

Faith in the Home
Sermon Notes and Applications
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, Matthew 11:25-30, "What is Rest?"

Define the word "rest?" That is easy, right? Simply put, taking a break from work, or getting the proper amount of sleep. Maybe, for you it's a quiet night in the home binge-watching a favorite show on a streaming site. Maybe it's reading a book for you. Maybe, you see rest as a vacation. Or, maybe in way vacations are burdensome because of the arranging of the plans, and the working to get ahead at your job (not mention the catch up after you get back). Maybe the binge watching of a show or any of your other recreational activities becomes burdensome because you procrastinate through those means rather than getting things done that you need to get done. Then you become stressed. That opens another can of worms, too. Do you believe that you can only rest when you get everything done on your to do list? These are all good things to think about.

However, the most important question is this: How does God define "rest?" Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to me all 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." These verses tell us that rest comes from trusting in Jesus. Is it any wonder why worldly people are owned by stress, anxiety, and fear?

Alcohol sales are still high even during inflation. Money is tight, but people still have enough money for their booze. (I'm by no means a teetotaler.) Our country has an opioid epidemic. Worldly people need their drugs to cope with reality. The worldly people of our country try to find rest, which alludes them.

So how does one who is in this world, but not of this world rest? Think of what gives you anxiety. Pray about it and ask God to take that anxiety from you and to give you trust that He will take care of you. He who died on the cross for your sins, is going to help you in this world. He has given us a weapon to fight stress and anxiety. Prayer is that weapon! Even if your prayer is, "Lord, I believe help my unbelief," from Mark 9). Trusting in God, is being able to put Him first and trust that your family will be better taken care of as a result. Prayer is an act of trusting in God. What will result is being filled with grace and knowing that God will take care of all things that we cannot control. Rest comes from Christ alone. Christ has not only promised you an eternal paradise when He makes a new world, but He promises to be with you and help you in this world.

How do we teach and model these things to our family?

1. Obviously, coming to worship is a no brainer. But God's Word in the Old Testament tells us in the Third Commandment, "Remember the Sabbath and keep it Holy." In the New Testament book of Hebrews, we are instructed to not "Forsake the gathering." Why do we need to be commanded to receive God's grace? Because our sinful nature has tendency to lead us to believe we that we can be too busy to come to worship. B.U.S.Y. means, "Being under Satan's yoke." Let's not forget Jesus' words about children, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them."

2. If you are out of town, finding an LCMS congregation worship at is a commendable. Watching online is also a good option, especially when you or a family member are sick. However, if you are in town and healthy, online worship is not equal to being present. Coming to worship is a blessing not just for receiving the Word and Sacrament, but also for the fellowship of believers. When you are not here, you are missed.

3. Resting or having "Sabbath" during the week.... Jesus not just our Lord at 10am on Sundays. He is with us each day. Looking to Him for all goodness does bring ease of stress, anxiety, and fear. Which begs to question, "are those feelings sinful?" There is a time in place for all things under heaven. When I see a toddler wondering closer to a parking lot or a street, my anxiety (fight or flight) kicks in and go to protect that toddler from danger. When stress, anxiety, and fear steal our joy in the Lord, that is a sin. When we take our stress and anxiety out on other people, or we let affect us in way that is detrimental to our well-being, then that is the time where we need to repent to Jesus.

4. Stress and anxiety will come. However, we have God who is faithful and forgiving us even when we do not put our trust in God. He is a God of grace, and love. He forgives us and gives a clean slate to trust in Him again and again.

5. Prayer is the number one weapon against stress and anxiety. Jesus wants you yoked to Him, so He can carry your burden. He is God, He wants you to trust in Him. He wants to take care of everything that is too big for you to carry on your own. Instead of stressing about stuff pray about it. Example: Does the direction of our culture have you stressed for our nation? It will be better for the nation to have you pray for it than to have stress about it. I believe prayer is even more effective in changing our nation for the better than voting is (yes, I want you as Christians to still vote).

6. There is always tension of balancing vocations. You have to work to provide for and take care of the family, but your family also needs time with you. Resting in God does not mean forsaking your duties, but it does mean trusting that God has covered you with grace so that you can take those duties on with renewed joy. It also means that you have grace for others who are also busy.