

**COMING AND GOING**  
**Matthew 11:25-30**  
**Preached by Dr. Cahill**  
**Babcock Presbyterian Church**  
**Sunday, June 24, 2012**

Some years ago there was a Broadway play entitled “Stop the World, I Want to Get Off.” Doesn’t that say it all? With all that goes on all around us, changes in our society, all our buzzing around doing mindless tasks, don’t you long for a “time out” for just a little while, to slow down, so you can have some peace?

The old World War 1 biplanes had no fast and slow speeds on their instrument panels. There were just two options “full on” and “full off.” From the moment the pilot called out “Contact,” the engine went into overdrive and sooner than later the continuous full throttle power would burn out the engines. Ever wonder where the term “burn out” came from?

If this modern day parable rings true for you, then Jesus’ invitation to come to him for rest is tailor made for you.

“I will give you rest.” What does that mean? Does it mean you’ll never be stressed, you can live in a bubble protecting you from heartache and spiritual anguish?

Unfortunately, some of the pop, new-age culture is again being wrongly confused with what the full Christian life is really all about. Without proper grounding the concept of peace and rest can become dangerously self-indulgent. It can mean to some living the “good life/high life,” always lounging around reading good books and engaging in scintillating conversation and meditating on lovely thoughts while drinking herbal teas. In this scenario, life can become premeditatively self-centered. But if you make Christ the center of your life, in sync with God’s will and grounded in his love then there’s less danger of self-indulgence.

Again, listen to what Jesus said, “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and learn from me.”

When you get yoked to Christ your quest for rest and peace is not an end in itself, but a means to an even greater end.

Jesus says, “Learn from me.” Question: what was Jesus’ life purpose? Answer: servant hood. Primarily, Jesus came to die for the sins of the world, but before Good Friday, every day his life was spent enabling people to find God. His teaching, his healing, and his simply “being” with people was all done to help honest seekers find the truth that sets us free. By being a servant, lowering himself to raise others up, Jesus was proclaiming the reality of God’s active presence in our world. That’s why Jesus invites us to come to him so we can become like him, servants to each other and everyone else God sends our way.

However, in our coming we're also invited to be going. Wasn't Jesus' final command to the disciples "Go out into the world, make disciples of all nations?"

We may like the idea of coming to Jesus for rest, but we feel equally uncomfortable going out to give others what Jesus gives us. Coming to Jesus gives us warm fuzzies. The thought of going out to our neighbors brings on the cold pricklies. Why? "Making disciples," may be interpreted by others as being presumptuous, even arrogant.

"I don't want to force my beliefs on somebody else." Let me let you in on a little secret. I don't want to force my beliefs on anybody. I don't want to force my beliefs on you, the members of my congregation. So, I'm not asking you to do what I wouldn't do, and what's more Jesus doesn't ask you to do that either. Read the gospels. Not once did Jesus ever force himself on anybody. Instead, through his presence Jesus made the reality of the kingdom so powerfully real that many men and women readily accepted his invitation to step into a new way of life. And you want to know something? Each and every one of you has it within your power to do the same, to make the reality of God's kingdom powerfully real to the people around you. Let me repeat that, you have the power to pass on to others what God has given you. Don't believe me? Then let's take a little survey. Answer these four questions.

1. How are you doing? Are you sensing God's peace in your life, even though there's plenty of reason for you to be a "basket case?"
2. Is the ministry of our church making a difference in your life? Is it relevant to your personal faith journey?"
3. Do you find Jesus becoming increasingly important in your life? Are you finding yourself even more hungry for his grace and unconditional love?
4. On a scale from one to ten, if Babcock Church suddenly disappeared, how much would you miss it?

I pose these questions as an exercise to help you prayerfully consider how essential your life in Christ has become and is becoming. Hopefully all of you answered, "Very important, without my faith in God my life would be empty, purposeless and self-indulgent. But since I've been introduced to Jesus I find that my life is now becoming more full, purposeful and balanced."

If that's true for you, then consider this scenario. A good friend, someone you care about, is in pain. Physical pain, psychic pain, spiritual pain, take your pick. You really care about this person. He or she is calling out for help. Why then would you withhold from this dear friend the most important, life-affirming power you have going in your life? You'd do anything else, take care of their kids, get them to the doctor, bring a meal, clean the house, run errands. Why then, if the situation was right and you felt the urge to gently share what gives you strength, would you avoid giving your hurting neighbors what has already been given you? I'm not suggesting you pull out a Bible and beat them over the head with it. But you are encouraged you to let them know you care for them, and you want them to know what you already know, the peace and rest only Jesus can give.

Still, it's a scary burden Jesus puts on our shoulders. Faith sharing is risky. Some may think you're weird or narrow minded. "I don't want to be branded as being a religious fanatic!" If that's your fear, remember this, Jesus isn't asking you to be a religious fanatic. Christians are never expected to force religion on vulnerable people. But we are given the opportunity to extend Jesus' open invitation, "Come to me all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest."

"Well," you may be thinking, "if that's what Jesus wants me to do, how do I start? When will I know what's appropriate and what's not appropriate to say? Where do I start 'learning' from Jesus?"

There's a book entitled "What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School." The author passes on common sense business skills that really work. Here's one of his most important. Each morning he spends one full hour deciding how to spend the rest of the day. Doesn't that make sense? One hour to plan the balance of the day. Theoretically that's time well spent!

Now, translate this from a business context to a discipleship context. One hour a day set aside asking God to help you get in touch with the source of your life. One hour asking God to bless you with eyes and ears of faith so you might see and hear God showing you how to be a servant to anyone God sends your way. One hour asking God to empower you in thought, word and deed as you make the power of the kingdom a living, breathing reality.

"Yeah right," you protest. "Are you kidding? An hour of prayer? I don't have an hour for prayer! My life is too hectic as it is."

Fine, forget one hour. Make it fifteen minutes, or ten minutes, even five minutes. Start somewhere, then see what happens. Just make the time to come to Jesus. Talk to him. Listen to him. Follow him. I predict you'll find that five, ten, fifteen minutes will become just the right amount of time God requires of you.

My favorite post Easter story is in John's Gospel. There we read the disciples were commanded to return to Galilee and wait for Jesus. One day while sitting around waiting for Jesus, Peter, probably impatient and frustrated, stood up and announced, "I'm going fishing!" In my mind's eye I see the disciples looking at each other with a "Why not?" look on their faces until one by one each gets up and trots after Peter.

The next morning they return to shore empty handed and while pulling down their sails and folding up their nets a stranger on the beach calls out, "Put out your nets on the other side of the boat," with the result being they catch more fish than they can handle. Suddenly after having a "déjà vu all over again" moment Peter recognized the stranger is Jesus and Jumped overboard and swam to shore.

There Jesus, tending a coal fire, invites the twelve to an early morning breakfast on the beach of fish and bread. It was after breakfast Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love me," with Peter answering, "Yes I love you," each time, and thus without saying it forgiving Peter for his three denials before the cock crowed twice.

“Then feed my lambs and feed my sheep,” Jesus responded, letting Peter know despite his denials Jesus still wanted Peter to lead the Apostles into the world, going out to love and serve in Jesus’ name.

And who knows, maybe very soon, to your surprise, you’ll hear Jesus, in an equally intimate conversation encouraging you to invite your neighbor to know that gentle and humble Presence that brings rest to your soul.

“Come to me all you who are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest...”

“Go out into the world and make disciples...”

Let us pray.