

**15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity: September 8, 2024**  
**“But I’m So Tired”**

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Our text for this morning is our Epistle lesson, Galatians 5, especially these words, “<sup>7</sup> *Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.* <sup>8</sup> *For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.* <sup>9</sup> *And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.* <sup>10</sup> *So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*”<sup>1</sup>

Times are tough. Pagan teachings have infiltrated the church and threaten God’s people in a congregation that has been around for less than 50 years. The city in which the congregation is located has many things with which to stay busy and many more than fill the eyes and ears with all kinds of messages. God’s Word is challenged in both overt ways and subtle ways. It raises important, but often unanswered questions, “How much of God’s Word do I really have to know? How much do I really have to listen to? When does the observance to days and customs in the community around us actually challenge the teaching of God’s Word? Are there things that undermine the observance, the hearing, the reception of God’s Word? Whose to say this man who makes me feel bad on Sunday is actually right anyways? There are others out there who obviously know more. Their message, their words, often bring more happiness and their calendar makes more sense than whatever day of the Church Year this guy says we are supposedly observing.”

This is much the sentiment of the Christians in Galatia. While Christians have the Gospel preached to them and they are repeatedly told of all Christ has done for them, they find it harder and harder to actually see it around them. They were growing tired, and every passing hour met them with growing fatigue. The demands of being a Christian, the expectations clearly laid out in the Word of God, while living in an age that reveled in the pigsty of immorality and exulted godlessness and sought triumph in all things apart from God, were too great for them to meet.

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians 6:7–10

The race of life was longer and harder than they had expected. They were ready to give up, to throw in the towel, or at the very least to call time out and rest awhile.

Being tired is not a sin, but being tired can make it easier to be enticed or forced away from God. There are some very natural reasons why people grow tired. One is that they are not accustomed to the hard work that their daily tasks set before them. Athletes are good examples of this. A cross-country runner knows that in order to run a long race like that, they do not just wake up one morning and say, "I am going to compete in Cross Country this afternoon." Then they show up and take off in a sprint for more than three miles. They know that they cannot compete until they have first spent many long hours rigorously training to get mind and body hardened for the season that lies ahead. He runs for many previous weeks, toughening the muscles and sinews in his legs so that when the big day for that important race arrives, he'll be ready to run and no collapse in home stretch.

Paul uses the image several times when speaking to Gentile Christians. The athletic games were important to their culture. Feats of strength and speed and mental prowess were an important way that not only served entertainment purposes, but also allowed for bragging rights and gave goals of physical and mental fitness.

Paul notes that we too, are athletes- Christian athletes - running the race of life. And how often don't we complain that the legs of our spirit ache and throb! They are so weary. In fact, we are often afraid they will give out entirely. Could it be, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, that we tire of running because we have not run enough? Perhaps we have not been Christians enough nor consistently enough. Maybe there is something lacking in our training, either physically, nutritionally, or mentally and disciplined.

In our Offertory, we are now singing that God's Word is what guides our life and is our stay in death. At other times we sing and ask God to renew a *right* spirit within us. Do you know what that request is asking? The word right means consistent. We're asking God for an attitude of the heart that is daily consistent with the confession on our lips about being faithful Christians.

So, again, could it be that the sinews of our spirits are weak from disuse? Do we tire of church work because we have not worked enough for church? We tire of giving because we have never given enough to stretch and harden the muscles of giving. We set out with a brisk spurt of kindness and soon become exhausted because we have long been accustomed to unkindness.

Are we quick off the blocks, and then leave nothing in the tank? Are we undisciplined? Do we even start with the right and proper nutrition to give the body, to give faith, what it needs to meet the long and trying days ahead? In any congregation, who often gets counted on? Is it not those who through long years of faithful and sacrificial concern for the things of God are accustomed to the long, patient, and uninteresting stretches of the race? They are not the only ones of course, but do we not often look to them for wisdom and guidance?

All of this is to say, the best way to train for hard work is by hard work. Sprinting has its place, but the Christian life is not built on sprinting. Jesus knows of tiredness and the importance of endurance and discipline. He endured suffering and divisions and dissension and deceit. His enemies rushed at him with a barrage of false teachings and accusations to try and get him to tire and entice Him away from the pace He had set. The devil tried to tempt Him to run a shorter race, to take the glory without the way of the cross. Death sprinted for Him and Jesus had trained for this moment.

He who had to be about His Father's business, ran the race of life, perfectly, for you. He carried your sins with Him and while death was sprinting to the finish line, Jesus exclaimed, "Father, forgive them." When it seemed as though death would win, He called out, "It is finished." The tired Jesus had seemed to lose the race of life and death had been the victor. He was laid in the tomb to rest from His labors of paying for your sins and mine. A lifeless body collapsed on the field and was laid to rest.

But that was not the end of the race. He rose from the dead to put an end to death. That victory is now yours. He ran the race perfectly, and by doing so, won for you forgiveness of sins, rescue from death and the devil, and eternal salvation.

To the victor go the spoils, and in Christ, you are the victor. How do you get these great spoils? By His nourishment through Word and Sacraments. It begins with proper nutrition.

The long dreary work is not the only reason one can become tired. A person may tire because something is draining off his strength. There may be a foreign cancerous growth eating away life's energy; something that saps your energy and drains your vigor. You cannot expect to feed both a tapeworm and your hungry life cells. Some secret sin may be robbing you, burrowing away to undermine the peace of God.

If you have been trying to sustain both an evil habit and a good life, can we really wonder, that despite all our determination, our good intentions don't materialize? We can't knowingly, willfully continue to give in to our pet sins of jealousy, pride, greed, and lust—a condition that only helps to aggravate the already weakened state of our sinful life, and then expect to be robust and healthy for the race of life. Every time we listen to and then surrender ourselves to the voice of Satan, we bleed ourselves of the spiritual sap that is so vital if we are not to grow weary and fatigued.

Jesus says we cannot serve two masters. We cannot divide our loyalties between that which is high and that which is low without betraying and killing out that which is high. What has light in common with darkness? It is either one guest or the other. If we choose to play host to that which is evil, that which is good will depart no matter how piously we plead for it to remain. We cannot allow the cancer of willful sinning to eat away unchecked at the stomach of our spirit and still expect to feel radiant and full of pep. Daily we must perform plenty of painful surgery to keep this cancer in bounds. Otherwise, our weariness will be unto death.

Some people grow tired because they fail to see results. They work hard and long but still seem to get nowhere. This should not be the case with the Christians. When Jesus told us to love our enemies, He did not promise that our enemies would suddenly become our friends. It is as though He said, “Because I have loved you with a love that carried Me to the cross, love one another. Because I have humbled Myself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, for you, be like-minded toward one another. Because I loved you even when you were as yet unborn, because I bled for you though you knew it not, because I came to seek and to save you though you sought Me not, because I suffered hell that you might forever enjoy heaven, because I was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death that you might know joy eternal, because I died that you may live, because I was cursed that you might be blessed because I was forsaken of God that you might never know this horror, therefore hold up the example of My love before your eyes to move you to live in love for one another.”

How difficult this is to practice when our efforts gain such small results! How discouraging it is when after years of being kind to someone he still remains surly and unforgiving! But his unkindness should not kill our kindness – not for Christians! The fountain of our kindness is fed by the eternal springs of the Lord's kindness to us and not by the responding kindness of our fellow men.

Thus, it should be with any noble cause in life. It can become tiresome when after long years of pleading with our friends and family to come to church and share the blessings of God's love with us, they still stubbornly refuse. It can be enticing for our spirits to sag, when day after day we plug along in our jobs, our Christian living, yet fail to see any spectacular progress! Often after years of patient and arduous striving we find ourselves blocked at every turn either by our own weaknesses or the evil of the world and the wickedness of people around us. And it is then that we may want to despair and give up the race.

Yet we don't, for through Paul, God the Holy Spirit says, “***Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. <sup>8</sup> For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. <sup>9</sup> And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.***”<sup>2</sup>

When the Last Day comes, God's side will be in full triumph. In the meantime, we walk by faith and not by sight; now we see through a glass dimly but then face to face. God has never promised that we shall see the results of our labors. He has only asked that we be faithful in discharging them.

This isn't always fun, nor is it always easy. We cannot, on our own, rise above all these things that help make us tired Christians. When we find ourselves feeling, “But, God, I'm so tired,” we hear the words of Isaiah, “***they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.***”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Galatians 6:7–9

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 40:31

Jesus gives us food for eternal life—full balanced, proper nutrition. The Law doesn't always taste so good, but it is necessary. The Gospel is sweet though. Through God's Word, the Bread of Life, our spiritual sinews are nourished. Through hearing and hearing the word of Christ, through preaching, through reading, marking, and learning, we inwardly digest and assimilate this heavenly food, and it becomes part and parcel of every demand of life. And through persistent daily exercise of Christian virtues, we discipline and strengthen these muscles until they become steeled and skilled to do the most exacting and laborious tasks.

When you find yourself feeling, "But God, I'm so tired," my encouragement for you, is commit this to your memory and make it a regular part of your exercise and weight training,

**C** Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -  
 new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -  
 way from Thy pres-ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it  
 from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va -  
 tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir-it. A - men.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

**Prayer of the Church**  
**Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity**  
**8 September 2024**

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troubled life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, Lord, in Your mercy grant us a safe lodging and a holy rest and peace at the last. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, God of all concord, it is Your gracious will that Your children on earth live together in harmony and peace. Defeat the plans of all those who would stir up violence and strife, destroy the weapons of those who delight in war and bloodshed, and, according to Your will, end all conflicts in the world. Teach us to examine our hearts that we may recognize our own inclination toward envy, malice, hatred, and enmity. Help us, by Your Word and Spirit, to search our hearts and to root out the evil that would lead to strife and discord, so that in our lives we may be at peace with all people. Fill us with zeal for the work of Your Church and the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which alone can bring that peace which is beyond all understanding. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, You have promised to send Your holy angels to guard and keep Your children. We thank and praise You for the gift of life and for the protection and care you have provided as *Chris* celebrates his birthday, and *Tammy and Luke* celebrate their baptismal anniversaries. Grant that they may grow in grace, continue to know Your loving-kindness, abide in the confession of Your care and protection, serve You faithfully all the days of their life and finally come to the fullness of Your joys in heaven; Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father of all mercy, You never fail to help those who call upon You in faith. Give strength and peace to Your servants who are afflicted in body, mind, or spirit, especially *Dick, Gavin, Esther, Ruth, Ann, William, Zoey, Jeri, Pastor Small, Debbie, those we name in our hearts*. Grant that they may know that You are near, and that underneath them are Your everlasting arms. Grant that they, resting on Your protection, may fear no evil, for You are with them to comfort and deliver them. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Increase our faith, O Lord, and grant that all who come to Your Supper may come in repentance, seeking Your forgiveness, and in the unity of a true confession. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**