

Sermon for the 2nd Sunday after Trinity Sunday Matthew 11:25-30

Come to me all who are weary and burdened



*25 At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; 26 yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. 27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 28 **Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 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. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**"*

Can you still remember your first day of school? For example, can you still remember your first school backpack? Or do you remember your first days of school? I can still remember when we got our son's first school backpack. We were afraid that with an unsuitable backpack, one could even add permanent health damage to the children. And so, everything had to fit just right. The load the boy should bear ought not crush him. We are now painfully aware that we have put much worse on our children's backs! Even so bad that our children must take to the streets and admonish us, "You stole our future!" That cannot leave us cold. And I am thinking especially of the many children who do not get to express their displeasure because they simply do not have the chance to do so. It puts a heavy burden on our shoulders because our way of life has made living conditions for future generations difficult. And this awareness affects us all. Young and old alike. In addition to these things happening in our world, there are also innumerable burdens that weigh on our backs like a hundred pounds. Concerns about the workplace, relationships that have been broken or become difficult. The many mistakes we humans make among one another weigh heavily on our shoulders, making it hard to breathe. We lie on the ground in body and soul and don't know how we can go on. "I can't breathe!" we groan.... and we don't know how to save ourselves.

The words Jesus says to us today are meant exactly for those who are so overwhelmed. Near the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus first spoke these words, the Romans crucified 2000 Jews in Jesus' lifetime. The memory of this and other bloodbaths was still fresh in people's memories.

The widows and orphans were Jesus' listeners. And Jesus could see the sadness and hopelessness in their eyes. He saw the trauma of the many who barely got away. As well as those burdened with guilt because others died for them. And His heart opened to them! It was precisely because of such hopelessness that Jesus came. It was His goal to take away the burdens of the people. And that is why He called to the mourners. Just like He calls to us today: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden... I will give you rest!" When I hear that, my heart opens. A different sound can be heard here that I'm not used to. No advertisement that promises me all sorts of things if I only buy this product or that product. No moral preacher who hammers into me all that I have done wrong and how I must live in the future. Rather, this Jesus only tells us one thing: Come to me! We can come exactly as we are. With all our worries and burdens we have accumulated over the years. With our feelings that we are imperfect. We can simply come. If Jesus calls us like this, then we know that it is God Himself who invites us. God wants us to be with Him. It could be so different: It could have been that God doesn't call us at all. It could have been that the sins that we humans have accumulated for generations would have become too much for God, too. It could be that God had finally had enough of it and left us alone with all our problems. God could have said the world can no longer be saved. But God doesn't do that, instead He comes to us! And He comes to us still today through Jesus. Jesus' shoulders are so wide that He can carry everything! In Psalm 103, the Psalmist sings: "As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;" What all this means we learn especially from Jesus who simply says: "Come!" When we look at the original text of Jesus' words, it says: "I want you to take a break!" Many people are slowly realizing that we humans need to take breaks in addition to working. The breaks in life are as important as life itself. We humans are not machines. And that's why God already determined in creation that we should take a day off. God shows us in the creation how this break should look. He pronounces His Word of blessing about everything: "Behold, it is good!" And it is precisely this Word that God speaks again through Jesus. Through Jesus, God gives us an ultimate and permanent Sabbath rest. He knows about our terrible sins and burdens. In Jesus, everything turns into goodness. Where there was sin, let there be righteousness. Where there was hate, let there be love. Where there was hopelessness and doubt, let there be faith and confidence. In addition to the many demands of our society and all the pressure we lay on ourselves, we need these words from our God. "Enough is enough! In Jesus, all is well!" For us, these words means that we can really pause. It means that we lay down everything that that makes life difficult. That we reach towards the sun of God's grace and draw from it. I know that each of us has their own burdens to carry. For some, other people's burdens weigh heavily on their shoulders. Perhaps someone has done you wrong. And these sins of others press so heavily on you that you have become bitter and cannot forgive. Sometimes the feeling is so strong that you can barely breathe from the agitation and anger. "Enough is enough!" says Jesus. Let go! Lay your burdens on me. Maybe you have done something bad yourself and this burden can also be so heavy that life can hardly be endured. Simply lay it before Jesus, the one who can carry everything on His shoulders.

When Jesus calls out His words of “Come”, He invites us to be with God. What that means is that we are closely connected with God. There is no social distance between God and Jesus. God and Jesus are so close that not even a stamp can fit between them. And God wants us to be that close to Him. With no face mask and no fear of hugging, God stands at heaven’s door and wants us to be with Him. This is how it will be when we see God face to face. But Jesus wants us to learn from Him now. We can already get to know this heaven that He wants to give us. Jesus’s yoke is easy and He wants us to learn from him. That’s why he sends his disciples into the world and gives them this command: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” Jesus’s yoke is not a new and heavy burden that we must do in addition to other things. No, His burden is easy. In all of life, we may never stop learning from Jesus. He shows us how we should deal with our families. He shows us how we should deal with our sexuality, with money, with work, with our marriages. All of this takes on a heavenly quality through Jesus. Jesus also tells us who is being addressed: “Come, everyone!” When Jesus says everyone, He means everyone! There are no exceptions. When Jesus says everyone, then I know that I am absolutely included because I belong to everyone! When Jesus says everyone, He means all other people. Including the people with whom I have problems. Jesus also wants to get to those who are my enemies. He wants to get to the educated and the uneducated. He wants to go to those who have never heard of Him and he also wants to go to those who already know everything by heart and to those for whom this has all become too boring. He wants to go to those who may have randomly come to church, and He also wants to go to those who have become children of God through a strong conviction. Jesus wants to come to all of us. And He wants us to be with Him. Just as closely as Jesus is connected to God, so He wants to be connected to us.

During my school career, I sometimes had good grades.... Sometimes, however, thick red lines told me where I was insufficient or even in danger of failing to achieve a grade. In Jesus’ class, everything runs differently. There, we always get an A+ that Jesus himself earned for us. Therefore, we always draw from His fullness. Inadequate, imperfect, unfit—there is no such thing with Him. Therefore come! And finally take a deep breath! Amen.