

June 30, 2024

Texts: Zechariah 9: 9-12; Matthew 11: 25-30

Title: "The Key to Getting Enough Rest"

Our text for the day is a perfect one when we have, in the upcoming week, a holiday when, at least in theory, we'll be getting some time to rest and relax. It reminds me of a woman who opened her refrigerator one day and saw a rabbit sitting on one of the shelves. "What are you doing in there?" she asked. The rabbit replied: "This is a Westinghouse, isn't it?" The woman replied, "Yes." "Well," said the rabbit, "I'm westing." Bad, I know, but resting is what our text is about today.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." That's a very compelling promise of Jesus that many of us need to hear. We're tired . . . for several reasons.

**Some of us might be tired because we work too hard.** Some years ago there were predictions that advances in technology would radically change how many hours a week people work. The thinking was that eventually, technological advancements would allow people to work far fewer hours, like 20 hours a week. The great challenge was supposedly what we would do with all the excess time.

So how many of you are wondering what to do with all the excess time on your hands? Pastor Barbara Brown Taylor wrote that in China the polite answer to the question of "How are you?" is to say, "I am very busy, thank you." So is that how we measure our success, how busy we are? And you know, hard work doesn't always indicate success. Some of us are tired because we're doing too much.

**Even more often we're tired because we worry/stress too much.** To a great extent, that fatigue you feel may be mental. Our body feels tired because our thoughts or fear, anxiety, and stress are in overdrive.

For many of us that are employed, our jobs don't necessarily put a lot of physical stress on us, but mental and emotional. Have you ever noticed that people who have a great mental attitude seem to have more energy than those who have a sour attitude toward life? It's true. Attitude is everything. It really is.

Tommy Lasorda's team, back when he was managing in the minor leagues, once lost seven games in a row and the team felt defeated and exhausted. After their seventh loss, Tommy walked into the locker room and found the players sitting around, dejected, with their heads down. "Hey, get your heads up." Tom Lasorda yelled. "I don't ever want to see you guys with your heads down again. Just because you lost seven games doesn't mean you're not a great team. You're going to start winning! The 1927 Yankees, the greatest team in history, lost nine games in a row!

Suddenly heads went up and expressions changed. And that was the turning point. The team started winning, and by the end of the season they were the champions. A few days later his wife asked, "Tommy, are you sure the Yankees lost nine games in a row?" "How would I know?" Tom answered. "I was only a year old. But it made a good point." And it did! They needed to believe that success was possible. The team needed to know that seven losses in a row didn't make them losers. There's something energizing about a positive outlook.

It would be good to remind ourselves from time to time that our faith is an entirely positive belief about life. That's why we call it Gospel--Good News. We are loved and our God has good things in store for those who love Him.

But **our greatest need, according to our gospel passage, is to relax and trust God.** That's what happens when we yoke ourselves to Christ. He helps us bear the burdens that you're carrying. Now notice that we're "yoked" to Christ. Doesn't mean we don't do anything. It just means that what we do becomes easier when we relax and trust God.

Norman Vincent Peale told the following story: "Sailing to the Near East last summer, I often talked with the ship's 1st officer. He told me a ship riding out a storm keeps going ahead by relaxing in the waves . . ." "The ocean is a tremendous force," the ship's officer said, "and a ship is only a very small force, but we know how to make our powerful engines adapt themselves to the timing of the sea. We don't drive them relentlessly through the waves; instead, we adjust our speed to the timing of the waves, so we are practically carried along by the sea."

Now, said Dr. Peale, this can be applied to people as well as to ships. Get yourself in time with your difficulties. Then get in harmony with God, and you will ride them without strain.

That's the sort of thing Jesus was talking about when he said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." If you are going to insist on carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders alone, you are going to be very,

very tired. Let me give you some Good News. There's One who loves you very much

who will take your burden on His shoulders and you can deal with it together, if you'll trust Him. I hope this coming week, which will include the fourth of July on Thursday, will offer a few moments of rest and recuperation, but I hope even more that you'll let Christ rest and refresh you through every day of your life. Amen.

