

DAY 22

REST



Matthew 11:28

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

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I don't think I can count the number of times I've pointed out the obvious fact of how fast-paced our world has become. And at the risk of preachers hyperbole, I believe it is one of the top issues facing our spiritual formation today.

It is hard to attend to the presence of God when our pace of life rushes beyond the

moment. But maybe the most challenging side-effect of the pace of life is sheer exhaustion. Most of us know what it means to be fatigued. We feel in our bodies; we feel the weight and heaviness of our daily grind. Fatigue ambushes us when we work too hard, when we get up too early, and go to bed too late—trying to balance too many demands.

It sets in with the daily 9-5, the folding of the 200th load of laundry, or the dry monotony of another round of dishes. I have often begrudgingly joked that all parenting is, is feeding kids and sweeping their mess, then feeding them again.

Life is exhausting. And on top of all of that, you layer Corona Virus and the cultural pressures we are all feeling at many levels, and it is no wonder that our souls are skittish in the presence of quiet.

This exhaustion that we all seem to face, and at times wear as a badge of honor, is often our own doing. It is the result of trying to live beyond our means. We are finite creatures that live on a finite amount of resources of energy. Our exhaustion is a sign that we are trying to live beyond our physical, emotional, and spiritual limits. Ultimately, this was Adam's demise in the story of the fall; Adam was trying to live beyond his limitations. God plants them both in the garden and with everything available to them with the exception of the two trees, and Adam and Eve buy into the myth that they can live beyond their limitations. May I suggest that our, that my, overloaded schedules, and packed to-do lists are merely reappearances of us trying to live beyond our limitations?

Our souls are not meant to bear the weight of what our modern world puts on them. We are not created to live beyond those limitations. And our exhaustion points to this.

But what breaks through this cycle of exhaustion is this invitation from Jesus, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” - Matthew 11.28

“In the midst of our daily slog, Jesus wants to gift us with rest. Jesus knows the importance God places on rest. After all, not only did God model rest in the creation story, but God also demands we rest too.” - Trevor Hudson

There are various ingredients that comprise rest. It includes sabbath, slowing, stopping from work, sleep, joyful experiences. The invitation to Jesus is to recognize our limitations and learn to thrive from within them. Because the offer of rest is to us all, it is to enter into Jesus' rhythm of life and embrace the rest that is promised to us. A rest that regenerates our weary hearts and our weary souls. Rest that allows us to embrace the presence of God in the here-and-now. May we learn to experience this rest.

Daily Practice

Memorize today's verse and repeat it often as you go about your daily work. Go to sleep at a reasonable time tonight and receive your night's rest as a gift from God.

The below reflections are written by congregants & staff of CPC. All reflections are following Trevor Hudson's book Pauses for Lent and are both heavily influenced and borrowed from his work. Any quotes without attribution should be credited to him.