

# THE FIRST 15

Friday, June 28, 2024

Today is Friday, June 28 and we are studying what the Bible says about rest and renewal.

## OPENING PRAYER

*Holy and loving Lord, amid the pressures of another busy day with the many plans, activities, appointments, and demands, I pause to find a place of rest. I close my eyes and seek the calming peace of your abiding presence. I breathe deeply, in and out, allowing myself to relax in a quiet space of serene stillness. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.***  
**Matthew 11:28-30**

## REFLECTION

The Gospels present a picture of Jesus as an itinerant preacher constantly on the go - healing, preaching, and teaching surrounded by a crowd of followers. Yet the scriptures also tell of times when he left the crowds and went away, announcing to his disciples his desire to be alone. He got into a boat and pushed out into the water to escape the crowded shoreline. He disappeared into the mountains to pray alone to his Father. Jesus understood the burdens of a busy life and found time away for quiet and solitude. Jesus wants us to find that same kind of rest - rest for our souls.

I live in a noisy world full of stress, anxiety, expectations, commitments and demands. The Bible promises me a different life. Christ invites those who are weary and carrying heavy burdens to come and find rest. I am promised rest. Rest for my soul. I am promised peace. The peace that passes understanding. I am encouraged to come to him. Coming to Christ means turning away from some things and letting go of others. Coming to Christ means asking him to lift the burdens caused by sin, sorrow, and stress. Coming to Christ means not carrying all the weight, setting some things down and taking time away to be with him.

Jesus invites me to take his “yoke” upon me. When a yoke is placed on a horse or an ox, they are compelled to obey the directions of the driver. Christ invites me to willingly take the yoke he offers. A yoke that is not heavy but easy and light. Jesus says learn from me. I will teach you. I will direct you. I will show you the way you should go. I will lighten your load and guide you to places of nourishment and rest. I will lead you to green pastures and still waters. Jesus is not a harsh master, but loving, gentle and humble. He is the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. I can trust him with everything because he wants the best for me.

**Ask:** Where in my life is there weariness? Where do I feel burdened? What do I need to set down? What do I need to let go?

## Pause and Pray

### CLOSING PRAYER

*Lord Jesus, I come to find rest in your presence. Lift my weariness, lighten my burden, and reduce the load I bear. My soul longs for the renewal that you offer. My heart seeks the peace that you promise. My mind craves the calm you provide. My spirit seeks the refreshment you supply. I come to you with burdens I have been carrying all alone. Some are heavy. Ease my load. Free me from my ceaseless busyness, strivings and doings. Empower me for the singular tasks you give and unite me with others in service. I welcome the yoke you offer and the peace you provide. Amen.*