

TEXT: Mark 6:31

THEME: GOOD NEWS FOR TIRED SOULS

1. Jesus' Sweet Invitation
2. "Come with Me to a Quiet Place

"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest" (Mark 6:31).

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

When things had been tough at work, a friend of mine would tell his co-workers, "We need some porch time." He would invite them over to his house to relax from the hard day, to lean back and talk about what had happened, to recharge their batteries physically and emotionally. And sometimes...he even told his wife they were coming!

Sundays in summer used to be prime porch time, days of rest. Most shops were closed up, and most work was put on hold so everyone could go visit family and friends. Somehow, we have lost the common sense to slow down to rest. Our commercial activity, channels of entertainment, computer access, Facebook, blogs, and tweets all run 24/7. Even that expression, 24/7, wasn't around until a few decades ago. Now it seems that the only things that must close are the deeper restorative parts of our bodies and minds. If rest is put off for too long, bad things happen. Researchers tell us that going without sleep for 20 hours puts you in the same condition as a person legally drunk. Your reactions are slowed, and your judgments are twisted. Worse yet, because your self-awareness is also distorted, you don't even know you are impaired. Then we end up like the toddler who has missed his quiet or nap time—hyper, cranky, rash, and convinced the world is falling apart. When challenged, we insist, "I am *not* tired! I'll just have another cup of coffee, a Monster, or a 5-hour energy drink.

In our gospel lesson today, Jesus offers a SWEET INVITATION, "**Come with me.**" The disciples had returned from some tiring mission trips that we heard about last week. Jesus knew just what they needed—porch time with the Savior.

This is GREAT NEWS FOR TIRED SOULS—it was for the disciples and it is for us. Jesus had walked the same dusty miles as his disciples. He had felt the same dry throat and grumbling stomach. His patient teachings and answers had faced the same cutting hostility. Jesus, too, had seen his hard efforts seem to disappear like a drop in the lake. "**Come with me,**" he said, "Let's talk about this."

As true God, Jesus gave his tired disciples the perspective they needed. He saw clearly that their preaching efforts had not been wasted. He knew that their failures did not need to stick in their hearts or block the way to future victory. Jesus wanted to tell them it would turn out alright. "Come with me. I have something incredible to tell you. I have something amazing to show you—it will happen on a hill just outside of Jerusalem."

God's house still offers porch time 24/7, an inviting place to talk and listen and rest in his Word. Jesus feeds our tired souls with a look back at what he did for us on the cross on that hill just outside of Jerusalem. And he shows us the future in heaven that melts away our fears, aches, and frustrations. "**Come with me,**" Jesus says. What a sweet invitation!

“COME WITH ME TO A QUIET PLACE,” Jesus says. This is the time of the year when many of us take a vacation. Where do you like to go for vacation? Where is your ideal spot? Often we picture a quiet place in some remote area. That makes sense. After months of the grind and howl of traffic, the drone of offices and factories, the hustle of the marketplace, and the buzz of a home complete with at least three electronic devices in every room, quiet is a blessed change. Listen to the soft evening sounds in a state park. You can hear a mourning dove calling from the other side of the lake.

Sometimes, however, the silence may disturb us. In the dead of night, we hear only our breathing and a distant clock ticking—and maybe our consciences speaking to us. What we have done and said, or what we should have done and said, has been recorded by an inner device that plays the torture over and over again. Without Christ, our sins are loud in God’s ears as well, so loud that God doesn’t hear what else we say. Isaiah the prophet explained it like this: **“Your sins have hidden [God’s] face from you, so that he will not hear” (Is 59:2).**

But our Savior, Jesus, wants us to follow him to a quiet place so that we can listen carefully. We do need to listen to our consciences, but even more important, we need to hear the Savior. Over the roar of our sins, Jesus said things we need to hear—cries from the cross where he paid for all our sins. We need to hear his exaltation: I am “finished” with your sin, your death, and your hell. They are gone forever. He erased the record of sins and those inner recordings that so trouble us. That is a truly beautiful silence!

Treasure the quiet places where Jesus takes you. For example, worship services don’t have to be busy and entertaining to be effective. In a low-key service, Jesus may be giving you time to contemplate his **“gentle whisper” (1 Kings 19:12)**. Or take your private Bible reading. God’s Word doesn’t always reach out and grab you with truths that you will want to shout to the nations. Sometimes God is loud; other times he is the dove calling from across the lake. In the quiet you can hear his peace, peace between him and you because of Jesus, peace for all eternity. In this busy and loud world, take Jesus’ invitation to come with him to a quiet place and hear GOOD NEWS FOR TIRED SOULS, hear God’s words of forgiveness and new life to you. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Dear Creator, when you made the world, you made the seventh day to be a day of rest. You have created our bodies and minds to need times of refreshment. Be with us in our times of relaxation. Remind us to take time to appreciate the wonders of the world you made, and give us a renewed sense of awe and wonder at your creation. Let the time we spend together as a family be full of joy. Spare us from the troubles caused by sin. Let each person we meet feel the warmth of your love shining through us.

We join with the Martens family in thanking you for granting recovery to Ryanna from her serious illness. Once again, you have heard and answered our prayers in accordance with your will. Thank you, Lord, for allowing our Trinity church family to be your hands in offering support and comfort to the Martens family during this difficult time. What an awesome privilege you give us in that blessed task.

May we show that same support and comfort to Betty and Stacey Miller as they deal with Ron's death. Use us to remind them that you made Ron an heir of eternal life by Jesus' blood. Give them hope and peace in your sure promise of the resurrection. Let them find comfort in this quiet place with our Savior, who last evening said to Ron, "Come with me."

Give each of us true rest and peace that can only come from knowing Jesus as our Savior. Amen.