

FINDING TRUE REST PRT 1

Matthew 11:28 NIV “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.”

How often have you been confronted with rage, anger, and animosity in the most bizarre of moments? Someone just snaps at you and flips unnecessarily, leaving you second-guessing yourself as to what you did wrong in the moment.

I am sure you have experienced this or behaved in this way before. It speaks of an underlying issue that is ravaging our communities. Unless something is done, our communities will become increasingly hostile and unbecoming in their outlook on life.

This is at the Centre of our new series we are starting today. The title of our new series is **FINDING TRUE REST PART 1**, and today I will be doing a general introduction.

If you are observant enough, you will agree with me that we are living in highly volatile and restless communities. The signs are there and are of great concern. When you have a critical mass of restless people, you will end up with a restless society. Let me highlight to you the signs of a restless generation we are living in:

1. Increased Mental Health Concerns:

- A rise in the prevalence of anxiety disorders, depression, and burnout diagnoses.
- Recent data shows that mental health disorders are prevalent, with depression affecting over 27% of South Africans.

2. Increased workplace Issues:

- Higher rates of absenteeism (taking more time off), increased staff turnover, more complaints and grievances, and decreased overall productivity.

3. Public Health Challenges:

- A higher incidence of stress-related chronic health conditions such as hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, and obesity within the population.

4. Social and Behavioral Shifts:

- Increased social disaffection, relationship difficulties (higher divorce rates, fewer close friends), and a general increase in impulsive or risk-taking behaviors.

5. Increased Use of Support Services:

- Greater demand for mental health services, helplines, and self-help resources.

These signs collectively indicate a population under significant and prolonged stress that is not receiving adequate restorative rest.

FINDING TRUE REST PRT 1

- Many people are restless, and they are looking for a way out. This has resulted in people adopting unhealthy and ungodly coping mechanisms.
- That is why we must talk about finding true rest. The dysfunctions in your life may be due to restlessness within you. But you don't have to stay restless; you can find true rest.
- The concept of rest is comprehensive and all-encompassing.
- Where we read, we come across Jesus dealing with this issue of rest, and He brings it to the attention of those in His hearing.
- While Jesus was on earth, He didn't waste time with just philosophical and academic words, but whenever He spoke, it was because He noticed something and was ready to address it.
- Jesus must have observed something in the community, and hence He made the utterances found in verse 28.
- The question I had when I read this was this: Jesus saw the issue, but were the people aware of it?
- The journey to finding true rest starts with acknowledging its absence in your life.
- Peace and rest can be so elusive that you can lie to yourself that you are ok, whilst you are not.
- You and I need to examine what Jesus said to see if there is restlessness and brokenness that need restoration.
- Jesus spoke of restlessness from three dimensions.

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- This first portion of verse 28 has been interpreted in different ways; in some instances, it has been overspecialized.
- It is my take that when Jesus said Come to me, all ye who are weary, He was literally referring to physical exhaustion emanating from being overly active in this life.
- This is the first dimension of restlessness that Jesus addressed.

1. Weariness from hard labor.

- Jesus saw an exhausted community that was running on fumes and running out of control.
- Many people are physically exhausted because of hard work – businesspeople are suffering from burnout, teachers are tired after doing classes the whole year, mothers are weary because of juggling multiple jobs.
- Jesus stands before them and calls them to come to Him to receive some rest. Jesus gives body rest, nerve rest, and mind rest to the tired individual.

FINDING TRUE REST PRT 1

- Jesus lived the principle of rest even during His earthly ministry.

Mark 6: 30 Meanwhile, the apostles gathered around Jesus and brought Him news of all they had done and taught. 31 And He said to them, "Come with Me privately to a solitary place, and let us rest for a while." For many people were coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

- The older you get, the more rest you need, and yet the older you get, the busier you get.
- We live in a culture that forfeits rest to chronically overwork, and some of the most driven people don't get enough sleep for what their body requires to function at peak performance.
- When you do not get as much rest as you need, you become impatient and irritable towards your family and friends.
- A couple of weeks ago, I spoke about increasing your earning capacity, but you need to be careful that you do not sacrifice rest to the god of success, power, and productivity.
- It is possible to fool yourself into thinking that you do not need rest. Some of the problems we have in our lives emanate from a lack of physical rest.
- The Bible is very clear that humans need rest, and physical rest is a gift from God.

Psalms 127: 2 It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones.

- Physical Rest requires us to relinquish control. Resting is a statement of faith in God – you are telling God that He is well capable of dealing with your world, even more so when you are at rest.
- Jesus invited this weary group of people to rest in Him.
- This is a rest from physical labor and is based on God's example of resting after creation.
- It includes taking time to be still and allowing the body to recover, as shown in the story of Elijah being told to eat and rest.
- Physical rest reminds us that we are not God – it is only God who neither sleeps nor slumbers (Psalm 121:4).

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- Not only was Jesus inviting those who were burnt out due to physical exhaustion, but He was also inviting those who were emotionally burdened.
- This brings us to the second dimension of restlessness Jesus spoke about.

FINDING TRUE REST PRT 1

2. The weariness from emotional burden

- Many people are heavily laden by burdens of the soul. This is even more dangerous because it can be more devastating than physical exhaustion.
- He extends the invitation to people with mental burdens. Are you struggling to sleep because of worry and anxiety about tomorrow? Jesus invites you to come to Him and find rest from that.
- Are you burdened by sorrow after a great loss in your life? Jesus invites you to receive supernatural comfort from Him.
- You will hear saying, do not worry about a thing – why because He knows how to deal with tomorrow.
- Jesus promises to give you emotional rest.
- This is the ability to remain at peace even amidst troubles, and it requires faith in God.
- It involves letting go of worry, fear, and anxiety, and shows trust in God with your circumstances.

Proverbs 12:25 Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad.

Proverbs 15:13 A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed.

Proverbs 25:20 Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on a wound, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.

- Are you overburdened by sin, and can't take it anymore? The burden of sin comes over you when you are not only convinced of the evil of sin but are contrite in soul for it; you are really sick of your sins and feel the need for a relief.
- Sin has a way of burdening your spirit man.

Psalms 32: 2 Blessed is the man whose iniquity the LORD does not count against him, in whose spirit there is no deceit. 3When I kept silent, my bones became brittle from my groaning all day long.

Proverbs 14:30 A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.

Proverbs 28:13 Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

- The great rest and the one that begins all other tests is rest that comes from being forgiven your sins.

FINDING TRUE REST PRT 1

- It is only Jesus who can forgive you and bring you to be at peace with God. Without the forgiveness of sins, you are in line to face the wrath of God.
- The invitation to the weary and heavily laden is wide open to all, but very few will take up the offer.
- It is for Jesus to invite you, but it is for you to respond. What restlessness have you been dealing with, and do you acknowledge the need for rest?
- Could it be that your anger issues are a result of the guilt you harbor within you? Could it be that your addictions are a result of an unsettled soul needing rest?
- Drugs will not sort out your restlessness, smoking will not, yes, even e-cigarettes will not, and gambling will not give you relief.
- Respond to Jesus and you will experience rest physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Jesus knows the weariness and fatigue that come with doing work and carrying emotional burdens.
- Jesus was the weariest that ever walked the earth, and He bore the burden of the sins of man.