

Pastor Daniel Waldschmidt – St. John’s Burlington - 7th Sunday after Pentecost – Matt. 11:25-30

A few weeks ago my family and I were at my wife’s parent’s church, and they gave Luke a children’s bulletin and it happened to catch my attention. The picture on the bulletin for him to color was a bunch of people carrying big boulders on their backs and they were sweating and looking distressed because of these big boulders on their backs. But they were carrying the boulders to Jesus. And the passage on the top of the bulletin said: **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matt 11:28)**

What boulders have you carried with you to church today? Maybe your boulder is guilt. Jesus says bring that boulder here to me. John the Baptist pointed at Jesus and said, “Look the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” Jesus took the boulder of your sins and mine and put the boulder on his back and carried it to the cross and paid for it there. He’s the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Or maybe the boulder that you have carried to church today is some physical pain. Well Jesus went around Galilee healing people. Several times Jesus healed people who were paralyzed and couldn’t walk. He said, “Get up and walk” and they were able to walk! There was a man who was blind and Jesus rubbed mud on the man’s eyes and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. The man washed and then he could see! The paralyzed man and the blind man were burdened by their physical ailments and Jesus released them from their physical ailments. And those healings were just a little mini-preview of what Jesus is going to do for you when he returns. in the resurrection. When Jesus returns he is going to completely restore your bodies and release you from whatever physical pain that is burdening you.

Or maybe the burden which you brought with you to church today, is just everyday life. Do you ever feel like no matter how hard you work, you’re always three steps behind? Then find rest in God’s word which says in 1 Corinthians 15, “Your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Cor 15:58). You never know how God is going to use your work as a Christian father or a Christian mother. You never know how God is going to use your labor as a Christian employee. You don’t know exactly how God is going to use your work as a Christian mother or father or employee, but he promises you, “Your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

So whatever burdens you have brought with you to church today, bring them to Jesus because he says: **“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.”** When Jesus says, “I will give you rest, he is saying that the Old Testament Sabbath Day was pointing forward to him. Sabbath is a Hebrew word that means “rest.” God told the Old Testament people not to any work on the seventh day. He told them to take the day off and get some rest. There were several purposes for that. It was meant to give rest to their bodies. The Sabbath Day also reminded them of the fact that God created the world in six days and that he rested on the seventh day when all the work was complete. The Sabbath day also pointed forward to the rest which God would give us in the forgiveness of sins. Do you remember what Jesus said on the cross? He said “it is finished.” All the work of our forgiving our sins is complete. Now we don’t have to worry about trying to pay for our sins because has already paid for our sins on the cross. The work is complete and we get to enjoy the Sabbath rest of the forgiveness of sins. Another

purpose for the Sabbath day was for people to set aside some time to worship God and hear his word because God's word is what give rest to our souls. Now that Jesus has come, God no longer requires that we take Saturday off. That was a temporary law until Jesus came. It was meant to point forward to Jesus and the rest that Jesus would bring. And so the book of Colossians says, **"Therefore 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 1:16-17). So God doesn't require that we do not work on Saturday. But God still requires that we set aside time to worship him and hear his word. Because in his word is where we find rest for our souls. When we hear his word, Jesus comes to us and takes the boulders off our backs and gives us rest.

Jesus says: ²⁸ **"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."** It's interesting that Jesus says that he gives us rest but he also says that he gives us a yoke. A yoke is a symbol for work. Before they had tractors, if you wanted to plow your field, you put a yoke on the neck of oxen and the oxen would pull the plow. A yoke is a symbol of work. So it's interesting that Jesus says **"I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you."** (Matt 11:29-30) We learn from this that the Christian life is not one of inactivity. We keep God's commandments, but we do it in the complete rest of knowing that Jesus has forgiven us for the times when I've broken his commandments in the past and that he will forgive for the times when we stumble in the future. We strive with all our effort to keep God's commandments, but we do so out of the complete rest of sins forgiven. Because of forgiveness, God's commandments aren't a burden on our back. They're a happy yoke that we delight in.

So if you're tired from carrying your boulder, no matter what that boulder is, bring it to Jesus and he will give you rest. If your boulder is guilt, Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. If your boulder is physical pain, he'll release you from that burden completely when he returns and transforms our lowly bodies into his glorious body. If your boulder is the tasks of everyday life, he promises you that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. So bring your boulders to Jesus and he'll exchange it for a happy yoke. Bring your boulders to Jesus and he will give you rest. Amen.