



5 DAY DEVOTIONAL

Sermon: Rest For The Laboring

SPEAKER: REV. CHRIS SMITH | 9/6/2026 | PAGE 1 OF 5

Day 1: An Invitation You Don't Want to Miss

Devotional: Most of us are carrying something heavy right now. Maybe it's a financial burden that keeps you up at night, a relationship that's draining you dry, or a quiet exhaustion that no amount of sleep seems to fix. You're not alone in that feeling. Solomon had everything the world says should make a person happy. Wealth, wisdom, accomplishment, influence. And yet, looking back on it all, he called it empty. That's a sobering thought. If the richest, wisest man alive couldn't find lasting satisfaction in what the world offers, neither can we. But here's the good news. Jesus doesn't leave us there. He steps into that emptiness with one of the most generous invitations ever spoken. He doesn't say, "Clean yourself up and then come." He says come as you are, weary and burdened, and He will give you rest. That word "rest" is bigger than a nap or a day off. It's a deep, soul-level peace that the world simply cannot manufacture. It's available to you today, not someday when life settles down, but right now. If you're tired, this invitation is for you. If you're overwhelmed, this invitation is for you. You don't have to have it all together to come to Him. You just have to come.

Bible Verse: "Come to me, all you 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 burdens light." - Matthew 11:28-30

Reflection Question: What burden have you been carrying on your own that you haven't yet brought to Jesus?

Quote: "Jesus provides a deeper rest than just physical rest. He gives rest for the soul."

Prayer: Lord, I am tired and I need You. Thank You for the open invitation to come to You just as I am. Teach me to bring my burdens to Your feet and trust You with what I cannot carry alone.

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Day 2: Enough Is Found in Him

Devotional: We live in a world that is constantly telling us we need more. More money, more success, more followers, more stuff. And so we chase. We work harder, we hustle longer, and somehow the finish line keeps moving. The more we get, the more we want. Ecclesiastes cuts right through that illusion. Solomon looked at a life packed full of achievement and asked a painfully honest question: what does a person actually gain from all of it? His answer was sobering. Without God at the center, even the greatest accomplishments leave the soul restless. This isn't a message against hard work. Proverbs is clear that honest labor produces real fruit. But labor without God at the center will always leave you empty. The problem isn't the work. It's what we're working toward and who we're working for. True contentment isn't found in reaching a certain income level or checking off a life goal. It's found in a Person. When Jesus is at the center, something shifts. The striving quiets. The anxiety loosens its grip. Not because your circumstances are perfect, but because your foundation is. You don't have to keep running on empty. There is enough in Him. There has always been enough in Him.

Bible Verse: "For what has a man for all his labor and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun, for all his days are sorrowful and his work is burdensome, even in the night, his heart takes no rest." - Ecclesiastes 2:22-23

Reflection Question: In what area of your life are you striving for "more" when Jesus may be inviting you to find contentment in Him instead?

Quote: "You'll never have enough until you have Christ. You'll never have enough money, you'll never have enough possessions. You'll never have enough friends. But whenever we have Jesus Christ, we can find that contentment that is so hard to find."

Prayer: Father, forgive me for looking to things and achievements to fill what only You can fill. Shift my focus back to You and help me find genuine contentment in Your presence today.

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Day 3: Forgiven and Free

Devotional: One of the heaviest burdens a person can carry is guilt. It has a way of following you into every room, whispering that you are too far gone, too broken, or too inconsistent to be truly loved by God. Many people live under that weight for years, never fully believing that real forgiveness is possible for someone like them. But Scripture doesn't leave any wiggle room on this. When we confess our sins to God, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Not most of it. Not the parts He deems acceptable. All of it. This is the kind of rest Jesus was talking about. Not just physical relief, but the freedom that comes when the weight of sin is lifted off your shoulders. That guilt you've been dragging around doesn't have to come with you anymore. Confession isn't about earning forgiveness. It's about receiving what Jesus already paid for on the cross. The cross was enough. It is enough. And when you bring your honest, unfiltered self before Him, He doesn't turn away. He cleanses. He restores. He sets free. You don't have to keep carrying what He already died to remove. Come to Him honestly today, and let Him do what only He can do.

Bible Verse: "If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." - 1 John 1:9

Reflection Question: Is there something you've been holding back from God, afraid that it's too much for Him to forgive?

Quote: "The cross is enough. If he never blessed me in another way, the cross is enough."

Prayer: Jesus, I bring my honest self before You today, failures and all. Thank You for the promise that Your forgiveness is complete. Help me to receive it fully and walk in the freedom You purchased for me.

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Day 4: Peace in the Middle of the Storm

Devotional: Life doesn't pause when you become a follower of Jesus. Storms still come. Diagnoses still arrive. Relationships still break. Financial pressure still knocks on the door. If you've ever wondered why following Jesus doesn't seem to make life easier, you're asking a question that His own disciples wrestled with. In Mark 4, the disciples were in a boat with Jesus when a violent storm hit. They panicked. Jesus was asleep. And in their fear, they cried out to Him. He spoke to the storm, and it stopped. But notice what He asked them afterward: "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" The lesson wasn't that storms won't come. It's that Jesus is in the boat with you. His presence changes everything about how you face what's in front of you. He may calm the storm around you, or He may calm the storm inside you. Either way, you are not alone. When life gets heavy and worry starts to take over, that's the moment to lean in closer, not pull away. His presence is the anchor. His peace is real, and it is available right now, in the middle of whatever you're facing today.

Bible Verse: "And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." - Mark 4:37-39

Reflection Question: When the storms of life hit, is your first instinct to lean into Jesus or to try to manage the situation on your own?

Quote: "The boat's not going to sink as long as Jesus Christ is in the boat."

Prayer: Lord, remind me in the middle of my storms that You are right here with me. Help me to trust Your presence more than I fear my circumstances, and give me a peace that only You can provide.





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Day 5: The Rest You've Been Looking For

Devotional: We've spent this week looking at what it means to be weary, to be empty, to be forgiven, and to be held through the storm. All of it points to one truth: the rest your soul is looking for is found in Jesus, and it's available right now. His yoke isn't a burden added on top of everything else you're already carrying. It's an exchange. You give Him your heavy load, and He walks alongside you with something far lighter. Following Him means learning from Him, yielding to Him, and trusting that His ways are higher than yours even when you can't see the full picture. This kind of rest isn't passive. It's found in His presence through prayer, through worship, through time in His Word, and through community with other believers. When you gather with others and lift His name together, something happens in your soul that nothing else can replicate. Life is short and full of trouble. That's not pessimism. That's honesty. But the good news is that you don't have to face it alone, and you don't have to wait until heaven to experience His peace. It starts today, in His presence, one step at a time. Come to Him. Stay close to Him. That is where rest is found.

Bible Verse: "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all." - Ecclesiastes 12:13

Reflection Question: What is one practical step you can take this week to draw closer to Jesus and experience the soul-rest He promises?

Quote: "This life is short and full of trouble, but we can find rest for a weary soul in his presence."

Prayer: Father, thank You for the gift of rest that only You can give. Help me to stop striving in my own strength and to lean fully on You, trusting that Your presence is enough for every season of life.

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