

Introduction: 24/7 culture; productivity, efficiency; in an increasingly humanistic society where people are viewed as a part of the machine of the universe and dehumanized, more and more is expected.

- We have labor saving devices so that we spend less time doing mundane things, yet we continue to be hurried, lacking time to do the things that we desire. There is often guilt when there is "down time", and the call always seems to be more and more.
- How are you resting?

I. AN INVITATION TO SPIRITUAL REST – Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus' Invitation – "Come to me"

- more than a physical coming (they were there)

Who He Invites to Come to Him – "all you who labor and are heavy laden"

- In this context, about what kind of rest is He speaking? Not primarily physical (though we'll see this is true), but spiritual
- The burden of *sin* - Psalm 38:4
- The burden of *self-righteousness* – Matthew 23:4 (they don't assist them)

His Promise – "I will give you rest...for your soul (v.29)"

- Bring your burden of sins and of self-righteousness, and I will relieve you of those burdens
- This is the putting off of those ways (sins and self-righteousness) that only increase problems and guilt

What does it mean to Come to Christ – "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me"

- Not only is there the putting off, but also a putting on; freedom isn't found in become independent, but in a change of masters

*Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody. (Gotta Serve Somebody – Bob Dylan)*

- By the "yoke", it becomes clearer that the imagery is that of a master and an animal; a yoke was for a beast of burden
- Here is the call to voluntarily "take" the yoke of a master, something an animal doesn't do
- There is also the self-conscious commitment to Jesus as teacher and Lord, from whom we learn
- It isn't freedom complete from commandments and a way of life, but taking on of that which isn't burdensome 1John 5:3 It is this way that God promises true human liberty and blessing

How This is Rest – "for I am gentle and lowly in heart...My yoke is easy and My burden is light"

- Jesus' character – gentle and lowly in heart; to serve sin or self-righteousness is to serve a hard taskmaster that ruins lives and brings destruction and devastation
- His yoke and burden is easy and light – one of the things that makes this so that, unlike the Pharisees who made men the servants of their man-made commands, Jesus gives help by His Spirit in loving obedience
- Have you ever been burdened because of your sin? Have you ever been burdened by self-righteousness?
 - If so, then here is the help that you need. This is the real reason we should go to Jesus. I would question the reality of someone's profession of faith in God if this hasn't happened.
- What should you do when you slip back into sin, when self-righteousness comes again? Psalm 116:5-7

II. THE BLESSING OF PHYSICAL REST

- There is a direct connection between our souls and our bodies because we are one in this life. We cannot separate the two, because we are not disembodied spirits.
- When the soul does not rest, it often has the effect that the body does not rest. There are several reasons for this:
 - 1.) Unconfessed sin – Psalm 6:6
 - The remedy for a bad conscience is to confess and forsake sin and walk in righteousness.
 - Proverbs 3:21-24 obedience and a good conscience
 - 2.) Anxiety, worry, and fear – Psalm 3:5-6 4:4, 8
 - This is ultimately a frustration with the fact that we are not sovereign and all knowing.
 - The remedy is to trust in the Lord, who never sleeps Psalm 121:4
 - Sound sleep is a testimony of the fact that we realize God is God and we are not.
 - 3.) The burdens of an overworked/overcomplicated life - Psalm 127:2 Ecclesiastes 5:12
 - We often carry the burdens that we ourselves have set upon our backs rather than moving toward a more simple life.
 - Late nights, hectic days, full of activities. The burden of debt and paying bills because of spending money we don't have.
 - Psalm 127:2 It is vain...He gives His beloved sleep
 - There is always more to do, and yet sound sleep is a testimony of God being God and our being finite.

What should you do if you find yourself without rest/sleep due to these things?

- The lack of rest, often with spiritual roots, brings about such physical problems as hypertension, increased anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, etc.

- Use sleepless times to meditate on God and rejoice and trust - Psalm 63:6-7 Jeremiah 31:26
- Take time off to rest (not just do a bunch of more stuff) - Mark 6:31
- Be counter cultural in regards to the Christian Sabbath. We live in a restless society, 24/7, stores that never close, things always available. This is something relatively new in human society with the harnessing of electricity. Throughout Scripture the day is used in conjunction with work, the night for sleep. It is part of our created being. Likewise, the cycle of weeks is something God has given as part of our living in time. There is a time to work and a time to rest.
- This is one reason we have structured our Lord's Day the way we have. I remember being physically exhausted at the end of the Lord's Day. We should be refreshed on Monday so that we can get back to our ordinary labor.
- The word Sabbath means ceasing, and carries the idea of resting. It is to be a blessing and refreshment. It is a weekly opportunity to legitimately put aside other things, and rest in the Lord more intensely spiritually (through the ministry of worship and fellowship) and physically.
- If you leave here and immediately go to the mall, the movies, the restaurant, not only are you preventing others from resting from their labors, but you yourself (and your family) are potentially wearing yourselves out.
- We live in a culture where rest, quietness, silence, prolonged periods of thinking are not encouraged, and every moment has to be filled with entertainment, shopping, and activity. REST! In doing so, you will find rest in the Lord.
- Warning: I am not saying that you use sleep as a means of escape Proverbs 20:13; it itself becomes a refuge after sleeplessness causes body to break down and problems compounded.
- See sleep as a precious blessing, pray for it, and do all within your means to rest well. It is not more spiritual to lose sleep and cause physical problems because of business. God does not want us to destroy our bodies which are temples of the Holy Spirit.

III. THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL REST

- Revelation 14:11, 13 In these verses, what we experience now in a small way is a foreshadowing of what all will experience in Eternity. For the wicked, those who will not recognize the Lord Jesus as their Master, hell is likened to a place where there is NO REST. Many of you know what it is like to be awake way too long. Everything is askew, your body begins to hurt, you can't think right. This is a picture of the everlasting condition of the wicked.
- For the righteous, those who have put their hope in Christ, heaven is described as a place of everlasting REST. True rest and peace in the presence of God, the kind of peace that we know when we have rested well, the sun is shining through the window, a cup of coffee (or drink of choice) next to us, thinking about the glory of Christ and His goodness to us...this is but a picture of the everlasting condition of those in Christ.
- To rest then, you must rest in Christ now.
- To continue to be burdened by sin and self-righteousness is to be burdened forever because you have not believed on the Son of God.