



## Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

October 7, 2021

### DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces



Source: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

### Today's Inspiration in one sentence

**“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”**

(Matthew 11:28)

### Did You Know?

- Earlier we learned that **Matthew's** audience were Jewish or Jewish Christians. These are the elements that prove it for the scholars:
  - Matthew's concern with fulfillment of the Old Testament. He has more quotations from the Old Testament than any other New Testament author.
  - His tracing of Jesus' descent from Abraham.
  - His lack of explanation of Jewish customs (especially in contrast to Mark).
  - His use of Jewish terminology (e.g., “kingdom of heaven”; where “heaven” reveals the Jewish reverential reluctance to use the name of God.)
  - His emphasis on Jesus' role as “Son of David”.
- The above doesn't mean, however, that Matthew restricts his Gospel to Jews. He records the coming of the Magi (non-Jews) to worship the infant Jesus, as well as Jesus' statement that the “field is the world” (13:38). He also gives a full statement of the Great commission (28:18-20).

(The NIV Study Bible; Matthew)

### Personal Insight

The struggles of sleeplessness are probably familiar for more of us than we would think. For some of us it can be chronic. But many of us can recall memories of some nights when we turned from one side to another. We might remember the feeling as if our brain was still running in the hamster wheel of to do lists or problems to solve.

I like to remind myself that all these issues are well known for humanity for ages. And the solution hasn't changed either. The situation below brought one of David's Psalms to my mind: **“Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer. ... Many, Lord, are asking, “Who will bring us prosperity?” Let the light of your face shine on us. ... In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.”** (Psalm 4:1; 6; 8)

King David understood that trusting in God can give us peace, which is essential for a good sleep as well. Jesus confirmed the Almighty's invitation for a relationship that has been built on the love, care, and providence of God. We, too, can come to Jesus, who knows the Father. We, too, may find rest and calm as we **“cast all [our] anxiety on him”**. (1 Peter 5:7)

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



## Rest Well

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*

Matthew 11:28

### READ Matthew 11:25 – 30

The clock blinked 1:55 a.m. Burdened by a late-night text conversation, sleep wasn't coming. I unwound the mummy-like clutch of my tangled sheets and padded quietly to the couch. I Googled what to do to fall asleep but instead found what not to do: don't take a nap or drink caffeine or work out late in the day. Check. Reading further on my tablet, I was advised not to use "screen time" late either. Oops. Texting hadn't been a good idea. When it comes to resting well, there are lists of what not to do.

In the Old Testament, God handed down rules regarding what not to do on the Sabbath in order to embrace rest. In the New Testament, Jesus offered a new way. Rather than stressing regulations, Jesus called the disciples into relationship. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). In the preceding verse, Jesus pointed to His own ongoing relationship of oneness with His Father—the One He's revealed to us. The provision of ongoing help Jesus enjoyed from the Father is one we can experience as well.

While we're wise to avoid certain pastimes that can interrupt our sleep, resting well in Christ has more to do with relationship than regulation. I clicked my reader off and laid my burdened heart down on the pillow of Jesus' invitation: "Come to me . . ." – By **Elisa Morgan**

### REFLECT & PRAY

**Dear Jesus, thank You for the rest You call me to in an ongoing relationship with You. Amen.**

How does viewing rest as a relationship rather than a regulation change your view of rest? In what area of your life is Jesus calling you to rest in relationship with Him?

### SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Implicit in Matthew 11:25–30 is the truth that we're all under some type of "yoke," that is, we each have a burden to bear in this world. Those who are "weary and burdened" (v. 28)—which at some point is all of us—have a choice to make. We can choose to remain under the yoke that comes from living in this world apart from God, or we can follow Jesus and wear His yoke. He assures us it's easy and light (v. 30). That may be hard to believe as we encounter life's many challenges, but choosing to run from God brings a far greater burden—one that leads ultimately to despair. Life will bring all kinds of burdens, but how much better to follow after Christ. He promises a peace that the world can't give (John 14:27). – By **Tim Gustafson**

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