

## **MATTHEW 11:25-30**

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."

## **EARTH SCHOOL**

### **Matthew 11:25-30**

Whenever we suffer from an unexpected affliction, we want comfort. We want to know that everything is going to be okay. And we frequently utter the old adage, "Everything happens for a reason" to reassure ourselves that something we don't yet see will occur in the future that will provide a blessing. It is a spiritual way to process the events we are experiencing for it is based upon a faith that God always works for good behind the scenes. In a spiritual sense, as denizens of this planet, are we not all then enrolled in "Earth School"?

So now that we will hopefully begin to emerge in the next few months from our year and a half pandemic, it is incumbent that we reflect upon the lessons it has brought to all aspects of our lives and to wonder how we might move forward from a faith based perspective. For not only has the pandemic changed us personally, it has also impacted our collective behavior. How obvious it has become that none of us acts in isolation from the whole. Our interdependence has been on full display!

The better part of our nature has been revealed by so many different people in so many different places. After IDA and now Nicholas have ravaged Louisiana and Texas, thousands of people in many different ways and places have rolled up their sleeves to help out. Those who have been evicted from their homes have found shelter with family members and neighbors. Doctors and nurses are working 12 hour shifts seven days a week to care for the Covid infected.

But unfortunately, the pandemic has brought out the worst in many others. Who would have believed, for example, that a woman would criminally assault a flight attendant, breaking her jaw over the wearing of a mask? The sharp increase of violence on both domestic and international flights is appalling.

And hasn't the pandemic been used in a warped consciousness as an excuse for assaulting Asian citizens who ludicrously got blamed for the virus itself? And I don't know what the Jews have to do with any of this, but anti-semitic attacks have risen sharply as well. And then there was the Canadian Muslim family just out on a walk in their neighborhood who were killed by a young man who drove up onto the sidewalk in his pickup truck and mowed them down.

And now as the Delta Variant holds serve, anti-vaxxers have become the newest protest group. In a number of cases, people simply wearing masks to protect both themselves and others have been harassed and even physically attacked. Why would someone wearing a mask provoke such an angry response from anyone? Gosh!

Because of all this, on the personal level, I think the pandemic has worn all of us out much more than we realize. Over the last year and a half, we have often been caught in the cross currents of information that was valid at the time, and then discovered to be inaccurate as new studies shed a different light on previous findings. That's science. And this has fueled a culture of suspicion and misinformation broadcasting across the public domain. And that subsequently has forced us to take sides on an issue which in a sane society would have been strictly about public health and safety. And now it has ridiculously evolved into a full blown

culture war. All of this has deeply affected us both personally and collectively. In any sort of charged atmosphere, there are many spiritual lessons to be unpacked at Earth School. Jesus had his angry moments harshly calling out the hypocrisy and evil behavior of both Jews and Gentiles alike. But Jesus also had comforting words whose lessons beg to be learned. I love this particular scripture because it reveals the tender side of Jesus. And you have to recall that Jesus was an activist and by its very nature, activism requires a sharp tongue. But beneath that is a heart that aches for what we humans endure. *Come to me all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens.* (My goodness, doesn't that describe all of us?) *And I will give you rest.*

That sentence alone causes you to take a deep breath and let it all go. It unmask for us the reassuring and compassionate underbelly of our Creator. If you want to know God, then you want to know Jesus. He is the instructor for Earth School. *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.* This is our revelation: God is tender. *God hides things from the wise and intelligent and instead has revealed them to infants.*

What God has done is built for us a comfortable nest to live in spiritual security. It is fashioned by grace, God's giving-ness to all who would accept it. *Take my yoke 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.*

Very simply, Jesus invites us to turn to the Source of life that is never absent. Tune in to a Presence of something beyond comprehension. This is how we shall survive Earth School with its curriculum of duality, ambiguity, uncertainty, loss and suffering that is highlighted by the pandemic we have endured. Jesus beckons us to enter the inner stillness to find relief from the incessant noise of fear. God is forever with us and when we graduate from Earth School, God will be there to hand us our diplomas. We must always remember that we are pupils here and can seek comfort any time simply by turning to God's eternal and loving

presence.

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