

An Antidote for Exhaustion

Scripture Matthew 11: 16 - 19 & 25 – 30

9/12/21 In-Person Service

A sadness seems to shroud the opening lines of the 11th chapter of Matthew. John the Baptist is in prison and things look bleak. John the Baptist sends messengers to Jesus asking - ‘Are you the one who is to come or are we to wait for another?’

Today we are going to honor Sharon Tweedie for her many years of service to the Bethany Beach CC (DOC). I am sure there have been times in her life and times in her church life that she has wondered the same thing John the Baptist did. She asked Jesus - ‘Are you the one who is to come or are we to wait for another?’

At this time in our church life, we are asking the same questions. We are asking Jesus - ‘Are you the one or is there someone else?’ At this time of sorrow that Sharon is leaving our fellowship, we are asking Jesus - ‘Are you the one and why?’ At this time of exhaustion from this pandemic, we are asking Jesus - ‘Are you the one or is there something else?’

And yet, unlike John the Baptist, we ask it not from the dank space of a prison cell, but from the dark uncertainties of our lives. We are asking from the dark recesses of our mind and the dark parts of our lives.

We are exhausted from searching without finding while fussing at God for not answering our questions. We are exhausted from this pandemic and asking God – WHY! We are exhausted from suffering through a difficult time in our lives while asking God - Are you the one or is there something else?

Jesus, listening to John’s friends, seems exhausted also. Jesus listens carefully to their questions. You can almost see Jesus wince. You can almost see Jesus frustration.

Finally, Jesus sends John’s friends away with the answer they needed most - ‘Go & tell John what you hear and see!’

Jesus is the promised One. Let me repeat that - Jesus is the promised One!

Now turn and tell your neighbor that Jesus is the promised One. Your neighbor is exhausted by life and its hardship. Get their attention and tell them that Jesus is the promised One.

Your neighbor is hard of hearing this morning from exhaustion. Tell them loudly that Jesus is the promised One.

I need your inspiration this morning - tell me that Jesus is the promised One!

Sharon Tweedie needs your inspiration this morning - tell her that Jesus is the promised One!

Thank you, we needed that, I needed that and Sharon needed that!!!!

When John the Baptist's friends return and share the news with John that Jesus is the promised One, John can die knowing he gave his blessing correctly!

Jesus is exhausted. Jesus is worn down by questions that seem blind to the obvious answer. We seem like whining children who play in the street of our discontent. Nothing seems to satisfy us. We hear lively music but do not dance. We weep but do not rejoice in everlasting life. Jesus went to a cross for us but yet we are exhausted!

Jesus is exhausted by the fickle crowds that follow him. Yet the crowd is exhausted from never finding soul satisfaction in the spiritual quest of life.

We are told in our scripture that Jesus at this time of exhaustion opened his life to God in prayer. Jesus thanked God for revealing his will and his heart to the infants - that is us by the way!

Here, Jesus reminds us that our search for answers can be found in a child-like trust. Jesus reminds us that our quest for certainty can only be found in placing our lives in the care of the one who reveals God. It is only in a trusting relationship with Jesus that we discover satisfying release from the haunting questions of life's meaning. It is only in a trusting relationship with Jesus that we discover the relief from exhaustion. It is only in a trusting relationship with Jesus that we discover an answer for death.

Jesus now turns and addresses us in this piece of scripture. Jesus has answered John's friend's questions, he has voiced a prayer of gratitude to God. Here are words that have comforted seeking people for nearly 2 millennia - *'Come to me, all you that are weary or exhausted and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest!'*

Burdens come in many packages. For John, the burden was wrapped up in confusion. John so much wanted Jesus to be the Messiah on his terms. At the end of his life, John found rest in Jesus' assuring words.

For some of you, the burden is wrapped up in physical pain. You so much want healing in your terms. Take rest in Jesus' assuring words. *'Come to me, all you that are weary or exhausted and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest!'*

Others have burdens wrapped up in doubt. You so much want answers to the questions of life like 'WHY?' Take rest in Jesus' assuring words. *'Come to me, all you that are weary or exhausted and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest!'*

We are confused about Jesus' presence and work in our lives. For some, faith is a riddle to be solved with our minds rather than an action expressed through our work. For some, following Jesus requires the letting go of the heavy burden of prejudice so Jesus can give rest in uncommon acceptance.

Like John, we want to know from deep within our souls that Jesus is the promised One. *'Come to me, all you that are weary or exhausted and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest!'*

We live in a life of uncertainty. We thirst for certainty! We search for answers from the dark cells of our doubts believing that if we had the right answers, we would find peace.

To our amazing relief and surprise, Jesus gives himself rather than answers. Jesus invites us simply to come to him with our soul's exhaustion and in his presence, find our rest. *'Come to me, all you that are weary or exhausted and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest!'*

Here is an antidote for exhaustion. *'Come to me, all you that are weary or exhausted and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest!'*

Like John, bring our Lord all your confusions, uncertainty, and pain. In so doing, you will both hear and experience a love that will never let you go.

For the last time, close your eyes and hear these words one more time - *'Come to me, all you that are weary or exhausted and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest!'*

Will Sharon Tweedie please stand –

Go in peace, with our love, our forgiveness, and our prayers supporting you.

Go in strength, with the gifts we have shared in our time together.

Go in joy, with the assurance that the bonds of your love in Christ cannot be broken.

You are part of our family, here you will always be at home.

Go in peace, AMEN.

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Finally, Jesus sends John’s friends away with the answer they needed most - ‘Go & tell John what you hear and see!’

Jesus is the promised One. Let me repeat that - Jesus is the promised One!

Now turn and tell whoever is watching this YouTube service with that Jesus is the promised One. If you are alone, shout out loud – Jesus is the promised One.

We is exhausted by life and its hardship. Hear again - Jesus is the promised One.

We are often hard of hearing from exhaustion. Hear again - Jesus is the promised One.

You need inspiration, so shout at your screen - Jesus is the promised One!

Thank you, we need to hear that!!!!

When John the Baptist's friends return and share the news with John that Jesus is the promised One, John can die knowing he gave his blessing correctly!

Jesus is exhausted. Jesus is wearied down by questions that seem blind to the obvious answer. We seem like whining children who play in the street of our discontent. Nothing seems to satisfy us. We hear lively music but do not dance. We weep but do not rejoice in everlasting life. Jesus went to a cross for us but yet we are exhausted!

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For the last time, close your eyes and hear these words one more time - *'Come to me, all you that are weary or exhausted and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest!'*

Let us pray:

Let us go in peace, with love and forgiveness. Let us go in strength, with the gifts that God has given us. Let us go in joy, with the assurance that the bonds of love found in Jesus Christ cannot be broken. We are part of a family based in our faith in Jesus Christ, and through this medium of You Tube, may we always gather together in worship. AMEN.