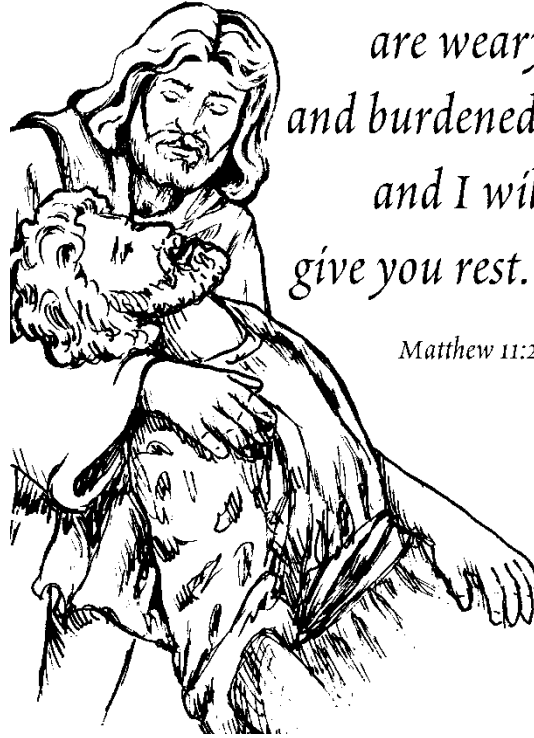


THEME FOR SUNDAY, JULY 3, 2011
THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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

Matthew 11:28



**CONNECTING POINTS:
OUR VISION IN ACTION**

Is there a “burden” that you’ve been carrying with you for much too long a time? Write a prayer about it to God on a piece of paper, then lay it on the altar (we will shred it for you without reading it) or take it home and burn or otherwise destroy it. Then thank God for His offer of rest and forgiveness through our Lord Jesus.

Is there someone you care about who could use the rest and comfort that only Jesus can provide? Invite them to Praise in the Park next Sunday at 10 am at Symmes Township Park. Take a card from the Welcome Center as an invitation.

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO CHRIST NOW AND FOREVER

THEME FOR SUNDAY, JULY 3, 2011 THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

“Lighten Up!” Matthew 11: 25 –30

Our society applauds and admires those who “go it alone”, who refuse to give up, even though life has slowed to a crawl – not the sprint it once was – because of the burdens they are carrying along the way. The largest burden – the burden of unforgiven sin – cannot be shed without divine intervention.

Jesus’ inclusive invitation in Matthew 11 rings out this morning with a guarantee of freedom from the burden of sin and a connected life with Him. These wonderful words from our Savior bring us immediate rest and a much more comfortable load to carry through life with His support.

Introit

Selected Verses from Psalm 91

- L: He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
C: Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
L: I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress,
C: My God, in whom I trust.”
L: Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—
C: The Most High, who is my refuge—
L: No evil shall be allowed to befall you,
C: No plague come near your tent.
L: “Because he holds fast to Me in love, I will deliver him;
C: I will protect him, because he knows My name.
L: When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble;
C: I will rescue him and honor him.
L: With long life I will satisfy him
C: And show him My salvation.”

THEME FOR SUNDAY, JULY 3, 2011

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Old Testament Lesson

Zechariah 9: 9 – 12

(God's people are promised freedom from the burdens of exile through His sent one, the righteous king who would triumphantly ride into Jerusalem. The burdens of all of God's people were eventually lifted when Jesus humbly rode into Jerusalem as the Savior King and shed His blood as a ransom to free the world from the burden of unforgiven sin.)

⁹Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. ¹¹As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. ¹²Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

The Epistle Lesson

Romans 7: 14a – 25

(St. Paul wrestles with the dilemma of failing to respond to the will of God and then being accused by God's own law. Rather than trying to extricate himself from such a mess, St. Paul finds salvation, victory and comfort in God's only answer – our Lord Jesus Christ.)

¹⁴For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

²¹So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²²For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³but 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. ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

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The Gospel Lesson Matthew 11: 25 – 30 Responses page 190

(Jesus is unapologetic in pointing out the inseparable, divine connection between Himself and God the Father as well as the salvation He gives. Jesus' invitation brings both temporary and eternal rest – and also His assuring presence – to shoulder a much lighter load of living for Him.)

²⁵At 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; ²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷All 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. ²⁸Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Have a blessed week!