

Mark 6:30-34

I'm sure that at one time or another, all of you have experienced a common malady known as **burnout**. Whether you're a homemaker, a teacher, a farmer, a professional person, or a student still in grade school - burnout strikes! It begins as a general disillusionment with your state in life. People who are **burning out** commonly ask questions like, "What am I **doing** here? **Why** am I doing what I'm doing? Is this **all** there is to life?" As the condition worsens, even the **smallest** things can cause **big** irritations. Counselors and psychologists will tell you that **burnout** can be very **serious** if it's left untreated. Fortunately, the treatment is easily within reach, and it doesn't have to be **expensive** either! The solution to burnout is **rest** - not necessarily **complete** rest from **all** laboring, but at least a **change** - a change of **scenery**, a change of **pace**, or some **other** significant change. That's what **vacations** are all about - **rest** - rest for both **body** and **soul**. In our text today, Jesus shows us that **He also** recognized the **importance** of rest, as He invited His disciples to **Come To A Secluded Place, And Rest**.

Why did the disciples need **rest**? Jesus had just sent out the twelve two-by-two, to preach repentance, to cast out demons, and to anoint the sick. **Now** those disciples had **returned** to make a progress report - and they had a **lot** to talk about. Our text tells us, "*The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to Him **all** they had done and taught.*" They were so **excited** that they gave Jesus a step-by-step account - they literally told Him **everything** that had happened. It was probably similar to what happens when a young child tells his grandmother about his trip to the **zoo**. "Oh, Grandma, it was **so** neat. We saw the **giraffes**, and the **zebras** and the **hippos**. There were lots of **funny monkeys** too! Then we stopped for a while and ate some **hotdogs** and **popcorn**, and then we saw some scary **lions** and **tigers**. There were **otters**, and **seals**, and **polar bears**. And Grandma, one part even had **snakes** and **crocodiles** - but Mom didn't like that part very much, so she waited on a bench. But the best of all were the **elephants**. Don't you like the elephants best of all too, Grandma?" When kids are **excited** about something, their **exuberance** can almost be overwhelming. And that's the way Jesus' **disciples** felt too. They were so **amazed** at the wonderful things they had **taught**, and at the tremendous **miracles** which they had **performed**, that they couldn't stop **talking** about it.

Actually, this part of our text is sort of a foreshadowing of the **Judgment Day**. The disciples were giving an **account** to **Jesus**. He had given them a **task** to carry out, and had also given them the strength and the talents to **do** it. Now the time had come to tell Jesus how they had **used** their talents. It was a real **joy** for

them to make their report, because they had used their talents **faithfully**. However, on the **Judgment Day**, **all** people - the faithful and the **unfaithful** - must pass before the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account of their **lives**. Not all of **those** reports will be **joyful** ones. I dare say that we will want to be **sure** we have not **done** or **said** anything in this life, which we would **not** want to relate to our Lord Jesus!

But of course, you realize that's **impossible**. We're going to **sin**, because the devil, the world, and our flesh won't **allow** it to be any other way. Yet, the sobering thought of **repeating** our sinful words or actions to **Jesus**, should make us stop and **think** before we go ahead and enter **into** those sins. In those terrible moments of temptation, we would do well to offer a **prayer** to the Lord - a prayer to give us the strength **not** to break His commandments, but rather to think and act according to **His** will. But then of course if we do end up **giving in** to the temptation, we need to **repent** of our sins, take them to **Jesus**, and **thank Him** for His gracious **forgiveness**.

Now, in carrying out the tasks which Jesus had given to **them**, Jesus' **disciples** had been working at a **fast** and **furious** pace. Our text continues, "*He said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a **secluded** place and **rest** a while.' For there were so many people coming and going that they did not even have a chance to **eat**.'*" That's the kind of employer to **work** for! Jesus recognized that the disciples wouldn't **last** very long if they continued to work at such a **hectic** pace - not even taking time out to **eat**. So, Jesus told them to take a **break** - to get some **rest**.

Jesus Himself had a human body which required **rest** and **relaxation**, so He graciously invited His disciples to come and rest **with Him**. That sounds **nice**, doesn't it! Every Christian **longs** to rest with Jesus in heaven **permanently** for all **eternity**. But of course, the rest of which Jesus spoke in our **text**, would only be **temporary**. It would only last a short while, giving His disciples a little **breathing** room - a few moments when they could be **alone** with their **Savior** once again, and sort out some of their thoughts and priorities. In addition, this **resting** time was to be **uninterrupted**. They were to come **by themselves** - leaving behind all the **crowds**, and their **problems** as well. They were to have the **privacy** which was necessary to tell Jesus **everything** they had on their minds, including their doubts and fears. Jesus would provide them with rest for their **bodies**, for their **minds**, and for their **souls**. All **they** had to do was **come**.

The same invitation goes out to **us**. Jesus says, "***Come to Me**, all you who*

are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” - rest for our bodies, minds, and souls. It’s **good** for us to spend a little reflective time with Jesus - to partake of His body and blood in the Lord’s Supper for the forgiveness of our sins - to remember His suffering and death for our salvation. Let’s not **kid** ourselves. If Jesus’ chosen twelve disciples, who were among the **most** active workers in Christ’s kingdom - if **they** needed to be alone with Him in order to receive **rest**, then who are **we** to think that we could do **without** it? Jesus has **invited** us to come - to come and **rest** in a quiet place. That quiet place could be right here in **church**. It could also be at a **camp**, or up in Northern Wisconsin or over in Minnesota, or out in New England, or down in Arizona or Florida or Texas, or **wherever** that place **is** where you **always** go, just to get **away**. The location itself isn’t nearly as important as remembering to take Jesus **with us** in our thoughts, our words, and our actions.

Also, as nice as it is, don’t forget that **wherever** you go to rest, it will only last for a short time. **Any** rest which we find here on the earth is only **temporary**, so make the **most** of it. As it turns out in our text, Jesus’ disciples would be resting even **less** than they had **planned**, for Mark goes on to say, *“Many people saw them leave and knew where they were going. They ran there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them.”* Jesus and His disciples **needed** rest, and they tried to **find** that rest, but the people wouldn’t **allow** it. They diligently **followed** Jesus and the disciples. It wasn’t that they were trying to be inconsiderate, it was more that they just didn’t **think** about it. St. Mark explains **why**. *“When Jesus stepped out of the boat, he saw a large crowd. His heart went out to them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. He began to teach them many things.”*

Lost sheep. Wandering sheep. Jesus could have sent those people **away**. It probably would have been better for Himself and for His disciples if He **had**. But those people **needed** Jesus. They were like sheep without a shepherd. They didn’t know where to go or what to do, and they were looking to **Jesus** for **guidance**. Sheep which are left alone to fend for themselves will soon **die**, because they are among the most **helpless** animals on earth. Jesus **knew** that. He is the **ultimate** Shepherd - the **Good** Shepherd who even lays down His **life** for the sheep. So, Jesus did **not** send the people away. Instead, putting aside His **own** needs, Jesus **welcomed** the people, and immediately began to **teach** them.

It’s **amazing** to think that many of those people **ran ten miles** in order to be waiting on the other shore when Jesus landed. No doubt it took the sick and infirm quite a bit **longer** to arrive - but when they finally **got** there, they were not **disappointed**. Jesus healed them **physically**, and taught them **spiritually**. That crowd couldn’t get **enough** of God’s Word. Is that also **our** attitude? Do we hunger

and thirst for the Word of God, or do we say, “Well, I stocked up on God’s Word pretty well **last winter**, so it’s not going to hurt me to stay away for a while **this summer**”? Think of the tremendous spiritual blessings which can be ours when we care enough to set aside some special times to be **alone** with our Savior - even during the summer months. We **need** the rest which Jesus brings through God’s Holy Word and Sacraments. Don’t stay away from them for too long. It’s not **healthy!**

In conclusion, the physical rest which the disciples received in our text didn’t last too long - perhaps only as long as it took them to cross the lake by boat. But in His grace and wisdom, Jesus also offered them (and us) a **long-term** rest - an **eternal** rest **with Him** in heaven. That’s the crown we receive for fighting the good fight of **faith**. My dear friends, may we never grow weary of the battle, and may we continue to faithfully **use** God’s Word and Sacraments - to strengthen our defensive **armor**, to intensify our offensive **weapons**, and to provide us with the physical and spiritual **rest** which is so **important** to us all. Amen.