



rest for the weary

Sermon Growth Guide

June 23, 2024

Rest Through Allegiance

Sermon Growth Guide

June 23, 2024

Rest for the Weary - Rest Through Allegiance

Mark 3:20-34

Key Verse: Mark 3:24.

If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

Big Idea: Rest comes through allegiance.



rest for the weary

Foundations

Rest for the Weary. Jesus promises us rest. Rest today. Yes, absolutely. Today, we ought to be known by the world as a people whose souls are full of rest, undivided in their allegiance and fully nourished to live fully alive. Today, we are fed with a passage where Jesus is accused of being false. Jesus' own family, and Jesus' own national 'pastors' want Jesus silenced. His message is getting too radical. His allegiance to the "will of the Father" too extreme. Jesus is not going along with the patterns of his culture. One of the most precious pieces of thought in today's Scripture surely must be in verse 27: "No one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house." Jesus is showing his cards. A great foreshadow, that directly aligns with the ancient prophecies, unfolds here as Jesus responds to his accusers. There is a strong man, Satan, who is destroying people's souls. But there is a stronger man. Jesus, the binder of the strong man has come. Jesus has come to set the captives free. And he is showing us how to live undivided lives. Spend time catching up with one another. Joys and sorrows. Hopes and dreams. Pray for one another. Pray that you understand this Scripture better and that the Holy Spirit empowers you to put it into practice.

Understanding God's Word

Together, read Mark 3:20-34. What do the religious leaders accuse Jesus of in verse 22? In verse 31, Jesus' family arrives. If you were in this position, how would it make you feel? How might you be tempted to respond differently than Jesus? What might this mean for today?

Applying God's Word

Rest comes through allegiance. Jesus shows us what an undivided life looks like. He sets us free to live for God alone. What will it look like for your life to become even more undivided? Today Michael charged us to perform a soul allegiance inventory. Where is your will pure and whole, aligned with the will of the Father? Where is it not? Discern a practical next step to live more undivided for God's will alone.

Witnessing God's Word

Imagine your friendships with yet-believers as you live an even more integrated life, living for God and God alone. How will these relationships be more challenging? How might your witness be even more clear?

So many people are burning themselves out these days. I mean, it's cliché, right? Burnout. Are you burned out? Do you know someone burned out? Does the person sitting beside you look burned out? Careful how you answer that! One very common reason for burnout is because we default so quickly to living a divided life. How often, if we would only choose one path instead of two, would we actually find ourselves rested. But we fear we're missing out. We over-strive. We justify our hamster-wheel lifestyle with phrases like "You Only Live Once." We presume incorrectly that we don't have enough. We serve multiple masters. Instead of living one faithful and good life, so many of us are trying to live two or three or ten lives in the same amount of time. We learn together today that when my allegiance is divided, rest for my soul is not in sight. We continue in our sermon series, Rest for the Weary. Jesus offers us rest. When my allegiance is divided, rest for my soul is not in sight.

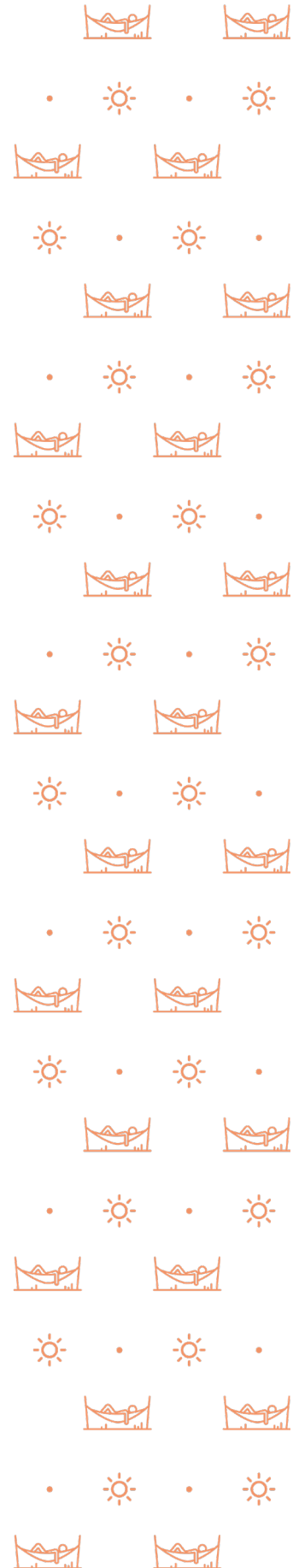
In our Scripture today, Jesus is accused of serving demons. In his defense, Jesus declares that "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand." No doubt, Jesus' original listeners, who lived every day in a divided State, felt with great pain the truth of Jesus' words.

"Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." Brother, sister, mother, you are called by your Creator, the Living God, to bear account for your life. God has created you free with the greatest of nobilities: to bear the awesome responsibility of self-rule, to "choose this day whom you will serve." You are called by God to live a life of righteousness, an undivided life. Our Scripture culminates in the very final verse with today's charge imbedded right in it. The words of Jesus, "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

So many people are burning themselves out these days. God does not give us two hours of work to be done in one

hour. Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Preachers will often elevate the image of the yoke. We've been elevating it in this series. Humor me. Imagine one yoke on one pair of oxen. Great. Now, imagine a second yoke placed on the same oxen, but forcing the oxen in a contorted, second direction. Now, if we try and place a third yoke on this poor pair of oxen, I expect one of you ought to cry out in a loud, passionate voice, "Stop! You're hurting the oxen! You can only use one yoke at a time! This is torture!" Oh, sisters and brothers, when we think of the oxen it seems so clear, so easy. So, why are we quick to add multiple yokes on our own shoulders? It's madness what we join our culture in dividing ourselves so often. I'm not talking about real hats of real responsibility; I'm talking about yokes of allegiance. God gives everyone multiple hats: child of God, sibling, worker, parent, friend - whatever beautiful combination God has given to you. It's a sacred thing to be stewarded as best as you can. Jesus is saying: you are designed to wear my one yoke of allegiance, stop trying to where three yokes of three different allegiances at the same time. "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand."

Mark 3, our passage today, contains two stories in one setting. The setting is a house. "Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat." Within this house two stories are unfolding. Call it a two-story house! One story is of Jesus' family trying to silence him and get him to come home. Jesus' family thinks Jesus has lost his mind and they are embarrassed about it. "When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, 'He is out of his mind.'" Think about that. Jesus' own family can't stand him. The



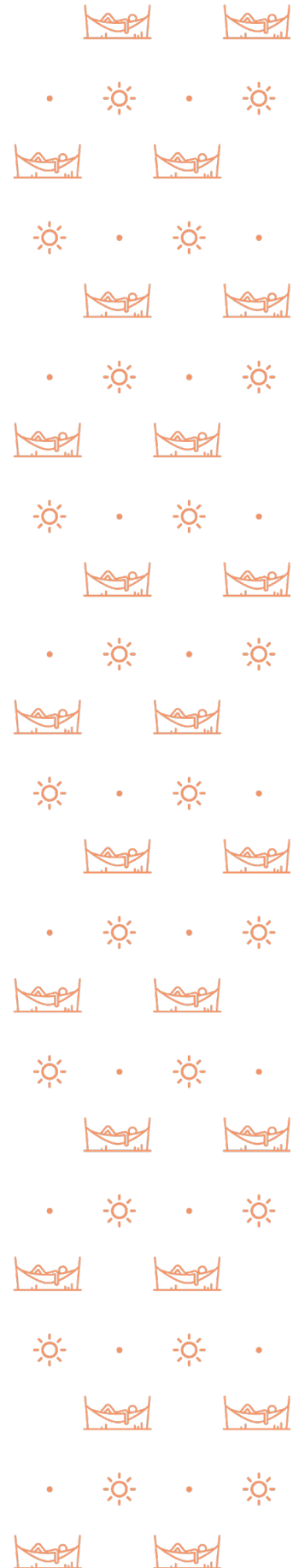
other story unfolding in the house is that of the religious leaders accusing Jesus of serving Beelzebul, a commonplace name at the time for the devil. "And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, 'He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.'" One setting, two stories – a two-story house. Both stories, note, are in one sense doing the same thing: Jesus is being accused of something serious with the intent of Jesus' ministry being silenced.

Jesus is being accused. Satan is the Father of Lies. Satan is called, The Accuser. Recall Revelation 12:10, "Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.'" The Big Idea today is that Rest comes through allegiance. You are designed by God to bear one yoke of allegiance, Jesus' yoke. Take that yoke upon your shoulders, and that yoke only, and therein you will have rest. Stop listening to the accuser, who accuses you of not doing enough, of not being kind enough, of not fill-in-the-blank-with-however-Satan-attacks-you-through-accusation, like wave upon wave of not-good-enough. You have a choice to make each and every time your Accuser moves in upon you. You can shift your allegiance, or you can stand firm. Jesus stands firm.

So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house

Full of grace and truth, wisdom from before the dawn of time, Jesus disarms those who seek to silence him. And in

doing so, Jesus gladly shows his own cards for his own mission, his own yoke. "No one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house." Why did Jesus come? John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I (Jesus) have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." You and me? We're called to live an undivided life. We all know that when we take time to think it through. Remember the great title and thought by Kierkegaard, "Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing." Our hearts know this reason. Undeniable. Faithfulness and The Good, hand in hand. But we can't do it! We've always failed. But Jesus can. Jesus' will is perfect. Jesus' heart is pure and undivided. Jesus lived in a sinful world as the sinless messiah. Jesus came that you may have life, and have it to the full. How did it do it? How did Jesus win us life, life to the full? By binding the Strong Man. By binding Satan, your accuser. "No one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house." This world, in its fallen state, I tell you it's under the control of a strong man, the devil. He's strong I tell you! Don't mess with him alone! But this I also declare to you this day. Though Satan be strong, there is a Stronger Man, the Strongest of Men, Jesus, the God-Man, who came here into Satan's house and arrested Satan and all his demons. Jesus did it with his righteousness, his purity of heart, his heart set steadily and mightily and perfectly on his Father's will, to live a sinless life and offer himself as a ransom for many. Satan thought he silenced Jesus on the cross, but it was Jesus silencing Satan. Jesus happily did not move from those nails. Jesus let himself anchor down on that cross of wood, so that his precious blood could pour out as an offering for you and for me. So that even when we find our hearts divided and we find multiple yokes of allegiance once again upon our shoulders, we know we can turn to Jesus again and again and again, and cry out, "Jesus, I've picked up these yokes yet again, but I need your yoke,



the one that is easy and light. I need you and only you. Help me, Jesus. Satan wants to silence you in my life once again, but I know you are the Stronger Man who has forever bound Satan and now, Jesus, plunder me out of Satan's grip and into your everlasting arms."

So there it is. Jesus did it for you. Here's what you must do. You must give yourself to Jesus. Live by faith. The allegiance kind of faith. And let's stop pretending we're not trying, constantly, to wear multiple yokes. Søren Kierkegaard writes "What shall it profit the sick man to imagine himself, as all men do, to be well, if the physician says he is sick!" (Søren Kierkegaard, Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing) Rest for the Weary begins by saying, "Yes, that's right, I'm weary. I want to be more like Jesus, but I keep listening to the Accuser and I keep pledging my allegiance in the wrong direction and picking up the wrong yokes."

Today's Scripture leads us to reflect on our own walk with Jesus. Dallas Willard defines discipleship this way: "Discipleship is the process of becoming who Jesus would be if He were you." (Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God) Imagine taking an hour this afternoon to perform a soul allegiance inventory. Where is your will pure and whole, aligned with the will of the Father? Where is it not? Join the Spirit in aligning your will with the will of God. So many people are burning themselves out these days. You were never meant to bear more than one yoke. Rest comes through allegiance.

