



## **The Fifth Sunday After Pentecost**

Sunday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### **The Venerable Peter Scott**

Sermon Transcript

#### **Matthew 11:16-19;25-30**

“But to what will I compare this generation? It 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.’ 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!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.” At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. “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.”

## **The Burdens We Carry**

I am feeling a bit overwhelmed these days. Not a surprising statement to hear, but perhaps one that you wouldn't expect from the Rector. It would seem that I am looking for the smallest things that will give us hope that we are moving forward through the pandemic. The other day I was walking along First Street and I noticed that the Tim Hortons was open for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic because they don't have a drive through. It was now open to walk-in orders and although you couldn't stay and have your coffee, it was a change, a step in the right direction. We look for this sort of thing in a time which I describe as 'boredom mixed with anxiety'. We are anxious about our health and those we love, while at the same time, we are bored with the routine of not being able to come together except under restrictions and in limited circumstances. It is for the good of others that we continue as we have been socially distancing, washing our hands, and staying safe.

Jesus words in today's reading are words that I think we all need to hear at this time: "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 are words that those who come to the 8:30 service know well because they are repeated every week and make up part of which are known as

the comfortable words, or 'comfy words' as they are sometimes known. Those that labour and are heavy laden will be refreshed by Jesus is the take-away from these verses. Let's unpack what they mean for us. I have divided what I read by verse: 11:28 "Come to me...;11:29 Take my yoke upon you...and finally,11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

11:28 "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Jesus is inviting all people, not a specific group, but all those who are weary and carrying heavy burdens. That can include just about anyone at one point in their lives. During the pandemic, possibly, most or all of us have felt weary and like we are carrying heavy burdens. I have talked with a number of you who have either had the Covid test or know someone who has had one. I had the test a couple of weeks ago and tested negative. Getting the test was a well-run operation and I commend those frontline workers for their patient, caring presence in what are a series of protocols that are repeated day in day out. I am sure that they would know what boredom mixed with anxiety means. Thankfully, having testing negative, I would say that it made me think about how if I had tested positive, I would have had to have to call all those I had come in contact with and burden them with my news. I usually call people to help them with their burdens, listen and pray for them; this is something all of have done and I suspect this is especially true during the pandemic. We all are to bring the light of Christ in our lives to lighten the burdens of others which leads me to my second point, verse 29.

11:29 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. We can learn

from Jesus to be gentle and humble in heart. This point is short and simple. I remember when my father died very early on in my ministry at St. Mark's, 19 years ago today in fact. I remember a lot a words of comfort, but it was a hug from Archdeacon Marion Vincett, that I remember the most. She knew that there was a burden and that's all I needed at the moment. The fancy language for that is a theology of presence, showing up, being with people. Jesus was there for people then and is present with us now as he promised. And we are called to do the same; to be there when needed.

11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." You will notice that there is still a yoke and that there is still a burden, but they are easy and light. We have been shown also that this new way of doing things over the internet has its challenges as we try to log on each week hoping that the technology will work. We all know that it is nothing like in person worship and ministry; that is our burden and our yoke at this time. We all have been living in a very difficult time as we come to the end of our fourth month since the Bishops closed the Anglican churches in Ontario. What it has revealed to us is that we miss each other, we miss the church and we miss fellowship. God is with us and, it has been my experience, more so in our times of need that at any other time. That is what this passage is about; it is for the weary, carrying heavy burdens, Jesus is gentle and humble of heart, present to us and we will find rest in our souls. We are still worshipping God, we are still singing God's praises, we are still doing ministry and I very much appreciate your ongoing support through your donations to the church.

At this time, we are now reaching out to vulnerable groups by permission of the Bishop and so our Food Cupboard is opening this

week, and 12 step groups with a limit of 10 are allowed back into the church building. We have the Primate coming to us next week and we are going to celebrate the Eucharist today online for the first time in our history. We are pleased to announce that Liam Croft has been appointed Technical Coordinator at St. Mark's retroactive to June 1 and until September 1. We all give thanks for Liam's expertise and diligence in bringing what are some of the best production values to our videos in the Diocese of Niagara. Liam, as well, has given counsel and advice on all our digital platforms (St. Mark's Website, Mailchimp, Facebook, YouTube and Zoom). Welcome (officially) to our team Liam and thank you your all you have done for St. Mark's ministry! And finally, we have received a grant from the Emergency Community Support Fund for \$5,000!! The monies from this grant will go toward technical support to develop St. Mark's digital presence and the work of Liam as our Technical Coordinator.

Signs of hope, yet signs that we are still having to carry the burden and the yoke of not being together. I pray as we go forward that we take with us Jesus words of hope and comfort into our lives and those we meet this week in person and digitally in this week ahead. Amen.