

## The Lord's Night Sermon.

Excerpt from Great Gospel of John 01:220.06-221.25

Situation: The Lord Jesus teaches his followers in Kis near the Sea of Galilee. After another great healing miracle the Lord delivers His night sermon about activity and rest. He starts with the answer to a question. (Great Gospel of John 01:220.06-221.25)

Say I [Jesus speaking]: "No, friend Ahab, you have in truth hit the nail firmly on the head. Thus it is! What man does not acquire for himself independently with the abilities bestowed on him, God cannot and may not provide without judging him.

"Therefore, all of you should not be just idle hearers of My Word, but diligent doers, only then will you begin to notice its blessings within you.

"For life is action and not stagnation of the powers on which life depends. And so life must be preserved even for eternity through the constant activity of all its powers, for in the lying-down-to-rest there is no permanent life.

"The certain feeling of well-being you gain from rest is nothing else but a partial death of the powers needed for living. The person who then increasingly enjoys the inactive rest, especially of the spiritual life-powers, thereby also slides ever more into the arms of actual death from which no God will easily free him.

"Oh yes, there does also exist a proper rest full of life, but that is in God and for everyone an indescribably blissful feeling of contentment to be active in accordance with God's will.

"This most blissful feeling of contentment and the clearest realization to have always truly acted according to the order of God is that proper rest in God which alone is full of life because it is full of energy and respective action. Every other rest that consists in the ceasing of the life-powers is, as already mentioned, an actual death to the point to which the various life-forces have withdrawn from activity and no longer resumed it. - Do you understand this?"

Says Judas Iscariot: "Lord, if so, then man should flee sleep like the pestilence, for also sleep is a rest of a number of life-forces, although external ones."

Say I: "Certainly! Because of that late-risers will never reach a particularly great age. Whoever grants his body five hours of sleep in his young days and six hours in his old age will usually reach a great age and look youthful for a long time, whereas a late-riser soon ages, gets a lined face and grey hair and at a somewhat advanced age walks around like a shadow.

"And just as the body gradually dies off through too much sleep, in the same way, but on a much larger scale, this applies to the soul if it increasingly slackens in its activity according to My Word and will.

"Once idleness has made itself at home in a soul there soon follows also depravity. For idleness is nothing else but a self-indulging love which all the more flees any activity for someone else's sake because it basically wants only one thing, namely, that all others should work for its benefit.

"Therefore, beware particularly of idleness, for this is an actual seed for all kinds of vices.

"The various beasts of prey may serve you as an example. Look, these beasts become destructively active only when driven by burning hunger. Once they have captured their prey and satisfied their hunger, they again return to their lairs where they rest often for days, especially snakes.

"Now look at a robber or murderer. This man who shuns all work, who is actually a devil in the flesh, lies often for days in one of his dens. Only when his spies tell him that a rich caravan is due to pass his den, he lies in wait together with his accomplices, ruthlessly attacks and robs the caravan and kills the merchants to prevent them from betraying him. And that is a fruit of idleness.

"Therefore, I say once more: Beware above all of idleness, for it is the road and the wide door to all imaginable vices.

"After work has been done moderate rest is good for the limbs of the body, but excessive rest is worse than none.

[221] "If someone has walked a long distance and finally reaches a shelter he will, if he does not go to bed immediately, but continues with small movements and on the following day is on his feet already before sunrise, not feel any tiredness all day, and the longer he will thus continue his journey the less tired it will make him.

"If, however, someone after a day's march arrives quite as tired at a shelter, immediately throws himself on a bed and maybe leaves it only at noon on the following day, he will be continuing his journey on completely stiff feet and with a totally benumbed head. After having covered a certain distance, he will from utter exhaustion long for a rest, and it can even happen that he collapses on the road and if no one comes to his aid - which can easily happen - perishes there and then.

"And what has caused it? His own too great desire for rest and the delusion that rest strengthens a person.

"If someone wishes to achieve a great, amazing accomplishment in one or the other art where a high degree of hand or finger-dexterity is required, - question: Will he achieve it if instead of constant diligent practice every day he idly strolls around day by day with his hands in his pockets motivated by a kind of anxious concern not to tire his hands and fingers to prevent them from getting stiff and unfit for the striven-for accomplishment?

"Truly, even I Myself with all My boundless wisdom could not make a prophet and determine the time when such a disciple of art will become a virtuoso. Therefore, My dear friends and brothers, I repeat:

"Only activity upon activity for the common good of people brings you salvation. For all life is the fruit of God's constant, never tiring activity and therefore can only be maintained and preserved for eternity through proper activity whereas nothing but death does and must result from inactivity.

"Place your hands on your heart and feel how it is constantly active day and night. The life of the body depends solely on such activity. Once the heart stops, that would mean the end of the natural life of the body, I should say.

"And just as the rest of the physical heart obviously constitutes the total death of the body, this same rest of the soul's heart is the death of the soul.

"The heart of the soul, however, is called love, and its pulsating expresses itself in true and full love-activity.

"Thus constant love-activity is the never wearying pulsebeat of the soul's heart. The more actively the heart of the soul pulsates, the more life is generated in the soul and once thereby a sufficiently high degree of life has formed itself in the soul, equal to the divine supreme degree of life, this awakens therein the life of the divine spirit.

"This - as the very life, because the untiring supreme activity itself - then flows into the soul that has become equal to it through love activity, and everlasting imperishable life has fully commenced within the soul. And look, all this arises from activity, but never from idle rest.

"Therefore, shun rest and seek full activity, and eternal life will be your reward.

"Do not imagine that I have come to bring peace to mankind on this earth. Oh no, only the sword and war instead.

"For, men must be impelled to all kinds of activity through distress and hardships or they would become lazy, fatted oxen that fatten themselves for eternal death.

"Distress and hardship bring about fermentation upon fermentation in man from which in the end something spiritual could develop.

"One could, of course, say: 'Through distress and hardship also anger, vengeance, murder and manslaughter arise, also envy, hardheartedness and persecution.' That is indeed true, but bad as all that is, the result is nevertheless better than from idle rest which is dead and brings neither good nor bad results.

"Therefore I tell you: Let a person be really warm or completely cold where I am concerned; but a lukewarm one I will spit out from My mouth.

"I prefer an energetic enemy to a lukewarm friend, for the energetic enemy will challenge Me to full activity, so that I may either win him over or make provision to permanently prevent him from harming Me. Beside a lukewarm friend, however, I become lukewarm Myself and if I should get into difficulties, will the lukewarm friend be of any use to Me?

"Therefore, also a lukewarm ruler is a pest for his people, for then the nation's spirit decays and the people all turn into voracious oxen and beasts of burden. But a severe and even tyrannical ruler causes the people to be alive and there is activity everywhere so as not to incur punishment. And if a tyrant goes too far the people will rise in great numbers and rid themselves of their tormentor."

I think I have now said enough about the value of activity and am convinced that all of you have understood this lesson. Therefore, if someone wants it and feels a need for a sleeping rest for his body, let him seek a bed, but who wants to sit up with Me through the night, let him remain here.' There **they all** said: 'Lord, how could we sleep when You are sitting up? Only the mother Mary seems to need a rest for her body, and so You could send her to bed.'

But Mary, although she had dozed a little in an armchair behind Me, heard these words, sat up and said with great friendliness to the speaker: 'Friend, you who usually speak for your fellow-disciples, I tell you that your concern for me is rather futile. For, see, for the sake of my Lord I have sat up for probably hundreds of sleepless nights and am still alive – and if it is His will I will again go through as many sleepless nights and not lose my life. Therefore, do not concern yourselves about me all of you, it is sufficient that One looks after me.'

These words had been addressed to Thomas and he came to Mary and asked her not to regard his good intention unkindly. But Mary comforted him and was very kind about his concern for her, and Thomas felt easier in his mind and soon, quite relieved, resumed his seat.

For a while there was now silence. No one spoke, for they all pondered on what had been said and found the truth of it shining ever brighter.

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Only **Matthew** said after a while to himself: 'Tomorrow at daybreak this teaching about activity and rest will be recorded as best as possible on a special tablet, for this so extremely important lesson must on no account be lost to the world.' And when soon it began to dawn, Matthew kept his word, and this lesson was preserved for a long time and through Jonael and Jairuth reached also Samaria, but in the course of time was considerably distorted and, therefore, also got lost. But while it was still around the people knew it under the name of "the night-sermon."

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