



# MINISTRIES

A Ministry of the Athens Universal Life Church  
Dr. Rob White – Senior Minister  
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**TITLE:** Come Away and Rest Awhile!

**SERMON IN A SENTENCE:** Christ calls us to life-giving rhythms of work and rest.

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Today's scripture lesson comes from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 6, verses 30 to 34 and 53 to 56.

Starting at verse 30:

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to Him all that they had done and taught.

He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a remote place and rest for a while." For many people were coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

So they went away in the boat by themselves to a remote place,

but many saw them leaving and recognized them. People ran there by land from all the towns and arrived ahead of them.

So as He stepped ashore, He saw a huge crowd and had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Then He began to teach them many things.

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and beached the boat.

As they got out of the boat, people immediately recognized Him.

They hurried throughout that vicinity and began to carry the sick on mats to wherever they heard He was.

Wherever He would go, into villages, towns, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged Him that they might touch just the tassel of His robe. And everyone who touched it was made well.

-- May the Lord add His Blessing to the reading of His Word!

-- Hello, I am Doctor Rob White with the A U L C Ministries with our message this week.

-- I am happy that you can take a few minutes out of your busy week to be with us today!

Truck drivers often drive long distances to deliver supplies to others. These dedicated drivers bring groceries to our local markets. They move lumber to mills where doors and windows are made. They deliver cars, books, computers, flowers, fish, fruits, vegetables, and even Christmas trees.

Long-haul truck drivers are hard working men and women who drive from one side of our country to the other, delivering many of the things we enjoy each day. To help them be safe on the road and function at their best, there are rules which they must follow. One of the most important rules is that drivers need to rest after they have driven a certain number of hours. They must take time off and rest a required amount of time before they can safely drive again.

We learn about the importance of rest in the Bible. Jesus and his disciples had been very busy teaching great crowds of people about God's love. Jesus said to his disciples, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while."

This is good advice for all of us - we can become very busy. It is useful and exciting to study hard in school and learn new things every day. Taking lessons to become a skilled musician, dancer, painter, or bowler is great. And it is fun to be active and play with friends.

While we are busy enjoying all the wonderful opportunities we have, it is important to remember that we also need time to be alone and to rest. Rest is important for our health and allows us to be more helpful to others. Jesus says, "Come away.... and rest a while."

Jesus had sent the disciples two by two to heal the sick and to proclaim the Gospel. Their mission was a roaring success, and they could hardly wait to tell Jesus about it. They "gathered themselves together to Jesus, and they told him all things, whatever they had done, and whatever they had taught".

Wouldn't that have been fun! Can't you imagine the excitement! While one disciple told about a dramatic healing, the other disciples would wave their hands for permission to be next. "Oh, that reminds me! Teacher, let me tell you about this one!"

Jesus let them talk! Then, after they had talked themselves out, Jesus said, "**Come away into a deserted place, and rest a while**". They were tired! Jesus could see it! They were still on a "high" from all the wonderful things that had happened to them. They probably didn't even know they were tired—but Jesus could see it. He surely told them that he was proud of them—that they had done well. Then he said, "**Come away into a deserted place, and rest awhile.**" There's a time to work, and there's a time to rest. There's a time to produce, and there's a time to enjoy.

God had acknowledged that in the creation. God created light—and day and night—and the skies and the water and the dry land—and the trees and all vegetation—and the sun and the moon and the seasons—and the birds and the fish—and all the animals—and finally humans. And then do you know what God did? God rested!

"On the seventh day God finished his work which he had made;  
and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.  
God blessed the seventh day, and made it holy,  
because he rested in it from all his work which he had created and made"  
(as we read in Genesis chapter 2 verses 2 and 3).

Later, God would tell us to keep the Sabbath holy—to make it a day of spiritual renewal and rest. There was nothing arbitrary about that. God knows that we need rest and renewal. God knows that, without rest and renewal, we will wear out before our time.

Did you ever read the little manual that comes with your car? That little manual has some good advice in it. It will tell you to check your tires to insure that they are properly inflated. It will tell you to change the oil and filter at certain intervals. It will tell you to maintain anti-freeze in the cooling system—and brake fluid in the braking system. It will tell you to perform certain types of maintenance at 7,500 miles and more extensive maintenance at 30,000 miles.

The people who wrote that book know a lot about your car. They designed and built it. Read the book! That little book is boring, but not nearly so boring as waiting to be rescued when your car breaks down in the middle of nowhere. We ignore the creator of our car at our own peril.

So also we ignore *our* creator at our own peril. God told us that we need time for rest and renewal. We're no longer under the Jewish obligation to keep the Sabbath, but the purpose behind the Sabbath is still with us. God created us with a need for spiritual renewal—for worship—for re-connecting with God—for rest. We don't do that very well these days.

When I was young, most stores were closed on Sundays. Sundays were for rest and renewal. Now the stores are open, and Sunday is just another hectic day. We think we can't take time for rest and renewal on Sunday. We have to do the laundry and mow the lawn. If we do take time for rest, we do it in the most hectic way possible. On Sunday evenings, the highways around every major city are crowded with cars full of exhausted people returning from their hectic play. We work hard and we play hard.

We're like the driver of a car who believes that he can't afford \$39.95 for an oil change. Or can't spare the car for an hour for an oil change. Keep that car moving! Keep it going! Can't take time now!

But mechanics say, "Pay me now or pay me later." They say, "Change the oil or change the engine." The person who won't change the oil will probably have to trade cars fairly often. Then he will have to work hard to make money to pay for the new car. Then he certainly won't have time to change the oil.

We're like that! We work at WORK and we work at HOME. We work at WORK and we work at PLAY.

Sometimes the church is part of the problem. In the church, as in most organizations, twenty percent of the people do eighty percent of the work. Sometimes the church works people to death. Gary Carver, a Baptist preacher, tells about a couple who joined his church. The man said, "Preacher, that last church

liked to have killed us. They almost worked us to death. We were involved in everything, and I can guarantee you that we are not going to get involved at this church." And they didn't!

Carver tells about another man who had been the Sunday School Director, a teacher, a deacon, and most everything else. The man told Carver, "I had to get out. I had two boys growing up in my home and I looked at my calendar and in one month I had spent twenty-six nights at the church. Twenty-six out of thirty!" (Dr. Gary L. Carver in his sermon, "Mingling with the people.")

I heard about a pastor who was trying not to be part of the problem. He changed the sign outside the church to read, "EXPRESS WORSHIP, 45 MINUTES, GUARANTEED!"

I must admit to being torn about that. Keep it holy, but keep it short! Preach ten minutes and skip communion! Sing the first and last verses! Cut out some of the prayers! We're like the man whose wife complained that she never saw him, so he bought a laptop to bring his work home. How can we build relationships with God or spouses or anybody else when we're moving so fast?

Jesus told the disciples, "**Come away into a deserted place, and rest awhile.**" The disciples needed rest! They needed time to recharge their batteries! So do we! We think that we can't take the time, but we must! We know that, if we run our car flat-out, it won't be long before our car won't run at all. The same is true for us. If we run ourselves flat-out, we will one day find ourselves broken down alongside the road of life.

Jesus told the disciples, "**Come away into a deserted place, and rest awhile.**" Then the story took a nasty turn. People saw where they were going, and got there ahead of them. When Jesus and the disciples got to their quiet place, a great crowd was gathered there waiting for them.

It's interesting to see how Jesus handled that. He could have been angry. The disciples were weary, and the crowds had upset Jesus' plan for a quiet time.

- Jesus could have said, No miracles today, folks! Go on home! Come back during our regular hours! But that is not what he did.
- Jesus could have told the disciples to pull themselves together and go back to work. But he didn't do that either.

Jesus didn't impose on the disciples, who were weary from their travels. Jesus had compassion on his disciples. He also had compassion on the crowd. He saw that they were like sheep without a shepherd, so he began to talk to them. He began to teach them. He began to lead them. He began to herd them along in the right direction. He became their shepherd. They brought their sick to him, and he healed them.

Jesus didn't organize his disciples to work the crowd. He didn't say, "Guys, I know you are tired, but we have to go another inning!" There was no frantic quality to Jesus' ministry. He just touched the crowd with God's power, and that was all that was needed.

**The hymn**, "Take Time to Be Holy", is a good example of the Lord making more of our work than we could have expected.

The man who wrote the words to "Take Time to Be Holy" was neither a pastor nor a songwriter. William Longstaff was an English businessman—a Christian layman who took his faith seriously.

Hearing a sermon on the text, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," Longstaff was inspired to write a poem, "Take Time to Be Holy." Being a good businessman, Longstaff had a practical mind. That is reflected in this hymn, which offers many practical suggestions for becoming holy.

- He says, "Take time to be holy," which reflects his understanding that holiness, like every virtue, requires time and attention to develop it.
- He says, "Speak oft with the Lord," reflecting his personal experience that prayer deepens faith.
- He says, "Take time to be holy, Be calm in your soul; Each thought and each motive, Beneath His control," telling us that we can face adversity calmly if we look to Christ for guidance.

Longstaff managed to get his poem published in a Christian newspaper, but that was the end of it—or so it seemed. But as it turned out, George Stebbins, a Christian musician, had seen the poem and had clipped and filed it. Years later, needing a hymn on the subject of holy living, he remembered the poem and set it to music. It has been a favorite now for more than a century.

I don't know whether Longstaff ever knew that Stebbins had set his poem to music. I don't know that he ever heard it sung. I know only that he felt called to write the poem—and that God took care of the rest. When we do something good—something for God—we might never know the full measure of good that we have accomplished. We can only know that God will take what we offer, great or small, and make of it a treasure.

There's a lesson in that for us. Yes, there's a great deal to do, but we need to leave God's part in God's hands. We need to do our part, but then we need to let the Lord do his part. Christ calls us to be people of faith—not a people of worry—not busy, anxious people. Christ calls us to believe—to believe that, once we have done our part, we can trust God to do God's part. George MacDonald put it this way:

"Learn these two things:  
never be discouraged because good things get on so slowly here,  
and never fail to do daily that good which lies at hand.

Do not be in a hurry but be diligent.  
Enter into the sublime patience of the Lord.  
Let patience have her work and bring forth her fruits.

Trust to God to weave your little thread into a web  
though the patterns show it not yet."

What wonderful advice! What salvation lies in these words. Never be discouraged. Do your part. Be patient. Trust God! That's the key, isn't it! Trust God! We have to do our part, but then we need to trust God.

"Trust to God to weave your little thread into a web  
though the patterns show it not yet."

Allow God to take away your spirit of anxiety—and give you the peace that passes understanding.

-- That's our Lord's message for this Lord's Day and I hope you got a blessing out of it!

-- Go out this week and be a blessing and be blessed! -- For the more you are a blessing, the more you will be blessed!

-- Thank you all for watching and listening and we will see you all next week!

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