

## The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (2017)

**Matthew 11:25–30** At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; 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 who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**”

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Dearly beloved:

Rejoice, greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout daughter of Jerusalem! Dear ones, WE are the daughter of Lord’s Mount Zion! WE are indeed the tender daughter of the Living God’s Holy City! This is the Church of Jesus the Christ!

For as Zechariah told, He entered the OLD City in a way King’s and Christ’s simply never had. David had a tough time of it, when son Absalom rebelled against him. Read in Second Samuel, starting chapter 13 or so; and eventually you read how poor David himself had to, basically, sneak out the

back door of Jerusalem. 'Barefoot,' the Scriptures say; and stepping out the path his Son and Lord would take: across the Kidron Valley, weeping up the Mount of Olives, being cursed and mocked all the way: 'NOW who is KING!'

My dear ones: the day we were baptized by the authority of the One Who beckons us to Himself, to take on HIS yoke, calling it 'easy' and 'light' and our 'rest,'—something MAY have changed about US—that is the Lord's business, not MINE! But when we were baptized with all the authority of heaven and earth, heaven and earth changed—that's for SURE! Meaning, GOD changed—the way HE is going to deal with us until the End of the Age; and then there can only be MORE blessing, more in store for those who are weary, heavy laden, in need of rest for good.

I never hung around cows much growing up. Unlike me, all my relatives had to work for a living; so every summer I'd get this close to the cows and chickens and pigs. But not long enough to understand Luther's comment, that when the lost, the world, the boastful, the proud, look at the water of Holy Baptism, they look at the water with all the comprehension of cow looking at a newly painted fence! A bovine-dilettante like myself thought this meant that the popular were PUZZLED by the water, not quite sure what to make of it. I stopped by a field a few years ago and watched some cows. (This is what your offerings pay for, my dear ones. Rejoice!) And it seems to me that the cow don' care if it's a fence at all, painted new or not! All the COW cares about is what it can get its jaws around!

Not to extend the metaphor too far!—but only being concern in what we can ‘get our jaws around’ is the source of just about all the weariness this world has; the MARK of the burden that all men feel, even we religious folk!

What an easy mark the next man is, with all his faults on display! What DELICIOUS snacking is to be had, when we sit with our co-conspirators—or poor innocents, and drag them down into the rehearsing of ALL that we heard going ALL WRONG with just about ALL the folk we met today, for WHOM...CHRIST...DIED!

And we call ourselves disciples of Jesus?!

Jesus does! Who BETTER to learn from Him, than Peter, falling at His feet after the miraculous catch of fish, and declaring, ‘Depart from me, Lord, Son of David, God—WHATEVER YOU ARE—for WHATEVER YOU ARE, I AIN’T!’

And the Lord said, ‘Now this is a fella I can’t lose from my squad! And he CALLS himself all wrong with God! I’ll teach Him a lesson! And the Church will rejoice! You will never forsake Me, Peter? Simon, YOU...will die for ME?! Hmmm. Now you will see how the King, the Christ, the Lord, your God, Heaven and Earth has changed, now that I...AM...HERE! Now that I am with you, with my Gospel and my Baptism and My Body and My Blood.’

Zechariah is a tough read, fellow disciples; at least for

one who knows God least, like me. But it is a close second to Isaiah for being quoted by the New Testament! ESPECIALLY the happy news about the King coming SO lowly in the City of God, that all God's people—wherever they may be!—are called on to sing and shout and rejoice...and leave behind all that is OLD, and LAW, and PINNING THE NEXT MAN DOWN, or puffing yourself up....

After the Exile of the Jews, the Persians were in charge, centered in Babylon, what the Hebrew Bible called 'Babel.' One of the ancestors of Jesus, listing in Matthew chapter One was sent by the Persian Great One to lead the Jews back to Jerusalem, even rebuild the temple. But that ancestor of Jesus, descendant of David, was UTTERLY under the thumb of the idolater Darius; even NAMED after the city of Babylon: Zerub-Babel! Meaning something like 'This guy is a BABYLON-GUY!'

And there was ONE people in all the world who knew for certain Who and What the Living God is, and WHY He even bothers to EXIST AT ALL! He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And He revealed Himself to them to bless all nations. And He called His special people to apply themselves to His revealed Will—that Will chiseled onto stone; a sure sign that any fulfillment of That Will that is 'US to HIM' is just going to anger Heaven, and call down wrath on earth. Those people were the special ones the Lord raised up to say that since nothing changing in US is ever going to please our Creator, then the Creator Himself would need to change.

And Zerub-Babel kind-of ruled the Holy People—but as the prophet said, 'Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord!'

(Just an aside here, dear ones. If anyone wants to give you the inside skinny on the Holy Spirit, and they start to scare you, just run.)

What King has GIVEN US His Kingdom?! The One Who calls a 'yoke' 'easy.' His CROSS! OUR Cross! The One Who says HIS BURDEN is something LIGHT! The One Who cried out from the cross, 'WHY, O God—of ALL MEN!—are YOU forsaking ME?!'

Changing the rules forever, God forever, our life and our hope. New wineskins to hold the new wine!

YES, my dear ones—YOU and I can be ABSOLUTELY PURE, justified, correct and IN THE RIGHT, as we rub up against the next man or woman or child or friend or foe or Christian or not—and our King calls to, with NO power, NO might that will attract the world's gaze, or the cow's. And as the fist clenches, or the teeth, or the mind, or the heart, or the gut, or the eyes—we really do throw ourselves into it, don't we, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE FIGURE WE'RE RIGHT FOR CERTAIN!—

When we wanna play the fire and brimstone God of Mount Sinai over against the next man—and oh, how FUN it

is when even the BAH-BLE sez we is RIGHT and THEM is WRONG!—

Meek and lowly Jesus calls out to us with a smile and says, 'My dear ones: even GOD is past all of THAT! Did you not hear about My suffering, death and burial? And have you not heard that I have risen from the dead? And did I not baptize you, to guarantee you that God thinks of condemnation and reprisal and vengeance as SO OLD, SO OLD TESTMAMENT?'

'Come to Me! Learn again, today, right now—when you feel the burden of being right in a world of wrong—learn again that I have washed you, making the Blessed Holy Trinity YOUR Servant! And WHATEVER comes to you, comes from Me, from US, from the God Who is yours!'

'And if YOU are lacking ANYTHING AT ALL now—is just MORE of the same, MORE of the NEW, that I have come to bring, to GIVE, in MY Church! So I give you today, to eat and to drink, My Body Which was given into death for Peter, for you, for sinners only; and My Blood, of the Covenant that is NEW—NOT LAW, NOT measuring up to ANY SCALE, RULE, LIST, STONE TABLETS. My Last Will and Testament, which CANNOT be revoked! And so, you are forgiven and cleansed and filled with My Spirit, and God is your Father, Who has nothing better to do today than to hear your prayer.'

HOW has God CHANGED?

One of the best reasons to send your children to this pastor for catechism class, is that I am going to reassure YOUR CHILDREN that if they wear out and exasperate their parents, that's really not THEIR FAULT at all! If you did not want to have to teach little children over and over and over—as if some days they have never heard a word that you've SAID.....

Well then, you never should have had them. But you do; and that's that.

God has changed so UTTERLY, that when Jesus sees that ALL He is going to get out of this world, as a Kingdom, as followers, as students, and friends—is a group of people who are as quick on the uptake as infants and toddlers: WHEN...ARE...THEY...GOING...TO...GET...IT???!!!

And on His way to the cross for them, for us, He stops and grabs the ENTIRE ATTENTION of Heaven and Earth, God and Angels and the devil his-self, and Jesus declares:

'ALL you have given ME from this world are those who are NEVER going to GET WHAT I'M ABOUT—not REALLY! Not CONSISTENTLY! Not like I DO!'

And our lowly King says to His Lord and Father above: 'And for them, I thank you!'

My dear ones: it doesn't matter what YOU thought of

YOU this morning, or what I thought of ME when I waddled out of my house. My Jesus, our Jesus, saw us, sees us; and His prayer to His Father to us is: Thank you for them!

Rejoice! In the Name of Jesus!