

September 2021

I may be romanticizing a bit, but seems as if summertime actually use to afford the time of sweet rest. Summer days waned longer as we milked the sun for all it was worth out in the yard or on the beach. To catch a sunset was a priority and eating watermelon on the porch was a staple. Conversation with friends lingered into the cool of the evening and a week or two spent with family was a highlight that children would write about when they returned to school in the fall.

I fear that we are losing the ability to do this. The feeling of loneliness and anxiety are on the rise. This past year or so hasn't helped. We have taken up computer screens and phone screens to try and find solitude but with no avail. Screens, by nature, are distracting and with increased use over the past year and half we have seen the increase of mental health problems (which certainly is also attributed to remaining distant from others, among other things). Where are the sunsets, times of quiet reflection, beach days, mutual conversation, and exercising our imaginations by gazing at the clouds? The extended family is divided politically so there is no reunion. Rest seems hard to find even in the summer.

This is not good. To not have rest. In fact, rest is so important that God has woven it into creation itself and has even given us Christians His command:

And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done. (Genesis 2:2-3)

Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy. (Exodus 20:8; Third Commandment)

Jesus said, Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)

We need the rest that Jesus provides. We were meant for it even before the fall into sin. We need, more than ever, the peace which passes all understanding and the hope and comfort that eternal life with Christ is ours by His all availing sacrifice. We need the rest in our soul that Jesus has defeated death which means that death need not be avoided by us at all costs because Jesus has won the victory.

This also means that we need the Church's worship more than ever. To be gathered in the Divine Service is to be transported out of loneliness - to be with real people who need us and we them around the gifts of God which endure. Not just images on screen, but real people united by the Spirit in the Redeemer's image restored by forgiveness, joined by grace, and refreshed in the Supper which cleanses, gives us rest, and strengthens faith.

Turn off the screen for a while. Walk with friends. Watch a sunset. Eat watermelon on the porch. But most importantly: come to church. Rest as it has been given to you - in the pew, around the altar, and with your brothers and sisters in Christ. You are a child of God and He knows to provide rest like no other. That's why it's His Service and why we call it Divine.

Peace to you in Christ,
Pastor Suggitt

LIFE QUOTES

“God has taken away your sins. He has changed your heart. He gives you the ability to put yourself last so that you can humbly serve others. That’s greatness and a great life in God’s eyes. That humble serving attitude values and serves every life whether that life is a few cells old or a gene short of worldly greatness.”

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