

MINNESOTA VALLEY CHURCH; July 21, 2024
9th Sunday after Pentecost; Singers: Hannah C./Becky K./Reynolds

PRELUDE: Carol Gustafson

CALL TO WORSHIP: From Psalm 23

PASTOR: The LORD is my shepherd,
ALL: I shall not be in want.
PASTOR: He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
ALL: He restores my soul.

HYMN #450 “Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us”

CONFESSION OF SIN FROM ROMANS 6:1-7 *What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE:

READER: Luke Johnson

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: *Jeremiah 23:1-6 "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!" declares the LORD. 2 Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: "Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done," declares the LORD. 3 "I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. 4 I will*

place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD. 5 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. 6 In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.

EPISTLE LESSON: *Ephesians 2:11-22 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)- 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. 19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.

CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!

CONFESSION OF FAITH: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in

the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen

GLORIA PATRI: *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is not, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRAYER

PRAISE SONGS: 1 or 2 praise songs chosen by CAROL

SERMON: “AN INVITATION TO REST” Mark 6:30-33
Pastor Tom Olson *Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*

FATIGUE: Are you tired and lacking in energy. Lack of energy and constant fatigue is growing to epidemic proportions in our world today. I know my battle with sleep apnea has been a struggle to get the rest I need.

VACATION: I find it interesting that the gospel lesson for this Sunday comes at the height of our summer vacation season. It is “An Invitation to Rest.” As I “recover” from a few days of camping this week, I am not sure if vacations are time to rest or times to get exhausted. I need to get back to work so I can rest.

NEED: Rest is something that we all need, especially if we don’t sleep very well. We also need mental and emotional rest. We all need peace with God and rest for our souls. Today, Jesus gives his disciples “An Invitation to Rest” in Mark 6:30-33.

I. THE NEED FOR REST

Mark 6:30-31a *The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. 31 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat...*

DEMANDING: The disciples needed rest. The ministry was demanding. The crowds were overwhelming. The schedule was grueling. The disciples were reporting to Jesus about all they had done and taught. They were casting out demons, they were praying for the sick, they were ministering to the poor and needy. They were working in the face of soldiers and religious leaders that opposed them. All of this takes energy.

DRAINED: The Apostle Paul said in *Philippians 2:17* “**I am poured out like a drink offering...**” He tells about his ministry, times in prison, times he has been stoned and beaten and left for dead, the concern he has for the churches. Paul didn’t get rest until his was in prison for his faith. He got true rest when he died.

SATURDAY: I talked with a young mom who has a child that is teething and has a cold. That mom needed rest. Service in the restaurants on the North Shore was quite slow because they were short on help. Whole sections of tables were not being used. The waitresses were moving fast and were tired. Yesterday I picked up some hardware at Menards. The cashier was exhausted. She told me that on Saturdays the customers are very rude. She could not wait to get off of work. She needed rest.

CULTURE: When I look at people in our culture and read their harsh words, I can tell they are tired. It is not the good physical tired where you hit the pillow and fall asleep. They are tired of trying, they are tired of the divisions, they are tired of living...they are like the man who sang in the classic movie, “Showboat” that song “Old Man River” the words, “I am tired of living and I am scared of dying.”

SNAPPING: Our nation would be transformed if we could just get off the merry-go-round of activity and get some well needed rest for our souls. What are we to do when we are at the point of snapping. I don’t take too many calls when we are on vacation but I do take a few. I took calls from someone who was at their wits end and ready to break. From someone who was totally drained

with family stress and troubles... I told that individual, you need some serious rest from your situation.

REAL: Some of you listening today need to recognize that if you don't make some adjustments, you are going to snap. It may be that you are wound up by the tense political campaign and you need rest from that. The need is very real. That is why there is a drug epidemic because people are trying to escape and get some rest.

Matthew 9:35-36 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

God knows we need to rest.

II. THE CALL TO REST

Mark 6:31b He said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

PUSHED: Jesus knew that his disciples were pushed to their human limits, so he took action and invited them to come with him to a quiet place to get some rest. He knew that in spite of the needs of the people that they were meeting, the issue at hand was for the disciples to catch up on sleep and restore their souls.

PSALM 23: Jesus invites them to come "with Him." Psalm 23 tells us that the Lord is the Good Shepherd who leads us to green pastures, still waters and restores our souls. He wants us to be well rested. God does not want us to be tense, irritable, driven and ready to snap. The fruit of the Holy Spirit we need is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and much more.

ALONE: Jesus invites them to come "by themselves." How can we paraphrase that in modern words? Leave your cell phone behind, leave your music behind, leave other people behind and take a break from it all.

KING: I read about a king in times past that was in a terrible state of mental distress. He asked a wise man what he should do. The advice was to go away for two weeks by himself and be quiet. The first few days were hard as his mind was filled with thoughts and conversations. But little by little his mind grew peaceful. At the end of 14 days he had restored his sanity, peace and sound mind. He was ready to return to his official duties and make wise decisions from a peaceful frame of mind. We need times in "a quiet place."

REST: Jesus finally said, "Get some rest." Most of us are too driven to get real rest. God gives us the sabbath, one day in seven to rest, and most of us do not do well with that. God gives us sabbatical year, one year in seven, to take the whole year off, and not too many people do that. God gives the newly married couple one year free from duties for their first year of marriage. My nephew and his wife had saved up quite a bit of money before they married and they took a good part of a year off and lived from their savings and flew to distant and remote places to stay and enjoy each other's company. Then they went back to work again after that several months together alone. It was wise to do it early in their marriage before family, career demands or even old age took a toll. By the time my parents had the time and money enough to travel they were pretty old and tired.

EXHAUSTION: During the salmon fishing season, fishermen sometimes go long periods of time out in the ocean without rest. They get into a state of exhaustion. The old pastor and fisherman, Oscar Brown, told me that there is only one way to recover from exhaustion. He said go to sleep. Wake up and eat. Go back to sleep. Wake up and eat. And repeat the cycle until the exhaustion is gone. He said that if you don't do that the consequences can be

disastrous. Many of us are sleep deprived. I know my sleep apnea takes a toll and others can't sleep due to physical pain. In that case there needs to be extra times of rest.

CALL: We are not talking about laziness. Very few people I associate with are lazy. We are talking about Jesus' call to rest.

III. THE PLACE OF REST

Mark 6:32 *So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.*

SOLITARY: Finally, the place of rest is described. They went away in a boat to a solitary place. The place makes a difference. Solitude is a part of spiritual renewal.

SHORE: During our camping trip this week we had hikes, we did sight-seeing, we cooked over a campfire and we played games. But the most impressive part of the week was Rebekah's idea. Two times we went out to the lakeshore where the big flat rocks made of once molten lava eased their way gently down to the lake. There are a number of widely scattered picnic tables made by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's out of stone and split logs. We sat quietly at a table and look at the open water and rocky cliffs. We went down by the water and listened to the waves gently breaking on the shore. In the distance a lady was doing her stretches and meditations, I suppose it was yoga. The place was solitary and drew a few pilgrims trying to find some peace and spiritual renewal.

WAVES: The gentle waves of a calm day on Lake Superior are reported to have great healing effect to frayed emotions. Sometime I would like to go to a solitary place, all by myself, with no family responsibilities, no cell phone, just my Bible and perhaps one great book and have an extended period of physical and spiritual rest. I suspect that the result may just be that I would come back and be a better husband, father and pastor. I try to have

some times like that early in the morning before my family wakes up and it is good. Even our back deck is a solitary place, early in the morning. So is a park bench.

SHORT: The invitation to rest was short-lived. Crowds came and sought out Jesus and the disciples for teaching, healing and ministry. They fed thousands with the handful of loaves and fish.

The fulness of rest will come to us when we are home in heaven. Revelation 22 gives us a glimpse into that great place: **Revelation 22:1-5** *"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever."*

NEARER: Notice that for the disciples along the Sea of Galilee and the saints in glory that the rest is being near to our Savior Jesus Christ. A person can be busy serving Christ and dry up spiritually. But you will be a river of life and a spring of living water if you live near to Jesus throughout the day. The good news is that He invites us to come with Him to a solitary place to rest.

COME: I love the way Jesus puts it in Matthew 11. Let these words be to you personally today: **Matthew 11:28** *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*

The invitation has been given...won't you come? *And now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen*

HYMN #586 “There is a Place of Quiet Rest”

LORD’S PRAYER: *Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen*

BENEDICTION

CLOSING SONG: Picked by Carol

POSTLUDE: Carol Gustafson