

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and **rest a while.**” For many were coming and going, and they had **no leisure even to eat.**

And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw **a great crowd**; and he had compassion for them, because **they were like sheep without a shepherd**; and he began to teach them many things.

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to **bring the sick on mats** to wherever they heard he was.

And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might **touch even the fringe of his cloak**; and all who touched it were **healed.**

The Gospel of the Lord.

“Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.”

Rest.

We all need it and we never seem to have enough of it. We have things to do, places to be, and people to see. When I was teaching full time, every minute of my day was taken. I was so efficient with my time. If I had an extra 10 minutes to spare, I would find something to do so I didn't waste that extra minute!

I noticed that since I retired, I've become complacent with my time. Our lawn is becoming overgrown with weeds and the cars aren't washed. I have more time and less things to do, but I think after working for 30 years, Jesus is telling me to “rest a while.”

Sometimes in our life, many of us struggle with the feeling of being completely worn out, overwhelmed, and helpless.

Simple things can become difficult.

Our bodies become tired.

As Christians we often think that we need to do more and more to be pleasing to God and to please others. We live our lives striving to meet expectations at home, work, and yes, even at church.

God didn't make a mistake when he mandated one day a week for rest.

Looking back just two decades, Americans now work 164 more hours per year. As a culture, we see productivity as the ultimate virtue and idleness as weakness or a character defect.

But we need to find rest, spiritually, emotionally, and physically. I have four ways for us to start:

The first thing is *to play*.

Put away your cellphone or laptop. Replace time in front of the t.v. with real people, face to face. See a friend. Walk around outside. Look up at the sky and see pictures in the clouds.

Remember what you did for fun when you were a kid? Did you love to draw? Did you like playing in the rain? The list is never-ending. Take some time to remember what really makes you happy and brings you joy.

Play and fun energize us and provide us with a life worth living. Play takes us out of our analyzing, worrying, paranoid, and overthinking minds. It takes us away from being overly focused on the past, or worrying about the future. It keeps us in the moment. It makes us enjoy what is happening to us now.

We often feel guilty when we play, but it is truly essential to our health and happiness.

We need to laugh.

We need to enjoy all the things we have worked so hard to attain.

The second thing is to say thank you.

Like happiness, being thankful and more positive in our everyday life can be contagious. Thank a stranger. Thank someone you love. Even thank someone that annoys you.

And be sure to thank God everyday.

The third thing is to take care of ourselves.

Jesus said yes many times, but he also said no many times. When the demands on Him became too great and he found himself physically and spiritually exhausted, he withdrew to a private place. He knew he needed time to stop, reflect, pray, and nourish his inner life.

So take care of yourself first, so you can take care of others. It is that simple.

We cannot take care of everyone, all the time, every day and every night, week after week, month after month. If we don't rest, we won't be able to take care of others. If we don't slow down, we will be of no use to anyone, especially God.

The fourth thing is to accept what is.

I'll never be a millionaire. I'll never look like I did when I was 21. It's very difficult, but I need to accept that.

Your perception is your reality. If you look around you and everything is wonderful but you remain unhappy and unfulfilled, then the problem may lie within you, with how you think or perceive your life.

Accept the good and the bad in you. We all can be nice, we all can be mean. We get angry, we can be judgmental, and we can be kind. Accept all facets of yourself. God will still love you. Give yourself permission to enjoy your life, to be happy. You deserve it!

God's plan does not include overwork, stress, worry, and anxiety. His plan for us is the opposite of that! He begs us to trust Him and rest in Him.

He wants us to experience joy in our lives and relationships.

He asks us to slow down and take time for Him in prayer.

He set the example for slowing down and getting away from the crowds when he was tired.

He wants us to begin to experience the joy of His love and salvation, not when we get to heaven, but now, here, today.

So what should you do today, tomorrow, and all the days after to renew your minds, your bodies, and your faith?

Rest.

Amen