

THE NEED FOR REST AND ITS DANGERS

MARK 06:30–34

Introduction — Rest

Every person needs rest, relaxation and time alone with God. However, when the believer is seeking to rest, he must know there are some serious dangers that confront him. This passage shows three of the dangers.

- I. The disciples returned from their mission (v. 30).
- II. Danger 1: not taking time to rest (vv. 31-32).
- III. Danger 2: taking too much time to rest — when people are seeking help (v. 33).
- IV. Danger 3: losing sight of people who are as sheep without a shepherd (v. 34).

I. *Mark 06:30 Disciples as Ministers*

The disciples returned from their mission and reported to Jesus. They reported two things: what they had done and what they had taught. How they had lived and what they had taught were both of vital interest to Christ. He had given them precise instructions in both areas. This report would reveal their obedience to Him, the degree of commitment and effectiveness of each disciple. Jesus needed to know, for the salvation of the world depended on their lives and teaching. He was soon to leave all in their hands.

Thought 1. Believers are accountable both for how they live and for what they teach. They are to be obedient to Christ — living exactly as He has said and teaching exactly what He has said to teach. Every disciple is held accountable to God (2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 13:17).

Thought 2. A disciple should live and teach so that he can share anything with the Lord. He should have nothing to hide or of which to be ashamed.

II. *Mark 06:31–32 Rest and Devotion*

The first danger is not taking time to rest. The disciples were extremely tired. They had gone forth for the Lord and carried out His mission, and it had exhausted them. Since returning, the demanding crowds surrounding Jesus were pressing in upon them. They barely had time to make their reports, much less rest and meditate. Therefore, Jesus suggested they go to a quiet place and get alone with God for awhile. Note several things.

1. It was both the work of the ministry and the demands of the crowd that taxed the disciples' energy.

Thought 1. It is not work alone that tires the body. Responsibility and the weight of it create pressure and tax one's energy. Just the presence of a demanding crowd is a reminder that one is responsible to work.

2. The disciples had bodies that naturally required some relief from pressure and rest from labour.

***Psa 55:6-7** I said, “Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest — I would flee far away and stay in the desert.”*

3. The disciples had spirits that required some extended periods alone with God in meditation, study and prayer. They had to receive from God in order to share the presence and message of God. They had to be still and listen, giving God opportunity to share with them. They had to be recharged before they could charge.

***Psa 23:1-2** The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters.*

***1 Sam 12:7** Now then, stand here, because I am going to confront you with evidence before the Lord as to all the righteous acts performed by the Lord for you and your fathers.*

***Isa 28:12** To whom he said, “This is the resting place, let the weary rest;” and, “This is the place of repose” — but they would not listen.*

***Job 37:14** “Listen to this, Job; stop and consider God’s wonders.”*

4. The disciples needed a quiet, deserted place to get alone with God — not a place where others were, not a place of business, of commercialism, of fine accommodation.
5. The Lord cared about them; He cared about their exhaustion. They had poured themselves into His mission and into the lives of people. He knew they needed rest and rekindling, refuge and consoling, relaxation and worship. He had compassion upon them, so He said, “Come with me by yourselves...and get some rest.”

***Mat 11:28** “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

***Exo 33:14** The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”*

***Exo 34:21** “Six days you shall labour, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the ploughing season and harvest you must rest.”*

***Lev 23:3** There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord.*

***Psa 46:10** “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”*

***Psa 131:2** But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.*

***Prov 1:33** “But whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.”*

III. *Mark 06:33 Resting Too Long*

The second danger is taking too much time to rest. People are desperately seeking help; therefore, the believer must take only the time needed to rest his body and spirit, no more, no less. The scene was dramatic. The people saw where Jesus and the disciples were heading. They began to run by foot around the lake. As they ran, they passed through the cities shouting excitedly the news that Jesus was nearby. Throngs of people joined in the streaming mass of humanity making its way around the lake. By the time they reached the place where Jesus' ship was to dock, the crowd had grown to five thousand men not counting women and children.

This is the crucial point: the disciples needed rest. They knew it and Jesus knew it, yet here was the demanding crowd. They were interfering and keeping the disciples from their much needed rest. The disciples became irritated and soon wanted the people sent away. (This is seen by their request in v. 36 and the rude way they asked the question in v. 37.) However, Jesus knew something. The disciples had some rest coming across the lake. The sea, their old stomping ground, had relaxed them a great deal. That was sufficient to carry the disciples through another session of ministry. It was a matter of just how exhausted the human body *really* was vs. the needs of the people. In this particular case, the disciples were ready to act selfishly and take too much rest, thereby neglecting the people.

Thought 1. There is a time to minister just as there is a time to spend alone with God. There is a time to work just as there is a time to pray. There is a time to get up and get to it just as there is a time to rest and relax.

Isa 32:17 The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.

Thought 2. Unfortunately, many have the problem of resting and relaxing too much instead of working too much. Some even spend too much time in what they call Bible study, prayer and fellowship with God and neglect being out among the people enough. While on this earth, fellowship with God is primarily to prepare us to go out and minister.

John 9:4 "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work."

Acts 4:20 "For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

1 Cor 9:16 Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

Jer 20:9 But if I say, "I will not mention him or speak any more in his name," his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.

IV. Mark 06:34 The Shepherd and the Sheep

The third danger is losing sight of people who are as sheep without a shepherd. Again the scene is descriptive. As the boat approached the shore, Jesus stood in the boat watching the multitude clamouring for space on the seashore. He needed rest, and the disciples needed rest even more. But He was not annoyed or irritated with the people. Contrariwise, He was moved with deep, intense compassion because the people were as sheep without a shepherd. He could not turn from them. He could not send them away despite the need for rest. He could do only one thing. He had to meet their need; He had to teach them, so He began “teaching them many things.”

Note: when Jesus saw the multitude, He said, “They were like sheep without a shepherd.” He meant at least three things by this statement. (Jn. 10:1-6; 10:11-18. See Isa. 53:6.)

1. Sheep without a shepherd are bewildered and wander about, not knowing where they are or where they are going. They get lost ever so easily and cannot find their way back to the flock. So it is with people. People without the shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, are bewildered. They do not know where they have come from, where they are going, nor why they are where they are. They wander about, getting lost in place after place, never finding the way to true life. (See *Lost*, Lk. 15:4).

Mat 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Jer 50:6 “My people have been lost sheep; their shepherds have led them astray and caused them to roam on the mountains. They wandered over mountain and hill and forgot their own resting place.”

Ezek 34:6 My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.

2. Sheep without a shepherd go hungry. They do not have adequate nourishment. They cannot find sufficient food to live. So it is with people. People without the Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, go hungry. They do not have the Shepherd of God to feed and inspire their souls nor to satisfy their inner longings for peace, love and joy (Gal. 5:22-23). They have only themselves to depend upon as they seek to meet their craving for life. They have only themselves in seeking the answer to...

- purpose
- loneliness
- depression
- sickness
- emptiness
- assurance
- disturbance
- death

John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”

John 6:51 “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

3. Sheep without a shepherd cannot find shelter or safety. The sheep are exposed to all the dangers of the wilderness (Lk. 15:4). So it is with people. People without the Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, are exposed to all that is within the world, and they are doomed. They are doomed because the animals, the temptations and trials of the world, attack at every opportunity and destroy all who wander about.

1 Pet 5:8 *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

Psa 57:1 *Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.*

Psa 91:1 *He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.* (see Psa 61:1-4; 91:1-6) ■

LUKE 15:04 LOST (APOLLUMI)

“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them.”

Luke 15:04

To perish, to destroy, to lose, to lose eternal life, to be spiritually destitute, to be cut off. □

JOHN 10:27–29 SHEEP

The sheep of the Shepherd believe in the Shepherd. Others may not, but the sheep do. This is what Jesus was saying. Note how He used the traits of sheep to describe His followers (believers).

1. Sheep are *receptive* to the voice of the Shepherd. They know His voice and respond to it. When He calls them, they come and do what He says. Note also that they know the voice of false shepherds. (See Jn. 10:4-5.)
2. Sheep are *known* by the Shepherd, and this knowledge leads them to trust Him explicitly. The Shepherd responds to the sheep and to their faith and trust in Him. He cares for them deeply, leading and looking after them. He even knows them individually, calling them by name (see Jn. 10:2-3). The fact that He responds to them with such care and attention gives them even greater faith and trust. They trust their Shepherd without question.
3. Sheep *follow* the shepherd. They obey Him, knowing He goes before them in order to remove all obstacles and dangers (see Jn. 10:4-5).

4. Sheep are *communal*. Note the sheep follow in a group. They form a commune or a fellowship of sheep. They are a body who follow the Shepherd. (See *Fellowship*, Acts 2:42.)
5. Sheep are given *eternal life*. And note: eternal life includes an abundant life while on this earth, which begins the moment the sheep become a follower of the shepherd (See *Life in Jesus Christ*, Jn.10:10).
6. Sheep are *kept from perishing*. (See *Perishing*, Jn. 3:16.)
7. Sheep are *secure*. No man (no one) can snatch them out of the Shepherd's hand. The person who is truly in the Shepherd's hand will not be lost. The Shepherd promises this time and again (see Jn. 6:37-39). Note exactly what Jesus said. The sheep are saved from someone *trying to snatch* them away, and they are saved no matter how great the *attempt* may be. (They are secure, kept from the evil one, even the devil himself.)
8. Sheep possess a *double security* in the Owner, that is, God Himself. They are secure not only because they are in the hands of the Shepherd but because they belong to the Owner. The Owner is God, and God is greater than all. Therefore being the greatest, no one is now able or ever will be able to pluck the sheep out of God's hand. (See Rom. 8:38-39.) (Not even the devil.) □

ACTS 02:42 FELLOWSHIP

Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 02:41-42

The fellowship wrought by the Spirit of God means more than the association existing in secular groups such as civic clubs and community bodies. There is a vast difference between *community participation* and *spiritual participation*. *Community participation* is based upon neighbourly association. *Spiritual participation* is based upon a spiritual union wrought by the Spirit of God.

The distinctiveness is this: the Holy Spirit is within the Christian believer. The Holy Spirit creates a spiritual union by melting and moulding the heart of the Christian believer to the hearts of other believers. He attaches the life of one believer to the lives of other believers. Through the Spirit of God, believers become one in life and purpose. They have a joint life sharing their blessings and needs and gifts together. Note several things about fellowship that are taught by this passage.

1. Fellowship is being experienced by the new believers because they join other Christians in learning the Scriptures (apostles' teachings) and in worship (prayers and celebrating the Lord's Supper, Acts 2:41-42).
2. Fellowship forbids an unattached Christian life. Their fellowship is maintained because they "are devoted" in the Scriptures and in worship. An unattached Christian life is just impossible.
 - a. Christianity is first an individual matter, but then it becomes a social matter. The Christian is attached to Christ individually, but he is also attached to other believers. He walks with other believers in the Scriptures and in worship.
 - b. Christianity is first a spiritual organism, but then it becomes a spiritual organization. The Christian has an *inward life*, but he also takes on an *outward form* of life. He becomes a living organization with other Christian believers. He sits at the feet of the apostles' teaching and joins right in with other Christians as they worship together.
 - c. Christianity makes the true believer a saint (one who is set apart unto God), but Christianity is made up of *saints* — plural. Christianity is not just one person; Christianity is many persons — *saints*. The word is often used in the New Testament, but it is never used in the singular. Christianity is Christianity because the saints *study the Scriptures together* and *worship together*.
 - d. Christianity demands that a believer personally live out such virtues as kindness, long-suffering and love; but the believer can do this only in association with others.
 - e. Christianity means that the Spirit of God has entered the believer's life, but it also means that the Spirit of God has placed the believer into a corporate body (the church), into Christian society itself. The Spirit of God indwells the corporate body of believers as well as the individual (see 1 Cor. 3:16).
3. Spiritual fellowship faces two dangers.
 - a. Fellowship and society can be over-emphasized — to the point that individual salvation is missed. An individual must "accept His message" (Acts 2:41).
 - b. Individual salvation and individual worship, whether through nature or by any other means, can be overly stressed — to the point that Christian fellowship and society can be missed (Acts 2:42; see Heb. 10:25).

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Rom 12:5 So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

1 Cor 10:17 *Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.*

Gal 3:28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Eph 4:13 *Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

Heb 10:25 *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

1 John 1:7 *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

Psa 119:63 *I am a friend to all who fear you, to all who follow your precepts.*

Mal 3:16 *Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honoured his name. □*

JOHN 10:10 LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST

*“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” **John 10:10***

Life is one of the great words of the Scriptures. The word *life* (zoe) and the verb *to live* or *to have life* (zen) have a depth of meaning.

1. Life is the energy, the force, the power of being.
2. Life is the opposite of perishing. It is deliverance from condemnation and death. It is the stopping or cessation of deterioration, decay and corruption (Jn. 3:16; 5:24, 29; 10:28).
3. Life is *eternal* (aionios). It is forever. It is the very life of God Himself (Jn. 17:3). However, eternal life does not refer just to duration. Living forever would be a curse for some persons. The idea of eternal life is also quality, a certain kind of life, a life that consistently knows love, joy, peace, power and responsibility.
4. Life is satisfaction (Jn. 6:35).
5. Life is security and enjoyment (Jn. 10:10).
6. Life is found only in God. God is the source and author of life, and it is God who has appointed Jesus Christ to bring life to man. Jesus Christ gives the very life of God Himself (Jn. 5:26; 6:27, 40; 10:28; 17:23).

7. Life has now been revealed. It has been unveiled and is clearly seen in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ shows man what life is (Jn. 1:4-5; 5:26; 1 Jn. 1:2).
8. Life only comes to a man by believing in Jesus Christ. A man outside Jesus Christ only exists. He merely has the existence of an animal. Real life is found only in God. This is to be expected and it is logically true, for God is the creator of life. As the creator of life, He alone knows what life really is and what it is supposed to be (Jn. 3:36; 5:24; 6:47). This is the reason He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world: to show men what life is. When a person looks at Jesus Christ, he sees exactly what life is, exactly what it involves (Gal. 5:22-23):
=> love => patience => faithfulness
=> joy => kindness => gentleness
=> peace => goodness => self-control □

JOHN 03:16 PERISH, PERISHING (APOLETAI)

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

John 03:16

To be lost, to destroy utterly, to lose utterly, to lose eternal life, to be spiritually destitute, to be cut off.

1. Perishing means to be in a lost state in this world. It means to be...
 - aging, deteriorating, decaying, dying. (Mt. 8:17; 1 Cor. 15:50; Col. 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:4.)
 - without life (purpose, meaning, significance). (Jn. 1:4; 10:10; 17:2-3.)
 - without peace (assurance, confidence, security in God’s keeping). (Jn. 14:27)
 - without hope (of living forever). (2 Tim. 4:18.)
2. Perishing means to be in a lost state in the world to come.
It means...
 - having to die
 - facing judgment
 - being condemned
 - suffering separation from God and all loved ones
 - experiencing all that hell is (Mt. 5:22; Lk. 16:24; Heb. 9:27). □