

Come to me

Matthew 11:25-

Come to me all you that are weary and are carry heavy burdens.

It has been a wearying time to all of us lately.

So many lives are lost to the coronavirus and the grief over this loss is a heavy burden to many families and many communities and many nations and our world. Many jobs are gone, as well. Many, those unemployed and their families are devastated. To make matters more frustrating, we are not able to meet face to face to comfort and console in person.

It has been a wearying time.

During the pandemic crisis, we have learned that there are inequalities in health care and persistent racism in our society. And the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis has shaken and awakened us to see and face painfully the systemic racism in our nation.

It has been a weary time.

Due to the coronavirus, we have been gathering online on Sundays since March 15. We are getting used to worshipping online, but still it is not the same. Inability see one another face to face in person, especially those who join by phone and also to hear all of us singing hymns during the service adds extra weariness. We know even if we gather in person for worshipping at the church, we are asked neither to sing and nor to hum during the worship for everyone's safety. It has been a weary time. I am weary. How about you?

On top of these weary situations we have, we have personal and family issues and concerns that press us down. Financial burdens and relational burdens. Concerns after concerns. Problems after problems. When it rains, it pours. Many of us are stressful. No, we all are stressful.

We all know that overwhelming feelings of stress lead us to overeat, drink and smoke. And eventually stress made us feel depressed, anxious, alone, even suicidal.

In our Bible passage today, we hear Jesus saying to the people around him and us this morning, “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.”

“Are you weary? Are you carrying heavy burdens? Kun Sam, come to me, and I give you rest.”

Jesus’ invitation, “Come to me, and I will give you rest” is the good news to all us who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens.

Do you hear Jesus calling your name and invite you to come to him?

We are hesitant to accept the invitation. Aren’t we?

We celebrate our nation’s independence this weekend. The word, independence conveys strength and freedom in our culture. From our early childhood, we have been trained and educated to become an independent being. “Be independent. Show your strength. Do all things to take care of yourself alone.” And the word, dependence in contrast is understood as a sign of weakness and immaturity in our culture.

So naturally we resist Jesus’ open invitation, “Come to me, and I will give you rest”. We wave our hands from left to right, saying, “No, thanks. I am grown up and independent. I can handle my problems. I don’t need you, Jesus. I don’t want to bother you, Jesus.” That is our human arrogance and foolishness.

But Christian faith is radically different than what we have been brainwashed. Dependence is a wonderful virtue to practice and cherish as long as we live as God’s people. What is faith? Faith is a total dependence on God. Faith is accepting the reality that God is the source of everything and we depend on God in everything. Leaning on the everlasting arms of Jesus is a Christian way of living.

John Wesley had a dream one day to go to heaven. He asked God, “how many Methodists are here?” “none.” I was surprised by God’s answer. So he asked God

again, “How about Presbyterians?” “None. “How about Baptists?” None. “Who are here then?” “Christians are here.”

“Coming to Jesus” is not same as joining a church community or a denomination. Any denomination is not a way. Jesus is the Way. Jesus is the way to go and follow. Jesus is the way to set us free.

Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.... So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:31-32, 36)

Come to me, and I will give you rest.

The Lord is our role model. During his earthly ministry, he regularly took times to go to God and spend time with God for rest.

We have been reading the Gospel of Mark, one chapter a day since last Monday. We found Jesus taking time to pray. Mark 1:35 reads, “In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place and there he prayed.” Mark 6:46 reads, “After saying farewell to his disciples, he went up on the mountain to pray.”

Spending time with God is Jesus’ resting time. Resting is not an idling time, but a time to receive new energy and insight and power for the daytime ministry. It is a time of replenishment. Resting is essential for us to continue to be used as God’s instrument for justice, peace and hope.

Come to me, and I will give you rest.

Lord, here I am. Replenish me with your spirit of love and hope. Empower me with your spirit of boldness. Renew us to do join your ministry of justice and peace in the world. Amen. Amen.

Now I invite you to communion table to where our Lord, Jesus invites all of us.

May we be nourished and strengthened to continue to follow Jesus Christ.