

Sermon Matthew 11 25 30 3rd S AF Pentecost

Sermon: 3rd Sunday after Pentecost

Text: Matthew 11:25-30

Theme: Come to me!

Goal: Jesus' invitation is for all! All can enjoy His rest by faith!

Dear Friends,

Introduction: Technology helps a lot at home and in the society! There is a machine or an appliance for everything you can imagine: To wash the dishes, to clean the dust, to cook in a better way, to entertain you, etc. etc. In the office and in our personal lives, - especially in the communication area, -everyday there are new ways to improve our work and our communication.

But do these things really liberate us from our tasks and responsibilities? Or are we more and more stressed and heavily laden with all the new technology? The day seems to become shorter and the 24 hours are not enough anymore to do what we need or have planned to do, in spite of all the help we have from the technology.

Something similar happens in the intellectual and emotional areas of life too. Books and more books have been written to help people to live better, to understand the universe, to gain more money, to relax using various techniques, to be healthier, to have a better relationship... but never ever so many have searched for help of psychologists, new and old religions and counseling.

I am not criticizing technology and knowledge or science. I use them as well and sometimes I feel myself very stressed with all of these around me and I cannot follow and use them as fast as they are offered. I am just doing an observation. But these things are not bringing true rest, comfort or peace to people.

I -Don't search for peace in the wrong place

When Jesus mentions “the wise and the learned”, He is talking about those who rely on technology and science to solve all the problems of humanity; who rely on human solutions and wisdom to solve spiritual matters as well; who rely on themselves and their efforts to please God. Jesus is talking about religious people who rely on their knowledge and wisdom, just like they rely on the Bible or on other sciences as well. He is speaking about church-going people who trust in their own efforts according to the Law, as if it was possible to find relief only in the obedience to the Law, as the Pharisees were teaching.

Saul was a “wise and learned” person of his time, an example of a good Pharisee and well educated person. He was honest in his efforts to please God and to get rest, according the education and orientation he had received from his teachers in the church. God didn't despise his studies and former preparation, but called him to be His special missionary, using his skills, transforming him into the great Apostle Paul, who wrote most of the Letters of the New Testament and spread the Gospel all around the known world of that time, and till now through his writings.

But Paul confessed to the Philippians (3:4-9): “If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage (rubbish), that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.”

Paul found what Jesus is offering in our text:

II – Look for peace in Jesus

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

A) First of all, Paul found the *forgiveness of his sins* by faith in Jesus. He never more relied on his own efforts and his obedience to the Law. He still obeyed the Law after his conversion; but not because he wanted to present himself to God as a perfect man and receive God's favor; but because God accepted him in Christ as he was, giving him a new life to live according to God's will.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened” with your sins, “and I will give you rest”, invites Jesus. And we know and believe that this is true. We come to Jesus every day as we pray the Lord's Prayer: “And forgive us our trespasses...” We come to Jesus every Sunday in the service and confess our sins, believing that He forgives us. We come to the Lord's Supper, relying on and trusting in His grace and love only; and we go back home relieved and forgiven.

The hymn 229 (LW, v.4) expresses Jesus' invitation in a very nice form: *“Come, o sinners, one and all, Come accept His invitation; Come, obey His gracious call, Come and take His free salvation! Firmly in these words believe: Jesus sinners will receive.”*

B) Secondly, Paul found *comfort* in Jesus for all his anxieties in trying to obey the Law 100% for his salvation. In the Epistle for today (Romans 7:14-25), after stressing his personal fight against sin and confessing that sin only condemns him and puts him down, he finally shouts: “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? THANKS BE TO GOD – TROUGH JESUS CHRIST MY LORD!

C) In Jesus' death and resurrection, Paul found hope that he had never had before. The fears about the future and the death have passed, because Jesus is alive on the other side of the “valley of the shadow of death”, and we can confess with the Psalmist: “I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” (Psalm 23:4).

D) And Jesus says: “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.” - Do you know what a yoke is? I didn't grow up in a farm; but someone explained me about this: The yoke is a wooden object, placed over the neck of two oxen to pull a wagon or a plough. They pull it together. - We don't carry our burden by ourselves, alone. Jesus is there with us to carry them. And the yoke is not ours, but belongs to Him! And it is not a heavy one! “For my yoke is easy and my burden light”, says Jesus. - Will you carry your yoke alone? - The hymn “What a Friend we have in Jesus” (LW 516.3,2) says: *“Are you weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our refuge - Take it to the Lord in prayer!! - Can we find a Friend so faithful Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness – Take it to the Lord in prayer.”*

Conclusion: Those who don't feel “weary and burdened” because of their sins, will not look for Jesus and His relief. We need the Law to show us that we are not as good and strong as we think about ourselves. When we read and study the Commandments, we can realize how weak and burdened we are. Then, the invitation of Jesus to come to Him will have a special taste and value! He promises to give us rest through His blood shed on the cross and shared in the Lord's Supper! And when all other fails in our life, He is still there by our side and invites us: “Come to me!” - THANKS BE TO GOD – THROUGH JESUS CHRIST MY LORD! Amen.