

man brought mule - got in town
Thought Brake Rein - ran away,
put to mule - mule - started talking
Night Stopped mule - suit looks mes,
man out of harness - suit looks mes,
unhook the mule - it'll stand!

THE DROPPED BRIDLE REIN

Mark 6:31

Introduction:

Far back in the 1800's the Cimarron Country of Colorado and northern New Mexico and Texas was open range. That is, without fences anywhere. And riders could ride that range and I read the story about Buras Jenkins, who was a preacher who lived back in the 1800's. It told how he often would ride the range with cowboys. During the long hot summer days when they had ridden hard from daylight until late afternoon with nothing to eat and nothing to drink. With their lips parched by the wind and the sun and the dust. They would ascend a little hill or mesa and beside a spring or some or some small cedar - would rest awhile. And on such occasions, we had only to draw the reins over the horses heads and drop the long ends to the ground. The cow ponies were trained to stand thus as if tied. At any rate, he said, I never knew one that was well trained to move away. No doubt they were just glad to stand as the men rested in the shade. In this story, I discovered two things. There is the dropped bridle rein, and also the rest.

I guess you have heard about the horse that David Harum sold to the Deacon. The Deacon who could not trade on Sunday but he could discuss all the preliminaries of the trade and settle them and get his money the next day on Monday. And he had never been beaten in a horse trade. David Harum guaranteed to him that the particular horse would stand without hitching. And the next day after the Deacon bought him, he did stand, in the middle of the road all day long. Without being hitched and without any bridle reins, trailing. But that is not the kind of horse that I am talking about this evening. But I think here is a lesson of dropping the bridle reins. It is plain - there is the necessity of rest, both for man and beast. The cow pony needed rest and so did the man.

David sold horse man small farm - Christ house
met on road - promised Brine \$30 later - I see they know him he was Deacon in Bag - ch -
That means he will be there in with - ch -

The other relaxation of tired muscles and nerves is necessary.

I found a text to go with this message, Mark 6:31. Jesus recognized that it was necessary for his disciples - that he had called to serve him. They had gone out on a mission and they had returned. Now when they came back to tell him what had taken place, he said to them - come ye apart into a desert place, and rest awhile. Now they had been busy for many people were coming and going - that they scarcely had time to eat.

Now let me say, mother nature sometimes forces us to rest. Sometimes she comes and forces us to drop the bridle rein. It is when she may come and put us to bed for a week, or six weeks, or six months. In spite of ourselves for our relaxation, for our tense strung-up nerves. And we bemoaning this lot of dropping the bridle reins.

But we are told that the American people suffer more than any other nation from what is called "nerves". Nerves is the national disease. And this is not due just to the kind of climate that we have - to the atmosphere. But more likely from our (ambition) of one sort or another. For the Americans have a great ambition for money, for position, and they are free to aspire in the game of the race of life. And what a tragedy. Many Americans die frequently in the early time of life. We must learn as a people to rest. We already know how to ride hard, and we know how to work hard. We know how to plunge ahead - over the hills and roadblocks.

A professor once reared a brood of pigeons in a cage. He kept them there until maturity. And then he wanted to give them a chance to fly. So one day he took them out. He tossed them into the air one at a time. Each pigeon spread his broad wings and it was natural for him to sail around. And they had not been up very long

before there were signs of distress. And they were coming back and circling around the cage. And one by one, they dashed themselves against the ground and the cage - panting to the ground. They knew instinctively how to fly. But they had never learned how to lite. I wonder if this is part of our problem.

Now when we are physically tired, we need to have short periods of complete rest. As the matter of dropping the reins. The English have a prescription for longevity. They say, it is frequent and short vacations. Three weeks or a month in the summer of a continuous vacation is not so good. But two or three days taken frequently throughout the year. Now if we rested on the weekends, we scarcely however know what a weekend is. And if by chance, we get a weekend, do we rest. No we dash away madly, to some nerve wracking expedition. And it leaves us more exhausted than when we set out. It is true that a change of work is a rest in itself. That is why employees in a factory at noon time get out to use their muscles to play baseball or volley ball. Something totally different.

But most of us need to learn - you can take a half a day or a weekend or two days to do nothing - (absolutely nothing). This is unmitigated loafing for just a few hours at a time. Have you learned how to do it.

(Walt Whitman) who was strong even in advanced age said, I loaf and invite my soul.

(Beecher), when asked how he was able to accomplish so much work, said - by turning one day into two. He meant that he slept a little while in the middle of every day and it turned out to be an excellent practice for him.

(William Jennings Bryant) endured hard campaigns because he was able between.

Whatever else this indicated - it surely points to a body under the master of the mind.

A professor has said that the long gas lines are to our advantage. It helps a fellow ^{rest -} to sit and do nothing. This, he says, ^{- Universal Book -} very few of us know how to do. And he went on to compare. He said there used to be large sagging chairs in the homes of people. But today, he says, the (living room) looks as though it has never been used.

Now Jesus was tired. He had been teaching great crowds. He enters a boat and he is going to go about six miles across the lake. And Jesus went fast asleep on that trip.

Another time when he was journeying in (Samaria), he rested on the curb of Jacob's well.

The secret of living a sane strong life, is to use these little periods of rest, this is a secret, of being able to be in a relaxed condition and position of body and mind. Which one does his actual work.

One ought to ride with a loose rein and guide his horse by the slight pressure upon the neck. One ought to yield to the motion of his animal. By a relaxation of nerve and muscle.

The best riders are almost those who can be won with the body of their mount. A tense, high-strung rider, fatigues both himself and the horse. They say this is the real case of sea sickness. The inability to relax and yield to the motion of the ship. And surrender one's self to move with the ship. Hence, there is the nervous disease of sea sickness.

Now lots of sea sick people on the great ship we call life. Because they have never discovered the secret as Blackman said of a good boxer. He needs to be in a relaxed form. If your whole figure is relaxed, a blow cannot hurt. You yield to the blow - you give with it, and it becomes more a push than a blow. If you stiffen against it, it shakes and jars your whole being. How many of us know how to take the buffetings of life.

It would be remarkable as we think as we go to our work - that we could relax even while we work. One physician said that his work was easy for him because it was like play. It was something that he enjoyed doing.

Mark Twain gave some rules for living a long life. And when he had reached advanced age, someone asked him about this. How that he was so hail and hearty at 3 score and 10. He replied, I have a set of rules. They may not fit anyone else but they suit me exactly. "When I eat anything that disagrees with me - I keep on eating it until one or the other of us gets the best of it. I never smoke more than one cigar at a time. I never go to bed as long as there is anybody to sit up with. And I never get up until I have too. I never did a lick of work in all my life."

Well, of course, we know that Mark Twain was a most industrious man as a writer. But what he means, I think, is that his work was play and that he enjoyed every bit of it and every minute of it. Now that is what we need to learn to do - is to learn the secret of making play out of our work. Not drudgery. Most of us could by relaxing. By taking life easier - enjoy our work much more than we do. Now I am not saying that life is a huge joke. But I am not trifling with this subject either. But I am helping us to meet life with nerves that are strong and taught to discover how we can drop the bridle rein. We have restless minds. A mind on wheels knows no rest. It is as a rolling wheelbarrow. Struggling against everything as it travels. If you desire to be useful, to honor God, and be happy - we must discover

this great truth, that Jesus has called us too.

During the War, we heard much about the R & R. Many of the servicemen are familiar with that break. I do not know all that that entails, but what it meant was after he spent so many hours under the strain of battle - that there would be a break for him. And he would be flown to some rest camp. Some area of recreation that would be a complete change from what he had been involved in. This is exactly what Jesus was talking about here. Let us get away from this. And he said, come away by yourselves to a lonely place. Rest awhile.

An appointment with God. This is a good prescription for those who have nerves and over-looked the truth that here is a lasting meaning. They needed physical rest - they had been pushed by the crowds. They needed to make an appointment with God. And to get aside with themselves and with God.

Now people make appointments today with everybody else. They make an appointment with a merchant, with a tailor, with a hair dresser. They make all kinds of appointments. The dropped bridle rein of making an appointment with God.

Now if you do not do this physically, you will be like the situation on a busy street. Down the street stands a long line of trucks, and cars, and they are honking their horns. But far up in front is a narrow one-way bridge. But on one side stands a mangie little mule hitched up - now he could pull it easily. But he will not. He is bulky. And he is obstinate. And this mule succeeds in halting a long line that wants to be on its way. That old mule has learned the instinct of the dropped bridle rein - he knows how to relax when he wants too.

Now lets take this truth and make some applications out of it.

I. WHEN SIN GETS THE BEST OF YOU.

There are many things that teach us. There is hurry and fear.

Have you ever thought about this mortal enemy of hurry. What is the use of going so fast. You may get to your grave sooner - but no place else. You may save a quarter of an hour in a day. But what will you do with it after you have saved it.

And what about worry. What does it ever gain us. Crossing bridges before we come to them. Anticipating evils before they even threaten us. Being anxious for tomorrow. This is the futile thing that we ever do in the world - is worry. You can't talk against worry. Worry is something that will get the best of you.

And then there is fear. This is a demon that possesses many. Human beings are timid creatures. Why are we afraid of anyone else. Why are we afraid of pain. And why are we afraid of these things that come to us and we must live life. You are afraid for your salary, you are afraid for your job, for your taxes, for your bills. Now somehow they get paid. And somehow there is work enough for all to do. And there is food enough for everyone. And there are clothes enough to go around.

So when the sin of hurry, worry, and fear come - we need to know how to hand the reins over to Jesus. In a hurry, we need to know to just take time to serve Jesus. On the matter of worry, we put a finger on the cause of anxiety. And squeeze it out. And the matter of fear - God cares for every bird in the air. And even the one that falls to the ground. He considers the lilly - how they grow. They toil not. Neither do they spin. And yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which is today - and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you. Oh ye of little faith.

Now Jesus sent out these disciples to preach and to teach. And he said you go without money. You live off the people. And you demonstrate this by depending and looking up to me. Why be afraid of this then. What is there to fear today in your life. Where is the shadow that hangs over you. Truly this is not the darkest moment in your life. Whatever the fear that assailed you - there was a time back yonder that was more tragic and more threatening to your home or your loved one. Perhaps it was your wife between life and death. Perhaps a little child slipping out into the broad sea of eternity. Somehow you survived the shock. Somehow you weathered the storm. If you were to think of the very darkest hour in life - then think about what Abraham Lincoln said in the darkest hour of his life. Even this, will pass.

Now Jesus can conquer for us and with us all of these things that limit us and restrain us. He can unwind them. And the things that tie our hands he can set us free. The things that cause us to not get the most out of life.

Jesus came to set us free. To give us the truth and to make us free. Now sin restricts us and confines us. Now to find that peace, in life, Jesus knew how to rest. He knew how to turn aside the peace and relaxation. And he is here today to teach us this so simple and yet so profound secret of life. The quiet, the rest, the peace that nobody can take away.

Let me illustrate this with the story of Henry Drummond of Glasgow. He used to visit some friends in mid-Scotland - spending a large part of his summer holiday with them regularly. One such occasion, he was about to leave after a pleasant visit, and they said to him "there is something we were going to ask you to do for us. You know John, the coachman, we are troubled about him. He has been taken to drink and no one has been able to help him. He is now on his last chance with us. Do you think you could help him. Now that you are leaving, perhaps it is too late."

But it was never too late for Henry Drummond. The coachman came for him and Henry Drummond got into the seat beside the driver. They rode and he talked about the horses. As they came to a dangerous bend, he asked, what would happen if these horses ran away with us here. It would be fatal, he replied. But said, Henry Drummond, if you found that they were out of control and you knew that I sitting beside you could control them - what would you do. "I'd give you the reins", he said.

John, said, Henry Drummond - there are a pair of wild horses in you. They'll drag you, and why not hand over the reins to Jesus Christ. As they parted at the train - John did just that. The next summer Henry Drummond found John a happy Christian.

If you get the reins in the right hands, then you can win the victory.

II. WHEN THE SOUL NEEDS REPLENISHING

Our text has a word for the peril of Christian service - that these disciples had gone on the first piece of independent work. Now he wants them to go to the desert for a retreat and quietness. A time to be apart with God is needful. There is always the necessity of the bridle reins being dropped.

During the war, (World War II), a British newspaper published a prayer. "Save us Lord from feeding on newspapers and news broadcasts. And starving ourselves of Thy Word to which we could all say a hearty Amen."

The soul needs this. (Bishop Ninde) had a little daughter. One day she entered his study - and she found him sitting with up-lifted face, and a soft expression. And he was apparently at first not conscious of her presence. He was startled as she

stood on the threshold watching him. And then he turned and looked at her with his usual kind smile. What were you doing just now, she asked her father. I was thinking about God he gently replied.

Yes, we need to drop the bridle rein and think about God when the soul needs replenishing.

You remember the story of the old sheep ranger in Idaho who found that his violin was out of tune and he couldn't tune it - he needed some standard note to go by. So he wrote to the radio state in far off California and asked them to strike that note. And they did. They stopped the program and struck the note, the sheep rancher caught it and the violin was in tune again.

Your quiet hour will help you hear God's standard notes. Then you can tune up your flattened notes to his. Keep your heart in tune with him.

In New York City, a large hotel, put in a meditation chapel. It was a little room on one of the upper floors. It was for the accommodation of the guests and the employees. It was a place of retreat, prayer, and meditation. It was not intended for services. It was merely a place where a person could come and sit apart from worldly matters in silence. The doors of the chapel were never locked. And that despite of the bustle and confusion of the modern city, despite the materialism and the man whirl of pleasure, with which people are charged - they all frequently feel the need of silence, prayer, and meditation.

III. WHEN BURDENS ARE HEAVY

We need to practice the dropped bridle rein when our burdens get heavy.

I read the other day a story that Mark Guy Pearse tells of an incident that happened. He had preached a sermon on the text of where Jesus talked about the father's yoke you know, being light. And how that he would lift the burdens. And when he had finished that sermon, a man came up to him and said, I wish I had known you were going to preach about that. He said, I could have told you something that would have helped you illustrate. He said when I was a boy at home, I used to drive the oxen in my father's yoke. And the yoke was never made to balance, he said. He said my father's yokes were always made heavier on one side than the other. Then he said, we would put a weak bullock in along side a strong bullock and the light end would come on the weak bullock because the stronger one had the heavy part of it on his shoulder. Then his face beamed as he said, that is why the yoke is easy and the burden light. Because the Lord's yoke is made after the same pattern and the heavy end is upon his shoulders.

So it is - that we will find rest for our souls in this way.

IV. WHEN EXHAUSTED IN THE RACE OF LIFE

I think our text has a great point. And Jesus said come apart, ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile. When you are tired in this exhausting race of life, there are several things that we need to notice here.

The great point is, that Jesus is the one that does the inviting. He says, come apart. And this is something you do not over look. His presence with them. It was his presence that enabled them to relax and rest - and to receive. They could leave their burdens with him. And they could gather from him these spiritual resources.

I re-read again the story that Dr. George McDaniel, who was a great teacher, but he loved to fox hunt. And one morning at dawn he went fox hunting with Roy Angell, who is another great teacher. They had been enjoying for sometime the music of a pack of fine fox hounds. As they chased a red fox. On this particular occasion the two preachers had ridden across ahead of the dogs to a high rock cliff. In which the old red fox has taken refuge several times before. Marsh George, as they called him, was eager for a glimpse of the fox, that his dogs couldn't catch. They had concealed their horses in the bushes. And were sitting very silently and still when around the edge of a high cliff, on a shelf of rock, the red fox trotted to the mouth of the dark deep den. He stopped a moment, lifted his head and listened. The dogs were a great distance away. So he casually sat down and began to smoothe his fur, lick his paws, at intervals he would prick up his ears and listen intently and then relax. Finally when the dogs got close, he trotted unhurriedly into the dark cavern behind him. And you can imagine that he sat relaxed and unafraid. As he listened to the furor of the hounds as they surrounded the entrance to his home.

Dr. McDaniel layed his hand over on the saddle of his friend, and said with deep emotion, Roy, there is a great sermon. "When you have a safe refuge to which you can go in a time of trouble, the hounds of life don't worry you much." I think when God put into the heart of man the idea of Heaven, and a Hell to shun - that it was something. A place to which he could go at the end of a trying life and there be blessed. I think also God established the home in the same way. That at the end of day, a man can go to his home and be renewed in his strength and in his energy. I know this passage, we need to realize, there is a refuge. There is a place, for the Lord God is a refuge. There is a place, that you can drop the bridle rein.

And in that quiet hour, several things will happen when you come to do this.

✓ For one thing, we will re-discover a sense of proportion. We see things that worry us in their true perspective. In this quiet place with God, doubts are often

best put to silence.

In this quiet hour, the reality of God's love in Christ, has power to reach the heart. We know afresh that he lives and his love is the reality, which can never be defeated or destroyed.

We need to drop the bridle reins on each Lord's day where we can open our minds and our hearts to another world. To that which is unseen. And we can listen to not the news bulletins, the rumors, the false hopes, lying fears, but to our real business. We cannot live without this inspiration.

Jesus felt the need of this and he is the one that suggested this. And I bring to you tonight, that this is a grand and a glorious picture as we think of the dropped bridle rein of the cow pony, stopped for rest. And the man relaxes and the rein is not taught, but everything is quiet.

In this situation with God, we are absorbed as the poet said.

Life tides on a crescent sea beach
When the noon is new and thin
Into our hearts high yearnings
Come welling and surging in.

In from the distant ocean
Whose rim no foot may trod
Some call it aspiration
And others call it God.