

The 5th Sunday after Pentecost: Holy Trinity Church: July 9, 2017

Proper 9: Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30: *Traveling Light With Jesus*

Preached

By

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In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

A young dog was spinning round and round in circles when an older dog sauntered up. "What are you doing?" the old dog asked. "I'm chasing my tail," the young dog replied. "You see, happiness is in my tail. When it wags, I'm happy. When it drops, I'm sad. Happiness is in my tail. If I catch it, I will always be happy!" So again the young dog spun round and round trying to bite hold of the elusive tail. Finally, all out of breath, the young dog fell to the ground, sad and worn out. The old dog, still watching all this, said, "You know, I used to chase my tail. But one day I found that if I just went on about my business, happiness followed right along behind me."

My sisters and brothers in Christ, from Matthew's Gospel Jesus calls out to all of us tail-chasing, happiness-seeking, worn-out people. Jesus says, "*Come*

unto me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” Do you ever feel tired? Do you ever feel weary? If you don't, you would be rather unusual. Now we all experience what is called physical fatigue, but there are other kinds of fatigue that in my opinion are far worse than the physical kind. There is mental fatigue. There is emotional fatigue and worst of all, there is spiritual fatigue. Now for physical fatigue you need sleep, but for any other kind of fatigue you need rest. There is a difference. You can go to a drug store and buy medication that will put you to sleep, but you cannot buy anything that will give you rest, because rest is not a condition of the body, it is a condition of the soul.

If there is one term that describes where people basically are living today it is overload. Most of us are overwhelmed, overworked, over committed, over anxious, over matched, over extended and over loaded. Our energy supply is on empty and we are running on vapor most of the time. When we are in overload mode, we are experiencing a symptom of deficit living. Overloaded people live in a state of deficit and by that I mean emotional deficit, relational deficit, and spiritual deficit. If you have ever overdrawn your checking account, you know the immediate stress and pressure that comes. You immediately want to find a way to cover it, but where do you find money when you are flat broke? Well, it is just as possible to get overdrawn in life.

When you are overwhelmed, you find yourself living in deficit. You get overdrawn in your marriage, overdrawn with your kids, overdrawn on the job and you just plain run out of the spiritual, mental, relational, and emotional steam that it takes to really enjoy life.

My sisters and brothers, you don't want overload to wag your life.

Overloaded people need words that begin with the prefix "Re." Words like: restore, revive, recover, reflect, relax, replenish, renew, retreat and refresh. Stop with that last word - refresh. I want to share with you how life can be shockingly refreshing whether it is lived on a sunny Saturday afternoon or a rainy Monday morning. I don't believe rainy days and Mondays always have to get you down. You can travel lightly and find life to be "shockingly refreshing", but there is one condition. You must be where you need to be in relation to Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ must be where He needs to be in relation to you.

I want you to listen to these words of Jesus from Matthew's gospel, which are as refreshing as enjoying a cool breeze, sitting under an umbrella at the beach and drinking cold lemonade. *"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and*

learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ, Jesus us asking you, are you tired? Are you worn out? Come to me. Get away with me and you will recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me; watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of my many graces. I will not lay any yoke upon you that is too heavy or ill-fitting for your life. Keep company with me and you will learn to live freely and travel lightly through this life.

Now in verse 28 the word “heavy burdens” here literally means working to the point of absolute exhaustion. The word for "*heavy burdens*" pictures a man laboring under a tremendous burden that is so heavy that he can no longer carry it. Jesus is talking about a state of unrest.

Everywhere you turn in the world in which we are living you find unrest. There is international unrest, social unrest, moral unrest, and economical unrest. If you are tired of living on the edge, if you are tired of a life that is nothing more than another day and another dollar, if you are tired of feeling that all you are doing is making time and taking up space, if you are weighed down and beaten up, tired of your job, tired of your marriage, tired of your

problems, tired of the pain, tired of the guilt, tired of the shame or just plain tired of being tired, then listen up and let Jesus show you how to travel lightly.

Now the key to living life to the fullest and making life something you enjoy from the beginning rather than endure to the end is found in three verbs in today's Gospel. The verb "*Come*", the verb "*Take*" and the verb "*Learn*." In those words lie the secret on how to travel lightly without all the stuff we pick up along the way.

My sisters and brothers, the first thing that Jesus says is so simple. He says, "Come to Me." That is, get in My presence, listen to My voice, hear My words. When you come to Jesus just as you are, Jesus will give you all that He has, and all that Jesus has will be all that you need. It will be sufficient for you. Now when Jesus says come to me, what he really means is, you've got to turn your back on anything and everything that you might substitute for Him. You see the reason why so many people are restless, tired, burned out; living on the edge, frustrated and stressed is because they are looking for rest in all of the wrong places. There are some people who try to find peace and rest in pleasure, alcohol, partying, hopping from bed to bed, woman to woman, man to man, marriage to marriage. Trying to find the rest that is just not there. Others try to find it in performance. The workaholic scrambles all day and

then burns the mid-night oil. They do all that they know how to do, the best way they know how to do it, but still there is no rest. Other people try to find it in status and position. They climb all over people and even step over their own family trying to get to the top only to find out that if you ever do get to the top, it wasn't even worth the trip. Some people try to find it in possessions. You know what the Scriptures say about making money? It says that no matter how much you make, you will never have enough. Ecclesiastes tells us, whoever loves money never has enough money; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless." (Ecclesiastes 5:10 NIV)

People just don't understand that money can buy a house, but it can't buy a home. Money can buy influence, but it can't buy friendship. Money can buy sex, but it can't buy love. Money can buy anything except happiness. It can take you anywhere except to heaven. If you are looking for rest and peace and contentment and satisfaction Jesus will save you a lot of heartache and a lot of trouble and give you a shortcut by letting you know that you won't find it in pleasure, performance, position or possessions. You will only find it in the person of Jesus Christ. It was St. Augustine who said, "The soul is restless and it will not rest until it finds its rest in God."

My sisters and brothers in Christ, the reason why Jesus used the yoke is because it was a symbol of submission. What Jesus is saying here is, if you want to find rest in this life, and you want to find peace in your heart, you have to come to me, you have take your yoke from me, you have got to learn from me to travel lightly through this life. In short, we must submit. You will never have real peace until you surrender your life to Jesus Christ. Most people think of surrender as an act of defeat, but in life surrender to Jesus Christ is the first step to victory.

Our challenge this week comes in the form of a question, how are we to travel lightly with Jesus. In other words, what is going to guide you in the moral and spiritual decisions you have to make in your daily life? You really only have two choices: Either you will follow God in what God tells you through Jesus or you will follow the customs and culture the world tells you to follow. A life lived with Jesus a life in Jesus a life for Jesus is shockingly refreshing and the traveling is light.

My sisters and brothers in Christ, many of you have heard about the little Swallows of San Juan Capistrano. These little birds are famous for migrating to and from this beautiful place in California. Did you know that every March thousands of these little birds fly 6000 miles over the ocean from Argentina all

the way back to San Juan Capistrano, California? Now how do they do it? They can't swim and they certainly can't fly 6000 miles without stopping. So, how do they do it? Each swallow carries a large twig in its mouth. When the birds get tired, they drop their twigs into the water, land on them and rest until they are ready to resume their flight.

My brother and sisters, life is like that. Life is a journey over water.

Sometimes the water is still, sometimes the water is choppy. Sometimes the water is smooth, sometimes the waves are rough. Some days it is nothing but sun and some days it is nothing but storms. Here is the challenge, we all get weary in the flight and when we do, we can go to the cross of Jesus and lay that cross on the water of our lives. No matter what kind of water it is, the cross of Christ will always float you and there you can always rest. Take it from this old dog. I used to chase my tail. But one day I found that if I just went on about my business, happiness followed right along behind me."

Amen.

