

The Second Sunday in Apostles' Tide, July 5, AD 2026

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Rest Revealed for Little Children

Matthew 11:25–30

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph 1:2

²⁵ At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; ²⁶ yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷ All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

You would think—after the fireworks that Jesus had done, you would think that more people would believe. Fireworks? Like the authority with which He preached: "YOU'VE HEARD IT SAID . . . BUT I SAY TO YOU right now!" (cf Mt 5:21, 22). Like the dazzling display of His divine power in cleansing a leper, healing the centurion's servant, or calming a storm. Or how about the explosion made when Jesus cast demons into a herd of pigs, so that THE WHOLE HERD RUSHED DOWN THE STEEP BANK AND INTO THE SEA AND DROWNED IN THE WATERS (Mt 8:32)? More than a few dollars were sunk into that celebration of independence from the devil. The most powerful sound, however, may have been a few simple words spoken by Jesus to a man who was paralyzed: "TAKE HEART, MY SON; YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN" (Mt 9:2). So tender and clear; so breath-takingly beautiful.

You would think, after all that *and more*, the results would be impressive. The people of Galilee should've known Jesus and welcomed Him. The Jewish leaders—the scribes and Pharisees—should've embraced Him. The wise and understanding should've recognized Him as the promised Messiah live and in person. But they didn't. Many rejected Him. They said, "John the Baptizer HAS A DEMON and Jesus is A GLUTTON AND A DRUNKARD" (Mt 11:18, 19). And so He proclaims WOE to them—WOE to those who do not repent and believe.

Jesus must be tired of it, don't you think? Tired of speaking the truth and not being heard. Tired of doing the good works of God and not being seen. Tired of bearing sins, sicknesses, and death and getting little thanks for it. Tired of doing it over and over again only to be dismissed, disregarded, ignored, mocked, and threatened.

And yet in the face of rejection and ridicule, He prays: I THANK YOU, FATHER, LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, THAT YOU'VE HIDDEN THESE THINGS FROM THE WISE AND UNDERSTANDING AND REVEALED THEM TO LITTLE CHILDREN; YES, FATHER, FOR SUCH WAS YOUR GRACIOUS WILL (vv 25–26). How might the disciples have heard these words of thanks and praise? “That’s right, Jesus, thank God the wise and understanding don’t get it but that He’s revealed it to little children . . . little children . . . like . . . us . . . Hey! Wait a minute! Whaddya mean ‘little children’? Are you saying we’re not the wise and understanding?”

If they were like us, then *they* wanted to be the experts. *They* wanted to be “in the know.” *They* wanted to be considered wise and understanding. *They* wanted the respect of family and friends. But there’s no promise that you can have both—that you can have Jesus *and* have the favor of the world. According to our Lord, His work is hidden from the wise and understanding but revealed by the Father to the least and the littlest. Or, to put it another way, faith in Jesus isn’t a matter of our work, our expertise, our knowledge. Those who have it figured out have no need of a Savior. Faith comes as a gift to the childlike, the dependent, the needy who cannot accomplish anything in and of themselves. That’s the crux of the matter, isn’t it? Whether we’ve got to figure it out ourselves or are willing to trust God’s wisdom in His Word. Whether we insist on our independence *from Jesus* or whether we’re willing to be dependent, *His* dependents, claimed *by Him* before the Father.

The Father’s gracious will is to reveal Himself in His Son, Jesus Christ. He came in the flesh, and He—the same Jesus—comes still to us today in His holy Word and in His precious gifts, the Sacraments. And still the wise and understanding question, dismiss, undermine, and mock Him. And still we little children receive Him and rejoice in the things that He reveals to us. Isn’t this why we treasure so deeply the Holy Scriptures and Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, and Holy Communion? They are the very revelation of the Father through the Son!

Jesus said, “ALL THINGS HAVE BEEN HANDED OVER TO ME BY MY FATHER, AND NO ONE KNOWS THE SON EXCEPT THE FATHER, AND NO ONE KNOWS THE FATHER EXCEPT THE SON AND ANYONE TO WHOM THE SON CHOOSES TO REVEAL HIM” (v 27). What a tremendous statement! According to His human nature, Jesus says, ALL THINGS are given into His power. All good things and every

good gift come from Him. He'll say it again after rising from the dead: "ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME" (Mt 28:18), and then He commissions the disciples, indeed, the whole Church, to make use of His authority in baptizing and teaching.

See how deep the connection goes between the Father and the Son—even in His humanity. He alone perfectly knows the Father, just as the Father perfectly knows the Son. One God, one divine essence, one plan for our salvation. And see how He connects us into this divine life! The Son has chosen to reveal all of this *to us*, so that we might know Him as Savior and know His Father and be children of the heavenly Father forever.

And now, the gracious invitation: "COME TO ME, ALL WHO LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST" (v 28). Think about what makes you feel tired, weary, burdened. [*Pause*] Another doctor's appointment. A late night of fireworks. That fight with your spouse. The midterm elections. An unexpected car repair. Or perhaps you're weary in the same way as St. Paul: FOR I DO NOT DO THE GOOD I WANT, BUT THE EVIL I DO NOT WANT IS WHAT I KEEP ON DOING. . . . I DELIGHT IN THE LAW OF GOD, IN MY INNER BEING, BUT I SEE IN MY MEMBERS ANOTHER LAW WAGING WAR AGAINST THE LAW OF MY MIND AND MAKING ME CAPTIVE TO THE LAW OF SIN THAT DWELLS IN MY MEMBERS (Rom 7:19, 22–23). You know what he means. That sharp tongue you just can't curb. That crippling envy. That all-consuming worry. That harsh judgment of your neighbor. That frenzied seeking of rest, relief, and help in every place *except* Jesus and His Word.

I WILL GIVE YOU REST. He speaks with authority, and yet with kindness. He knows what you need. He knows who He is. And He knows what He has to give. And Jesus never tires of this—He never tires of the work He does so that we can have rest. Rest for our bodies, rest for our minds, rest for our emotions, but most of all rest for our souls. What you've been carrying is more than you can bear, but not more than He can bear. He declares a declaration of independence from the burden of sin, from the accusations of the devil, and from the threat of death.

You can draw a direct line from this promise of Jesus to our gathering together today. The Lord commanded the people of Israel to remember the Sabbath day, by keeping it holy. But the wise and understanding twisted that day of rest. They turned it into *more* work, *more* burden, *more* Law. If it's about what *we* do or what *we* know or how good *we* are, we'll never have rest. The truth is that it was never about the day itself. It was about what God was doing on that day for His people.

What was God doing? Saving His people. That's why Jesus rode into Jerusalem humble, mounted on a donkey. He came not to make war but to make peace. He did His work in six days. And having offered Himself up fully on the cross—"FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT"—He rested from the work that He had done, from the burden of sin, from the brokenness of the old creation. He rested in the grave, and then He rose again on the first day of the week a new creation, refreshed, ready to work for us still. And that's why *we* gather still on the first day of the week, because we won't find real rest anywhere except in Him.

"TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU, AND LEARN FROM ME, FOR I AM GENTLE AND LOWLY IN HEART, AND YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS" (v 29). He offers that same gift to you now: MY YOKE. His yoke is the yoke that lightens the load instead of making it heavier. Like when a child struggles to move something large and then his father comes by and says, "I'll get that for you." Jesus put His shoulder under your cross, hoisted it up, and carried it all the way to Calvary. And then He looks at you and says, "There, child. Don't worry about the blood. It's what was needed. The job is done. Finished. Be at rest. With my yoke, you can learn to play, to dance, to love, to live *for real* and *forever*." So tender and clear; so breath-takenly beautiful.

"FOR MY YOKE IS EASY, AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT" (v 30). Little children, hitch up to Me and come see what I can do. And you know what the best part is? He hasn't even gotten to the Grand Finale yet! The biggest, the best, the loudest and most beautiful part is still to come.

The peace that passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Phil 4:7