

## Blessed Is The Man Who Sleeps In Church

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**Matthew 11:25-30** <sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. <sup>26</sup> "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. <sup>27</sup> "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*. <sup>28</sup> "Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> "For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light."

Earlier this week I had to make some pocket joints. I knew before I even started that I needed a new pocket hole jig and that I didn't have the right type of screw. But Menard's is 25 minutes away, and I thought I'll just make it work with these screws I have rather than drive I get the right tool and screw.

After I put 10 different holes in one board and split it, I finally gave up and drove to Menard's. With the right tool and the right screws, it was easy to finish up and move on with my day.

Jesus warns of something similar in our text. He can see the people all around him working hard to make do without the right tool. They are trying vainly to do it themselves, to find their way to God by their own hard work. They are seeking peace and a clean conscience, but they won't ever achieve it without the Jesus. They would rather make do with what they have than go to Jesus and receive true rest.

Come to me Jesus says then only can you find the Father and finally have rest.

Blessed is the man who sleeps in church. Maybe we shouldn't actually sleep in church as the theme suggest, but it is clear that Jesus encourages us to find rest in him. Those who come to church seeking rest in Jesus receive a far better rest than those who stay at home and sleep in.

True rest always begins with Jesus.

The mistake I made was thinking it would be faster to make do rather than to drive over and get the right tool. There are I'm sure better carpenters than me that could probably do it without the pocket jig, but even they can probably do it faster with the right tool.

We often make the mistake of thinking that our beds or our armchairs are a better source of rest than driving to church. We think we can make do rather than get up and drive to church. It's true that beds give us physical rest whereas church gives us spiritual, but the bible leaves no doubt which is more beneficial.

The prophet Isaiah reminds us:

**Isa 55:2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.**

Why do you waste your time and energy seeking physical rest? You will not find rest for your body until your soul is at peace with God. But on the other hand, when your soul is at peace your body too will be rested.

Martin Luther is quoted as saying:

“I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.”

This seems counterintuitive to us. We assume that if we are tired, we need to sleep in. Jesus assures us that the rest we receive in him is better than the rest we receive on our pillows. The more we have to do the more important it is that we start with rest in Jesus.

Jesus reminds us:

**Mat 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.**

Those who spend their time and energy seeking earthly food and money will never be satisfied. Those who seek spiritually gifts from Christ will be full. Those who seek physical rest will never have enough. Those who seek spiritual rest in Jesus will never lack.

We often make the same mistake I made earlier this week. I thought I didn't have time to drive to Menards, when in fact it wasn't until I drove to Menards that I was able to get anything done. The truth wasn't I didn't have time to not drive to Menards. We often think I don't have time for prayer and devotion, when in fact it's not until we take the time to rest in Christ that we get anything done. We don't have time not to come to Jesus.

True rest is cleanliness in Christ.

Later that same night after finishing the project, I was tired, dirty and a little sweaty. There was a small corner of my mind that was thinking I'm too tired to shower, just go to bed and worry about it in the morning. Besides not wanting to get the bed dirty, I also knew that I would not sleep well until I was clean.

It is hard to get real rest until you are clean. It is harder still to get any real rest until you are spiritually clean.

This is why Jesus says, “Come to me and I will give you rest.”

It is impossible to rest with guilt and sin nagging at your conscience. Jesus is the only one who can cleanse you.

**Psalm 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.**

The prophet David reminds us that the one who has his sin washed away is blessed by the Lord.

This blessedness is seen in the life of Jacob. Jacob's uncle Laban kept changing Jacob's wages. He would tell him he can have the stripped lambs. Then he would tell him he can have all the spotted lambs. No

matter what Jacob's wagers were that is how the lambs were born. God walked with Jacob and whatever Jacob did it prospered. This is the blessedness that David is speaking about.

When we are blessed by God we don't have to worry about what we will eat or where we will sleep. God is with us to give us all that we need and more. This blessedness is given to those who are washed of their sins in Jesus.

Without forgiveness, every time a bad thing happens one would have to wonder if God is punishing me. With forgiveness we are confident that we walk in God's blessedness. We walk with God without fear and without worry. Because we are forgiven in Christ, we know that whatever happens God will bring good out of it and bless us through it.

This is true even when dealing with the consequences of our own sin. If someone sins openly, fornication, theft, perjury etc, that sin might have difficult consequences, unwanted pregnancy, prison etc. The one who has confessed their sin and received absolution from Christ himself is blessed. That one can accept such difficulties knowing that the Lord will bless them and bring good out of it.

That is the joy of forgiveness, not that the consequences of all sin are gone, but that the Lord is with you despite the sin and will bless you as he blessed Jacob.

True rest is knowing that Lord is with me because he has forgiven my sin.

Jacob slept one night with a rock for a pillow. That doesn't sound like a very comfortable night's sleep. Nevertheless, he received that night the promise that God would be with him. That promise is rest far exceeding anything the softest bed in the world can give you. We need to be less concerned about our pillows and more concerned about prayers. Nothing we can do on our own will give us rest, but Jesus offers it freely. Amen