

April 17, 2020 – Friday after Easter

Dearest Saints in Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25) and our victor over death (1 Corinthians 15:57).

There are a lot of people who are *exhausted* right now. Not tired. Not sleepy. *Exhausted*. Think of the healthcare workers who are on call long hours, having to be concerned with new routines, new regulations, and new burdens of care. Think of those working in nursing homes and care facilities, who are having to explain to their residents for the thousandth time why they aren't able to have visitors or eat together. Think of the law enforcement officers who are dealing with people who have no care in the world for the health of other people. Think of the teachers and educators who have had to completely change the way that they teach, who have had to become experts in online technology, and have had to try to rework their already carefully crafted curricula.

It's not just workers who are exhausted. Think of the students of those same schools, who are trying to figure out how to do school at home, who can't always get immediate help from their teachers, and who can't spend time with their friends. Think of the residents of those same nursing homes who can't receive visitors, who can't play cards or bingo together, who are missing out on all kinds of usual activities. Think of just about anyone, stuck at home with nowhere to go, lonely, isolated – *exhausted*.

There are plenty of examples of people who are wearied and exhausted in the Scriptures. The people of Israel grew faint from their wandering in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 25:18). David and his men were weary from waging war against the Philistines (2 Samuel 21:15). Agur, one of the authors of Proverbs, wrote, *The man declares, I am weary, O God; I am weary, O God, and worn out* (Proverbs 30:1). Even Jesus would often become exhausted from the crowds, or from travel (John 4:6).

How is it that Jesus dealt with this exhaustion? He went off by himself and prayed, often going up on a mountain or to some other place of solitude (Matthew 14:13, 23; Mark 6:47; Luke 6:12; 9:18; John 6:15). This was a time for him to meditate on God's Word. It was a time for him to lay out his exhaustion before his Father. It was a time to receive rest and healing from God.

What many people are experiencing now seems to be quite different, though, than what we find here in the Scriptures. We're already alone, isolated, off by ourselves. How can Jesus' example be helpful for us? Well, the rest of what Jesus did still holds true.

Meditation on God's Word and prayer will *always* bring us peace, comfort, and rest, no matter our situation. No, this does not mean our problem will magically disappear. When Jesus came down from the mountain, the crowds were waiting. Yet, Jesus continued to go off by himself to pray and to immerse himself in God's Word. Why? Because God is the ultimate source of peace and rest.

Today, no matter what your situation is, there is plenty in your life that is no doubt exhausting. The current situation hasn't made the weariness go away. Social distancing, isolation, and all of the other recommendations and rules can make us weary in their own way. But, this is all the more reason to seek after God's Word. When we do, we will find peace and rest. We will hear timeless and true messages like this - *He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for Yahweh shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:29-31).* We will find prayers like Psalm 63, where David writes, *O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me (Psalm 63:1-8).* We will hear the sweet words of Jesus, who promises, *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).*

Where else do we find Jesus – where else would we go to him – except by prayer and in his Word? Saints in Christ, I know that this is an exhausting time. As your pastor – and as your brother in Christ – I urge you to be in his Word. Take time alone to read – or listen to – the Scriptures. Take time together with family, if possible, to read and discuss God's Word. Take time to pray. Lay it all out to God! He will hear, he will understand, and he will give you peace. That is his promise, now and always!

In His Peace,
Pastor Squire