TITLE: Rest for the Weary

TEXT: Mt. 11:28; Jn. 1:1-4, 10, 11, 14; Ro. 12:3

Mt. 16:24; Gal. 12:20

INTRODUCTION: How many of you here this morning has ever found yourself weary and just longing for rest? Maybe you have come home from work so tired and worn out that you even by-passed supper just to go and rest your weary body.

 Maybe the work that you do is not all that physically demanding but you have come home mentally or emotionally exhausted and rest was the most appealing thing on your immediate agenda..

 When we are physically, mentally or emotionally exhausted the promise of simple rest can be the sweetest of music to our ears..

 Oh I can’t wait to get home and plop down in my favorite chair or recliner….To just kick back and allow myself to go physically, mentally or emotionally dormant for a while…

 Have you ever experienced this kind of weariness and have just longed for, yearned for the sweetness of rest?

 I imagine all of us have. All of us can identify with the need we have at times for rest for these bodies of ours and the sweetness of it when we find it.

 But what I want to talk about this morning is another kind of weariness that we often experience and another kind of rest that we long for…

 And that is spiritual weariness and the deep desire that we have to find and enter into spiritual rest….

 I have found myself physically exhausted at different times in my life, I have found myself mentally exhausted at times, even found myself emotionally exhausted a few times in my life and longed to find rest…

 But there is a weariness that far outweighs all of the above and that is when we become spiritually weary. Those times when we become spiritually exhausted or worn out. Those times when we feel that spiritually we just can’t take another step. Maybe even feel like we have even expired, died, spiritually.

 And we just long for, our heart yearns for rest for the spiritual part of our being.

 If you have ever experienced spiritual weariness then you know what I am talking about.

 There is nothing that can leave us feeling so empty, so in need to find rest for our soul as when we are spiritually weary.

 In Scripture Jesus gives us the answer to how to find rest when we find ourselves spiritually weary…

**Matt 11:28 (NIV) "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."**

These verses of Scripture have a twofold application.

 They speak of how to find rest for a soul that is burdened by sin… Referring to a soul that is still burdened by un-confessed, un-repented of and un-forgiven sin. A soul that is lost and separated from God by that sin and longs to find rest from the condition of bearing the burden of that sin….

 To those who find themselves in that condition Jesus invites to….**"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.**

And what a sweet rest it is when we come to Jesus for the forgiveness of our sin and He gives us the assurance that we have been forgiven our sin, that we don’t have to carry it any longer but that He has removed our sin from us and we now stand before Him as righteous in His sight.

 But this verse has another application as well and that is for everyone who is a Christian, everyone who has, at one time in their life, accepted Jesus as the Lord and savior of their life, those who already have had their sins removed and buried in the depths of the deepest sea.

 How many of you here this morning have experienced the saving grace of Jesus Christ in your life and yet have suffered, are possible suffering, from spiritual weariness?

 Maybe you feel spiritually stagnant, like things just aren’t happening for you spiritually like they once were. Like you have come to a spiritual stand still or maybe even feel like you are sliding downhill spiritually.

 Maybe you have felt or feel like you have even experienced a spiritual death of sorts and it has left you feeling spiritually exhausted, spiritually worn out and you just long for, your heart yearns to find rest for your wearied soul and Spirit.

 Well then hear Jesus say to you this morning…..

**Matt 11:28 (NIV) "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."**

Jesus here tells us how, not just to find the initial rest for our troubled and wearied souls when we are lost and separated from Him in our sin, but He tells us how to find and come back to that place of spiritual rest once we have experienced it and have allowed it to slip away from us.

The promise is just as true for us today as it was the day that we came to Him for our salvation.

**Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.**

In the next verse Jesus tells us how….

**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.**

 Here Jesus tells us how to find rest for a troubled soul. Rest for a wearied Spirit…

 He says: **Take my yoke upon you and learn from me!**

What is the yoke that Jesus wore that we are to take upon ourselves? What is it that we are to learn from Him that will give us rest for our souls?

He gives the answer with the words that follow.

**--for I am gentle and humble in heart!**

The yoke of Jesus that we are to take up, take upon ourselves and the thing that we are to learn from Him that will keep our spirit at rest is His gentleness and humbleness of heart.

 Jesus wore gentleness and humility as a yoke!

 A Yoke is what was used to help carry your burden back then.

Example: If your burden was carrying water you would attach it to your yoke to distribute the load so that you could carry it more easily.

 The yoke that Jesus bore to enable Him to carry the load that He came to earth to carry, the load of your and my sin, was His gentleness and humility of heart.

 Think about it? Who was Jesus?

 Jesus was the incarnation of the God of creation…

**John 1:1 (NIV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

**2 He was with God in the beginning.**

**3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.**

**4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.**

**10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.**

**14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

Jesus is the Word, the Logos of God! **Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.**

Jesus is identified here as the God of creation who, through the miracle of the incarnation, left the glory and splendor and majesty of heaven and came down to earth to become one of us.

 The creator reducing Himself by His will and choice to come and live as we do.

 The creator willingly came and gave His life for His creation.

 Or the one sinned against came and gave His life to pay the price for the ones who sinned against Him.

**Romans 5:8(NIV)**  **8But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

 And it is in that act that we see the gentleness and humility of Christ displayed.

 This is this same Jesus who says…

**"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.**

 When Jesus says: **Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart…** He is telling us what His yoke is and what it is we are to learn from Him.

 We are to take up the yoke of His gentleness and humility.

 We are to learn and then apply His gentleness and His humility to our own lives.

 There was no greater act of gentleness and humility then for Jesus to leave the majesty and glory of heaven to come down to earth to become as one of us.

 There is no greater act of gentleness and humility then for the one who created us to come and give His very life for the ones He created.

 Jesus whole life on earth was marked by gentleness and humility.

 We see it exemplified when a woman who was caught in the very act of adultery was brought before him and her accusers asked Jesus what they should do to her…

 Jesus knew their evil intent had nothing to do with the woman but was an effort to get Him to say something by which they could bring an accusation against Him!

 Did Jesus take the opportunity to make a spectacle out of them, embarrass them before the crowd and show them for who they really were?

 No, in gentleness and humility He simply says…. Let he who is without sin cast the first stone…..

 After the accusers had left the woman and Jesus standing alone did Jesus rebuke and judge the woman for her sin, tell her what an evil woman she was and turn away from her in disgust?

 No! In gentleness and humility he simply says: woman, neither do I condemn you now go and leave your life of sin.

 What made Jesus response so gentle and humble was that Jesus was the one who could rightly have judged and condemned her.

 He was the Word become flesh! He was the incarnate God!

 He was the one who gave the command: Thou shall not commit adultery!

 Jesus tells us that if we are to really enter into the spiritual rest that we long for then we must first take up His yoke and learn from Him.

 The yoke that Jesus wore was the yoke of Gentleness and humility.

 That which we are to learn from Him is our need to apply His gentleness and humility to our lives.

 To become gentle and humble as He was gentle and humble!

The word for gentle that Christ used was:

**4235 praos {prah'-os}**

1. **gentle, mild, meek**

The word that He used for Humble was:

**5011 tapeinos {tap-i-nos'}**

**1) not rising far from the ground**

**2) metaph.**

**2a) as a condition, lowly, of low degree**

**2b) brought low with grief,**

**2c) lowly in spirit, humble**

 It means to not think of oneself more highly then we ought to!

Roma 12:3 (NIV) For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

 Most often when we, as a Christian, suffer spiritually, when we go through those dry times spiritually, those times that we become spiritually exhausted and worn out and yearn to find rest for our troubled soul, we do so because we have departed from the gentleness and humility of Christ.

 Show me a Christian who is struggling spiritually and I will show you a Christian that has become pride-full and self-centered rather than meek & humble and Christ centered.

 You may be thinking, well Pastor, I have struggled spiritually before and the last thing that I am is pride-full. I feel terrible about it. I feel like I have failed God.

I feel like I have disappointed Him. I feel like I am of no use to Him or anyone else. I feel like dirt and the last thing that I am is full of pride…

Really!

 Do you know what the clinical definition of pride is?

Pride is an over consumption with self!

 There are two sides to pride…high self-esteem and low self-esteem.

 The one with high self-esteem says; Look how neat and wonderful I am! Look at all the things that I can do! Look how popular I am and how many Facebook friends I have or twitter followers!

 We see someone like this and we think what? Man is that person full of themselves! That person is prideful.

 Now take the one with low self-esteem..

 They may say: Look at how pitiful I am. I can’t do anything right. No one likes me. I don’t have any real friends. My only follower on Facebook is my mother! Woe is me.

 Let me ask you something…. What is the central focus in both cases?

 It is self! It is centered on me! It is consumption with self!

 And consumption with self is pride, and a pride-full heart will always hinder the Holy Spirits work in our life.

 Jesus said, do you want to find rest for your souls? Do you want to find rest for your troubled spirit?

 Then take my yoke upon you and Learn from Me. Learn my gentleness and humility and then apply it to your life.

 It is what Jesus meant when He said:

Matt 16:24 (NIV) …. "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

The Greek word for deny is:

 **533 aparneomai {ap-ar-neh'-om-ahee}**

**1) to deny**

**1b) to forget one's self, lose sight of one's self and one's own interests**

 Before we will ever be able to take up our cross and follow Christ we need to first deny ourselves. We need to forget about ourselves. We need to lose sight of ourselves, our self-interest.

 Self will always consume the Holy Spirits presence in our life.

 Pre-occupation with self will always hinder the Holy Spirits work in our life.

 It will always leave us feeling spiritually exhausted, maybe even spiritually dead.

 Paul came to this realization in his life when he said:

Gala 2:20 (NIV) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

 This shows the meekness and the humility of Christ applied to one’s life.

When we can truthfully say: I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me!

 I have no more self-interest because I have crucified self on the cross of Christ and from now on it is no longer I who live but it is Christ living in me as I yield control of my life, all of my life, to Him!

 Example: Several years ago I knew someone that I perceived to be a Mature Christian, a man that I looked up to, one who always went to Church on Sunday and mid-week Bible study, but who, I started to notice, very seldom came to any other Church fellowships.

 We had just started a men’s ministry and I was calling around the guys of the Church and when I called this man to invite him to come to the men’s meeting he stated that he probably wouldn’t be there because he wasn’t much for just fellowshiping.

If he couldn’t go and get fed, get something meaty out of it then he didn’t have time for it…

 I thought to myself, isn’t that kind of self-centered. Isn’t that really un-Christ like.

 To want to come only for what we may get out of it!

 Only for what is in it for us!

 Where is the meekness of Christ in that? Where is the humility of Christ in that?

 For as mature as this man may have been in other areas of the faith he was seriously lacking understanding in this one.

 We don’t come to Church or Church fellowships for just what we can get out of it..

 We come into fellowship for what we have to put into it.

 Even if the only thing that we have to put into it, the only thing that we have to contribute, to offer, is our presence.

 How many of you realize that just your presence is a valuable commodity to the body of Christ.

 Just your presence may be the encouragement that someone else within the body needs on that given day.

 Example: When I first started going to Church there was a man who brought encouragement to me by his just being there.

 If we have been crucified with Christ and we no longer live then it is no longer a matter of what we get out of it but what we have to put in to it!

 If we look at it any other way then this then we are being self-centered and pride-full and the love of Christ is not ruling and reigning in our hearts and most likely we will be at unrest spiritually.

 I have gone through times of spiritual stagnation, times when I have become spiritually exhausted, felt like a spiritual desert and have just longed for the sweetness of this spiritual rest that Jesus promised.

 And what I have always found to be true when I have gone through those times is that I have stepped out of the gentleness and humility of Christ and have become more self-focused instead of Christ focused.

 Maybe you are feeling like this today… Like you are spiritually stagnant… Suffering from spiritual exhaustion and you just long for the sweetness of rest. Rest that only Jesus can provide…

 If so then here Jesus say to you this morning…

**"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.

 In the Philippines there was a driver of a carabao wagon who was on his way to market when he overtook an old man carrying a heavy load. Taking compassion on him, the driver invited the old man to ride in the wagon. Gratefully the old man accepted. After a few minutes, the driver turned to see how the man was doing. To his surprise, he found him still straining under the heavy weight, for he had not taken the burden off his shoulders.

How many times do we walk under a load that we don’t have to carry, a burden that Jesus offers to take from us?

 Have you taken up His yoke this morning?

 Have you learned from Him? Learned of His gentleness and humility of heart? Have you learnt it and then applied it to your life?

 Have you come to that place of emptying self of self and entered the place of spiritual rest, spiritual peace, spiritual contentment that Christ has for you?

 Can you say with the Apostle Paul: I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.