn't **work** any more. It needed new **batteries**. But **now** we have **rechargeable** batteries. When the batteries go dead, you simply stick them on the charger, and in a few hours, they are as good as new again. And this recharging works over and over again for **hundreds** of times, so you don't have to get a second job in order to keep your family supplied with **battery** power.

The **reason** for this illustration, is that our **spiritual** batteries need to go on the charger too - and not just once or twice a year, but rather, **regularly** and **frequently**. Jesus said, "*Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*" **Spiritual** weariness can be compared to **physical** weariness in many ways. For example, they are both caused by a poor **diet**, and a lack of **exercise**. If we want to be spiritually **strong**, we will need to be feeding our faith with the proper spiritual food. **Jesus** tells us that we can **get** that good spiritual food from **Him**. Jesus feeds our faith with His **Word** and **Sacraments**.

However, we must also remember that a proper spiritual diet is **more** than just getting the **right** kind of nourishment and exercise which **Jesus** offers. It **also** means **not** getting the **wrong** kind of nourishment and exercise which the **world** offers. All too often we think we can have it **both** ways. We think that if we come to church once in a while, and read our Bibles occasionally, then it won't **matter** if we "fall off the wagon" here and there. We think that it won't matter if we're a little bit **greedy** once in a while, or if we aren't always **kind** and **understanding** toward others. We think that it won't matter if we commit **this** sin or **that** sin because it can always be **forgiven** again by our gracious **God**. But it **does** matter - it matters a **lot**. It's **true** that Jesus invites us to **come** to Him for **rest**, but it is **also** true that He exhorts us to carry a **yoke** - a **burden**.

Jesus said, "*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.*" The prophet **Jeremiah** carried a yoke on his shoulders for a while as a visual aid for the Israelites. It symbolized the **burden** which they would bear if they chose to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. But in reality, the

yoke was originally **designed** to be a **tool** to make burdens **easier** to bear. They distribute the weight of a burden **evenly** over a large surface area. And **that's** the way the yoke of **Jesus** works. He invites us to **exchange** the yoke and burdens of this **world**, for **His** yoke and burdens. And Jesus assures us that His yoke is **easy**, and the **burdens** which we bear for Him are **light**.

Dear friends, if you are **physically** or **mentally** tired, you can offer **lots** of excuses for it - and most of them would probably be pretty **valid**. But if you are **spiritually** tired, there's **no** excuse for it. There is **Rest For The Weary**. Come to **Jesus** - come and hear His **Word** - come and receive His Holy **Supper**. Receive from **Jesus** the **strength** you need, to stay **away** from the evils which the **world** continually offers - and you **will** find **rest** for your souls. You have **God's** Word on it. Amen.