

East Durham Methodist Circuit:
On-line Service for 18th July 2021

Prepared by Peter Walsham and Ann Riding
Reader (video): Susan Pinkerton

Theme: Finding Rest in God

Call to worship:

Jesus said to his disciples: **“Come away and rest a while.”**

Come into the Lord’s presence now, away from the burdens and stresses of life.
Come with open arms, and receive the rest that Jesus offers – to restore our souls and equip us for whatever comes next.

O God you are our shepherd. Your care and compassion were shown in the life of Jesus.

We ask that this very day, we may experience the rest you offer, the peace that can restore and revive us and enable us to live the promised abundant life.

In Jesus name we pray.

Amen

Hymn: **Be Still** David J Evans

StF 20

1. Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
The Holy One is here;
Come bow before him now
With reverence and fear
In Him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
The Holy One is here.

2. Be still, for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire,
With splendour He is crowned:

How awesome is the sight
Our radiant King of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around.

3. Be still, for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place:
He comes to cleanse and heal,
To minister His grace -
No work too hard for Him.
In faith receive from Him.
Be still, for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place

Prayers of approach, adoration, confession and thanksgiving:

Prayer of Approach

God our loving Father, who gently guides and leads us, restore our souls today as we come to worship you. Let us not hurry, but sit at your feet, gazing upon your lovely face.

Prayer of Adoration

Jesus you are our Shepherd who makes us lie down beside still waters, who restores our souls. You anoint our heads with oil and our cup overflows. We worship and adore you

Prayer of Confession

Gracious Lord, you always make time for us. We are sorry we don't always make time for you. When we are rushing around being busy, sometimes even when we are doing your work, we forget about you.

We are sorry when we make our lives so full that there is no room left for you - no room to get away, to be in a quiet place with you.

Forgive us Lord and help us not to hurry but to slow down. Help us to get a right rhythm that is in tune with you

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Thank you Lord that you always have time for people. Even when you are tired and need a rest!

When the crowds gathered your compassionate heart healed and restored all those who came to you. Thank you that you are kind and caring and lavish your love upon us.

Your self-giving love has set us free to be the people you have called us to be. Thank you that you are present in the big and small things of our lives, in the ordinary and everyday times and in the extraordinary and special times.

You never leave us or forsake us.

Thank you, Lord.

Amen

Now we say together the prayer Jesus taught us:

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done - on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,
For ever and ever.**

Amen

Hymn: Hungry Kathryn Scott

1. Hungry, I come to You for I know You satisfy.
I am empty, but I know Your Love does not run dry.
So I wait for You, so I wait for You...

**I'm falling on my knees
Offering all of me
Jesus, You're all this heart is living
for**

2. Broken I run to You, for Your arms are opened wide.
I am weary, but I know Your touch

restores my life.
So I wait for You, so I wait for You...

I'm falling...

So I wait for You, so I wait for You
So I wait for You, so I wait for You
So I wait for You, so I wait for You

I'm falling...

Hungry, I come to You for I know You satisfy.

⁵ Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. ⁶ Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. ⁷ My salvation and my honour depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge.

⁸ Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

⁹ Surely the lowborn are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie. If weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath.

¹⁰ Do not trust in extortion or put vain hope in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them. ¹¹ One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard: "Power belongs to you, God, ¹² And with you, Lord, is unfailing love"; and "You reward everyone according to what they have done."

Prayers of Intercession:

We now pray for God's people and his world. Let us pray

We pray for people of other cultures who live among us
Thank you for the richness they can bring to our lives.

We pray for people who feel excluded for reasons of race, culture, colour or any thing that makes them feel "bad different" and not "good different"

We are all the same Lord, in your sight.

We pray for our fellow citizens of earth and heaven

We pray for countries at war, for the people who suffer, perhaps not even understanding what the fighting is about

We pray for those who are suffering from the results of natural disasters, those who are fighting heatwave caused, wildfires and those who fear for their lives

Bring them hope, Lord.

Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called the children of God

We pray for those who deliberately go into danger to negotiate for peace, and for our selves that we may bring God's peace to our neighbours

We pray for our fellow citizens of earth and heaven

We pray for new communities being built up around us

Housing estates, schools, churches, places of work and leisure

Bless them all Lord

We pray for our own community and those around us- for family and friends and our church families

Let us be there when they need us and our hearts when we are apart

We ask these prayers in the name of Jesus

Hymn: All to Jesus I surrender

Robin Mark

1. All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.

**I surrender all,
I surrender all.
All to Thee, my blessed Saviour,
I surrender all.**

2. All to Jesus I surrender,
Humbly at His feet I bow,
Worldly pleasures all forsaken;
Take me, Jesus, take me now.
I surrender all...

3. All to Jesus I surrender,
Make me, Saviour, wholly Thine;
Let me feel Thy Holy Spirit,
Truly know that Thou art mine.
I surrender all...

4. All to Jesus I surrender,
Lord, I give myself to Thee;
Fill me with Thy love and power,
Let Thy blessing fall on me.
I surrender all...

5. All to Jesus I surrender,
Now I feel the sacred flame.
Oh, the joy of full salvation!
Glory, glory to His name!
I surrender all...

Reflection: Mark 6: 30-34 & 53-56 Share the Word from Roots

'We had had a fantastic time telling people all the things Jesus had been teaching us. We had also been able to heal people, and the buzz of excitement about what was happening got better and better. You can imagine the noise when we got back to where Jesus was – all of us trying to tell him our bit of news, trying to get his approval and find out what had been happening to the others! And, at the same time, other people were arriving, asking to see him. And he was talking to them and healing them as well. It was...well, it was chaos – and we never even got round to preparing anything to eat!

'Fortunately, Jesus realised what was going on. And seeing how exhausted we all were, he suggested we got away from it all, and have some time to get our breath back. We thought we had managed to slip away by boat, across the lake. But somehow people had spotted us and ran round to the other side. They beat us to it. By the time we got to shore, there was already a crowd waiting. My heart sank. We needed some peace and quiet. But Jesus quoted that verse from the Book of Numbers to us: "They are just like sheep running about without a shepherd," and he just got on with teaching them – right up until it was too dark to see any more.

'The same thing happened when we got into the boat and went to Gennesaret. There was the crowd, waiting on the shore. Everywhere we went – towns, villages, out to the countryside – it was always the same. People begging him to heal their friends, their family – whoever they had brought. Some just asked if they could touch his cloak. And even they got better. It was a most exhausting time...but I wouldn't have missed it for the world.'

Message:

I'm sure you've all heard the saying '**No rest for the wicked!**' Have you ever been really exhausted from doing a difficult job or a time-consuming task? Can you remember what it felt like to finally put your feet up, or climb into bed, seeking rest and recuperation? Have you ever been torn between seeking your own self-interest and another's needs?

Achieving a healthy balance between work, rest and play, can be quite a struggle for some people.

When I was appointed deputy training manager for the NHS Northern Regional Health Authority's Operating Department Practice course, my senior colleague told me she was a 'workaholic!' and that I shouldn't try to copy her work ethic. She explained that unlike me, who had a wife and family to consider, she was single and lived alone, therefore her work often took precedence over everything else.

I think that in a lot of working environments you will find the odd 'workaholic', who hardly considers times of rest and recuperation.

In our New Testament reading from Mark, Jesus says this to his disciples, **"Come with me by yourselves, to a quiet place and get some rest."** So, they set off in a boat, across lake Galilee to find that restful place. This was following a very busy and stressful time for the disciples who'd been sent out, on mission, by Jesus, and they had just returned and were ready to report back to Jesus, when he realised, they were in need of rest.

The problem with setting out on lake Galilee was that it was surrounded by hills and if you stood on the higher ground, you could often predict where a boat could be heading. The crowd that had been gathering around Jesus, saw them depart and saw what direction they were headed in, and they quickly pursued them on foot so that when Jesus and the disciples arrived, the same crowd were waiting for them to disembark and begin ministering to them again.

'No rest for the wicked', one might say.

Two significant miracles then happened, which our reading doesn't cover, namely **5,000 people were fed with five loaves and two fish**. Then following this, Jesus sends his disciples out in the boat again without him because he needed to dismiss the crowd.

But then the second miracle is recorded as Jesus is **seen 'walking on the water'**, as he caught up with the disciples who were struggling to manage the boat in turbulent, stormy waters. And of course, as soon as they had reached the shore, another huge crowd were waiting for them, as the scripture says: **"They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was."**

We can easily picture this hectic scene, can't we? No time for any rest and recuperation! Jesus and the disciples must have felt absolutely exhausted!

I remember, many years ago whilst working in the operating theatre and having covered two 12 hour shifts over a very busy weekend of emergency operations. As I was leaving the hospital, at 9:00pm, exhausted and longing to get home and straight to bed, I was met by the on-call, consultant anaesthetist who was running back towards theatre.

I will never forget the brief, persuading conversation we had. **"You're not going home, are you?"** he said and when I confirmed I was, his reply was: **"Well I could really do with your help because we've a man coming to theatre immediately, who's been involved in a bad road traffic accident and he's critically ill and needs our urgent intervention. If we don't get him on the operating table soon, he'll die."**

So, how could I refuse? I turned around and quickly followed him back to the operating theatre, where for the next 6 hours, and during the early hours of the morning, relying on the adrenaline surge for energy, I helped to save this poor unfortunate man's life.

'No rest for the wicked!'

Except.... I did find rest, eventually, and because I'd been working through the night, I was told by my line manager, to go home and have a day's rest in lieu. And that day's rest was so peaceful. A blessing from God if you like!

So, how can we achieve a healthy balance between work, rest and play? Well, in Psalm 62 verse 5, we have the answer: **"Find rest, O my soul in God alone; my hope comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, He is my fortress, I shall not be shaken. He is my rock and my refuge."**

Then from verse 11: "One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard: that you, O God, are strong, and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done."

We can achieve a healthy balance between work, rest and play, by simply putting our trust in God's word. By seeking His presence in prayer, and by allowing His Spirit to administer His peace in our lives.

Jesus knows what it's like to be exhausted by a frantic workload. That's why he can say with confidence in Matthew's Gospel Ch11: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, 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"

In John's Gospel, Ch 10 verse 11, Jesus says: "I am the good shepherd." And, if we want to know what a good shepherd is, then look no further than Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd; I'll want for nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, leading me beside quiet waters and restoring my soul."

Jesus is the expert at leading us to these peaceful moments. And it's so important that we allow him to do this in our lives.

If and when we find life's work getting too much for us, ask Jesus to intervene. Ask him for this special peace he, and only he can offer. Ask him as your true shepherd, to lead you beside the still waters that you may be refreshed, find peace for your soul and restoration for your body.

Make sure you give yourself some quality time because without periodically re-charging your batteries, you are no good to anyone.

Amen

Hymn: **Psalm 23: The Lord's my Shepherd** Stuart Townend **StF 481**

1. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul.

**And I will trust in You alone,
And I will trust in You alone,
For Your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.**

2. He guides my ways in righteousness,
And He anoints my head with oil,
And my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on His pure delights.

And I will trust...

3. And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
For You are with me, and Your rod and
staff

Are the comfort I need to know.

And I will trust...

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.

Amen

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.

Amen