

Greetings in the name of the living Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

**SCRIPTURE:**

Ezekiel 34:15-16 (MSG) – Larger reading: Ezekiel 34:11-24

*“And I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep. I myself will make sure they get plenty of rest. I’ll go after the lost, I’ll collect the strays, I’ll doctor the injured, I’ll build up the weak ones and oversee the strong ones so they’re not exploited.”*

**STORY:**

According to a Greek legend, in ancient Athens a man noticed the great storyteller Aesop playing childish games with some little boys. He laughed and jeered at Aesop, asking him why he wasted his time in such frivolous activity.

Aesop responded by picking up a bow, loosening its string, and placing it on the ground. Then he said to the critical Athenian, "Now, answer the riddle, if you can. Tell us what the unstrung bows implies."

The man looked at it for several moments but had no idea what point Aesop was trying to make. Aesop explained, "If you keep a bow always bent, it will break eventually; but if you let it go slack, it will be more fit for use when you want it."

**OBSERVATION:**

Bone tired. Exhausted. Weary. That is the story of so many of us in these trying days of the Pandemic and “forced” isolation. There is a cry deep within us that craves to be set free and get out of the “four walls” and the tedious sameness of everyday existence. This isn’t living ... it is just marking time/days on a calendar. The weight of it all makes us just to tired to take the next step. Weighed down. Burden. Breaking under the load.

If this doesn’t describe us I would be greatly surprised, but it probably does describe someone we know ... a friend ... a neighbor ... a family member ... or the essential worker at the grocery store.

The real question for today is this: What are we going to do about it?

God is our shepherd. He will give us true rest. We know that, but does the other person? Maybe we have been placed in their pathway because God intends for us to help carry their load. To sooth their aching muscles. To listen to their woes. To provide that rest that they cannot find anywhere else.

Just maybe, but we won’t know unless we try.

**QUOTE:**

*God is tireless, relentless. He refuses to quit.* – Max Lucado

**PRAYER:**

Thank you for giving us true rest. Now help us extend the same love and support to others.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim  
Jmartin450@tampabay.rr.com  
386-795-5323

***NOTE: Tomorrow, September 26<sup>th</sup>, there will be a national time for Praying for our nation. If we all could stop whatever we are doing at NOON and offer up a prayer. It states in 1 Timothy 2:1 – “I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people” ... and if not at Noon then at a time that it is more convenient for your schedule. Thank you for caring.***

***Watch for our prerecorded Worship Service (with mistakes and all) via our Facebook page at: Manatee United Methodist Church. We are making very tentative plans to be back in the sanctuary the middle of October which still creating a live presentation for our Facebook page and hopefully on Youtube. Just pray that it all comes together.***

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