

# Rest Op.

## Arresting a Restless Heart

January 19, 2025

**Today we'll see how to sooth and quiet our cranky, tuckered out souls!**



Last Sunday, Noah talked about the need for rest; and I want to pick up on that, because rest can be so easily misunderstood. Because **rest requires hard work**. Because, **it's not easy to take it easy**. That great Jewish theologian, Jerry Seinfeld said: It's so much *work* to get a *family* in a *car* for a *vacation*. I *pack everything up*, *get everything set*, *get the kids* in their *car seats*, and *close the door* for my *wife* on the *passenger side*, and ... I *slowly walk* around the *car* to the *driver's side* ... and *that's my vacation*. Every feel that way throughout your day? Question is: **What's your resting heart rate?** On a *scale of one to ten*, **how would you rate your heart's ability to rest in Christ** on a *daily basis*, and *especially* in the *midst* of the *storms* of *life*? Jesus said:

"Come to Me, [in His Word] all you who are *weary* and *burdened*, and I will *give you rest*. [But, you'll have to *make the effort to*] *Take My yoke* [the *collar that joins two beasts of burden*] *upon you* and *learn from Me*, for [unlike your *grumpy, fussy, colicky nature*] I am *gentle* [calm and collected] and *humble in heart*, [content and secure without being *prideful*] and [that'll take *effort on your part; but*] *you will find rest for your souls*. For *My yoke is easy* and *My burden is light*." – Matthew 11:28-30 NIV

But, **it takes a lot of effort to take a load off**. Especially for the *weary*. Cuz it can *seem* like *more work*. Because *true rest* isn't something you just *decide to have*; it's something you *have to seek and find* – because, **it's only found in the Lord as His Word rests in our heart**. In fact, as we *load in His words*, He *unloads* the *stresses* and *worries* and *anxieties* of this ol' *world*. Because **we're able to hear His voice**, which *comforts* and *encourages* and, quite often, *talks us off the ledge*.

[Because] It is for *freedom* that Christ has *set us free*. [No *hidden agenda, deceitful desires, or corrupt motives* as it is with the *ways of the world; so*] *Stand firm*, then, [in your *freedom*] and do not let yourselves be *burdened again by a yoke of slavery* [to *sin that flourishes in ignorance to truth*]. – Galatians 5:1 NIV

No longer *walk* as the *rest ... alienated* from the *life of God*, because of *the ignorance* that is *in them*, because of *the blindness of their heart* ... if indeed you have *heard Him* [for yourself in His Word] and have [actually] *been taught by Him*, [to be *just like Him*] as the *truth* is in *Jesus* ... [so] be *renewed* in the *spirit of your mind* – Ephesians 4:23 NKJ

[Because] Jesus said, "*If you hold to My teaching, [lit. My Word] you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*" – John 8:31-32 NIV

**From the burden of the bondage of the yoke of slavery to sin, that comes from the ignorance within.**

Therefore, *laying aside* [the yoke of the *burden* of the *bondage* to] all *malice*, all *deceit*, *hypocrisy*, *envy*, and all *evil speaking*, as *newborn babes*, [in Christ] *desire the pure milk of the Word*, that you may grow thereby – 1 Peter 2:1-3 NKJ

You see, **the key is in the growing in the likeness of Jesus**. The *Son of David*. (Mt 1:1) And what's the *light burden* placed on *His shoulders* like an *easy yoke*? I think it's the "key of David"

*He who has an ear*, let him *hear* what the *Spirit* says ... These things says *He* who is *holy*, *He* who is *true*, *He* who has the key of David – Revelation 3:6-7 NKJ

Over and over, as Jesus taught, He would call out, "He who has an ear, let him hear" Any idea what He's referring to here? One OT verse. Ezekiel 3:10, wherein God says:

"Receive into *your heart* all *My words* ... and *hear* with your *ears*." – Ezekiel 3:10 NKJ

And, in the case of the key of David, I think He wants us to hear what Isaiah prophesied; that:

The key of the house of David I will *lay* on his *shoulder* – Isaiah 22:22 NKJ



*That's an easy yoke and a light burden!* Even *Job* (31:35-36) said he'd *carry* the *Almighty's book* on his *shoulder*. So, does *David* offer a *key* that offers "*rest for your soul*" to the "*gentle and humble in heart*"? Yep! It's a *recurring theme* in the *Psalms*, and especially *Psalm 131*, in a *prayer*, wherein he says:

Lord, my *heart* is not *proud* [it's *humble*] ... nor do I *involve* myself in *great matters*, [beyond my *control*] or in things too difficult for me [to *comprehend*]. [And thus] I have certainly *soothed and quieted* my *soul*; like a *weaned child resting against his mother*, my *soul within* me is like a *weaned child*. – Psalm 131:1-2 NAS

A believer *begins* by *desiring* the *milk* of the *Word*; but **the key is in the growing**. Paul writes:

I could not address you [Corinthian *believers*] as *spiritual* but as *worldly* [believers] – mere *infants* in *Christ*. [So] I gave you *milk*, not *solid food*, for you were not *yet ready* for it. Indeed, you are *still not ready*. [Are you?] – 1 Corinthians 3:1-2 NIV

[You need] the *elementary truths* of God's *Word* all *over again*. You need *milk*, not *solid food*! [Which is sad, because] Anyone who *lives on milk*, ["the *elementary truths*"] being *still* an [un-weaned, *rattled*] *infant*, is not *acquainted* with [the *rest* that comes with *learning and living*] the *teaching* about *righteousness*. [i.e. being *gentle* and *humble in heart*] But *solid food* [beyond God's *baby food*] is for the *mature*, who *by constant use* have *trained themselves* to *distinguish good* from *evil*. – Hebrews 5:11-14 NIV

So the question is: **How hard do you work at resting in Christ?** And *that's* a serious question.

Since the promise of *entering* His *rest* still *stands*, let ... *none* of you be *found* to have *fallen short* ... for anyone who enters *God's rest* also *rests* from his *own work*, just as *God* did from *His*. [Which is *more* about His *ongoing work*] Let us, therefore, *make every effort* to *enter that rest* ... For [it's *found in*] the *Word* of God [which] is *living* and *active*. [Even as it's *resting*] ... [judging] the *thoughts* and *attitudes* of the *heart*. – Hebrews 4:1-12 NIV

And that's a good thing for those who want a gentle and humble heart (like Jesus) that produces the thoughts and attitudes of a soothed and quieted soul at rest (like David). Whereas, the *rattled* hearts of the Pharisees were on full display every time Jesus healed someone on a Sabbath – the Day of Rest.

So, because Jesus was [purposely] doing these things on the *Sabbath*, the Jews persecuted him. [And while the religious rulers were feigning judgmental vapors] Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at His work to this very day, and [so] I, too, am working." [And they *fainted from the shock!*] – John 5:16-17 NIV



Now, not to get *religious*, but *how* is "the Lord of the Sabbath" (Lk 6:5) *not violating His own Sabbath*? Well, because of the *exception that proves His rule*.



He said to them, "What man is there among you who has *one sheep*, and if it *falls into a pit on the Sabbath*, will not lay hold of it and *lift it out*? [He made the *same point* a week before, but with a *donkey*. (Luke 14:3-5) So, just *pick the one that fits you best*] ... Therefore it is *lawful to do good* [no matter how much *effort it takes*] on the Sabbath." – Matthew 12:11-12 NKJ



And by "lawful", He doesn't mean *allowed*, He means *required!* I never pictured it going in head first! You see, **God has never ever rested from doing good.** Nor should *we*. The big difference being, *He's* the One doing the heavy lifting, and **we're the straying sheep and stubborn donkeys being freed.** And Father and Son were working as One to save every *stubborn donkey* and *straying sheep* that'll submit, from whatever *pit we're in!*



[And, believe it or not, it was] For *this reason* the Jews *tried* all the harder to kill Him; not only was He breaking the Sabbath [according to their *own religious rules*], but He was even calling God *His own Father*, making Himself equal with God. [So] Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the *Son* can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees *His Father* doing ... For just as the *Father raises the dead* [from the *grave*] and *gives them life*, even so the *Son gives life* – John 5:18-21 NIV

To those *dead in sin*. Cuz on the *cross*, on the Sabbath, Father and Son worked as One, to lift everyone from the bottomless pit of sin and death. Jesus said as much beforehand, declaring:

"When I am lifted up from the *earth*, [I] will draw all people [up] to myself." He said this to show by what *kind of death* He was going to *die*. – John 12:32-33 ESV

He's obviously not saying He'll draw all people to Himself on the cross. **He just left out the part about rising, and redeeming, and rescuing (all who'll let Him) from the pit.** Starting with all who died before Him, and were waiting for Him to join them; because they were the first to find out first hand, that **when Jesus said, "It is finished", He was just getting started!** Because after *that*:

The *tombs broke open* and the *bodies* of many *holy people* who had *died* were raised [from the *literal pit of death*] to life. – Matthew 27:52 NIV

In the OT, the Messiah is often pictured as God's Arm stretched out to save.

And I will *redeem* you with an *outstretched arm* – Exodus 6:6 ESV

“Why, [then] when I *called*, [you to come to Me and learn from Me] was there *none* to answer? Is My hand *shortened at all* that it cannot *redeem*? Or have I *no power* to deliver?” [From whatever *pit* you’re in down here] – Isaiah 50:2 NKJ

Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by [Jesus (according to Colossians 1:16) a.k.a.] Your *great power and outstretched Arm*. [Therefore] There is *nothing too hard* for You. – Jeremiah 32:17 NKJ

[So why does Isaiah say] *Awake, awake, put on strength*, O *Arm of the Lord* ... [For] There is none to *guide* [the people of Jerusalem] among *all* the sons she has borne; there is *none* to *take her by the hand* – Isaiah 51:9, 18 ESV



**Awake?! Did Jesus fall asleep on the job?** I almost made this the opening question. Because the answer is ... **Yes!** He *did!* He *fell asleep* on the *job!* Remember when Lazarus was in the tomb for four days, before Jesus said:



“Our friend Lazarus has *fallen asleep*; but I am going there to *wake him up*.” His disciples replied, “Lord, [there’s *no need for that*] if he *sleeps*, he will get *better*.” ... So then He told them plainly, “Lazarus is *dead*” – John 11:11-14 NIV



He caused the same confusion with those mourning the death of a little girl.



“The child is not *dead*, but *sleeping*.” [Again, she’s *dead*. But that’s His term for *temporarily dead* a.k.a. *mostly dead*] And they *ridiculed* Him. ... [till] He *took the child by the hand*, and said ... “[Little girl] *arise*.” [And *pulled her up from the pit*] – Mark 5:39-41 NKJ



In the *beginning*, when He *finished* His work of creation, He could *rest*. Cuz it was *done*. And on the *cross*, **when He finished His work of redemption, we can rest. Cuz it’s done.** You see, the *Pharisees* weren’t *resting at all* on the *Sabbath*; they were *working* at *earning* spiritual points by means of a *rule-heavy, religiously burdensome system* that wore *everyone out!* Cuz that’s *our nature*.



So **we should make every effort to rest in God’s grace, by renewing our mind with His Word.** (Rom 12:2) Ever try to lay hold of a sheep? Let alone lift it. They’re about as keen on cooperating as a stubborn donkey. Likewise, **it takes a lot of effort to resist our own nature, and trust and relax and surrender and cooperate.** On the other hand, ever pick up and hold a weary puppy? We need to learn to be like that: content doing what we *can*, while *letting go of trying to control* what we *can’t*, by *trusting in* the *gentle hands* of His *outstretched arms*.

Therefore, my dear friends [writes Paul] ... continue to *work out your salvation* with *fear* and *trembling*, for it is God who *works in you* – Philippians 2:12-13 NIV

To *make* your *cranky, colicky heart, gentle and humble* like *His*. And *that*, no doubt, will be a *real workout!* Because, **true rest comes down to restoration.** Which comes down to **allowing the Lord to work in you.** Which comes down to **doing His will.** Which comes down to **knowing His heart.** Which comes down to **hearing His voice.** Which comes down to *making every effort to enter His rest* ... the *rest of your life*. Because, *that’s* what He *came down to do*.

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Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.