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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749

Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
January 26, 2014  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Scripture Lessons: Numbers 24:10-27; Romans 5:1-5  
Hymns: 351; 364; 421; 50 (26:1-3)

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and  
our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Matthew 11:25-30

At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You,  
Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden  
these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed  
them to babes. 26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good  
in Your sight. 27 All things have been delivered to Me by  
My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father.  
Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the  
one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. 28 Come to  
Me, all you 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."

(NKJV)

This is the Word of God!

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is  
truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, the Savior of all the world, dear fellow Redeemed.

INTRO: Where does one turn?

We have all faced difficult situations when we knew we needed help, and we didn't know where to turn, we didn't know who to call. It isn't always something life threatening that leaves one feeling at wits end. For me it has happened a couple times when traveling that my car has broken down when I was a long way from home. Who do you call? I didn't have triple A, and even if I had, would they have gotten me to a mechanic that wouldn't take advantage of the situation? One could list any number of situations that others have experienced that are more or less serious, but it doesn't take much for us to become agitated and unsure of what to do.

What about when real trouble comes into one's life? We may find ourselves turning to people and needing to trust people we have never even met before, and they are the ones that have our lives in their hands. They may be doctors or lawyer, or some other type of professional, and we may be told that these are the best there is out there in the world, but that doesn't give peace of mind or heart. People are fallible, and we know it.

Then what about eternal life and death? Then where should one turn? There are many different answers out there in the world that offer hope, and speak of peace but there is only One that brings us a sure and certain hope for life and guarantees us peace. That is the voice of Jesus who calls to us and says –

## **THEME: Come to Jesus!**

Come to Jesus --

### **I. If You would Know God.**

People like to think about God, and then they like to apply their own thoughts to define who and what God is. We have all heard people postulate that a good God would never send people to hell. People see God as being something that they can grasp with their own minds, and fathom with their own reason. In other words people think that God ought to be like them, or rather like they like to think of themselves. But people aren't at all like God. People are not truly just and fair. We see things from our own perspective all the time. Watch a football game with a fan of the other team and it will not take long for you to understand how differently people can view the same event. We are very much inclined to minimize our own failings while maximizing the sins of others. We don't like to apply the word sin to our mistakes and missteps, after all sin is bad, and we all know bad people, and we all know "I'm not one of them." As a result of that we can have the mistaken notion that God sees the good things we do for others and doesn't see the bad thoughts or actions that we have successfully hidden from other people. We think that the good that we do surely greatly outweighs any little wrongs that we might have done, and so God will gladly receive us into heaven.

All that is the thinking of natural man, and natural man does not know God and he can't know God because these are spiritual things, and we are by nature carnal, tied to the flesh, tied to the things of this world, tied to the

thinking of this world. That is the wisdom of this world. In 1 Corinthians chapter one we read:

**1 Corinthians 1:20-21** Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

The world doesn't have the answers. Spiritual truth and peace does not come from the mind of man, it comes from the mind of God. The wise of this world are so pretentious! They are confident that by their meditation, and introspection, and philosophical machinations, they are able to resolve the answers to man's problems and find the key to peace and inner tranquility. **"Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"** This is exactly the Lord Jesus' point in our text when He praises His heavenly Father, saying:

**Matthew 11:25-26** "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. 26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.

The answers for spiritual life, for inner peace, for true tranquility they all come to us from the mind of God, and God has revealed these wonders of His grace to us through His Son.

**Matthew 11:27** All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

True peace is found only in knowing the one true God, and knowing Him for who He truly is. We know many of the attributes of God, that He is all powerful, and wise, even all knowing. We know that He is holy and just and fair, and these qualities of God we can know by nature, by observing the world around us in an honest way, and knowing what our own conscience tells us, but even then we do not truly know God, not as our Father. That only comes to us through the revelation of Jesus Christ. And so Jesus declared on the night He was betrayed, on the night before He died.

**John 14:6** Jesus said ..., “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Jesus leads us to God. If you would know God then come to Jesus, and you will know the true and living God that loved us underserving sinners so much that He sent His only-begotten Son into the world. And so the Lord invites us to Come to Jesus --

## **II. If You Would find Rest for Your Souls.**

**Matthew 11:28-30** Come to Me, all you 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.”

Jesus speaks to those who labor and are heavy laden. Who is Jesus talking about? He is talking about those who labor under the weight of the law of God. The law tells us what we should do and of course what we are not to do! Sounds simple enough, but our flesh rebels against

being told what to do. The law speaks to us of loving God totally and completely with all our might with all our heart and soul, with all our mind, and yet our mind thinks about us, and what we want and what would make us happy. There is conflict there that just doesn't go away. One cannot serve God and the desires of one's flesh. The law of God is so strict. The law of God is so demanding. The law of God never leaves us alone, it is always, always, always telling us what to do, and when to do it, and how to do it!

Jesus says, **“Come to Me all you who labor”** under the law. Christ has fulfilled the law, and freed us from the condemnation of the law, and delivered us from the slavery to our own sinful desires which rebel against the holy will of God.

Jesus says, **“Come to Me all you who ... are heavy laden.”** Heavy laden, carrying a great burden of guilt and shame and the condemnation of the law on our backs. And indeed the burden of our sin is backbreaking. Guilt can haunt the nicest people in the world. It can haunt them because even the best of us, even the kindest of us have sins of which we are ashamed, and we ought to be ashamed. We have sinned daily and much. We have had evil thoughts and desires and lusts of the flesh, and gossiped about our neighbor, and coveted the goods of others, we have been angry without a cause, and cursed others in our minds if not with our words. We have sinned against man and against God, and we are heavy laden with a burden that is too great for us to bear, far too great for us to bear.

And Jesus says: **“Come to Me all you who ... are heavy laden.”** Why Jesus? Because **“the Lord has laid on Him**

**the iniquity of us all**”(Isaiah 53:6) Yes, Jesus has taken our load of sin and guilt and condemnation, and shame, - He has taken it all – He has taken it upon Himself and He bore it to the cross where Jesus endured the full penalty of divine justice for our sin, for **all** sin! Jesus took our sins away! Jesus takes YOUR sins away – far away – **“As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us”** (Psalm 103:12).

Come to Jesus, take His yoke upon yourself. His yoke is the yoke of the gospel that constrains us according to the love of God, and directs us on the path to heaven. His burden is light. It is the burden of love, God’s love for us that fills our hearts that we might love others. It is this love that we learn from Christ who is meek and lowly in heart. He came to earth not for His good and glory, but to benefit us with His forgiving grace. He came, not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for the many, many lost sinners in this world (Mark 10:45).

The invitation of our Lord still goes forth from His Word. He calls to us yet today and says, **“Come to Me ... and I will give you rest. ... and you will find rest for your souls.”**

When troubles come and we have tribulations, where shall we turn? We turn to Jesus, we come to Jesus, we know we have access by this grace to the throne of God, and we shall find grace to help in time of need. The answer is there with the Lord. Come to Jesus and you shall find rest for your souls. He alone has the answer to sin and death. He alone possesses the key to eternal life. It is there for all who, by the gracious calling and power of the Holy Spirit, Come to Jesus, and find in Him our

peace, our rest, the way to God, and heavenly bliss and glory.

**AMEN.**

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.