

*Mondovi: Our Savior's, Gilmanton & Montana: Salem United Methodist Churches  
7.5.2026, Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, Rev. Hyuntae Kim, Ph.D.*

## Rest in Me

Matt 11:16-19, 25-30

Let us pray: Lord, send your promised word, the word of life, into our hearts. Drive out every form of unbelief and anxiety. Grant us your faith so that we may enjoy your peace in you. In our Lord Jesus' name. Amen.

In verses 16 through 19, Jesus uses a children's game to describe the generation of his time. When children followed their parents to the marketplace, they would pass the time by pretending to hold weddings and funerals. In the wedding game, one child played the flute and others were supposed to dance. But if a child did not like the role they were given, they simply refused to dance no matter how much the flute was played. In the funeral game, when someone pretended to weep loudly, another child was supposed to beat their chest in mourning, but again, if they did not want to, they just would not do it.

Jesus says the people of that generation, including the religious leaders, were acting just like those children. They did not listen to the messages of John the Baptist or Jesus. Their only reaction was indifference.

When John came preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near," the people showed no real response. Instead, they nitpicked. "Why does he not eat anything? Why does he dress in camel's hair?" When Jesus came preaching the same message, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near," again they did not respond. Instead, they complained, "Why does he eat so much? Why does he spend time with sinners?" They were uninterested in the kingdom message itself, yet eager to criticize both John and Jesus for opposite reasons.

So Jesus concludes, "But wisdom is proved right by her deeds" (Matt 11:19, NIV). A person's wisdom is revealed by how they actually live. The people of that time believed they themselves were wise. Because of that, John's way and Jesus' way did not look wise to them, and they refused to follow.

Although we did not read verses 20 through 24, Jesus goes on to speak about the judgment that will come upon the cities that thought themselves wise and exalted, yet rejected the Messiah. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were filled with people who claimed to know and believe in God. Yet even when many mighty works were performed among them, they still refused to believe. Jesus says that if such works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, or

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even in Sodom, they would have repented. Through this contrast, Jesus is saying, "Do you see how blind and foolish you truly are?"

In verses 25 and 26, Jesus turns to the Father in prayer: "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do."

The "wise and learned" are the proud people of that generation who saw miracles and signs yet refused to receive Jesus. In contrast, the "little children" are those whom society considered simple or insignificant. I remember when I was in high school, some friends treated me as naïve simply because I believed in Jesus.

Believing in Jesus makes us like little children. Jesus himself said that unless we become like little children, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 18:3). Before we come to Christ, every person is bound by what they have learned and by their own wisdom. It is not that we were naturally innocent or humble enough to believe. Rather, there comes a moment when God, by his grace, makes us childlike so that we can believe. There is no other explanation except grace.

Before Peter recognized Jesus as the Messiah, he relied on his own experience and skill to catch fish. He worked through the night, but it was all in vain. Then Jesus stepped into his boat, taught the crowd, and afterward said, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Peter sensed the authority in Jesus' words. When he obeyed, he caught an overwhelming number of fish. In that moment, Peter realized he was a sinner. He saw his own foolishness (Luke 5:1-11). Before the Creator of heaven and earth, he became like a little child.

In verse 27, Jesus speaks again to the crowd: "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

From this, we learn that the Father has entrusted everything to the Son from eternity, and that he governs the universe through the Son. We also learn that the Father reveals himself to us through the Son. When we truly believe that the One who holds such authority, the Christ himself, dwells within those who believe, then rest comes to us.

That is why Jesus says in verse 28, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Life itself is full of toil and heavy burdens, but the greatest burden is religious distortion. Religion touches every part of life. People carry the weight of the systems they themselves create in order to secure happiness. Everyone believes in

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something. Even those who say there is no God are ultimately trusting in themselves. How exhausting it must be to live by one's own wisdom, like Peter before he met Jesus.

In verses 29 and 30, Jesus shows us how the rest he promises actually comes to us: "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 Israel, farmers placed a single yoke across two oxen when plowing the field. They paired a young, inexperienced ox with an older, seasoned one so that the younger could learn how to pull the plow. The yoke also became a metaphor in Jewish society for the particular way a rabbi taught the law to his disciples.

But the yoke of the religious leaders in Jesus' day did not lead people into God's righteousness. Instead, it trapped them in self-righteousness. The heavier their yoke became, the more burdensome life grew, and their sins remained unresolved. For example, the rabbis had established regulations stating that if you were carrying an object on the Sabbath, you couldn't move it more than 4 cubits, which is just about 6 feet. However, if you were completely unburdened, you were permitted to walk up to 2,000 cubits, just over half a mile. Imagine how exhausting it must have been to live under such constant anxiety.

The yoke of Jesus, however, is not heavy at all, because we bear it with One who is gentle and humble in heart. He carries the weight. He has already borne the yoke of the cross, carrying our sins, our sorrows, and even the burden of death and the grave. All we do is walk beneath his yoke, following his lead.

Let me share with you something that happened to a young man in Seoul several decades ago. He was not a believer. He had lost his parents early and grew up in hardship. At work, he suffered many injustices, and in the midst of it all, he developed tuberculosis or TB. His older brother had gambled away everything the family owned and disappeared. With nowhere else to go, the brother's wife and children came to stay with him. Already struggling with illness, he suddenly had more burdens placed on him, and he simply could not bear it. He constantly lashed out at his sister-in-law and the children.

During that time, his sister-in-law quietly and secretly began attending church because the young man despised Christianity. She went to Sunday worship and even to early morning prayer every day.

One morning, he woke up coughing blood. He looked around for paper to spit into and found a book. He tore a piece off and realized it was a Bible. His sister-in-law had placed it by his bedside, praying that he would read it and come to faith. Rage surged within him, and

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he spat onto the torn page. But right where his blood landed, he saw the words of Matthew 11:28: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

He thought, "Look at this. Everyone else in this world tells people who are burdened and exhausted to go away. My life is already miserable, and now my sister-in-law and her children have become another burden to me. Who is this One who says such words?" He read further and realized it was Jesus.

He said to himself, "I have nothing to lose. Let me try asking him to carry my burden." For the first time in his life, he knelt down and prayed. "Who are you? Will you really take responsibility for those who are weary and burdened? Take responsibility for my life, for my runaway brother, for my troublesome sister-in-law and her children. Do not just say it. Do it. Right now."

He wept and cried out, "My life is a mess. Jesus, who are you? If your words are true, then take responsibility." And the Holy Spirit seemed to come upon him. He had begun praying in the morning, but when he finished, it was already late afternoon. His face was covered with tears, but his heart was filled with fire, peace, and joy.

He stood up, took the streetcar to the Han River, and looked out over the reeds along the riverbank. He thought, "How can the world be this beautiful? Did I die and go to heaven?" He prayed, "Thank you, Jesus," and went home.

When he arrived, his sister-in-law and the children were pale with fear. They had seen the torn Bible and the blood-stained page and were terrified that he would throw them out. But when he saw them, compassion and gratitude welled up in him. He embraced them and told them what had happened. He knew he had been healed, and later he became a pastor. His brother eventually returned as well, and the whole family was restored.

Beloved, may you daily experience rest under the Lord's yoke, lighter than a feather. Amen.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, we lift up to you all the troubles we have faced, all the sorrows we have carried, and every burden we have borne. Under your yoke, help us find that everything becomes light and easy. Grant us the righteousness, peace, and joy of your kingdom in the Holy Spirit. We pray through you, our gentle and humble Lord Jesus. Amen.