

25 At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. **26** Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

27 “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Home

Two social workers were talking with Donna when I arrived for a visit. There weren't a whole lot of options and Donna didn't like any of them. She wanted what she wanted, to go home. But that's the catch, they wouldn't release her without having her sign on to hospice or palliative care. Through tears she cried out, “You're saying it's the end. Nobody will treat me. I'm not going on hospice. I want to go home. Just let me go.” They stepped out of the room a time or two. Just then the Doctor came in, “I'll sign your discharge papers. I'll send you home today. There isn't anything we can do for you. You're severely malnourished. You're not getting any better. You're likely to get a fungal infection being on a TPN. There isn't anything we can do for you. You're going home today.” The doctor left and the other two social workers became apologetic, “I can't believe she just did that. I'm so sorry. That was uncalled for.” They left and Donna turned to me, “What did you think of that?”

“It sounds like someone was finally honest with you,” I said. “Yeah... I liked her too,” Donna agreed. But she was going home, finally. She wasn't giving up. She would continue fighting with all her strength until she found rest. You might be wondering, “What rest?” She fought for what seemed her whole life and not just for her life but for her husbands as well. It doesn't seem as if she had any rest in this world. So what about the promise? What about, “*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*”

Doesn't appear to be much rest in chapter 11. John the Baptizer was imprisoned. People were beginning to get a little worried. Jesus doesn't seem to be making any political power gains. He isn't growing any support. He's been condemned as demon possessed. They say of him, “*Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.*” How does one earn a reputation like that? Eating and drinking. Jesus spent time with people. He was honest with the people even those in power. Jesus speaks harshly to the religious leaders and is gentle with the hurting. Just previous to our lesson Jesus curses two cities and announces, “*It will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.*”

At least he's honest? The problem was that the people didn't like to hear what he had to say. They wanted Jesus to praise them for being so good, having life together, for finding rest in their works, actions, dedication. But Jesus responds by thanking God, "*Father I praise you because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children.*" Those who think they are healthy are in no need of a doctor only the sick. Those who think they are good enough to get by on their own will find no rest. But those who think they are unworthy, unprepared, the weary and burdened find rest.

Doesn't appear to be much rest in this world. Our situation isn't much different from Jesus' day. We aren't imprisoned. Jesus still isn't grasping for political power. He isn't gaining any support. There doesn't appear to be any rest in sight. There didn't seem to be any rest for Donna either. She didn't make it to the wedding. She didn't find much comfort in the hospital. There wasn't much comfort being in the hands of doctors who willingly admit, "There isn't anything we can do for you." So what do you tell her, "Don't give up. You can beat this. Don't give up hope." It doesn't matter how much hope, fight, with all that you have in you - you won't beat death. So what do you tell her? You're going to die? Or do we become apologetic, "I'm sorry... I don't know where that came from. That was so inappropriate." Or at least realize, "Someone was finally honest."

That's not pessimism. That's being realistic. There is a great possibility that you will die but there is one who has beat death. There isn't a single serious historian that questions whether or not Jesus existed. We know he existed. We also know what he said. We know of the rest he spoke of.

There is comfort in death because there is life after death. Jesus revealed that to his child Donna. She was called by him at a young age, when she received the promise of her Savior in baptism. Jesus called to her in his Word, his church, his sacrament reminding her of the rest he had won for her. He brought her rest that though she die she will live.

Donna would complain, "Pastor, I'm not ready. I don't even have grandchildren yet." I'd reassure her, "Your kids are still young. It only takes 9 months. There's still hope." But then I'd remind her, "You're ready. You just don't want to go. You're ready because God has made you ready." There she found rest even if the Doctors and Nurses didn't find any with her around, "My son is an attorney... If anything happens to me...he'll go after you..." There Donna found rest.

Jesus made her ready on a day when he found no rest. When Jesus didn't put down the yoke. When he carried our burdens for us. He unequally yoked himself to us pulled the weight of this world and gives us life. Later he rose from the dead and promised to take us home, which is exactly where Donna wanted to go. She had that promise. She believed that promise. She fell asleep in that promise. We know where she has gone: home.

His yoke is easy and light. His yoke is the Word which he binds us to himself. It's a call to discipleship, to follow Jesus. This world is exhausting. You'll never find comfort here. Doctors will let you down. Science can only go so far. Even close friends and family will let you down. But there is one who has bound himself to us. He doesn't give up. He hasn't given up. He didn't give up on Donna. He took her from a world suffering and struggling under the consequences of the fall and took her home.

Christianity won't give you the best life ever. It won't give you blessings in abundance if only you believe or try hard enough. You might suffer, struggle, as you lose grip on life as it is slowly taken away. But it does provide rest. We have peace with God. He isn't angry with us. He's honest even when it hurts and for that there are no apologies because we have hope in the life to come. A world without cancer, colostomy bags, disease, or death. A place we can all call home. Amen.