

## The Key to Getting Enough Rest Matthew 11:25-30

Our text for the day is a perfect one for a holiday weekend when we get some time off to rest and relax. It reminds me of a woman who opened her refrigerator one day and saw a rabbit sitting on one of the shelves. "What are you doing in there?" she asked.

The rabbit replied: "This is a Westinghouse, isn't it?"

The woman replied, "Yes."

"Well," said the rabbit, "I'm westing."

READ MATTHEW 11:25-30

That is a promise that many of us need to hear. We're tired . . . for many reasons.

**Some of us are tired because we work too hard.** *Time* magazine reminds us that back in the 60s, expert testimony was given to a Senate sub-committee on time management. These experts predicted that advances in technology would radically change how many hours a week people work.

They forecast that the average American would be working 22 hours a week within 20 years. "The great challenge," these experts said, "will be figuring out what to do with all the excess time." Well, it's been about fifty years since those experts testified. How are you doing with all that excess time on your hands?

We've made an idol out of busy-ness, and because of that we're tired. Some of us are tired because we work too hard.

**Some of us are tired because we worry too much.** To a great extent, much of the fatigue we experience is mental. Our body feels tired not because our bodies have been too active, but because our thoughts have been in overdrive dealing with fear, anxiety and stress.

Most of us don't have jobs that put a lot of physical stress on us, but mental and emotional stress are another thing. Worry and stress are killers. Gordon MacDonald once noted that no man ever collapsed because of the burdens of the day; it's when the burdens of tomorrow are added to the cares of today that a person begins to sink.

Have you ever noticed that people who have a great mental attitude seem to have more energy than those who have a dour attitude toward life? It's true.

Look at Tommy Lasorda, the long-time manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers. He used to tell a story from his younger days when he managed in the minor leagues and his team lost seven straight games. About that time the sports writers across the country had voted to select the greatest major league team in the history of baseball. By a vast majority vote the honor went to the 1927 Yankees.

Defeated and exhausted from their consecutive losses, Lasorda's team headed for the locker room. A few minutes later he walked in and found all the players sitting around, dejected, with their heads down. "Hey, get your heads up." Tom Lasorda yelled. "I don't ever want to see you fellows with your heads down again. Just because you lost seven games doesn't mean you're not a great team.

You're going to start winning! As you know, according to a recent poll, the greatest team to ever play in the major leagues was the Yankees in 1927. And they lost nine straight games!"

Suddenly heads went up and expressions changed. It was the turning point. The team started winning, and by the end of the season they were the champions. Hearing about this story a few days later his wife asked, "Tommy, are you sure the Yankees lost nine games in a row?" "How would I know?" Tom answered. "I was only a year old. But it made the point."<sup>1</sup>

It would be good to remind ourselves from time to time that faith is all about a positive belief about life. That's why we call the Gospel Good News. We're loved by God, and God has good things in store for us.

**Some tired people simply suffer from sleep deprivation.** That may sound trivial and obvious, but we need to talk about it for a moment. My guess is that there are several of you who do not get enough sleep to function at your best. Some of this lack of sleep, of course, is due to stress and worry.

D.T. Niles, the great Asian evangelist, tells of traveling by train across India. It was a long trip and he needed to get some sleep. However, he was so concerned about his suitcase getting stolen that he had a hard time sleeping. He put it on the rack directly above where he sat. He kept dozing and waking up with his eyes on that suitcase.

Finally he was so tired that he dozed longer than he wanted and when he looked for his suitcase it was gone. However, an interesting thing happened. It was then that he could sleep. He no longer had anything to watch.

There is something about a troubled mind that can rob us of sleep. And for many people this is a serious problem. Did you know that, next to alcohol, sleep deprivation is the leading cause of serious accident and injury? It is also a leading cause of poor productivity.

We idolize Thomas Edison's sleep habits. He claimed he could live on fifteen minute naps. But we forget about Albert Einstein's sleep habit. He consistently averaged eleven hours of sleep a night.

A family was visiting New York City for the first time and were dazzled by the sights and sounds and bustling crowds of Manhattan. "They say this is the city that never sleeps," the father told his eleven-year-old daughter. "That's probably because there's a Starbucks on every corner," she observed.

Some of us are running on caffeine and ignoring the possible health costs, or productivity costs, or even possibly the cost to our overall well-being. And then we come to these words of the Master, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

**Truth is, our greatest need is to relax and trust God.** That's what happens when we yoke ourselves to Christ. He helps us bear the burdens of the day.

"The most pleasant and useful persons," said philosopher and humorist Don Marquis, "are those who leave some of the problems of the universe for God to worry about."

Here's something interesting: the word "worry" is used 13 times in Scripture. The word "trust" is used 126 times, the word "faith" is used 270 times. The word "believe" is used 226 times. And the word "love" is used 551 times.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Schuller, *The Peek to Peak Principle* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980).

If you want to put it more clearly into perspective, of the 13 times that worry is used, 11 of those times we are told not to worry and of the other two, we are asked, "Why do you worry" and the other one says "Tomorrow will worry about itself."

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

If you're going to insist on carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders, you're going to be very tired. Here's the Good News. There is One who loves you very much, who will take your burden upon His shoulders if only we give it to Him.

I hope this holiday weekend finds you rested and refreshed, but even more than that, I hope you let Christ rest and refresh you through every day of your life.