

Cherished-Chosen-Challenged – September 5, 2010

Rest For Your Souls

“Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Matthew 11:28-29

The first record of observing a Labor Day holiday is when the Central Labor Union in New York City set aside Tuesday September 5, 1882 for its celebration. The idea caught on over the years and in 1894 Congress passed a law to make Labor Day a national holiday celebrated on the first Monday in September. The original format for Labor Day included a parade to honor those who labored to construct the grandeur we observe in our country followed by a festival with recreation for the workers. In other words, hard work is honored with a time of enjoyable rest.

Rest is an important feature of each and every day. Breaks from work, mealtime to eat and refuel, as well as sleep to refresh and recharge our bodies are necessities. Extended breaks are also important. The day off from work each week or the enjoyment of the weekend, or even perhaps brief or extended vacations. No doubt, experience should teach us that God has designed us with a great ability to work and an undeniable need for rest...for just as Moses records the design for Adam's labor in the garden, so also the Psalmist observes, “so He gives His beloved sleep.”

Rest for the body is not the only rest we need. We need rest for our souls also. The souls of believers are involved in constant heavy labor, warring against the sinful flesh, the world and the devil. The “unholy trinity” mounts a constant assault against us and they are relentless in their pursuit to destroy our faith. The need to be relieved of such burdens and to find peace amidst such a constant conflict cannot be overstated.

Jesus invites us to find true rest and refreshment from these burdens in Him. But where can we find Him and how can we come to Him? Only in His Word and Sacraments will we find Christ our Savior. Only in Word and

Sacraments will we find the respite necessary to refresh and revive our tired souls. God says through the prophet Isaiah: “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.”

Daily time spent in reading the Word of God is just as important as your daily meal, break time at work, or good night’s sleep. Your soul needs the rest, refreshment, and recharging that only this life-giving Word supplies. Do you skip meals all the time? Do you go without sleep every day? Do you work long and tedious hours without breaks? What happens to the health of your body when you do these things? Eventually you would get sick and die. Imagine what happens to the health and well being of your soul when you are devoid of God’s Word!

And what would happen if you never had a day off, a weekend, a vacation? Besides limiting your productivity the stress would finally kill you. God commanded the Sabbath Day (rest day) for a reason. It was not primarily rest for the body...it was rest for the soul. Coming to church to hear God’s Word and receive the Sacrament is coming to Christ. In Him, by virtue of His death and resurrection, we receive the spiritual rest we so desperately need. Are you spiritually starving? Are you spiritually exhausted? Come to church and worship. There you will find Jesus and rest for your souls.

- Remember: The hard worker thinks he can do it...he can keep on going...until he finally collapses. Don’t fall into the same trap spiritually. Come to church and find rest for your souls in Jesus Christ.
- Remember: The burden we bear as Christians in our labor for Him is really a blessing. The more we learn of Him the greater peace and rest we have in knowing the forgiveness and life He gives.

How blessed we are to be the people of God. He has chosen us to be in this place. He has prepared us for this time. He has equipped us for service to Him. **Don't wait for someone else to do it. If you wait on someone else to do it...it will never get done!** God bless you in the growth of your faith and in service to Him and His people, for your labor in the Lord is never in vain.

Pastor Jacobs

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