

I don't know about you, but I am weary. Last Monday morning, when I heard about the rapid rise of infections in Texas, Florida and other parts of the country, I grew weary. As the week progressed, I saw more videos of white people yelling at black people about simple actions like taking mail out of their own mailboxes and building a patio, I thought these divisions are escalating not decreasing. As business close, jobs are lost for good and summer celebrations are cancelled, it just seems too much.

In this state of weariness, I came to Jesus' words in today's gospel. "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, 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." These words usually wash over me like a waterfall on a hot day. I hear Jesus saying to me - I am with you. I am all around you. I will make going forward possible despite the burdens that face you. And yet as I read Jesus's words and reflected on them, I found that I was not feeling the rest. Where was the yoke meant to ease my burden? It occurred to me that I might be missing the rest that Jesus offers, that I might be expecting a different kind of yoke than the one Jesus offers.

Therefore it is interesting that our gospel reading today is part of Jesus' response to John the Baptist who is dealing with his expectations not being met. You remember John – the wild preacher in the wilderness wearing camel's hair, eating locusts, and proclaiming the coming of Jesus. John is now sitting in jail and Jesus is not doing what John was expecting him to do so he sends his disciples to ask Jesus – Are you the one to come or is there another?

In the part Jesus' response that we have for this morning, I hear him addressing the situation of expectations not being met. He says this generation is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.' In other words we were there and you did not participate.

Jesus goes on to give examples of how both he and John were misunderstood.

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

I get the feeling that generation of that time missed a lot. I get the feeling that our generation misses a lot too. I asked myself - Is Jesus playing music, and I am not dancing. Is Jesus wailing and I am not mourning? Am I like John coming to Jesus with expectations that Jesus is not about? Am I missing what Jesus is doing?

We all have our expectations and often Jesus is working in very a different way. How can we hear the music and the wailing? How can we hear the words that Jesus is saying to us, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest?" What is the rest we are expecting? How do we think Jesus should be relieving our burdens?

I took some time to answer those questions for myself? The rest I am longing for is for all that has been going in recent times to stop. I want the rate of daily Covid 19 infections to drop – big time. I want people to start seeing each other as human beings, as brothers and sisters all created by God. I want us to start listening to one another and figure out how we can heal the racism that pervades our society. But perhaps that is not the rest Jesus is offering me at this moment. And so I have to ponder what rest is Jesus offering me because I know he is offering me rest. I know God is working to get us from where we are to a better place. I know God is at work healing this world.

I am assuming that I will find rest when the world is healed or at least healed of what I want it to be healed of, but that is my expectation. It occurred to me even if the world is healed of Covid-19 and our country of racism, the ‘rest’ I think I will feel may not be there because something else will happen. Perhaps my rest will come when I trust God to do that work, when I yoke myself to God. As one person said this week to me – I am taking my hand off the wheel. I’m giving it all to God. She also said, “So often I take my hand off the wheel, give it to God and then take it right back, but I can’t do that anymore. It is just too much.” Receiving this rest from Jesus is going to take some practice.

What if I trust God is working and instead of fretting that we aren’t there yet, look around to see how God is working right now? Might I realize that God is right there with me offering me rest that is not possible in any other way. In the spirit of looking around to see how God is working, I want to share with you some images that speak to me of how God is at work in our world.



The first is from Chicago where 12-year-old Jahkil Jackson and his nonprofit, [Project I Am](#), normally assemble and distribute bags filled with hygiene products for homeless men and women. During the pandemic, he provided them for senior citizens.



The next is from our food pantry where our volunteers continue to show up every Thursday. In the first few weeks of the pandemic we were serving sixty something families and we thought that was a lot. Last Thursday, we served 93 families. I see God working in our volunteers who go get the food, sort it, package it and give it out



Still with the pantry, I see God in all the various people who collect food for our pantry. They are new friends to our pantry either buying the food themselves or collecting from neighbors.



And then there are our healthcare workers who look after those who come through their doors. There are so many stories of nurses and doctors caring for patients as if they were family when their families could not come.



I see God at work when white women in Louisville, KY, lined up to form a human shield to protect black protesters on June 1.



I also saw God at work when black protesters protected a policeman who got separated from his fellow officers during a protest.



In Minnesota, the state where Floyd was killed, an officer and a demonstrator shared an emotional embrace during a protest in St. Paul.



Then there are the flags in our church that remind us that our church had folks on the both sides of the Revolutionary War. We don't know the details of how it was for them or what tensions went on in our congregation, but we know that they continued to serve God and St. Peter's ministry continued.

If you are not feeling the rest that Jesus is offering. Pause. Take your hands off the wheel. Look around and take time to see what is happening in the world, in your city, and in your neighborhood. Spend time in prayer and meditation and with scripture because our world will not spend much time on the good that is happening. You will have to look and to pay attention. Jesus is offering the kind of rest that nothing else can offer. Let yourself be yoked to Jesus and see how that will change this world.