

# Rest

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 09 November 2014

Preacher: Chris Coleman

[ 0 : 00 ] This morning, I want to apologize again.

You might see Exodus chapter 11 in your bulletin.! I'm not going to preach from that. I was fully intending to preach from it and studying to preach from it.

! And you may know that it's about the Passover and the eventual angel of death. It seemed not fitting to preach it.

And so, I kind of transitioned from that on Thursday when we heard the news.

And I know it's selfish because there's many people who struggle, many people whose lives are touched by cancer. Jonathan's been dealing with it in his family for some time now.

[ 1 : 05 ] And so, I know that it's selfish that it now comes home to me. And I find it difficult to handle emotion.

I'm not a very emotional guy. You can ask my wife. And so, there's some difficult emotions and I don't understand them. And so, I began to search the scripture for some insight on pain and suffering.

And I listened to some fantastic sermons by some amazing preachers who have suffered well. And I read some fantastic passages of some amazing biblical characters who suffered well.

And I don't know that a 29-year-old who really hasn't suffered much, apart from his stupid decisions, I don't know that I have anything to add on pain and suffering.

And so, Thursday night, I was at somewhat of a loss. And I was like, God, I don't know what to do, what to preach on. And I almost called Tom.

[ 2 : 06 ] I was like, hey, you got a sermon in your back pocket? He always told me. He always told me, Chris, I've got a sermon in my back pocket. If you ever need one. And so, I began to just rest.

Rest in God. And as I thought about pain, so much has been said about the reality and the usefulness of pain and suffering. C.S. Lewis actually wrote an entire book on it.

And he said it well, and he said, we can ignore even pleasure, but pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains.

It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world, and I agree. And I have kind of a mental assent to that, but my heart's really just not there. To be completely transparent and honest with you.

And so, as I began to rest in Jesus Christ, and rest in his comfort, in his sovereignty, I was just pulled to a verse, a passage.

[ 3 : 12 ] You can turn there, Matthew chapter 11, verse 28. And God just reminded me that pain and suffering are not the only realities for Christians.

I think probably most Americans are aware that they're not the only realities for us. But there's another reality and another promise that's not any less important.

It's not any less spoken of in Scripture. It's spoken of quite often. So let me read. Starting in verse 28, it says this, And Jesus said, And so this morning, I'd like to just flip the script, not talk about exodus or pain and suffering, but to talk about rest.

And the faithful God who gives it, who promises it, who offers it freely to us. It is a promise. And so I want to work from that premise that rest is as real and essential to believers as pain and suffering.

And so I wonder why some of us, I know why I am, but why some of us are so tired. Why do we settle for the physical and mental and spiritual fatigue?

[ 4 : 49 ] And can we change that? And so first of all, I'd like to consider that rest is important. Rest is important. Now, I don't know how many musicians we have in this room, but musicians especially should know that rest is important.

It was Mrs. Charles Cowman said this, She says, There is no music in a rest, but there is the making of music in it. In our whole life melody, the music is broken off here and there by rests, and

we foolishly think we come to the end of the tune.

God sends a time of forced leisure, sickness, disappointed plans, frustrated efforts, and makes a sudden pause in the choral hymn of our lives. And we lament that our voices must be silent, and our part is missing in the music whichever goes up to the ear of the Creator.

How does the musician read the rest? See him beat the time with unvarying count, and catch up the next note true and steady, as if no breaking place had come in between.

Not without design does God write the music of our lives, be it ours to learn the tune, and not be dismayed at the rests. They are not to be slurred over, not to be omitted, not to destroy the melody, not to change the keynote.

[ 6 : 07 ] If we sadly say to ourselves, there is no music in rest, let us not forget, there is the making of music in it. If you're a musician, you understand the importance of rest.

Without rest, music is really just noise. There is a time and a place in every piece, where we must rest. And I think there's this wonderful legend about the great apostle John, and no, it's probably not true, but I love legends, and I love legends about the apostles, and about ancient Israel, and I just, you know, it's not, you know, obviously, the inspired word of God.

But it is beautiful. The apostle John, in his old age, was said to have a bird, a pet bird, a tame bird, that he cared for deeply.

He cherished it, and he would amuse himself throughout the day by feeding, and playing with this bird. And a huntsman came along one day, and he had his bow and arrows, and he was just surprised.

It's like, here's the great apostle John. You know, could he not be doing better things than playing with this silly bird? And so he took it upon himself to ask him, listen, is there not important work?

[ 7 : 23 ] Is there not theology? Is there not writing to the churches that you could be doing? And so John looks at him, and he says this, he said, do you always keep your bow bent?

And the hunter is like, well, no. To keep a bow bent all the time would render it useless it would become sprung, and it could no longer shoot arrows accurately or at any distance.

And so no, of course not, I would not keep my bow bent. It would be rendered useless. And John replied, he says, if you unbend your bow to prevent its being useless, so do I unbend my mind for the same reason.

John understood rest, unbending his mind. It says this, Jeremiah 31, 25, for I have given rest to the weary and joy to the sorrowing.

Sorry, not Joe. Joy to the sorrowing. If you read farther than that verse, Jeremiah like wakes up at that point. It's this dream that God's speaking to him and he's like, and then I woke up and I was satisfied.

[ 8 : 31 ] I had slept well. He gives rest. God gives rest. The rest that we need as his children. Rest is important. But beyond important, rest is worthy of attention.

You know, rest doesn't always come easily. Especially if you're a professional. You understand that like life and work and family can really rob you of rest at times.

And you have to make time for rest. And so rest is worth our attention. I'm reminded, two years ago when Tony and I moved here, we traveled to Owosso, the great city of Owosso, because that's where you go when you want to do something.

Because there's not a lot to do in Bartlesville. And so off to Owosso we go and I'm driving and we do whatever we did, shopping, something, probably eight.

And it was getting dark and I was like, all right, let's go home. And so we jump in the car and I make a turn towards, to get to Highway 75 so we can go home.

[ 9 : 37 ] And I hear my wonderful wife, she's like, that's not the right way. Now I know none of you men understand what I'm talking about, but as a man I generally do not have a great sense of direction.

I don't know if y'all are in that same boat. I'm assuming y'all are. And so I do not have a great sense of direction. The Army was very difficult when we did land nav because I got lost a lot.

And so Tony's like, it's not the way. I was like, Tony, you, you just moved here too. Right? This is the way.

I turned this way to get here. I'm turning this way to get home. And long story short, my wife is right. We were lost. We were very lost.

I found the airport, which I don't think is in Owosso. And so I found the airport in this 35 minute or so drive home turned into well over an hour.

[ 10 : 35 ] And she did not handle it gracefully. She laughed at me and rubbed it in that she was right. But you know what? I had the opportunity to pay attention. I could have stopped.

I could have thought about where I was going. I could have taken some advice. But instead, I just forged it onward. I'm going to get to this home.

This is the right way. And sometimes rest is worthy of attention. It is not always evident. It is not always immediate.

I love this in Jeremiah chapter 6. This is what God says to Israel. He says, this is what the Lord says. Stop at the crossroads and look around.

Ask for the old godly way and walk in it. Travel its path and you will find rest for your souls. It's not always evident.

[ 11 : 35 ] And really, if you really kind of look deeply into what this passage is saying, it's very specific. What it's talking about at that crossroad, it literally means stop.

Look. You've got this way and you've got this way. Consider it. Weigh the advantages. Think about where you're going.

And then, as it goes on, it says, ask for the old way. Again, literally means to ask somebody. I had not read this verse when I got Tony lost in Owosso.

But ask for the old way. It's not always evident. It's not always immediate. It is not obvious. So you ask for the old way, the godly way, and then you walk in it.

And then, God will give you rest for your souls. And so, rest is worth our attention. It's worth spending time on.

[ 12 : 35 ] It's worth getting it right. But rest is fragile too. You know, even when we do find it, we can often destroy our rest.

I don't know, sometimes, as families, we show up on Sundays and we're happy. Oh, Sunday church. And we try and put this face on that disguises the fact that maybe you and your wife fought the whole way to church or maybe your kids were in the back seat fighting all the way to church. you know, rest can be destroyed. This day of rest this Sunday, it can be destroyed by a lot of things. But, rest can be destroyed especially by doubt.

Doubt can be destructive to rest. There's a story of Oliver Cromwell. He sent a messenger across the English Channel to do what messengers do to carry a message.

And before this messenger embarked on the journey across the channel, he stayed at a small seaport town while they waited on their ship. And he got a room there in an inn.

[ 13 : 42 ] And in that day, you know, your servant would travel with you and they would sleep in that room with you. And so the servant's there on the floor and the messenger's there in bed. And night came and the messenger's just tossing and turning.

He had no rest. He couldn't get to sleep. The servant there on the floor is just sound asleep, resting peacefully. And so finally, all this tossing and turning of the messenger wakes the servant up and the servant's like, Master, can you not sleep?

Is there something wrong? Is there something that troubles you? And so the messenger says to him, he says, I'm so afraid that something will go wrong with our passage in the morning.

And so the servant says, may I ask you a question? Okay. Ask. And he says, did God rule the world before you were born?

Which the messenger replied, well, of course. The servant says, well, will God rule the world when you are dead? Again, the messenger, yes, of course he will. So the servant replies to him, he says, then Master, why not let him rule the present as well?

[ 14 : 57 ] And he was struck by the wisdom of that. Sudden peace came over him and pretty soon they were both sleeping soundly. Doubt, fear of the unknown can destroy rest.

Have you ever lost sleep because of worry? I'm sure, I'm sure no one here, only me. All right. You lost sleep because you were worried, because you were afraid, because you were, I'll tell you what, I, before every youth event, I get about two hours of sleep because I'm just thinking of what can go wrong.

Is the van going to break down again? I'm afraid. I have doubts. I have fears.

Like, did I think of everything? Did I pack everything? Do we have enough food? Is Wesley going to eat all the cookies again? Sorry, Wesley. Or Dawson.

He eats cookies too. You know, in basic training, I slept, like, 16 and a half weeks of basic training, advanced training, I slept so well.

[16:04] Like, my head would hit that pillow. We're talking like a mattress with some really terrible springs under it. It's like one of those vinyl mattresses. They're about that thick and you jump in bed and like you sink in.

It's more like a hammock than a mattress. Some of y'all understand. You understand what I'm talking about. But I slept so well. My back never hurt. Sleep through the night. Never woke up until the drill sergeant came in and started throwing stuff at you. And I always thought that it was because of exhaustion because you do a lot in basic training. You do a lot in advanced infantry training. And I always thought it was because of exhaustion that I would sleep so well and so soundly.

And, but after I was out, I realized as I began to not sleep well and so soundly that the reason I slept well in basic training was not because I was so tired because I think all of you know that exhaustion itself can keep you awake at times.

You're just too tired to sleep. It was not that. It was because I didn't worry about anything. I mean, you think about it. I woke up at 4.30. I was doing PT at 5.

[17:09] I was eating breakfast at 7 or 8. I trained until lunch. Then I trained until dinner. Then I trained until we went back to the barracks. We cleaned and we went to bed.

That was every day with a few variations. I don't have to worry a thing. Like, my every day for 16 and a half weeks was planned out for me.

There was no worry and it was no wonder that I slept so well. There's a passage in Isaiah that says, Have you never heard? Have you never understood?

The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of His understanding. He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.

Even youths will become weak and tired and young men will fall in exhaustion but those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles.

[18:08] They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. Trust. Trust. Doubt can destroy rest.

Trust is fundamental to rest. You cannot rest if you cannot trust. And so is your lack of rest as a believer, is it due to unbelief?

Do you not believe in the sovereignty of God? Do you not believe in His plan in the future that He has already considered, already planned out?

Do you not believe in His goodness and His grace and His mercy? Is that what robs you of your rest, your lack of trust? But I want to point out one other thing in this passage.

Don't think that that rest has some sort of timetable. You know, maybe you're young and you're building a career or you're focused on school and you think, you know, well, I'll rest eventually.

[19:14] You know, when I'm old and retired or when I have more time, then I'll rest. Because He doesn't give a timetable. He says this in verse 30 there in Isaiah 40, even youths will become weak and tired and young men will fall in exhaustion.

Rest is not for people who are older. Rest is not for people who suddenly find time for it. Rest is necessary. Your youth does not exempt you from the need of rest.

But I want to go back to Matthew 28. I hope you're still, or Matthew 11, sorry, verse 28. I hope you're still there. I want to kind of tease a little bit of more meaning out of this. This is where I've been just sitting in my own life.

Matthew 28, I'm going to read that again. It says, Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. This is a question I ask myself, and I would hope you would too, any time you read the scripture.

You should ask why. Why are things being said? Why is it written this way? I'll just read it blindly. All right, did my reading for the day. What do you think those burdens were?

[20:30] Why do you think Israel was weary? Well, hopefully you understand that the context is the message. And really, he says that if you look ahead in chapter 12, I'm just going to read the first couple of lines of chapter 12 and we'll get to it pretty quickly.

At about that time, Jesus was walking through some grain fields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, so they began breaking off some heads of grain and eating them, but some Pharisees.

That's really as far as you need to go to understand why the people of Israel were burdened and weary. They had had so many unbiblical laws heaped on them.

They had so many barriers that these Pharisees, these quintessential bad guys of the New Testament, had placed between them and their God. They were burdened by it, burdened by legalism, weary from it.

And so when Jesus says, come to me you who are heavy burdened, you who are weary, and I will give you rest. Those are the burdens he's talking about. Now, not that we don't have Pharisees today, we certainly do.

[ 21 : 48 ] None in our church, of course. But they are there, there are Pharisees there, and so maybe that's not your burden, but you have been set free as a believer.

You do have rest as a believer. Paul says in Galatians 5, 1, it is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by the yoke of slavery.

We have been set free. That rest comes from that freedom. we live and breathe and exist in the grace of Jesus Christ.

And we should rest in that. You can't rest if you're not free. How's the old song go? Well, there ain't no rest for the wicked.

No rest for the wicked. You cannot rest if you are not free. And so what burdens You? Are you burdened like the people of Israel? Are you burdened by legalism? By rules that you don't find anywhere in the Bible?

[ 22 : 57 ] Are you burdened by that? Are you burdened by unbelief? Are you burdened by a guilt or an addiction that you've been carrying? What burdens you?

What is that barrier between you and rest? Jesus put it this way in John 8 36 So if the Son sets you free you are truly free.

Have you been set free? I ask you that. And can you rest because of that freedom? I hope so.

And there's one last passage I'd like to look at in Revelation 21 4 and this is less about rest. It may not name it directly here but I think it carries weight.

rest. And obviously the end result of this passage will be rest. It says this you will wipe away every tear from their eyes and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain.

[ 24 : 05 ] All these things are gone forever and so if you worry and if fear and doubt have somehow robbed you of your rest and maybe right now God is just not God of the present for you.

Maybe there's some people out there who are struggling with that. Make no mistake that God is the God of the future. Now he's the God of the present too whether you give any assent to that or not but he is the God of the future and he has there will be no more pain no more sorrow he's going to make everything right everything that was good and glorious and perfect at the beginning of time will be made good and glorious and perfect at the end of it the whole conclusion to this is rest rest and bask in the greatness and glory of God for all eternity and so I encourage you this morning if nothing else rest in the future rest in the hope that he will make all things good he will make all things just and righteous

I encourage you this morning from my own heart something that I am holding to now rest do not neglect it look for it discover it claim the promise of rest it is important it is effective it is necessary let's pray Lord I thank you for your rest thank you for your goodness and your mercy I pray that anybody who needs that would find it they would search for it with all their might that they would stand at the crossroads and ask for the old way the good way and they would find rest for their souls Lord I pray for all the families in here that are touched by pain and suffering right now which would in some way be all of us that you would just encourage and heal and lift up and give us rest this you are also in the

I pray amen let's tend and sing this morning take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to! thee take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love at the impulse of thy love take take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee take my voice and let me sing always only for my king always only for my king take my silver and my gold not a might would I withhold take my moments and my days let them flow in ceaseless praise let them flow in ceaseless praise thank you chris always got to do announcements some reminders for you the christmas parade is coming up and if you would like to be involved in that there's two ways two opportunities for you first and foremost there is a work day this saturday we didn't get in the bulletin because i forgot but this saturday from nine to twelve we're going to be working on the float and so if you can come by we're going!

[ 29 : 44 ] ! so! to one go to go! to go! to! to! make sure we have everybody's correct information before we reprint it again this coming year all right well it's good to be with you this morning let's close in song behold our God seated on his throne come let us adore him behold our king nothing can compare come let us adore him you're dismissed