



6th Sunday after Pentecost

5th July 2026



Resting in God's Love

Our Gospel reading today is rather long, according to the lectionary we had the choice of leaving out verses 20-24 where Jesus rebukes the unrepentant cities. Even though some of these passages may be difficult to relate to our present situation, and also difficult to understand, we can still learn from these verses.

I always suggest that we need to look at the context and culture of the readings to fully understand the message, eg, the Prodigal Son, the Woman at the Well and the Syrophenician Woman.

It was interesting that Rev' John said exactly the same thing in his sermon last week, always check the context, it does help to read the verses before and after the reading to fully understand the meaning of the lesson and give us some background knowledge.

We notice again today that Jesus' healing and reconciling ministry continues to meet with opposition, especially from the religious authorities, whose attitude stands in contrast to the enthusiasm of the crowds. Now we shall see that that hostility becomes more widespread as the ministry in Galilee enters its later stages.

We also notice a problem that is emerging with ever growing intensity, regarding the type of messiah that Jesus is proving to be, or not to be. As we have read before, the majority of Jesus' contemporaries expect a different type of messiah. They are looking for a King, perhaps in fine clothes, perhaps on a throne and living in a palace. A king who will overthrow the harsh Roman rule and bring justice and equality.

Therefore as Jesus identifies as the Messiah in a totally different and upside down way, just as he always does things, the bulk of Jesus' contemporaries, "this generation" fail to accept him. It must be very disappointing for Jesus as misunderstanding and opposition continue to grow around

his ministry. Once again we see Jesus using imagery to illustrate the "failure of this generation", the negative response to his ministry.

In the Gospel reading today, we can imagine two different groups of children sitting in the market place. One group tries to engage the other group in their games, but without success. So the first group complains, we tried playing weddings with the flute, and you wouldn't dance; we tried playing funerals, wailing, and you wouldn't mourn. You're not much use.

These illustrations relate to the rather somber reality of John the Baptist's ministry, the funeral "game" that the children were playing representing a "mournful" ministry of John and then of course the more "festive" joyful ministry of Jesus.

Jesus and John had no chance, as they spread the Good News using their distinctive styles of ministry.

Jesus was said to be too lax, "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners" and John was just too severe and a little weird, in a good way!

And so rejection of Jesus becomes more widespread and foreshadows the "No" of the bulk of Israel to the message of its Messiah, we see the anguish of love frustrated, and effort wasted on these cities and this people closest to His heart, however Jesus' ministry in Galilee will continue in line with earlier prophetic statements.

Then Jesus began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done because they did not repent. In spite of this rejection, Jesus thanks his Father, God, for the fact that what has been hidden from the wise and the intelligent, that is the Scribes and Pharisees, has been revealed to the Little ones, those who were despised and looked down upon.

These little ones, although despised, have access through Jesus to the true knowledge of God, because, lacking wit or opportunity for study, they have no other means of knowing, except through Jesus.

Jesus adds that this is how things were meant to go, It was God's "good pleasure" that the revelation of the messianic era and the good news of the kingdom should be revealed to the poor and simple and not to the powerful and clever.

The misunderstanding and rejection that Jesus experienced was not an unfortunate outcome. This was part of a divine plan concerning the giving of revelation in connection with the kingdom. Jesus has established the fact that he is the One who truly knows the Father and the Father's saving will, so He issues an invitation as the divine Son of the Father, come to Me he says; implying not to them, in this context being the religious authorities who through their interpretation of the Torah in accordance with their tradition, impose heavy burdens upon the people; burdens that they are unwilling to lift.

Jesus offers a different way to those who are "weary and burdened", these are the ordinary people who find the strict rules and regulations burdensome. Jesus invited them to come to Him, to take His yoke upon them and learn from His instruction. In this way they will find rest, not meaning the absence of activity and idleness, but of arrival at the fullness of life in the kingdom, the enjoyment of an eternal Sabbath with God.

Jesus is presenting himself, then, as the one who can safely lead burdened humanity to rest in this final sense. However the relief is not just for the future. Those who come to Jesus will experience him as "gentle and humble in heart" and will find his yoke easy and his burden light.

The reference seems to be, to life presently lived within the Torah interpretation of Jesus. The Gospel presented Jesus as gentle and humble of heart, through Jesus we find unconditional love an extension of the love offered by God the Father. This love is what makes even the most difficult requirements "easy and light".

What do we learn from this scripture reading ?

We see here that Jesus is obedient to God the Father, even when things don't seem to go as well and as expected; we see that this was indeed God's plan in this reading.

Our prayers are always answered but not always as we would like. God has the whole picture and therefore gives us what we need.....Trust and obey.

At Dinner Church last Tuesday evening Elizabeth gave the reflection and her core message was trust and obedience to God and of course we sang Trust and Obey to conclude.

Thanks Elizabeth, it was very well received, trust is becoming more and more difficult in our troubled world especially regarding our phones and computers with scams and hackers, not to mention our daily lives that sometimes don't go the way we had planned.

Jesus gives thanks to God for all He has done, and then offers this amazing invitation, Come to Me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

These words are just as relevant to us today as they were all those years ago. Allow yourself to be drawn into relationship with Jesus and to experience His unconditional love, His saving grace, mercy, and forgiveness; and then share it !! AMEN

Finish with Jesus Calling, Sarah Young. July 5.

Draw near to Me with a thankful heart, aware that your cup is overflowing with blessings.

Gratitude enables you to perceive Me more clearly and to rejoice in our love relationship.

Nothing can separate you from My loving presence. That is the basis of your security. Whenever you start to feel anxious, remind yourself that your security rests in Me alone, and I am totally trustworthy.

You will never be in control of your life circumstances, but you can relax and trust in My control.

Instead of striving for a predictable, safe lifestyle, seek to know Me in greater depth and breadth.

I long to make your life a glorious adventure, but you must stop clinging to old ways. I am always doing something new with My beloved ones. Be on the lookout for all that I have prepared for you. Trust in Me.

Praise the Lord for these powerful words of truth and encouragement. Amen.