

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 2 May 2021

Sermon Title : Rest in Me

Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng

Text : Matthew 11:28-30

INTRODUCTION

As Christ's followers, we are called to be different from the world. If that is so, how are we to be different from the world in the face of the pandemic? While it is prudent to follow guidance given by the government so that we are responsible, we should not live in fear. We know our all-powerful God is in control and we also are certain that when we breathe our last, we will be in the fullness of His presence, where joy is complete, so we should not be anxious and worried or fearful.

Today's 3 simple and familiar verses will help in our mundane lives when we go through certain challenges. Because the whole Bible is the counsel of God, God uses all of His word to teach and mould us. However, we sometimes find certain portions of the Bible more attractive than others, but we need also to read deeply into those passages that may seem unattractive, so we will know how to respond to challenges instead of just searching or googling for verses when a crisis comes or when weariness sets into our lives.

Weariness faced by Christians

It is not physical tiredness which we can sleep off that wears us down. It is tiredness experienced after trying to deal with certain issues in our lives many times and yet not successful in resolving them. It may be in dealing with a disobedient child making repeated mistakes yet unwilling to learn from wisdom shared through a parent's love. It could be a cold relationship with one's spouse, keeping it at arm's length or trying to help a friend or relative with good intentions but instead being misunderstood and judged. It could also be in dealing with illnesses or economic woes. On top of all these struggles, we still have to live a Christian life which the world would see as different from others'; representing Christ accurately. We are expected not to retaliate when someone deals with us unfairly; we cannot take revenge but are to turn the other cheek when someone slaps us; we are to forgive. We have to live by this other set of rules and values that is different from the world's, making it way tougher.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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Jesus' answer to our weariness

a) Matthew 11:28

- "Come to me..." – Jesus' invitation is 'come to me' and not to some other person or indulgence or even to Scriptures. His invitation is to spend time with Him. As a pastor, when I counsel a person, I want to lift the gaze of the person to Jesus, away from their problems. Jesus – "God with us" offers us His invitation to "come to Him", but we tend to go to Him last. Let Jesus always be the first person we approach.
- "... all of you..." – This invitation is open to everyone; whatever gender, age or people group.
- "... who are weary and burdened..." – Jesus specifically invites those who are weary and burdened. People generally do not enjoy being surrounded with people who keep pouring out their troubles. We like to mix with people who are successful and fun, those who can lift our spirits up; cutting off those who wear us down. But Jesus is the opposite; He wants those who are tired, exhausted and down-trodden to come to Him. He invites them to come to His circle of intimacy, for Him to take care and deal with their situation. This is the shepherd heart of Jesus.
- "... I will give you rest." – God our Father is a generous giver, He gives us His Son, Jesus Christ. We do not have to earn it because Jesus always gives. He will give us rest! The rest is ours! It is a promise from God.

b) Matthew 11:29

Here, there are three verbs **take**, **learn** and **find** that will be effective in bringing that rest promised by Jesus:

- Take my yoke – Most of us would have associated rest with "take a pillow" or "take a bed" but Jesus tells us to take His yoke. A yoke is a contraption or device for work used by animals for tough work. It is put on two animals for them to do work together as directed by the master.
- Learn from me – We are to learn from Jesus because:
 - He is God who lived on earth as a human being. He had gone through troubles, tiredness and exhaustion beyond the physical. For all that He tried to do for humanity, people accused Him and even His family did not understand Him.
 - He rose above all that tiredness, He was alright because He spent time with God. He knew how to deal with the tiredness.

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- He is gentle and humble in heart. So even when I repeatedly fall into the cycle of tiredness He will not turn me away.
- Find rest – Is rest to be given or to be earned?
 - It is given but we need the faith to find it. It is like being given a voucher for claiming a free cake. While we have already been given the cake, we need to go to the shop to claim it even though we do not need to earn that cake.
 - To receive that rest we simply need to trust what Jesus says and put into practice what He says.

c) Matthew 11:30

In the army, there is a log/timber exercise where a big log is to be carried by a few men. The shortest one will always benefit the most because the shortest one does not feel the weight. The weight, burden and pressure of the log are on the taller ones. It is the same when we carry Jesus' yoke. Jesus is actually the one carrying the yoke because He is the taller, stronger and bigger one. His load will be easy for us to bear and carry because He is carrying it. All we need to do is just move along with Him as He knows what to do, how to do it and in that process we are learning from Jesus.

CONCLUSION

Let us not struggle to live out our Christian life in our own strength. Instead, let us take on the yoke of Christ, for when we carry His yoke, we know that He is the one leading and guiding us, we only need to simply follow Him and all will be well because the burden is on Him. God promises His rest for all of us so let us cast our cares on Him.

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As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

Appoint someone to read Matthew 11:28-30 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, 'This is the Word of the Lord.'

All to respond, "Thanks be to God." Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now."

- a. As God's word was read, which verse speaks to you the most?

- b. (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Rest in Me"?

- (ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. (i) In what ways do you identify with “living a Christian life is tiring and burdensome”?
- (ii) Jesus said you are to take His yoke which is easy to bear and light. What does this mean to you?
- 2b. Jesus invites us to come to Him and He will give us rest. What does ‘rest’ in Christ look like to you?
- 3a. Is Jesus the first person you turn to when you face challenges in your life?
- 3b. Which of the 3 verbs: “take”, “learn” or “find”, do you need to put into practice in order to receive the rest that Jesus has freely given to you?
- 3c. How can your group members help or encourage you to achieve 3b above, in the following week(s) until your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Jesus invites us to “come to Him”. Share about a time when you “come to Him” and spent time with Him and found rest.

OR

Give thanks to God for being a generous giver to you.

5. With a prayer partner, take time to pray for the concerns in 3b. and 3c. Commit to help and encourage each other to turn to God first in all circumstances.

As a group, discuss what daily routine would be helpful for you to “come to Jesus” so you may find rest daily and not be worn out by the weariness of life.

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